

Protect State Lifeline for Disabled & Elderly Adults

HEN, ABD, Medical Care & SSI Services

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HEN, ABD, MEDICAL CARE & SSI FACILITATION SERVICES ARE CRITICAL SUPPORTS FOR DISABLED AND ELDERLY ADULTS

The state's Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) program ensures that people diagnosed with significant but temporary mental illnesses or physical disabilities can meet their basic needs while unable to work. The program provides rental, utility, and transportation assistance, as well as access to health and hygiene items.

The Aged, Blind, and Disabled (ABD) program helps extremely low-income adults with permanent mental health illnesses or physical disabilities by providing modest cash assistance of up to \$197 per month while they apply to the federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. When people transition to SSI, the federal government reimburses the state for the full cost of the ABD cash grant. ABD also provides support to low-income elderly and disabled documented immigrants who are not yet eligible for federal medical and income support benefits.

Medical Care Services provide health care coverage for elderly or disabled immigrants who have legally verified immigration status.

SSI Facilitation Services, provided by the state Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) assists disabled individuals through the lengthy and complicated process of applying for SSI benefits. This process can take many years, but results in \$733 per month for recipients, allowing them to meet their most basic needs. These services are a win-win: those with disabilities gain access to greater stability, and the state receives federal reimbursement for the interim ABD support.

These programs are a last resort safety net for people who are unable to work and who are otherwise at extreme risk of suffering poor health and even death.

Steve's Story

Steve is an army veteran who served during the Gulf War. He enrolled in the HEN program in January 2013 after spending 2 years in and out of shelters and living on the streets. On top of several serious physical health issues, Steve also suffered from depression and anxiety, which became more acute during the time he was experiencing chronic homelessness. The HEN programming staff teamed up with Steve's housing case manager to enroll him in a special veterans supportive housing program. After 6 months he was able to move in to a subsidized Bellingham Housing Authority apartment. The HEN program was able to pay for his security deposit.

Thanks to a more stable life in his new home, Steve rekindled his love for painting, which he finds therapeutic. His work has been featured in Bellingham's downtown monthly art walk. It was only a few months after Steve moved in to his home that he was able to take over all the rental payments.

ASK THE LEGISLATURE

Maintain funding levels for the Housing and Essential needs program; the Aged, Blind, and Disabled Program; Medical Care and SSI Facilitation Services.

SHELBY'S STORY



In her own words - "While I was in school, I suffered a terrible head injury and I was later diagnosed with PTSD. Having access to the Aged, Blind, and Disabled benefit meant I could take care of my basic needs. I use my \$197 ABD cash grant every month to help pay for rent, bus fare, cleaning supplies and other personal necessities. I'm lucky that I also live in an affordable building or I would very likely be homeless. I feel very fortunate to have access to the ABD grant, and I don't know how people who don't have it are able to manage."