

Baltimore City Community Resources

Call **2-1-1** for information on food banks, energy assistance and other resources near you

Health Care for the Homeless

421 Fallsway, Baltimore, MD 21202
410-837-5533

Housing navigators can assist in applying for housing. Housing navigators are at three Pratt Libraries for walk in between 11am to 3pm on the following days:

Cherry Hill Branch

(443) 835-0764
Monday and Wednesday

Walbrook Branch

(443) 615-1232
Tuesday and Friday

Waverly Branch

(443) 546-6157
Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday

Mayor's Office of Homeless Services

(443) 984-8713

Baltimore City Shelter Hotline

443-984-9540 to connect with emergency shelter for the night.

CONTACT US

Would you like to request free
legal representation?

PUBLIC **JUSTICE** CENTER



(410) 625-9409

www.publicjustice.org

This brochure is provided for informational purposes only and does not act as legal advice. This information is not a substitution for a careful review of your individual situation with an attorney. Revised 8/29/25.

PUBLIC **JUSTICE** CENTER 

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Temporary Cash
Assistance (TCA): Rights
of Families Experiencing
A Crisis or Homelessness



What is a family crisis?

A family crisis is something that threatens normal family functioning. Here are some examples:

- Homelessness or housing crisis
- Death in the family (immediate family or household member)
- Problem at school (suspension, expulsion, mandatory school meetings)
- Utility disconnection or shut off notice

What is Homelessness?

- Emergency shelter or transitional housing
- Motel, hotel
- Nighttime residence not designed for regular sleeping accommodations for humans
- Sharing the house of other persons due to economic hardship, loss of housing, or other reasons

What is a housing crisis?

- Eviction, foreclosure or other loss of housing
- Substandard housing that threatens the family's health and safety, such as:
 - rodent infestation
 - leaking plumbing
 - mold
 - no heat, water, or electricity

Do I have to work to get TCA?

If you are experiencing a family crisis, homelessness, or a housing crisis, you have the following rights:

- It is your choice whether you want to be referred to a work program or excused from the work requirement.
- You can be excused from the work program and still receive TCA. This is called "good cause".
- DSS should provide you with referrals to homeless resources, affordable housing, and community resources.
- DSS cannot require you to do anything in order to have good cause. For example, if you are experiencing homelessness, DSS cannot require you to turn in proof that you are looking for shelters or housing.
- If you qualify for "good cause" and choose to work, DSS cannot reduce, sanction or close your TCA if you miss work.
- If you choose to work but later realize it is too difficult, you can ask to be given good cause and excused from the work program.

How do I get good cause?

- When you apply for TCA, you will meet with a work activity specialist who will ask you about your family, health and housing.
- If you are unable to work, DSS should not refer you to a work program. DSS should give you the option to be excused from work or be referred to work.
- **Tell DSS you want "good cause" because you have a family crisis. Every DSS office in Maryland must follow this policy and give you good cause.**
- DSS should give you 30 days of "good cause." Before the end of your good cause period, DSS must ask you if you are still unable to work for the same reason or another reason. DSS can give you another period of "good cause."

