

Struggling to Pay for Basic Necessities? General Assistance (GA) may be able to help

What is GA?

It is a program in state law that is run by Maine's towns. It helps those without other resources to pay for necessities such as:

Rent/Mortgage



Electricity



Heat



Food



Medicine



Where do I apply for GA?

Towns handle applications. Larger towns have specialized General Assistance or social service offices to take applications. Smaller towns often have the town clerks take applications.

What if I am Homeless or "couch surfing"?

You can apply in the town where you are currently located. Towns can't make you apply in the town you came from or where you last lived.

I am not a U.S. Citizen or I am not sure about my Immigration Status. What do I need to do in order to apply for GA?

ALWAYS REMEMBER: YOU SHOULD NEVER RUSH YOUR APPLICATION FOR IMMIGRATION RELIEF IN ORDER TO GET GA. You can get GA for up to two years even if you have not applied for immigration relief if you can show that you are still in the process of applying for immigration relief.

You will need to show you do not have resources to pay for basic necessities.

If you have applied for asylum or another immigration status and are waiting for a decision, you will need to show any of the following forms of proof:

- A notice of receipt
- The first page of an asylum application

If you are currently applying for asylum or another immigration status (like SIJS, a U visa, VAWA, etc.) but have not submitted your application, you will need to show proof of pursuing an immigration process. You will need to show the following proof:

- A signed form (called an affidavit) saying you are pursuing immigration process.
- AND if you have them, any of the following:
 - A notice to appear in court (ONLY IF YOU HAVE ONE)
 - Alien number (ONLY IF YOU HAVE ONE)
 - Date of your hearing in your case (ONLY IF YOUR HEARING IS SCHEDULED)

Applying for rent?

GA will want to contact your landlord to complete paperwork and possibly inspect your apartment. You should bring your landlord's contact information to the appointment.

If you have received an eviction notice make sure you bring it to your appointment.

What if the town office accepting GA applications is closed?

You should be able to apply for emergency assistance 24-7, and every town must provide information on how to do that. If you have any trouble accessing your GA office or applying, you can call the State GA Hotline at: 1-800-442-6003.

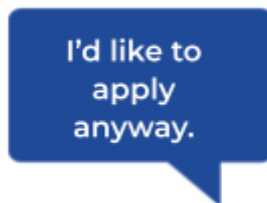
I Tried Applying, but they never let me complete an application. What Do I Do?

EVERYONE HAS A RIGHT TO COMPLETE AN APPLICATION FOR GA AND GET A WRITTEN DECISION FROM THE TOWN WITHIN 24 HOURS. If you are not eligible, a town should still let you apply. The town then must give you a written denial.

So, when the town says:

You have the right to say:

And ask for a written decision:



If you follow the above steps and you still aren't able to apply, or you didn't receive a written decision, contact the State GA Hotline at: 1-800-442-6003. You can also contact [Pine Tree Legal Assistance](#) or [Maine Equal Justice](#).

I Applied for GA but Got a Written Denial. Now What?

Once you get a written denial you only have 5 days to submit a written appeal.

What do I put in the written appeal?

You can handwrite the appeal. Simple is ok. Say something like:

“I am requesting a fair hearing.”

-and-

“I believe I am eligible for GA and GA was wrong to deny me”

-and-

“I believe I am entitled to assistance for (Insert the assistance you applied for)”

-and-

Include your address and phone number.

After I submit the appeal, then what?

The town must schedule a fair hearing within 5 days. This is informal and normally happens at the town office but can be done over the phone if necessary.

Can I have someone with me to my fair hearing?

You can bring anyone you like, including an interpreter of your choice or your representative. Pine Tree Legal or Maine Equal Justice may be able to help you at your hearing.

For more information, contact:

- State of Maine, through the DHHS Hotline: 1-800-442-6003
- Pine Tree Legal Assistance: <https://ptla.org/contact-us>
- Maine Equal Justice: <https://maineequaljustice.org/contact-us/>