

Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum and the New York Immigration Coalition's

GUIDE TO **Public Benefits** FOR **Immigrants**



The Public Advocate
for the City of New York
Betsy Gotbaum



To access an online copy of the guide, please visit: www.pubadvocate.nyc.gov/PublicBenefitsGuide.htm
Visit the NYC Public Advocate's Office on the web at www.pubadvocate.nyc.gov or call us at 212-669-7250
Visit the NYIC on the web at www.thenyic.org or call 212-627-2227

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The Public Advocate
for the City of New York
Betsy Gotbaum



A MESSAGE FROM

**Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum and Chung-Wha Hong,
Executive Director of the New York Immigration Coalition**

Dear Friends,

Immigrants come to New York City to find a better life. More than three million immigrants live in the city—that's more than a third of all New Yorkers. They help build the city's economy, bring neighborhoods to life, and make our culture the most diverse in the country.

Many immigrants are very successful. Others, such as those who do not speak English or who lack education, often work in low-paying jobs that do not give them health insurance or other benefits. Low-income working immigrants may need government help, for themselves or their families, but some find it hard to understand the process of applying for benefits. Others may not even try because they do not know if they qualify.

This free guide gives you general information about federal, state, and city benefits and what eligibility category you need to qualify. Qualification for a benefit is determined by the government agency that oversees the benefit. It can be hard to apply for benefits because the requirements and steps to apply are different for every benefit. Think about contacting a not-for-profit group to help you and your family with the application process. You can also call the Public Advocate Office at (212) 669-7250 if you need help.

If you do not know your immigration status, check with an immigration attorney to see if you qualify for benefits. For help, you can contact the New York State Immigration Hotline: (212) 419-3737 or (800) 566-7636. The hotline can answer general questions about immigration and naturalization in 17 languages and will give you a referral to a group that can help you.

This city depends on the hard work of immigrants like you. Again, if you are having trouble getting city services and benefits you qualify for, please call the Public Advocate Office at (212) 669-7250. We are always ready to lend a helping hand.

Sincerely,

Betsy Gotbaum
Public Advocate

Chung-Wha Hong
NYIC Executive Director

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Public Benefits for Immigrant New Yorkers

Many immigrants do not apply for benefits because they are afraid it will put their immigration status at risk so that they won't be able to get back in the country if they leave. Or they might be worried that if they apply for benefits it could affect their chances of becoming a legal resident or citizen.

Many immigrants also worry that a benefits administrator will report them to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). **By law, city agencies are not allowed to disclose your immigration status to anyone for immigration enforcement efforts.**

Undocumented immigrants cannot get most state and federal public benefits, but these benefits are still available to their citizen children. For example, if you are an undocumented immigrant, you are not eligible for Food Stamps, but you can apply for Food Stamps for your citizen children.

Eligibility Categories Used to Qualify for Public Benefits

For definitions of the terms in bold, see the glossary at the end of this guide.

In general, only **U.S. citizens**, **U.S. nationals**, or immigrants with a **qualified alien** (also known as **qualified immigrant**) status can qualify for federal, state, and city benefits.

A qualified immigrant is one of the following

- Lawful Permanent Resident (Permanent Resident Alien or Green Card Holder)
- Lawfully residing active duty service member or honorably discharged veteran and their families
- Refugee
- Asylee
- Immigrant whose deportation or removal is being withheld
- Cuban or Haitian entrant
- Amerasians
- Trafficked immigrant (T visa holders)
- Immigrant granted parole in the United States (for at least one year)
- Battered immigrant spouses and children of U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents

In New York State, immigrants who are **PRUCOL** (Permanently Residing Under Color of Law) can qualify **ONLY** for state and city benefits. PRUCOL is not an official immigration status, but many immigrants are described this way. The PRUCOL category is used to describe many different situations in which an immigrant can get certain benefits. PRUCOL immigrants are people who are living in the United States; DHS knows they are here and is not taking steps to deport them. Examples of PRUCOL include **victims of crime (U visa holders)**, immigrants granted parole in the U.S. for less than 1 year, immigrants with deferred action status, and many other categories. Like the “qualified alien” category, PRUCOL is **NOT** an immigration status. It is just a category used to qualify for public benefits.

In addition to PRUCOL, another benefits-related category is **Undocumented immigrants**. Undocumented immigrants may qualify for only a few public benefits.

For needs-based benefit programs that look at household income (such as food stamps or welfare), an ineligible (PRUCOL or undocumented) adult can apply for eligible household members (citizen children or qualified immigrant children).

How to Read the Public Benefits Chart with Eligibility Categories

For each benefit, this guide tells you who qualifies: qualified immigrants, PRUCOL immigrants, and undocumented immigrants. For an overview of which eligibility category you need to get each benefit, please see the chart below.

To read the chart, you can either

- 1) Choose an eligibility category from the top row and go down the column to see what benefits you qualify for, or
- 2) Choose a benefit from the first column and go across the page to see what eligibility category you must be in to qualify for the benefit.

In the chart, an “X” means that the person in the eligibility category can qualify for the benefit and a “No” means the person does NOT qualify for the benefit.

Remember, even if you are undocumented, you can still apply for benefits for an eligible child.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This guide is only a reference and does not list every public benefit available. The office that runs each public benefit program makes the final decision on whether or not you receive the benefit. Immigration status is one of many eligibility requirements and not all immigration categories are listed in this guide. If you are not sure you qualify for a benefit, please contact my office at (212) 669-7250.

Public Benefits Chart with Eligibility Categories

	Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) (Green Card Holder)	Lawfully residing active duty service member or honorably discharged veteran and their families	Refugee	Asylee	Deportation or removal withheld	Cuban/Haitian entrant	Amerasian	Victims of Trafficking (T visa)	Granted Parole in the U.S. (at least 1 year)	Battered immigrant spouses and children of U.S. citizen or LPR	PRUCOL (includes U visa holder)	Undocumented	
	QUALIFIED IMMIGRANTS										PRUCOL	N/A	
	Humanitarian Entrants												
Financial Assistance Programs													
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	X ¹	X	X ²	X ²	X ²	X ²	X ²	X ²	X ²	No	No	No	No
Social Security Disability Insurance (SSD)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No ¹	No
Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) (Regular)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No	No
Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) (Emergency)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No	No
Cash Assistance (Family Assistance)	X ³	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X ³	X ³	No	No
Cash Assistance (Safety Net Assistance)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No
Child Tax Credit (Federal)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Empire State Child Tax Credit (State)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (Federal)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (State)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (City)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) (Federal)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No
Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) (State)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No
Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) (City)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No
Reduced Fare MetroCard for Seniors	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Reduced Fare MetroCard for Disabled	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Unemployment Insurance	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No
Food and Nutrition Programs													
Food Stamps (Regular and Expedited)	X ⁴	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X ⁴	X ⁴	No	No
School Meals (Breakfast and Lunch)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Summer Meals (Breakfast and Lunch)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

X¹ Eligible for SSI if you can be credited with a substantial work history OR were lawfully residing in the U.S. on 8/22/96.
X² Eligible for SSI only if entry to U.S. was after 8/22/96. You are eligible for 7 years after entry. In the future, may be eligible for 9 years.
X³ There is a 5 year bar, but you are eligible for Safety Net Assistance.
No¹ Unless you are also a lawfully residing immigrant.
X⁴ There is a 5 year wait only if you are an adult who is not disabled.

	Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) (Green Card Holder)	Lawfully residing active duty service member or honorably discharged veteran and their families	Refugee	Asylee	Deportation or removal withheld	Cuban/Haitian entrant	Amerasian	Victims of Trafficking (T visa)	Granted Parole in the U.S. (at least 1 year)	Battered immigrant spouses and children of U.S. citizen or LPR	PRUCOL (includes U visa holder)	Unocumented
	QUALIFIED IMMIGRANTS										PRUCOL	N/A
	Humanitarian Entrants											
Programs for Families with Children												
Child Care	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No	No
Head Start	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Universal Prekindergarten (UPK)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Out-of-School Time (OST)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Health Insurance Programs												
Healthy NY (Working Individuals)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Healthy NY (Sole Proprietor)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No
Healthy NY (Small Employer)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No
Medicaid	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X ⁵
Medicaid Excess Income	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No
Family Health Plus	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No
Children's Medicaid	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No
Child Health Plus	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X ⁶
Prenatal Care Assistance Program (PCAP)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Medicare (Parts A and B)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No	No
Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No	No
Health Care Service Programs												
Nurse Family Partnership	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Family Planning Benefit Program (FPBP)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No
Housing Programs												
Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No
Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No
Senior Citizen Homeowner's Exemption (SCHE)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No
School Tax Relief (STAR) (Basic and Enhanced)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No
Disabled Homeowner's Exemption (DHE)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No
Veteran's Exemption	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No
Public Housing	X	X	X	X	X	No ²	X	X	X	No	No ³	No ³
Section 8 Housing Assistance	X	X	X	X	X	No ²	X	X	X	No	No ³	No ³

X5 If you are pregnant, you may qualify. For all other undocumented immigrants, you may qualify for Emergency Medicaid.

X6 Undocumented children only.

No² Unless you are residing in the U.S. under grant of parole, then you are eligible.

No³ As long as 1 person in the household is a U.S. citizen or a qualified immigrant, the household can apply but the benefits are less.



Financial Assistance Programs

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI)

SSI gives elderly, disabled or blind people in need cash every month for food, clothes, and housing.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	
Who qualifies?	Most qualified immigrants will not be eligible until they become a citizen. ¹
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be disabled, blind, or age 65 or older • Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount • Value of what you own must not be more than a set \$ amount • Must apply for all other cash benefit programs
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.ssa.gov/ssi/ • http://www.ssa.gov/ssi/text-understanding-ssi.htm • Social Security Administration: (800) 772-1213. If you are deaf, call (800) 325-0778
How do I get an application?	Must either apply in person at a social security office or over the telephone (see below)
Office locations:	To find a Social Security office, go to https://secure.ssa.gov/apps6z/FOL0/fo001.jsp or call (800) 772-1213

SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INSURANCE (SSD)

SSD gives cash to a worker and eligible family members when that worker becomes disabled or dies. Disabled workers, widows, widowers, and children or adults disabled since childhood all qualify for SSD.

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSD)	
Who qualifies?	Qualified immigrants and lawfully present immigrants (some PRUCOL)
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be blind or disabled, and unable to work for at least a year • Must have paid federal taxes for a set time, based on your work history and the age your disability began • No cap on household income or \$ value of what you own
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.ssa.gov/dibplan/index.htm • Social Security Administration: (800) 772-1213. If you are deaf, call (800) 325-0778
How do I get an application?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In person at a social security office • Social Security Administration: (800) 772-1213 • Online at http://www.ssa.gov/applyfordisability/adult.htm
Office locations:	To find a Social Security office, go to https://secure.ssa.gov/apps6z/FOL0/fo001.jsp or call (800) 772-1213

¹If you are a refugee, asylee, person whose deportation or removal is withheld, a Cuban/Haitian entrant, an Amerasian or a victim of trafficking, and you came to the United States after 8/22/96, you are eligible for SSI for only 7 years unless and until you become a citizen. In the future, benefits may be extended from 7 to 9 years. If you are a Lawful Permanent Resident, you are eligible for SSI if you have worked legally a certain amount of time OR were lawfully residing in the U.S. on 8/22/96.

HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HEAP)

HEAP pays \$40 to \$540 a year to help you heat your home. If you are about to run out of fuel or have your heat cut off, you can also get emergency HEAP money.

	Regular HEAP	Emergency HEAP
Who qualifies?	Qualified immigrants. Ineligible adults may apply on behalf of eligible family members.	Qualified immigrants. If the person on the lease is not a qualified immigrant, he or she can apply for household members who are citizens or qualified immigrant.
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount Must pay heating bills directly or pay rent that includes heat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be in an emergency situation (heat will be cut off or you have less than a 10-day fuel supply) Must meet regular HEAP requirements (see left) Must have your name on the lease and live in that home Must not have enough \$ to meet the emergency
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/heap/ http://www.nyc.gov/html/hra/html/directory/heap.shtml NYC HEAP Hotline: (800) 692-0557 	
How do I get an application?	http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/heap/application.asp Applications are available in November. Apply early. Only a set amount of \$ available.	
Office locations:	http://www.nyc.gov/html/hra/downloads/pdf/HRA_HEAP_office_locations.pdf	

CASH ASSISTANCE (PUBLIC ASSISTANCE OR WELFARE)

Cash Assistance, also known as public assistance or welfare, gives eligible adults and families cash to help pay for living expenses. There are two types of Cash Assistance programs: Family Assistance (FA) and Safety Net Assistance (SNA). The main difference is that FA is a federal program so federal immigration rules apply. Cash Assistance can be used to pay for food and clothing, rent or mortgage, utilities, and other special needs. You have the right to an interpreter provided by the agency.

	Family Assistance (FA)	Safety Net Assistance (SNA)
Description of benefit:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash assistance to families with a child living with a parent or other relative • 60-month time limit 	Assistance to single adults, couples without children, children living apart from any adult relative, people who have gone over the 60-month limit on FA, and immigrants who are not eligible for FA
Who qualifies?	Qualified immigrants ^{2,3}	Qualified immigrants ⁴ and PRUCOL (including U visa holders)
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount • Value of what you own must not be more than a set \$ amount • Must work a set number of hours once you get the benefit • Must have a face-to-face interview 	
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.nyc.gov/html/hra/html/directory/cash.shtml • http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/ta/ • HRA InfoLine: (877) 472-8411 	
How do I get an application?	Applications are available at HRA Job Centers	
Office locations:	To find a Job Center office, call the New York State Temporary Assistance Hotline: (800) 342-3009 or go to http://www.nyc.gov/html/hra/html/directory/job_centers.shtml . You can also apply for Food Stamps and Medicaid at HRA Job Centers.	

²Lawful Permanent Residents, Immigrants granted parole in the U.S. for at least one year, and Battered immigrant spouses of U.S. citizens or Lawful Permanent Residents are eligible for Family Assistance after they have been in qualified status for 5 years. All other qualified immigrants do not have to wait 5 years for this benefit.

³If you get this benefit, you might have a problem with your green card application. Getting any other non-cash benefits will not affect your green card application.

⁴See comment above.

FEDERAL AND (EMPIRE) STATE CHILD TAX CREDIT

The Child Tax Credit is a federal and state income tax credit for families with children who qualify.

	Federal Child Tax Credit and Additional Child Tax Credit	Empire State Child Tax Credit
Who qualifies?	Everyone who has a social security number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) ⁵	
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child must be under age 17 on December 31 • Child must have lived with you for more than six months in the same year you are applying • You must claim the child as a dependent • Child must be a U.S. citizen or qualified immigrant • You must owe taxes to claim the Child Tax Credit. The credit reduces the taxes you owe. If you do not owe taxes, you may qualify for a refund through the Additional Child Tax Credit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have lived in New York State for at least one full calendar year • Must apply for a federal child tax credit or household income must not be more than a set \$ amount • Must have a child at least 4 years old on December 31 • Child must have a social security number or an ITIN • The credit reduces the taxes you owe or gives you a refund if you don't owe taxes
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p972.pdf • IRS: (800) 829-1040 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.tax.state.ny.us/pit/income_tax/empire_state_child_credit.htm • http://www.tax.state.ny.us/pdf/2008/inc/it213i_2008.pdf • NYS Department of Taxation and Finance: (800) 225-5829
How do I get a form?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No separate form for the federal child tax credit • For the Additional Child Tax Credit, fill out Form 8812 http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8812.pdf 	http://www.tax.state.ny.us/pdf/2008/fillin/inc/it213_2008_fill_in.pdf

⁵Undocumented immigrants and other qualified immigrants can file taxes using an ITIN.

