

Overview of DPPHS Benefits Programs

Food Security

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The SNAP Program provides food assistance to low-income Montanans. The average monthly benefit amount is \$258 per household (in October 2021 this increased by approximately 25%), and the average SNAP household receives SNAP benefits for 18 months. The federal government sets the eligibility criteria for this entitlement program. One in every eleven Montanans receives SNAP benefits, and nearly two-thirds of SNAP participants are children, elderly, or have disabilities.

Of those receiving SNAP in FY 2020:

- 42% children
- 16% disabled non-elderly adults
- 8% seniors

The SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) Program helps SNAP participants enhance skills, training, or work experience to increase their ability to obtain regular employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency. Montana has SNAP E&T programs in Billings, Missoula, and Helena, and will be expanding into additional counties within the next year, with the goal of covering all counties by 2027.

Montana's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

The Montana WIC Program strives to assure healthy pregnancies, healthy birth outcomes, and healthy growth and development for women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk. WIC services include: Health Screening and Referrals; Nutrition Education and Breastfeeding Support; Healthy foods prescribed to meet the unique needs of the mother and children.

Families with incomes below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level qualify for WIC. For example, a family of three with an annual income of \$40,182 is eligible to receive WIC services.

Energy Assistance

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

LIHEAP, funded through a block grant, helps low-income households reduce their energy burden. Based on financial eligibility, the average household subsidy through LIHEAP for the 2019-2020 heating season equated to about \$126 per month.

Of those receiving LIHEAP assistance in FY 2020:

- 45% disabled
- 45% elderly
- 18% households with small children

Weatherization

The Weatherization program benefits low-income recipients by investing in energy saving measures to reduce heating costs and lower energy consumption. Investing in weatherization dollars lowers the cost of heating bills for the household over time. Weatherization supports low-income families in maintaining safe, stable, and affordable housing.

Not only does the Weatherization Program help low-income families and individuals lower their home energy costs and increase their health and safety, the Weatherization Program creates jobs. Whenever possible, materials are purchased locally. Houses are prioritized based on eligibility of the dwelling and high energy burden with preference provided to those households with elderly, persons with a disability, or children. In FY 2020, households receiving weatherization assistance resulted in a reduction of annual energy costs by an average of approximately 35%. Seventy-one percent (71%) of the supported households own their home.

Of those receiving weatherization support in FY 2020:

- 42% disabled
- 36% elderly
- 19% households with small children

Healthcare Coverage

Medicaid/Healthy Montana Kids

Healthcare coverage through Medicaid and Healthy Montana Kids includes a wide range of the state's population, from infants to senior citizens, and children and adults with disabilities in need of community services and long-term care .

The largest categories of coverage include:

- **Medicaid Expansion:** Provides healthcare coverage to adult members of Montana families whose household countable income equal is between than 25% and 138% FPL.
- **Healthy Montana Kids/Healthy Montana Kids Plus:** Provides medically necessary health care coverage for children through the month of their 19th birthday, in families with countable income up to 266% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).
- **Aged/Blind/Disabled Medicaid:** Provides healthcare coverage to blind or disabled using Social Security criteria, and if their income and resources are within allowable limits. Any aged, blind, or disabled individual determined eligible for SSI is automatically eligible for Medicaid coverage.

Employment and Family Support

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

The Montana TANF Program is temporary assistance designed to help families become stable, able to work, and financially secure. To be eligible for TANF, the household must have a child or include a pregnant woman in her 3rd trimester. The federal limitation on temporary assistance is 60 months in a lifetime. In addition to the state-run TANF program, four tribes manage their own TANF programs: the Blackfoot Tribe, Chippewa Cree Tribe, Fort Belknap Tribes, and Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT).

Clients eligible for TANF services may be eligible to receive cash assistance and/or other supports to assist in meeting the goals of family stability, employability, and financial security. On average, a TANF client receives assistance for nine months. In 2020, 78% of TANF participants were children.

TANF clients are required to participate in work and training activities each month. The number of hours, and the countable activities depend on the ages of the individual and their children.

Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarships

The Best Beginnings Scholarship Program helps low-income families with children birth to 13 years old access child care. The Best Beginnings Scholarship Program supports working families, students, children served through Child and Family Services, and families served through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Programs. Eligible families must meet income and activity requirements. A family of three making up to \$3,313 per month is eligible at 150% FPL. Families assume a percentage of their child's cost of care through a monthly copayment made directly to the child care provider.

Not only do families benefit from the Best Beginnings Scholarship Program, so do early care and education providers. The Early Childhood Services Bureau uses validated market survey data to determine competitive reimbursement rates for licensed child care providers. Additionally, policies are designed to support continuity of care and staffing for the child care provider and the child to assure consistency and quality in licensed child care programs.

FOOD SECURITY

Program	Type of Program	Number of Participants (July 2021)	Income Thresholds	Resource Limits	Age
Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) - Food Assistance	Entitlement	95,525	Gross monthly income (GMI) up to 200% of FPL, and after allowable deductions (rent, utilities, childcare), net monthly income (NMI) cannot exceed 100% of FPL	N/A for most households	All
WIC	Entitlement	approximately 14,000 participants monthly	Up to 185% FPL	N/A	Women who are pregnant, breastfeeding (up to one year) or postpartum nonbreastfeeding (up to 6 months). Infants & Children birth up to 5 years.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)	Block Grant	15,694	Higher of: 60% of the Statewide Median Income OR 150% of FPL	1 person HH - \$12,043 and increases per HH member	All
Weatherization	Block Grant	877 homes completed annually	200% of FPL	1 person HH - \$12,043 and increases per HH member	All

HEALTHCARE COVERAGE

Program	Type of Program	Number of Participants (July 2021)	Income Thresholds	Resource Limits	Age
Medicaid Expansion	Entitlement	107,542	138% FPL	N/A	19-64
Healthy Montana Kids/Healthy Montana Kids Plus	Entitlement	126,044	266% FPL	N/A	Under 19
Aged/Blind/Disabled (ABD) Medicaid	Entitlement	26,781	Varies by individual eligibility group	\$2,000 single/\$3,000 couple for most. Exception is Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities (MWD) is \$15,000 single/\$30,000 couple	All

EMPLOYMENT AND FAMILY SUPPORT

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) - Cash/Training Assistance	Block Grant	4,423	Net income is 30% of the 2011 federal poverty index	\$3,000 per Household	Families with children or a woman in her third trimester of pregnancy
Best Beginnings	Block Grant	Average number of children served each month 3,467. Average number of families served each month 2,404. In FY21, BBS served unduplicated 4,465 families, and 5,774 unduplicated children.	Up to 150% FPL - graduated eligibility once already receiving assistance up to 200% FPL. The gross monthly income of all adult and minor household members is evaluated in determining household eligibility.	Households with assets that exceed \$1,000,000 are not eligible for the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship Program.	Eligible child must be under 12 years old at the time of eligibility determination