

GENERAL ASSISTANCE REGULATIONS

SECTION I. DEFINITIONS

Basic needs are defined as food, shelter and water, appropriate prescriptions for life-threatening conditions as prescribed by a proper authority and electricity and heat during the moratorium.

Chemical dependency as used in these regulations shall mean the addiction to drugs, including but not limited to alcohol, illegal drugs and prescription drugs.

Moratorium as used in these regulations shall mean the authorized period of time between November 1 and April 1 for the delay of payment of electric and gas bills to an electric company for those who are eligible for assistance through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

Needy persons are defined as those who may have income but are unable to meet their basic needs.

Poor persons are defined as those who have no property, exempt or otherwise, and are unable, because of physical or mental disabilities, to earn a living by labor.

Resident as used in these regulations shall mean an individual whom has held a permanent, fixed physical address within Poweshiek County for at least 30 consecutive days.

SECTION II. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- A. **LEGAL AUTHORIZATION:** The guidelines and procedures set out in these regulations implement the provisions of the duties imposed upon Poweshiek County by Chapter 252 of the Code of Iowa, as amended.
- B. **PURPOSE:** The Poweshiek County General Assistance program is designed to provide for the relief of poor persons in Poweshiek County who are ineligible for, or are in immediate need and are waiting for approval and receipt of state or federal programs, or those whose basic needs cannot be fully met by the assistance furnished under such programs. General Assistance funds shall not be utilized until all other sources of public assistance have been exhausted. The Board of Supervisors of Poweshiek County, Iowa shall have the discretion to make exceptions in unusual situations.
- C. **ADMINISTRATION:** the General Assistance Director is appointed by and responsible to the Board of Supervisors of Poweshiek County, Iowa and shall administer the general assistance program. The Assistant Director, who is also appointed by and responsible to the Board of Supervisors of Poweshiek County, Iowa, shall assist the Director in daily office tasks and shall also perform all the duties of the Director when the Director is absent or unable to carry out the duties.

D. DUTIES OF DIRECTOR:

1. Accept applications for general assistance from persons residing in Poweshiek County.
2. Investigate the actuality of each statement presented on each application for general assistance to determine the accuracy and reliability as appears necessary to the Director under the guidelines of Section III of these regulations.
3. Determine eligibility of each applicant according to these regulations.
4. Refer applicant to appropriate programs for alternate sources of assistance, and when possible assist clients to attain self-sufficiency.
5. Arrange vendor payments for eligible applicants.

**SECTION III.
GUIDELINES FOR INVESTIGATION**

The Director shall investigate the actuality of each statement made on an application if any of the following reasons appear from either the application or from other information available to the Director including but not limited to:

- A. Applicant's situation indicates potential unused resources.
- B. Applicant's property or cash reserves are near equal or exceed the limitation allowed.
- C. Applicant's living expenses are greater than income.
- D. Applicant's income is sufficient to meet basic needs.
- E. Applicant appears to be mentally confused.
- F. Applicant is physically ill or disabled and unable to participate in the eligibility determination process.
- G. Applicant has a known history of misrepresentation.
- H. Applicant is a transient or someone who changes his address frequently or who has no permanent place of residence.

**SECTION IV.
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

A. ELIGIBILITY: To be eligible for general assistance an applicant must comply with the following established guidelines:

1. Applicant must have residency in Poweshiek County to be eligible for assistance, as defined in Section I.
2. Must use the applicant's own real and potential resources as defined in Section IV (B) of these regulations to meet the needs of the applicant's family.
3. Exhaust the resources of those persons charged by law to provide for the applicant's support. (See 252.2 and 252.5, Code of Iowa).
4. Register with the Workforce Development Center of Iowa and participate in job searches if deemed appropriate by the Director, and provide documentation of job

searches, if asked.

