The General Assistance (GA) program in Maine is administered by each municipality in order to provide immediate help to eligible people who do not have enough money for basic needs, such as rent/mortgage, food, heating fuel, medications, non-elective medical care, and other items that are essential to maintain themselves or their families. In order to receive GA, people must follow program rules and meet the eligibility requirements.

**HOW TO QUALIFY**
To get General Assistance, your income must fall below the OVERALL MAXIMUM LEVEL OF ASSISTANCE for your household size. The OVERALL MAXIMUM LEVEL OF ASSISTANCE is found in the local GA ordinance. Also, your income must be less than what you need to pay for the basic necessities of food, shelter, heating fuel, electricity, water and sewer utilities, household supplies, clothing, and medical care. GA requests must be for help with current bills. GA does not usually pay for back bills.

**HOW TO APPLY**
Under normal circumstances, you must apply in person and fill out an application. During the COVID-19 emergency, you may apply by phone. To begin the process, call 207-699-5305. If this is an EMERGENCY and the office is closed, please call 207-807-2055. See the box at right for a complete list of information you will be asked to present. Without complete information about your income and expenses, the administrator cannot determine if you are eligible.

**WHEN TO APPLY**
It is important to apply for assistance before you have a crisis. If you receive a notice that your electricity is going to be shut off, or if you are going to be evicted, notify the administrator immediately at 207-699-5305.

**DURATION OF ASSISTANCE**
Assistance will be granted for no longer than one month, although it may be granted for shorter periods, such as a week at a time. If a month has gone by since your last application and you need additional assistance, you must reapply and show the administrator that you are eligible.

**AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE**
The amount of assistance you receive depends upon your situation. The municipality does have maximum levels of assistance for the various basic necessities that it will not exceed. For example, if your total eligibility is $450 and your rent is $425, but the municipality allows a maximum of $350 for housing, you will not receive $425 even though you are eligible for $450.

**WORK REQUIREMENT**
Under normal circumstances there are work requirements associated with receiving General Assistance. During the COVID-19 emergency, these requirements may be waived.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**
The information concerning your request for assistance, including the application, budget sheet, decision, etc., is strictly confidential. You, your attorney, the administrator, and certain government personnel may review your records, but the general public may not review your records unless you have given your express permission.
REPAYMENT
If you receive GA, you are required to repay the municipality when you become financially able to do so. If the municipality makes a mortgage payment or pays for a capital improvement to your property, it may place a lien on your property in the Registry of Deeds. There is also an automatic lien against any Workers’ Compensation lump sum payment that you may receive. If you receive other aid, you may be required to pay back the payments received from GA.

APPEALS
If you do not agree with the administrator’s decision, you can ask for further explanation. If you still disagree, you can appeal the decision to the Fair Hearing Authority (FHA). The FHA may be one person, or a small board made up of three or five people. No member of the FHA will have participated in the decision on your request for assistance. You must request the hearing in writing within 5 working days of receiving your decision. After you make such a request, a hearing will be scheduled within 5 working days. An attorney may represent you at the hearing at your own expense. You will receive a written decision from the fair hearing authority no later than 5 working days after the hearing. If you are dissatisfied with the fair hearing authority’s decision, you have 30 days to appeal to Superior Court.

If you are in immediate need and you think the municipality has violated the state law with regard to your request for assistance, you may call the Department of Human Services to complain. The Department’s hot-line number is 1(800) 442-6003.

FORE MORE INFORMATION
Visit: www.falmouthme.org/town-clerk/pages/general-assistance
Or Call 207-699-5305
If this is an EMERGENCY and the office is closed, please call 207-807-2055.