



PEN AMERICAN CENTER RESOURCES FOR WRITERS: GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Below is a list of government-sponsored programs. These programs are in no way specific to writers or artists, though there are eligibility requirements. Please contact the responsible agency with any questions..

Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA)

(866) 487-2365

In 1986 Congress passed the Consolidated Omnibus budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) in order to provide continued group health insurance coverage that might otherwise be terminated. COBRA is not an insurance plan or company, it is a law. COBRA health insurance provides retirees, some former employees, spouses, and dependant children the right to temporary health coverage at group rates under certain conditions. For more information, please visit: www.COBRA-Health-Insurance.com

Food Stamp Program

(703) 305-2062

The Food Stamp Program helps low-income households buy food they need for a nutritionally adequate diet. The program is operated by state and local welfare offices and is available in all 50 states. To be eligible, a household must meet certain criteria, including income and resource standards, as well as work requirements. More information online: www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/

Medicaid

(800) 633-4227

Funded by the state and federal government, Medicaid is a health insurance program for low-income and high-need people. Qualifications vary from state to state. More information online:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/home/medicaid.asp>

Medicare

(800) 999-1118

Health Insurance Program for people age 65 and over, some people under 65 with disabilities, and people with End-stage Renal Disease. If you are already receiving Social Security benefits, you are automatically enrolled the month you turn 65. More information online: www.medicare.gov

Social Security

(800) 772-1213

After 10 years of work you may qualify for benefits. Younger people need fewer credits to qualify for disability or survivor benefits. Go online to check eligibility and program types and for more information: www.ssa.gov

State Unemployment Insurance (UI)

(877) 889-5627

The Federal-State Unemployment Insurance Program provides unemployment benefits to eligible workers who are unemployed "through no fault of their own" and meet eligibility requirements. UI payments provide temporary financial assistance to unemployed workers while they seek work. For more information and to find your local agency check online: www.workforcesecurity.doleta.gov/unemploy/uifactsheet.asp

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

(800) 772-1213

SSI is a Federal income supplement program funded by general tax revenues designed to help elderly, blind, and disabled people who have little or no income. The program provides money for food, clothing, and shelter. To receive SSI, you must be 65 or older, blind, or disabled. Children as well as adults can receive disability benefits. Information and eligibility requirements online: <http://www.ssa.gov/ssi/>

