

What is Personal Needs Allowance?



The Personal Needs Allowance (PNA) is a monthly sum of money that residents of nursing homes, who receive Medicaid, may retain from their personal income. Any income above the allowance is applied toward the cost of their care.

For most people in nursing homes, the PNA is their only source of discretionary income. Currently, the federal minimum PNA amount is \$30, less than one dollar a day, though states are permitted to increase their PNA as they see fit.

Personal expenses the resident must cover include:

- Clothing
- Haircuts
- Personal television, radio, or computer
- Cell phone bills, and
- Other items that contribute to their comfort and quality of life.

Federal regulations prohibit facilities from charging residents' PNA for personal hygiene items and services that are included in Medicaid payments, such as soap, tissues, shampoo, and incontinence supplies, among others.

The federal PNA was last raised in [1987 by the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act](#) from \$25 per month to \$30 per month.

With adjustments from states, as of 2025, the average monthly PNA for nursing home residents is \$72.74, with a range from \$30 to \$200.

Some states automatically adjust their PNA each year, tying it to the federal Cost-of-Living Adjustment issued by the Social Security Administration (SSA). Other states calculate it as a percentage of the Federal Benefit Rate. Although, some states have not changed their PNA in decades. In Alabama and South Carolina, the PNA is still only \$30.

Adjusted for inflation, the \$30 federal minimum PNA would be equal to \$82.37 in 2025 dollars, yet only eleven states have PNA's above \$79. Half of the states are still at or below \$60. This leaves many people with two dollars or less a day, leaving them ill-equipped to buy the basic items or services.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

is a federal program, administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA) that provides monthly payments to individuals with limited income and resources who are 65 or older or disabled. SSP, or State Supplementary Payments, is a state funded program that provides additional payments to SSI recipients.

Generally, SSI benefits are significantly reduced when a person enters a nursing home, often to a maximum of \$30 per month. An exception may be given for short-term stays (up to 90 days) in a medical facility. SSP amount may also be reduced when a person is in a nursing home, depending on the state's rules.

THE PNA SUPPORTS RESIDENTS' QUALITY OF LIFE

People living in nursing homes throughout the country rely on their PNA to cover basic goods and services not covered by the nursing home. It provides residents with the opportunity to participate in activities beyond those provided by the facility, to remain connected with family and friends, and to obtain basic items such as clothing and shoes.

As one person in a nursing home explained when arguing for a higher PNA in his state:



"People in nursing homes constantly need to make difficult choices on how to spend their PNA funds. They have to ask themselves:

- ▶ When can I buy a new coat?
- ▶ How much longer can I go before I need to replace these shoes?
- ▶ I love chocolate but can I afford to buy a bag of kisses?
- ▶ Knitting relaxes me and makes me feel productive, but can I afford yarn?
- ▶ How often can I have my hair cut and buy my favorite shampoo?
- ▶ Chinese food would be great, but what would I need to give up if I treat myself to outside food?
- ▶ Can I buy my grandchild a birthday present?"

Many people living in nursing homes acknowledge that the PNA in their state falls short of covering basic necessities, forcing them to make difficult choices between essential items and preventing them from purchasing items that bring comfort and a sense of dignity. They cannot maintain their hygiene and grooming the way they would like, and they cannot participate in hobbies they enjoy, or afford a personal cell phone to help them stay in touch with family and friends. **A low PNA isolates nursing home residents from their communities. Residents cannot afford to leave a facility to see a movie, have a meal, or visit family and friends.**

One individual living in a nursing home explained, on over just \$2 a day, she cannot afford to buy her favorite cup of coffee. Something small but important to her. Clothing is another item that many people in nursing homes struggle to buy with their PNA. As a result, some residents rely on clothing donations from their community and clothing left behind at their facility.



Another nursing home resident explained, *"Limited PNA funds can produce stress and depression. Most residents worked hard, sometimes two jobs during their working life. They never thought they would end up in a nursing home, let alone have only \$50 a month spending money."*

Consumer Voice supports advocates throughout the country working to raise the PNA in their states and urges increases to the minimum PNA amounts and that they be tied to the cost of living moving forward, so that PNAs increase with inflation.

As prices rise, many people in nursing homes struggle to purchase everyday items:

2024 Prices

Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index

Item	Price
Movie Ticket	\$10.78
Haircut	\$45.00
Magazine	\$8.99
Paper copy of <i>The New York Times</i>	\$6.00
A First-Class Stamp	\$0.50
Candy Bar	\$1.39
Can of soda	\$1.00
Monthly cell phone plans	\$25-40

State PNA Amounts	Number of States	States
\$30	2	AL, SC
\$31-39	2	CA
\$40-49	6	AR, ID, LA, ME, VA, MS, UT
\$50-59	11	DE, IA, MO, MT, NJ, NY, OH, WV, WY, IN, WI
\$60-69	5	IL, MI, KS, PE, KY
\$70-\$79	13	GA, NC, TN, MA, NH, CT, HI, NE, OK, RI, TX, OR, VT
\$80-\$99	1	NM
\$100-\$110	6	ND, SD, MD, DC, WA, CO
\$125-\$149	2	MN, AZ
\$150-\$160	2	NV, FL
\$200	1	AK

PERSONAL NEEDS ALLOWANCE (PNA) BY STATE 2025

Alabama	\$30.00
Alaska	\$200.00
Arizona	\$145.05~
Arkansas	\$40.00
California	\$35.00
Colorado	\$108.73*
Connecticut	\$75.00
Delaware	\$50.00
District of Columbia	\$106*
Florida	\$160.00
Georgia	\$70.00
Hawaii	\$75.00
Idaho	\$40.00
Illinois	\$60.00
Indiana	\$52.00
Iowa	\$50.00
Kansas	\$62.00
Kentucky	\$60.00
Louisiana	\$45.00
Maine	\$40.00
Maryland	\$102.00
Massachusetts	\$72.80
Michigan	\$60.00
Minnesota	\$128.00*
Mississippi	\$44.00
Missouri	\$50.00
Montana	\$50.00
Nebraska	\$75.00
Nevada	\$154.00*
New Hampshire	\$74.00+

New Jersey	\$50.00
New Mexico	\$94.00^
New York	\$50.00
North Carolina	\$70.00
North Dakota	\$100.00
Ohio	\$50.00*
Oklahoma	\$75.00
Oregon	\$79.07
Pennsylvania	\$60.00
Rhode Island	\$75.00
South Carolina	\$30.00
South Dakota	\$100.00
Tennessee	\$70.00
Texas	\$75.00
Utah	\$45.00
Vermont	\$79.93
Virginia	\$40.00
Washington	\$105.78*
West Virginia	\$50.00
Wisconsin	\$55.00*
Wyoming	\$50.00

*Tied to Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA)

+ Tied to COLA, raised every five years

^ Adjusted according to the Consumer Price Index

~ Adjusted annually to be 15% of Federal Benefit Rate



The National

CONSUMER VOICE

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