

HOW TO APPLY FOR PUBLIC BENEFITS IN DANE COUNTY

You already know that there are a lot of public benefits (like W-2, Food Stamps, Medical Assistance, Emergency or Interim Assistance or Kinship Care) that you might be eligible for. We've put together some tips that will hopefully make applying for benefits easier – so that you can get the support that you and your family need:

1. You have **NOTHING TO LOSE AND MUCH TO GAIN** by applying for benefits. If you are denied, you are no worse off than if you hadn't applied.



2. You cannot be denied the **RIGHT** to apply for benefits. You should **INSIST** on filling out an application. If you are not allowed to apply or told that you are not eligible before you even fill out an application, contact one of the advocacy groups listed on this flier.



3. When you apply for any benefit program (like W-2), make sure to **ASK IF THERE ARE OTHER PROGRAMS OR BENEFITS** that you might be eligible for (like childcare subsidies, Food Stamps, Medical Assistance & BadgerCare, Emergency Assistance, etc.) and apply for **ALL** the benefits that you think you need or that you think you're eligible for.

4. If your application for benefits is denied, you have the right to get a **WRITTEN DECISION WITHIN 30 DAYS** explaining **WHY** you were denied.

5. MAKE SURE YOU'VE COMPLETED THE APPLICATION. When you apply for any benefit, you must **COMPLETE** your application before any decision will be made about your eligibility. Sometimes you may get discouraged in the middle of an application and not fill it out completely. Or a caseworker may tell you that it doesn't look like you'll qualify, and you'll decide to stop the application process. Or sometimes you may think that you've done everything you need to complete the application, but Human Services says they're missing important documents or information. **Don't get discouraged! Fill out the entire application to the best of your ability!**

(Turn Flier Over for More Tips)

REMEMBER!



→ If your application is incomplete, or if Human Services is missing information or verification from you, they will not always be able to make a decision about your eligibility. **If your application is not COMPLETE within 30 days, it will be denied.**

→ **If Human Services says you are missing important documents** or asks you to verify information on your application, make sure to ask **HOW** you can provide the needed verification and ask your worker to **HELP YOU** get the information if you can't get it yourself. **Also ask for the written verification check list.**

→ **When you think that you have completed the application**, ask the worker if the application is complete and if and when you will get a **WRITTEN DECISION**.

→ **Ask for a COPY of your completed, signed and dated application.** This is the best way to be sure that you did everything that you needed to do, and getting a copy gives you proof that you did apply and the date that you applied.

→ When you get the decision, if you disagree with it or don't understand it, **CALL YOUR WORKER** and ask for an explanation. If you can't reach your worker or don't agree with the worker's explanation, ask to **SPEAK TO THE WORKER'S SUPERVISOR**.

→ If you still disagree with the explanation or the decision, request an **APPEAL FORM**. The worker **MUST** give you one. If you want help appealing, contact one of the organizations listed below.



If you are having problems filing an application for benefits, or if your application has been denied, you can call these organizations for help:

ABC for Health

(For Medicaid, BadgerCare &
Health Insurance issues)
261-6939

Interfaith Hospitality Network

(Ask for Leslie McAllister)
294-7998, ext. 303

Neighborhood Law Project

(Ask for Vicky Selkove)
260-8299 or 260-8221

Hospitality House

(Ask for Jack Longert)
255-2960

Andy Heidt, Ombudsman

Dane County Human Services
242-6477

Legal Action of Wisconsin, Inc.

256-3304