



Hope Arkansas Lions Club

Resource Book
for
Hempstead County, Arkansas

Updated May 11, 2014

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Arkansas 211

Arkansas 211 connects people in Northwest Arkansas with services in the area. Although they will only refer individuals to services in Benton, Carroll, Madison, and Washington Counties, United Way of Northwest Arkansas maintains a website with information many counties in Arkansas, including Hempstead County. Services including and in addition to the services in this book can be found at <http://www.referweb.net/211arkansas>.

Arkansas Department of Human Services

The Hempstead County offices of the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of County Operations are a source of much information and many services for low-income families and individuals and those who are in need of temporary services. The offices are located at 116 North Laurel in Hope. Ellen Haywood is the County Administrator, and their phone number is 870-777-8656. You may drop by for information, or you may call for an appointment.

The Arkansas Department of Human Services provides many services, but in their offices are also information about many other services they do not directly provide. Two computers are located in their lobby, where individuals can complete forms and search for jobs. Employees are also available to assist people with how to use the computer and to complete forms.

Information about and applications for the following services are located on the DHS web site at <http://access.arkansas.gov>:

Division of Aging and Adult Services

Alternatives for Adults with Physical Disabilities - Caregiver assistance for adults with physical disabilities

ElderChoices - In-home and community based care for the elderly

IndependentChoices - Assistance with personal care for adults

Living Choices - Assisted Living - A Medicaid program that allows you to live in a licensed Level II Assisted Living Facility

Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education

Arkansas Better Chance - Services for educationally deprived children

Child and Adult Care Food Program - Provides reimbursements for well-balanced nutritious meals served by providers at day care facilities

Child Care Assistance - Financial assistance for child care

National School Lunch Program - Provides reimbursement to private schools and residential child care facilities that serve children well-balanced nutritious meals

Summer Food Service Program - Provides reimbursements to sponsors for well-balanced nutritious meals served during the summer

Division of County Operations

ARKids First (A & B) - Children's Health Insurance

Former Foster Care Health Coverage for Adults - Coverage for adults up to age 26 who aged out of Foster Care in Arkansas

Health Care Independence Program - Health Care Coverage for Adults 19-64

Medicare Savings Assistance with premiums - Provides help with paying Medicare Part B premiums

Pregnant Women Health Coverage - Coverage to women age 19 and up who are pregnant at application

Refugee Resettlement - Provides services to refugee families

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) - Assistance buying food

Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) - provides case management services to assist families with children under 18 years old with finding employment

Division of Developmental Disabilities Services

Alternative Community Service Waiver - Services for People with Developmental Disabilities

First Connections Early Intervention Program - Services for children birth to 3 years old with a developmental delay or diagnosed medical condition

Title V Children with Special Health Care Needs - Assist with expenses for children with chronic medical conditions

Division of Services for the Blind

Older Blind Services - Independent living services for older persons who are blind or visually impaired

Vocational Rehabilitation - Job related services for blind or severely visually impaired individuals

You will be asked several questions, then you will be given information about services for which you might be available.

Many of these services are discussed in other places in this Resource Book.

Computers are also available at **Hope in Action** that will help individuals find appropriate services.

Vision-Related Problems: Division of Services for the Blind

The Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) is part of the Arkansas Department of Human Services. DVS representatives are at the Hope Workforce Center (Employment Office) regularly. Contact the Workforce Center at 777-3421 for the schedule or to ask for an appointment. The nearest DSB office is located at 3809 Airport Plaza, Texarkana, AR (870-733-0563, ext. 10339, TDD: 870-772-3813).

Help Obtaining or Keeping a Job Because of Severely Impaired Vision

Do you want to work, but you can't because of a severely impaired vision? The Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) may be able to help. DVS can help provide almost any service for an individual who wants to work but can't because of a non-visual health condition. These services include helping high school and college students participate in and be successful in school.

Eligibility requirements:

- Working or want to work
- At least 14 years old.
- One of the following:
 - Legally blind (20/200 with correction in the best eye)
 - 20/50 with correction in the best eye and have a progressive visual condition that may result in legal blindness
 - In imminent danger of becoming legally blind, as documentation by a physician who is skilled in diseases of the eye
 - Visual field in the best eye subtending an angle of less than 20 degrees

Contact DSB office for more information. There is no income limit for most of the services provided by DSB, but there may be income guidelines for related services provided by other agencies, such as Mid-South Sight and Hearing.

Other Services of DSB:

Help with independent living services for individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired. These services may include helping the individual attend World Services for the Blind.

Special programs for blind and visually impaired students ages 16 – 18.

Free Braille and Audio Materials: Library of Congress National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

The National Library of Congress National Library Service (NLS) loans braille and audio materials (books and magazines) at no cost to persons who are unable to use standard printed material because of visual or physical disabilities. Players are also loaned free of charge. For information, contact the Arkansas Regional Library below.

