Assist a Client with Applying for Benefits

The Job Aid explains how clients can use MI Bridges to submit an application for assistance. MI Bridges Community Partners and MDHHS staff can use the information in this Job Aid to assist clients with applying for benefits.

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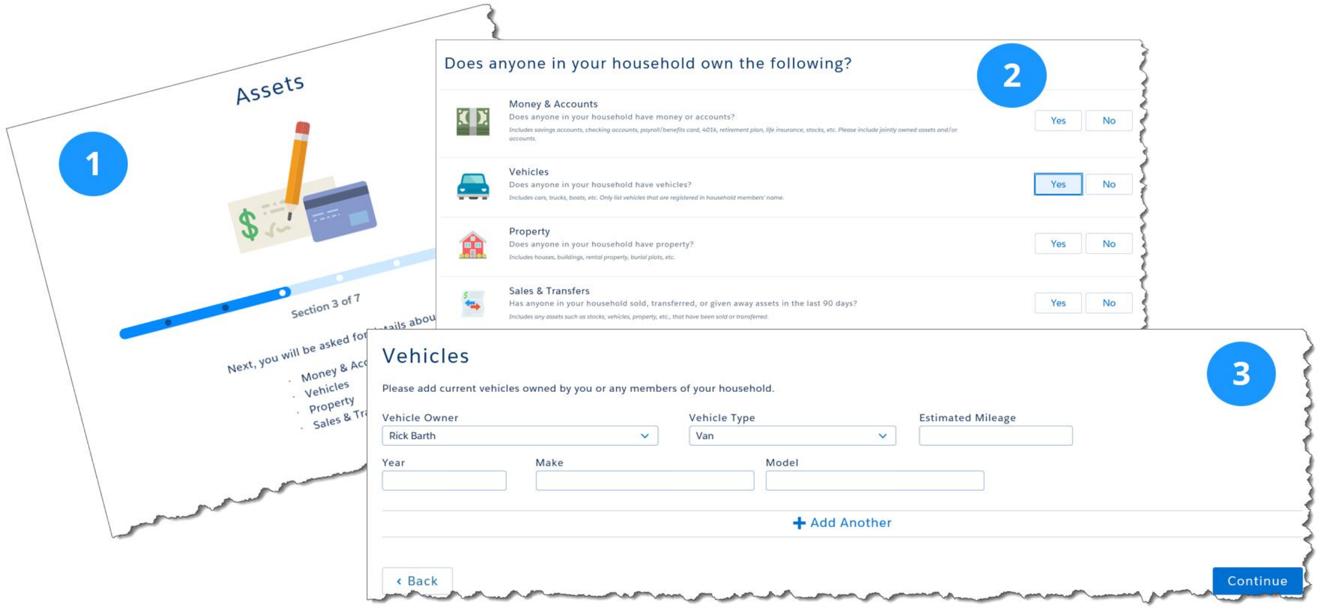
Important Information

Clients can use MI Bridges to submit assistance applications. MI Bridges combines six MDHHS programs into one application:

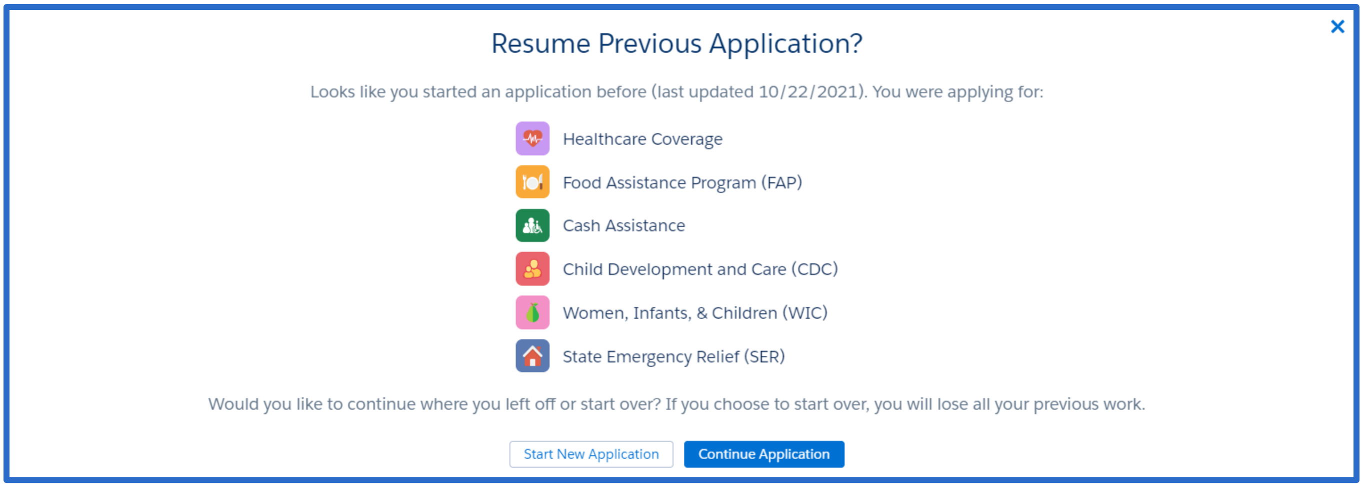
- Healthcare Coverage
- Food Assistance Program (FAP)
- Cash Assistance (Family Independence Program (FIP) (This includes: Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Child Development and Care (CDC)
- State Emergency Relief (SER)
- Women, Infants, & Children (WIC)

The MI Bridges assistance application varies in length, depending on what programs the client is applying for, as clients are only asked questions related to the programs that they are requesting. The application begins with a core application, followed by supplemental questions specific to only the programs the client is requesting. The core application asks questions that are common to all programs.

