



Immigrant Eligibility for General Assistance (GA)

What is General Assistance?

General Assistance, called **GA**, comes from towns and cities, like Portland and Lewiston, to help pay for housing costs and other basic needs like food and medicine.

Can I get General Assistance?

You can get GA if you do not have enough money to meet your basic needs **AND** you are lawfully present **OR** pursuing immigration relief.

As an immigrant, you must be:

- **Lawfully present in the United States** (This means you could be eligible if you have a visa or a Lawful Permanent Resident status in the U.S.);

OR

- Taking steps to pursue immigration relief (Immigration relief could mean asylum or any other legal avenue for relief)
 - This means you may be eligible if you got a Notice to Appear in Immigration Court and you are going to apply for asylum or some other immigration relief, even if you haven't applied yet. You will need to complete a form that asks you what steps you have taken or are going to take to apply for immigration relief.

PLEASE NOTE: If you have children born in the United States, they may be eligible for GA even if you are not eligible based on your immigration status.

How do I get GA?

You get GA from your town office. Every 30 days you have to go back to the town office to apply again.

If you are going to apply again for GA, the town may set requirements you have to do before you come back and apply next time. The town is not allowed to force you to apply for asylum before you are ready.

What are my rights when I apply for GA?

- ❖ You have a right to apply for GA. Every town must have a GA program and must let you apply. Towns must provide GA to people who are eligible.
- ❖ All the personal information you share when you get GA is confidential.
- ❖ You have a right to interpreter services when you apply. It is not acceptable for the town to ask you to bring an interpreter, friend, or family member to interpret.

If you have concerns about how a town or city is treating you, please contact Maine Equal Justice.

For questions about public programs, contact:

Maine Equal Justice (MEJ)
Phone number 207-626-7058, extension 205, or go to
maineequaljustice.org/about-us/contact-us/ and leave a message online

For questions about immigrant status you can contact:

Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project (ILAP)
Phone number 207-780-1593 or toll-free at 1-800-497-8505
Email address: ilap@ilapmaine.org