

# Cash Assistance During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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# The Cash Assistance Program

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (“TANF”) Program gives families cash to spend on their basic needs. In Arizona, the TANF program is called the Cash Assistance Program. The Cash Assistance Program is run by the Arizona Department of Economic Security (“DES”).

You can apply for cash assistance on the same application for food stamps and medical assistance.

# Cash Assistance During the COVID-19 Pandemic

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, DES has made changes to the Cash Assistance Program.

This is general information and does not discuss all situations. We will cover:

1. Recent changes to the Cash Assistance Program.
2. Who is eligible for the program.
3. Income eligibility guidelines.
4. Program options.
5. How to apply.

# Changes to the Cash Assistance Program

**In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been changes to the Cash Assistance Program. Some of those changes are:**

- **During the pandemic, there are no work requirements for adults.**
- **During the pandemic, Arizona's time limit on how long you can get cash benefits is suspended.**
- **The adult does not have to sign the Personal Responsibility Agreement.**

# What if a person applied before and was denied Cash Assistance?

- If you applied before and were denied, you may be eligible.
- A stimulus check will not be counted as income for the Cash Assistance Program.
- Unemployment insurance benefits are not counted as income for the Cash Assistance Program.

# Who is eligible for Cash Assistance?

Low-income families with a minor child living with them are eligible for cash assistance. Some cases are referred to as “child only.” Examples are:

A parent can apply for cash assistance for just the child, because the parent does not have an immigration status that allows them to get public benefits.

A parent who gets Supplemental Security Income (SSI) can apply for their child.

If the child lives with a specified relative, the relative of the minor child can apply for cash assistance for the child.

# **Is a child in a mixed immigration status household eligible for Cash Assistance?**

A person can get cash assistance if they are:

1. A US citizen, or
2. A “qualified” immigrant.

The child must be in one of the above categories. A parent may apply for cash assistance for their child and if the parent is not asking for assistance for themselves, the parent cannot be asked about their immigration status.

# **Can a family with both parents living together get Cash Assistance?**

Yes. This is called the Two Parent Employment Program (TPEP).

# What are the income guidelines for Cash Assistance?

The general income guidelines for cash assistance are:

- 130% of the current federal poverty level for a family when the head-of-household is not the parent of the child and wants cash assistance only for the minor child. For a family of 3, this is \$2,311 per month. An example is a child living with her grandparents.
- 100% of the current federal poverty level for all other families. For a family of 3, this is \$1,778 per month.

# How much can a family get in Cash Assistance?

The amount of cash assistance benefits you can get depends on your situation. DES will look at the number of persons in your household, income, and whether you pay for basic costs, such as rent, mortgage payments and property taxes.

It is important to fill out the cash assistance application with as much information as you have available. DES will give you the cash assistance on an Electronic Benefit Transfer (“EBT”) card that works like a debit card.

# How much can a family get in Cash Assistance?

DES uses 2 payment charts for cash assistance.

Families who pay shelter costs (rent, mortgage, taxes, etc.)

Number of Participants	CA Monthly Payment Standard
1	\$164
2	\$220
3	\$278
4	\$335
5	\$392
6	\$449
7	\$506
8	\$563
9	\$620
10	\$677
11	\$734
12	\$791

Families who do not pay shelter costs

Number of Participants	CA Monthly Payment Standard
1	\$103
2	\$139
3	\$175
4	\$211
5	\$247
6	\$283
7	\$319
8	\$355
9	\$391
10	\$427
11	\$463
12	\$499

# Do parents have to meet work requirements to get Cash Assistance?

**No.** Because of recent changes in state law, parents do not have to meet the cash assistance program's work requirements *during the COVID-19 pandemic*.

When the pandemic ends, DES may decide to require parents to participate in work activities to get cash assistance.

Getting your high school equivalency degree or GED qualifies for the work activity requirement.

# How long can a family get Cash Assistance?

Recent changes in state law suspended the cash assistance time limits during the COVID-19 pandemic. Until the pandemic is over, you can get cash assistance for as long as you are eligible for the benefits.