Arkansas Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
900 West Capitol Avenue, Suite 100
Little Rock, AR 72201-3108

Librarian: John D. Hall

Library Code: AR1A

Telephone: (501) 682-1155

Toll-free (In-state): (866) 660-0885

TDD: (501) 682-1002

FAX: (501) 682-1529

E-mail: nlsbooks@Library.Arkansas.gov or jd@Library.Arkansas.gov

Web site: <http://www.library.arkansas.gov/libraryForTheBlind/Pages/default.aspx>

To be eligible, you must be a resident of the United States or an American citizen living abroad who is unable to read or use regular print materials as a result of temporary or permanent visual or physical limitations. The specific requirements are

- A. Blind persons whose visual acuity, as determined by competent authority, is 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting lenses, or whose widest diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees.
- B. Other physically handicapped persons are eligible as follows:
 1. Persons whose visual disability, with correction and regardless of optical measurement, is certified by competent authority as preventing the reading of standard printed material
 2. Persons certified by competent authority as unable to read or unable to use standard printed material as a result of physical limitations.
 3. Persons certified by competent authority as having a **reading disability** resulting from organic dysfunction and of sufficient severity to prevent their reading printed material in a normal manner.

An application for services can be found at <http://www.loc.gov/nls/pdf/application.pdf> and is also included with this book.

A searchable catalog of available books is located at http://www.loc.gov/cgi-bin/zgate.nls?ACTION=INIT&FORM_HOST_PORT=/prod/www/data/nls/catalog/index.html,z3950.loc.gov,7490&CI=110527

Non-Visual Health Problems: Arkansas Rehabilitation Services

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) is part of the Arkansas Department of Career Education. The website for the agency is <http://ace.arkansas.gov/arRehabServices>. ARS representatives are at the Hope Workforce Center (Employment Office) regularly. Contact the Workforce Center at 777-3421 for the schedule or to ask for an appointment. The district ARS office is located at 2807 East Broad Street, Texarkana, AR (870-733-2807, TDD: 870-733-3074). Freddie Smith is the local district manager.

Help Obtaining or Keeping a Job Because of a Non-vision Health Problem

Do you want to work, but you can't because of a health condition? Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) may be able to help. ARS can help provide many services for people who want to work but can't because of a non-visual health condition.

ARS can provide almost any service to help a person with non-visual disabilities prepare for, obtain, or retain employment. These potential services may include:

- Diagnosis and evaluation of capacities and limitations
- Guidance and counseling
- Career and technical education
- Job placement
- Physical and cognitive restorative services
- Assistive technology
- Residential career training facility and hospital
- Transition services for high school students with disabilities who are moving from high school to further education or work
- Scholarships and leadership programs for students with disabilities
- Financial assistance to kidney transplant recipients
- Community rehabilitation programs
- Supported employment services
- Supported housing

Other Services of ARS:

If you are an Arkansas business, non-profit organization, or government agency seeking to hire or retain an employee with non-visual disabilities, ARS may be able to help you with financial incentives and/or services. Contact the ARS office for details.

If you are a high school student with a non-visual disability who needs assistance to stay in school or get training, ARS may be able to help you. Contact the ARS office for details.

If are deaf, hard of hearing, or have another condition that prevents you from using a standard telephone, ARS may be able to provide you with specialized telecommunication equipment. To be eligible, you must:

- Be an Arkansas Resident
- Have personal telecommunication service (telephone service)
- Have a disability certificated by a qualified professional verifying the need for specialized telecommunication equipment.

If your income is \$50,000 a year or less, the equipment is free. If your income is above \$50,000 per year, a shared cost option is available. The application is included with this book. It can also be found at http://ace.arkansas.gov/arRehabServices/programs/fieldServices/Documents/TAP%20Application%2011_28_12.pdf. More information can be obtained by contacting the TAP office at Voice/TTY: 1-800-981-4463, Voice/TTY: 501-686-9693, or VP: 501-246-8219. The office is open Monday through Friday 8:00 – 4:30.

If you have a hearing problem and need other services to live independently, ARS may be able to help. Eligibility depends on income and severity of hearing loss guidelines. Services may include counseling, audiological and medical evaluation, independent living skills training, adaptive equipment, basic sign language instruction, interpreter services, or other such services.

If you would like a loan to purchase assistive technical equipment and services in order to improve or maintain your independence, to have a better quality of life, or assist you in becoming a more productive member of the community, ARS may be able to provide you with the loan. Contact your local ARS office for more details, or download the information at <http://ace.arkansas.gov/arRehabServices/programs/fieldServices/Pages/alternativeFinancingProgram.aspx>.

Other Medical Assistance

Hope Lions Club

The Hope Lions Club may be able to help low-income individuals with eyeglasses, eye surgery, training for blind individuals, and hearing aids. An eyeglass application is found at the end of this book. Information concerning getting assistance through eye surgery or hearing aids through Mid-South Sight and Hearing or World Services for the Blind can be obtained from Lions Bill Freeman, John Collier, or James Griffin.

Workers with Disabilities Medicaid

If you are between the ages of 16 and 65, have a significant disability expected to last 12 months or longer, based on Social Security guidelines, and work, you may qualify for Workers with Disabilities Medicaid. Disability must be verified if the applicant has not received Social Security Disability or SSI benefits in the last 12 months. For some, this may be a viable alternative for individuals who can work some and want Medicaid in a few months rather than waiting two or more years for Medicare, for individuals who lose SSI benefits because of marriage, or other individuals with disabilities who work and need health care.

