

Tool 2:

Savings and benefits: Understanding asset limits

If you are receiving public benefits (such as cash assistance (TANF), food stamps (SNAP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, etc.), you may want to complete this tool to know how your savings might affect your benefits.

Assets are things you own that have value. Your money in a savings or checking account is an asset. A car, home, business inventory, and land are examples of assets, too.



Asset limits and savings

Even if you receive public benefits, you can generally have some savings. Savings are important for building your financial stability.

Assets help you build financial security for you and your family. **But if you receive public benefits, some of your assets may affect the benefits you receive.** In general, your liquid assets – like cash or money in savings or checking account – are counted. You may still be eligible to receive benefits even if you own a home or a car. In some states, if the value of your car exceeds a certain amount, the amount over that value may be counted. Whether an asset counts against the limit depends on the program and the state. It is important to note that some benefits are federal, and some benefits come from the state. Be sure you find out the rules that apply to the benefits you get in your own state.

If you save money from the Earned Income Tax Credit or any other portion of your tax refund, this savings is generally not counted against your limit for up to 12 months.

Please note that rules regarding benefits change regularly, so check the rules annually to ensure accuracy.

Benefits and asset limits list

| Benefit | Asset limits as of October 2016 | How to get more information |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I get SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program | <p>While the states have discretion, the Federal Asset Limits for SNAP benefits are up to \$2,250 in countable resources (bank account) or \$3,250 if one household member is over 60 or disabled.¹⁷</p> <p>States using broad-based categorical eligibility have no asset limits.¹⁸ This means that if an individual qualifies for TANF, SSI, or General Assistance, he automatically qualifies for SNAP.</p> <p>In 22 states and the District of Columbia, there are no asset limit tests for SNAP. In an additional 12 states, households with seniors or people with disabilities who have gross income under 200 percent of poverty do not face an asset limit.¹⁹</p> | <p>To get information about SNAP benefits in your state, call your state hotline number. You can find the hotline number by visiting http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/state-informationhotline-numbers.</p> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I get TANF: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families | <p>\$1,000 to \$3,000 in most states</p> <p>Nevada's limit is \$6,000.²⁰ Alabama, Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Ohio, and Virginia have no asset limits.²¹</p> | <p>To find out more about your state or tribal TANF program, visit http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/help.</p> |

¹⁷ Certain resources are NOT counted, such as a home and lot, the resources of people who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), the resources of people who receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and most retirement (pension) plans. The procedures for handling vehicles are determined at the state level. See United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligibility>.

¹⁸ States have the option to enroll people using broad-based categorical eligibility. This effectively eliminates the asset test specifically for SNAP because people are enrolled based on their enrollment in other programs. See <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R42054.pdf>. See also United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/snap/BBCE.pdf>.

¹⁹ "Broad Based Categorical Eligibility in the SNAP Memo as of Nov. 2012 (updated April 2015)." <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/snap/BBCE.pdf>.

²⁰ Nevada increased its limit to \$6,000 in 2014. https://dwss.nv.gov/TANF/TANF_FAQ-Eligibility_Criteria-R/S.

²¹ *Urban Institute Welfare Rules Databook*, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, ACF, HHS, OPRE Report 2014-52, September 2014, pages 74 and 166. See <http://wrd.urban.org>. Additionally, since the most current version of the HHS publication was released, Illinois also eliminated asset limits on TANF, <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=69797>, Section H.

| Benefit | Asset limits as of October 2016 | How to get more information |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I get SSI: Supplemental Security Income | \$2,000 if single \$3,000 if married Individuals with significant disabilities with an age of onset of disability before age 26 are now able to save up to \$14,000 annually into a tax advantaged ABLE account without loss of benefits. | To find out more about SSI or to apply for benefits, visit https://www.ssa.gov/agency/contact to get the contact information for your local Social Security Administration Office. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I get SSDI: Social Security Disability Insurance | No asset limits | To find out more about SSDI or to apply for benefits, visit https://www.ssa.gov/agency/contact . |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I get: Public Housing | Generally, only the income from assets is used in determining eligibility. | To find out more about public housing options and eligibility, contact your local housing office at http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states . |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I get LIHEAP: Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program | Some states and tribal governments use categorical eligibility for LIHEAP. This means if someone in the household receives TANF, SSI, or SNAP, they are eligible for LIHEAP benefits. While most states do not have asset limits, where they exist they range from \$2,000 to \$5,000. | To find out about your state or tribal LIHEAP program, visit https://liheapch.acf.hhs.gov . |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I get: Family Medicaid²² | No asset limit test due to Affordable Care Act Regulations that took effect in 2014 | To find out more about your state's Medicaid program, visit https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/by-state/by-state.html . |

²² See <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/03/23/2012-6560/medicaid-program-eligibility-changes-under-the-affordable-care-act-of-2010#h-28>.

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|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I get SCHIP or CHIP: State Child Health Insurance Program | <p>No asset limit test in most states; contact state administrator for details</p> | <p>To find out more about your state's CHIP program, visit https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/by-state/by-state.html.</p> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I get: Medicare Part D Extra Help (also known as Low-Income Subsidy) | <p>Your combined savings, investments, and other countable assets cannot be more than:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ \$27,250, if you are married and living with your spouse ▪ \$13,640 if you are not currently married or not living with your spouse²³ <p>Countable assets exclude home, vehicles, personal possessions, life insurance, burial plots, irrevocable burial contracts, and back payments from Social Security or SSI.</p> | <p>For information about eligibility, contact your State Health Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (SHIP). The SHIP offers free help with your Medicare questions. To find your state SHIP program, visit https://www.shiptacenter.org.</p> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I get: Medicare Savings Programs | <p>Your combined savings, investments, and other countable assets cannot be more than:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ \$10,930, if you are married and living with your spouse ▪ \$7,280 if you are not currently married or not living with your spouse <p>Countable assets exclude your home, one vehicle, burial plot, up to \$1,500 for burial expenses if you have put that money aside, furniture, and other household and personal items.²⁴ Some states have higher or no asset limits.</p> | <p>For information about eligibility, contact your State Health Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (SHIP). The SHIP offers free help with your Medicare questions. To find your state SHIP program, visit https://www.shiptacenter.org.</p> |

²³ See “Understanding the Extra Help with Your Medicare Prescription Drug Plan” from the Social Security Administration at <https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10508.pdf>.

²⁴ See <https://www.medicare.gov/your-medicare-costs/help-paying-costs/medicare-savings-program/medicare-savings-programs.html#collapse-2624>.