

MassHealth's Personal Care Attendant Program

The Personal Care Attendant (PCA) program is offered through MassHealth, Massachusetts' Medicaid program. The PCA program pays for care for people with permanent disabilities to enable them to continue to live at home.

PCAs can help you with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) such as:

1. Mobility
2. Bathing and grooming
3. Dressing and undressing
4. Passive range-of-motion exercises
5. Taking medications
6. Eating
7. Toileting

PCA time is **not** allowed for verbal prompting, cuing, or supervision.

If you live with family members, they will be expected to assist with household chores. If you live alone, or with family who are physically unable to assist, PCAs can also help with shopping, laundry, meal preparation, housekeeping, and accompanying you to medical appointments (Instrumental Activities of Daily Living, or IADLs).

Eligibility

To qualify you must:

- Be **eligible for MassHealth Standard or CommonHealth**
- Have a **chronic or permanent disability** that prevents you from performing your own personal care
- Need **physical assistance with at least two of the seven ADLs** listed above and
- Have approval from your doctor or nurse practitioner for PCA services

Children may be eligible for PCA services if they are over the age in which parents would ordinarily be expected to help with personal care, generally over age 5, except in exceptional circumstances.

PCA services **cannot** be used at the same time as MassHealth-funded Adult Day Health, Day Habilitation, Adult Foster Care, Group Adult Foster Care, homemaker services funded through the Mass. Rehabilitation Commission, or while you are in a hospital or rehabilitation facility (with limited exceptions).

The PCA Program is Consumer-Directed

If MassHealth approves PCA services for you, you must recruit, hire, train, and schedule your own PCAs. Your **Personal Care Management Agency (PCM)** can teach you how to do these

tasks and assess whether you need someone else, a **surrogate**, to help with some or all of them.

Your PCM can help find a PCA or you can hire someone you already know such as a friend or certain relatives. You **cannot** hire: your spouse, your surrogate, your legal guardian or the parent or foster parent of a minor child. However, one parent of an **adult** with disabilities may be the guardian/surrogate and the other parent may be the PCA. Your PCA must be legally authorized to work in the U.S. and have a social security number.

To Apply

Apply through your local PCM which may be a local Independent Living Center or Elder Service Agency. **To find your local PCM call MassHealth Customer Service at 800-841-2900 or see mass.gov/info-details/personal-care-management-pcm-agency-list.**

Your doctor or nurse practitioner must fill out some forms. You can help keep your application on track by checking if they have completed these forms.

Your PCM will then conduct a detailed assessment of your needs for MassHealth's review. This will include a home visit, usually by a nurse and an occupational therapist. MassHealth will decide if you are approved for the program and the number of hours of care it considers medically necessary and will cover.

Expect that the application process will take some, typically a month or two.

Sources and for More Information

- MassHealth PCA Handbook: mass.gov/doc/pca-consumer-handbook-personal-care-attendant-program/download
- Helpful FAQ: stavrospca.org/resources-faqs *
 - * While much of this information is applicable to everyone, some is specific to those served by this agency.
- Regulations: mass.gov/regulations/130-CMR-422000-personal-care-attendant-services