Financial eligibility is calculated by a mixture of non-work and work income. Non-work Income (social security disability, worker's compensation, VA benefits, etc.) is limited to the SSI individual benefit amount plus \$20. Net personal income is calculated by the non-work income plus **half** the work income. Net personal income is limited to 250% of the Federal Poverty Level. Countable Resources (cash, savings, investments other than retirement accounts, and certain property) are limited to \$4,000 for a single person, or \$6,000 for a couple, plus \$200 for each additional person. Only resources belonging to you and your spouse are counted. Your home, household goods, and one car are not counted. A second car is allowed if your spouse needs it to work. Funds placed in an Approved Account are not counted.

You may save up to \$10,000 in a separate Approved Account, approved by DHS. This account can be used for expenses to help you work or become more independent, such as education, work-related expenses, home purchase or modification, vehicle purchase or repairs, and medical expenses not covered by Medicaid.

Applications are available at the local DHS office. Potential applicants who are currently receiving Social Security or SSI disability benefits and plan to work part time should contact the local Social Security Office to determine the best options for them. For more information, contact the Choices in Living Resource Center at 1-866-801-3435.

Personal Care in the Home

Southwest Arkansas Development Council (SWADC) provides in-home personal care for individual who are ill, elderly, or have disabilities. SWADC is a non-profit community-action agency serving 12 counties. SWADC provides comprehensive and quality care in the client's home environment. Personal care can include bathing/grooming/dressing, meal preparation, shopping, laundry, housework, or other needed personal care services.

Personal care services provided by SWADC may be paid for by Medicaid, private pay, or other sources for qualified persons. For more information, contact the SWADC office in Hope at 777-2629. The Hope office is located at 104 South Main St. Office hours are Monday – Thursday 8 – 4:30 and Friday 8 – 4. Offices are closed 12 – 12:30 for lunch.

ARS and DSB

Individuals who need have disabilities and need medical services in order to obtain or maintain employment may be able to receive assistance through the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) or the Division of Services for the Blind (DSB). See the information above concerning these two agencies for more information.

Long Term Care Medicaid

Although nursing facilities are the proper choice for some people, there are other options available. The full range of long-term care options in Hempstead County are:

- Developmental Disability Service (DDS) Waiver program - Home and community-based care is available for individuals with developmental disabilities who would otherwise require care in an institution. The DDS Waiver program provides the full range of Medicaid benefits as well as other specialized services. For information, contact the local DHS office (information above) or DDS at 501-682-8662.
- Alternatives for Adults with Physical Disabilities (AAPD) – Home and community based care for individuals with physical disabilities aged 21 to 64 as an alternative to institutionalization. AAPD provides Attendant Care and Environmental Accessibility Adaptation Services and the full range of Medicaid benefits. Individuals requiring Skilled Care are not eligible.
- ElderChoices (EC) – Home-based care for individuals aged 65 and over. EC provides homemaker services, Individuals requiring Skilled Care are not eligible. chore services, home delivered meals, Personal Emergency Response System, Adult Day Health Care, Adult Foster Care, Respite Care, Adult Day Care, and Adult Companion Service. EC provides the full range of Medicaid benefits.

- Assisted Living Facilities Level II (ALF) – Facilities that provide assistance with activities of daily living to individuals that are aged, blind or physically disabled in a residential setting. Living units and common space are provided to address all activities of daily living on a 24-hour basis. Individuals in Level II Assisted Living Facilities are eligible for the full range of Medicaid benefits, but room and board costs are not included in the waiver coverage. Individuals requiring skilled Care are not eligible for this program.
- Nursing Facilities – Institutions that provide medically necessary care 24 hours per day for residents who require skilled nursing care, rehabilitation services or health-related care and services above the level of room and board and not primarily for the care and treatment of mental diseases. Recipients receive the full range of Medicaid benefits. Medicaid also pays all or a portion of monthly facility vendor payment depending on the monthly income. Individuals in Nursing Facilities with income over the current limit may become eligible for Medicaid by establishing an Income Trust. In addition to being income and resource eligible, the Nursing Facility resident must be aged, blind or disabled and require medical care of a certain level, determined by the Office of Long Term Care.

The income limit for all of the above programs is three times the current SSI Standard Payment Amount for an individual. Only the income of the applicant is counted toward the limit. The resource limit for the covered individual is \$2,000. In some programs, if the covered individual has a spouse, the spouse may be eligible to keep all or a portion of the total spousal resources.

For information, contact the Hempstead County Department of Human Services (DHS) office at 116 North Laurel or 870-777-8656. You may drop by for information, or you may call for an appointment. You may also go to <http://access.Arkansas.gov> for eligibility screening.

College Scholarships, Loans, Loan Reimbursement, and Grants

FAFSA and Pell Grants

No matter where you plan to attend college, your first step is www.fafsa.gov. Many programs require that you complete a FAFSA on time by a particular date to receive the program's services. For most statewide Arkansas scholarships, the deadline for submission is June 1 before you attend college. The cost of the application is free; if the web site asks for a fee, you have gone to the wrong site (like www.fafsa.com. Don't go there!). Fill out your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon as you and/or your parents file the federal income tax return for the year before you plan to attend college. The application must be made each year you desire a grant. If you have any questions about completing the FAFSA, contact your high school counselor or the financial aid department of the college you wish to attend. Note that just because the federal report states that you are eligible to receive a grant based on the information you submit to FAFSA. There may be additional college or state requirements you must meet in order to receive a Pell Grant.

