

# Small Steps to Big College Dreams

## The Save for College Program and Public Benefits

### Your NYC Scholarship Account

Because the NYC Scholarship Account is owned and managed by NYC Kids RISE, **money in the NYC Scholarship Account will not affect existing or future public benefits while held in the account.**

NYC Kids RISE will provide more information in future years on how spending the money in a student's NYC Scholarship Account may impact that student's public benefits when they get to college. For more information, call the NYC Kids RISE hotline at 833-KID-RISE **(833-543-7473)** or visit [nyckidsrise.org](https://nyckidsrise.org).

### Your Own College Savings Account

There are many ways to save for college and many different types of college savings accounts. The Save for College Program provides an opportunity for you to open one of two college savings account options that can be connected to your child's scholarship account:

This document has information about how opening and depositing money into each of these kinds of accounts may impact **your** eligibility (the account owner) for public benefits. It does not describe the potential effect on a child's own public benefits when they get to college.

NYC Kids RISE does not provide investment advice or recommend any particular kind of college savings account. Every family's financial circumstances are different, and you should consider your own circumstances before saving or investing.

**For more information about college savings options available to you through the Save for College Program, visit [nyckidsrise.org/options](https://nyckidsrise.org/options).**

## Summary

Please read the information below to understand how your family's public benefits may be affected by either of the college savings account options. The table below also lists who to contact for more information. Note that the resource limit amounts and other rules can change over time. **Contact the benefits agency using the contact information below to learn more about current resource limits for each of the benefits.**

There will be **no effect** on the following benefits of having or depositing money into an NYC Scholarship Account OR your own college savings account:

- WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children)
- Free and reduced-price lunch
- Medicare and Medicare Savings Plus
- SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance)
- LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program)
- CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program)

There is a **possible effect** on the following benefits of having or depositing money into your own college savings account:

- NYCHA (New York City Housing Authority) housing
- NYCHA's Section 8 program
- Affordable Housing (Housing subsidized by the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development or Housing Development Corporation)
- Medicaid
- Emergency LIHEAP
- Public Assistance (TANF/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, cash assistance, welfare, family assistance, or safety net assistance)
- Food Stamps/SNAP

**Interested in seeing which benefits you may not have but might qualify for?  
Visit <https://access/nyc.gov>.**



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Note that the information on the next pages might change for you and your family, depending on whether you are currently receiving a benefit or if you are applying for a benefit in the future.

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE REFER TO THE CHART BELOW.**