FEDERAL, STATE, AND CITY CHILD AND DEPENDENT CARE CREDIT

This tax credit is for working people who pay someone to take care of a child or other dependent person so that they can work or look for work.

	Federal Credit	State Credit	City Credit
Who qualifies?	Everyone who has a social security number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) ⁶		
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have earned \$ • Must have paid for child/dependent care⁷ so that you or your spouse could work or look for work • Must have a child under 13 years old or dependent who cannot take care of him/herself • Child/dependent must have lived with you for more than six months in the same year you are applying • Child/dependent must have a social security number or an ITIN • Must give the contact information and social security number (or ITIN) of the person paid for care • This credit reduces the taxes you owe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you qualify for the federal credit, you can file for the state credit • Same requirements as the federal credit • The credit reduces the taxes you owe or gives you a refund if you don't owe taxes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must qualify for the state credit • Must live in New York City • Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount • Must have paid for child care for children under the age of four on December 31 • Child must have lived with you for more than six months in the same year you are applying • The credit reduces the taxes you owe or gives you a refund if you don't owe taxes.
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p503.pdf • IRS: (800) 829-1040 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.tax.state.ny.us/pit/income_tax/child_and_dependent_care_credit.htm • http://www.tax.state.ny.us/pdf/2008/inc/it216i_2008.pdf • NYS Department of Taxation and Finance: (800) 225-5829 	
How do I get a form?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f2441.pdf (only if you file Form 1040 or Form 1040NR) • http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f1040as2.pdf (only if you file Form 1040A) 	http://www.tax.state.ny.us/pdf/2008/illin/inc/it216_2008_fill_in.pdf	No separate form (use state form)

⁶See comment above.

⁷Person paid for care cannot be your spouse, the parent of the child, or someone you can claim as a dependent.

FEDERAL, STATE, AND CITY EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT (EITC)

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a federal, state, and city income tax credit for low-income working people and families. It reduces the amount of taxes you owe or gives you a refund if you don't owe taxes.

	Federal Credit	State Credit	City Credit
Who qualifies?	Qualified immigrants and PRUCOL (including U visa holders) ⁸		
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount Must have less than \$2,900 in investment income If you have no children, you must be between the ages of 25 and 65 If have children, child can be a son, daughter, stepchild, foster child, adopted child, sibling, stepsibling, or grandchild Child must have a social security number Child must have lived with you for more than 6 months in the same year you are applying The child must be younger than 19 (or younger than 24 if a full-time student) on December 31. Totally and permanently disabled children of any age qualify. Must have lived in the U.S. for the full calendar year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must have claimed the federal EITC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must have claimed the federal EITC Must live in New York City
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> http://www.nyc.gov/html/dca/html/initiatives/eitc.shtml http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p596.pdf http://apps.irs.gov/app/eitc2008/SetLanguage.do?lang=es (Spanish) IRS: (800) 829-1040 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> http://www.nyc.gov/html/dca/html/initiatives/eitc.shtml http://www.tax.state.ny.us/pdf/2008/inc/it215i_2008.pdf NYS Department of Taxation and Finance: (800) 225-5829 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> http://www.nyc.gov/html/dca/html/initiatives/eitc.shtml NYS Department of Taxation and Finance: (800) 225-5829
How do I get a form?	http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f1040sei.pdf (use only if you have a qualifying child)	http://www.tax.state.ny.us/pdf/2008/illin/inc/it215_2008_fill_in.pdf	No separate form (use the state form) but must attach Worksheet C from the state form. http://www.tax.state.ny.us/pdf/2008/inc/it215i_2008.pdf

⁸Tax filer and any children the tax filer is claiming must have a social security number.

REDUCED FARE METROCARD

MTA offers a reduced fare MetroCard for seniors or people with certain disabilities. A regular MTA fare costs \$2, reduced fare is \$1 or less. Immigration status does not matter.

	Reduced Fare MetroCard for Senior Citizens	Reduced Fare MetroCard for People with Disabilities
Who qualifies?	Everyone	
How do I qualify?	Must be 65 or older	Must have one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blindness • Hard time hearing • Walking disability • Loss of both hands • Mental retardation • Getting Medicare for any reason other than age • Serious mental illness and getting SSI benefits
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.mta.info/nyct/fare/rfindex.htm • (212) METROCARD (638-7622) 	
How do I apply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.mta.info/nyct/fare/pdf/seniors.pdf • Subway stations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.mta.info/nyct/fare/pdf/disabled.pdf • Subway stations
Office locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced Fare MetroCard Walk-in Service Center 3 Stone Street (between Broadway and Broad Street) • MetroCard Bus or Van locations go to http://www.mta.info/metrocard/mms.htm 	

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

If you are unemployed through no fault of your own, you can get money for up to 26 weeks.⁹

Unemployment Insurance	
Who qualifies?	Qualified immigrants and PRUCOL (including U visa holders) (You must be authorized to work)
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be unemployed but not because you were fired¹⁰ • Must be ready, willing, and able to work • Must be looking for a job • Must have been paid a set \$ amount for a set amount of time
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.labor.state.ny.us/ui/ui_index.shtm • Unemployment Insurance Telephone Claims Line: (888) 209-8124 • For additional contact numbers and addresses: http://www.labor.state.ny.us/ui/bpta/Important%20Telephone%20Numbers.shtm
How do I get an application?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • File claim online: https://ui.labor.state.ny.us/UBC/home.do?FF_LOCALE=1 • File claim over the telephone: (888) 209-8124 (English, Spanish, Russian, Cantonese, Mandarin, Creole, and other languages available)

⁹You may qualify for an extra 13 weeks of benefits if you apply by March 29, 2009.

¹⁰Examples include: no work (temporary or seasonal work ended), job was eliminated, laid off, company closed, etc. If you were fired, you usually are not eligible for unemployment insurance, but in some cases, you can be. Call an unemployment insurance caseworker to talk about your case.



Food and Nutrition Programs

FOOD STAMPS

Low-income families can use Food Stamps to buy food at many grocery stores and markets. If you qualify, you will get a card that works like a debit card. In case of an emergency, you can apply for expedited Food Stamps, which get to you faster than regular Food Stamps.

	Food Stamps	Expedited Food Stamps
Who qualifies?	Qualified immigrants (Adults who are NOT disabled and are Lawful Permanent Residents, Immigrants granted parole in the U.S. for at least one year, and Battered immigrant spouses of U.S. citizens or Lawful Permanent Residents are eligible after they have been in qualified status for 5 years. All adults who are humanitarian entrants (see chart on page 6) do not have to wait 5 years.	
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household¹¹ income must not be more than a set \$ amount Most people must work a set number of hours once you get the benefit Most people must have a face-to-face interview¹² (If you cannot go to the office, a telephone interview may be scheduled) For most people, there is no limit on the value of what you own 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must meet requirements for regular Food Stamps (see left) Must meet one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your household has less than \$100 in cash and other sources of \$ and will make less than \$150 in the month you apply \$ amount of what you make and other sources of \$ is less than the rent or mortgage, heat, utilities, and phone combined You are a migrant or seasonal farm worker The interview and decision will be made the same day the application is turned in
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/foodstamps/ http://www.nyc.gov/html/hra/html/directory/food.shtml 	
Contact information:	HRA InfoLine: (877) 472-8411	
How do I get an application?	http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/apps/default.asp#fs (English, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Russian, Haitian-Creole, and Korean)	
Office locations:	To find a Food Stamp office, call the city hotline at (877) 472-8411 or go to http://www.nyc.gov/html/hra/downloads/pdf/food_stamps_brochure_1207.pdf If you are also applying for Cash Assistance, HRA Job Centers throughout the city will also take your Food Stamp application.	

