

ROCKLAND COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES



Consumer Handbook

Highlighting the programs and services
provided by the Rockland County
Department of Social Services...

so you can get the help you need
for you and your family.



C. Scott Vanderhoef, County Executive
Susan Sherwood, Commissioner

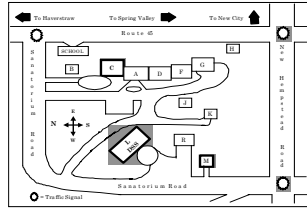


June 2009



ROCKLAND COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

**Department of Social Services
50 Sanatorium Road, Pomona, NY**



Building L: Main Offices (Accessible to the handicapped)

Administration	Emergency Aid	Employment	Fair Hearings	Food Stamps
Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)	Housing	Medicaid	Medicaid Chronic Care	Medicaid Managed Care
Resource Recovery	Medicaid, Food Stamps, Supplemental Security Income	Special Investigations	Temporary Assistance	

Building C: (Accessible to the handicapped)

InfoRock (Information & Referral)	Adoption Services	Adult & Long Term Care Services	Child Protective Services	Foster Care Services
Intensive Family Preventive Services	PINS Integrated Services	Pomona Family Preventive Services	Protective Services for Adults	Volunteer Services

Satellite Offices: (All accessible to the handicapped, except as noted*)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Support Adolescent & Special Services <p>2 New Hempstead Road New City</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childcare Subsidy Program Medicaid Outreach <p>Spring Valley Family Preventive Services</p> <p>Health & Human Services 23 Robert Pitt Drive Monsey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance Center Medicaid Outreach <p>17 South Broadway Nyack</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Haverstraw Family Preventive Services Medicaid Outreach <p>*23 New Main Street Haverstraw</p>		

OTHER RESOURCES

- **Domestic Violence Shelter Hotline (Open 24 hours a day/seven days a week):** 634-3344; www.rocklandfamilyshelter.org
- **Mental Health Crisis Hotline (Open 24 hours a day/seven days a week):** 364-2200; www.rocklandgov.com
- **County of Rockland:** 364-2000; www.rocklandgov.com
- **Rockland County Department of Health:** 364-2512; www.rocklandgov.com
- **Rockland County Guidance Center:** 358-9390; www.rocklandgov.com
- **Transportation Information Line:** 364-3333; www.rocklandgov.com
- **MyBenefits.ny.gov:** Initial prescreening tool to determine eligibility for Food Stamps, Earned Income Tax Credit, Childcare Subsidy, and Free/Reduced School Lunch programs
- **New York State Department of Health:** www.health.state.ny.us
- **New York State Office of Children & Family Services:** www.ocfs.state.ny.us
- **New York State Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance:** www.otda.state.ny.us
- **Social Security Administration;** (800) 772-1213; www.socialsecurity.gov

OTHER RESOURCES

Directions to the Dr. Robert L. Yeager Health Center, Sanatorium Road, Pomona, New York:

From New York and New Jersey - Northbound

- George Washington Bridge to Palisades Interstate Parkway North
- Palisades Parkway North to Exit 11 (New Hempstead Road)
- Left at the traffic light at the end of the exit ramp
- Right at the second traffic light (Route 45)
- Continue for about 1/2 mile on Route 45 to the entrance of The Dr. Robert L. Yeager Health Center on the left hand side of the road
- Follow the red signs at the driveway entrances to Building L or C (Department of Social Services)
- If upper parking lot for Building L is full, please use lower lot by making a right out of the parking lot, then your first left

From Orange County - Southbound

- Palisades Interstate Parkway to Exit 12 (Spring Valley/ New Hempstead)
- Right onto Route 45 (South)
- Right at the entrance to the Dr. Robert L. Yeager Health Center, about 7/10 of a mile down the road on the right hand side of the road
- Follow the red signs at the driveway entrances to Building L or C (Department of Social Services)
- If upper parking lot for Building L is full, please use lower lot by making a right out of the parking lot, then your first left

Useful Numbers and Links:

- **Information Rockland-NY Connects:** 364-2020; www.informationrockland.com
- **Emergencies—Call 911**
- **New York State Child Abuse Reporting Line:** (800) 342-3720; **if a child is in immediate danger, call 911**



County of Rockland
Department of Social Services
The Dr. Robert L. Yeager Health Center
Building L - Sanatorium Road
P.O. Box 307
Pomona, New York 10970-0307
Telephone: (845) 364-2000

C. SCOTT VANDERHOEF
County Executive

SUSAN SHERWOOD
Commissioner

Dear Consumer:

Welcome to the Rockland County Department of Social Services!

