



Legal Aid Society of Hawai`i

GA/AABD: The Application Process

Use this brochure if you want information on how to apply for General Assistance (GA) or Aid to Aged, Blind, and Disabled (AABD) benefits for your disability.

GA and AABD are financial assistance programs for adults with severe disabilities. Both are administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS).

DHS ADDRESSES AND PHONE NUMBERS

OAHU:

Central Honolulu Applications Unit
333 North King, Rm 202
586-8107

East Honolulu Applications
333 North King, Rm 201
586-8055

Ewa Unit
601 Kamokila Blvd., #106
692-7300

Kailua Unit
45-513 Luluku Road
233-5350

Kalihi Unit
420 Waiakamilo Rd., Rm 101
832-5520

Kaneohe Unit
45-513 Luluku Rd.
233-5350

Kapalama Unit
420 Waiakamilo Rd., Rm 101
832-5538

Kinau Unit
420 Waiakamilo Rd., Rm 101
832-4660

Kuakini Unit
420 Waiakamilo Rd., Rm 117C
832-3800

Leeward Application Unit
86-088 Farrington Hwy., Suite 106
697-7147

Makiki Unit
677 Queen St. 4th Flr, #400B
587-5276

Nanakuli Unit
601 Kamokila Blvd., #117
692-7775

Nuuanu Unit
888-3 N. King
832-5627

Palama Unit
420 Waiakamilo Rd., Rm 101
832-5558

Pawaa Unit
677 Queen St. 4th Flr, #400B
587-5290

Punawai Unit
677 Queen St. 4th Flr, #400B
587-5283

Wahiawa Unit
929 Center St.
622-6476

Waianae Unit
86-088 Farrington Hwy., #101
697-7177

Waikele Unit
94-275 Mokuola, Rm 303
675-0040

Waipahu Applications Unit
601 Kamokila Blvd., #468
692-7171

Waipahu Unit
601 Kamokila Blvd., #106
692-7310

West Honolulu Applications Unit
420 Waiakamilo Rd. Suite 101
832-5500

West Oahu Unit
94-275 Mokuola, Rm 303A
675-0050

Windward Applications Unit
45-260 Waikalua Rd.
233-3621

Windward Unit
46-005 Kawa St., Rm 307
233-3655

MAUI:

East Maui
54 High St., Rm. 125
984-8300

West Maui
35 Lunalilo St., Rm. 300
243-5110

BIG ISLAND:

Hilo Applications Unit
13 Keakaulike St.
933-8857

Hamakua-Kamuela Unit
45-3380 Mamane St., Bldg 1, Rm.
110
775-8854

Kau Unit
P.O. Box 6, Naalehu, HI 96772
939-2421

Kohala Unit
P.O. Box 249, Kapaau, HI 96755
889-7141

North Kona
75-5995 Kuakini Hwy., #323
327-4980

South Kona
P.O. Box 225, Captain Cook
323-7573

KAUAI:

Hanapepe Unit
1-3491 Kaumualii Hwy.
335-2110

Kapaa Unit
4-1579 Kuhio Hwy., #101
822-3475

Lihue Unit
3060 Eiwa St., #103
271-3371

Physical v. Psychiatric

You should be asked by DHS whether your disability is physical. Push for both. If you say 'both' then you will get a 2nd evaluation if you lose the first.

I. What is GA? What is AABD?

Both General Assistance (GA) and Aid to Aged, Blind, and Disabled (AABD) are state financial assistance programs for disabled adults. Each program has its own requirements.

GA provides financial assistance to individuals who are:

- between the ages of 18-65 years old; AND
- physically or mentally disabled for at least 60 days (unable to work more than 30 hours/week); AND
- financially needy, as defined by the eligibility rules.

AABD provides financial assistance to individuals who:

- are 65 years of age or older; OR
- are blind; OR
- are physically or mentally disabled for at least 12 months and unable to work; OR
- have a condition that will lead to death and unable to work; OR
- living with and caring for an individual receiving AABD; AND is financially needy, as defined by the eligibility rules.