Because of the requirements of various programs, you may need to complete the FAFSA, even though you may not be eligible for Pell Grants. To be eligible for a Pell Grant (up to about \$5,500 per year), you must:

- A. Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen
- B. Have a valid Social Security Number
- C. Have a high school diploma, GED, or have completed home schooling
- D. Be enrolled in an eligible program (generally a one-year program) seeking a degree or certificate
- E. Maintain satisfactory academic progress
- F. Not owe a refund on any federal student grant or be in default on a federal student loan
- G. Be registered with selective service if required
- H. Not have a conviction for the possession or sale of illegal drugs for an offense that occurred while you were receiving federal student aid (other convictions may be exempted – check with the Student Aid Eligibility Worksheet)
- I. Not have completed a bachelor's degree
- J. Have a financial need (Complete FAFSA to determine eligibility.)
- K. Meet any other requirements of your college financial aid office.

Arkansas Scholarships

Many Arkansas scholarships are available to Arkansas residents or graduates of Arkansas high schools. These include, but are not limited to the Arkansas Lottery Scholarship, graduate scholarships for members of minority races, students seeking professional degrees not available in Arkansas, licensed teachers and administrators, children and spouses of certain military and law enforcement personnel, members of the National Guard, members of a minority race seeking

to become teachers, and single parents., To apply for all Arkansas state scholarships, go to www.adhe.edu and click on the YOUiversal icon. After you enter certain information, you will see a list of potential scholarships. You may apply for most of these scholarships with one application. Some scholarships may require that you attend Arkansas institutions. The deadline for applying for most Arkansas Scholarships is June 1 before you plan to start college.

Special Scholarships and Aid

If you have a disability, either physical or mental, you may qualify for grants from Arkansas Rehabilitation Services or the Division of Service for the Blind. See the sections concerning these two state agencies in this book.

Would you like to be a Rehabilitation Counselor and work for the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services? If you earn an approved master's degree, are hired by the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS), and have student loans, ARS can reimburse you for up to \$10,000 of your loans. You can find more information at <http://ace.arkansas.gov/arRehabServices/programs/fieldServices/Pages/studentLoanPaybackProgram.aspx>.

Are you a member of an American Indian tribe with at least one-quarter degree Indian blood? If so, you may qualify for a grant from the Bureau of Indian Affairs for undergraduate programs, graduate degrees, or law school. Go online at <http://www.bie.edu/ParentsStudents/Grants> for details.

Do you work or have you worked in farm labor in the last two years? Did you work in a chicken house or do other farm work? Did you catch chickens or hang live chickens for processing? The Arkansas Human Development Corporation may be able to help you with expenses for career training. Call Maria Ramirez at 870-826-4149 or Gloria Hudson at 870-777-9264 for more information. They can also help you find employment or earn your GED.

Are you age 60 or older? You may take classes tuition-free at any Arkansas state-supported institution. Talk with the business office or the registrar's office at the institution you would like to attend for more details.

Are you a TEA participant? A Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) program is in every two-year college in Arkansas. CPI helps parents of minor children attend college. Services provided vary depending on the college. Currently only TEA participants are accepted as new participants in CPI programs. You can determine eligibility for the TEA program at access.arkansas.gov.

Some of the organizations also mentioned in this book can help students attend college. Some are the TEA program, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, and the Division of Services for the Blind. See the information for those organizations for more details.

Are you a single parent? Single parents in Hempstead County may apply for scholarships **to any institution** through UACCH. For more information, see Becky Wilson, Director of Financial Aid at UACCH or go to www.aspsf.org/county_hempstead.html.

Institutional Scholarships

Practically all colleges and universities award institutional scholarships. Many Institutional scholarships are awarded on merit, but some may be awarded on need. To find out about these scholarships, look at the web site of the college or university you want to attend and contact the financial office.

Local Scholarships

Your high school counselor, Career Coach assigned to your school, or the college financial aid director is the best source of information about local scholarships. An application for the Hope Lions Club Scholarship is included in this book.

Help Providing Food

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Food Stamps)

Low-income U. S. citizens and some aliens living in the U. S. legally may be able to participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) program, commonly called Food Stamps. Households must meet certain resource standards and work-related rules. You may go to <https://access.arkansas.gov/Welcome.aspx> to determine your eligibility and make an application, or you may apply at the local office of the Department of Human Services (DHS) office in Hope at 116 North Laurel (Phone # 777-8656). Ellen Haywood is the County Administrator. You may call a customer assistance person at 1-800-482-8988 for assistance in completing an application. You have the right to submit a SNAP application with only the applicant's name, address, and a signature of a responsible household member or the household's authorized representative. However, providing a complete application may result in a quicker eligibility determination.

