

# I applied for benefits. DSHS said no.

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If you applied for cash, food, or childcare assistance from the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and they turned you down for (denied you) benefits, there are some things you can do to challenge that decision.

## Why did DSHS deny me benefits?

It depends. The DSHS worker who went over your application might think any of these:

- Your monthly income or things you own (your *resources*) doesn't meet their guidelines.
- You or your family aren't eligible to get the benefit you applied for. For **example**, you don't have a disability, or you're not within a certain age range.
- You or your family aren't citizens or a type of immigrant who can get the benefit you applied for.
- You haven't given DSHS information they need.
- You haven't done something DSHS' rules say you must.

If you haven't gotten interpreters or notices in your own language and DSHS has stopped your benefits, you may be able to get the benefits turned back on. You should talk to a legal aid lawyer if DSHS hasn't provided you with interpreters or translations.

## How does DSHS tell me about the denial?

DSHS must send you a notice that says all of these:

1. Which benefit you applied for.
2. Why the facts in your case keep you from getting benefits.
3. Which Washington Administrative Code (WAC) (<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/>) rules the worker used to decide your case.
4. How to appeal DSHS' decision to deny you benefits.

## Could DSHS be wrong to deny me benefits?

Yes.

- The DSHS worker may not have known or understood all the important facts.
- DSHS may have not used its rules correctly.
- DSHS may not have taken the right steps in deciding your case and giving you notice.
- DSHS may not have taken the right steps if you have a disability making it hard for you to understand or follow their rules. Read about how to get disability accommodations from DSHS.

## What if I disagree with DSHS?

You can do any or all of these:

1. Ask for an administrative hearing.
2. Ask a DSHS supervisor to review and explain the decision.
3. Re-apply.

### **When and why do I ask for explanation and review?**

Before or after asking for a hearing, you can ask your DSHS worker to **explain** more about the decision to deny, terminate or reduce your assistance.

You may learn DSHS had wrong or was missing information. If that's the case, try to give DSHS the correct or missing information.

If you need help getting that information, you can ask the worker. If you must pay to get the information, ask DSHS to pay, or if DSHS will accept other proof that you don't need to pay to get.

You can also ask the DSHS worker's supervisor for a meeting to **review** the decision to deny, terminate or reduce benefits. If you write to the supervisor, the supervisor must write back within 10 days. If that doesn't change the decision, you can write to the head (the *administrator*) of the local DSHS office. The administrator must write back to you in **10 days**.

If you disagree with what the worker, supervisor, and administrator decide, the matter is final *unless* you also ask for or have asked for a hearing.

### **Should I re-apply?**

Yes, if one of these is true:

- You think DSHS was right to deny you when they did. But your situation has since changed. You believe you're eligible to get benefits now.
- You have more information that might change DSHS' decision. Your DSHS worker or supervisor will only look at your new info if you re-apply. You can re-apply while also trying to use the new information in your administrative hearing.

You can re-apply for benefits any time. You can re-apply even if you've asked for a hearing.

### **I've asked for a hearing. Can I also reapply?**

Yes. You can re-apply for benefits any time. You can re-apply even if you've asked for a hearing.

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