Tips for Navigating the Assistance Application

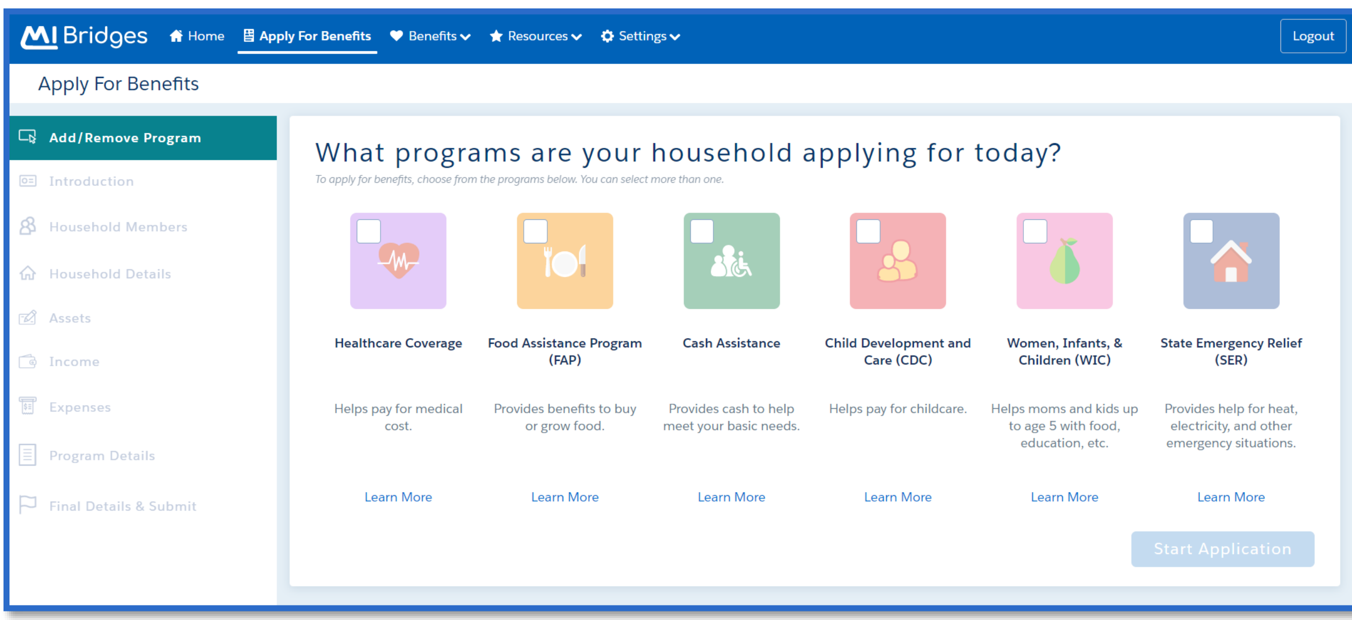


- Every application in MI Bridges follows the same structure of transition, question, and detail pages.
    1. Transition page: Each section of the application such as assets, income, expenses, etc. begins with a Transition page introducing that section.
    2. Question(s) page: The transition page for a section is followed by one or more Questions page. Answering 'Yes' on a questions page is how the clients identify their life circumstances that may impact program eligibility. Only questions that the client answers yes too will prompt follow-up Details page(s).
    3. Detail page(s): The Detail page(s) are pages which the client can use to provide additional details on a life circumstance.
- The application is available in English, Spanish, and Arabic.
- Throughout the application, a navigation pane displays on the left of the page. As the client progresses through the application this green bar will change to highlight the section the client is currently focusing on. Clients can also use this navigation pane to revisit sections of the application they have already completed. They cannot navigate to sections that have not been haven't completed. **Important Note:** Clients can return to the program selection page at any time to add or remove programs that they want to apply for.
- Clients can have one *In Progress* application at a time. A client can stop and return to complete the application at a later date. If a client has an *In Progress* application and clicks Apply for Benefits, the **Resume Previous Application?** pop-up displays. The client can choose to continue the *In Progress* application or begin a new application.



Launch a New Assistance Application

1. Click **Apply for Benefits** under *I want to…* The **What programs are your household applying for today?** page displays.
    - Clients can also click **[Menu]**, then *Apply for Benefits* to begin the process.



2. Click the *Programs* for which the client is interested applying for, then click **[Start Application].** The **Let's get started** page displays.
    - A client can apply for as many programs as needed.

