Safety Net Assistance (SNA)

Eligibility

Safety Net Assistance (SNA) provides cash assistance to eligible needy individuals and families who are not eligible for Family Assistance, including:

- Single adults,
- Childless couples,
- Children living apart from any adult relative,
- Families of persons found to be abusing drugs or alcohol,
- Families of persons refusing drug/alcohol screening, assessment or treatment,
- Non-citizens who are eligible for Temporary Assistance (TA), but who are not eligible for federal reimbursement (See attached chart, Non-Citizen Eligibility Desk Aid), and
- Recipients of SNA who are determined to be able to work must also comply with work requirements to receive SNA benefits.

Generally, eligible recipients can receive cash SNA for a maximum of two years in a lifetime. After that, if eligible for SNA, it is provided in non-cash form, such as a payment made directly to landlords or vouchers sent directly to a utility company. In addition, non-cash SNA is provided for:

- Families of persons found to be abusing drugs or alcohol,
- Families of persons refusing drug/alcohol screening, assessment, or treatment, and
- Families with an adult who has exceeded the 60-month lifetime time limit.

Assistance

Basic grants, utility assistance and shelter allowances vary by county and by family size. For a family of four in most counties the total amount available to cover basic needs, utilities and shelter would be about $800 and up to $1000 in Nassau and Suffolk. Medicaid benefits are separate from this calculation. These rates were last set in 2012 and have not increased since.
Today, the counties and New York City are responsible for 71 percent of the cost of this program and the state covers 29 percent. Not long after the Great Recession the state changed the sharing formula from a 50/50, state/local split to what they are today.

### National Comparisons

Only 22 states have similar general assistance programs (Safety Net in NYS).

- NYS is the only state in the nation that provides general assistance for disabled, unemployable, and employable people.
- NYS has the 6th highest state cash assistance amount.
- NYS is one of only a few states that have no time limit on general state assistance.
- NYS is one of only 16 states that have no time limit on general state assistance.

### NON-CITIZEN ELIGIBILITY DESK AID

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Status</th>
<th>WMS ACI Code</th>
<th>Common Documentation</th>
<th>WMS DOS and DEC Codes¹</th>
<th>Safety Net Assistance (SNA)</th>
<th>Family Assistance (FA)</th>
<th>Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) without 40 Qualifying Quarters</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>1-551 Permanent Resident Card: workers must check category code; Temporary 1-551 stamp in foreign passport or on I-64 Arrival/Departure Record; or Immigrant visa with the notation &quot;upon endorsement serves as temporary 1-551 permanent resident for one year.&quot;</td>
<td>DOS is the date status was obtained</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes if: Entered the U.S. on or after 8/22/96 and has continuously resided in the U.S. for five years; or Entered the U.S. before 8/22/96 and was lawfully residing in the U.S. on that date.</td>
<td>Yes if: In a qualified status and in receipt of certain disability benefits (7 USC 1396d(a)(7)); or in a qualified status and under age 18; or After five years in U.S. in a qualified status; or Currently in a qualified status and was age 65 or older on 8/22/96 and was lawfully residing in the U.S. on that date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPR with 40 Qualifying Quarters</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Same LPR documentation as above and Proof of 40 qualifying quarters²</td>
<td>DOS is the date status was obtained</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes if: In a qualified status and in receipt of certain disability benefits (7 USC 1396d(a)(7)); or in a qualified status and under age 18; or Currently in a qualified status and was age 65 or older on 8/22/96 and was lawfully residing in the U.S. on that date.</td>
<td>Yes if: In a qualified status and in receipt of certain disability benefits (7 USC 1396d(a)(7)); or in a qualified status and under age 18; or After five years in U.S. in a qualified status; or Currently in a qualified status and was age 65 or older on 8/22/96 and was lawfully residing in the U.S. on that date.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹The Date of Status (DOS) field in the Welfare Management System (WMS) identifies the date a non-citizen obtained a qualified status, which is indicated by the appropriate Alien Citizenship Indicator (ACI) code, and is used to calculate when a qualified non-citizen reaches five years in a qualified status and then becomes eligible for federally funded assistance. If otherwise eligible, non-citizens that are considered Permanently Residing Under Color of Law (PRUCOL) are not qualified non-citizens, therefore, their time in a status that is considered PRUCOL does not count towards the five years. For non-citizens that are PRUCOL, the DOS field is left blank. If a non-citizen who is PRUCOL, is not a qualified status, the date that the qualified status is obtained is the date that he is entered in the DOS field.

²Workers must check the “Category” code on the documentation provided to make the correct eligibility determination for federal benefits (FA, SNAP). This code is used to describe the category that is used to admit a non-citizen to the U.S. as a permanent resident. It is located on the front side of the I-551 Permanent Resident Card next to the cardholder’s A number. This field is also known as a class of admission (COA), as seen on the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) report. As illustrated on this desk aid, certain non-citizens who have an I-551 Permanent Resident Card, often referred to as a “green card,” may not be subject to the “five-year bar” on federal benefits depending on the category code on the I-551.

Additionally, it is essential that the category code included in the qualified battered non-citizen section on page 3 of the desk aid is identified. This is because, for qualified battered non-citizens, the DOS is often prior to the “Resident Since” date on the I-551 Permanent Resident Card.

Note:
- Individuals born in certain territories of the U.S. as U.S. citizens at birth. These include: Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Panama Canal Zone (those born between 2/3/1899 and 10/1/1978). In addition, individuals who are born outside of the U.S. may be U.S. citizens at birth if one or both parents were U.S. citizens at their time of birth. Districts must verify citizenship status for these individuals. Individuals who are not U.S. citizens at birth may become U.S. citizens through naturalization. Naturalization is the conferring of U.S. citizenship after birth by any means whatsoever. Individuals born in American Samoa or Swains Island are nationals of the U.S. and for purposes of benefit eligibility should be treated as citizens. ACI code: “2.”
- To qualify for cash assistance, a non-citizen must be a lawful permanent resident (LPR) with 40 Qualifying Quarters (LPR with 40 Qualifying Quarters) or an LPR with 40 Qualifying Quarters. As used in this desk aid, the term “non-citizen” means a person who is not a citizen or national of the U.S. The term “qualified non-citizen” means a person who is a “qualified alien” as that term is defined in 8 U.S.C. §1158(a).