¹¹The Food Stamp application defines a household as a person or group of related or unrelated people living together who buy and cook food together.

¹²In the future, some people will not need to have a face-to-face interview, but no date has been set for this change.

SCHOOL MEALS (BREAKFAST AND LUNCH)

In New York City, breakfast is free to all students, no matter your immigration status, at all schools, no matter what your income. Lunch can be \$1.50, \$0.25, or free, depending on the student’s household income. Children in families that get Food Stamps or Cash Assistance automatically get free school lunch.

	School Breakfast	School Lunch
Who qualifies?	Everyone	
How do I qualify?	Free to all students but all must fill out an application ¹³	Household income will decide whether your child gets free or reduced price lunch
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.opt-osfns.org/osfns/meals/default.aspx • Call the school your child attends for more information 	
How do I get an application?	http://www.opt-osfns.org/osfns/meals/forms_reduced.aspx (English, Chinese, Spanish, Russian, French, Hebrew, Italian, Greek, Korean, Polish, Hindi, Arabic, Urdu, and Haitian-Creole)	

SUMMER MEALS (BREAKFAST AND LUNCH)

The Summer Meals program offers free breakfast and lunch to children, no matter your immigration status. The program starts in late June and ends in late August at more than 700 schools, parks, pools, libraries, and New York City Housing Authority buildings in the city.

Summer Meals (Breakfast and Lunch)	
Who qualifies?	Everyone
How do I qualify?	Child must be 18 years or younger
How do I get more information and contact information?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.opt-osfns.org/osfns/resources/sch_search/SummerMeals.aspx • School Food: (718) 707-4300
How do I get an application?	There is no application
Meal locations:	Available mid-June at http://www.opt-osfns.org/osfns/resources/sch_search/SummerMeals.aspx

¹³Only one application needed if all children in the home attend the same school. The application asks for a social security number for an adult living in the house; if you do not have a number, write the word “NONE.”

WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC) PROGRAM

WIC gives milk, juice, formula, and other healthy foods to low-income mothers, pregnant women, and young children. Immigration status does not matter. Women who already get Food Stamps, Medicaid, or Cash Assistance automatically qualify for WIC.

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program	
Who qualifies?	Everyone
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A woman who is pregnant, has given birth, or is breastfeeding¹⁴ – An infant or child younger than five • Must live in New York State • Must be certified by a doctor, nurse or nutritionist as being at risk for health problems because of a lack of food¹⁵ • Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.health.state.ny.us/prevention/nutrition/wic/ • http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/aboutwic/ • Growing Up Healthy Hotline: (800) 522-5006
How do I get an application?	http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/fhplus/application.htm (English and Spanish)
Office locations:	Growing Up Healthy Hotline at (800) 522-5006 to find a WIC local office (hospitals and community health clinics)

COMMODITY SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM (CSFP)

CSFP gives food to low-income mothers, pregnant women, young children, and seniors at least 60 years old. Immigration status does not matter. Food is picked up at a special site once a month. You cannot be in both CSFP and the WIC program (see above) at the same time.

Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)	
Who qualifies?	Everyone
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A woman who is pregnant or has given birth (up to one year after the birth of a baby) – A child from birth up to age six – A senior 60 years or older • Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount • Must live in New York State
How do I get more information?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.health.state.ny.us/prevention/nutrition/csfp/ • http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/csfp/
How do I get an application?	Applications are available at CSFP sites below
Contact information and Office locations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queens County: Builders for the Family and Youth 89-56 162nd Street, Jamaica, NY 11432 (718) 523-2220 • Kings County: Kings County Hospital Center 840 Alabama Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11207 (718) 498-9208

¹⁴Breastfeeding mothers are eligible up to 12 months after the child's birth. Non-breastfeeding mothers are eligible up to 6 months after a child's birth.

¹⁵This is a free exam.



Programs for Families with Children

CHILD CARE

The Administration for Children's Services (ACS) works with not-for-profit groups to give free or low-cost child care or child care vouchers¹⁶ to low-income families. Weekly fees for ACS child care depend on household income. For full-time care, fees cannot go over 10% of a family's income. Parents can also sign-up for part-time care.

Child Care	
Who qualifies?	Qualified immigrants (only status of the child matters)
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child must be between 6 weeks and 12 years old or under 18 if the child has special needs • Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount • Must need child care for one of the following reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – You are in a work or education training program or are looking for a job – You are sick and cannot take care of your child – You must be gone from your home, and no adult can watch your child – Your child or family is getting services from either ACS or HRA • Single parents: you must try to get child support from the parent not living with the child¹⁷ • Must have a face-to-face interview
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/html/child_care/child_care_information.shtml • http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/html/child_care/child_care_eligibility.shtml • ACS Information and Referral Department: (917) 228-7076
How do I get an application?	Call the ACS Information and Referral Department at (917) 228-7076 for an application
Child care locations:	To find a child care program, go to http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/downloads/pdf/childcare_contract_agencies.pdf

HEAD START

Early Head Start and Head Start offer free educational programs for eligible children from birth to age five and support services for their families. Immigration status does not matter. Children from families getting Cash Assistance or SSI automatically qualify.

Head Start	
Who qualifies?	Everyone
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child must be no older than five years old • Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/html/child_care/headstart.shtml (English) • http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/downloads/pdf/headstart_spanish.pdf (Spanish) • http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/downloads/pdf/headstart_creole.pdf (Creole) • ACS Head Start: (212) 232-0966
How do I get an application?	Applications for Head Start are available at Head Start Centers. A list of centers and their contact information is at http://gis.nyc.gov/doitt/cm/CityMap.htm or http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/downloads/pdf/headstart_directory.pdf

¹⁶An ACS voucher lets you buy child care service from a program not funded by ACS. The wait for a voucher is very long. It is better to use an ACS funded program, which does not require a voucher and may have space right away.

¹⁷You do not have to try to get child support if it would be dangerous for you to contact the other parent.

UNIVERSAL PREKINDERGARTEN (UPK)

Prekindergarten helps young children get an early start on their education. Immigration status does not matter.

Universal Pre-K (UPK)	
Who qualifies?	Everyone
How do I qualify?	Child must be four years old
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/PreK/default.htm (Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Haitian-Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu) • Department of Education Office of Early Childhood Education: (212) 374-0351
How do I get an application?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/PreK/default.htm (Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English, Haitian-Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu) • http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/EarlyChildhood/EligibilityApplications/default.htm

OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME (OST)

OST offers free, educational and other programs for young people after school, on holidays, and in the summer. Immigration status does not matter.

