
Benefits Plus Learning Center

Studies show there is a critical need for knowledgeable professionals who can address the barriers low-income families face when accessing public benefits.¹

About the Learning Center

The Benefits Plus Learning Center, a program of the Community Service Society of New York (CSS), established in 1994, is the only resource center of its kind in NYC. Specifically designed to educate social service professionals on government benefit and housing programs, the Learning Center equips professionals with the information, resources and tools they need to help their clients navigate government bureaucracy. Visit <https://bplc.cssny.org>.

About Benefits Plus Online

Benefits Plus Online, the premier publication of the Benefits Plus Learning Center, is a searchable online resource manual on over 80 different city, state and federal public benefits and housing programs for social service professionals serving disenfranchised populations, including the low-income, elderly, disconnected youth and the disabled in NYC.

Written by experienced advocates, reviewed by legal experts, updated regularly, this online tool provides the information professionals need to learn how a program works, how to access the benefit, who qualifies, how to apply, what steps to take when advocacy is needed, as well as provide valuable resources & government contacts.

Benefits Plus is the “go to” resource manual for those who want to effectively navigate the government benefit system on behalf of their clients. As staff become successful in navigating the system, more clients will access and maintain the benefits and housing programs needed to stabilize their lives.

Staff who use *Benefits Plus*, will:

- Discover the rules and procedures that help clients access and maintain their benefits
- Gain practical knowledge to effectively access benefits and housing programs
- Find out what happens when clients return to work Identify documentation, where to go, and the steps clients need to take when applying
- Uncover how receipt of one benefit impacts eligibility for other benefits

- Find advocacy tips on challenges clients face when attempting to access benefits
- Learn the procedures for appealing an agency’s improper action
- And much more!

Throughout Benefits Plus, we integrate case examples to clarify complex concepts, advocacy tips that assist the advocate in cutting through government bureaucracy, notes that explain special circumstances, warnings, government contacts, additional resources, and more.

Impact

- Saves the Professional Time: We research the rules and regulations so the professional doesn’t have to.
- Makes the Work Easier: A one stop tool to help professional connect their clients to benefit and housing programs by addressing eligibility and application barriers.
- Is Current: Updated regularly, it makes it easy to stay on top of the ever changing government benefit world.
- Helps The Professional Become an Effective Advocate: Incorporates advocacy guidance from nearly 25 years of the Learning Center’s staff experience with government benefit programs.

Testimonials

- *This is a great tool to get staff new to case work/coordination trained and knowledgeable about benefits.*
- *Benefits Plus provides great resources to help navigate and obtain reliable information.*
- *I absolutely love the educational and training value of Benefits Plus. The background information provided is extremely useful for helping a provider to understand the benefits better and thereby explain them to clients more clearly.*
- *The website is invaluable!*
- *It’s amazing!*
- *The updates and the tools are very helpful.*

¹ The Coalition for Access & Opportunity’s May 2012 Report: *Moving to 21st Century Public Benefits: Emerging Options, Great Promise & Key Challenges*