

How can I get cash assistance?

It's important to know what your rights are.

What is TFA?

TFA is Temporary Family Assistance. It's usually called "welfare" or "State." TFA is Connecticut's cash assistance program for low-income parents and their children, including teen parents. You can apply for cash assistance at the Department of Social Services (DSS).

How do I get TFA?

If you are a teen parent, in order to get cash assistance you have to follow a lot of rules. But, there are some exceptions to the rules, so make sure you read all of this booklet to find out what they are. It's important that you know what your rights are.

Can any teen parent get cash assistance?

No. To get cash assistance, a teen parent must meet all the requirements listed below, or an exception described in this brochure. You must be:

1. low income; and
2. either pregnant or living with your baby; and
3. living with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian; and
4. going to school; and
5. a U.S. citizen, legal permanent resident, or some other categories of immigrants.

Can I still get cash assistance if I quit school?

If you quit, only your baby can get cash assistance. Also, you will have to work or look for a job. If you stay in school, both you and your baby can get assistance. As long as you are in a program to receive a high school diploma or GED for 20 hours per week, you and your baby can get assistance.

How long can I get cash assistance?

If you are under 18, you can get cash assistance as long as you are in school. When you turn 18, you will get cash assistance for 21 more months (extensions may be available), and you will be required to follow DSS work rules.

If you are not in school (so only your baby is receiving cash assistance), then the amount of time you can get benefits will depend on many factors. Please see us or call us if you have questions about this.

Can I still get cash assistance if I get married?

Yes, but if you are married you are treated as an adult. This means you may be required to go to school, and you are not required to live with an adult. This also means you will only get cash assistance for 21 months (extensions may be available) and you may be required to work, look for a job, attend school or job training.

If my mom is getting cash assistance, can I still get it?

Yes. You and your first baby can get cash assistance as part of your mom's cash assistance if you are living at home and still in school. But, if you have a second baby while you or your mom are on assistance, you will only get an additional \$50 per month.

I don't have a parent or guardian to live with.

Can I get cash assistance?

Yes. You can get cash assistance if you live with one of your relatives, or a relative of your baby, or in another place where there is an adult taking care of you. You must bring this adult with you when you apply at DSS. If DSS approves, this person will be

your "payee" and she will be in charge of your money. Make sure it is someone you trust!

In order for DSS to approve, you must show one of these:

- you do not have a living parent, stepparent or legal guardian to live with;
- you do not know where your parent/stepparent/guardian is;
- they will not allow you to live with them;
- living with them will be harmful to you or your baby.

Can I get cash assistance if I don't have any relatives or other adults who can take me in?

Maybe. You may be able to get cash assistance in your own name if you show one of these:

- there aren't any relatives or other adults who can help you;
- you don't know where your relatives are;
- none of your relatives or other adults will let you live with them;
- living with any of your relatives or other adults will be harmful to you or your baby.

I'm not a U.S. citizen. Can I still get cash assistance?

Maybe. It's going to depend on your situation. Come see us or call us if you have questions about this.

How do I apply for cash assistance?

Go to DSS with your parent/guardian or payee, and bring:

- long form Birth Certificate
- social security numbers (for both you and your baby)
- rent/mortgage receipt
- copies of utility bills (phone, heat/oil, cable, electric, etc.)
- bank account statements
- car registration
- proof of full-time student status

The phone number and address for DSS are on the back of this brochure.

TFA is
cash
assistance
for
low-income
parents.

Where can I get help?

To apply for cash assistance

Hartford Department of Social Services (DSS)

3580 Main Street, Hartford

(860) 723-1000

Monday - Friday, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

(Wednesday afternoons for emergency only)

For other locations and phone numbers, call 211 infoline.

For more information about cash assistance or your legal rights

Call CCA's Teen Legal Clinic

at 860-570-5327 or 203-223-8975.

For questions about child support and cash assistance,
please see our brochures on Teen Mothers and Child
Support, and Teen Fathers and Child Support.



Center for *Children's* Advocacy

University of Connecticut School of Law

65 Elizabeth Street, Hartford, CT 06105

www.kidscounsel.org

If I'm a teen parent

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Cash Assistance for Teen Parents