How to Apply for Medical Assistance (MA) in Pennsylvania

What is Medical Assistance?
Medical assistance (MA), also known as Medicaid, is a federal program which provides lower income individuals and families with healthcare coverage. States are required to include certain types of individuals or eligibility groups under their Medicaid plans and they may include others.

Am I eligible for Medical Assistance? (Please see attached flow chart for additional information)
Anyone can apply for Medical Assistance even if you already have health insurance. Eligibility for MA is based on several factors. These can include:

- Age
- Income
- Resources
- Citizenship
- Disability
- Residence

How do I apply?
There are a few different ways to apply for medical assistance.

- Go to your local county assistance office and apply in person—this is the best way to apply. A caseworker will review your application, discuss your own unique situation with you and help you decide what options or choices may be best for you.
- Apply online—www.compass.state.pa.us. Once your application is reviewed by the County Assistance Office a caseworker will contact you via mail and/or telephone to discuss your application.
- Mail application to your local County Assistance Office—contact the office and ask them to mail you an application or download the application from the above mentioned web address, complete it and mail it to your local office. This is least recommended method as it will prolong the application process.

What kinds of documentation do I need to apply?
You can apply without providing documentation but you will need to provide certain items before your application can be processed and an eligibility determination can be made on your case. These items include:

- Photo ID, birth certificates, social security cards
- Proof of income
- Proof of resources (bank accounts, savings bonds, CD’s, etc.)
- Documentation of any other medical insurance you might have
- Recent medical documentation (this is especially important for anyone with an autism diagnosis)

How long does the application process take?
The amount of time the application process takes from start to finish varies. Once your application is received in the County Assistance Office it is to be processed within 30 days; however several factors can delay this process. It is best to keep in touch with the County Assistance Office to ensure your application is processed in a timely manner.

What happens next?
When your application has been processed and an eligibility determination has been made the County Assistance Office will inform you as to whether your application has been approved or denied.

What if I am denied?
If you are denied medical assistance for any reason you have the right to appeal the decision and have your case heard by an appeals officer who will review your case to ensure the eligibility determination is correct.

Where can I get more information?
To get more information you can call or visit your local assistance office or visit the Department of Public Welfare on the web at: http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/. To get more in depth information on eligibility and income guidelines please see the attached pages.
Medical Assistance (MA) and Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

I have a child diagnosed with autism, can I get medical assistance?
There are a variety of medical assistance programs available to children. If your child has a disability but
your household income is too high for family based coverage you may still be eligible to receive medical
assistance for your child. This program is commonly referred to as “loophole” and counts only your
child’s income in determining eligibility.

How do I know if my child is eligible for the “loophole” program?
If your child is under 18 years old, has less than $851 per month in income and has a diagnosis of ASD
he or she should be eligible but the only way to know for sure is to apply for MA through your local
County Assistance Office (CAO). If your child is found eligible under the loophole program they will
remain eligible until the end of the month of their 18th birthday provided you complete the annual
reapplication process. It is important to keep the CAO’s updated on any address changes to ensure you
receive your reapplication packet in the mail.

What happens when my child turns 18?
If your child is receiving any type of MA, including “loophole”, when he turns 18 there are steps that
need to be taken in order to ensure he remains eligible after his 18th birthday. First and foremost, you or
your child must fill out a new application and go through the application process again. You can either
contact your caseworker and complete the application by mail or go to the office for an appointment.
You will no longer have to provide proof of your income but you will have to provide a parental
contribution letter which states that you do not provide financial support to your child. Keep in mind that
for the purposes of the CAO, financial support means that you do not give your child money to use at his
or her discretion; it does NOT include providing your child with basic necessities such as food and
shelter. When your child turns 18 income limits also change. Again, the CAO will only count your child’s
income. These rules apply until your child turns 21 then the rules change yet again.

Now that my child is 21 years old and an adult does he still qualify for medical assistance?
When a person turns 21 a new eligibility determination needs to be made to decide if he can receive MA.
Again, a new application will have to be filled out and you have to go through the application process all
over again from start to finish. There are a few additional things that need to be done to get MA at age 21
and older. First, the applicant’s resources will be counted along with his income. Second, the applicant
will need to have an employability assessment form completed by a doctor. The employability assessment
form tells the CAO that you have a disability which prevents you from working. In some cases you will
also be required to apply for SSI through the Social Security Administration Office.

What if I am over the income or resource limits for medical assistance?
There are other options available for a person with an ASD diagnosis. Depending on your individual
circumstances you could be eligible for Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities or MAWD. This
program is available to anyone age 16 and older, living with a disability and who is employed at least 1
hour per month and is financially compensated. This can even include walking a neighbor’s dog once a
week for $5.00. The income limits for this program are $2128 per month for one person and you can
have up to $10,000 in resources and still be eligible. Again, the best way to find out if you are eligible for
any of these programs is to put in an application with your local County Assistance Office.

*Once enrolled in MA, children and youth from birth to age 21 are eligible to receive all physical health
and behavioral health services covered under EPSDT.
### CHART A

- **Family Size** | **Birth to age 1** | **Age 1-6** | **Age 6-18** | **Age 19-21**
---|---|---|---|---
1 | $1575 | $1132 | $851 | $425
2 | $2111 | $1518 | $1141 | N/A
3 | $2648 | $1903 | $1431 | N/A
4 | $3184 | $2289 | $1721 | N/A
5 | $3721 | $2675 | $2011 | N/A
6 | $4257 | $3061 | $2301 | N/A
7 | $4794 | $3446 | $2591 | N/A

**For individuals age 18, 19, and 20 only that person’s income is counted**
**For all other age groups all family income is counted**

* These income limits apply through the end of the month a person turns 21

### CHART B

- **Family size** | **Income**
---|---
1 | $5,100 to 20,042
2 | $5,300 to 27,380
3 | $5,600 to 34,340
4 | $6,800 to 41,300
5 | $8,100 to 48,260
6 | $9,100 to 55,220
7 | $10,200 to 62,180
8 | $11,300 to 69,140

MA elig flow 3/08