5. Accept available work if health, and other circumstances permit, as determined by the Director. Director may request written statement from proper authority for health and other circumstances.
6. Complete an application form to the satisfaction of the Director.
7. An applicant must be eighteen (18) years of age to receive assistance, if living independently.
8. Poweshiek County Assistance policies and guidelines will not be in conflict with the Federal Government Welfare Act of 1996. An applicant will not be eligible for assistance from Poweshiek County General Assistance if, anyone in the household has been discharged from FIP's 60 Month Program for failure to meet the 60 month maximum requirement.
9. General assistance income eligibility guidelines shall be according to the following chart:

2007 HHS Poverty Guidelines

Size of Family Unit	Annual Income	Monthly Income
1	\$ 10,210	851
2	13,690	1141
3	17,710	1476
4	20,650	1721
5	24,130	2011
6	27,610	2301
7	31,090	2591
8	34,570	2881
For each additional person, add	3,260	272

SOURCE: *Federal Register*, Vol. 70, No. 33, February 18, 2007, pp. 8373-8375.

B. PERSONAL AND FAMILY RESOURCES: All real and personal resources of the family including net income from any source shall be considered in making determinations for granting general assistance with the following exceptions:

1. Tools and equipment used for home and family maintenance or support.
2. Any motor vehicle that has an equity not to exceed two thousand, five hundred dollars (\$2,500.00)
3. Any homestead with an equity not to exceed twenty five thousand dollars (25,000.00).
4. Irrevocable burial lots and funeral trust funds, within reason.

Potential resources, being cash or any other resources of the family that can be readily converted to cash within seven (7) days, will also be considered as real resources.

Any transfer or sale of property made within two years prior to the application and for the purpose of qualifying for general assistance renders the family ineligible for general assistance.

C. EMPLOYMENT SEARCH: The Director will refer all applicants and all persons in the

household over the age of 16 and not actively pursuing a high school diploma to the Workforce Development Center of Iowa. Each member of the household eligible for employment shall make at least two face-to-face job seeking contacts per week for three consecutive weeks. Telephone contacts do not satisfy the requirement. If the employer contacted has no recollection of meeting with client, it shall not be deemed a valid contact. Contacts will be checked. Failure to make two contacts results in ineligibility for General Assistance. All household members eligible for employment shall accept employment when available. The refusal to attend an interview and/or accept employment will jeopardize any general relief benefits. This requirement shall not be enforced when, in the determination of the Director, any of the following conditions exist:

1. The person suffers from mental or physical illness, which prevents gainful employment, as documented by a proper authority.
2. The person is handicapped or otherwise unemployable, as documented by a proper authority.
3. The person is caring for a dependent family member who requires home care and supervision as documented by a proper authority.

A person may not be eligible for assistance if unemployed for the purpose of seeking post high school training or education.

A person who voluntarily quits a job within the last sixty days and is currently unemployed is not eligible for general assistance.

A person who is “on strike” from her/his employer may not be eligible for general assistance.

D. COMPUTATION AND PROOF OF INCOME:

Income shall be the aggregate of all gross income of family members excluding minor children who are actively pursuing a high school diploma. The Director shall verify wages, food stamp benefit, childcare benefit, child support and/or alimony payments and any other documentation that the Director deems appropriate. The applicant shall furnish the most recent income tax return if Director requests. Proof of current bills, shall be furnished upon request of Director.

E. DECISIONS: Eligibility and need shall be determined within approximately ten days after application is properly completed and presented to the Director and all necessary members of the household sign the application form. Any resulting disbursements will be made as soon as possible after. Disbursement of general assistance shall be by payment to the vendor as described in the Poweshiek County General Assistance Regulations. Payment is authorized by voucher. The Director shall keep adequate records of all disbursements by applicant and by category, together with any information necessary to explain each grant of general assistance.