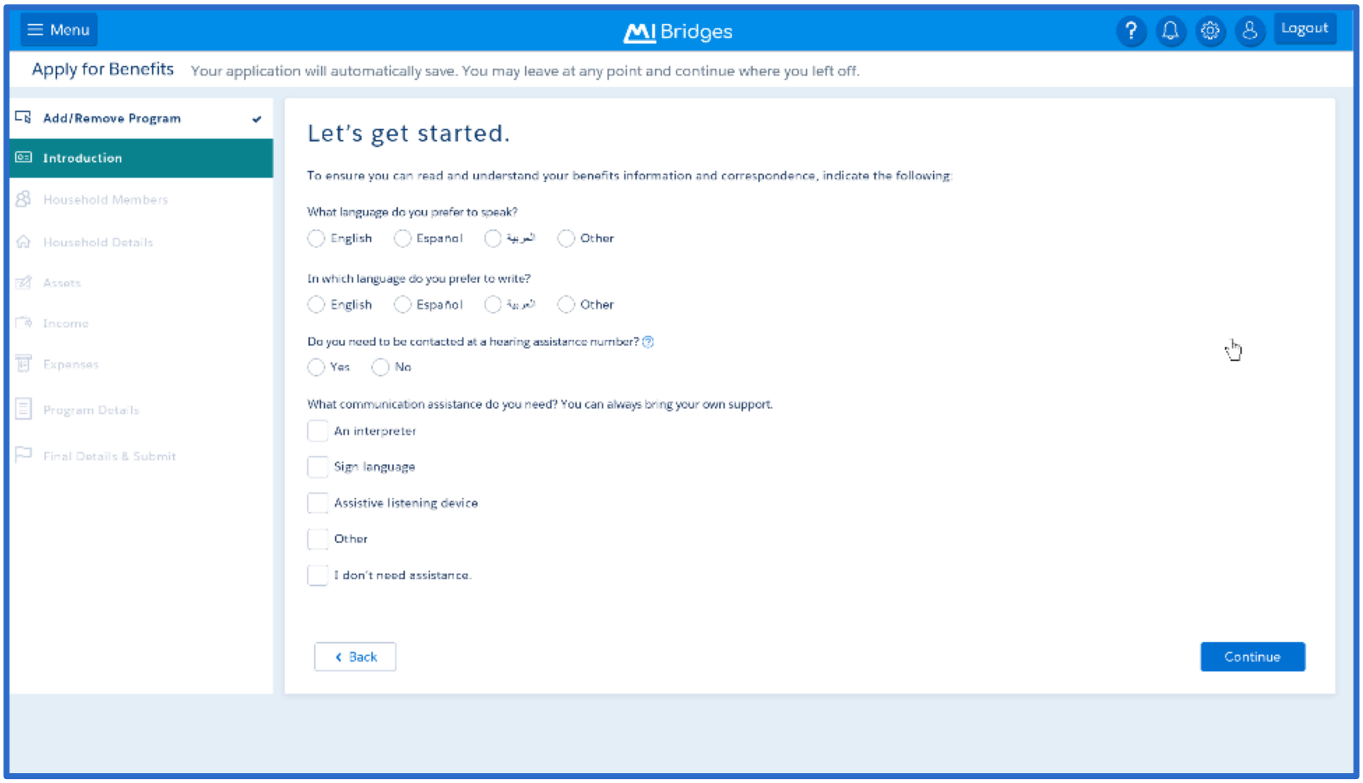
- Clicking **[Learn More]** under a program to view program details.
- **<u>Important! The questions a client is asked when completing the application is based on the programs for which the client is applying.</u>**

	Tip: Each time the client selects **[Continue]**, the application is saved. As the client advances through the application, Saved ✓ displays in the top of the page each time the application is saved. If the client chooses to leave and complete the application at a later date, they will be able to continue the application at the last saved page.

The Core Application

Introduction

In the **Introduction** section the client records information such as language preferences, contact information, address, and if the client's food assistance request is expedited.

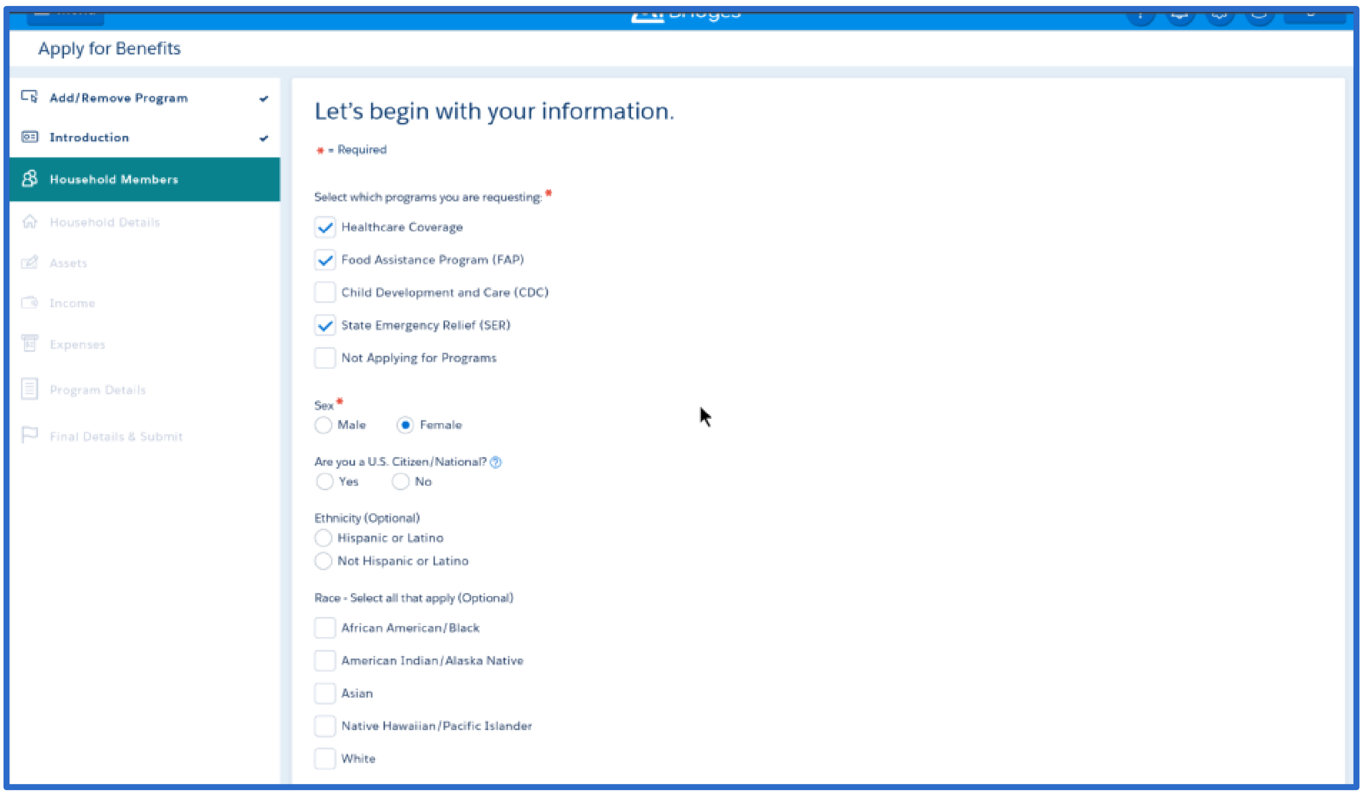


3. Complete the *Introduction* section of the application, and click **[Continue].** The **Household** transition page displays.
   - Fields with a red asterisk (*) are required fields.
   - In MI Bridges some application fields are dynamic. For example, both the *Cell Phone* and *Home Phone* fields begin with a red asterisk (*), however only one is required. Once one field is completed, the red asterisk next to the other field disappears.
   - In MI Bridges, answering **Yes** or **No** to come questions may prompt additional fields to displays. For example, answering **No** to *Are you homeless and don't have a permanent place to stay?* Prompts fields to displays so the client can record an address.