<b>BENEFIT</b>	<b>WILL SAVINGS IN A 529 ACCOUNT AFFECT THIS BENEFIT?</b>	<b>WILL SAVINGS IN A BANK SAVINGS ACCOUNT AFFECT THIS BENEFIT?</b>	<b>WHO CAN I CONTACT FOR BENEFITS ASSISTANCE?</b>
<b>WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children)</b>	<b>No</b> - There is no resource test for WIC eligibility determinations.	<b>No</b> - There is no resource test for WIC eligibility determinations.	Call the information hotline at <a href="tel:800-522-5006">800-522-5006</a>
<b>Free and Reduced-Price Lunch</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	Lunch is free for all NYC public school students.
<b>Medicare and Medicare Savings Plans</b>	No - Medicare is not a means-tested benefit and does not have a resource test.	No - Medicare is not a means-tested benefit and does not have a resource test.	Call the information hotline at <a href="tel:718-557-1399">718-557-1399</a>
<b>SSDI/Disability (Social Security Disability Insurance)</b>	<b>No</b> - SSDI is not a means-tested benefit and as a result does not have a resource test.	<b>No</b> - SSDI is not a means-tested benefit and as a result does not have a resource test.	To get in touch with your local office, please contact the national hotline at <a href="tel:800-772-1213">800-772-1213</a>
<b>Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)</b>	<b>No</b> - There is no resource test for LIHEAP eligibility determinations.	<b>No</b> - There is no resource test for LIHEAP eligibility determinations.	Call the HEAP Infoline at <a href="tel:800-692-0557">800-692-0557</a> if you have questions about HEAP or <a href="tel:212-331-3126">212-331-3126</a> for operator assistance.  Call the Heat Line at <a href="tel:212-331-3150">212-331-3150</a> if you have trouble paying your heat bill or are home-bound and need assistance with HEAP.
<b>Emergency Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)</b>	<b>Possibly</b> - Savings in this account count as a resource and could affect this benefit.  To receive Emergency LIHEAP, households are allowed up to \$2,000 in resources and up to \$3,000 in resources if a household member is more than 60 years old.	<b>Possibly</b> - Savings in this account count as a resource and could affect this benefit.  To receive Emergency LIHEAP, households are allowed up to \$2,000 in resources and up to \$3,000 in resources if a household member is more than 60 years old.	Call the HEAP Infoline at <a href="tel:800-692-0557">800-692-0557</a> if you have questions about HEAP or <a href="tel:212-331-3126">212-331-3126</a> for operator assistance.  Call the Heat Line at <a href="tel:212-331-3150">212-331-3150</a> if you have trouble paying your heat bill or are home-bound and need assistance with HEAP.
<b>New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Housing</b>	<b>No</b> - the total amount of savings in a 529 account is <b>not</b> counted.  NYCHA <b>will not count</b> any self-reported interest earned in the 529 account towards your income.	<b>Possibly</b> - The total amount of savings in a bank account is <b>not</b> counted.  However, NYCHA <b>can count</b> any self-reported interest earned in a traditional savings account towards your income.	NYCHA's Customer Contact Center <a href="tel:718-707-7771">718-707-7771</a>

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<p><b>New York City Housing Authority's (NYCHA's) Section 8 Program</b></p>	<p><b>No</b> - the total amount of savings in a 529 account is <b>not</b> counted.</p> <p>NYCHA <b>will not count</b> any self-reported interest earned in the 529 account towards your income.</p>	<p><b>Possibly</b> - the total amount of savings in a bank account is <b>not</b> counted.</p> <p>However, NYCHA <b>can count</b> any self-reported interest earned in a traditional savings account towards your income.</p>	<p>NYCHA's Customer Contact Center <a href="tel:718-707-7771">718-707-7771</a></p>
<p><b>Affordable Housing (Housing subsidized by the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development or Housing Development Corporation)</b></p>	<p><b>Possibly</b> - The balance of your 529 account does not count towards the asset limit. (It's important to note that savings in a 529 account do not count toward the asset limit, while savings in a bank account do.)</p> <p>However, any interest earned on your 529 account would count towards your income calculation. If all of your assets<sup>1</sup> are worth less than \$5,000, the interest they earn is counted toward your income. If all of your assets are worth more than \$5,000, either the interest they earn or 0.06% of their value is added to your income, whichever amount is greater.</p>	<p><b>Possibly</b> - There are two ways in which savings in a bank account may impact your eligibility for affordable housing. The total value of the savings account will be counted toward the applicable asset limit.</p> <p>Typically, the asset limit is equal to about one year of your total household income. Also, if all of your assets are worth less than \$5,000, the interest they earn is counted toward your income. If all of your assets are worth more than \$5,000, either the interest they earn or 0.06% of their value is added to your income, whichever amount is greater.</p>	<p>NYC Housing Connect <a href="tel:212-863-7990">212-863-7990</a></p>
<p><b>New York's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Child Health Plus (CHPlus)</b></p>	<p><b>No</b> - There is no resource test for CHPlus eligibility determinations.</p>	<p><b>No</b> - There is no resource test for CHPlus eligibility determinations.</p>	<p>Child Health Plus Information Line: <a href="tel:800-698-4543">800-698-4543</a> <a href="tel:877-898-5849">877-898-5849</a> TTY</p>
<p><b>Medicaid</b></p>	<p><b>Possibly</b> - There are no Medicaid resource limits for children, parents with a dependent child, or pregnant consumers (MAGI group).</p> <p>There are resource limits for the blind, disabled or persons 65 years old or older (non-MAGI). Certain non-MAGI groups are exempt from the resource test (e.g., under 21 ADC-related). This resource test varies depending on the category of eligibility and household size.</p>	<p><b>Possibly</b> - There are no Medicaid resource limits for parents and pregnant consumers. There are resource limits for the blind, disabled or persons 65 years old or older.</p> <p>Withdrawals during the look-back period (the five years before a Medicaid application) could delay the disbursement of Medicaid payments. This account may need to be spent down first before becoming eligible for Medicaid.</p>	<p>For blind, disabled or persons 65 years or older, AND for people who receive their Medicaid through the HRA Cash Assistance program: Medicaid Helpline <a href="tel:888-692-6116">888-692-6116</a></p> <p>For NYS Health Exchange clients: NYS Department of Health <a href="tel:855-355-5777">855-355-5777</a> <a href="tel:800-662-1220">800-662-1220</a> (TTY)</p>

