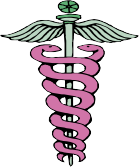


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| *Often, teens think they are not entitled to benefits or they have a hard time getting benefits and give up.*  *Don’t give up!*  *If you qualify for benefits, you are entitled to them!*  **Where do I start?**  **Call the Department of Public Welfare Change Center at**  **215-560-7226**  **to find the Department of Public Welfare**  **office nearest you. Or apply online at:**  [**www.compass.state.pa.us.**](http://www.compass.state.pa.us/) |
|  |
| 1424 Chestnut Street  Philadelphia, PA 19102-2505  215.981.3700  Fax: 215.981.0435  [www.clsphila.org](http://www.clsphila.org/) |

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| **Young parents and welfare benefits**  *If you are a young parent, it is extremely important that you are able to access benefits for you and*  *your child.* | |
| J U V E N I L E L A W C E N T E R  1315 Walnut Street, 4th Floor Philadelphia, PA 19107  215.625.0551  Fax: 215.625.2808  800-875-8887 in PA  [www.JLC.org](http://www.JLC.org/) | **What kinds of benefits are available to young parents?**  The programs are: Cash Assistance, SSI, Medical Assistance, Food Stamps, and WIC.  **Can teens get cash assistance if they have children or are pregnant?**  Cash welfare can include money for child care, funds for books and supplies for education programs and transportation assistance.  **If you are a low-income teen parent, you can get cash assistance if:**   * You go to school or a vocational program full time. You may be able to be excused from this if you are disabled or are a victim of domestic vio- lence; and * You tell DPW about your child’s father. This is for DPW to get child support. You don’t have to tell them if you have “good cause” because of domestic violence. This means, if you are afraid that the father of your children will hurt you if you give his name, you do not have to; and * You live in an “adult supervised living arrangement.” An adult super- vised living arrangement includes living with your parents, another adult, or in a program.   However, there are exceptions to this requirement.  **What are the exceptions to the “adult supervised living ar- rangement” requirement?**  You do not need to live with your parents to get help! If you cannot live with your parents you may be excused from this requirement.  Some excepted reasons for this include:   * if your parents are ill, have died, won’t let you live with them or don’t have space for you; * if they are unable to take care of you for mental, emotional, physical or financial reasons; * if your parents spent your check in an inappropriate way; * if they live far away and you have not lived with them for twelve months or more and you are working, in school or in substance abuse treatment where you live; * if you or your child’s mental or physical health would be at risk if you lived with them; * if there is a history of sexual abuse; * or if there are other good reasons why you shouldn’t live there. |

Last modified: February, 2013

**Young parents and welfare benefits**



# Can teens get cash assistance even if they do not have children and are not pregnant?

## If you are a teen without children and are not pregnant, you can probably get cash if you are under 18 or:

* You are under 18; or
* You are 18 or over, and
  + are in high school and are expected to graduate before you turn 19.

# What is “Medical Assistance” (MA) and do I qualify?

The Medical Assistance (MA) program provides free health care coverage. If you have MA, you get a medical card.

If you quality for TANF, or SSI, you automatically qualify for MA. However, if you are a low-income teen, you probably qualify for MA even if you do not qualify for the other programs.

# What are “Food Stamps” and do I qualify?

Food stamps come in the form of an access card you can use to purchase food.

Most low-income people qualify for food stamps. You can get separate food stamps if you do not live with your parents, are not under the “parental control” of an adult and are buying and cooking food separately.

# What is WIC (“Women, Infants and Children”) and do I qualify?

WIC is a nutritional program for pregnant women and women with children under five that offers foods (such as milk, eggs, cheese, etc.), nutrition information, immunization screenings and referrals to health providers. Contact WIC at **1-800-743-3300** to apply.

# What can I do to fight for my right to benefits?

## If you are told you cannot apply or are denied benefits, insist on getting a denial notice in writing and appeal immediately.

**You can ask people that you know for help.**

You can ask adults to write letters to your caseworker. These letters could explain

your situation supporting that you live alone, why you can’t live with your parents or that you prepare your own food. Also, you may want to ask a social worker, teacher or family member to go with you when you apply for benefits.

## For help or advice, call: The Welfare Law Line (215) 227-6485.