



*Helping Older Persons with Legal &  
Long-Term Care Problems*

# **PASSPORT – Ohio’s Home Care Program**

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## ***1. What Is The PASSPORT Program?***

PASSPORT stands for **P**re-**A**dmission **S**creening **P**roviding **O**ptions and **R**esources **T**oday. PASSPORT offers home health care and community-based services to individuals as an alternative to institutionalization or nursing home care. PASSPORT is funded with state and federal funds under the Medicaid Waiver program. [\[1\]](#)

## ***2. What Services Does PASSPORT Provide?***

PASSPORT may provide, to an eligible individual when approved in a care plan, services including but not limited to: nursing care; physical, occupational and speech therapy; personal care; respite care; social work/counseling; homemaker services; home-delivered meals; nutritional consultation; chore services; adaptive and assisting devices (such as crutches); home medical equipment; medications; and home health case management. [\[2\]](#)

## ***3. Who Provides The PASSPORT Program Services?***

PASSPORT contracts with Medicare/Medicaid-certified home care agencies to provide services to eligible individuals. [\[3\]](#) You are assigned a PASSPORT case manager to make sure you are being safely maintained in the community. The case manager monitors your health and adjusts your plan of care so it continues to meet your needs.

## ***4. How Do I Become Eligible For PASSPORT?***

You must be 60 or older [\[4\]](#) and live or plan to live in a non-institutional community setting. [\[5\]](#) You must require a nursing facility level of care and be at risk of institutionalization. [\[6\]](#) You must have an attending physician who will authorize a care plan that you agree to. [\[7\]](#) Your service needs must not exceed \$14,700/month. [\[8\]](#)

## ***5. What Are The Financial Eligibility Requirements For PASSPORT?***

PASSPORT financial eligibility rules are in many ways the same as those of the Institutional Medicaid program that pays for services provided in a nursing facility. [\[9\]](#) See Pro Seniors' *Institutional Medicaid* pamphlet for a full explanation of Institutional Medicaid's income and resource rules. Below is a short summary of the financial eligibility rules.

**Income:** Only your individual gross monthly income is considered. The income of other family members is not counted. [\[10\]](#) If your gross monthly income exceeds \$2,250, you must establish a Qualified Income Trust to be PASSPORT eligible. [\[11\]](#)

**Resources:** You can only have \$2,000 in countable resources. [\[12\]](#) But your home, [\[13\]](#) one vehicle, regardless of value, [\[14\]](#) an irrevocable pre-need burial contract, [\[15\]](#) cemetery plots [\[16\]](#) and a few other items are exempt resources and not counted when calculating PASSPORT eligibility. [\[17\]](#)

If you are married, and you and your spouse have less than \$26,720 in countable resources (this includes the \$2,000 the applicant is allowed to keep), then you are PASSPORT eligible. If together, your countable resources exceed \$26,720, then Medicaid will allocate your resources between you and your spouse via a formula and any countable resources allocated to you, the PASSPORT applicant, must be spent-down to the \$2,000 eligibility limit. [\[18\]](#)

Transferring assets for less than their fair market value within 60 months of applying for PASSPORT, may cause you to be determined ineligible for PASSPORT for a number of months dependent on the value of the gifted asset. [\[19\]](#)

## ***6. Do I Pay Anything For PASSPORT Services?***

Your financial responsibility for PASSPORT home health care is calculated by deducting from your gross monthly income the personal needs allowance of \$1,463/month, medical insurance premiums and unpaid medical expenses. The remainder, if any, is your patient liability, or what you must pay. [\[20\]](#)

## ***7. Can My Spouse Keep Some Of My Income To Help Pay Expenses?***

Yes, if your spouse's income is low enough. Your spouse's monthly income is subtracted from the total of the Minimum Monthly Maintenance Need Allowance (MMMNA) (\$2,030) plus the calculated Excess Shelter Allowance (ESA), if any. The ESA is the amount that your spouse's housing costs exceed \$609 (30% of the MMMNA). [\[21\]](#) The MMMNA of \$2,030 may also be increased to a maximum of \$3,090 by requesting a state hearing if exceptional circumstances exist such as catastrophic illness or home repairs. [\[22\]](#)

## ***8. How Do I Apply For PASSPORT?***

To apply for PASSPORT, contact your local Area Agency on Aging office. For a list visit: <http://ohioaging.org/Pages/Area%20Agencies.html>. In Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Warren and Hamilton counties contact the Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio at 1-513-721-1025. [23]

## ***9. Who Else Pays For Home Health Care?***

Home health care payment options include:

- a) County tax levy services (Hamilton County has a home care program funded by a tax levy);
- b) Private pay (some nonprofit providers offer a sliding fee, based on income);
- c) Long-term care insurance and some group health care insurance policies may provide home health care services; and
- d) Medicare payment for skilled home care is available to Medicare-eligible persons.

## ***10. How Do I Become Eligible For Medicare Home Health Care?***

Medicare will pay the cost of medically needed skilled services, home health aide services, medical supplies, and medical social services if

- a) Your care requires part-time or intermittent skilled nursing care, or physical or speech therapy;
- b) Your services are provided under a plan of care approved by your physician; and
- c) You are homebound.

To be considered homebound, you must be normally unable to leave home without the aid of supportive devices (such as a wheelchair) or the help of another person. See Pro Seniors' *Medicare Home Health Care Benefits* pamphlet for more information.

