

Indiana Family and Social Services Administration [Skip Repetitive Navigation links](#)

## Bureau of Aging and In-Home Services (BAIHS) - Relatives as Parents:

### Answers to Basic Concerns

#### Financial Assistance

##### What is available?

In Indiana there are several programs that offer financial assistance to needy families and children, such as **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**, **Food Stamps**, **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**, **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)** and more. **Contact your local Office of Family Resources to determine what programs you may qualify for.**

##### Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)?

This program, which used to be known as AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) or welfare, provides monthly assistance to families with children under the age of eighteen who do not have financial support from one or both parents due to death, absence from the home, unemployment, or mental/physical incapacity.

It is also possible to receive assistance for a child or children only. Benefits are accessed with a Hoosier Works card. The card replaces paper checks and works much like a bank debit card. The whole family may qualify for assistance

##### What is a child-only grant?

A child-only grant means that you receive cash assistance for a child which is not your natural son or daughter. The grant you receive each month is based on the number of children that you take care of and does not include the number of adults in the family. Because the grant you receive is only meant for the care of the child, it is usually less than the cash value of the grant that you would receive if the whole family was receiving TANF benefits.

In order to be eligible for a child-only grant, the child must be living with an ineligible parent or a specified relative

If you have questions about eligibility, contact your local Bureau of Family Resources. You can find the location of your local office by looking in the Government section of the phone book or [www.in.gov/fssa](http://www.in.gov/fssa). A case manager can talk with you about your situation and tell you if you are eligible for TANF.

##### Are there limits with TANF?

Yes, there are limits on the amount of benefits that you can receive from TANF. These limits depend on whether your whole family is using TANF or if you have a child-only grant

##### Contact Information

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families** 1-800-622-4932

**Food Stamps** 1-800-622-4932

##### Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Social Security 1-800-772-1213  
Area Agency on Aging 1-800-986-3505

##### Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

(For Questions) 1-800-829-1040  
(For Forms) 1-800-829-3676  
Indiana State Department of Revenue (State) 1-317-232-2240

##### AARP (Grandparent Information Center)

(To Request EITC Tax Package for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren) 1-202-434-2296

##### I want a child-only grant.

- | There are no time limits for child-only grants.
- | You can receive child-only assistance until the child turns 18.
- | There are no work requirements for the adults that care for the child.

##### I am not the child's legal guardian. Does that matter?

No. You can still apply for TANF even if you are not the child's legal guardian and do not have legal custody. If you are applying for a child-only grant, you must be a "specified relative." This means that you need to be related to the child and responsible for his/her care.

##### Who is eligible?

In order to receive TANF, you must meet the eligibility requirements. These requirements are based on the number of eligible family members and total income of the parent(s) or caretaker. This requirement is also used to determine how much assistance you will receive each month.

There are some other requirements depending on whether you want TANF for your whole family or a child-only grant:

- | In order for the family to receive TANF, when you apply, the family cannot have assets that are worth more than \$1,000. Your house is not counted as an asset.

##### How do I apply?

only grant.

### I want my whole family to get TANF.

- | For adults, you can only receive 24 months of assistance at a time. However, after the adults in the family no longer receive TANF, the children in the family can still receive TANF.
- | The adults in the family must participate in the IMPACT (Indiana Manpower Placement and Comprehensive Training) program while they are receiving TANF. IMPACT helps people become able to take care of themselves financially by helping with education, training, job searching, and job placement. This means that, in Indiana, you must be employed or looking for work in order to receive TANF.
- | You should keep in mind that not all adults are required to participate in the IMPACT program. To find out if you are exempt, contact your local Bureau of Family Resources. A case manager can talk with you about your situation and tell you if you are exempt from IMPACT.

In order to apply for TANF, you will need to call your local Division of Family Resources and complete an application. When you call, be sure to tell them whether you want TANF for your whole family or a child-only grant. They will schedule an appointment with you and tell you what you need to bring.

### What information do I need in order to apply?

There are several pieces of information that you will need when applying for TANF:

- | Proof of the family or the child's income. This includes income that comes from jobs, child support payments and social security. Proof of income includes tax return forms or pay-stubs.
- | Social security card or number for everyone applying for TANF.
- | Proof that the child is living with you.
- | Proof that you are a resident of Indiana.
- | Proof that you are related to the child. This can be done with birth certificates or other legal documents.
- | Proof of the child's citizenship. If the child is not a United States citizen, you will need some proof of the child's immigration status.

### How do I apply?

In order to apply for food stamps go to your local Division of Family Resources. The case manager at the office will help you complete the application.

### I am not the child's legal guardian. Does that matter?

No. As long as your family meets the eligibility requirements, you can get food stamps. However, the WHOLE family must apply for food stamps. You cannot apply just for the child.

### What information do I need in order to apply?

- | Proof of income for ALL family members. This includes income that comes from jobs, child support payments and social security. Proof of income includes tax return forms or pay stubs.
- | Social security card or number for everyone in the household.
- | Proof of residency. This includes utility bills that show your current address.

### Food Stamps

The Food Stamp program assists eligible low-income individuals in obtaining a more nutritious diet by increasing food purchasing power through the Hoosier Works Card. Benefits are accessed with this card, much like a bank debit card. The Hoosier Works Card replaces paper food stamp coupons. Your income and household size will determine the cash value you will receive each month.

