

TROUBLESHOOTING

What if I do not have internet access, or I do not know how to use a computer?

If you do not have internet access, you can use a computer at a friend's home, library, or community center. You can also use computers at ACCESS Nebraska kiosk locations. For information about kiosk and community partner locations, call the DHHS Helpline at 1-800-254-4202.

If you do not know how to use a computer—or prefer to complete an application by hand—you can request a paper application from DHHS or a Community Partner. After completing the application, you can fax, mail, or submit it to DHHS in person. Some Community Partners can also help you complete the application by computer, and your local DHHS office can assist you if you are unable to complete the application on your own.

What if I do not have a telephone, or I have a cell phone with limited minutes?

If you are not able to use your phone to complete an interview, check your benefits, or get answers to your questions, you can visit a Community Partner or local DHHS office for help accessing those services.

What if a disability or other special circumstance makes it difficult for me to use ACCESS Nebraska?

You can call DHHS at 1-800-254-4202 for help with translation and other needs. You may also request an in person interview by contacting a local office. You can visit http://dhhs.ne.gov/pages/map_cntctlst.aspx to find the DHHS office nearest you.

Elderly or disabled clients have the option of requesting the assistance of a dedicated DHHS caseworker. If your request for a caseworker is denied, please call Nebraska Appleseed at 402-438-8853 to discuss other options that may be available to you.

What if I speak a language other than English?

The application asks for your language preference so DHHS can send materials in the language of your choosing. Additionally, the customer service center can access interpreters by phone at no cost to you. You also have the option of having a friend, family member, or other trusted person with you during your interview and other phone calls.

Who can I contact if I have other problems?

DHHS Helpline: 1-800-254-4202

➤ If you have general or technical questions about using ACCESS Nebraska

The Ombudsman's Office: 1-800-742-7690

➤ If DHHS has not satisfactorily addressed your concerns about a state program or employee

Nebraska Appleseed: 1-800-845-3746

➤ If you want information about your rights within public benefits programs

Frequently Asked Questions about **ACCESS Nebraska**



To contact the Nebraska
Appleseed Intake Line, call:

402-438-8853 ext. 105
(in Lincoln)
1-800-845-3746 ext. 105
(outside of Lincoln)

NEBRASKA APPLESEED

941 "O" St., Suite 920

Lincoln, NE 68508

Phone: (402) 438-8853

Toll Free: (800) 845-3746

Fax: (402) 438-0263

Email: info@neappleseed.org

Website: www.neappleseed.org

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What is ACCESS Nebraska?

ACCESS Nebraska is the online system our state uses to provide public benefits (like food and medical assistance). Through the website (<http://accessnebraska.ne.gov>) you can learn about public benefits, check if you might be eligible, apply for assistance, and report important changes in your life. The ACCESS Nebraska system also includes local Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) offices, Customer Service Centers, and Community Partners.

Local Offices have computer kiosks where you can complete an application, places for you to drop off forms and documents, and staff who can assist clients in need of additional help. You can visit http://dhhs.ne.gov/pages/map_cntctlst.aspx to find the office nearest you.

Customer Service Centers are call centers that employ Social Services Workers who provide information about benefits, respond to client concerns, and process changes.

Community Partners are places in the community where you can apply for benefits, such as libraries, shelters, food banks, and other social service offices. Each site may provide different services. Some have computers that you can use to apply, while others can help directly and answer questions you may have. For more information about Community Partner locations and their services, call 1-800-254-4202 or visit: http://dhhs.ne.gov/children_family_services/AccessNebraska/Pages/Accessnebraska_partnersgrid.aspx

What is different about ACCESS Nebraska?

Before ACCESS Nebraska, a person who wanted to apply for benefits would visit a local DHHS office and be assigned a caseworker. The caseworker would process the application and remain available to answer questions and assist the client while he or she was receiving benefits.

With ACCESS Nebraska, a person can apply for benefits online at home, a community partner location, or a DHHS office. Local DHHS offices remain open, but may have limited office hours and fewer staff. An applicant will temporarily be assigned a caseworker to process their application. After eligibility is determined, people with special circumstances (such as those who are elderly or disabled) may qualify to continue working with their caseworker. But most clients will be asked to contact the customer service center if they need further assistance related to their benefits.

What benefits can I apply for using ACCESS Nebraska?

Some programs you can apply for include: *Medicaid* (medical insurance for people who are elderly or disabled and low-income parents); *Kids Connection* (Medicaid for children); *AABD* (Aid to the Aged, Blind, and Disabled); *SNAP* (formerly known as Food Stamps); *ADC* (cash assistance for low-income families); *Child Care Subsidy* (help with child care costs) and *LIHEAP* (help with heating/cooling expenses). *ACCESS Nebraska will process you only for the benefits you apply for so be sure to apply for all the programs you are interested in.* See below.

How long does it take to apply?

It takes about 40 minutes to apply online, but may take longer if there are a lot of people in your home or you have a lot of needs. However, you do not need to complete the entire application at once. You can save an application and return to it for up to 30 days.

What information will I need when I apply?

Helpful information to have includes:

- Information about everyone in your home (including birth dates and social security numbers, if possible)
- Proof of income for you and other members of your household (such as pay stubs)
- Your current bank account balances
- Rent or mortgage information, including monthly payment amounts and landlord's contact information
- Proof of expenses (medical bills, child care, utilities)
- Vehicle information such as the value of the vehicle and how much you owe on it.

NOTE: Although you may apply with only your name and contact information, giving more information may allow DHHS to process your application more quickly.

What should I know about applying online?

Some helpful hints about applying online are:

- You will create a user ID and password. *Write them down* and keep them in a safe place. You will need this information to get back into your application.
- You have three attempts to log in. If you forget your user information or the computer locks you out, you must start a new application.
- To be considered for any benefits you might be eligible for, be sure you check the boxes of ALL benefit programs. Leaving a box unchecked may mean your application is not processed for that program, even if you meet the eligibility criteria.

- There are no “back” buttons on the application
- You can click the “help” button if you don’t know how to answer a question. This button can also help you move from screen to screen.

What happens after I apply?

DHHS should notify you by phone or mail after your application is received. You will have an interview, and then you will be assigned a caseworker to process your eligibility. You can choose to have your interview over the phone or in person.

How long will it take to get benefits?

Processing times depend on the program(s) you applied for and how quickly you provide information. With the necessary information, it should take no more than 30 days for SNAP or 45 days for Medicaid.

How can I check the status of my benefits?

To check your benefits, call the toll-free Automated Voice Response system 24/7 at 1-800-383-4278. You can also check online using a DHHS-issued PIN number and the user ID and the password you created when you applied.

How do I submit pay stubs and other documents?

You can mail, fax, email, or submit your documents in person at a local DHHS office. Visit http://dhhs.ne.gov/children_family_services/AccessNebraska/ContactUs/Pages/ContactUs.aspx to find the email, fax number or mailing address for the document imaging center in your region.

Things to consider when submitting documents:

- Write your case number or name on both sides of each page you submit to DHHS so they can be processed and attached to your case.
- Because missing documents can affect your benefits, *avoid sending originals by mail and consider keeping a record of the documents you submit.*
- To create your own record of the information you submit, you can take documents to a local DHHS office and request that an employee photocopy the documents, date-stamp both copies, submit one copy for processing, and return one copy to you.