

## Screen.

Screening is a process of answering questions about your current living situation, including family members, income and expenses to see if you may be or may not be eligible for benefits through the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS). This is a confidential process.

**Do I Need To Create An Account To Screen For Benefits?** No.

### What Happens After Screening?

After answering questions, a message online will let you know if you may or may not be eligible for Child Care, Energy, Financial, Food or Medical Assistance.

Even if the screening indicates that you may not be eligible for benefits, you can still immediately link to “Apply for Benefits,” or choose to print a paper application to complete and share with your local department of social services.

## Apply.

**What If I Can't Finish The Application All At Once?** You will have 60 days to “Save,” “Exit” and “Continue” to work on your application before submitting it.

**What Happens After I Submit My Application Through CommonHelp?** The online application process will provide you with information about next steps, as well as the name and address of your local department of social services, which will receive and process your application.

**What If I'm Homeless Or Don't Have A Permanent Address When I Apply?** A street address and zip code are not required, just a city. CommonHelp will direct your application to local department of social services serving the city you entered.

## Check Benefits.

**Can I Check On The Status Of My Benefits Through CommonHelp?** Yes, once you create a CommonHelp account you can access information about your current and past benefit amounts.

## Renew.

**Can I Renew My Benefits Through CommonHelp?** Yes, if you have an existing case you can renew your benefits through CommonHelp up to 60 days prior, and 30 days after the renewal date. If there are no benefits available for renewal, the “Renew My Benefits” link will not be displayed.



**CommonHelp**  
helping those in need

[www.commonhelp.virginia.gov](http://www.commonhelp.virginia.gov)

The Virginia Department of Social Services

## Your Social Services Benefits...

**Online. Anytime.**



[www.commonhelp.virginia.gov](http://www.commonhelp.virginia.gov)

## What Is CommonHelp?

CommonHelp is the Virginia Department of Social Services' fast and easy way to screen and apply online for many benefit programs.

With CommonHelp, it has never been faster or easier to:



**“**  
*As a working mom, having online access through CommonHelp saves me time.*  
**”**

- ✓ **Screen** for eligibility.
- ✓ **Apply** for benefits and services.
- ✓ **Check** your benefits.
- ✓ **Report** changes.
- ✓ **Renew online** and save time.



## What Benefits Does CommonHelp Cover?

- **Cash Assistance (TANF)**
- **Child Care Services**
- **Energy Assistance (Fuel, Crisis or Cooling)**
- **Food Assistance (SNAP)**
- **Medical Assistance**

## Questions And Answers

**Who Should Register Online With CommonHelp?** If you, or a family member, are applying for or currently receiving benefits from the Virginia Department of Social Services, you should create an account with CommonHelp.

### Can I Register A Family Member Or Friend?

Yes. CommonHelp also allows other persons, who may be legal guardians, authorized personnel or those with power of attorney to submit an application on someone's behalf.

**“**  
*I don't get around as easily as I used to. CommonHelp lets me renew my benefits from home.*  
**”**



**“**  
*We just had a baby and I lost my job. It helps to know we can screen for benefits online, confidentially.*  
**”**

**Is CommonHelp A Secure Website?** Yes. CommonHelp is secure and will provide access through passwords you create and verification of personal information only you should know. Remember, never share your password with anyone.

**Can I Still Submit A Paper Application?** Yes, although the use of paper applications is discouraged, this is still an option. You will be encouraged to submit an electronic application when visiting the local agency in person to apply.

**What is Cash Assistance?** Temporary cash assistance for needy families with minor children.