### Who is eligible?

In order to receive food stamps, you must:

- | Be a resident of Indiana
- | Be a U.S. citizen or legal immigrant
- | Participate in the IMPACT program
- | Meet asset and income requirements.

If you have questions about eligibility, contact your local Division of Family Resources. You can find the location of your local office by looking in the Government section of the phone book or [www.in.gov/fssa](http://www.in.gov/fssa). A case manager can talk with you about your situation and tell you if you are eligible for food stamps.

### Children

In order to receive SSI a child must

- | Be under the age of 18;
- | Blind; or
- | Disabled; and have
- | Limited income and resources

The physical or mental disability must result in marked and severe functional limitations. The disability must also be severe enough that it is expected to result in death or last for a continuous period of at least

**Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**

The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program pays a monthly benefit to people with limited income and resources who are disabled, blind, or age 65 or older. Blind or disabled child, as well as adults, can get SSI.

**Who is eligible?**

Anyone who is:

- | Aged (age 65 or older);
- | Blind; or
- | Disabled

And who

- | Has limited income and resources; and
- | Meets other requirements that include US citizenship or certain categories of non-citizens.

The physical or mental disability must be severe enough that you cannot perform substantial gainful activity. The disability must also be severe enough that it is expected to last for at least a continuous period of 12 months.

**I am not the child's legal guardian. Does that matter?**

No. You can apply for SSI for a child without having legal custody or guardianship. If you are caring for the child your income and resources are not counted. Only the child's income and resources are counted.

**REMEMBER!!** The child cannot receive both TANF and SSI. You must pick one. The SSI benefits tend to bring more money, but, you and the child will lose Medicaid coverage

**Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)**

The Earned Income Tax Credit program is set up through the federal government and the state of Indiana to help low-income people who are responsible for children. The program helps by reducing the amount of state and federal taxes that you owe and/or giving you money back after taxes.

**Federal EITC****Who is eligible?**

Indiana residents who receive the federal earned income tax credit are eligible for the Indiana earned income credit.

**How do I apply?**

Complete Indiana Schedule EITC and attach it to your state tax return, Form IT-40 or Form IT-40PNR. The credit may also be claimed on the short Form IT-40EZ. You can get these forms from your local Department of Revenue. You can also get the forms at [www.in.gov/dor/taxforms/](http://www.in.gov/dor/taxforms/).

is expected to result in death or last for a continuous period of at least 12 months.

If you have questions about eligibility, contact your local Social Security Administration (SSA) Office. You can find the location of your local office by looking in the Government section of the phone book or by calling SSA's toll-free line at 1-800-772-1213. Contact information is also available at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov), SSA's official Internet site. A Social Security representative can tell you if you or the child is eligible for SSI.

**How do I apply?**

To apply for SSI contact the Social Security Administration Office at 1-800-772-1213 or visit the local office. A representative will talk with you about your situation and assist in completion of the application. Internet filing is available at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).

**What information do I need in order to apply?**

- | Proof of the child's citizenship. If the child is not a United States citizen, you will need some proof of the child's immigration status.
- | Proof of blindness or disability.
- | Proof that you are caring for the child.
- | Information about doctors, hospitals and clinics that have treated the child.
- | Social security card or number for the child.
- | Proof of the child's age. This is usually the child's birth certificate.

**Adoption****What kinds of adoption assistance are available for children with special needs?**

For people who are interested in adopting children with physical or emotional problems, three programs provide financial assistance. They are the **Indiana Adoption Subsidy Program (IASP)**, the **Nonrecurring Adoption Expense Program (NRAE)** and the **County Adoption Subsidy Program (CAS)**. These programs are available in different combinations.

**Indiana Adoption Assistance Program**

This program provides monthly payments and reimbursement for medical costs and other costs for people who adopt children with special needs. This program is not based on the adoptive parents' financial condition. To get more information about this program, contact your local Bureau of Family Resources.

You can find the location in the Government section of the phone book or by checking the website:

<http://www.in.gov/fssa/children/dfc/directory/index.html>.

If you need additional assistance, the telephone number for adoption and foster care information is 1-800-468-4228.

**Nonrecurring Adoption Expenses**

This program permits reimbursement for one-time expenses paid by adopting parents in connection with the adoption of a special needs child.

**County Adoption Subsidy**

This program may include monthly payments for support of a "hard to place" child, as defined by Indiana law, or a subsidy for health care expenses related to the child's medical, physical, mental, or emotional

**Child Custody****What do relative caregivers need to know about de facto custodians?**

In 1999, Indiana passed House Bill 1445. This bill affects child custody cases when a de facto custodian has cared for a child. A de facto custodian is a person who has physically, emotionally and financially cared for a child for a specific period of time. If the child is younger than 3 years of age, the person must have cared for the child for at least six months. If the child is 3 years of age or older, the person must have cared for the child for at least one year.

expenses related to the child's medical, physical, mental, or emotional condition. The child could be eligible for both, depending upon the order of the court. The definition of a "hard to place" child is broader than the definition of a child with special needs. To get more information about this program contact your local Division of Family Resources. You can find the local office by looking in the Government section of the phone book.

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**What role does the defacto custodian play in the custody cases?**

If the court finds evidence during a custody case that someone is the de facto custodian of the child, the court will allow the de facto custodian to be part of the custody hearings. The court will also award legal custody to the de facto custodian if it is in the best interest of the child.

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