Out-of-School Time (OST)	
Who qualifies?	Everyone
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child must be between the ages of six and 21 • Household income does not matter
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/html/afterschool/out_of_school_time.shtml (English) • http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/downloads/pdf/services-ost-parents-guide-en.pdf (English) • http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/downloads/pdf/services-ost-parents-guide-es.pdf (Spanish) • http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/downloads/pdf/services-ost-parents-guide-ko.pdf (Korean) • http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/downloads/pdf/services-ost-parents-guide-ar.pdf (Arabic) • http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/downloads/pdf/services-ost-parents-guide-ru.pdf (Russian) • http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/downloads/pdf/services-ost-parents-guide-hc.pdf (Haitian-Creole) • http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/downloads/pdf/services-ost-parents-guide-zht.pdf (Chinese) • Department of Youth and Community Development: (212) 788-5647
How do I get an application?	Applications are at OST Centers. Locations their contact information can be found at http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/html/afterschool/search.shtml



Health Insurance Programs

HEALTHY NY FOR SMALL EMPLOYERS, SOLE PROPRIETORS, AND WORKING INDIVIDUALS

Healthy NY is low-cost health insurance for small business owners, their employees and their families, and working people. Healthy NY offers several HMO insurance plans, which have different monthly fees. If you qualify for Healthy NY, any children in your family probably qualifies for Child Health Plus health insurance.

	Working Individuals	Sole Proprietors ¹⁸	Small Employers
Who qualifies?	Qualified immigrants, PRUCOL (including U visa holders), undocumented	These programs have no immigration status requirements. ¹⁹	
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must live in New York State • You or your spouse must either be working or have worked in the past 12 months • Must not have had public (government sponsored) health insurance for 12 months before applying or have lost insurance because of a specific event • If you have a job, your employer must not offer health insurance • Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount and must not qualify for Medicare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must live in New York State • You or your spouse must either be working or have worked in the past 12 months • Must not have had health insurance for 12 months before applying • Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount and must not qualify for Medicare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business must be in New York State • Must have 1 to 50 workers • Must not have offered health insurance to your workers the last 12 months • At least 30% of your workers must not make more than a set \$ amount • Must pay at least 50% of the health insurance for your full-time workers each month and offer Healthy NY to all workers working 20 hours or more per week who do not make more than a set \$ amount • Must guarantee that at least half of your workers will buy Healthy NY or have health insurance from another company • At least one worker who buys Healthy NY must not make more than a set \$ amount
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.ins.state.ny.us/website2/hny/english/hny.htm (English) • http://www.ins.state.ny.us/website2/hny/spanish/hnys.htm (Spanish) • (866) HEALTHY (432-5849) 		
How do I get an application?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.ins.state.ny.us/website2/hny/english/hnystapp.htm (English) • http://www.ins.state.ny.us/website2/hny/spanish/hnysstap.htm (Spanish) 		

¹⁸Sole proprietors are people who are the only owner and worker of a business.

¹⁹While this program has no immigration status requirements, it is unlikely that an undocumented immigrant could fall into either of the above categories.

**MEDICAID AND MEDICAID EXCESS INCOME
(MEDICAID SPENDDOWN PROGRAM OR MEDICAID SURPLUS INCOME PROGRAM)**

Medicaid and Medicaid Excess Income programs offer health insurance for low-income people and people who can't afford health insurance on their own. If you do not qualify for Medicaid, you may qualify for Medicaid Excess Income. A primary care doctor takes care of your health and sends you to a specialist doctor if you need to see one.

Immigration status does not matter for pregnant women who live in New York State and do not make more than a set dollar amount. If you do not meet the Medicaid immigration requirements below, you may qualify for Emergency Medicaid, which pays for treatment in an emergency—no matter what your immigration status.²⁰

	Medicaid	Medicaid Excess Income
Description of benefit:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free health insurance for low-income adults • No co-payments • Will cover health care costs picked up in the three months before the application is turned in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medicaid coverage for people whose household income is more than the set \$ amount and who meet all other Medicaid requirements below.²¹ • You must pay for this coverage with any \$ you make that goes over the Medicaid \$ cap and Medicaid pays the rest.²²
Who qualifies?	Qualified immigrants and PRUCOL (including U visa holders)	
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be 19-64 years old²³ • Must live in New York State • Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount • Value of what you own must not be more than a set \$ amount, except for pregnant women • Must apply in person and have a face-to-face interview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – If you cannot go to the office, you can ask someone to go for you – If no one can go for you, you may ask for a home interview • If you are receiving SSI or Cash Assistance, you automatically qualify 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 65 years or older – Disabled – Blind – Child under 21 years old – Single parent with children under 21 years old • Must live in New York State • Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount • Value of what you own must not be more than a set \$ amount, except for pregnant women • Must apply in person and have a face-to-face interview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – If you cannot go to the office, you can ask someone to go for you – If no one can go for you, you may ask for a home interview
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.nyc.gov/html/hia/html/public_insurance/adults.shtml • HRA InfoLine: (877) 472-8411 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.nyc.gov/html/hia/html/public_insurance/excess.shtml • HRA InfoLine: (877) 472-8411
How do I get an application?	http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/fhplus/application.htm (English and Spanish)	
Office locations:	A list of office locations and their contact information can be found at http://www.nyc.gov/html/hia/html/public_insurance/enroll.shtml	

²⁰The patient's doctor must confirm that the medical care is for an emergency condition.

²¹You must first apply for Medicaid and if you make too much money to qualify for Medicaid, an administrator will let you know if you can get Medicaid Excess Income. If you do qualify, each month you must have medical bills that are more than the excess income amount. Medicaid will pay for any bills that are over your excess income amount.

²²You must pay each month to keep the coverage. For any month you do not have medical bills to pay or do not mail in the extra income to the program, you do not have health insurance.

²³Also available to seniors over 65 years old.

FAMILY HEALTH PLUS

Family Health Plus offers public health insurance for adults. A primary care doctor takes care of your health and sends you to a specialist doctor if you need to see one. Co-payments²⁴ are paid directly to the doctor. If you do not qualify for Medicaid because of income, you may qualify for Family Health Plus.

Family Health Plus	
Who qualifies?	Qualified immigrants and PRUCOL (including U visa holders)
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be 19-64 years old • Must not have health insurance • Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount • Must live in New York State • Value of what you own must not be more than a set \$ amount • Must apply in person and have a face-to-face interview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – If you cannot go to the office, you can ask someone to go for you – If no one can go for you, you may ask for a home interview
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/fhplus/what_is_fhp.htm • http://www.nyc.gov/html/hia/html/public_insurance/adults.shtml • HRA InfoLine: (877) 472-8411 • New York State Family Health Plus Information Line: (877) 934-7587
How do I get an application?	http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/fhplus/application.htm (English & Spanish)
Office locations:	A list of office locations and their contact information can be found at http://www.nyc.gov/html/hia/html/public_insurance/enroll.shtml

²⁴Co-payments are not needed from some people or for some medical services.

CHILD HEALTH PLUS (CHILDREN’S MEDICAID/CHILD HEALTH PLUS A AND CHILD HEALTH PLUS B)

Child Health Plus offers free or low cost health insurance for uninsured children. There are two types of health insurance programs for children, Children’s Medicaid (also known as Child Health Plus A) and Child Health Plus B. Child Health Plus B is for children whose families’ household income is too high to qualify for Children’s Medicaid. A primary care doctor takes care of your child’s health and will send your child to a specialist doctor if he or she needs to see one. If your child qualifies for Child Health Plus, you probably qualify for Healthy NY health insurance.