## ***11. What Can I Do If My PASSPORT Application Is Denied?***

If your application for PASSPORT is denied, you can appeal the decision in writing or by calling the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services within 90 days of the date the notice was mailed. [24] If your PASSPORT services are reduced or ended you must request a state hearing within 15 days of the date the notice was mailed in order for your PASSPORT services to continue while your appeal is pending. [25] After the state hearing, further administrative appeal [26] and court review [27] are available.

## *12. Is Help Available To Appeal PASSPORT Decisions?*

Yes. Ohio residents age 60 or older can contact Pro Seniors for help regarding their PASSPORT denials, reductions or terminations. Pro Seniors can provide information, advice, representation and/or referrals to seniors who wish to appeal their PASSPORT cases. All of these free services are available by calling Pro Seniors' Legal Hotline for Older Ohioans at (513) 345-4160 or (800) 488-6070.

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Pro Seniors' Legal Hotline for Older Ohioans provides free legal information and advice by toll-free telephone to all residents of Ohio age 60 or older. If you have a concern that cannot be resolved over the phone, then the hotline will try to match you with an attorney who will handle your problem at a fee you can afford.

In southwest Ohio, Pro Seniors' staff attorneys and long-term care ombudsmen handle matters that private attorneys do not, such as nursing facility, adult care facility, home care, Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, protective services, insurance and landlord/tenant problems.

This pamphlet provides general information and not legal advice. The law is complex and changes frequently. Before you apply this information to a particular situation, call Pro Seniors' free Legal Hotline or consult an attorney in elder law.

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**Endnotes:** *[Click the endnote number "[1]" to return to the text]*

- [1] [Chapter 5160-31 of the Ohio Administrative Code \(OAC\)](#)
- [2] [OAC § 5160-31-05](#) PASSPORT HCBS waiver program covered services
- [3] [OAC § 5160-31-06](#) Provider conditions of participation for the PASSPORT HCBS waiver program
- [4] [OAC § 5160-31-03\(A\)\(9\)](#) Eligibility for enrollment in the PASSPORT HCBS waiver program
- [5] [OAC § 5160-31-03\(A\)\(8\)](#) Eligibility for enrollment in the PASSPORT HCBS waiver program
- [6] [OAC § 5160-31-03\(A\)\(10\)](#) Eligibility for enrollment in the PASSPORT HCBS waiver program
- [7] [OAC § 5160-31-03\(A\)\(6\)&\(7\)](#) Eligibility for enrollment in the PASSPORT HCBS waiver program
- [8] [OAC § 5160-31-03\(A\)\(2\)](#) Eligibility for enrollment in the PASSPORT HCBS waiver program
- [9] [OAC § 5160-31-03\(A\)\(2\)](#) Eligibility for enrollment in the PASSPORT HCBS waiver program
- [10] [OAC § 5160:1-6-03.1\(H\)\(1\)](#) Medicaid: determining financial eligibility for medical assistance using the special income level
- [11] [OAC § 5160:1-6-03\(A\)\(2\)](#) Medicaid: special income rules that may apply when an individual is requesting Medicaid payment for long-term care services; See also, [OAC § 5160:1-6-03.2](#) Medicaid: use of qualified income trusts (QIT)
- [12] [OAC § 5160:1-3-05.1\(B\)\(8\)\(a\)](#) Medicaid: resource requirement
- [13] [OAC § 5160:1-3-05.13](#) Medicaid: treatment of the home
- [14] [OAC § 5160:1-3-05.11\(C\)](#) Medicaid: automobiles and other modes of transportation as resources
- [15] [OAC § 5160:1-3-05.6](#) Medicaid: burial funds and contracts
- [16] [OAC § 5160:1-3-05.7](#) Medicaid: burial spaces
- [17] [OAC § 5160:1-3-05.14](#) Medicaid: resource exclusion

- [18] [OAC § 5160:1-6-04](#) Medicaid: treatment of income and resources for an institutionalized spouse with a spouse in the community
- [19] [OAC § 5160:1-6-06](#) Medicaid: transfer of assets
- [20] [OAC § 5160:1-6-03.1\(F\)](#) Medicaid: determining financial eligibility for medical assistance using the special income level;  
[OAC § 5160:1-6-07\(F\)](#) Medicaid: post-eligibility treatment of income for individuals in medical institutions
- [21] [OAC § 5160:1-6-07\(F\)\(4\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#) Medicaid: post-eligibility treatment of income for individuals in medical institutions
- [22] [OAC § 5101:6-7-02](#) State hearings: standards for revising community spouse income and resource allowances at a state hearing
- [23] [OAC § 173-42-03](#) PASSPORT program (Medicaid-funded component): enrollment process for individuals;  
See also, [OAC § 5160:1-2-03](#) Medicaid: application for home and community-based (HCB) services
- [24] [OAC § 5101:6-3-02\(B\)\(1\)](#) State hearings: state hearing requests
- [25] [OAC § 5101:6-4-01\(A\)](#) State hearings: continuation of benefits when a state hearing is requested
- [26] [OAC § 5101:6-8-01\(A\)](#) State hearings: administrative appeal of the state hearing decision
- [27] [OAC § 5101:6-9-01](#) State hearings: further appeal rights