



## Michigan's Home Help Services Program

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Legal Hotline for Michigan Seniors

Are you are struggling with daily tasks that were once second-nature? Would you like help at home but are unable to pay for it? If you are reaching a point where you may not be able to live independently but lack of funds is preventing you from hiring help, you should be aware of a little known program offered through the Michigan Department of Human Services called the Home Help Services Program. It may provide the funding you need to hire help with your activities of daily living as well as with things like chores around the home.

The Home Help Services Program is designed to enable people of very modest means— who cannot completely manage to care for themselves— to continue to live in their homes rather than nursing homes, adult foster care homes, or homes for the aged. This program provides funding for eligible individuals to hire caregivers to assist them in performing their daily tasks of living. Covered “tasks” can include: preparing meals, clean-up and feeding, using the toilet, bathing, grooming, dressing, moving around the house, taking medicine, shopping for essentials, laundry and light housework.

People enrolled in the Home Help Services Program are expected to employ their own caregiver, sometimes called a service provider. They may choose to employ friends or relatives. Program rules prohibit employing a spouse or, in cases where the client is under 18, a parent. The Michigan Quality Community Care Council (MQC3) maintains a registry to help locate a qualified provider. Call the Council at 800-979-4662 for assistance.

To participate in the Program, interested individuals must apply to their local office of the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS). Forms are also available online and can be mailed in. Individuals must be eligible for Medicaid (special income and asset limits apply) in order to qualify. Exceptions can be made in circumstances involving high medical bills or extensive personal care needs.

After an application is filed with DHS, an Adult Services caseworker will conduct an initial assessment and determine the extent of care an individual is eligible to receive. A physician assessment is also required in this determination. A program participant may hire a provider based upon this assessment subject to the approval of the caseworker. Amounts paid to providers that are under \$1,300 per month are approved at the local level. Anything above \$1,300 per month requires state level approval.

While there is some paperwork and rules to follow, the Home Help Services Program is a way for families of modest means to secure in-home care for older adults. The Program was created more than 25 years ago and is funded by Medicaid. It currently serves approximately 50,000 low-income seniors and disabled adults living in Michigan. To learn more about the program contact the DHS office in your area or the Legal hotline's Benefit Enrollment Center. You can also use the Benefit Enrollment Center online at [www.elderlawofmi.org/legalhotline](http://www.elderlawofmi.org/legalhotline).

The Legal Hotline for Michigan Seniors is available Monday – Thursday to answer your legal questions relating to the aspects of care for older adults as well as other topics for people 60 and over. There is no charge for assistance but donations are appreciated. You can even donate online at [www.elderlawofmi.org/donate](http://www.elderlawofmi.org/donate). In cases requiring more specialized advice or further assistance, the Hotline may be able to provide referrals to free or affordable legal and other resources. You can set up an appointment for a lawyer to contact you by calling 800-347-5297, between 9AM and 5PM.

The information contained in this article is general and not intended to be a substitute for legal advice. In any legal matter you should always consider consulting with an attorney for specific advice about your situation.

