Public Benefits for Families of People Detained by ICE

Families already receiving public benefits

Families that already get benefits should report any changes in household income and in who lives in the home. There are two reasons to report:

1. <u>The rules for most public benefits say you must report changes</u>

   Depending on the type of benefits you get, you have to repot changes to:
   - Oregon Dept of Human Services Self-Sufficiency offices - find your local office here
   - Social Security Administration – find your local office here
   - Housing Authority - find your local housing authority here

2. <u>You might get more benefits</u>

   If your household income has gone down, your benefit amount could go up.
   - *For example, if you have Section 8 for your two children, and your household's monthly income decreases from $2400 to $800, your rent could go from $1100 to $720.*

   If your household income has gone down, you might qualify for additional benefits.
   - *For example, if your children get OHP healthcare but you don't, and your household income has gone from $3000 a month to $1600 a month, you may also be able to get OHP.*

   If you have taken in friends or relatives, you could get more benefits.
   - *For example, if you used to get $153 in SNAP food benefits every month when you had only one child living with you, you might get $253 every month if you take in two more children to live with you.*

You should report as soon as possible. Even if you don't know how the situation will work out or what you will do next. You should report even temporary changes. Reporting right away means:

1. <u>You can start getting help as soon as possible.</u>
   Some benefits like help with daycare or housing have waiting lists. Others like rent assistance or SSI take a long time to process. Starting as soon as possible is very important.

2. You make sure you don't miss any deadlines to report.
   Some benefits like SNAP or SSI can have very short deadlines to report, as little as 10 days.

3. You may be able to keep receiving the benefits even after your situation changes again.
   If you are able to qualify for certain benefits such as help with rent or medical insurance, you may be able to keep receiving those benefits even if your family member is released and your income increases.

Families not receiving public benefits

If your family has less income because a family member was detained by ICE, or if you have more people in your household because you took in a child (or children) whose parent was detained by ICE, you may qualify for various types of benefits to help keep food on the table and make ends meet.

Some common public benefits:

OHP – Oregon Health Plan is free health insurance that provides medical, mental health, and dental care at no cost. https://www.oregon.gov/oha/hsd/ohp/pages/index.aspx

SNAP – supplement food benefits, money on an Oregon Trail card that can only be spent on groceries. https://www.oregon.gov/odhs/food/pages/snap.aspx

WIC – supplemental food for people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, and for children age 5 and under. https://www.oregon.gov/oha/ph/healthypeoplefamilies/wic/pages/index.aspx

TANF – Temporary monthly cash benefits for families with children who have no or very low income. https://www.oregon.gov/odhs/cash/pages/tanf.aspx

OHP HRSN rent assistance: For people enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan, up to 6 months of rent if you need help paying rent in order to avoid becoming homeless. https://www.oregon.gov/oha/hsd/ohp/pages/housing.aspx

ERDC – Employment Related Day Care: This program provides money to pay for childcare for people who are low income. There may be a wait list for this program. https://www.oregon.gov/delc/programs/pages/erdc.aspx

Housing – various types of public housing programs including Section 8 vouchers, project-based Section 8 buildings, and county and locally-funded buildings, and USDA housing. They typically all have waitlists.

How to Apply:

You can apply for most public benefits by calling your local Oregon Department of Human Services office (find your local office here), or applying online using the state ONE system here.

To apply for OHP Rent Assistance, contact the Coordinated Care Organization (CCO) you or your family members are assigned to, or call the OHP Client Services line at 1-800-273-0557 to apply or to find out which CCO you need to talk to.

You can get help applying for benefits from the agency (including help in a language other than English) and you can get help applying for benefits a community partner – a trusted organization in your community who helps people sign up for benefits. You can find community organizations who might be able to help you here https://healthcare.oregon.gov/Pages/find-help.aspx or by calling 211.

Is applying for benefits safe?

Sometimes people worry about applying for public benefits because they don't want to share their information with the government or they think getting benefits might hurt their immigration case.

Some questions to think about:

- Does Immigration already have my address because I have a pending case?
- Is my address easy to find? Do I have a driver license, car insurance, electric bill, bank account,

Immigrants are eligible for benefits

Many immigrants and their family members are eligible for some public benefits. Even if some family/household members are not eligible, other eligible members of the family/household can get public benefits.

Applying for benefits for children with legal status

Family members or caretakers who do not want to get benefits for themselves can apply for their children or the children who are living with them. A person who is applying for public benefits for their children or children living with them do NOT have to give information about their own SSN or immigration status to the agency. They only have to give that information about the children for whom they are applying for benefits.

Applying for benefits without using your home address.

You can apply for benefits if you do not have a physical address. If you are unhoused or living in a vehicle or couchsurfing, you can use only a mailing address.

For some public benefits, like the Oregon Health Plan, people are allowed to apply for public benefits using the address of an "authorized representative" instead of your home address. In order to do this, you must fill out an agency form appointing the person who you want to be the "authorized representative" for public benefits.

To appoint an "authorized representative" who can sign you up for OHP benefits, fill out the form https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/me0231.pdf.

Choose an "authorized representative" who you trust, as all the mail about your benefits will go to their address. Your authorized representative will have access to your personal information and will need to make sure you get all the mail the public benefits agencies send to you in time for you to respond.

Benefits can be helpful for immigration cases!

Remember that receiving public benefits can help your immigration case. For example, you can sometimes qualify for a fee waiver for immigration filing fees if you receive certain benefits like SNAP or OHP. Receiving public benefits can also help show hardship as part of humanitarian cases like U Visas or T Visas. And getting benefits like WIC or SNAP can help build a record of continuous presence needed for things like TPS, DACA, or Cancellation of Removal. Plus, having a stable address is critical for receiving important mail.

Public Charge Concerns:

In November, 2025, the Trump administration proposed to change the current public charge rule but didn't explain what will replace it. This makes it hard to know how officials will consider public benefits when they review a green card application in the future.

For now, the old public charge rule put in place by the Biden administration is still in place. This means that food (like SNAP and WIC), housing, and most healthcare benefits, including Oregon Health Plan and Healthier Oregon Program benefits, are not considered in a public charge test, and benefits received by your family members or people living with you don't count in your public charge test (if it applies to you at all).

One thing to consider is that if you are currently receiving public benefits, stopping them now won't likely affect your public charge determination.