II. How Do I Apply?

The application process can be different for GA and AABD. This brochure focuses on GA. DHS will decide whether you will receive GA or AABD.

To first apply for GA or AABD, you must do 4 primary things:

1. Fill out an application for benefits,
2. Specify if you think you are eligible for AABD.
3. Turn it in to the Department of Human Services (DHS), AND
4. Go To Your Interview & Bring Verification

STEP ONE:

Pick Up and Fill Out The Application.

Things You Should Know About Completing the Application

- C The application is about 11 pages long, so be prepared to spend some time filling it out. You can take it home and fill it out if you need to, but keep in mind that, if you are eligible, you will receive benefits from the day that you turned in your application. **The sooner you turn in your application, the sooner you can get your benefits.**
- C You do not need to provide all of the required information on the day you file your application. DHS must accept any application that provides your name, date, and signature. You do not need to provide any additional information to file your application, but you will need to provide DHS with the other required information as soon as possible.
- C **If you are in an emergency situation** (you are homeless, being evicted, surviving on very little income/assets, or living in a shelter and are about to become homeless), write a letter informing DHS of your situation. Submit this letter with your application.

What's the Difference Between GA and AABD?

GA is easier to get because the requirements are easier to meet. The amount of GA can depend on the number of people who are receiving GA at that time. The amount may change each quarter (every 3 months) and has ranged from \$268 to \$418 each month.

AABD is hard to get because the requirements are more strict. Unlike GA, the amount of AABD you get each month is the same: \$418. It does not change each quarter.

If You Don't Have A Mailing Address

If possible, try to give DHS a mailing address where they can send you notices about any changes in your benefits. You can use a P.O. Box number OR many services agencies allow you to use their mailing address, such as the Waikiki Community Center at 277 Ohua Avenue.

Even if you are unable to get a mailing address, DHS should still give you benefits if you are eligible.

STEP TWO:
Turn In Your Application to DHS.
Turning In Your Application

“Fleeing Felons”: Individuals who are in violation of probation or parole or have left another state to avoid prosecution are ineligible for financial assistance.

- C Turn the application in as soon as possible. If DHS decides that you are eligible, you will receive benefits from the day on which you filed your application.
- C You can drop off your application in person or mail, or you can ask a friend or family member to deliver it to DHS.
- C Make a copy of your application and ask DHS to date-stamp it when you file your application. Keep your date-stamped copy in case DHS loses your application. That way, you will have proof that you turned your application in on that day,
- C The DHS worker should tell you the date and time of your interview, and a list of documents that you must bring to the interview. If not, ask DHS for this information.

STEP THREE:
Go to your interview and provide verification of your eligibility.

What to Expect at the Interview

- C The interview is usually held at the DHS Office nearest to your residence.
- C If you are unable to attend an in-person interview because of your age or disability, you can ask a friend or family member to attend in your place. If you are unable to find someone to attend in your place, you can ask DHS to do the interview over the phone.

What You Should Know About Providing Verification

Do not allow DHS to take your original documents. Ask for a receipt or date-stamped copy of each document they take. Keep the receipts or date-stamped copies as proof that you submitted documents in case DHS loses them.

The DHS worker will ask you to provide proof of the following things:

- C **Your Identity, Age & Citizenship Status (must be a U.S. Citizen or a “qualified” immigrant)**
This includes: Driver’s licenses, State identification cards, Passports, Green Cards or Birth Certificates.

“Qualified” immigrant: 1. Lawful Permanent Resident, 2. Refugee, Asylee, or Parolee, 3. Cuban or Haitian, 4. Some battered spouse or child, 5. Micronesian, Marshallese and Palauans are eligible if “qualified.” Check with DHS or Legal Aid about whether your immigration status is “qualified.”

