

A Brief History Of Assistance For Adults With Disabilities In Washington

Pre-2010 | General Assistance (GA-U/GA-X)

- General Assistance included cash grants and medical benefits (Medical Care Services) to three groups of adults without dependents:
 - GA-U: Temporarily unable to work due to a physical or mental incapacity
 - GA-X: Awaiting approval for federal SSI benefits
 - GA-Other: Low-income and ineligible for other forms of public assistance
- For all general assistance programs in Washington, the maximum cash grant was \$339 per month; with an average distributed GA-U grant in FY 2008 of \$299 per month

July 2009: 37,269 individuals received general assistance in Washington.

2010-October 2011 | Disability Lifeline + MCS

In 2010, to preserve the General Assistance programs legislators renamed the program Disability Lifeline:

- Maximum cash grants were reduced to \$197 per month
- Medical benefits through MCS were no longer guaranteed

Caseload maintained relative stability, and still served about 38,000 people in FY 2011

November 2011-Present | Housing and Essential Needs/ Aged, Blind, Disabled

- In 2011, assistance to adults with disabilities split into two main programs:
 - **Housing and Essential Needs (HEN):** Housing assistance and access to limited essential items for adults (age 18+) who are unable to work for at least 90 days due to a mental incapacity, physical incapacity, or substance use disorder
 - **Aged, Blind, or Disabled (ABD):** An \$197 cash grant for adults who are living on an extremely low incomes who are: 1) age 65 or older, 2) blind, or 3) have a long-term disability and will likely qualify for federal SSI benefits.

This 2011 change eliminated cash benefits for over 20,000 disabled adults

In 2017, the legislature granted ABD recipients eligibility for HEN.

In 2022, the ABD grant was increased to \$417 for a single person - the only grant increase since the program's creation. The need for the HEN program has consistently outweighed the resources allocated.