

## Resources and Services – Quick Reference Guide

### Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Families First, the state's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, is a workforce development and employment program. The Families First program emphasizes work, training, and personal responsibility. It is temporary and has a primary focus on gaining self-sufficiency through employment. The Families First program helps participants reach this goal by providing temporary cash assistance, transportation, child care assistance, educational supports, job training, employment activities, and other support services. To be eligible for the program, participants must meet technical and financial eligibility standards and must agree to follow a Personal Responsibility Plan (PRP). As part of the PRP, the participants agree to keep immunizations and health checks up-to-date for their children, to keep their children in school, to cooperate with child support services and, if not exempt, to participate in work and/or training for at least 30 hours per week.

<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/families-first-tanf.html>

### Head Start / Early Head Start

Since 1965, the federal Head Start program has been committed to serving the needs of young children and their families from low-income environments. Today, Head Start is well known as a leader in early childhood education and in the field of school readiness.

But along with preparing children for the classroom, Head Start works to build families and the community. After all, families and communities have an important role to play in childhood growth and development. Head Start serves as a trusted resource, often teaming up with other state and local organizations to meet the growing needs of at-risk children and their families in the communities where they live.

<https://www.kidcentraltn.com/article/head-start>

The Early Head Start (EHS) program is free preschool for infants from birth to 36 months from low-income families. EHS programs follow the national EHS Performance Standards that define high quality services in early childhood education, parent engagement, social services, nutrition and health. EHS programs help children by providing comprehensive services that link high quality early education with families, strengthened by parent education and ties to community services.

<https://www.kidcentraltn.com/program/early-head-start-ehs>

### Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federally funded grant program created by the Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1981. The program aims to assist low income households, primarily those who pay a high proportion of household income on home energy, in meeting their immediate energy needs. In Tennessee LIHEAP is administered through a network of 19 local agencies that reach all 95 counties.

<https://thda.org/business-partners/liheap>

## Resources and Services – Quick Reference Guide

### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) provides nutritional assistance benefits to children and families, the elderly, the disabled, unemployed and working families. SNAP helps supplement monthly food budgets of families with low-income to buy the food they need to maintain good health and allow them to direct more of their available income toward essential living expenses. DHS staff determines eligibility of applicants based on guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The primary goals of the program are to alleviate hunger and malnutrition, and to improve nutrition and health in eligible households. DHS has a dual focus on alleviating hunger and establishing or re-establishing self-sufficiency.

<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap.html>

### Women, Infants, and Children Program

WIC stands for Women, Infants, and Children and is also called the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program. WIC is a federal program designed to provide additional food to low-income pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, infants and children until the age of 5. The program provides a combination of nutrition education, supplemental foods, breastfeeding promotion and support, and referrals for healthcare. WIC has proved to be effective in preventing and improving nutrition-related health problems.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) funds the WIC Program. The Tennessee Department of Health provides the services in about 140 county health department locations and hospital sites throughout the state. Participants must be residents of Tennessee, meet the income guidelines, and be determined to be at nutritional or medical risk.

<https://www.kidcentraltn.com/article/women-infants-and-children-wic>

### Child and Adult Care Food Program

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federally funded program that provides reimbursement for eligible meals that are served to participants who meet age and income requirements. Administrative payments are also provided for those agencies that sponsor the participation of day care homes. All payments are based on annual rates established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). CACFP provides aid to child and adult care institutions and family or group day care homes for the provision of nutritious foods that contribute to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of young children, and the health and wellness of older adults and chronically impaired disabled persons. Research shows that well-nourished children are healthier, more attentive, and have better mental performance than children who are under-nourished. Findings also indicate that children served by CACFP eat healthier food than children who bring food from home. The CACFP also helps facilities implement best practices to ensure children have access to a variety of nutritious foods.

<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/children/dhs-nutrition-programs/child-and-adult-care-food-program.html>

## Resources and Services – Quick Reference Guide

### TennCare Medicaid

TennCare is the state of Tennessee's Medicaid program. It provides healthcare to mostly low-income pregnant women, parents or caretakers of a minor child, children and individuals who are elderly or have a disability. To get Medicaid, you must meet the income and resource limits. You can apply anytime for TennCare.

There are several different groups of people that may qualify. And, each group has different income limits. Some of the groups also have limits on how much you own-your "resources." These are things like bank accounts, cars, and land. The number of people who live in your household count too.

More information about the TennCare Medicaid eligibility categories in Tennessee can be found at:

<https://www.tn.gov/tenncare/members-applicants/eligibility/tenncare-medicaid.html>

### Children's Health Insurance Program (CoverKids)

CoverKids is full health coverage for children 18 and under whose families cannot afford employer-sponsored insurance or individual insurance and who make too much to be eligible for TennCare. CoverKids is part of the Children's Health Insurance Program, which provides health insurance to uninsured children in all 50 states. Any child who is eligible for TennCare will be covered by TennCare, not CoverKids. Children who aren't eligible for TennCare are eligible for CoverKids.

<https://www.kidcentraltn.com/article/coverkids>

### Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities. Infants and toddlers with disabilities (ages birth–2) and their families receive early intervention services under [IDEA, Part C](#). Children and youth (ages 3–21) receive special education and related services under [IDEA, Part B](#). In addition to meeting the legal requirements of IDEA, the commitment made by districts and schools to provide a high-quality education in an inclusive setting to all students with disabilities is crucial to their success.

<https://www.tn.gov/education/finance-and-monitoring/idea.html>

### Voluntary Pre-K Program

Tennessee's Voluntary Pre-K Program is a state-funded educational program designed to prepare children for success in kindergarten. Pre-K classes are available in every eligible Tennessee school district. The program is specifically for 4-year-olds, with first priority given to those at risk for entering school ready to learn.

<https://www.kidcentraltn.com/article/voluntary-pre-k-program>