

Notice to All General Assistance Applicants

Use of Income Requirements

Income for basic necessities - Applicants are required to use their income for basic necessities. Except for initial applicants, no applicant is eligible to receive assistance to replace income that was spent within the 30-day period prior to an application for assistance on goods and services that are not basic necessities. All income spent on goods and services that are not basic necessities will be considered available to the applicant and combined with the applicant's prospective 30-day income for the purposes of computing eligibility (22 M.R.S.A. § 4315 (A)).

Applicants who have sufficient income to provide their basic necessities and who still need assistance with other basic necessities will be eligible, provided that their income does not exceed the overall maximum level of assistance.

Use-of-income requirements - Anyone applying for general assistance must document his/her use of income to the administrator. This documentation can take the form of cancelled checks and/or receipts that demonstrate that the applicant has exhausted all household income received over the last 30-day period. Any repeat applicants must verify that such an expenditure of income was for basic necessities.

Allowable expenditures include reasonable shelter costs (rent/mortgage); the cost of heating fuel, electricity, and food *up to the ordinance maximums*; telephone costs at the base rate *if the household needs a telephone for medical reasons*, the cost of non-elective medical services as recommended by a physician which are not otherwise covered by medical entitlement or insurance; the reasonable cost of essential clothing and non-prescription drugs, and the costs of any other commodity or service determined essential by the administrator. Cable television, cigarettes/alcohol, gifts purchased, costs of trips or vacations, court fines paid, repayments of unsecured loans, credit card debt, costs associated with pet care, etc., are not considered basic necessities and will not be included in the budget computation.

The municipality reserves the right to apply specific use-of-income requirements to any applicant, other than an initial applicant, who fails to use his/her income for basic necessities or fails to reasonably document his/her use of income (22 M.R.S.A. § 4315 (A)). Those additional requirements will be applied in the following manner.

1. The administrator may require the applicant to use some or all of his/her income, at the time it becomes available, toward *specific* basic necessities. The administrator may prioritize such required expenditures so that most or all of the applicant's income is applied to housing (i.e., rent/mortgage), energy (i.e., heating fuel, electricity), or other specified basic necessities.
2. The administrator will notify applicants in writing of the specified use-of-income requirements placed on them.
3. If upon subsequent application it cannot be determined how the applicant's income was spent, or it is determined that some or all of the applicant's was not spent as directed and was also not spent on basic necessities, the applicant will not be eligible to receive either regular or emergency general assistance to replace that income.
4. If the applicant does not spend his/her income as directed, but can show with verifiable documentation that all income was spent on basic necessities up to allowed amounts, the applicant will remain eligible to the extent of the applicant's eligibility and need.