



DSS ONLINE APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS REFUGEE CLIENTS

All DSS field offices are only able to take in-person appointments for emergency situations. This means that the application for all benefits is recommended to be done online. Once the family is enrolled, any requested documentation from DSS can be either uploaded to the family's DSS account online or dropped off at a DSS field office during business hours.

DSS requires a separate JFES (Job First Employment Services) Refugee Service Needs Assessment and Employment Plan be completed for each employable adult member of the family. Ask your IRIS Community Sponsor Coach (CSC) for the blank form if it is not available on the IRIS website. Once completed, it gets uploaded as indicated in step 18 below along with other required documents.

The person creating the account needs to have explained to the clients beforehand that s/he is applying on their behalf and will serve as their DSS authorized representative (or "a-rep") going forward.

To apply for benefits, visit this page and click "Apply Now" under Apply for Benefits: <https://www.connect.ct.gov/access/jsp/access/Home.jsp>

Follow these steps:

(Note: Unless otherwise directed, only fill in fields that are denoted "required")

1. Create an account by creating a username and password.

Print or save the page to ensure you remember the username and password.

2. After creating the account, login using username and password.

3. SKIP the case association question.

You can associate the case later when clients' Social Security number is submitted to DSS.

4. Click "Apply" and proceed to apply for each family member, starting with the principal applicant (i.e., usually the father).

5. Complete the section that will make you the authorized representative for the family's account.
6. Check "cash", "SNAP", and medical. Before proceeding, SAVE and EXIT so that you can return later to resume from where you left. Unfinished applications can be saved for up to 15 days.
7. Click "apply" again, return to the application, and hit "next".
8. In the SNAP section, indicate "0" for both income and assets.
9. In the question about taxes, check that no one has filed, or has been claimed as a tax dependent in the years prior to the arrival, adding all household members.
10. Provide the total amount for the family's monthly rent.
11. For educational level, say "unknown".
12. If you have the I-94s available, upload when prompted, for SIV you may upload copies of visa and passport.
13. In the section asking for any medical conditions, it is better to NOT answer this question as it will delay approval of the application.
14. When asked to detail shelter expenses, refer to the DSS letter that your CSC has provided you. From the letter you can indicate the amount of rent, that it is paid monthly, and that it is not public housing. You will upload the letter in a later section as part of supporting documentation, so there is no need to list more shelter expenses here.
15. When asked whom the authorized representative represents, say "organization", then provide the authorized representative's name and phone number for the cash assistance interview.
16. Type the principal applicant's name in the application signature field.
17. Submit and print/save the application to PDF before proceeding.
18. In the next section, you will submit supporting documentation which **MUST** be in PDF format. (Select "other" if documentation type does not appear in drop-down menu):
 - a. I-94 if available (for refugees) and copies of Visas (for SIV)
 - b. Passport pages if available (i.e., bio page for each family member)
 - c. DSS letter supplied by IRIS (from the dropdown menu, select "From other party living arrangement").
 - d. JFES Service Needs Assessment for each employable adult, completed.
 - g. Copy of lease and copies of Social Security Cards for all family members. If these documents are not available at the time of application, whenever they become

available, they must be submitted online so that lack of such documentation will not precipitate any pause or gap in the client's benefits in the future.

19. After completing this section, send your CSC a PDF copy of the application you have submitted to DSS.

20. Once the application is submitted to DSS online, the next and final phase of the application process is that DSS will review the application. If the application satisfies DSS's requirements, DSS will interview clients over the phone. The date and time for the interview is supposed to be communicated with clients via mail. However, clients can proactively call DSS at 855-626-6632 during business hours (*except Wednesday, Wednesdays DSS does not accept calls*) to complete the interview. The interviews for SNAP and TFA are at times completed by the same DSS caseworker, but sometimes they are conducted by two different DSS caseworkers. It is important to remember to ask the DSS interviewer in the first interview whether the interview is for both SNAP and TFA or for one of them. If the interview is completed for SNAP, you may ask the interviewer to connect you with the relevant caseworker to complete the interview for TFA and vice versa. When the interviews are completed, usually the DSS caseworker can tell you the SNAP and TFA dollar amount the family is approved for as well as when to expect the EBT card(s) in the mail.

Note 1. DSS can interview the a-rep. on behalf of the applicant client if the client does not speak English.

Note 2. If the DSS caseworker insists on interviewing the applicant client, if the client needs an interpreter, DSS has an interpreter line for a wide range of languages.

Note 3. Before the interview, make sure the client or a-rep has the following identifying information handy:

- Client's full name and date of birth
- Client's online submission ID for the application (*can be located on the PDF copy of the submitted application*)
- Client's address and phone number
- SSN if available
- DSS may also ask for the client's A# which can be located on the IRIS DSS letter.

21. When clients receive their EBT card, you can activate the EBT card by calling the number on the backside of the EBT card and providing the following information:

- ✓ The card number which can be located on the front side of the card and is usually 18 digits
- ✓ DOB for the cardholder
- ✓ When asked for a 4-digit Social Security number, you can put four zeros (0000) if the client has not received his/her SSN or if a copy has not been submitted to the DSS yet.
- ✓ Choose a 4-digit pin code. Make sure you write down the pin somewhere as clients will need to use it each time s/he uses his/her EBT card moving forward.

Instructions for Access Health CT (AHCT)

1. In the past, DSS handled the application for Husky Health Insurance. That has now changed. Husky applications should either be completed over the phone by calling 1-855-805-4325 **with the principal applicant present** or you can apply online at <https://www.accesshealthct.com/>.

2. Once on the AHCT website, select “start new application”.

3. For SSN, answer that the application for SSN is in process.

4. Indicate preference for paper notifications.

5. Provide information for the authorized representative after selecting “responsible adult” among the choices.

6. Select paper notification, no duplicates.

7. Copy and paste applicant name into applicant signature.

8. You must call AHCT at **1-855-805-4325** to complete the process with the principal applicant present. When the agent comes online, explain that you are the authorized representative for a recently arrived refugee family and are assisting the principal applicant to obtain health insurance for her/him and her/his family. Request an interpreter in the client’s language to help facilitate understanding while pointing out that you may well need to participate in the call to make sure the client is able to answer questions correctly.

a. If the agent is uncooperative, ask for a supervisor. The State Refugee Coordinator has assured us that AHCT can process applications for all categories of refugee families. If the supervisor is not helpful, contact your Community Sponsor Coach who will follow up with DSS directly.

b. If the agent suddenly says the client is not eligible for health insurance due to a 5-year residency requirement, **ask for the application ID before hanging up**. Contact your CSC at IRIS with the application ID so that Access Health can be contacted to resolve the problem.