Because we understand that new, and even existing consumers, are often overwhelmed by having to deal with all the different units in our Agency, we have prepared this booklet to help you understand how and where you can get the help you need.

If you have any questions that are not answered in this handbook, please ask a Department of Social Services' staff member or call Information Rockland - NY Connects at 364-2020. We are all here to help you!

Sincerely,

Susan Sherwood
Commissioner

Our vision is to be the finest provider of services in government; to have a professional atmosphere that promotes respect for all and earns the confidence and trust of those we serve, including the community at large.

INFORMATION ROCKLAND- NY CONNECTS

Call: 845-364-2020

Fax: 845-364-2026

Email: Inforock@co.rockland.ny.us

www.informationrockland.com



Information Rockland (InfoRock)-NY Connects is the first point of contact for County residents to be connected to the vast array of health and human services available to them. One call to 364-2020 puts you in touch with experienced staff who use their knowledge and broad range of contacts to provide appropriate resources to meet your needs.

Equipped with the latest in call center technology, InfoRock-NY Connect's staff maintains a database of agencies, organizations and services to refer you to in your time of need. InfoRock clearly demonstrates the County's commitment to make access to government and County services user-friendly.

As you know, information is constantly changing, and InfoRock-NY Connects is here to keep it up to date for you. So just give us a call!!!

GENERAL INFORMATION WHEN APPLYING FOR ASSISTANCE AND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

We strive to see clients in a timely manner, but there will be days when you may have to wait longer than 30 minutes to be seen. Please be patient. Parents are asked to monitor their children at all times.

Please be aware that people come to this Agency for a variety of reasons and to see workers who perform different Social Services functions. If people arriving later than you are seen before you, they may be here to see a different type of worker than you need to see.

In keeping with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Rockland County Department of Social Services is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to those applicants/recipients who have a disability as defined by the Act. All applicants/recipients for assistance programs are informed about ADA's prohibition against discrimination through LDSS-4148A, available from:

- Building L, front desk
- Your worker at the time of application or recertification
- Information sheet included in all application packets

Reasonable accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis. Applicants/ recipients can make a request for accommodation through:

- ⇒ Telephone, by calling 364-3100
- ⇒ Writing to: Deputy Commissioner for Assistance Programs
Department of Social Services
Building L, Administration
P.O. Box 307
Pomona, New York 10970
- ⇒ In person, to a worker at the front desk in Building L

Applicants/recipients who are offered reasonable accommodation but refuse it, will be notified in writing of the accommodation offered and that the resulting action of their refusal may jeopardize receipt of services, and/or could result in denial, your case being closed, or a sanction being imposed.

AFTER HOURS



What if the Department of Social Services is closed and I have an emergency that can't wait until the morning?

After 5 p.m. and on weekends and holidays, call the Emergency Switchboard at 364-2000 and wait for an operator or call the Sheriff's Department at 638-5400.

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All telephone numbers in this handbook have an "845" area code, unless otherwise noted.



How can I find out where to find assistance to help me with a specific need?

Information Rockland (InfoRock)-NY Connects is the County's first point of contact for referral to all health and human services and information and assistance on long term care.

Contact InfoRock-NY Connects at 364-2020 or by e-mail at InfoRock@co.rockland.ny.us. If you call after hours or on weekends/holidays, leave a message and your call will be returned the next business day. Information is also available 24 hours a day/seven days a week by logging on to their website, www.informationrockland.com.



When I call InfoRock-NY Connects, do I have to give my name and address?

No, there is no requirement that you provide any identifying information. You can keep the call confidential.



