Workforce Services Bureau / GENERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Every county in California is required to provide relief and support to all residents who are not supported by their own means, by friends or relatives, by other public funds, or by other assistance programs. In Contra Costa County, General Assistance is the program that provides temporary assistance to individuals who are not eligible of federal or state-funded cash assistance.

Each county's program is established by its own Board of Supervisors. Its policies and regulations are subject to change by the Board of Supervisors depending upon the funds available to the program.

Purpose of the General Assistance Program

General Assistance is a short-term, employment focused program, for unemployed persons in preparing for and finding employment. General Assistance provides continued aid for incapacitated persons while applying for and securing a continuing source of support, such as Supplemental Security Income/State Supplemental Payment SSI/SSP.

Parents living with their children, ages 18 and under, may be eligible for CalWORKs, a cash aid program for families, and thus, not eligible to General Assistance.

Must I live in Contra Costa County to be eligible for General Assistance?

Yes. Any resident of Contra Costa County may be eligible for General Assistance. You need not have a fixed address to be eligible, but proof of residence may be required. You must have lived in the county for at least 15 days and be a legal permanent resident or US Citizen.

Who may be eligible for General Assistance?

The following residents of Contra Costa County may be eligible:

- Unemployed residents needing help finding employment
- Incapacitated residents who are applying for other forms of continuing support, or who are not eligible for other support
- Residents whose earnings are not more than the maximum allowable grant

Eligibility Factors

Whether a person is eligible for General Assistance depends on a number of factors such as employment earnings, other income, property value, residency and citizenship status. A full financial eligibility determination is made at the time of application and throughout the period of assistance.

- Employment: Applicants must be unemployed, or employed with an income that is less than the General Assistance grant. The earned income will be deducted from the General Assistance grant. Persons who cannot work due to a disability can be eligible to General Assistance continuously while they remain disabled.
- Income: All income that the General Assistant applicant or recipient receives from any source must be reported monthly. The amount received will be deducted from the monthly General Assistance grant. The applicants and recipients are required to apply for any income that they may be able to receive, such as Unemployment Benefits, Veteran's Benefits, CalWORKs, Social Security Disability, etc.
- Income In Kind: All income in-kind, such as housing, food, personal needs or basic transportation that a General Assistance recipient received is deducted from the grant.
- Property Limits: The combined value of the applicant's cash on hand, checking or savings accounts, stocks or bonds, life insurance policies, deeds of trust, motor vehicles, boats, and similar property, cannot exceed a value of \$500. Of the liquid assets \$50 are exempt.
- Property Exclusions: The house where the applicant lives is exempt. Any
 other real property (house, land, etc) is considered available to meet the
 applicant's needs. One motor vehicle with a value of \$4,500 or less is
 exempt.

Other Eligibility Factors

- All non-disabled persons must be available full time to work or seek employment.
- Persons with a substance abuse problem must participate in a treatment program.
- Individuals who are deemed totally disabled during 12 months or longer must apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
- Parents who have received CalWORKs for 60 months are not eligible to General Assistance until all the children for whom CalWORKs was received turn 18 years of age.
- An individual who is convicted of a drug felony, who is not connected to a CalWORKs case is potentially eligible to GA, unless the person is either a Fleeing Felon or a Probation or Parole Violator.
- All General Assistance applicants and recipients must cooperate with the Welfare Early Fraud Detection and Prevention unit.
- Pregnant women are eligible to General Assistance during the first two trimesters of the pregnancy. They may be eligible to CalWORKs in the last trimester of the pregnancy.

- Sponsored Immigrants may have the income and property of the Sponsor considered available to them for a period of three years.
- All General Assistance applicants and recipients are fingerprinted to prevent welfare fraud.
- General Assistance recipients must submit a form reporting any income or property received, as well as changes in employment, vocational training or education, address, living arrangements, etc.

What if I'm homeless?

If you are homeless you can receive General Assistance. A worker may be able to help you obtain a shelter bed.

How much property may I have?

In determining eligibility for General Assistance, some property is not counted. Here are examples of property that will not be counted:

- The home you live in
- One motor vehicle (not worth more than \$4,500)
- Supplies, tools or equipment used for work
- Clothing, household equipment, personal jewelry
- Money in a bank account held to pay property taxes

How much is the monthly General Assistance cash grant?

Grant amounts vary according to the number of people in the household and the employability status of the recipient. Note that grant amounts may change from year to year.

- One employable person: \$336 per month
- One disabled person: \$375 per month

53% of the monthly General Assistance payment is for housing and 47% for food, personal needs and transportation. **The rent portion is sent directly to the landlord.**

How long can I receive General Assistance?

Employable persons can receive the General Assistance grants for a maximum of 90-days in a twelve-month period. Disabled individuals can receive General Assistance continuously while they are disabled.

Are there services to help me find a job?

Recipients may attend a CalWORKs Job Club/Job Search workshop, receive help to obtain a professional resume and learn how and where to find jobs. Recipients are also referred to East Bay Works for employment seeking assistance. Bus tickets for Job Search can be provided.

Applying for General Assistance

The application for General Assistance includes completing all the application forms, signing the cooperation agreements, providing all the required verifications and attending mandatory appointments.

The application consists of a General Assistance Orientation and an Intake appointment.

There is no need to request an appointment to apply for General Assistance.

Required Verifications

- One Identity Document: Driver license or Department of Motor Vehicles identification card, Birth Certificate, Immigration Status document, Marriage Certificate, Military identification card, passport, etc.
- Social Security Number: Social Security card or proof of application for a Social Security card.
- Residence: Proof of address in Contra Costa County for at least fifteen (15) days prior to the program application is required. Evidence accepted: rent receipt or utility bills in the applicant name. The applicant may provide collateral evidence in the absence of conclusive proof. The 15-day period may begin with the day the individual applied for GA.
- Citizenship or Immigration Status: A recipient must be a US citizen or a Lawful Permanent Resident, such as Refugee, Asylee, Permanently Residing in the US under color of law, Conditional Entrant, Immigrant granted an Indefinite Voluntary Departure in Lieu of Deportation, Immigrant granted an Indefinite Stay of Deportation or Immigrant granted amnesty under the Immigration Reform & Control Act, T or U Visa applicant or recipient, etc.
- Verification of income, property and any additional support: All General
 Assistance applicants and recipients must provide verification of all earned
 and unearned income, checking and savings accounts, unemployment
 benefits, social security benefits, veteran's benefits, disability insurance
 benefits and any other income.
- Disability Verification: In order to receive General Assistance continuously, beyond the three month time limit for employable persons, an applicant or recipient must provide medical verification of physical or mental disability.

Where can I apply?

There are three General Assistance units located in Contra Costa County. If you want to apply or get more information on your eligibility to General Assistance, please call or visit the nearest office.

West County

1305 Macdonald Avenue Richmond, CA 94801 (510) 412-1920

Central County

400 Ellinwood Way, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523 (925) 521-5001

East County

4545 Delta Fair Boulevard Antioch, CA 94509 (925) 706-4760

Office hours in each location are Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 12:00 Noon and 12:30 pm to 5:00 pm.

Language and disability accommodations are provided.

For more information about the GA program in Contra Costa County please contact:

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