

Financial Assistance for People with Developmental Disabilities

Is Financial Help Available for People with Developmental Disabilities?

Supports to people with developmental disabilities come in a variety of forms, few of which are mandated. It is important to explore a number of options for supports, knowing that any one source is not likely to be comprehensive. This handout explores options for direct financial help as well as funding for services.

What Types of Ongoing Cash Assistance are Available?

Social Security provides a monthly cash stipend, called **Supplemental Security Income** to qualifying individuals. **Adults** (aged 18 and over) whose disability prevents them from earning “Substantial Gainful Activity” monthly. This is equivalent to \$1,180 monthly in 2018. Any income and assets for the person with a disability are considered. Assets cannot be more than \$2,000 in total, unless held in a Special Needs Trust or ABLE Account. If you think you may be eligible, call Social Security (1-800-772-1213) to set up an appointment and get started with this process.

If the child with a disability is under 18 years of age, the income and assets of the whole family are considered. See this chart to see if your family’s income limits are below the eligibility threshold.

<https://www.ssa.gov/ssi/text-child-ussi.htm> If so, apply for **Supplemental Security Income for the child with a disability** by calling Social Security (1-800-772-1213) to set up an appointment and get started with this process.

Programs like **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program** (SNAP, commonly called food stamps), **energy assistance**, and other programs that provide direct or flexible funding may be available to you. If the entire family is struggling financially, apply at any time for children. The person with a disability can also apply for programs like SNAP once they are 18, even if they are still living at home. See what you may be eligible to receive here- <https://www.benefitscheckup.org/>. You can apply for benefits in Virginia at the Common Help website- <https://commonhelp.virginia.gov/>

Is there One Time Money?

There are a few options for one time or intermittent funding. If the person with a disability is on the waiting list for a Medicaid Waiver, they can apply annually for the **Individual and Family Supports Program** that provides up to \$1,000 per fiscal year in flexible funding to meet disability-related needs like respite, specialized camps, and medical equipment. Funds will be provided to you or the provider of services, and you submit receipts to show you received and paid for the services. Visit <http://dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services/ifsp> and select “Individual and Family Supports Program” for the application and deadlines.

The Autism Society of Northern Virginia gives out **mini-grants** twice a year for individuals on the autism spectrum. These grants reimburse families for a portion of funds (up to \$1,000 per year) spent on autism related services. The program opens in May and November. Visit <http://asnva.org/> for more. In recent years, **The Arc of Northern Virginia** has been able to offer **LEAP Grants** to fund one time needs for students transitioning out of school. Visit www.thearcofnova.org to sign up for our e-newsletter with notifications for when this program opens again in 2019.

The **Down Syndrome Association of Northern Virginia** offers **scholarships and camperships** once per year to individuals with Down syndrome. Visit <http://www.dsanv.org/> and sign up for their newsletters and notification about this program.

Is there Help for Medical Expenses?

Medicaid is public health insurance for people with disabilities and people in poverty. If the person with a disability is under 18 year old, the entire household must be living below the poverty level to apply. If the person with a disability is over 18, they can apply as an individual adult, even if they are still living at home. This process is easier if the person is already receiving Social Security benefits. You can apply for Medicaid at <https://commonhelp.virginia.gov/>

If you have a Medicaid Waiver (see below for more details) and are between the ages of 3-21, you're automatically enrolled in a program called **Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT)** that can offer supplemental Medicaid funding for assistive technology, nursing, and other needs. <http://www.dmas.virginia.gov/#/maternalepsdt>

For children under age 19 who have Medicaid and private insurance, the **HIPP Program** may help parents pay for their insurance premiums to keep the child with a disability enrolled in private insurance. For more information, visit <http://www.dmas.virginia.gov/#/hipp> There is also an adult version of HIPP that you can read about here: <http://www.dmas.virginia.gov/files/links/966/AmIEligible.pdf>

If the person with a disability is under six years old, **Early Intervention** (services for ages 0-3) and **Child FIND** (for children 3-6 years old) may be of help. These programs fund prescribed therapies, interventions, and possible preschool for children with disabilities. This is available to all families by contacting your local Community Services Board.

The Eric Fund is a foundation that supports families with the cost of assistive technology devices. <http://www.ericfund.org/>

The Shannon Foundation is a non-profit that helps low income families cover the cost of medical expenses. <http://www.theshannonfoundation.com/>

What Help is there with Respite and Care Needs?

Virginia utilize a system called **Medicaid Waivers** to fund care needs, like on the job supports, in-home services, respite, and residential supports. There is a waiting list for our three more robust Developmental Disabilities Waivers that is based upon urgency of need. To learn more about these Waivers, visit <https://thearcofnova.org/programs/waivers/all-about-waivers/> If you have medical needs in addition to a developmental disability, explore the Commonwealth Coordinated Care (CCC) Plus Waiver. <https://thearcofnova.org/programs/waivers/ccc-plus-waiver/>

In recent years, our state vocational rehab agency, the **Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services** has been awarded a federal grant to offer up to \$400 per year for **respite care**. To learn about this program, visit <https://www.vda.virginia.gov/vcc.htm>

County Community Services Boards can assist you with crisis or emergency related respite needs.

Is There Help for Crises?

If a student is in public schools and experiencing crises (e.g., behavioral needs, arrests, psychiatric issues) that are making it challenging to keep them at home and school safely, talk to your school social worker about the **Comprehensive Services Act (CSA)**. This program allows funding to be used for services like a case manager, in-home services, respite, and more. <http://www.csa.virginia.gov/>

Virginia has a **mobile crisis team and a crisis respite home** (for adults only) in Northern Virginia, called **REACH**. If someone with a disability is in crisis or a behavioral or mental health crisis is likely in the future, contact reach to identify yourself and ask about their services. <http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services/Crisis-services>

Is Housing Available?

Waiting lists for public housing and general Housing Choice vouchers are closed, but as of 2018, adults with disabilities interested in moving out of the family home can work with their Developmental Disabilities Waiver Support Coordinator (must have a Waiver or be on the waiting list) to learn about the **State Rental Assistance Program**.

A number of housing options work in partnership with the **Medicaid Waivers** (see above). Work with your Support Coordinator to explore options for housing that works with your Waiver.

Is There Help with Living Expenses?

Comcast offers an **Internet Essentials** package for \$9.95 per month for families who are low income. They also have a **low cost laptop** (\$150) option for low income families. <https://www.internetessentials.com/>

Northern Virginia's Housing and Support Services team maintains a website database with options for housing-related subsidies and living expense supports, including one time rent assistance, food assistance, and energy assistance. <http://www.novahss.org/housing-resources/searching-for-housing>

You can view our Transition POINTS Guides, filled with resources across the lifespan at <https://thearcofnova.org/programs/transition/>