

# YOUTH RIGHTS IN PENNSYLVANIA: FINANCIAL RESOURCES WHEN YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN

One of the most important skills for living on your own is the ability to financially support yourself. The best way to do this is to get work experience, save money, and continue your education. This will increase your chances of getting higher paying jobs.

If you have a low income, the benefits programs listed here may help you make ends meet. It is good to learn about the different programs because you may be eligible for some but not others.

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**—provides money for children, the adults who care for them, and pregnant women. It has many rules, including work requirements, and it has a five-year time limit. You can apply for TANF at your local County Assistance Office or online at [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us).

**General Assistance (GA)**—provides money to individuals whose temporary or permanent disabilities prevent them from working. If you are between 18 and 20 years old and are still in high school, if you are in a residential drug treatment program, or are a victim of domestic violence, you also may be eligible. You can apply for General Assistance at your local County Assistance Office or online at [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us).



**Food Stamps**—is a card with money on it to use for groceries. You can apply for Food Stamps at your local County Assistance Office or online at [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us). Many more people are eligible for food stamps than are receiving them so remember to consider applying even if you are not eligible for any of the cash assistance benefits.

**Medical Assistance (MA)**—is insurance that covers physical and behavioral health care. You may be eligible if you are receiving TANF, GA, SSI, or if you are pregnant, a parent, disabled, a victim of domestic violence or require health-sustaining medications. As a result of Health Care Reform—the Affordable Care Act— young adults with very low income will be eligible for Medicaid. This provision of the Affordable Care Act will take effect in 2014. You can apply for Medical Assistance at your local County Assistance Office or online at [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us).

**Low Income Home and Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)**—is a program to help if you need assistance paying your heating bills or are in danger of losing your utility services. You can apply for LIHEAP at your local County Assistance Office or online at [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us). For more information contact the LIHEAP hotline at 1-866-857-7095.

**Child Care Subsidy**—is a subsidy program to help cover child care costs. It is available to those who meet the work or school requirements as well as an income requirement. For more information, call the Child Care Works helpline at 1-877-472-5437 or check out <http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/ServicesPrograms/ChildCareEarlyEd/003670906.htm>

**Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**—is a cash assistance benefit for disabled children and adults. You can call 1-800-772-1213 to begin an application or visit [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov) to find your local Social Security office. If you received SSI as a minor, you will need to have your eligibility redetermined when you turn age 18 using the adult standards for determining disability. It is important to be prepared for the redetermination process. Talk to your lawyer, your caseworker and other helpful adults to help you prepare. To find a lawyer who can help you, call the American Bar Association at 202-662-1000.

Juvenile  
Law  
Center