SECTION V. DISBURSEMENT OF GENERAL ASSISTANCE

After eligibility is established and verified, the Director shall disburse any general assistance granted, if the annual budget and line item for the requested assistance allows, according to the following categories of need and their listed guidelines:

A. RENT

1. Rent payment shall only be made to owners of property or their designee, not to the applicant.
2. Rent shall only be paid for housing that is currently being occupied by the family except for temporary absence of the family for health reasons.
3. Rent shall not be paid to an immediate relative (including step- or in-law) such as parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, brother, sister, aunt or uncle.
4. Rent may be paid for temporary housing such as hotel or motel.
5. Payment for temporary shelter shall be for a reasonable amount as billed by the vendor.
6. Payment made under Section V (A) is limited to \$100.00 per month for a household without children and not to exceed \$250.00 per month for a household with children.
7. Deposits are not allowable under this section.
8. Individuals already receiving rental subsidy/assistance from another source (HUD, FmHA, MICA, Ministerial Associations, etc.) are not eligible under this section.

B. UTILITIES

1. Utility relief includes vendor payments to gas companies, light companies, water companies, fuel oil companies and merchants who may provide any other type of fuel needed for heating or cooking.
2. Utility assistance may be provided only at the applicant's current residence. Utility obligations owed at a previous address are not to be considered for assistance.
3. The maximum amount authorized will be the amount of the current billing from the utility company not to exceed \$100.00 for electric, \$50.00 for water, or \$150.00 for fuels per month.
4. Utilities can be paid on a current basis, and it is not necessary to have a shut-off notice.
5. Utilities must be in the name of the applicant or another member of the household. If the expense of the utilities is being shared with a non-applicant, the bill will be pro-rated as to the applicant's rightful share, and payment will be made to the vendor.
6. Utility payment assistance will be denied if client did not use own resources to pay at least forty percent (40%) of the total bill incurred during the moratorium.
7. Deposits are not allowable under this section.

C. MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

1. Medical assistance shall be provided only for emergencies with exceptions to be approved by the Director prior to service. Prior authorization from the Director must be obtained before receiving medical assistance. When it is impossible to obtain prior

authorization, the client or a member of the client's immediate family (to include a guardian) must contact the General Assistance Office within two (2) working days. If there is a legitimate reason why contact could not be made in the allowable time, Director may make exception. Under few circumstances shall medical assistance under paragraph four and five of this topic be considered an "emergency situation".

2. Vendor payment may be made for emergency medical services as described below:
 - a. Emergency ambulance service to the nearest hospital.
 - b. Emergency hospital to include treatment in the emergency room of the local hospital and transfer to University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics.
 - c. Prescription and non-prescription medical needs of an emergency nature. Payment for prescription or non-prescription shall be limited to \$75.00 per eligible family member each month. Prescriptions shall be generic when possible.
3. Payment may be made for dental work necessary to alleviate pain. Payment for necessary dental work may include dentures and denture repair or replacement. Dental vendor payments are limited to \$250.00 for extractions or restoration and \$350.00 for dentures, if needed.
4. Vendor payment may be made for Title XIX frames for glasses not to exceed \$50.00 and lenses for glasses not to exceed \$65.00.
5. Vendor payment may be made for medical appliances not available through other resources, such as hearing aids, special shoes, etc.
6. A client may apply for state papers to be seen at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. State papers are completed in the general relief office and eligibility is based guidelines from the state. Poweshiek County is allotted approximately thirty-four (34) quota papers each fiscal year. Obstetric, orthopedic and psychiatric papers are considered non-quota. Poweshiek County General Relief will not issue state papers for a chemical dependency. Quota state papers will be utilized for medically necessary procedures only as prescribed by proper authority.