Once the pandemic is over, DES may decide to go back to time limits. The time limit for cash assistance was 12 months. Then you could ask for an additional 12 months of benefits. You also could ask for more months of benefits for a hardship reason: Examples are: you are a victim of a crime or domestic violence, homeless, have no transportation, or have no childcare.

## **Can a family get a one-time larger Cash Assistance payment?**

Yes. Under Arizona's **Grant Diversion Program**, you may receive a one-time larger payment of cash assistance benefits.

A payment under the Grant Diversion Program is equal to three months of cash assistance payments. The Grant Diversion Program is for when you need quick, short-term assistance. For example, you have a job lined up but it is not starting right away and you could use help from the Grant Diversion Program.

# **Can a family get a one-time larger Cash Assistance payment? (Continued)**

You may be eligible for the Grant Diversion Program, if you meet all of the following:

- Meet the cash assistance eligibility requirements
- Did not get cash assistance in the month they apply for Grant Diversion
- Did not get benefits through the Grant Diversion Program in the 12 months before they submit an application.

**You cannot get Cash Assistance benefits and the Grant Diversion Program benefits at the same time.**

# **If DES in the future starts to require a parent to sign a Personal Responsibility Agreement**

The parent must agree to do the following:

- Make sure all children ages 6 through 15 attend school;
- Keep the children's immunizations up to date;
- Not illegally sell, possess or use a controlled substance;
- Cooperate with the rules of the Cash Assistance Program, and
- Cooperate with the DES Child Support Services.

# Where can persons use their Cash Assistance?

**The Cash Assistance EBT card can be used at any ATM or store that accepts the EBT card. You cannot use your EBT card at a:**

- liquor store,
- casino,
- racetrack,
- adult entertainment establishment, and
- medical marijuana dispensaries.

You also cannot buy lottery tickets with a Cash Assistance EBT card.

## How do persons apply for Cash Assistance benefits?

- Submit an application online at [www.healthearizonaplus.gov](http://www.healthearizonaplus.gov).
- Print an application from the Arizona Department of Economic Security's ("DES") website ([www.des.az.gov](http://www.des.az.gov))

Fill it out and fax it to the telephone number on the application or mail it to:

Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Family Assistance Administration  
P.O. Box 19009  
Phoenix, Arizona 85005-9009

# How do persons apply for Cash Assistance benefits? (Continued)

- If persons need help with the application or have questions, call 1-855-432-7587 for assistance Monday-Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

There are a few DES offices still open to the public. DES is only seeing a person in the DES office for an emergency when the person does not have internet or telephone service. Check the DES website to see if an office near you is open: [www.des.az.gov](http://www.des.az.gov).

# Where can persons find more information about Cash Assistance Program?

Arizona Department of Economic Security, *Apply for Cash Assistance*, available at <https://des.az.gov/services/child-and-family/cash-assistance>.

Arizona Department of Economic Security, *Grant Diversion Program*, available at <https://des.az.gov/services/child-and-family/cash-assistance/grant-diversion-program>.

Arizona Department of Economic Security, *DES Services Related to COVID-19*, available at <https://des.az.gov/services/coronavirus>.

AZLawHelp.org

# What if persons need help getting medical care or food?

There are other programs available to help you through these difficult times. Persons can apply for **Cash Assistance, the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (“AHCCCS”) Medical Assistance** and **food stamps** in the same application. See the information in the previous slides.

# What about Unemployment Insurance Benefits?

Persons can apply for unemployment insurance benefits:

- Online at [www.azui.com](http://www.azui.com) and click the button “Apply for UI Benefits.” You can apply any time between 12:00 am on Sunday through 6:00 pm on Friday.
- By phone at 1-877- 600 -2722.
- A paper application is available in the documents center (UB-105 Arizona Initial Claim for Unemployment Insurance) at [www.azdes.gov](http://www.azdes.gov). The application will tell you where to mail or fax the application.

Thank you.