After you apply for SNAP benefits, you will have an interview either at the DHS office or over the phone. You may choose someone who knows about your circumstances to be your authorized representative and complete the interview. You may need to provide DHS with

- proof of social security numbers for each member in the household
- proof of legal alien status for non-citizens
- proof of identity
- proof of residence
- proof of all income
- proof of the value of resources such as, but not limited to, bank accounts, certificates of deposit, stocks, bonds, and vehicles
- proof of medical bills for household members over 60 years old and those receiving disability payments **if** you want these expenses to be claimed
- proof of current utility bills **if** you want to use your actual utility costs to calculate your SNAP benefit (there is also a standard cost)

If your household is eligible, your first month of SNAP benefits will be paid from the day that your application was received online or the first day your paper application was received in the DHS office. Most SNAP application must be processed within 30 days, but it must be processed within 7 days for families with especially low-income or cash on hand and for migrant or seasonal farm workers while they are not working.

A SNAP card is an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card that looks similar to a debit card. It can be used only at authorized retailers, such as grocery stores. The cards may not be used to buy non-food items or alcoholic drinks. Anyone found intentionally misusing a SNAP card will be disqualified from SNAP participation for one year for the first violation, two years for the second violation, and permanently for the third violation. He or she may also be fined or imprisoned or both, and may be subject to federal prosecution and penalties. Penalties also apply for individuals who give fraudulent information in order to receive SANP benefits.

If you are eligible for SNAP, you may also be eligible for many other services, such as housing assistance, energy assistance, certain Medicaid programs, Lifelink telephone discount, and many other programs, services, and discounts.

Southwest Arkansas Development Council

The Southwest Arkansas Development Council gives out commodities every three months in the Senior Center on South Main Street. Call 777-2380 or 777-1345 for more details.

Hope in Action

The food pantry for Hope in Action (606 West 3rd St) is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday thru Thursdays. Individuals wanting food must bring a photo ID, proof of income, and a valid social security card.

For more information, contact Hope in Action at 777-8227. After hours, individuals may call the Hope Police department at 777-3434.

Harvest Texarkana Regional Food Bank

Harvest Texarkana serves periodically distributes USDA commodities directly from their truck to residents of Hempstead County. Citizens wanting to receive commodities must meet income guidelines or be foster parents. Citizens must also show identification and proof of residency in the county where they are seeking commodities. Seniors ages 65 and older will be served first. Anyone needing more information about receiving TEFAP can call Harvest Texarkana at 870-774-1398. Anyone wishing to volunteer time taking items to cars may call Harvest Texarkana at the same number.

A Temporary Place to Stay – Hope in Action

Hope in Action provides temporary shelter for people without homes and in need of immediate shelter. Call 777-8227 during business hours (M – Th, 9 am – 4 pm) and the Hope Police Department or walk in after hours.

Help in an Emergency

Attorney General's Office

In a community emergency, such as a tornado or devastating storm, you may contact the Attorney General's office at 800-482-8982 to get connected with government and private organizations that are providing information and assistance.

The American Legion

When a county has been declared a disaster area by the governor, an active member of The American Legion or Sons of The American Legion members who have been displaced from the primary residence may receive up to \$1,500 for emergency assistance. Detailed information and an application for assistance may be downloaded at www.legion.org/emergency. The applicant must provide proof of out-of-pocket expenses, including, but not limited to, temporary housing, food, water, and clothing. More information may be obtained at 800-433-3318.

Especially for Families with Children

Transition Employment Assistance (TEA)

The Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) Program helps low-income families with children under the age of 18 become more responsible for their own support by providing temporary supplemental financial assistance while the head(s) of household go to school or otherwise work to increase earning potential.

State law limits the receipt of TEA benefits to a 24-month lifetime limit. TEA is part of the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). There is a 60-month lifetime limit for TANF benefits from all states combined. TEA participants are required to work (either paid or unpaid) or attend college a certain number of hours each week in order to receive the cash assistance.

TEA cash assistance is also available to meet the needs of children who are being cared for by non-parent adult relatives. Assistance to such relatives may be provided for the children without regard to the time limit.

TEA may also provide supportive services such as child care assistance and employment-related services while the parent or other adult relative works toward increasing his or her earning potential. Other benefits may be available to TEA participants, such as assistance in attending an Arkansas two-year college through Career Pathways.

You may go to <https://access.arkansas.gov/Welcome.aspx> to determine your eligibility and make an application, or you may apply at the local office of the Department of Human Services (DHS) office in Hope at 116 North Laurel (Phone # 777-8656). Ellen Haywood is the County Administrator. You may call a customer assistance person at 1-800-482-8988 for assistance in completing an application.

After you apply for TEA benefits, you will have an interview either at the DHS office or over the phone. You may choose someone who knows about your circumstances to be your authorized representative and complete the interview. You may need to provide DHS with

- proof of social security numbers for each member in the household
- proof of legal alien status for non-citizens
- proof of identity
- proof of residence
- proof of all income
- proof of the value of resources such as, but not limited to, bank accounts, certificates of deposit, stocks, bonds, and vehicles
- proof of medical bills for household members over 60 years old and those receiving disability payments **if** you want these expenses to be claimed
- Proof of each child's age
- Proof of each child's relationship to you

TEA applications should be processed within 30 days. If your household is eligible, your first TEA payment will be the first day of the month your application is approved. TEA payments are made in the form of an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card that looks similar to a debit card.

