



Things to Know about General Assistance

1. No matter where you live your town or city must have a general assistance program. A town or city can not say “we don’t do general assistance” or “we are out of money for general assistance.”
2. You have the **right to apply** for GA. You can do this by going to the town office.
3. The town office must post the hours they are open for you to apply for general assistance.
4. If you cannot wait until the office is open the town must provide you a way to apply for emergency general assistance.
5. If it is an emergency and you can’t apply with the Town or if you feel you were treated unfairly by the town or city you can call the Department Of Health and Human Services for help. Their number is 1-800-442-6003.
6. The city or town must give you a written decision within 24 hours either granting you benefits or denying your benefits. If you are denied GA, you have the **right to appeal**. You have 5 days to write a letter to ask for an appeal. Then a fair hearing will be scheduled.
7. All the information that you give GA is confidential.
8. You have the **right to an interpreter** when you talk to GA.
9. GA doesn’t give you cash; instead they pay bills for you. But there is a monthly limit on how much help GA can give you.
10. GA can require you to seek other resources that might help you make ends meet, like SNAP, MaineCare, or employment if you are able to work.
11. GA can require you to work for the town unless you have medical problems or you are needed to care for a family member.
12. If you have income, GA can require you to provide receipts proving that you are spending all your money on basic needs.

13. If you plan to apply for asylum:
 - GA cannot require you to complete your asylum application before you apply.
 - GA can ask questions about what steps you are taking to work on your application.
 - Getting GA will not affect your application for asylum under the new Public Charge rule.
14. You must make a new application for GA every 30 days.
15. Find more detailed information about general assistance at  Pine Tree Legal.

**Have you been denied GA? Do you have questions about GA?
Call Maine Equal Justice at 207-626-7058, extension 205**