	Children’s Medicaid/Child Health Plus A	Child Health Plus B
Description of benefit:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No co-payments or deductibles • Covers mental institution care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No co-payments or deductibles • Depending on your household income, you might have to pay a small monthly fee (between \$9 and \$45) • Does not cover mental institution care
Who qualifies?	Children who are qualified immigrants and PRUCOL (including U visa holders)	Any child who does not qualify for Children’s Medicaid because of income or immigration status
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child must be 18 years old or younger • Child must live in New York State • Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount • No cap on the \$ value of what you own 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child must be 18 years old or younger • Child must live in New York State • Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount (which is higher than the set \$ amount for Child Health Plus A) • No cap on the \$ value of what you own
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/chplus/what_is_chp.htm • http://www.nyc.gov/html/hia/html/public_insurance/children.shtml • Child Health Plus Hotline: (800) 698-4543 • HRA InfoLine: (877) 472-8411 	
How do I get an application?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you need health insurance only for children 18 or younger, you can use either application: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Growing Up Healthy application http://www.nyhealth.gov/nysdoh/chplus/growing_up_healthy_application.htm (English) – Access NY Health Care application http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/chplus/access_ny_application.htm (English and Spanish) • If you need health insurance for children 18 or younger, and/or for yourself or other adults 19 years old or older, you can only use the Access NY Health Care application http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/chplus/access_ny_application.htm (English and Spanish) 	
Office locations:	A list of office locations and their contact information can be found at http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/chplus/where_do_i_apply.htm	

PRENATAL CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (PCAP)

Under PCAP, pregnant women get hospital care during pregnancy and delivery, lab tests, and other services related to pregnancy and for at least two months after giving birth. Babies get health care services for at least one year after birth. Immigration status does not matter.

Prenatal Care Assistance Program (PCAP)	
Who qualifies?	Everyone
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must be pregnant• Must live in New York State• Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• http://www.nyc.gov/html/hia/html/public_insurance/pregnant.shtml• Growing Up Healthy Hotline: (800) 522-5006
How do I get an application?	http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/chplus/access_ny_application.htm (English and Spanish)
Office locations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A list of office locations and their contact information can be found at http://www.nyc.gov/html/hia/html/public_insurance/enroll.shtml• A list of PCAP offices and their contact information can be found at http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/perinatal/en/pcapmap.htm

MEDICARE (PARTS A AND B)

Medicare is a health insurance program for seniors and people with certain disabilities or kidney failure. The program has two parts,²⁵ Part A (hospital insurance) and Part B (medical insurance). Neither Part A nor Part B gives you 100% insurance coverage.

	Medicare Part A (Hospital Insurance)	Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance)
Description of benefit:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covers in-patient care in skilled nursing facilities, hospitals, hospice, and home health care You get Part A when you turn 65 Most people do not have to pay for Part A if they have paid enough Medicare taxes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covers medically necessary services and supplies, such as outpatient care, doctor's services, preventative services, physical therapists, and home health care It is your choice to enroll Depending on household income, you might pay a monthly fee
Who qualifies? ²⁶	Qualified immigrants and lawfully present immigrants	
How do I qualify? ²⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You or your spouse must have paid enough Medicare tax Must be one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age 65 or older Under 65 but have disabilities Have kidney failure that requires a transplant or dialysis No cap on your household income or \$ value of what you own 	
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> http://www.medicare.gov http://www.medicare.gov/MedicareEligibility/home.asp?dest=NAV%7CHome%7CGeneralEnrollment&version=default&browser=IE%7C6%7CWinXP&language=English http://www.medicare.gov/Spanish/Overview.asp (Spanish) Medicare: (800) MEDICARE (633-4227) Social Security: (800) 772-1213 	
How do I get an application?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you already get social security benefits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You do not need to do anything. You will be automatically enrolled in Medicare Parts A and B the month you turn 65 years old If you are close to age 65 and not yet getting either social security or Medicare, or if you only want to apply for Medicare and not social security benefits, you can apply three months before the month you turn 65 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can apply online at www.socialsecurity.gov or go to a social security office 	
Office locations:	To find a social security office, go to https://secure.ssa.gov/apps6z/FOL0/fo001.jsp	

²⁵There are two other parts to Medicare, Part C and Part D. Because Parts C and D are not public benefits, these programs are not included in this guide. For general information on these two programs, please contact (800) MEDICARE.

²⁶If you are part of the End Stage Renal Disease Program, and you are the undocumented spouse or child of a citizen or qualified immigrant who has paid enough Medicare taxes, you can qualify for Medicare.

²⁷If you do not meet all of these requirements, you can still get Medicare if you are: 65 or older and a citizen or a lawfully admitted immigrant who has lived in the United States continuously for five years. If you do not meet all the requirements, you have to pay for Part A. If you have not paid Medicare taxes, you must have lived in the United States continuously for the five years before you apply.

ELDERLY PHARMACEUTICAL INSURANCE COVERAGE (EPIC) PROGRAM

EPIC is a prescription drug plan for senior citizens who need help paying for their prescription medicines. EPIC can be used with other prescription coverage, such as Medicare Part D²⁸ prescription drug plans, which will lower the cost of your medicine. Seniors who receive full Medicaid benefits are not eligible for EPIC.

	EPIC Fee Plan	EPIC Deductible Plan
Description of benefit:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must pay an annual fee, depending on your household income • Must pay a co-payment (\$3 - \$20) each time you pick-up a prescription 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No annual fee • Must pay the full price of your prescriptions until you reach your deductible (a set \$ amount for the year which depends on your household income) • After the deductible is paid, must pay a co-payment (\$3 - \$20)
Who qualifies?	If you are eligible for Medicare, you are eligible.	
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be age 65 or older • Must live in New York State • Must be enrolled in a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan • Single seniors can make up to \$20,000. Married seniors can make up to \$26,000. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be age 65 or older • Must live in New York State • Must be enrolled in a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan • Single seniors can make between \$20,001 and \$35,000. Married seniors can make between \$26,001 and \$50,000.
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.health.state.ny.us/health_care/epic/index.htm • EPIC Hotline: (800) 332-3742 (many languages are available) 	
How do I get an application?	http://www.health.state.ny.us/health_care/epic/application_contact.htm (English and Spanish)	

²⁸Medicare Part D is a prescription drug plan run by private companies and is not a public benefit.



Health Care Services

NURSE FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

The Nurse Family Partnership is a free program for women having their first baby. Nurses visit first-time mothers at their home throughout their pregnancy and until their baby is two years old. Immigration status does not matter.

Nurse Family Partnership	
Who qualifies?	Everyone
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A woman must be less than 28 weeks pregnant with her first baby • Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount • Can be any age
More information:	http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/ms/ms-nfp.shtml
How do I get an application?	Applications are available at Nurse Family Partnership offices (see below)
Contact information and Office locations:	To find an office and its contact information go to http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/csi/nfp-map.pdf and http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/ms/ms-nfp.shtml

FAMILY PLANNING BENEFIT PROGRAM (FPBP)

FPBP offers family planning services to people who cannot pay for them. Services include contraception, emergency contraception, tests for sexually transmitted diseases and HIV, male and female sterilization, pre-pregnancy counseling, and other services.

Family Planning Benefit Program (FPBP)	
Who qualifies?	Qualified immigrants and PRUCOL (including U visa holders)
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be a woman or man of childbearing age (up to age 64) • Must live in New York State • Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount • Must apply in person and have a face-to-face interview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – If you cannot go to the office, you can ask someone to go for you – If no one can go for you, you may ask for a home interview
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.nyc.gov/html/hia/html/public_insurance/family.shtml • http://www.health.state.ny.us/health_care/medicaid/program/longterm/familyplanbenprog.htm • HRA: (718) 557-1399 or HRA InfoLine: (877) 472-8411
How do I get an application?	Applications are available at various locations (see below)
Office locations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A list of office locations and their contact information can be found at http://www.nyc.gov/html/hia/html/public_insurance/enroll.shtml • To find a family planning provider, call (800) 541-2831 or go to http://www.nyc.gov/html/hia/downloads/pdf/fpbp_approved_providers.pdf



Housing Programs

DISABILITY RENT INCREASE EXEMPTION (DRIE)

DRIE protects disabled renters from being forced out of their apartments as rents increase. Instead of paying your landlord extra money when he or she raises the rent, the landlord gets a tax credit from the city. You should apply within 120 days of your rent increase to get the most benefits.

Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE)

Who qualifies?	Qualified immigrants and PRUCOL (including U visa holders)
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must rent an eligible apartment (renters who live in Public Housing or Section 8 housing do not qualify) • Must be a disabled adult and the head of household on the apartment lease or a disabled adult and the spouse or domestic partner of the person on the lease • Must get state or federal disability-related cash assistance or disability-related Medicaid • Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount • Must pay more than 30% of your household income in rent
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.nyc.gov/html/dof/html/property/property_tax_reduc_drie.shtml • Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities: (212) 788-2830 If you are deaf, call (212) 788-2838
How do I get an application?	http://www.nyc.gov/html/dof/html/pdf/08pdf/drie_instructions.pdf

SENIOR CITIZEN RENT INCREASE EXEMPTION (SCRIE)

SCRIE protects renters who are seniors from being forced out of their apartments as rents increase. Instead of paying your landlord extra money when he or she raises the rent, the landlord gets a tax credit from the city. You should apply within 90 days of your rent increase to get the most benefits.

Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE)	
Who qualifies?	Qualified immigrants and PRUCOL (including U visa holders)
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be at least 62 years old and be head of the household • Must live in a rent-controlled, rent-stabilized apartment, Mitchell-Lama apartment²⁹ or rent-regulated hotel unit • The apartment or hotel unit must be your home • Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount • Must pay more than 30% of your household income in rent • No cap on the \$ value of what you own
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.nyc.gov/html/dfta/html/scrie/scrie.shtml#links (English) • http://www.nyc.gov/html/dfta/html/scrie_ch/scrie_ch.shtml (Chinese) • http://www.nyc.gov/html/dfta/html/scrie_ru/scrie_ru.shtml (Russian) • http://www.nyc.gov/html/dfta/html/scrie_sp/scrie_sp.shtml (Spanish) • NYC Department for the Aging: (212) 442-9366 • For Mitchell-Lama tenants only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – http://www.nyc.gov/html/hpd/html/tenants/scrie.shtml – NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development: (212) 863-8494
How do I get an application?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.nyc.gov/html/dfta/downloads/pdf/scrie.pdf (English) • For Mitchell-Lama tenants only: http://www.nyc.gov/html/hpd/downloads/pdf/scrie-app.pdf

SENIOR CITIZEN HOMEOWNER'S EXEMPTION (SCHE)

SCHE provides a property tax reduction to eligible seniors who own their house or apartment. The exemption reduces the estimated value of the homeowner's home between 5 and 50% which reduces the homeowner's property taxes. Homeowners who receive SCHE automatically receive Enhanced STAR tax reductions. You must turn in your application by March 17.

Senior Citizen Homeowner's Exemption (SCHE)	
Who qualifies?	Qualified immigrants and PRUCOL (including U visa holders)
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be at least 65 years old³⁰ • Must have owned the house or apartment for at least one year • Must live in the house or apartment you own • Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount • No cap on the \$ value of what you own
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://home2.nyc.gov/html/dof/html/property/property_tax_reduc_individual.shtml#sche • NYC Department of Finance Property Tax Customer Assistance: (212) 504-4080
How do I get an application?	http://home2.nyc.gov/html/dof/html/property/property_tax_reduc_individual.shtml#forms (English, Chinese, Creole, Korean, Russian, and Spanish)

²⁹Mitchell-Lama apartments are apartments for middle-income families.

³⁰If husband and wife are co-owners, only one person must be 65 or older. If unmarried people are co-owners, then all owners must be 65 or older. If you are a veteran, spouse of a qualified veteran, or a widow or widower, you can be under the age of 65 and still get SCHE.

SCHOOL TAX RELIEF (STAR)

STAR lowers property taxes for people who own their house or apartment. There are two types of STAR, Basic and Enhanced STAR. Homeowners who get SCHE automatically get Enhanced STAR tax reductions. You must turn in your application by March 17.

	Basic STAR	Enhanced STAR
Who qualifies?	Qualified immigrants and PRUCOL (including U visa holders)	
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must own house or apartment you live in • No cap on household income or \$ value of what you own • Can be any age 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must own house or apartment you live in • Must be at least 65 years old • Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount • No cap on the \$ value of what you own
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://home2.nyc.gov/html/dof/html/pdf/07pdf/faq-star-06-20-07.pdf • http://home2.nyc.gov/html/dof/html/property/property_tax_reduc_individual.shtml#star • NYC Department of Finance Property Tax Customer Assistance: (212) 504-4080 	
How do I get an application?	http://home2.nyc.gov/html/dof/html/property/property_tax_reduc_individual.shtml#forms (English, Chinese, Creole, Korean, Russian, and Spanish)	

DISABLED HOMEOWNERS' EXEMPTION (DHE)

DHE lowers property taxes by lowering the estimated value of the homeowner's home between 5 and 50%. You must turn in your application by March 17.

Disabled Homeowners' Exemption (DHE)	
Who qualifies?	Qualified immigrants and PRUCOL (including U visa holders)
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must own³¹ house or apartment you live in • Must have a physical or mental disability • Must have proof of your disability • No cap on your household income or \$ value of what you own
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://home2.nyc.gov/html/dof/html/property/property_tax_reduc_individual.shtml#dhe • NYC Department of Finance Property Tax Customer Assistance: (212) 504-4080
How do I get an application?	http://home2.nyc.gov/html/dof/html/property/property_tax_reduc_individual.shtml#forms (English, Chinese, Creole, Korean, Russian, and Spanish)

³¹If a husband and wife or brothers and/or sisters own the property, only one owner needs to have a disability to qualify for DHE. If co-owners are not married or related, then all owners must be disabled.

VETERAN'S EXEMPTION

Veterans and their spouses, or a parent whose child died in the line of duty can pay less or no property tax. You must turn in your application by March 17.

Veteran's Exemption	
Who qualifies?	Qualified immigrants and PRUCOL (including U visa holders)
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A qualified veteran (served during one of the following conflicts): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1st Persian Gulf Conflict (beginning August 2, 1990) - Vietnam War - Korean War - World War II - World War I – Be the spouse of a qualified veteran – Be the widow or widower of a qualified veteran – Be the parent of a child who died in the line of duty while serving in the U.S. armed forces during one of the conflicts above • Must own house or apartment you live in • No cap on your household income or \$ value of what you own
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://home2.nyc.gov/html/dof/html/property/property_tax_reduc_individual.shtml#veterans • NYC Department of Finance Property Tax Customer Assistance: (212) 504-4080
How do I get an application?	http://home2.nyc.gov/html/dof/html/property/property_tax_reduc_individual.shtml#forms (English, Chinese, Creole, Korean, Russian, and Spanish)

PUBLIC HOUSING

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) runs 345 housing developments with low-cost apartments for low-income families. Your part of the rent is 30% of the money your family makes. The waiting list can be very long.

Public Housing	
Who qualifies?	Most qualified immigrants ^{32, 33}
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be at least 18 years old (to qualify for senior housing, you must be at least 62 years old) • Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount • Must clear a criminal background check • All applicants must have a face-to-face interview. If you cannot go to the office, a telephone interview may be scheduled.
More information:	http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/html/assistance/app_for_pubhsg.shtml
How do I get an application and Contact information?	Applications can be found at NYCHA offices. A list of these offices and their contact information can be found at http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/html/assistance/borolocations.shtml

³²The Housing Act does not include qualified immigrants who are Cuban/Haitian entrants or battered spouses and children of a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident. If you are a Cuban/Haitian entrant who is residing in the U.S. under grant of parole, then you are eligible.

³³As long as 1 person in the household is a U.S. citizen or a qualified immigrant, the household can apply. The fewer eligible people in the household, the less the benefit will be.