Is there a fee for information and referral services?

There is no charge for this service. It is provided to County residents without regard to income.



What makes someone eligible for a caseworker?

Call InfoRock-NY Connects at 364-2020 and the intake caseworker will discuss the criteria for Family Preventive and Adult Protective Services and determine if a referral for caseworker services is appropriate.



Who do I call if I suspect someone may be receiving assistance that they are not entitled to?

If you are aware of someone you feel may be receiving assistance to which they are not entitled, or are aware of a vendor (storekeeper, doctor, etc.) who is taking advantage of any of the Department of Social Services' programs, please write to:

Special Investigations Unit
Department of Social Services
Building L, 50 Sanatorium Road
Pomona, NY 10970
354-3200 **All information will remain confidential.**



What can I do if DSS makes a decision that affects me and I am not satisfied?

You are entitled to a fair hearing if you believe that your case has been improperly denied, discontinued, your grant has been reduced, or if you feel that you are not receiving the proper amount of money.

You can only request a fair hearing or ask to change the date or time of the hearing by calling or writing to the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. To request a fair hearing, contact the State at 1-800-342-3334, fax them at 1-518-473-6735, or write them at the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, P.O. Box 1930, Albany, NY 12201.

The State will notify you by mail of the date and time of your fair hearing. You may bring a lawyer, community worker, or a friend with you to the hearing. To request an adjournment of a scheduled fair hearing, contact the State at 1-877-209-1134.

PREVENTIVE SERVICES



What services are available if I need help raising my children?

Family Preventive Services: Caseworkers are available to provide services to promote stability and avert disruption of your family. Contact InfoRock-NY Connects at 364-2020.

If required, **Intensive Preventive** Caseworkers will become involved with families to provide a greater level of service, working to strengthen the family so children can remain safely at home. If you need this service, please contact 364-3376.

PINS (Persons in Need of Supervision): This program assists families with children between the ages of 7 and 18 who are truant, acting out, or at risk of involvement in the Juvenile Justice System. Contact the PINS Unit at 364-3161.

Health-related, social and other community support services to pregnant adolescents and teenage parents are available through the **Teen Age Services Act (TASA)** and **Steps-to-Success (STS)** programs. Contact 638-5858 for additional information.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE



What if I need immediate help obtaining food, clothing or shelter?

Emergency help is available for individuals and couples who are eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), but whose specific emergency need cannot be met by the SSI Program as well as families with children that lack the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter or heat. Contact the Temporary Assistance Unit at 364-3100.

InfoRock-NY Connects can also assist you by providing contact information on agencies offering food, clothing, etc. in the County. Call 364-2020.



What other assistance can Temporary Assistance workers help me with?

The Employment Unit is responsible for helping you return to self-sufficiency by finding employment. Consumers undergo a full assessment of their job skills, training and education. Employment Unit staff and consumers work together to develop a personalized self-sufficiency plan, designed to lead you as quickly as possible into a job.

Housing staff will help you with housing problems and locates temporary housing for you if you are homeless. Staff also works with landlords and consumers to prevent evictions.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE



How do I apply for Temporary Assistance?

Contact the Temporary Assistance Unit at 354-3100 or stop by the Front Desk of Building L, where you will receive an application and an interview will be scheduled. Applications can also be downloaded from the County of Rockland's website, www.rocklandgov.com, clicking on County Offices, Departments, Social Services, Applications & Forms, then Temporary Assistance Application.



What do I need to bring with me to my interview?

- A COMPLETED application form
- Personal identification, such as passport, driver's license, alien registration, and/or visa
- Birth certificates of all children in the household
- A letter from the school, verifying enrollment of the children, their home address, and their listed legal guardian or parent
- Marriage certificate
- Rent or mortgage payment receipts from current month
- Rental agreement
- Recent utility bills (gas, electric, water, garbage) and tax bills (school, county, state)
- Medical or psychiatric proof of inability to work, or medical proof of pregnancy—If you cannot work because of illness, bring statement from doctor verifying reasons
- Baby sitter or child care receipts

CHILD SUPPORT



How do I get Child Support to help me raise my children?

