

Your Guide to Public Benefits in Rhode Island

Find, understand, and apply for programs in your state that can help:

- Increase your income,
- Save money on prescription drugs
- Pay doctors' bills;
- Buy groceries; and
- Cover other basic costs.

This fact sheet describes the programs in your state, helps you decide which are right for you, and tells you how to sign up. Income guidelines, eligibility requirements, and telephone numbers are subject to change. For the most up-to-date information in your ZIP code area log on to www.aarp.org/quicklink.

You can also go to the Benefits QuickLINK website (www.aarp.org/quicklink) to find out if you qualify for the benefits listed below or to print out applications for programs in your state.

Paying for Health Care and Prescription Drugs

Medicare

Benefit: Health insurance that helps pay for preventive care, doctor visits, hospital stays and prescription drugs.

Who can apply: People who are 65 and older, and younger people with disabilities or kidney failure.

How to apply: Call the Social Security Administration toll-free at **1-800-772-1213** and tell the operator where you live. You



can also log on to www.socialsecurity.gov and select “Questions about Medicare.” For information about the Medicare prescription drug coverage, call **1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)** or log on to www.medicare.gov.

For additional assistance, call the Rhode Island State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) at **401-462-4444** or log on to www.dea.ri.gov/insurance.

Medicare Savings Programs

Benefit: Pays for some of the costs of Medicare, including the Part B premium, deductibles, and co-payments. How much you get depends on your income and assets.

Who can apply: People who get Medicare and earn around \$1,219 per month for one person, or \$1,640 per month for a married couple.

How to apply: For more information, call your local DHS office listed in the Local Office Directory. For a complete list, log on to www.dhs.state.ri.us/dhs/doffices.htm or call the Rhode Island State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) at **401-462-4444**.

Medicare Rx Extra Help

Benefit: Pays for the monthly fee and deductible for Medicare prescription drug coverage, and lowers prescription drug co-payments.

Who can apply: People who get Medicare and have combined savings, investments and real estate (other than your home) are not worth more than \$12,510 if you are single, or \$25,010 if you are married and living with your spouse and have a limited income.

How to apply: Call the Social Security Administration toll-free at **1-800-772-1213** and ask for the Medicare Rx Extra Help application. You can also log on to www.socialsecurity.gov and click on the Medicare section.

For additional assistance, call the Rhode Island State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) at **401-462-4444** or log on to www.dea.ri.gov/insurance.

Rhode Island Pharmaceutical Assistance for the Elderly (RIPAE)

Benefit: Prescription drug assistance for adults 65 and older.

Who can apply: Individuals 65 and older with an annual income up to \$19,785, and married couples with a combined annual income up to \$24,735 receive a 60% discount on certain prescription medications; individuals 65 and older with an annual income between \$19,786 and \$24,838, and married couples with a combined annual income

between \$24,736 and \$31,050 receive a 30% discount; and individuals 65 and older with an annual income between \$24,838 and \$43,470, and married couples with a combined income between \$31,050 and \$49,679 receive a 15% discount on prescription medications. Individuals aged 55-64 years must be on Social Security Disability and are only eligible for a 15% state co-payment.

How to apply: For more information or an application, call the Department of Elderly Affairs at **401-462-3000** or log on to <http://adrc.ohhs.ri.gov/hottopics/RIPAE.php>.

Medicaid

Benefit: Provides medical coverage for hospital care, health center and clinical services, doctor care, nurse care, lab and X-ray services and nursing homes.

Who can apply: People who are 65 or older, blind or have disabilities, few resources, or in some cases, high medical bills. To qualify, you must meet Medicaid income and asset limits. Income limits vary, depending on the size of your family and where you live. Income limits also vary based on the particular Medicaid program for which you qualify, so contact your state Medicaid office for more information.

How to apply: For more information or to apply, contact your local Department of Human Services office. For a directory of offices, log on to www.dhs.state.ri.us/dhs/doffices.htm or call the Rhode Island State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) at **401-462-4444**.



