NC Department of Health and Human Services

Division of Social Services

Special Assistance Overview

WHAT IS SPECIAL ASSISTANCE?

Basic SA and SA-In Home

State/County Special Assistance (SA) is a Supplemental Security Income (SSI) state supplement that pays cash benefits to eligible beneficiaries who reside in licensed facilities authorized to receive SA payments. The SA payment is funded by 50% county dollars and 50% state dollars. SA beneficiaries are automatically eligible for Medicaid. These funds are used to pay for room and board.

The Special Assistance In-Home Program (SA/IH) provides an alternative to placement in a SA facility by providing a cash supplement to individuals who desire and are able to live at home safely with additional supportive services.

HOW TO APPLY FOR SPECIAL ASSISTANCE

The applicant or the authorized representative must apply for Special Assistance in person at the local Department of Social Services.

The county in which the applicant lives, or last lived, is the county in which you must receive Special Assistance.

Courtesy applications can be completed by a difference county Department of Social Services if the authorized representative or applicant has difficulty in reaching your local county Department of Social Services.

For the Special Assistance program, an authorized representative may apply on behalf on an individual. An authorized representative is any individual who is legally authorized or designated in writing by the applicant to act on the applicant's behalf. Authorized representatives include Legal Guardian, Power of Attorney, Health care Power of Attorney, Department of Social Services, Spouse (not separated), Parent (for a child under 21), Authorized representative who has been designated in writing by the applicant to assist with eligibility issues and who can have access to the information in the case file.

HOW TO APPLY FOR SPECIAL ASSISTANCE

The application processing time standard for Special Assistance to the Aged (SAA) is 45 days.

The application processing time standard for Special Assistance to the Disabled is 60 days.

The applicant/authorized representative will be provided with a written notice of information needed to process the application.

The applicant/authorized representative will be provided written notice of the eligibility decision.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Must be an individual who is age 65 or older; or is 18-64 and disabled or legally blind; or an individual under 18 who is legally blind.
- Must reside in North Carolina with the intent to remain and meet residency requirements.
- Must not be an inmate in a jail or prison.
- Must be a U.S. citizen or qualified alien
- Must receive SSI or is financially ineligible for SSI due to income.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS CONTINUED

- Must reside in a licensed facility authorized to receive SA payments.
- Must require the level of care provided in a licensed adult care home or supervised living and must have a valid FL-2 requiring domiciliary level of care, that is signed and dated by a physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner.
- Specifically for individuals who require Special Care Unit (also known as memory care units) payments at the SA Enhanced rate, the FL-2 must have a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease, dementia, major neurocognitive disorder or other forms of irreversible memory impairing conditions.

INCOME REQUIREMENTS

- All income that an applicant/beneficiary receives is countable income and is used to determine eligibility for the Special Assistance program. This includes both earned and unearned income.

- Each SA applicant or their authorized representative must be informed that they must apply for all benefits to which they may be entitled and must receive the maximum benefit for which they are eligible. This includes income such as: SSI, Social Security Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (RSDI), Veteran's benefits, Worker's Compensation, a union or private employer pension, Civil service pension or other such income
- Examples of countable earned income includes but is not limited to wages, self-employment.

INCOME LIMITS

2026	
Basic Rate	$1,397.00
PNA	$ 70.00
Maintenance amount	**$1,467.00**
Enhanced Rate	$1,792.00
PNA	$ 70.00
Maintenance amount	**$1,862.00**

2027	
Basic Rate	$1,447.00
PNA	$ 70.00
Maintenance amount	**$1,517.00**
Enhanced Rate	$1,857.00
PNA	$ 70.00
Maintenance amount	**$1,927.00**

RESOURCES

Resources are all financial assets that an applicant owns or has the right, authority, or power to convert to cash, and are legally available for the applicant's support.

The resource limit is $2000.00

Resources are classified as either liquid resources or real property.

RESOURCES CONTINUED

Liquid resources includes but not limited to cash, bank accounts, certificates of deposit, IRA, 401K, Annuities, investments such as stocks or bonds, cash value of life insurance policies or any resource that can be converted to cash. This also includes personal property such as but is not limited to, motor vehicles, junked motor vehicles, mobile homes, boats/trailers, campers.

Real property consists of land and any attachments such as dwellings and other buildings. This includes jointly owned property.

If an applicant/beneficiary gives away, transfers, or sells resources for less than the current market value, they may be ineligible for Special Assistance.

The lookback date for Special Assistance is 3 years (36 months prior to the date of application).