- C **Your Disability**

This includes: detailed medical records and a letter from your physician.

The letter from your doctor is very important in verifying your disability. Have your doctor describe your condition, explain how this condition prevents you from working, and how long it is expected to last.

- C **Your Income**

This includes: paycheck stubs and receipts of child support checks, and any other income you receive.

- C **Assets**

Bring any current statements from your bank accounts (savings and checking); insurance policies; deeds for any properties you own; car ownership papers *only if you own more than one car.*

- C **Place of Residence**

Bring rental agreement, lease agreement, or deed to your home proving your ownership

- C **Other Relevant Information**

Bring documents describing any other factors that may affect your eligibility for benefits.

III. What Happens After I Turn in My Application?

SEE THE DHS-SELECTED DOCTOR

After you turn in your application, DHS will send you to an evaluation of your disability by a doctor selected by DHS. You **MUST** go to this evaluation.

Have the DHS physician complete the *DHS 1270 Physical Examination Report* form OR *DHS 1271 Psychiatric Examination Report* form that you were given at your interview. The DHS physician will submit the completed form to DHS.

DHS WILL REVIEW YOUR APPLICATION

After you go to the DHS-selected doctor, your application will be reviewed by the Med-Quest Medical Services Branch. They will look at your records to see if you qualify for GA or AABD. They will not examine you, so you must provide them with clear medical evidence of your disability, otherwise their decision will be based entirely on the DHS evaluation.

IV. How Long Does DHS Take To Make Its Decision?

In Emergency Situations

If DHS determines that you are in an emergency situation after reviewing your application and letter (see *Completing the Application*), a worker will interview you within **two working days**. If you qualify for aid, you will receive immediate cash assistance.

In All Other Situations

DHS must authorize benefits or send you a denial of your application within **45 days** of your filing date.

V. What Should I Do Once DHS Makes Its Decision?

YOU WERE APPROVED FOR GA

You must comply with DHS requirements. If you do not follow DHS's rules, you can lose your benefits.

The requirements are:

1. Accept and comply with medical and/or psychiatric treatment.
2. Participate in work training programs, this is usually voluntary.

You may be required to accept vocational rehabilitation services, to look for work, or to participate in public work projects. You are exempt from this requirement if you are unable to work, employed full-time, enrolled in an organized job training program, or receiving less aid than you would for 8 hours of work at minimum wage.

3. Apply for benefits from the Social Security Administration.

SSA benefits include Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). To apply for SSI or SSDI, see the Social Security Administration (SSA) office and ask your Eligibility Worker to call Legal Aid for more assistance. *See text box on the next page for more information.*

4. Cooperate with verification.

You must attend appointments and cooperate with DHS to complete all requested forms.

5. Report changes in your financial situation

If you earn outside income, you must submit a Monthly Eligibility Report Form (MERF) each month on time. If you do not earn outside income, you must report changes in your household, living expenses, resources, address, or other changes within 10 days of the change.

You can also ask that DHS evaluate you for AABD, which usually provides more benefits than GA. However, at any reevaluation of your disability, you risk being found no longer disabled. To request AABD, send a request letter to your worker at DHS.

YOU WERE APPROVED FOR AABD

You must comply with DHS requirements. If you do not follow DHS's rules, you can lose your benefits.

The requirements are:

1. Apply for benefits from the Social Security Administration (SSA)
SSA benefits include SSI and SSDI. Contact SSA to get an application and ask your DHS worker to refer you to Legal Aid for help..
2. Get medical treatment
You must follow DHS rules to get medical treatment. You can ask for a "good cause" exemption if you have a mental disorder and cannot understand this requirement OR your religious beliefs do not allow medical treatment.
3. Cooperate with verification
You must attend appointments and cooperate with DHS to complete all requested forms.

Applying for Benefits From SSA

Once you get onto GA or AABD, you are required to apply for other benefit programs, including SSI and SSDI. Legal Aid has a GA to SSI Advocacy Program that may be able to help you.

