

State-Administered General Assistance (Cash Assistance)



Fact Sheet

The State-Administered General Assistance (SAGA) program is a cash assistance program operated by the Department of Social Services (DSS). The program typically serves adults who are either permanently or temporarily **unable to work** due to a documented medical condition and whose **income and assets are below allowable limits**.

Individuals who applied for and are waiting to receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits from the federal government's Social Security Administration typically apply for SAGA cash assistance, pending eligibility for these federal benefits. Those eligible for SAGA cash assistance receive a small cash stipend each month. Individuals cannot receive SAGA cash assistance if they are eligible for any other DSS or federal cash assistance program.

What are the SAGA cash assistance rules about being unable to work?

To receive SAGA cash assistance, a person must be either unable to work for a **short-term period (2-6 months)** or unable to work (including unable to participate in education or training) for a **long-term period (6 months or more)**. Individuals may also qualify as unemployable for certain specific, non-medical reasons which include being over age 55 with a limited work history, over age 65, or needed in the home to care for an incapacitated spouse.

Those unable to work for a short-term period also need to have a recent connection to the labor force to qualify.

Those individuals qualifying for SAGA who also have documented **substance abuse issues**, must participate in substance abuse treatment to remain eligible for SAGA cash assistance.

What are the income limits to be eligible for SAGA cash assistance?

Gross income limit – Your monthly gross income must **not be more than 300%** of the maximum SSI limit for one person if you are unmarried, or **600%** of the maximum SSI for a couple if you are married.

Applied income limit – There are also limits on the amount of “applied income” you may receive and still be eligible. Applied income is the amount of your gross income that remains after deducting certain costs. Your monthly applied income must be less than the maximum SAGA cash assistance available to you.

State-Administered General Assistance (Cash Assistance)



Fact Sheet

How are my benefits calculated?

Generally, the amount of the SAGA cash assistance for those with no income and who have to pay for housing is \$219 per month. For those with no income or housing costs (or who are residing in a shelter), the SAGA cash amount is generally \$55 per month. However, for a person without shelter costs, the benefit can increase up to \$219 per month if a DSS medical review concludes that the person is unemployable. If you live in a boarding home, SAGA may help you pay your boarding home bill, as well. Sometimes, additional benefits beyond these cash amounts are issued, so please tell us if you have any special needs when you apply.

What are the asset limits to be eligible for SAGA cash assistance?

To receive SAGA cash assistance, your assets must be less than \$250 if you are unmarried or \$500 if you are married. If you own a motor vehicle, up to \$4,500 of the vehicle's value may be excluded as a counted asset.

What else should I know?

You will be required to apply for SSI or SSDI benefits before you can receive SAGA cash assistance. You will also be required to sign a form authorizing the Social Security Administration to reimburse DSS for any SAGA cash assistance provided to you while your SSI or SSDI application is pending. This means that if the Social Security Administration finds that you were eligible for SSI or SSDI benefits while you were receiving SAGA cash assistance, the Social Security Administration will send your SSI or SSDI back benefits directly to DSS to reimburse the State for the SAGA cash assistance you received. The State will only keep the amount it paid to you as SAGA cash assistance.

Also, the State of Connecticut has the right to place a lien on your home property and to recover the amount of SAGA cash assistance DSS provides to you from money you receive in the future, such as from an inheritance, or a settlement, or judgment in a lawsuit.

How do people apply for SAGA cash assistance?

Online—The fastest and easiest way to apply is online. Visit www.connect.ct.gov and click on the “Apply Now” button. You can also use the “Am I Eligible?” feature to find out if you qualify for SAGA cash benefits

In Person—Visit any DSS Service Center to complete an application. Office locations can be found at www.ct.gov/dss under the “Regional Offices” tab, or you can call 2-1-1 to be referred to your nearest DSS office.

By Mail—To request an application, call the DSS Client Information Line and Benefits Center at 1-855-CONNECT (1-855-626-6632); TTD/TTY 1-800-842-4524 for persons who are deaf and hard of hearing. You can also print an application to complete by visiting www.ct.gov/dss/apply