

Know Your Welfare Rights!

APPLYING



ARE YOU APPLYING FOR WELFARE?

If you are trying to get welfare, SNAP (food stamps), Medicaid, or other assistance:

- You can complete and file an application online, by going to www.njhelps.org.
- You can file an application at your County Welfare Agency. The agency must take your application and file it the day you apply, even if you have to come back to complete it or submit additional paperwork.
- You can file a written application for SNAP benefits on the same day you ask for help, even if you are not applying for welfare. The agency must give you **expedited SNAP benefits within 7 days**, if:
 - Your gross income is less than \$150 per month or you have less than \$100 in cash; OR
 - You are a migrant or seasonal worker; OR
 - Your combined monthly income and cash on hand is less than your rent.
- You can fill out a **written application for Medicaid on the same day you ask for help**, even if you are not applying for welfare.
- If you apply for welfare, **the agency must give you emergency help that you need on the same day you apply, if you are in immediate need of help** because you have no food, shelter, utilities, or clothing, as long as you appear eligible for the WFNJ program. If you are applying for GA, you must cooperate with a work program or show documentation that you can't work due to a disability.
- If you apply for welfare, **the agency must immediately take your application for other kinds of emergency help if you are homeless, or about to lose your housing**. This **Emergency Assistance** (also called EA) can be a motel room, a shelter, or a temporary **rent subsidy** (TRA) to help you keep or find an apartment. You can also get EA to help you pay utility bills, obtain food, make mortgage payments, or get clothes or furniture. The agency must give you "immediate need" help right away and if eligible, EA right away if they can't help you another way. GA applicants must complete a 28-day work program, or show documentation of a disability, before they can be approved. EA can last up to 12 months. In some cases you can get an extension beyond 12 months.
- The welfare office must give you **special help if you are a victim of domestic violence, rape, or incest**. You may be temporarily excused from some of the work requirements, time limits, and other welfare obligations so that you can resolve your situation and recover from it.
- You have a right to challenge the welfare office's decision (**appeal to a judge**) if you are denied any of these things and you think you should get them. You can ask for a fair hearing at the County Welfare Agency or by calling the Fair Hearing Hotline at **1-800-792-9773**.

If you have any questions about your rights, or think you were treated unfairly by the welfare office, call LSNJLAWSM, Legal Services of New Jersey's statewide, toll-free legal hotline, at:

1-888-LSNJ-LAW
(1-888-576-5529)