

Public Benefits

That Can Help: Ohio

The AARP Foundation wants you to have the information you need to apply for low- and no-cost programs, including public benefits that can help older Americans:

- save money on prescription drugs
- pay doctors' bills
- reduce property taxes, and
- cover other basic living costs

This fact sheet describes the programs in your state, helps you decide which are right for you, and tells you how to sign up. Income guidelines, eligibility requirements, and telephone numbers are subject to change.

Paying for Health Care and Prescription Drugs

Medicare

Benefit: Health insurance that helps pay for preventive care, doctor visits, hospital stays and prescription drugs.

Who can apply: People who are 65 and older, and younger people with disabilities or kidney failure.

How to apply: Call the Social Security Administration toll-free at 1-800-772-1213 and tell the operator where you live. You can also log on to www.socialsecurity.gov and select "Questions about Medicare." For information about the Medicare prescription drug coverage, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) or log on to www.medicare.gov.

For additional assistance, call the Ohio State State Health Insurance Information Program (OSHIIP) toll-free at 1-800-686-1578 or log on to www.ohioinsurance.gov.

Medicare Savings Programs

Benefit: Pays for some of the costs of Medicare, including the Part B premium, deductibles, and co-payments. How much you get depends on your income and assets.

Who can apply: People who get Medicare and earn around \$1,170 per month for one person, or \$1,575 per month for a married couple.

How to apply: For more information or to request an application for the Medicare Savings Program, also known as the Medicare Premium Assistance Program, call the Ohio Consumer Hotline toll-free at 1-800-324-8680.

Medicare Rx Extra Help

Benefit: Pays for the monthly fee and deductible for Medicare prescription drug coverage, and lowers prescription drug co-payments.



Who can apply: People who get Medicare and have combined savings, investments, and real estate (other than your house) that are not worth more than \$11,990 if you are single, or \$23,970 if you are married and living with your spouse and have a limited income.

How to apply: Call the Social Security Administration toll-free at **1-800-772-1213** and ask for the Medicare Rx Extra Help application. You can also log on to **www.socialsecurity.gov** and click on the Medicare section.

For additional assistance, call the Ohio State Health Insurance Information Program (OSHIIP) toll-free at **1-800-686-1578** or log on to **www.ohioinsurance.gov**.

Ohio's Best Rx Prescription Drug Discount Card

Benefit: Ohio's Best Rx is a prescription drug discount card program designed to lower the cost of prescriptions for Ohio residents who do not have prescription drug insurance coverage. The discount card can be used at all participating Ohio pharmacies. Ohioans age 60+ with a Golden Buckeye card can also receive an Ohio's Best Rx card by calling the number below.

Who can apply: Any Ohio resident without prescription drug coverage who is either: 60 years of age or older regardless of income, or under age 60 with an annual income of less than \$31,200 a year (\$2,600/month); \$42,000 (\$3,500/mo) for family of two (higher limits for larger families).

How to apply: Ohioans may apply for the program by telephone at **1-866-923-7879** (1-866-9BESTRX) or online at **www.ohiobestrx.org**.

Medicaid

Benefit: Provides medical coverage for hospital care, health center and clinical services, doctor care, nurse care, lab and x-ray services and nursing homes.

Who can apply: People who are 65 or older, blind or have disabilities with limited income, few resources, or in some cases, high medical bills. To qualify, you must meet Medicaid income and asset limits. Income limits vary, depending on the size of your family and where you live. Income limits also vary based on the particular Medicaid program for which you qualify, so contact your state Medicaid office for more information.

How to apply: An application and an interview need to be completed at the local county department of job and family services. To find information on your local office, call the Ohio Consumer Hotline toll-free at **1-800-324-8680** or log on to **www.jfs.ohio.gov** and click on "Health Care."

Help with Your Home

State Property Tax Assistance

Benefit: The Ohio Homestead Exemption enables eligible homeowners to shield \$25,000 worth of the market value of their home from local property taxes.

