

PROGRAM FACT SHEET

Your Interviewer Can Explain These Programs In More Detail

Work First

Work First is about helping families achieve self-sufficiency—helping adults support themselves and provide for their children. To help families reach their self-sufficiency goals, Work First provides employment services, other supportive services, and time-limited cash assistance to families with children under age 18. The family is referred to child support to help get additional financial support for the children. If eligible, the family may also receive Medicaid. A family must meet income, resource, and citizenship rules.

Work First Benefits (WFB) is the process for issuing Work First cash assistance. All adults who are included in the assistance payment must have a Mutual Responsibility Plan of Action agreement that requires the individuals to work or participate in work-related activities. These adults must complete all of the requirements on their agreement each month before receiving Work First cash assistance, unless there is a good cause.

Child Only cash assistance payments continue to be issued near the beginning of the month, for that month.

Benefit Diversion is an alternative to Work First cash assistance; it provides help to families who need one-time temporary assistance for a specific crisis or episode of need. While Benefit Diversion is not appropriate for all families, it provides immediate help to families who are employed, soon-to-be-employed, between jobs, or anticipate receiving financial assistance in the near future that will help meet their needs.

A family that qualifies for Benefit Diversion can receive:

- A one-time cash payment of up to 3 months of Work First Family Assistance benefits. Cash payments stop after this one check;
- Up to 3 months of Medicaid ;
- Child care, transportation, and work-related expenses, if needed; and
- Child support services and referrals to other community and agency services.

Child Support Services

The purpose of the Child Support Enforcement (CSE) program is to ensure that noncustodial parents support their children. CSE program services are available to any individual who requests them. If the children are receiving Work First Family Assistance (WFFA), the caretaker of the children assigns his or her rights to child support to the State of North Carolina. Child support collected for children receiving WFFA is retained by the state when there are existing unreimbursed WFFA funds and treated as a reimbursement to WFFA funds. For children who are not receiving WFFA, the child support is paid to the client (custodial parent or caretaker).

There are no residency requirements for CSE services. The applicant or the child for whom CSE services are requested is not required to be a U.S. citizen.

Emergency Assistance

Emergency Assistance is available to help families with limited income and resources to cope with crises that are beyond their control. This includes help to pay unexpected bills.

Food and Nutrition Services

The Food and Nutrition Services helps low-income families or individuals buy food. Families must meet income, resource, citizenship, and work rules. If you buy and cook your food separately from others living with you, you may be able to apply as a separate household. Eligible households receive monthly benefits to buy food.

Crisis Intervention Program (CIP)

This program is for households in a heating or cooling-related emergency who have income less than 150% of the Federal Poverty Level. Eligible households may get up to \$600 assistance to buy fuel or to pay their electric or gas bill, depending on the county in which you live. Payments are made directly to the vendor.

Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)

This program pays a one-time vendor payment to eligible households to help with their heating bills. Priority in eligibility is given to disabled persons receiving services through the Division of Aging and Adult Services or households in which all members are age 60 and older. Applications are taken for these households December 1st through January 31st. Applications for all other households are taken February 1st through March 31st.

Child Care

Each county receives funding from the Division of Child Development for subsidized childcare services to help families pay for childcare. To qualify, family income must be within the income guidelines for the family size.

Most families who are Work First recipients qualify to receive assistance to help with childcare expenses. Parents/responsible adults receiving childcare assistance may be required to pay a parent fee based on their gross countable monthly income and their family size. The parent/responsible adult pays only one fee, regardless of the number of children in care.

Parents are free to choose the type of regulated childcare arrangement they wish to use. Information is provided about the star rated licensing system and how to select a childcare center or family childcare home.

State/County Special Assistance (SA)

This program provides financial assistance to help pay for room and board for persons living in Special Assistance (SA) approved residential care including adult care homes and supervised living facilities. SA recipients must be age 65 or older or if age 18 to 65, disabled according to Social Security standards. Individuals under the age of 18 must be legally blind and residing in specialized community residential centers. Medicaid eligibility is automatic for persons who qualify. The

residential facility may be able to bill Medicaid for the cost of some of the care for eligible SA residents.

There is also a program that provides financial assistance for persons living at home. The Special Assistance In-Home (SA-IH) Program is for persons who are in financial need, and who are age 65 or older or age 18 to 65 who are disabled or blind, and are in need of adult care home or supervised living level of care, but wish to remain at home. One qualification of this program is that the individual must first qualify for Medicaid Categorically Needy separately from the SA/IH program. Usually this means that countable monthly income cannot exceed 100% of the Federal Poverty Guideline.

The SA-IH payment cannot exceed 75% of what the payment would be if the recipient lived in a residential care facility. A social worker case manager also assesses whether the applicant can remain safely at home with the SA-IH payment and the available community resources. The number of SA-IH cases can make up 15% of the total Special Assistance caseload statewide. There are 91 participating counties.

There are income and resource limits for both SA Programs.

Medical Assistance (Medicaid)

This program helps families or individuals with medical bills such as doctor fees, prescription drugs, hospital charges, and nursing home care. Persons who get Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Work First Family Assistance, or State/County Special Assistance (SA) also get Medicaid. SSI recipients do not have to apply at the county department of social services to get Medicaid.

Other persons can also get Medicaid. There are several different types of Medicaid. All have income limits, and some have resource limits. Your caseworker will explain these to you.

Types of Medicaid:

- Aged (65 and older), disabled, or blind persons.
- Persons with Medicare coverage may be eligible for limited assistance with costs associated with Medicare. Medicare beneficiaries with income up to 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) may be eligible for payment of Medicare premiums, co-payments and deductibles for Medicare covered services. Medicare beneficiaries with income between 100% and 135% of the FPL may qualify to have their Medicare Part B premium paid.
- Families with children through age 20. The parents or the caretaker relative of children under age 19 may also be able to receive Medicaid.
- Individuals through age 20.
- Children under age 6 whose family's income is equal to or less than 200% of the FPL. This limit is higher than for older children. There is no resource limit.
- Children age 6 through age 18 whose family's income is equal to or less than 100 % of the FPL. There is no resource limit.
- Pregnant women, with or without other children. The income limit is 185% of the FPL. There is no resource limit.

- Women age 19 through 55 and men age 19 through 60 who are not eligible for other Medicaid may receive limited Family Planning Medicaid. The income limit is 185% of the FPL. There is no resource limit.
- Blind and disabled workers ages 16-64 with income equal to or less than 150% FPL. The resource limit is the minimum community spouse resource allowance. Entitled to full Medicaid coverage.

Medicaid may also cover medical bills from the three months before the month you apply.

N.C. Health Choice for Children

Children age 6 through age 18 who are not eligible for Medicaid, who do not have other health insurance, and whose family's income is not more than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) may be eligible for a special medical insurance coverage called "**NC HEALTH CHOICE FOR CHILDREN.**"

This insurance covers a wide range of medical care including doctor's care, hospitalization, prescription medicine, and dental and eye care. If the family's income is more than 150% of the FPL, the family may be charged an annual enrollment fee of not more than \$100. Co-payments for certain services may also be charged.