Ask your DHS worker to refer you to this program.

If you are approved for SSI or SSDI while you are receiving GA or AABD, you must repay DHS back if you receive any SSI/SSDI back payments for the months that you were on GA or AABD.

YOU WERE DENIED BENEFITS

If DHS did not approve your application, you can do a couple of things:

(1) Reapply for benefits. Especially if your condition has become more severe or you have new medical records.

Read the notice to find out the reason for your denial. Try to improve your second application to avoid having the same problem. Reapply even if you plan to appeal DHS's decision.

(2) Appeal DHS's decision.

You have **90 calendar days** from the mailing date on the notice to submit a written request for an appeal hearing. At the hearing, you can present your side of the story and try to prove that DHS's decision was wrong. See *Legal Aid's "DHS: Appeal Process" brochure for more information.*

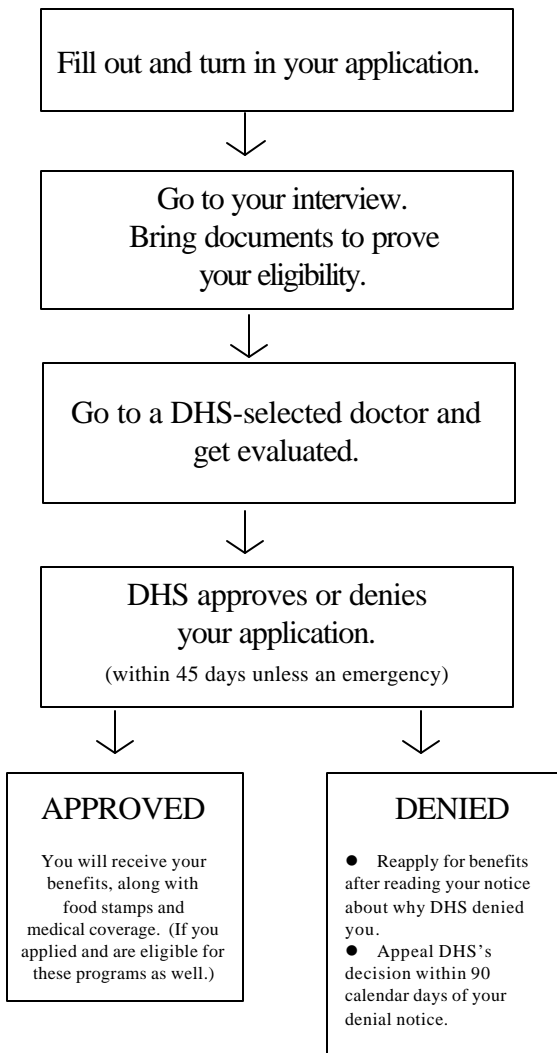
*Call the Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i
if you have more questions.*



Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i
 924 Bethel Street
 Honolulu, HI 96813



GA/AABD Application Process



LEGAL TERMS

AABD Aid to Aged, Blind, or Disabled; a state financial assistance program for individuals with a long-term disability.

appeal to ask an agency or court to rethink their decision.

DHS Department of Human Services. This is the state agency that administers the GA and AABD programs.

GA General Assistance; a state financial assistance program for individuals with a short-term disability.

MERF Monthly Eligibility Report Form. This is the form you must fill out each month to report any changes in your income.

SSA Social Security Administration; the government agency that distributes SSI, SSDI, and Social Security.

USEFUL NAMES AND NUMBERS

Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i

<http://www.legalaidhawaii.org>

Legal Hotline Mon-Fri 9-11:30am & 1-3:30pm

O'ahu 536-4302 Maui 242-0724

Kona 329-8331 Kaua'i 245-7580

Hilo 934-0678 Moloka'i 553-3251

Lana'i 565-6089

Social Security Administration (SSA)

1-800-772-1213

Department of Human Services (DHS)

see page 2 for addresses & phone numbers