

Accessing Texas Health and Human Services Commission Programs

Do you need help with health care coverage, food, cash, or other urgent needs?

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission helps connect low-income Texans with important services.

[Picture: Health and Human Services Commission local office with people waiting and SNAP poster on the door]

SNAP food benefits, which used to be called food stamps, help people buy the food they need for good health.

To apply for benefits go to: <http://yourtexasbenefits.hhsc.state.tx.us/programs/snap/>

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program provides cash to pay for basic living needs.

To apply for benefits go to: <http://yourtexasbenefits.hhsc.state.tx.us/programs/tanf/>

[Picture: woman applying for benefits with case worker helping]

There's also help available for people who are survivors of disasters or of family violence.

In addition, help filling out your income tax may be available if you are age 60 or over or have a low income.

To apply for benefits go to: <http://yourtexasbenefits.hhsc.state.tx.us/programs/other/>

[Picture: HHSC local office waiting room]

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission provides health care coverage for low-income Texans through managed care.

You receive coverage through a health plan, also called a Managed Care Organization. Each plan comes with a network of providers—specialists, therapists, clinics, pharmacies, and hospitals.

You might want to compare what's called value-added services. For example, some plans might provide access to a 24-hour nurse line.

You also decide your main doctor for your basic care.

You can pick the health plan that best meets your needs.

Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program cover services that help keep kids healthy. This may include: doctor's visits, vaccines, medicine, lab tests and x-rays, hospital care, glasses, dental care, and rides to the doctor.

STAR Health is a special program for foster care youth and youth transitioning out of foster care whose changing circumstances make continuity of care a challenge.

Medicaid for low-income pregnant women and CHIP prenatal coverage includes services like doctor's visits, medicines, labor and delivery.

The Texas Women's Health Program offers services including screenings and education for family planning, treatment of certain Sexually Transmitted Diseases, and birth control except emergency contraception.

There's also a special Medicaid program for women who have breast or cervical cancer.

STAR+PLUS - Medicaid for persons 65 and older and persons with disabilities covers services including doctor's visits, hospital care, pharmacy, vision and hearing care, and dental care.

The program includes long-term services and supports.

[Onscreen text: Paula Margeson, member, Housing and Health Services Coordination Council]

PAULA: You know, in the Independent Living Movement we really feel like almost nobody should be institutionalized. We feel like community-based services are the best kind of services – where people get to stay in their communities and get the support and the care and the help that they need.

It's always our preference in our movement to see people live out in society.

[Onscreen text: Craig, participant, Money Follows the Person]

CRAIG: They provided a full larder and a full refrigerator – orange juice, onions, garlic, cabbage, milk, crackers, cereal. It was enough food to get me through five weeks, almost.

They're continually assessing... they're bringing a chair. This one rocks and reclines so I keep my foot up. And this chair cuts the circulation off on my heels because it's made of plywood and it just isn't big enough.

They've done a lot of reaching out to me. And not a lot of me trying to figure out how to get out of this agency what I need. So I've got a bunch of angels on my side.

Texas will include mental health rehabilitation and mental health case management services in Medicaid managed care.

The Community First Choice Program will be for persons eligible for an institutional Level of Care. The program offers home and community-based attendant services and supports, skills development and training, and emergency response.

STAR Kids is designed for children and youth age 20 and younger. It will include greater coordination of services for each individual.

The Medical Transportation Program arranges for non-emergency rides for people who have no other way to get to their Medicaid health care visits. The program reimburses someone who uses a personal care to drive a Medicaid member to and from a health visit.

To connect with Medical Transportation and other state and local health and human services, go to the 2-1-1 “Help in Texas” website: www.211texas.org/211/ or you can also call 2-1-1.

The best way to apply for benefits is through the “Your Texas Benefits” website: www.yourtexasbenefits.com.

This makes things quicker, easier, and allows you to view and manage your account online without having to go into the office.

[Video: People in a local Health and Human Services Commission office receiving assistance with managing their benefits.

If you need to visit an office, you can locate one nearby. First, go to the www.yourtexasbenefits.com website. Then click on “Find an Office” at the top of the page.

If you don’t have a computer or you don’t feel confident using one, you can go to a local Health and Human Services Commission office where they can help you sign up for benefits and manage your benefits online.

There are also more than 400 community partners throughout Texas - such as food banks and health clinics - where people are trained to help you apply for benefits online.