

“When I started graduate school at Pitt, I knew that money would be tight. Despite sharing a small apartment with my partner, undeferred student loans and credit card debt from moving cities meant that I needed a lot more money a month than my stipend provided. I also couldn’t stay on my dad’s health insurance because it’s local to Florida, so I knew I needed health insurance but couldn’t afford to pay for insurance through Pitt.

That meant I went months without health insurance, and consequently without healthcare. (I was lucky enough to remain basically healthy through those months, but it was a strain-- particularly through flu season.) I work a freelance job writing and editing, but that simply wasn’t enough to make ends meet. Luckily, my older sister works in the welfare office in Pittsburgh and told me how to apply for SNAP and Medicaid. Especially since I am on a fellowship (as opposed to being an official employee of Pitt), my taxable income level was low enough to qualify for both. Before going through this process, I racked up even more credit card debt trying to feed myself and purchase books, so it was a huge relief to get access to healthcare and food stamps. It’s made my graduate student life much easier, and is probably how I was able to finish my first year; without it, the financial strain and/or the addition of a second job on top of my studies wouldn’t have allowed me to enroll full-time anymore. Although I love the city of Pittsburgh and my program in the English department, the stipend was not enough to provide for my needs, especially since I had financial obligations my family couldn’t fix.”

– Alison McIntosh, Graduate Employee in English



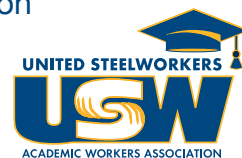
For more information go to:

Website: www.pittgradunion.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/PittGradUnion

Email: info@pittgradunion.org

Call or text: 412-339-4843



University of Pittsburgh Graduate Student Employees:

Do you know you may be eligible for free food through SNAP, the Pitt Pantry, Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, WIC or Hunger Services at the Urban League?

Do you know you may be also eligible for rental assistance or free or low monthly health care premiums for your children?

**Look inside
to learn how these resources may be available to YOU!**

“I have been teaching since my first day at Pitt five years ago and I love my students and work as an educator. I’ve also been in the fortunate position to have always felt well supported by my department. The reality of working for the Academy as a graduate student employee, however, is that our labor is severely devalued by a corporatized institution. Most of us face precarious employment and unsustainable wages—we live paycheck to paycheck and contract to contract—often below the federal poverty-level. As a parent with a young child, I am responsible for ensuring that my son has the opportunities and resources necessary for him to learn and grow. I can’t do that on what I currently earn. So, I’ve been very grateful to have access to supplemental foods and medical assistance through programs like WIC and Medicaid. Without these important benefits my son and our family may not be healthy, happy, and thriving as we are!”



– Hillary Lazar, Graduate Employee in Sociology

While the cost of living in Pittsburgh has been climbing, graduate student wages have remained stagnant. Based on the current Grad Employee Stipend rates, you may be eligible for some local services as well as government assistance programs.

2017 FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL GUIDELINES (FPL)

Household Size	100%	133%	150%	200%
1	\$12,060	\$16,040	\$18,090	\$24,120
2	\$16,240	\$21,599	\$24,360	\$32,480
3	\$20,420	\$27,159	\$30,630	\$40,840
4	\$24,600	\$32,718	\$36,900	\$49,200

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – 150 - 200% of FPL**
 The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is the new name for the Food Stamp program. Eligibility is determined by income, but applicants may receive deductions from their gross income for things like housing costs, child or dependent care payments, and medical expenses over \$35 for elderly or disabled people. The best way to find out if you're eligible is to apply. For SNAP's purposes, a household is defined as "a group of people who usually purchase and prepare meals together." People in the household are not required to be related. If you are in an emergency situation, make sure you tell the DHS office. You may qualify for "expedited benefits," which means that you can receive your SNAP/food stamp benefits within five days.

<http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/supplementalnutritionassistanceprogram/index.htm>
- Pitt Pantry – 150% of FPL**
 A volunteer-run food pantry that collects and distributes food to members of the Pitt Community. All members of the Pitt community are welcome to visit the pantry. Shoppers are asked to self certify their income so no tax documents are needed.

<https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/pittserves/sustain/pantry/>
- Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank – 150% of FPL**
 A non-profit organization that collects and distributes food through a 350+ member network in 11 counties in southwestern Pennsylvania.

<http://www.pittsburghfoodbank.org/>

- Women Infants and Children (WIC) – 185% FPL**
 The Pennsylvania Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) has improved the nutrition and health of families in Pennsylvania since 1974 by providing nutrition services, breastfeeding support, health care and social service referrals, and healthy foods.

WIC serves the following Pennsylvania residents:

- Pregnant women
- Breastfeeding women, for up to one year postpartum
- Women up to six months postpartum, who are not breastfeeding
- Infants and children under 5 years old, including foster children

<https://www.pawic.com/>

- Hunger Services at the Urban League – 150% of FPL**
 Individuals and families can call the Emergency Food Assistance hotline and get a referral to one of over 300 pantries in the network. In emergency cases, food is provided from an onsite pantry along with food vouchers. Call the hotline at 412-325-0749 or 412-681-1121.
- Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh**
 The Housing Choice Voucher Program (formerly known as Section 8), is the nation's largest rental assistance program. It helps low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled rent decent, safe and sanitary housing units in the private market. Income eligibility ranges from \$25,450 for a single person to \$36,300 for a family of 4. For more information and to view the full range of available programs please check out the url below.

<http://www.hacp.org/housing-options/housing-vouchers/hcv-faq#other>
- Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) – starting at 208% of FPL**
 Under Pitt's health insurance plan for grad employees, insuring children can be cost-prohibitive. CHIP covers all kids and teens - and for many families, it's free. Even families with higher incomes can take advantage of quality insurance with low monthly premiums and co-pays for most services.

<http://www.chipcoverspakids.com>