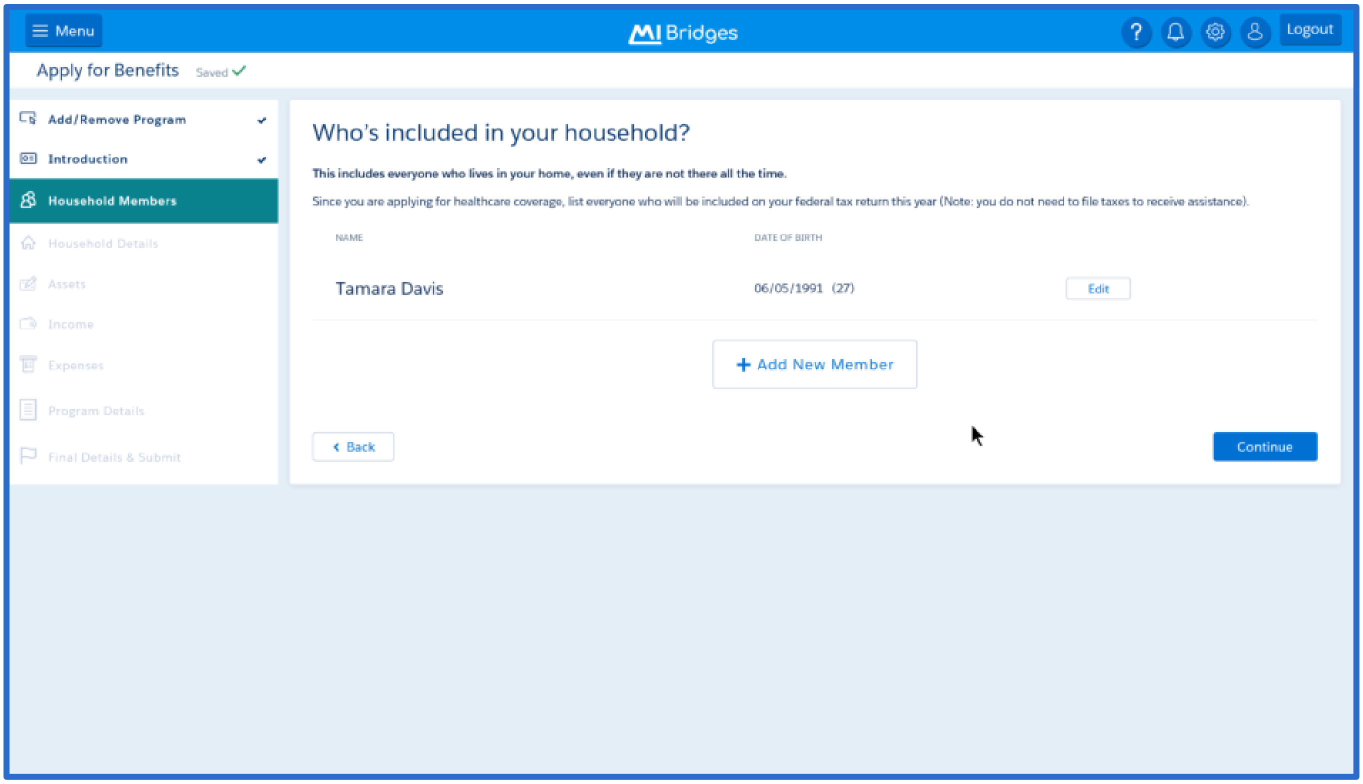
Household

In the **Household** section the client records information such as details about the individuals in the household, for example:

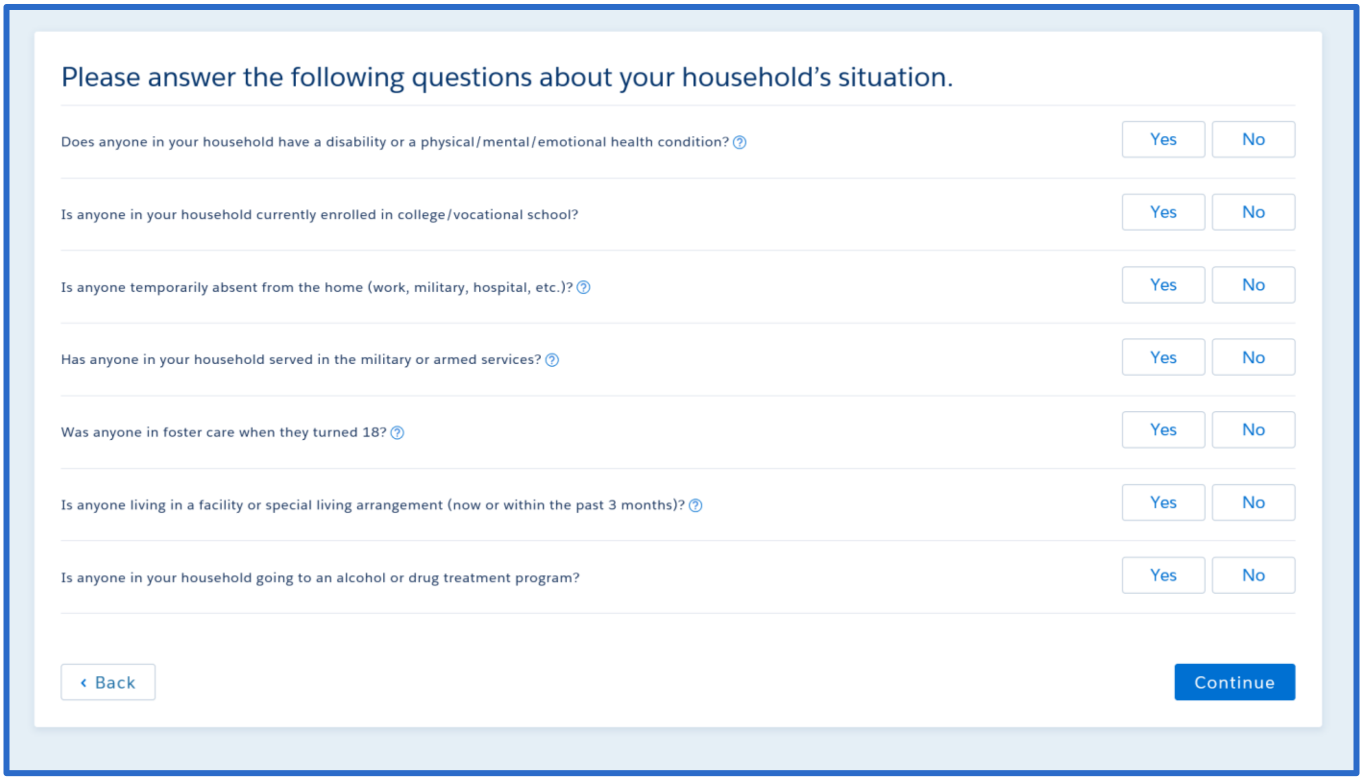
- The programs for which each person is applying
- American Indian background
- Information about household members filing a Federal Tax Return
- Living Arrangements
- Disability information
- College or vocational school enrollment
- Absent parent(s) for any children in the household
- Special circumstances such as seasonal farmworker, refugee status, etc.



