

## **California Lifeline Public Assistance Programs**

**Medicaid / Medi-Cal:** Medicaid is a joint federal and state program that provides health insurance coverage to low-income children, seniors and people with disabilities. Each state runs its own program. There are core rules that apply at the federal level and then eligibility rules that are established by each state. California's Medicaid program is called Medi-Cal. For more information on eligibility or to apply, please visit the state website: <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/mcs/medi-calhome/>.

**Food Stamps:** The Food Stamp Program is a federal nutrition assistance program designed to enable low-income families to buy nutritious food with Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards. Food stamp recipients are able to spend their benefits in authorized retail food stores. For more information on program eligibility or to find a local food stamp office to apply, please visit the national website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/>.

**Supplemental Security Income:** Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a federal income supplement program funded by general tax revenues and not social security taxes. It provides cash to aged, blind and disabled individuals, who have limited or no income. The income supplement is designed to meet basic needs for food, shelter and clothing. For more information on the program or to apply, please visit the national website: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/ssi/index.htm>.

**Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8):** The Section 8 program is also referred to as the Housing Choice Vouchers Program. The Housing Choice Vouchers Program allows very low-income families to choose and lease or purchase safe, decent, and affordable privately-owned rental housing. The program is federally subsidized and administered by local housing authorities and public housing authorities. For more details on the Section 8 program, please visit the national website: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/about/index.cfm>.

**Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP):** The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program provides two basic types of services to eligible low-income individuals: 1) financial assistance to offset the costs of heating or cooling dwelling units (their homes) or free weatherization services to make their dwelling unit (home) more energy efficient. For more program details, please call 1-866-675-6623, or visit the state website: <http://www.csd.ca.gov/default.aspx>.

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF):** This program replaced the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program (AFDC) as of July 1, 1997. The program provides cash assistance to needy families with dependent children, reduces the dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work and marriage, prevents out-of-wedlock pregnancies and encourages the formation and maintenance of two parent families. For a more detailed description of the program and the work requirements, please visit the national website: [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/opa/fact\\_sheets/tanf\\_factsheet.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/opa/fact_sheets/tanf_factsheet.html).

## **Consumer Action -California Lifeline Training Materials -Public Assistance Programs**

**National School Lunch's FREE Lunch Program:** The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) is a federally funded program operating in public, nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions and is designed to give kids the healthy meal they need to learn. Children in low-income families can receive reduced price or free meals at school or child care. For more details on the program, please visit the national website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/lunch/>.

**Healthy Families Category A:** The Healthy Families Category A is a low cost insurance program that provides health, dental and vision coverage to children ages 0 – 19 years of age, who do not have insurance today and do not qualify for Medi-Cal. There are three different income categories: A, B and C. Category A is just above the Medi-Cal income eligibility levels. Clients in the Healthy Families Category A pay lower premiums than the other categories. For more details, visit the state website: <http://www.healthyfamilies.ca.gov> call 1-800-880-5305 to ask questions or receive an enrollment packet. To receive assistance in person, call 1-888-747-1222 to find a Certified Application Assistant.

**Tribal TANF:** The Tribal TANF program is a cash assistance or welfare program for federally-recognized Indian Tribes or certain Alaskan Native families with dependent children. This program operates under the same premise as the regular TANF program, but is administered by the Indian Tribes or Alaskan Native organizations rather than by local social services agencies. For more details, visit the national website: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/dts/>

**Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance:** The General Assistance program is a state-mandated program that provides financial assistance to unemployed or incapacitated indigent people who are not eligible for assistance from any other source. The programs are administered at a county level and also by various Indian Tribes. The program was formerly referred to as "General Relief." To find the Department of Social or Human Services in any California county, please visit the following state website: <http://www.csac.counties.org/default.asp?id=7>.

**Tribal NSL / Tribal Head Start:** Tribal National School Lunch program is a nutrition program for children, whose families are low-income and members of federally-recognized Indian Tribes or Alaskan Natives. The program mirrors the National School Lunch's FREE Lunch Program, but is administered by the Indian Tribes or Alaskan Native organizations and is for children living on tribal lands. Tribal Head Start is a development program for low-income preschoolers and their families, who are members of various federally-recognized Indian Tribes or Alaskan Native organizations. For more information on Tribal Head Start, visit the following website: <http://caheadstart.org/facts.html>.

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**Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program:** Women, Infants and Children, more commonly referred to as WIC, is a federally subsidized special supplemental nutrition program for low-income pregnant, post-partum and breast-feeding women, and infants and children up to age 5 years old. WIC provides checks that can be used at local food chains to buy milk, juice, eggs, cheese, cereal, dry beans/ peas, iron-fortified formula and peanut butter. The programs are administered at a state level through local agencies and clinic sites. To help clients to apply or to learn more about the program, visit the national website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/howtoapply/whogetswicandhowtoapply.htm>

For more information and resources on California Lifeline, contact **Consumer Action:**

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