

# GENERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

## Contra Costa County

### PROGRAM

General Assistance is the county-funded program established by the State Welfare and Institutions Code for the purpose of aiding indigents who are ineligible for federal or state-funded cash assistance programs.

The General Assistance program in Contra Costa County is established by the Board of Supervisors. Its policies and regulations are subject to change by the Board depending upon the funds available to the program.

### PURPOSE

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

The General Assistance grant is considered a loan and must be paid back to the County. All applicants/recipients of General Assistance must sign a reimbursement agreement and a lien against any present or future real property, such as a house, land, etc.

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

### GENERAL ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS

- 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.**

Employable persons can receive the General Assistance grants for a maximum of 3 months in a 12 month period. Disabled individuals can receive General Assistance continuously.

### ELIGIBILITY FACTORS

Whether a person is eligible to 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.

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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.

Income: All income that the General Assistance 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 applicant or 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. A 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 disabled during 12 months or longer must apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
- Parents who have received CalWORKs for 60 months and are living with their children, 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 trimester of the pregnancy. They are eligible to CalWORKs in the last trimester of the pregnancy.
- Sponsored Immigrants will have the income and property of the Sponsor considered available to them for a period of 3 years.
- All General Assistance applicants and recipients are fingerprinted to prevent welfare fraud.

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- General Assistance recipients must submit each month a form reporting any income or property received during that month, as well as changes in employment, vocational training or education, address, living arrangements, etc.

#### **APPLYING FOR GENERAL ASSISTANCE:**

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

The application consists of a General Assistance Orientation, a Comprehensive Assessment Meeting to determine the employability level of the applicant, and an Intake appointment. A Mental Status Evaluation and/or Substance Abuse Counseling appointments may be also scheduled if necessary.

#### **REQUIRED VERIFICATIONS:**

Identity: 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 15 days prior to the program application is required. Evidence accepted: rent receipt or utility bills in the applicant or recipient 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: An applicant or 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

Disability Verification: In order to receive General Assistance continuously, beyond the three months time limit for employable persons, an applicant or recipient must provide medical verification of physical or mental disability.

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#### GENERAL ASSISTANCE OFFICES:

There are three regional General Assistance offices located throughout Contra Costa County. Office hours are Mon-Fri, 8:00 am to 12:00 Noon and 12:30 pm to 5:00 pm.

**To apply for General Assistance contact the office nearest you.**

- West County Office  
**Richmond** - 1305 Macdonald Avenue Richmond, CA 94801  
*Phone: (510) 412-3000*
- Central County Office  
**Pleasant Hill** - 400 Ellinwood Way Pleasant Hill, CA 94523  
*Phone: (925) 602-9379*
- East County Office  
Antioch - 4545 Delta Fair Boulevard Antioch, CA 94509  
*Phone: (925) 706-4980*