4. Begin the *Household* section of the application by recording information about the Head of Household. This is the first person recorded on the application. Click **[Continue]**. The **Who's included in your household?** page displays.
    - Select the program(s) for which the person is applying by clicking on the program.
    - Record information such as sex, race, ethnicity, and marital status.



5. After recording the Head of Household, the client can continue to add members of the household by selecting [+ Add New Member] on the **Who's included in your household?** page. Click **[Continue]** after adding the members of the household.
   - The age of the individual displays next to their name.
   - The individuals recorded in the Household section display later in the application when recording information such as assets, income, expenses, etc.



6. In the Household section, the client completes their first set of Questions pages. It is important to carefully review these pages, as this is how the client indicates their household circumstances. Clients will only view Details pages for the questions to which they answer Yes.

Tip: Some fields in MI Bridges are dynamic, including possible answer choices. For example, if a client selects **Yes** for *Is anyone in your household pregnant now or were they in the last 3 months?*, only female members of the household will display on the **Pregnancy Details** page.

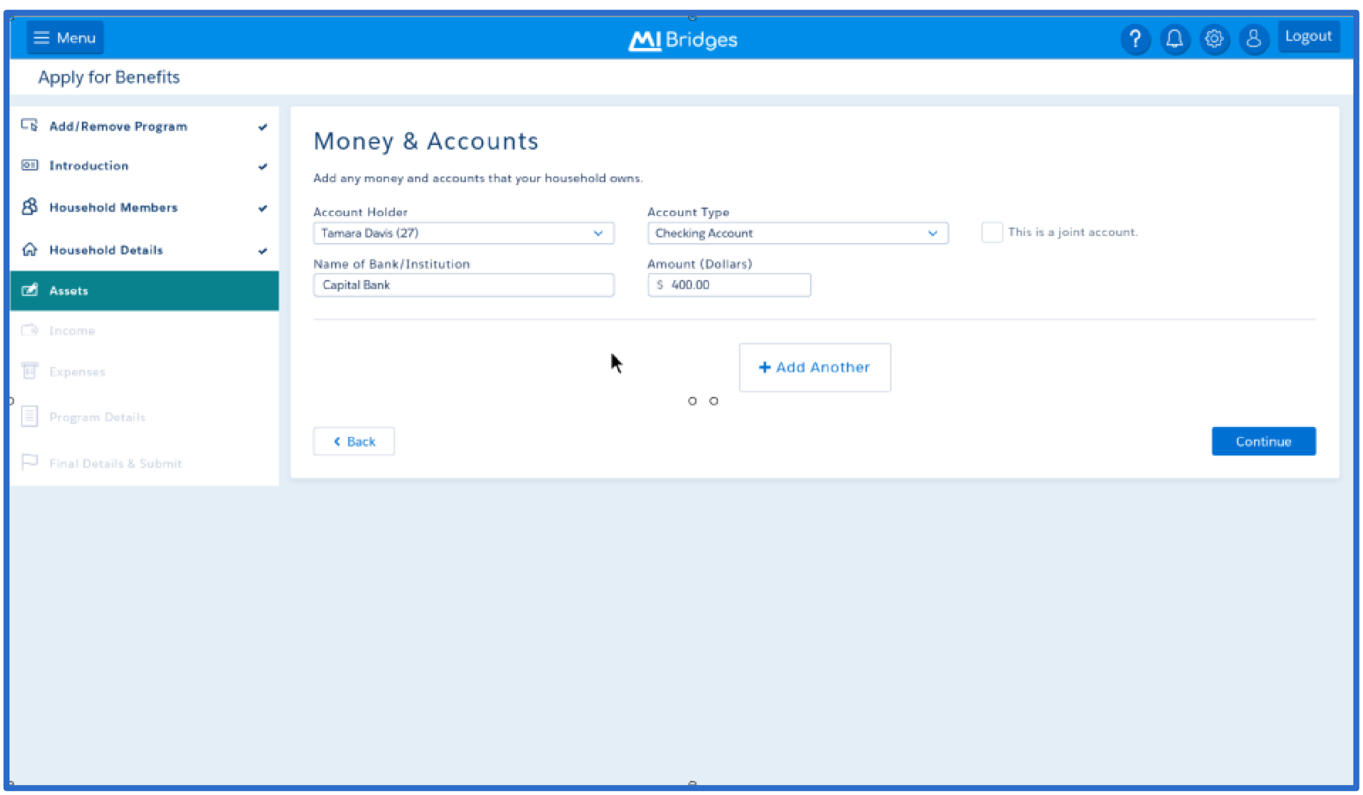
7. Complete the *Household* section of the application, and click **[Continue].** The **Assets** transition page displays.