SECTION 8 HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Section 8 helps low-income families pay the rent for an apartment. Your part of the rent is 30% of your household income. You find your own apartment. The landlord must agree to be a partner with the Section 8 program.

Currently, your Section 8 application will only be accepted if you are in one of the emergency situations listed below:

- Referred by the District Attorney’s Office
- Referred by ACS Family Unification and Independent Living Programs
- Victim of domestic violence

No other Section 8 Housing Assistance applications will be accepted at this time.

Section 8 Housing Assistance	
Who qualifies?	Most qualified immigrants³⁴
How do I qualify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be at least 18 years old • Household income must not be more than a set \$ amount • Must clear a criminal background check • Must have a face-to-face interview. If you cannot go to the office, a telephone interview may be scheduled.
More information:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/html/section8/section8.shtml (English) • http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/downloads/pdf/070213N.pdf (English) • http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/downloads/pdf/070213SN.pdf (Spanish)
How do I get an application and Contact information?	Applications can be found at NYCHA offices. A list of these offices and their contact information can be found at http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/html/assistance/borolocations.shtml

³⁴See 2 comments above.

Frequently Asked Questions on Applying for Benefits (FAQs)

IF I GET A PUBLIC BENEFIT, WILL I BE CONSIDERED A PUBLIC CHARGE AND NOT BE ABLE TO GET MY GREEN CARD SOMEDAY?

Getting most benefits will NOT stop you from getting your green card. If you have gotten or get cash benefits now, you might be considered a public charge. For example, if you get Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Cash Assistance (Family Assistance or Safety Net Assistance), or Medicaid—but only for institutional long-term care—you might have a problem when you apply for a green card. Getting non-cash benefits will usually NOT cause a problem with your green card application. Generally, of the benefits listed above, the only benefit most immigrants will qualify for is Safety Net Assistance.

HOW MUCH INCOME CAN I HAVE?

The amount of income you can have is different for each benefit. Because the income limits change every year, you should always get more information about the benefit from the government agency, an immigration service provider, or a not-for-profit group to see if you qualify. For most benefits your household income must not be more than a set amount. Household income does NOT matter when applying for these benefits:

- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSD)
- Federal and state child and dependent care credit
- Reduced Fare MetroCard
- Unemployment Insurance
- School Meals (breakfast only)
- Summer Meals (breakfast and lunch)
- Universal Prekindergarten (UPK)
- Out-of-School Time (OST)
- Medicare
- School Tax Relief (Basic STAR)
- Disabled Homeowners' Exemption (DHE)
- Veteran's Exemption

DO I HAVE TO HAVE A JOB?

No, to apply for most benefits, you do not need to have a job. For some benefits (Cash Assistance and Food Stamps), you may have to work a set number of hours once you get the benefit so that you can keep it.

HOW MUCH MONEY WILL I GET?

The amount of the benefit will depend on several factors, such as the number of people in your household, your income, the \$ value of what you own, and other factors. Every person's situation is different, so your benefit amount will be different from other people's.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR A BENEFIT?

This guide does not give step-by-step instructions on how to apply for a benefit. You should call a not-for-profit organization to help you apply for the benefit. You can also call the New York City Office of the Public Advocate at (212) 669-7250 for help.

WHAT IF I HAVE A PROBLEM APPLYING FOR A BENEFIT, AM DENIED, OR DISAGREE WITH THE DECISION MADE?

Call the New York City Office of the Public Advocate at (212) 669-7250 for help.

Glossary of Eligibility Category Terms

Amerasians are lawful permanent residents (see below) born in Vietnam after January 1, 1962 and before January 1, 1976 who have a father who is a United States citizen.

Asylees are people already in the United States or found at a port of entry who are determined by an Immigration Court or agent to be unable or unwilling to go back to the country they come from because of a reasonable fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a certain social group, or political opinion.

Battered immigrant spouses and children have been abused or treated with extreme cruelty by a spouse or parent who is a United States citizen or lawful permanent resident (see below).

Cuban or Haitian entrants are citizens of Cuba or Haiti who have been granted parole (see below), or have an application for asylum (see above) in process or are in a removal proceeding in Immigration Court which has not yet resulted in a final Order of Removal.

Immigrants who were granted parole in the U.S. for at least one year are people who were allowed into the United States because of a dangerous emergency in their home country or because they can help the United States. Parole is temporary. Parolees must leave when the emergency is over or they can no longer help the United States.

Immigrants whose deportation or removal is being withheld are people who entered the United States and were put in removal proceedings, but an immigration judge decided that they would be harmed if they were deported or removed because of their race, religion, nationality, membership in a certain social group, or political opinion.

Non-immigrants are people who are in the United States for a specific purpose for a set amount of time. This group includes students, workers, and tourists. This category of people generally does not qualify for public benefits.

Lawful Permanent Residents (Permanent Resident Aliens or Green Card Holders) have the legal right to live permanently in the United States.

Lawfully present immigrants are qualified immigrants or people who entered the United States legally and who have not broken the terms of their visa.

Lawfully residing active duty service member or honorably discharged veterans and their families are qualified immigrants who have entered the United States legally, currently serve or have served in the U.S. military, and are lawfully residing in the United States.

PRUCOL (Permanently Residing Under Color of Law) immigrants are people who live in the United States and DHS knows they are here. DHS has given permission to these immigrants to stay in the United States or is not taking any steps to deport them, usually because they are applying for some benefit. There are many types of PRUCOL immigrants, such as immigrant crime victims (U visa holders) (see below), immigrants granted parole in the U.S. for less than 1 year, immigrants with deferred action status, or people under Orders of Supervision. In New York State, they can qualify for state and city benefits.

Qualified immigrants (Qualified aliens) are people in several different categories (see the section on Eligibility Categories Used to Qualify for Public Benefits at the beginning of this guide for a complete list) who have legal and proper documentation and are eligible for federal, state, and city benefits.

Refugees are people outside their country of nationality who are unable or unwilling to go back to that country because of fear of persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, membership in a certain social group, or political opinion. Refugees apply for and get this status before they enter the United States.

Trafficked immigrants (T visa holders) are people brought into the United States and forced into prostitution, slavery, or forced labor. They get a T visa. Trafficked immigrants are not technically qualified immigrants, but by law, they can get all the same benefits as refugees.

Victims of Crime (U visa holders) are undocumented immigrants who have suffered major physical or mental abuse as crime victims (domestic violence, assault, rape, etc.) and get legal status by helping authorities prosecute crime. They get a U visa. U visa holders are not qualified immigrants, but are PRUCOL (see above). They do not qualify for all benefits.

Undocumented immigrants are immigrants who entered the United States without legal papers or who stayed longer than their visa allowed. They only qualify for a few benefits.

U.S. citizens are people who were born in the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam, U.S. Virgin Islands, or Northern Marianas. Also includes people who became U.S. citizens by naturalization, by acquisition (through a U.S. citizen parent), or by derivation (through a parent's naturalization).

U.S. nationals are people who are born in countries that are in U.S. possession, such as American Samoa.

The Office of the Public Advocate for the City of New York makes every effort to print accurate and reliable information. It does not guarantee or warrant that the information is complete, accurate, or up-to-date. The Office reviewed the benefits highlighted in this guide by examining information posted on the websites of the government agencies that administer the benefits and/or contacting an agency representative to verify information to the extent possible, as of 9/5/08. The Office of the Public Advocate for the City of New York assumes no responsibility for the use or application of any printed material and assumes no responsibility for any error or omission.

If you are seeking specific information or need assistance with the application process, please contact the government agency directly or a not-for-profit group, if applicable. If you are seeking immigration status information, you should seek professional legal advice.

If you should find errors or omissions, please contact us at 1 Centre Street, 15th floor, New York, NY 10007.