If you are eligible for TEA, you may also be eligible for many other services, such as childcare assistance, housing assistance, energy assistance, certain Medicaid programs, Lifelink telephone discount, and many other programs, services, and discounts.

If you give false or misleading information on the application or you conceal facts for the purpose of establishing or maintaining your family's eligibility for TEA, you may be declared ineligible for TEA and you must repay the overpayment.

Arkansas Work Pays

TEA Participants who obtain employment may qualify for the Arkansas Work Pays program. Participants may receive a monthly cash assistance of \$204 for up to 24 months while keeping their paychecks. The program helps parents transition from TEA to unsubsidized employment while increasing earning potential. They may also receive bonuses for keeping jobs and increasing income. Case managers provide one-on-one support to participants to help them keep jobs, get promoted, or obtain better jobs and increase income. The program is limited to 3,000 participants.

Diversion Assistance

Some individuals might not need ongoing cash assistance, but they may need a one-time payment so that the adult can maintain or obtain employment. Such individuals may qualify for Diversion Assistance. The payment is not a supplement to regular assistance, but it is in place of ongoing assistance. Eligibility requirements are:

- A minor child must live in the home.
- The adult has never received a Diversion Assistant payment
- The Diversion Assistance amount will alleviate the crisis.
- The adult is currently employed but having a problem that jeopardizes the employment, or has been promised a job but needs help in order to accept the job.
- The adult signs a Diversion Assistance Agreement, agreeing to forego regular TEA cash assistance for a period of 100 days from the date of application.

Childcare Assistance

A low-income family may receive free or reduced childcare services if each adult in the home is either:

- Working at least 30 hours a week at minimum wage or higher;
- Attending college full time (12 semester credit hours per semester) and maintaining a minimum GPA of 2.00; OR
- Working and attending school equal to 30 hours a week (each semester credit hour counts as two work hours)

If a family is eligible for childcare assistance, the family pays a co-pay, with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education paying the rest. A sliding scale that indicates the amount of copay based on parents' income can be found at http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dccece/dccece_documents/2011%20CCDF%20Sliding%20Fee%20Scale.pdf.

An application for Childcare assistance can be found at the local DHS office or online at http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dccece/dccece_documents/2012%20Child%20Care%20Assistance%20Application.pdf. The application lists required documentation.

A low-income family casehead may receive childcare assistance for no longer than 60 months for all children combined. There are several agreements for participants in this program, and they are listed on the application.

All Hempstead County childcare information is to be mailed to Melissa Sawyer, Miller County DHS, 3809 Airport Plaza, Texarkana, AR 71854. Her phone number is 870-773-0563.

Participants in Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) program or Expended Support Services (ESS) may receive childcare assistance in conjunction with these programs. Participants should consult their TEA or ESS case managers for information.

Earned Income Tax Credit

Although earned income tax credit can be claimed by low-income individuals without children, the allowed income levels are higher for families with children. Consult the income tax form and instructions for more details.

Home Instructions for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)

HIPPY provides free weekly in-home lessons for children ages three and four. The lessons are conducted by a homebase educator and promote parental involvement in the child's education. Monthly meetings are also held on parenting, budgeting, and many other topics. Door prizes, games, and food are provided at these monthly meetings. Any child aged three or four is eligible for the program, including participants in ABC, Head Start, and other preschool programs.

For more information, contact Evelyn Page, HIPPY Coordinator of the Southwest Arkansas Educational Cooperative, at 870-777-3076.

ABC Program – Hope Public Schools

Hope Public Schools provides a Pre K ABC Program for children three are four years old by August 1 of the year before the start of the school year. Cost is free for those who qualify. Call 722-2705 for more information.

ABC Program – Lovin' Arms

Lovin' Arms provides a Pre K ABC Program for children three are four years old by August 1 of the year before the start of the school year. Cost is free for those who qualify. Call Jamie Randle at 722-5225 for more information.

Especially for Senior Citizens

Senior Citizens Center

The Hempstead County Senior Citizens Center is located on South Main Street across from Tailgaters. The Center is open Monday thru Friday, 8 am to 2:30 p.m. Any person at least 60 years old may participate in all the programs except lunch free of charge, regardless of income. Programs include bingo, dominoes, puzzles, crochet and other handwork, speakers on topics of interest, and nutritional information.

Lunch is served each day at 11:30 a.m. Seniors who attend lunch are asked to donate \$3.00 each if they can pay. There are no income guidelines for lunch, and no Senior is turned down because of inability to pay.

Free Tuition

Individuals over 60 years of age may take for-credit classes tuition-free at any Arkansas state-supported college, as long as space is available. Talk with the business office or the registrar's office at the institution you would like to attend for more details.

Especially for Teens

That's Not Cool

That's Not Cool is a fun website that addresses issues that face teens, especially texting issues: an overabundance of texts or pressure to send inappropriate pictures or information. The website is www.thatsnotcool.com.