Custodial parents should contact the Child Support Unit at 638-5917 for an appointment. If you need general information on child support or specific information about your open child support case, please contact 1-888-208-4485.

The Child Support Unit obtains support orders for children or takes enforcement actions if the absent parent is not complying with a court order. To obtain support, it is necessary to locate the absent parent and/or establish paternity. These services are mandated for families applying for Temporary Assistance, Medicaid, and Child Care subsidies when one or both parents are absent from the home and for all children coming into Foster Care. Eligibility for these benefits may be affected for failure to cooperate in locating absent parents or establishing paternity.

A fee is charged to the custodial parent who is not receiving benefits from the Rockland County Department of Social Services for initiating an order of support.

A fee is also charged to all applicants if a field investigation or legal service is requested.

PROTECTIVE SERVICES CHILDREN & ADULTS



How do I get help if I see a child or adult who is possibly being abused?

Child Protective Services caseworkers investigate all reports of child abuse or neglect in Rockland County. To make a report of child abuse or neglect, call 1-800-342-3720. You do not have to give your name, and if you do, it will be kept confidential. Caseworkers will investigate the complaint, and if necessary, provide services to the family or children to stabilize the situation to ensure the safety and well-being of the child(ren).

Protective Services for Adults is a system of services designed to assist adults, over the age of 18, residing in the community, who are mentally/physically impaired and are in need of protection from abuse, neglect (including self-neglect) or exploitation and have no one able to assist them.

Services are aimed at assisting individuals to remain in the community for as long as possible. These services include counseling, case management, advocacy, financial management, finding alternative living arrangements, crisis intervention and legal actions when indicated.

If you know of an individual in need of the above services, please contact Information Rockland-NY Connects at 364-2020.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE

Also required is proof of:

- Amount of support from absent parent—either a photocopy of the support check or a notarized statement of same from the absent parent
- Disability benefits and worker's compensation
- Unemployment Insurance benefits
- Social Security benefits
- Consecutive pay stubs for the last eight weeks if you are presently working or if you have worked within the last three months
- Car registration
- Bank books (savings and checking) for the past six months
- Any and all resources and income, insurance policies (life, home, etc.)
- Divorce papers, separation agreement, or death certificate
- Eviction and foreclosure (rent due) notices

NUTRITION

How can I get more food for my family?

The Food Stamp Program enables low-income households to receive nutritious food. Food Stamp benefits are accessed through an Electronic Benefit Card and can be used like money at most supermarkets, small grocery stores and fruit and vegetable markets.

For general information on the Food Stamp Program, visit www.fns.usda.gov.

How do I apply for Food Stamps?

Food Stamp applications are available at the Rockland County Department of Social Services main office in Pomona. They can also be downloaded from the County of Rockland's website, www.rocklandgov.com, clicking on County Offices, Departments, Social Services, Applications & Forms, then Food Stamp Application. Interviews are conducted on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings at the Pomona site.

Who do I call if I lose my Electronic Benefit Card or it does not work?

Contact your Temporary Assistance or Food Stamp worker. If you do not know the name of your worker, contact the Temporary Assistance Unit's main telephone number, 364-3100.

UTILITIES

What should I do if I am having difficulties paying my electric or gas bill or my lights or gas have been turned off?

If you are receiving Temporary Assistance or Food Stamps, contact the Department of Social Services' Food Stamp Unit at 364-3032. If you are 60 years of age or older and/or disabled, please contact the Rockland County Office for the Aging at 364-2108. All others should contact the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Unit at 364-3478, 364-3480, or 364-3486.

INITIAL ELIGIBILITY

How can I determine if I qualify for benefits?

To check **initial eligibility** for Food Stamps, Medicaid, HEAP, and Childcare Subsidy, please log on to MyBenefits.ny.gov.

Final eligibility is determined by the Department of Social Services at the time of application.

HOUSING ISSUES

Suppose I cannot afford a place to live?

Housing staff assists Temporary Assistance consumers with housing problems and locates temporary housing for homeless consumers.

