

Emergency financial assistance and cash benefits

Version 3 | Reviewed September 16, 2026

A practical referral guide for advocates serving adults age 18 and older in Cuyahoga County, Ohio. Family and maternity programs are included for adult clients with dependents. Programs with a narrower age range are identified. An out-of-county treatment link is labeled when it matters.

Provider, government, and community webpages were reviewed for service descriptions, contact details, and published intake criteria. No provider was called, and bed availability, funding, and appointment capacity were not confirmed in real time.

Urgent contacts

Immediate danger: 911. Life-threatening emergency. Do not wait for routine intake.

Behavioral health crisis: 988. Call or text 988. FrontLine local crisis line: 216-623-6888.

Homeless shelter intake: 216-674-6700. Coordinated Intake, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Phone only.

After hours: 211. Evenings, weekends, and when the first referral cannot help.

Emergency financial assistance and cash benefits

These programs sit between a resource referral and the money needed to stabilize a household.

Prevention, Retention, and Contingency

Short-term crisis help paid to vendors. Posted maximum \$1,500 per year. Not same-day cash.

Phone: 216-987-7392

Service

Short-term crisis assistance for approved needs, including qualifying housing, utility, and employment expenses. Posted maximum is \$1,500 per year. Payments go to vendors.

Eligibility

County households with a minor child, a pregnancy, or a qualifying noncustodial parent. Citizenship or qualified-noncitizen rules, income at or below 200% of the federal poverty level, limited assets, and a qualifying crisis apply.

Intake

Submit the signed application and supporting records through the county page. Email Cuy-PRC-Application@jfs.ohio.gov, fax 216-987-8655, or use a Neighborhood Family Service Center drop box. Application and status line: 216-987-7392.

Confirm before you send someone

Confirm the expense category, pregnancy-specific criteria, prior assistance, and vendor paperwork. The county describes decisions within 10 calendar days after all verification is received. This is not guaranteed same-day assistance.

Sources: <https://hhs.cuyahogacounty.gov/programs/prevention-retention-and-contingency-program>

Ohio Works First

Time-limited cash assistance for eligible families. The county describes a 36-month adult limit.

Phone: 844-640-6446

Service

Time-limited cash assistance through Ohio's TANF program. The county describes a 36-month limit for adult family assistance.

Eligibility

Financially eligible families with a child under 18, or 19 if still in high school, and women at least six months pregnant. Participation requirements and exclusions apply.

Intake

Apply at benefits.ohio.gov, call 844-640-6446 Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-4 p.m., or apply at a Neighborhood Family Service Center. A caseworker schedules eligibility and participation interviews.

Confirm before you send someone

Confirm the income calculation, work requirements and exemptions, child-support implications, and any prior months used. Child-only cases can follow different rules.

Sources: <https://hhs.cuyahogacounty.gov/programs/ohio-works-first>

Public Benefits Library Navigator Program

In-person help applying for food, medical, and cash assistance. The library does not approve benefits.

Service

Help applying for food, medical, and cash assistance when online access or forms are a barrier.

Eligibility

People seeking benefits application help. The benefits agency determines program eligibility.

Intake

Ask at a Cuyahoga County Public Library, Cleveland Public Library, or Shaker Heights Public Library branch about navigator assistance.

Confirm before you send someone

Confirm branch hours, available assistance, and what records to bring. Library help does not itself approve benefits.

Sources: <https://hhs.cuyahogacounty.gov/programs/navigator-program>