Assets

In the **Assets** section the client records information on any assets in the household.

- Note: If an application is for only Healthcare Coverage, the Assets section does not display.

8. Select **Yes** or **No** on the Assets Questions page to indicate if any household members own assets. If a client selects Yes for a question, a details page displays so the client can record information on the asset.

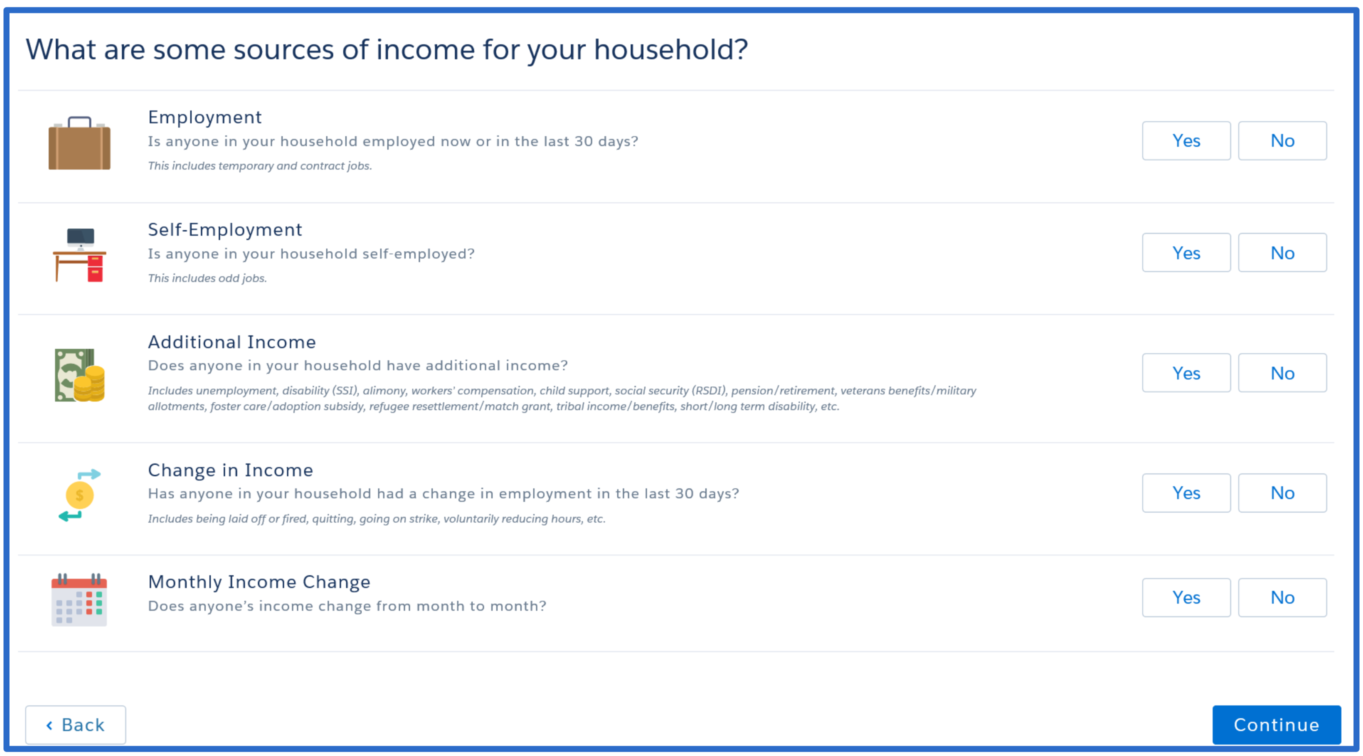


9. On Details pages, clients can record as much information as possible. Click **[+ Add Another]** to add another asset in that category.
10. Complete the *Assets* section of the application, and click **[Continue].** The **Income** transition page displays.

Income

In the **Income** section the client records information on any income in the household, including employment, self-employment, or other types of income received by the household such as pension/retirement, child support, etc.

Tip: Some Income questions in MI Bridges are dynamic. For example, if applications that include Healthcare Coverage ask if any household members income changes from month to month.



11. Complete the *Income* section of the application, and click **[Continue].** The **Expenses** transition page displays.

Tip: In each sub-section of the page, there is helpful text to provide examples of the types of income for each category.