Help with Your Home

State Property Tax Assistance

Benefit: State property taxes are not imposed directly by the state, but a portion of the city and town taxes is set aside for state purposes. Taxes are assessed and collected by the local jurisdiction. Fire district taxes are collected in some rural communities. Older adults may be eligible for a property tax relief credit of up to \$300.

Who can apply: Homeowners 65 and older who earn \$30,000 or less.

How to apply: For more information, call the Rhode Island Division of Taxation at **401-574-8829** or log on to www.tax.state.ri.us.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

Benefit: Pays heating and cooling bills, and some energy-related home repairs.

Who can apply: Low-income people with annual incomes less than \$24,395 for one person, or \$31,901 for two people.

How to apply: For additional information or application assistance log on to

www.energy.ri.gov/lowincome/liheap.php or call **401-574-9100**.

Telephone Assistance

Benefit: Helps pay for the cost of basic local telephone services.

Who can apply: Qualified low-income older adults. You are automatically eligible if you are in one of the following programs: Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Federal Housing Assistance/Section 8 Programs, Food Stamps, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Programs, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) General Assistance, and Tribally Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

How to apply: Call your local phone company and tell the sales department that you want to apply for Link Up or Lifeline.

Help Buying Nutritious Food

Supplemental Food Assistance Program (SNAP)

Benefit: An Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card, similar to a debit card, that you can use like cash to pay for food at most grocery stores.

Who can apply: People with limited income and resources, especially people 60 and over.

How to apply: Contact the Rhode Island Department of Human Services at **401-462-5300** or log on to www.dhs.ri.gov/default.aspx.

Cash Assistance

Social Security

Benefit: Monthly checks. How much you get depends on how long you have worked, how much money you earned, where you

worked, and your age when you began getting benefits.

Who can apply: Workers who are 62 or older, people with disabilities, or the spouse and children of a deceased or disabled worker who paid into the Social Security program.

How to apply: You can find out if you qualify for Social Security Benefits by using the screening tool on the Social Security website (www.socialsecurity.gov). If you qualify, you can apply for retirement benefits online at www.socialsecurity.gov. You can also make an appointment at your local Social Security Office. To find your local Social Security Office, call **1-800-772-1213** toll free and tell the operator where you live.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Benefit: Monthly checks.

Who can apply: People who are 65 and older, or people who are blind or have disabilities and have very low income and assets.

How to apply: You must make an appointment at your local Social Security office to apply. You can find your local Social Security office by calling **1-800-772-1213** toll free and telling the operator where you live. Or, you can log on to www.ssa.gov/pgm/links_ssi.htm.

Other Information

Eldercare Locator

Connects older Americans and their caregivers with sources of information on senior services. Call **1-800-677-1116** (hours of operation are Mon. - Fri. 9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. ET) or log on to www.eldercare.gov.

Senior Information Hotline

For additional information about other programs and resources for seniors, call the Rhode Island Department of Elderly Affairs Customer Information Referral and Assistance center at **401-462-3000** or log on to www.dea.ri.gov/programs/cust_info.php. You can also call The Point, Rhode Island's Adult and Disability Resource Center, at **401-462-444** or log on to <http://adrc.ohhs.ri.gov>.

Legal Help

If you need a lawyer but have limited resources, call the Rhode Island Legal Services Senior Citizen Program toll-free at **1-800-662-5035** (Providence) or **1-800-637-4529** (Newport) or log on to www.rils.org.

You can also go to the Benefits QuickLINK website at www.aarp.org/quicklink.



Benefits Outreach Program
601 E Street, NW
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Email: benefitsoutreach@aarp.org

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The AARP Foundation is AARP's affiliated charity. Foundation programs provide security, protection and empowerment for older persons in need. Low-income older workers receive the job training and placement they need to re-join the workforce. Free tax preparation is provided for low-and moderate-income individuals, with special attention to those 60 and older. The Foundation's litigation staff protects the legal rights of older Americans in critical health, long-term care, consumer and employment situations. Additional programs provide information, education and services to ensure that people over 50 lead lives of independence, dignity and purpose. Foundation programs are funded by grants, tax-deductible contributions and AARP.