



District of Columbia Public Benefits Briefing (2026)

1. TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)

Overview: Cash assistance and employment services for low-income families with children.

- Work participation required (IRP, TEP/POWER programs)
- 2025–2026: Increased enforcement and sanction focus
- Exemptions: pregnancy, child under 1, domestic violence, medical/mental health limitations
- Website: dhs.dc.gov/service/temporary-cash-assistance-needy-families-tanf

2. SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

Overview: Monthly food benefits via EBT for eligible households.

- Oct 1, 2025: Benefit/income updates
- Jan 2026: Work requirement notices issued
- May 1, 2026: ABAWD rules begin (3-month limit)
- May 2026–Apr 2029: Compliance period
- Exemptions: pregnancy, disability, caregivers, seniors, TANF participants
- Websites: dhs.dc.gov/service/snap | dhs.dc.gov/page/snap-work-requirements

3. Medicaid (DC Health Coverage)

Overview: Health coverage including medical care, hospital services, and long-term care.

- Administered by DC Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF)
- 2026: Potential federal funding pressure impacting HCBS
- SSI recipients automatically eligible
- Exemptions: spend-down pathway, protected assets
- Websites: dhcf.dc.gov | districtdirect.dc.gov

Cross-Program Integration

- Single application: districtdirect.dc.gov
- TANF → SNAP categorical eligibility
- SSI → Medicaid automatic eligibility
- TANF work participation may satisfy SNAP requirements

Key Leadership Takeaways

- SNAP changes (May 1, 2026) are the most significant operational shift
- TANF enforcement increasing—monitor sanctions and engagement
- Medicaid impacts slower but potentially significant (HCBS focus)
- Proper exemption identification is critical