The Halls

The Halls (www.thehallsboston.com) helps teenagers with various relationship issues as it follows three teens as they maneuver through relationships in high school. New episodes are introduced each Tuesday and Thursday. It includes a series of videos, a blog site, various information for teens, and a discussion guide for leaders of youth. It is produced by the Boston Public Health commission.

Help for Families with Debt Problems

Consumer Credit Counselling Service

Consumer Credit Counseling Service is a private, nonprofit community service that provides money management counseling to individuals and families, assisting them in arranging mutually acceptable debt repayment plans for their creditors. CCS counselors will also help plan a monthly budget that fits your needs and suggest methods to improve money management and spending habits. Specific services and their fees are listed below.

You may apply for services online at www.helpingfamilies.org. Click the APPLY NOW! Button. There is no fee for applying. Persons requesting our Debt Management Service must complete and return several application forms. For help in completing the forms, you can schedule an appointment by calling 1-800-255-2227 or 501-753-0202 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Friday. Appointments during the lunch hour and after 5:00 p.m. can be arranged. Offices are located in North Little Rock, Conway, and Russellville.

Budget Counseling

A counselor assists in developing a plan to meet goals and needs for individuals and families, suggesting methods to improve money-spending habits. These services are FREE

Debt Management Service in Arkansas

When monthly living expenses and installment payments are higher than the income, a counselor will work to arrange a new repayment plan with the creditors. This allows monthly payments to be lowered due to an extension in the time allowed to repay the debts. This program is voluntary. A client must have enough money after basic expenses to make a workable plan. Debt counseling is FREE. A basic monthly fee for debt management services ranges for Free to \$30. Most of the funding for this service comes from voluntary contributions from creditors who participate in Debt Management Plans.

Credit Report Review

The Credit Report Review is designed to personally and confidentially analyze your credit report. The Credit Report Review offers a personal counseling session with the consumer to review the credit report's content and meaning. A fee of \$20 is assessed for this service.

Pre-filing Bankruptcy Counseling

This course is provided to those who are experiencing financial problems and considering filing for bankruptcy. This course is designed to provide information on the consequences of and alternatives to bankruptcy. With this information, the individual can make a better decision to resolve the financial distress. The course may be taken online. A fee of \$40.00 is charged for a single filer and \$60.00 for a married couple filing jointly.

Bankruptcy Pre-Discharge Education

This financial management course is designed to provide you with the knowledge to manage

your finances and give you the tools to help build a brighter financial future. The course may be taken online. A fee of \$50.00 is charged for a single filer and \$65.00 for a married couple filed jointly. (All materials included.)

CheckWise Education –

Is another online course. A fee of \$35.00 per individual is charged for this service.

Lifeline Support – Discount for Basic Telephone Services

The Lifeline Program is a federal program which provides support to telecommunications companies that in turn offer discounts to millions of eligible consumers.

Approximately 2,000 telecommunications companies provide these discounts. Consumers can apply for these discounts through their telecommunications company.

Eligible households can receive up to \$9.25 per month in discounts. Additional state support may be available. Approximately 2,000 telephone companies are eligible to provide these discounts.

A household applies for the discounts through their telecommunications company. These companies are then reimbursed through the Lifeline Program.

You may determine your eligibility for the program at www.lifelinesupport.org. Click on **Am I Eligible?**

Only one discount is allowed per household.

Eligibility is based on a household income at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty level. You may be eligible if anyone in your household receives the following assistance:

- Federal Public Housing Assistance or Section 8
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Medicaid
- National School Lunch Program's free lunch program
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP; food stamps)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Apply for the discount through your telephone company, either a wireless phone or a land line. If the discounted phone line is mobile, the phone must have only basic telephone service. (No data or texting plans or enhanced services.)

A list of the telephone companies that participate in the program can be found at www.lifelinesupport.org. Click on **Companies in My State**. Click on the name of your telephone company to see information about applying or contact information for the company.

Some of the companies are AT&T wireless, AT&T GoPhone, Southwest Arkansas Telephone Cooperative, Inc., and Walnut Hill Telephone Company.

Utility Assistance

Low Income Energy Assistance Program - SWADC

The Southwest Arkansas Development Corporation (SWADC) can pay utility bills for qualified families twice a year (fall and spring) plus twice a year after cut-off notices were received. Family must provide proof of all income received (or no income received) for all members of the family, proof of utility allowance or rental assistance received, and proof of utility bills.

Funding is provided on a first-come, first-served basis to qualified families as long a funding is available. Call SWADC for application deadlines and income eligibility levels. SWADC is a non-profit community-action agency serving 12 counties. For more information, contact the SWACD office in Hope at 777-2629. The Hope office is located at 104 South Main St. Office hours are Monday – Thursday 8 – 4:30 and Friday 8 – 4. Offices are closed 12 – 12:30 for lunch.

When funding is exhausted, families are referred to other sources, if possible.

Electric Service Payment Assistance for Migrants and Seasonal Farm Workers

Electric payments, gas payments, water service payments, and rent for migrants and seasonal farm workers may be provided by the Arkansas Human Development Corporation, located at 205 Smith Road, Suite C (Migrant Center). Call for information and/or an appointment at 777-9264. The office is open 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday thru Friday.

The Arkansas Human Development Corporation also provides educational program, health outreach programs, employment assistance, and transportation assistance.