Expenses

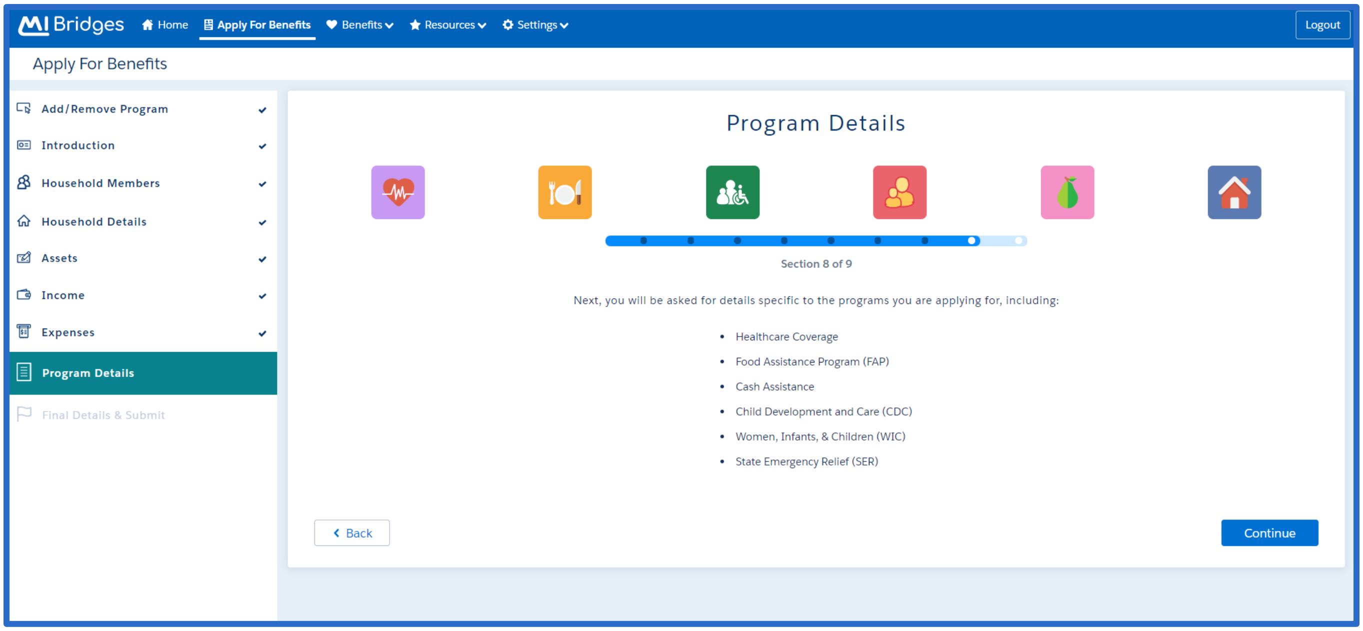
In the **Expenses** section the client records information on any expenses paid by the household, including housing related expenses, dependent care, medical expenses, court-ordered expenses, etc.

- Note: If an application is for only Child Development & Care, the Expenses section does not display.

12. Complete the *Expenses* section of the application, and click **[Continue].** The **Program Details** transition page displays.

The Supplemental Application: Program Details

In the **Program Details** section, the client answers information that is specific to the programs for which the client is applying. Similar to the paper 1171 Assistance Application, the length of the **Program Details** section varies based on the programs for which the client is applying.



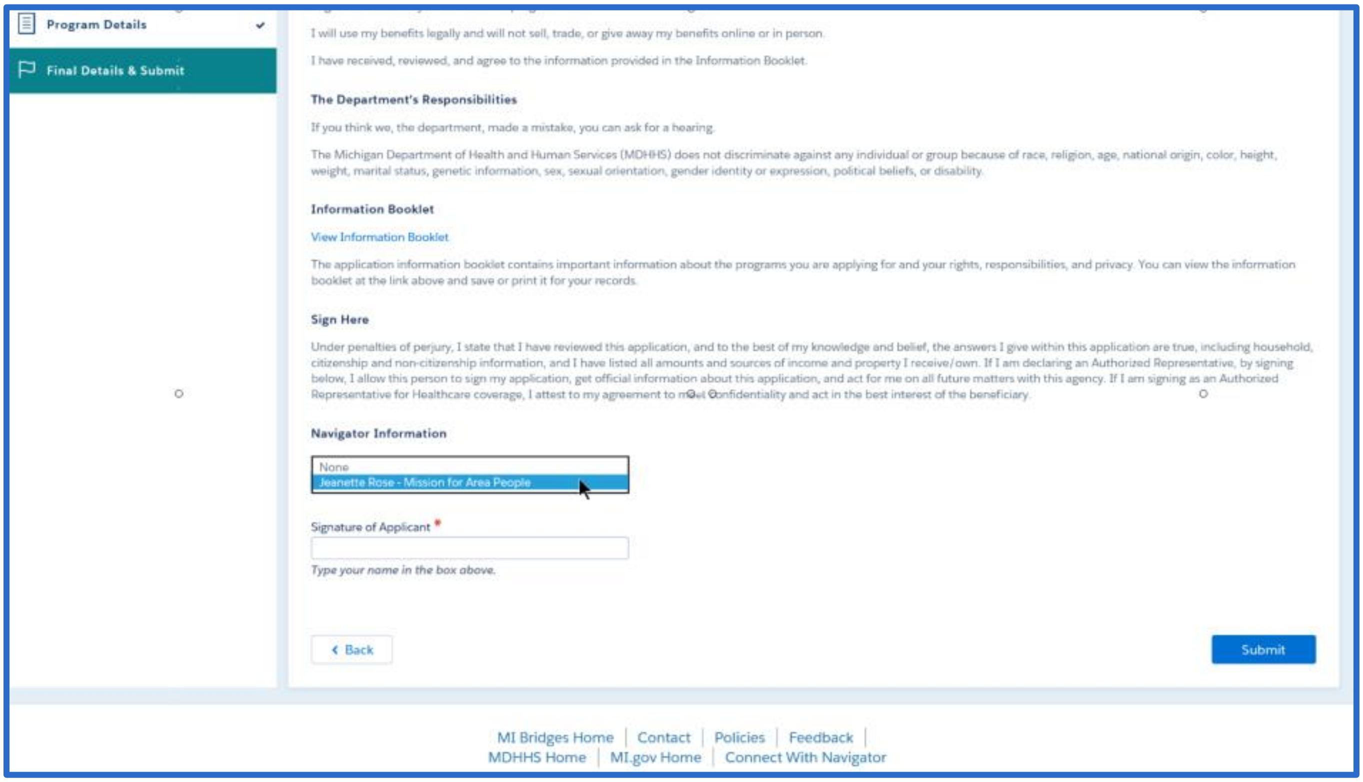
13. Complete the *Program Details* section of the application, and click **[Continue].** The **Final Details** transition page displays.

Final Details & Submit

In the **Final Details** section, the client answers information that is asked to all applications, such as information about previous benefits, voter registration, or if the client would like to name an authorized representative. This section also includes a page for clients to record any text they would like to share with MDHHS.

