

What is General Assistance?

General Assistance is a state mandated, municipally administered financial assistance program. It is designed to be the program of "last resort" for members of the Sumner community who are unable or have trouble providing for their basic needs. Basic needs are housing, electricity, heat, food, non-food (toiletries, hygiene), and some medical needs or prescriptions. General assistance (GA) is a confidential, financial program that assists eligible people who are in need and have nowhere else to turn.

NOTE: General Assistance has Maine State Government mandated regulations, the Town does not have the option to waive regulations.

Please note: General Assistance does **NOT** provide housing. The program can assist in paying for a current housing unit or assist with paying for an available housing unit. It is the responsibility of the applicant to locate the housing.

All other available resources must be explored and used before receiving General Assistance. Eligibility is based on household income. Other conditions will be required in order to maintain eligibility. General Assistance is granted for a thirty-day period and then requires a new application for any future assistance. Please note that General Assistance will not prepay bills. Assistance being applied for must already be due.

A standard condition of eligibility is that applicants must engage in an active job search. Job search efforts are reviewed and verified by the General Assistance staff. An exception to the job search requirement is for an applicant with a verified medical condition that prevents employment. A doctor will need to confirm the applicant is unable to work or has limitations.

Other conditions will include the following when applicable:

- Applying for SNAP (Food Stamps)
- Applying for TANF (Temporary Aid for Needy Families)
- Applying for Fuel Assistance (LIHEAP through Community Concepts)
- Applying for subsidized housing
- Applying for disability benefits

These are only some examples. Other conditions may be required as they relate to an applicant's specific situation.

What information is needed when I apply?

Your General Assistance budget will be based on the 30-day period starting the day you apply. We will also look back over the past 30 days before you applied, to see what money was received, and how it was spent.

You will need to provide:

- Identification for all adults and Social Security cards of all household members
- Passport/Visa and Immigration paperwork (1-589, etc.)
- DHHS benefit letter
- Income and expenses
- Receipts for the past 30 days (repeat applicants)
- Current bank statements
- Landlord verification

GENERAL ASSISTANCE REQUIREMENTS

In order to expedite the application process so that we can give you a decision more quickly, please include the following documents with your completed, signed application:

- Disconnection notices
- Overdue rent notices
- Current bank statements
- Current pay stubs for all household members who are working. This should include:
 - unemployment, SSI , pension, and any other forms of income
- If unable to work, doctor's statement and/or copy of application for SSI
- For Repeat Applicants: Please make sure any previous requirements on eligibility /ineligibility letter have been completed and provide receipts for expenses paid during the previous month