

SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Security Benefits designated for a child are used for the child's expenses. If the child is living apart from parents, the payee receiving the monthly Social Security check may be the caregiver. The payee does not have to be a legal guardian, but must be able to show responsibility for the care of the child. There are different programs to benefit children:

- SSI Program gives benefits to children who are disabled
- If a parent receives Social Security Disability, the child of that parent may apply for benefits even if the child is not living with the parent. Back benefits may be paid.
- Survivors Program gives benefits to children when a parent has died
- Dependent benefits may be available to children whose parents receive social security
- If a parent receives Social Security Supplemental Income, the children will receive TANF only if they live with the parent.
- Social Security Disability and Old Age Benefits of the caregiver, may qualify grandchildren and step-grandchildren for benefits if the parent was disabled or deceased at the time that the grandparent became eligible for benefits.
- Step-children may receive benefits of the step-parent as long as the step-parent was married to the child's natural or adoptive parent for at least one year prior to applying for benefits.

For more information or to set up an appointment in Albuquerque:

- **(800) 772-1213** at 4300 Cutler NE

Documents to bring:

- Child's social security number
- Proof of identification
- Proof that child is living apart from parents

VETERANS BENEFITS

If either a parent or a guardian is a veteran receiving veteran's benefits, there may be benefits available for the veteran's child. To check if your child qualifies:

- (505) **248-6740** Go on-line to www.va.gov

ADVOCACY INC. NM Guardianship Project

Legal services and information for support services for New Mexico families. Guardianship & Adoption of Children.

- (505) **266-3166**
- www.nmadvocacy.org

ADVOCACY INC. ...Promoting the interests of at-risk children and youth by providing legal advocacy and other supportive services.

Funded by individual and corporate contributions and grants from:

- United Way of Central New Mexico
- Albuquerque Community Foundation
- Center for Civic Values
- McCune Foundation
- New Mexico Civil Legal Services Commission
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Albuquerque Area

FINANCIAL SUPPORT for Families

These are services and benefits that might provide you with financial support.

HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT Income Support Division

MEDICAID, FOOD STAMPS and TANF are handled through the Income Support Division (ISD) of the Human Services Department (HSD.)

If you are a legal guardian, court papers granting you guardianship or custody of the child will be sufficient.

If you are not the legal guardian, the ISD may want proof that a child, who is not your biological or adopted child, is in fact living in your household. You can use a letter from someone such as the child's school administrator, a probation officer, a social worker or any one else including a friend or neighbor who comes to your house and knows that the child is living with you. A letter or a Power Of Attorney from the child's parent should also be sufficient.

Be honest with the ISD—benefits could be lost due to misinformation.

If a child leaves your home and is no longer living with you, you must tell your ISD worker immediately.

Applications for **Food Stamps, Medicaid** and **TANF** are made to the Income Support Division (ISD) of the Human Services Department (HSD.)

Application available at these ISD office in Albuquerque:

- (505) **222-9200** 4330 Cutler NE
- (505) **841-7700** 1041 Lambertson Pl NE
- (505) **841-2300** 1401 Old Coors SW
- (505) **383-2600** 1400 Williams SE

Online at <http://www.state.nm.us/hsd/appassist.html>

MEDICAID—Healthcare

A parent/caregiver can apply for Medicaid for a child. The caregiver does not have to be appointed a legal guardian for the child.

There are different types of Medicaid:

- All children who have been living apart from their parents for more than 30 days qualify for Medicaid -Section 32. Section 32 Medicaid provides complete medical and dental insurance for the child until age 19.

Private Insurance

If a parent has private health or dental insurance, the parent can have the child covered on the private insurance policy even if the child is no longer living in the parent's home. The court may order a parent to provide health insurance for a child even if the court has given custody or legal guardianship to another adult.

If a caregiver has private health or dental insurance, the caregiver should find out the insurance company's rules are on adding children to the policy. Health plans vary in their policies regarding adoption, legal guardianship and step parenting.

Financial Benefits for Families...Continued

FOOD STAMPS—Food Subsidies

The Food Stamps a family receives are determined by the family size, household income, rent, utilities, childcare and medical expenses. If a caregiver is already on Food Stamps and another child comes to live in the home, the caregiver should immediately tell the ISD caseworker. Even if the caregiver is not the legal guardian, an extra child will be counted in the household size and may increase the amount of Food Stamps the family receives. For a household that has not previously qualified, the addition of a new child to the home may mean that the family will now qualify for Food Stamps.

TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families)

TANF and other **cash** assistance programs are determined by the size and income of the entire household. If a caregiver is already receiving TANF or other cash assistance and another child comes to live in the home, tell the ISD caseworker immediately. Another child in the home may increase the TANF benefits. If the caregiver is not receiving TANF but would like government cash assistance for the child, the caregiver can apply for TANF. If the caregiver applies for cash assistance for the entire household, the caregiver will be required to participate in the federally mandated work programs. If a child is receiving cash assistance, the state will automatically open a child support case against absent parent(s).

Note: If the parent is receiving TANF for the child and the child moves out of the parent's home, it is important for the parent to report this to the ISD caseworker.

NM DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

WIC (Women, Infant and Children Program)

WIC is given to low-income pregnant women and to children under the age of 5. WIC provides extra food, milk, juice, cheese, etc. If you have a pregnant teenager in your home, you can apply for WIC for the teenager. If you have an infant or toddler in your home, the child may qualify for WIC assistance based on household income.

For Brochure and Eligibility in English and Spanish contact:

- www.health.state.us/phd/wic/index

Public Health Office in Albuquerque

- (505) **841-4173** 1111 Stanford NE

First Choice Communities Health in Albuquerque

- (505) **345-3244** 1231 Candelaria NW
- (505) **768-5450** 1316 Broadway SE
- (505) **873-7451** 2001-N Centro Familiar SW

HOUSING/HUD

Housing subsidies are determined by household size and income. If a caregiver applies for housing, all children living in the home will be counted toward the household size. A child is considered to be part of a household if they live in the household more than 50% of the time. In order to add a child to your Section 8 voucher, you need to provide HUD with the child's birth certificate and social security card. Those who live in the Albuquerque city limits can apply with the county and city programs, but can only be funded by one of these programs.

Bernalillo County Housing Authority in Albuquerque

- (505) **314-0200** 1900 Bridge SW
 - www.bernco.gov/live/departments.asp?dept=2334
- Albuquerque Housing Services (must live in the city limits)
- (505) **764-3900** 1840 University SE
 - www.cabq.gov/housing/

Note: A change in the household size may mean a change in the HUD payment. You must immediately report to HUD anyone who has moved in or out of your household.

CHILD CARE—Children, Youth & Families Department

If the caregiver of a child qualifies, it is possible to receive daycare assistance for the child. Eligibility for subsidized daycare is determined by household size and income. Caregivers receiving TANF may also qualify for subsidized daycare.

Application for subsidized daycare can be made through:

Children Youth and Families Department

- (505) **841-4800** 3401 Pan American Freeway

Documents to bring:

- Income verification of every household member—bring proof of monthly income
- Verification of **all** other income—child support, social security, etc.
- Birth certificate or baptismal certificate of every child in the household
- Social security cards for all household members—adults and children
- Proof of residency—utility bill or Medicaid card
- Class schedule and proof of financial aid for any adult registered in school
- Picture ID required.

CHILD SUPPORT—Child Support Enforcement Division

Parents must financially support their children. Caregivers of children may be able to collect child support from parents and legal guardianship is not a requirement.

- If the child is receiving TANF, the state will automatically start a case with the Child Support Enforcement Division (CSED.)
- If the child is not receiving TANF, the caregiver may apply to CSED for assistance in obtaining support.
- If a parent is employed anywhere in the country—not self-employed, CSED may be able to garnish wages from paychecks.
- If a parent is not making court ordered payments, you can bring the court order to CSED for enforcement.
- If there is no court order, CSED can petition the court for a child support order. A paternity order may also be filed.
- CSED fees will be taken from the child support check at 10% of the support check until the costs are paid. Therefore, if no money is ever collected, there will be no costs to the caregiver.

For more information or to set up an appointment

- **(800) 288-7207** in Albuquerque, 1015 Tijeras NW **or** 1000 18th NW
- <http://childsupport.hsd.state.nm.us>

Note: It is always an option to consult a private attorney to collect child support. If a parent is not working and has no assets, there may not be money to collect.