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<b>Medicaid (continued)</b>	Withdrawals during the look-back period (the five years before a Medicaid application) could delay the disbursement of Medicaid payments. This account may need to be spent down first before becoming eligible for Medicaid.		For blind, disabled or persons 65 years or older, AND for people who receive their Medicaid through the HRA Cash Assistance program: Medicaid Helpline <a href="tel:888-692-6116">888-692-6116</a>  For NYS Health Exchange clients: NYS Department of Health <a href="tel:855-355-5777">855-355-5777</a> <a href="tel:800-662-1220">800-662-1220</a> (TTY)
<b>Food Stamps/SNAP</b>	<b>No</b> - Funds in a 529 account are exempt from counting towards the resource limit test.	<b>Probably Not</b> - Since only a small percentage of SNAP households are subject to a resource test, having a savings account will not impact SNAP benefit eligibility or benefit level for the vast majority of SNAP households.	Food Bank For NYC SNAP Benefits Helpline <a href="tel:212-894-8060">212-894-8060</a>
<b>Public Assistance (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/TANF, Cash Assistance, Welfare, Family Assistance or Safety Net Assistance)</b>	<b>No</b> - Since this account is established for the single purpose of paying for educational needs and cannot be used for any other purposes, the funds are exempt from the resource limit test.	<b>Possibly</b> - Families are allowed up to \$1,400 in a separate savings account dedicated solely for tuition at a two-year or four-year college without the funds counting towards the resource test.  If savings are used for other purposes, the full account amount will count towards the resource test and could affect benefits. <sup>3</sup>	Human Resources Administration (HRA) Helpline <a href="tel:718-557-1399">718-557-1399</a>
<b>Supplemental Security Income (SSI)</b>  PLEASE NOTE: Child under the age of 18 cannot receive SSDI on their own. It would be considered an auxiliary benefit. An auxiliary benefit is a wage-earner who are currently receiving SSDI beneficiaries or retirement, their minor age child would be entitled to such benefit.	<b>Yes</b> - Savings in this account count as a resource and could affect eligibility.  To receive SSI, individuals are allowed up to \$2,000 per month in resources and couples up to \$3,000 per month in resources, unless the money is invested in an ABL Account. <sup>4</sup>	<b>Yes</b> - Savings in this account count as a resource and could affect eligibility.  To receive SSI, individuals are allowed up to \$2,000 per month in resources and couples up to \$3,000 per month in resources.	To get in touch with your local office, please contact the national hotline at <a href="tel:800-772-1213">800-772-1213</a>

<sup>1</sup> This includes all the money in this account and any other savings or assets you may have.

<sup>2</sup> This includes all the money in this account and any other savings or assets you may have.

<sup>3</sup> Families who are applying for public assistance, including families who previously received public assistance and are reapplying, who have any savings whether it is for tuition or not, will have to pass a resource test. If you have more than \$2,000 in assets (or \$3,000 if someone is age 60 or older), you could not be eligible for public assistance.

<sup>4</sup> For more information about ABL accounts, visit <https://www.ablenrc.org/what-is-able/what-are-able-accounts/>