D. BURIAL EXPENSE

1. **PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AND USE OF FUNERAL HOME, \$1100.00**
(funeral director will provide transfer of deceased from place of death within a 60 mile radius of funeral home; embalming and other preparation of deceased; arrangements with the family; use of staff for visitation service and funeral service and transfer and supervision of staff at cemetery or crematory; use of necessary automobiles; use of basic facilities; use of preparation room and supplies; use of facilities for visitation; and use of funeral home facilities for funeral service/or additional staff time for relocation and conducting the funeral service at another location; use of register book; acknowledgement stationary; temporary grave marker; and memorial service folders).
2. Simple Casket.... not to exceed.....\$ 179.00
3. Rigid Container. Not to exceed.....\$ 185.00
4. Cemetery or Crematory Charges.....\$ 300.00
5. Cremation.....\$1200.00
6. **Maximum Allowance.....\$1764.00**

7. **Restrictions:**

- a. The family of the deceased must meet with the Poweshiek County Assistance representative to apply for this allowance and the Poweshiek County Assistance representative must contact the funeral director *before* any arrangements are finalized. If deceased was a war-time veteran, Poweshiek County Veteran's Affairs will be contacted in place of Poweshiek County Assistance.
- b. Poweshiek County will only pay the invoice cost of the casket, the burial container and the cemetery expenses. The funeral home must attach the invoices along with the funeral home statement of charges.
- c. Any funds from the Veterans Administration, insurance proceeds or personal funds will be applied to the above charges and the County will pay the balance of the charges.
- d. If the family replaces the simple casket or simple concrete burial container with another casket or vault of better quality, Poweshiek County Assistance will not pay for these items.
- e. Transportation charges will also be included in item 4. Above, when the family chooses a cremation process and the funeral home must transport the remains to a crematory. The County will not pay any more than \$300.00 for the cremation process and the transportation to the crematory.
- f. The family will be responsible for transportation charges to a cemetery outside a radius of 25 miles from the funeral home.
- g. Poweshiek County Assistance will pay up to \$250.00 for a non-resident indigent transient burial according to Chapter 252.27 Code of Iowa.

E. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Transportation assistance may be in the form of voucher payments for not to exceed \$15.00 in gasoline and \$2.00 for oil.
2. Voucher payment may be made for one meal and one night's lodging at reasonable rates for transients.
3. The Poweshiek County Relief office may authorize voucher payment for bus tickets to either Iowa City or Des Moines.
5. Utility telephone payments may be made for those who need a telephone for medical purposes only as prescribed by a proper authority.
6. Voucher payments may be made for nursing home care to hold a bed not to exceed \$40.00 per day for sixteen days.
7. Voucher payments may be made for adult/child day care not to exceed \$10.00 per day for ten days.
8. Any other type of general assistance found by the Director to be appropriate may be disbursed under this subsection. Under no circumstances shall the Director find taxes, interest, carrying and late charges, mortgage payment or any other type of debt to be a current need for which general relief may be disbursed.

SECTION VI. MAXIMUM ASSISTANCE

The maximum assistance that a household can receive in a twelve-month period is as follows:

1. Assistance for two consecutive months, and/or
2. Assistance with no more than two items not necessarily in the same category, and
3. Total annual assistance not to exceed \$500.00 excluding burial.

SECTION VII. REIMBURSEMENT

If the Director feels that the client will qualify for Social Security Administration assistance program or alien reimbursement, the Director shall file appropriate forms for reimbursement to the county.

If a poor person has legal settlement in another county in the state of Iowa, Director will notify the County Auditor who will request reimbursement from the county of legal settlement.

Any time it is deemed appropriate, the Director shall have client fill out and sign an agreement to reimburse the county all or any part of the assistance that was provided for the client as agreed upon by Director and client.

If the client does not attempt to meet the agreed obligation, the client will not be eligible for any further assistance without review by the Poweshiek County Board of Supervisors.

SECTION VIII.
APPEAL

The applicant may appeal denial of benefits by the Director by presenting denial in writing to the Poweshiek County Board of Supervisors within fourteen (14) days of the date of the letter of denial. A hearing will be set up by and with the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors will make a final decision within thirty days (30) of the hearing.

Approved _____, 2004

Chair

Vice-Chair

Member

Diana Dawley, Auditor
Secretary to the Board of Supervisors