Hope in Action – The Benefit Bank of Arkansas

Hope in Action can provide electric, water and gas bill assistance. Call 777-8227 for information. Apply at the offices at 606 West Third Street, Hope. To apply, provide photo ID, proof of residency, proof of income, and shut-off notice.

Non-medical Transportation Assistance

The Arkansas Human Development Corporation can provide gas money on a one-time basis for migrants and seasonal farm workers. The Arkansas Human Development Corporation is located at 205 Smith Road, Suite C (Migrant Center). Call for information and/or an appointment at 777-9264. The office is open 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday thru Friday.

The Arkansas Human Development Corporation also provides educational program, health outreach programs, employment assistance, and utility assistance.

Free Income Tax Preparation

Almost any individual or family with a household earned income of \$58,000 or less in 2013 can file state and federal income taxes free at www.myfreetaxes.com. The IRS and Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration has approved the use of the website. The IRS uses the program in its Voluntary Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

TaxACT has an online free-file edition for federal and Arkansas state income tax returns. To qualify, the adjusted gross incomes (AGI) must be \$52,000 or less AND the primary filer must be aged 18 through 57. The website for Arkansas residents to use is https://www.taxactonline.com/s_online_tax2013/free-file.asp?sc=13050302&m=FFA&src=FFA&ad=AR.

Online Taxes at OLT.com provides free federal and free state online tax preparation and e-filing for taxpayers whose AGI is between \$13,000 and \$58,000, regardless of age. The website to use for Arkansas residents is <https://www.olt.com/main/oltstateff/default.asp?linkID=AR>.

TaxSlayer.com provides free federal and state online filing for individuals whose federal AGI is less than \$30,000. The website for Arkansas residents is www.taxslayer.com/americanpledge/default.aspx?source=fgsbfd&src=ARFFA.

H&R Block provides free federal and state tax preparation if the AGI is \$58,000 and the age of the primary filer is 52 or less. The website for Arkansas residents is http://www.hrblock.com/taxes/partner/index.jsp?otpPartnerID=5801&campaignId=pw_mcm_5801_0001.

Intuit TurboTax provides free online tax preparation & e-file if in tax year 2013 you meet one of the following:

- Earned \$30,000 or less Adjusted Gross Income (AGI), or
- Earned \$58,000 or less Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) and served Active Duty Military (including Reservists and National Guard) or
- Qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Free Tax Extensions

Visit their website at: <https://turbotax.intuit.com/taxfreedom/>

Hope in Action provides a software program to assist with income taxes. The service is available M – F, 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Register to Vote

Voter registration forms can be found in many places throughout Hempstead County. Two of these places are the county office of the Department of Human Services (DHS) on 116 North Laurel Street in Hope and at the Registrar's office at the University of Arkansas Community College at Hope. You may also register to vote at the Hempstead County Clerk's office.

To qualify to vote in an election, you must apply to register to vote at least 30 days before the election. If you are mailing in a form to the Arkansas Secretary of State's office, it must be postmarked by that date.

Obtain an Arkansas Birth Certificate

Birth certificates from individuals born in Arkansas after February 1, 1914 (and a limited number before that date) can be obtained from the Arkansas Department of Health. An application may be obtained at the local DHS office or online at

http://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programsServices/certificatesVitalRecords/Documents/vr-7_birth_certificate_application.pdf. Arkansas birth certificates may also be obtained at the Arkansas Department of Health at 4815 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas, or by calling 1-866-209-9482.

Cost of the certificates are \$12.00 for the first copy and \$10.00 for each additional copy. Applicants who mail the application are requested to allow 4 – 6 weeks for delivery. Telephone orders are expedited, with overnight shipping available for an additional fee. Orders placed in person will be filled the same day. The office is open 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. All requests require photo identification.

Find Government Information or File a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request

You have the right to see Budgets and much other information concerning government agencies. Some of this information is available online, and some you have to ask for.

Arkansas Act 1163 of 2011 requires that expenditures of all Arkansas state-supported institutions of higher education be available on websites operated by the institutions. The link to all of these websites can be found at www.adhe.edu. Click on either 4 Year Public Universities or 2 Year Public Colleges to find expenditure information about a particular institution.

Arkansas Act 742 of 2011 requires that other reports by state agencies be filed electronically and be available on the websites of the particular agencies.

The Electronic Freedom of Information Act Amendment (1996) stated that all federal agencies must make certain types of records created after November 1, 1996, available electronically and must provide electronic reading rooms available for citizens to use.

Information concerning Arkansas agencies and employees of the state of Arkansas can be found at <http://transparency.arkansas.gov/>.

Many types of information from public entities can be obtained by filing a Freedom of Information (FOIA) request. A request can be made by submitting a simple letter to the government agency of interest. An Arkansas example letter can be found at www.nfoic.org/arkansas-sample-foia-request. Guidelines for writing the letter are:

- Address the letter to the agency or subdivision in question and be as specific as possible.
- Mark the envelope and top of the letter (or the email subject line and top of the email) as a FOIA request.
- Be as specific as possible as to which records you are requesting.
- Explain why you are requesting the documenting.
- Include your contact information.
- Make copies for your own records.