



LANDLORD INFORMATION GENERAL ASSISTANCE

As an annual courtesy to landlords who participate or have participated in South Portland's General Assistance (GA) Program, please find the following helpful information relative to the City's program and State requirements pertaining to GA.

GA is a state mandated, municipally administered financial assistance program. It is designed to be the program of "last resort" for residents of our community who are unable to provide for their basic needs. Basic needs are defined as Shelter/Rent, Utilities, and Medical & Food.

Applicants are able to apply for GA once every 30 days. All re-peat clients in order to meet the statutory requirements must provide copies of their receipts for the past 30 days to the City. Therefore, it is important for clients to have receipts from their landlords to indicate the amount of rent paid. Without this information, the client's application is incomplete and the client will be asked to provide that information prior to determination of the benefit (if applicable).

GA costs are paid by taxpayer's dollars and GA expenses are reimbursed by the State at a 70% rate. The GA Program is the most accountable assistance program in the state of Maine. Applicants must take responsibility to become self-reliant. For disabled persons, this may mean applying for disability benefits and for able-bodied person, obtaining meaningful employment. The program lends a helping hand to individuals and families. The program is based on State Overall Maximums. On July 1, 2012 the maximums under the Governor's plan were reduced by 10%. The City adopts maximums each fall and this information may be found in our ordinance, available on line at www.southportland.org.

If a client receives GA, this does not guarantee that they will receive monthly GA vouchers or that the amount will remain the same each month. Responsibility remains with the client to call our office one week prior to their next appointment timeframe to set up an appointment. Interviews are scheduled by appointments. At each interview, the client's current financial situation is reviewed & discussed. Secondly, clients are required by state law to comply with requirements relative to their personal situation, either job searching, contacting social service programs and applying for benefits. Receipts for the past 30 days are required and will be counted for basic necessities only (rent, electric, heat, medical & food). Not considered are phone bills, cell phone, cable, loan payments, car payments, cigarettes, alcohol, key deposits, furniture, legal fees, court restitution, etc. The City works with clients to create a stabilization plan in order to help clients self-sustain. We work with our clients and assist with various services available to meet their unique circumstances including the Career Center, employment options, federal and state programs and workfare.

When an individual or a group of individuals are sharing an apartment or house with roommates, eligibility for shared expenses (rent, utilities, etc) is based on the number of

people living in the apartment and the receipt from the landlord would indicate the split. Spouses are legally required to support each other under M.R.S.A. 22 §4309 & §4319. Co-signers on a rental/lease agreement are considered financially liable if a tenant is unable to pay their rent, as the co-signer is making a promise to pay the rent if the applicant defaults.

If a client/tenant receives the benefit TANF: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families - a state subsidy from the Department of Health & Human Services, this monthly allowance is to be applied towards the clients rent. GA may only look at the *current* month's rent. The GA program is not designed to subsidize back rent or security deposits. Thus, the importance & the burden of responsibility on the tenant to plan accordingly to set up an appointment (allowing the 5 days) in the month the rent is due.

Due to confidentiality laws, the City is unable to discuss your tenant's case with you unless the tenant has given the City written direction to do so. If you are aware that your tenant receives general assistance, please remember that this is temporary assistance and not designed to be an ongoing monthly subsidy. Responsibility falls on the tenant to contact GA for future consideration.

Processing of payments within Accounts Payable is as follows:

1. If a client is deemed eligible for General Assistance from Monday to noon on Wednesday, the electronic voucher will be processed in Accounts Payable Friday of that week and mailed to the landlord.
2. If a client is deemed eligible for General Assistance after the noon hour on Wednesday to Friday, the electronic voucher will be processed in Accounts Payable the following Friday of the upcoming week and mailed to the landlord.

Following are the GA housing levels allowance for the City of South Portland. (2016)

For a household of 1: up to \$636.00 unheated	up to \$740.00 heated
For a household of 2: up to \$757.00 unheated	up to \$886.00 heated
For a household of 3: up to \$939.00 unheated	up to \$1099.00 heated
For a household of 4: up to \$1272.00 unheated	up to \$1468.00 heated
For a household of 5: up to \$1293.00 unheated	up to \$1531.00 heated
For a household of 6: up to \$1457.25 unheated	up to \$1728.75 heated

Household of 1: \$758.00 heated + electricity
Household of 2: \$904.00 heated + electricity
Household of 3: \$1117.00 heated + electricity
Household of 4: \$1486.00 heated + electricity
Household of 5: \$1549.00 heated + electricity
Household of 6: \$1746.75 heated + electricity

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