

Town of Chelsea

General Assistance

560 Togus Road, Chelsea ME 04330

Phone: (207) 582-4802 Fax: (207) 588-0025

What is General Assistance?

General assistance (GA) is a program that assists eligible people who are in need and have nowhere else to turn. It provides confidential financial assistance to Chelsea residents who are having difficulty meeting basic needs such as rent, food, personal and household supplies, medication, heating fuel, and other essential services.

How can I apply?

You can apply at the Town of Chelsea located at 560 Togus Road. Office hours are Thursday from 9:00am to 12:00pm. Applications are taken by appointment. You can call (207) 582-4802 or come into the office to schedule an appointment. The office is very busy, you may need to leave a message and we will return your call.

How long does it take to apply?

Your first visit will require an interview with a caseworker during which you will complete a written application. First visits take approximately 45 minutes.

What information will I need when I apply?

Your General Assistance budget will be based on the 30-day period following your application. We will also look back to 30 days before you applied, to see what money you received, and how you spent it. You will need to provide:

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

Is the information I give on my application kept confidential?

Yes. Your application and any case records pertaining to it are strictly confidential by law. You, the applicant, your attorney and certain government personnel may review your records. The Town will need to know who to pay your GA vouchers to, such as your landlord. The Town will also need for you to give permission for them to contact people who can verify your income and other necessary information. The general public cannot review your records unless you have given your written permission.

If I receive Food Stamps, TANF, Social Security, Veterans Benefits, Unemployment or Worker's Compensation am I still able to receive General Assistance?

Maybe. You would want to apply and if your income is less than your necessary expenses and the program's income maximum, you will be evaluated.

When will I get help?

We will issue you a written decision as to your eligibility within 24 hours after you apply and we will promptly furnish any assistance for which you are determined eligible within our guidelines. However, please be aware that if you have not furnished sufficient information, including verification required, to enable us to determine eligibility, we must consider your application incomplete and find you ineligible for any assistance until you reapply with adequate information.

If I am eligible will I get cash or a check?

General Assistance does not furnish money directly to the eligible person or household. All assistance is issued in the form of Town vouchers payable to vendors who have provided your household with goods or services.

How much assistance can I get?

The General Assistance Program is regulated by State Law, which has set an overall maximum amount of assistance that a household can receive. In addition, each municipality's GA guidelines contain maximum amounts of assistance allowable for each category of assistance including, rent, food, electricity, etc. We cannot exceed those established maximums even though household's expenses for various items may exceed those amounts. To be eligible, your income must fall below the overall maximum level of assistance for a household your size and your income must also be less than the amount you need to pay for basic necessities using Town guidelines.

How long can I continue to get help?

At the time an applicant receives a decision on their application, the administrator will inform them of their responsibilities for being eligible in the future. The period covered by your application and any assistance given under that application cannot exceed 30 days. However, there is no limitation on how many times a person can reapply and continue to be found eligible for assistance. The General Assistance program budgets your needs for 30 days forward from the date of your application. Upon a repeat application for General Assistance, the client must provide documentation (receipts) of all their spending over the past thirty days. The amount of income from all sources received by the household must be provided. The Applicant must show that they have utilized all potential resources the administrator referred them to on their notice of eligibility.