

How and where can I apply?

Apply for the Special Assistance Program at your county department of social services. You may send someone to apply for you. When you apply, please provide the following items if you have them.

- Income information that includes recent pay stubs, Social Security, SSI, or Veteran's Administration (VA) award letters;
- Savings and checking account information that includes passbooks, checkbooks, bank statements, etc;
- Information on assets such as property (real and personal), stocks, bonds, IRAs, annuities, life insurance, burial insurance and trust funds owned by you and or your spouse;
- Social Security card or other verification of Social Security number;
- Proof of age (birth certificate or other);
- Health insurance information; and,
- State-issued proof of identity.

From the date of application, the eligibility determination process can take up to 45 days for applicants aged 65 or older and up to 60 days for applicants younger than 65.

A list of the county department of social services can be found at: www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services/local-dss-directory



NC Department of Health and Human Services • Division of Social Services • The State/County Special Assistance Program • www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services • 820 S. Boylan Avenue, Raleigh, NC • Mailing address: 2420 Mail Service Center Raleigh, NC 27699-2420 • NCDHHS is an equal opportunity employer and provider. • 12/2025

Special Assistance

Help for North Carolinians Who Need Care in a Residential Facility



Do you or someone you know need the type of care provided in a residential facility, such as an adult care home/assisted living, family care home, group home/supervised living or a mental health group home and need help paying for this care? Read further about eligibility for the Special Assistance Program.

Can I get help paying my expenses at a residential facility?

Yes, if you are an older adult, an adult with a disability or a child who is legally blind living in a specialized community residential center and need to live or are living in an adult care home. The State/County Special Assistance Program helps pay for room and board. The assistance benefits are issued monthly to eligible individuals living in licensed residential facilities, as long as that facility is licensed by the NCDHHS Division of Health Service Regulation and follows the anti-discrimination practices of the Civil Rights Act.

Am I eligible?

Individuals with low income are potentially eligible if they are age 65 or older, between the ages of 18 and 65 and disabled according to Social Security disability standards, or (if under age 18) are a child who is legally blind and living in a specialized community residential center.

All applicants must:

- Need residential facility level of care as verified by a health care provider
- Be a U.S. citizen or qualified alien
- Meet income and asset eligibility requirements
- Be a resident of NC
- Meet all other Special Assistance eligibility requirements

NOTE: If you are eligible for the Special Assistance Program, you are automatically eligible for Medicaid. Medicaid helps pay for medical expenses and treatment. Medicaid may also help pay for personal care services which include assistance with activities of daily living, such as dressing and bathing.

Financial Eligibility Requirements Apply

When you apply for Special Assistance, you will be assigned a Department of Social Services (DSS) caseworker who will determine your eligibility. In the process of determining eligibility, there are certain income deductions for earned and unearned income and assets that may be excluded.

Examples of countable income include wages, budgeted for Special Assistance Adult Care Home eligibility and can explain how assets and income are verified and counted in the Special Assistance eligibility process.

Your DSS caseworker can explain how income is Social Security and Supplemental Security Income, and Veteran's Administration income.



How much will my Special Assistance benefit be?

The maximum Special Assistance payment an eligible individual can receive is tied to the maximum rate adult care homes can charge Special Assistance recipients for room and board. The maximum rate (set by the North Carolina General Assembly) that adult care homes can charge an SA recipient for room and board is currently \$1,397 per month.

An income-eligible individual's benefit amount is determined by taking the maximum rate and subtracting the individual's total monthly countable income. A personal needs allowance of \$70 is added to the maximum rate to allow an individual some spending money for clothing and other essentials each month.

	\$1,397	Maximum Adult Care Home Rate for 2026
+	70	Personal Needs Allowance
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=	1,467	Maintenance Amount
- subtract		Countable Monthly Income
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=	Monthly Special Assistance Benefit Amount	

Note: As of 1/1/2023, rates are adjusted yearly using the federally approved Social Security cost-of-living change (if any) that is effective for the applicable year. Please confirm the published rates with the county department of social services.