If you require financial assistance to move, you must get approval from your Temporary Assistance worker. The Department of Social Services cannot pay rent until your new dwelling has been inspected by the Rockland County Health Department.

What if I receive an eviction notice?

Contact the Front Desk Emergency Unit at 364-3100 or your Temporary Assistance worker.

CHILD CARE

How do I get child care for my child(ren) while I work?

The Childcare Subsidy Program provides subsidies to help pay for the cost of child care for low-income working parents. Contact the Childcare Subsidy Unit at 574-4600. If you are on Temporary Assistance, contact your worker.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

What if I have a medical emergency?

If you have a medical emergency, call 911.

Who do I call if I need medical insurance?

The Medicaid Unit processes Medicaid, Child Health Plus A, and Family Health Plus applications from Rockland County residents not receiving Temporary Assistance, as well as applications for the Family Planning Benefit Program and the Medicare Savings Program which helps seniors and the disabled pay for their Medicare Part B premium. Residents on Temporary Assistance should contact their worker for medical insurance information.

In addition to the main office in Pomona, the unit has several outreach locations throughout the County where workers accept applications and conduct interviews. Contact the Medicaid Unit at 364-3040 for information on how and where to apply. Applications can also be downloaded from the County of Rockland's website, www.rocklandgov.com, clicking on County Offices, Departments, Social Services, Applications & Forms, then Medicaid Application. A listing of outreach locations is also available on the Social Services site.

The Chronic Care Unit processes Chronic Care applications if you require nursing home placement or have a long-term care need.

General information regarding each program is summarized below:

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

Medicaid: Health care coverage for people who have income and resources below a certain level. When you are notified that you have been accepted into the Medicaid Program, you have 60 days to select a Managed Care Health Plan. You will receive an educational packet to help you decide. The Managed Care Unit can be reached at 364-3188.

Child Health Plus A: Health care coverage for children under the age of 21.

Family Health Plus: Health care coverage for individuals between the ages of 19 and 64 who are not Medicaid eligible, but whose income and resources are below a certain level.

Child Health Plus B: Health care coverage for children under 19 who are not Medicaid (Child Health Plus A) eligible due to family income being above Medicaid levels or due to their immigration status. The Rockland County Department of Health has facilitated enrollers, as does all of Child Health Plus B health plans, available to take applications. They can be reached at 364-3312.

Chronic Care: Health coverage in a long term care health related facility or a skilled nursing home. Application interviews are by appointment. Contact the Chronic Care Unit at 364-3990.

Healthy NY: Provides comprehensive health insurance, as well as high deductible health plans, to small businesses and working individuals at low cost directly through the Healthy New York Program. Please call 1-866-HEALTHYNY (1-866-432-5849), or go to the New York State Department of Health's website, www.health.state.ny.us, and click on Health Insurance Programs.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE



What do I do if I need home care services?

Medicaid-eligible adults and children requiring long-term care should contact the Adult Services/Long Term Care Unit at 364-3568. For information on long-term care services such as Personal Care, Private Duty Nursing, Shared Aides, etc., contact Information Rockland-NY Connects at 364-2020 where you will receive assistance to help you make informed decisions about the long-term care needs of seniors and children and adults with disabilities.



Who do I call if I need transportation to my medical appointment?

If you are Medicaid eligible, you may be entitled to transportation to and from providers of health care.

If you are enrolled in a Managed Care Medicaid Plan and your plan provides for transportation, please contact your plan's "800" telephone number.

If your plan does not provide for transportation, call the Department of Social Services' Medical Transportation Unit at 364-3049, 364-3050, or 364-3056 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. You must call at least *one week prior* to your appointment. Please remember, the last doctor's appointment cannot be scheduled after 3 p.m., and the last pickup to return home can be no later than 4 p.m.



Who do I call if I lose my Electronic Benefit Card or it does not work?

If you are receiving Temporary Assistance, Food Stamps, or SSI, contact your Temporary Assistance worker or the Temporary Assistance Unit at 364-3100. If you are only receiving Medicaid, call the Medicaid Unit at 364-3040.