

# Accessing Benefits during the COVID-19 Emergency

## Frequently Asked Questions

The Department of Human Services has new rules to make it easier for people to get and keep their benefits during the current public health emergency.

### County Assistance Offices (CAOs) are closed.

#### How can I apply for benefits?

- You can apply directly online at [compass.state.pa.us](https://compass.state.pa.us)
- In Philadelphia, drop off a paper application at the drop box outside your local CAO (during work hours)
- For help applying, contact:
  - *Pennsylvania Health Access Network* at 877-570-3642
  - *BenePhilly* at 844- 848-4376 (Philadelphia only)

### When should I apply for public benefits?

- **Apply right away!**
- LIHEAP (energy assistance): Apply before April 10, when the current season closes.

### How can I tell the CAO that my income recently changed?

- You can report a change of income by calling the Customer Service Center:
  - Philadelphia -- 215-560-7226
  - Statewide -- 877-395-8930
- You can also report on [compass.state.pa.us](https://compass.state.pa.us) or through the **MyCompassPA** mobile app.
- No proof is needed if you report you lost income due to the corona virus emergency.

### I got renewal papers in the mail. Do I have to return them?

- If you already received forms, you should complete them and return them if you can.
- **No one will be cut off benefits for failure to submit renewal forms or provide information.**

### What if I can't get the proof I need to apply or that DHS has asked me for?

- Tell the CAO right away if you cannot get the proof that DHS has requested. They can either make a phone call for you or will take your statement as proof.
- Your statement is the only proof required for Medical Assistance applications except for citizenship/alien status.

### I expect to go back to work in a few months. Can I still get cash assistance?

- **Yes! You should apply right away for cash assistance.**
- If you expect to return to work in the next few months, you should ask to be placed in the TANF Diversion program. There are no work or child support requirements for this program.