14. In this section the **Final Review** page may display. This page displays fields that the client did not answer. Completion of these fields is optional, but MDHHS caseworkers have identified this information as especially helpful when processing an application.

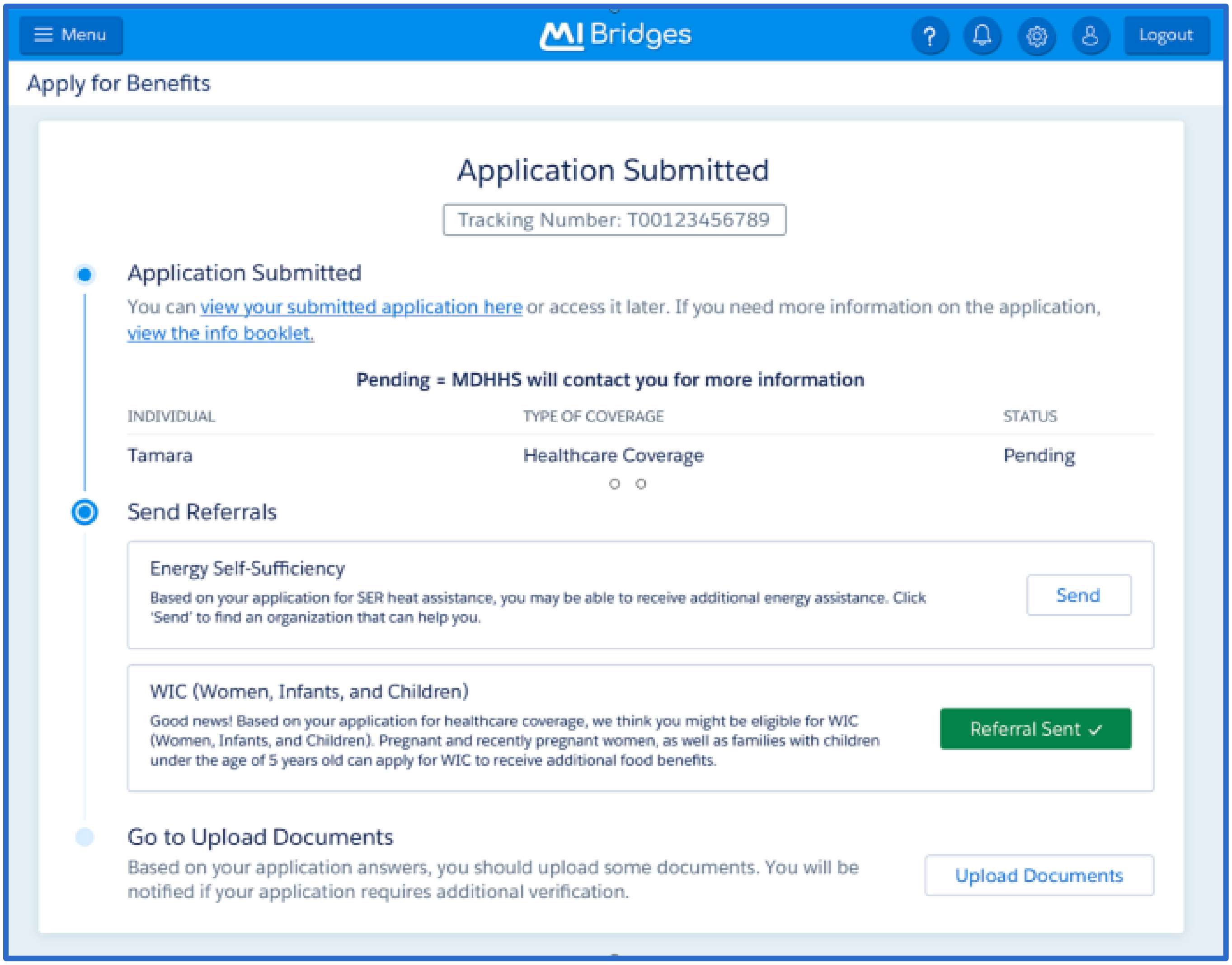
15. Complete the *Final Details* section of the application until reaching the **Your Signature** page.



16. The **Your Signature** page is the final page the client must sign to submit the application. On this page the client records if a navigator helped them complete the application. If a client is connected to a navigator(s) they will see their list of navigators in the drop-down menu.
17. Electronically sign the application and click **[Submit]**. The **Application Submitted** page displays.

Application Submitted

The **Application Submitted** page shows a summary of the benefits application and suggests next steps for the client. Clients have the ability for to see a live status of the healthcare coverage application. Clients also can send a referral to a Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) and/or Women, Infants, & Children (WIC) programs in MI Bridges. Based on the information in the client's application, MI Bridges can recommend that the client send a referral to a MEAP and WIC program. To send a referral all a client has to do is click **[Send].** MI Bridges also recognizes that the client can upload documents to provide verification for his/her case and has a [**Upload Documents]** button that will allow the client to upload verifications.



18. **Congratulations, the Apply for Benefits process is complete.**

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What are the benefit programs included with the Online Application? A. The six benefits programs' clients can use MI Bridges to apply for include: o Healthcare Coverage o Food Assistance Program (FAP) o Cash Assistance (Family Independence Program (FIP) (This includes: Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) o Child Development and care (CDC) o State Emergency Relief (SER) o Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
Q. How many benefit programs can the client apply for? A. Clients can Apply for Benefits for as many or as few benefit programs as needed.
Q. Will the new 1171 Assistance Applications be printed in black & white or color in the MDHHS offices? A. The color differences are one of the features that help make the application easy to read. Applications available in MDHHS offices and on the MDHHS website will be in color.
Q. Can the client save an in-progress application and finish it later? A. Yes, the application is saved each time the client clicks a **[Continue]** button. If the client logs out before submitting the application, after logging in again they will be prompted to submit or complete the in-progress application. A client can only have one application with 'in progress' status at a time.