Who can apply: Homeowners who are at least 65 years old or will reach age 65 during the current tax year, or who are certified totally and permanently disabled as of January 1 of the current tax year regardless of age, or who are the surviving spouse of a qualified homeowner, and who was at least 59 years old on the date of their spouse's death.

How to apply: For an application and more information, contact the Ohio Department

of Taxation at 1-800-282-1780, online online at www.tax.ohio.gov, or contact the county auditor's office where you live.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance and Home Weatherization Programs

Benefit: Provides assistance in paying heating and cooling bills, and some energy-related home repairs.

Who can apply: Low-income people with household incomes less than \$17,867 for one person, or \$23,957 for two people. Income limits for home weatherization are slightly lower.

How to apply: For additional information or application assistance, call toll-free 1-800-282-0880 or log on to www.odod.state.oh.us/cdd/ocs/heap.htm.

Telephone Assistance

Benefit: Helps pay for the cost of basic local telephone services.

Who can apply: Qualified low-income older adults. You are automatically eligible if you are in one of the following programs: Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Federal Housing Assistance/Section 8 Programs, Food Stamps, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Programs, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) General Assistance, and Tribally Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

How to apply: Call your local phone company and tell the sales department that you want to apply for Link-Up or Lifeline.



Help Buying Nutritious Food

Food Stamps Program

Benefit: An Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card, similar to a debit card, that you can use like cash to pay for food at most grocery stores.

Who can apply: People 60 and over who earn less than \$1,107 per month for one person, or \$1,484 per month for two people. The things you own cannot be worth more than \$3,000. If you qualify, the amount of money you receive depends on your total net income, family size, and where you live.

How to apply: Contact the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services toll-free at 1-866-244-0071 or log on to www.jfs.ohio.gov and click on "Food Stamps."

Cash Assistance

Social Security

Benefit: Monthly checks. How much you get depends on how long you have worked, how much money you earned, where you worked, and your age when you began getting benefits.

Who can apply: Workers who are 62 or older, people with disabilities, or the spouse and children of a deceased or disabled worker who paid into the Social Security program.

How to apply: You must make an appointment at your local Social Security office to apply. You can find your local Social Security office by calling 1-800-772-1213 toll-free and telling the operator where you live. Or, you can log on to www.socialsecurity.gov and select “Apply for Retirement Benefits.”

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Benefit: Monthly checks.

Who can apply: People who are 65 and older, or people who are blind or have disabilities and have very low income and assets.

How to apply: You must make an appointment at your local Social Security office to apply. You can find your local Social Security office by calling 1-800-772-1213 toll-free and telling the operator where you live. For information, you can log on to www.socialsecurity.gov and select “Disability & SSI.”

Other Information

AARP Foundation Benefits QuickLINK

Find out if you qualify for the programs listed here and several others by using Benefits QuickLINK. Answer a few questions and get fact sheets, applications, and websites for the programs that fit your situation at www.aarp.org/quicklink.

Eldercare Locator

Connects older Americans and their caregivers with sources of information on senior services. Call 1-800-677-1116 or log on to www.eldercare.gov.

Senior Information Hotline

For additional information about other programs and resources for older adults, call the Ohio Department of Aging toll-free at 1-800-266-4346 or log on to www.goldenbuckeye.com.

Legal Help

If you need a lawyer but have limited resources, you can call the Pro Seniors Legal Hotline toll-free at 1-800-488-6070 or 513-345-4160 in the Cincinnati area or log on to www.proseniors.org/legal_services.html.

The AARP Foundation is AARP's affiliated charity. Foundation programs provide security, protection and empowerment for older persons in need. Low-income older workers receive the job training and placement they need to re-join the workforce. Free tax preparation is provided for low- and moderate-income individuals, with special attention to those 60 and older. The Foundation's litigation staff protects the legal rights of older Americans in critical health, long-term care, consumer and employment situations. Additional programs provide information, education and services to ensure that people over 50 lead lives of independence, dignity and purpose. Foundation programs are funded by grants, tax-deductible contributions and AARP.



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