

**EMERGENCY GENERAL ASSISTANCE  
AITKIN COUNTY**

**Section 1. Emergency General Assistance Availability.**

- 1.1 Aitkin County will provide assistance to individuals in emergency situations as long as funding is available through the State allocation of Emergency General Assistance (EGA) funding or approval of Agency director.
  - 1.1.1 Availability of funding will be at the sole determination and discretion of the Director of Human Services or designee. County funds will be expended to supplement, extend, expand, or substitute the Emergency General Assistance fund only with approval of the Director of Human Services or designee.
- 1.2 The maximum amount of Emergency General Assistance that may be approved and issued for an individual or household unit, adding together all expenses needing payment to resolve the crisis, cannot exceed 4 times the cash grant standard under General Assistance.

**Section 2. Eligibility for Emergency General Assistance.**

- 2.1 Aitkin County will grant EGA to an individual or a household unit that meets the eligibility criteria established by Aitkin County in this policy.
  - 2.1.1 For purposes of this EGA guideline, household unit means all individuals who are or would be considered part of the EGA unit who live together in the same location.
- 2.2 EGA eligibility will be determined for the applicant's initial request(s), and will not be available again until at least 12 months have passed from the date of prior issuance.
  - 2.2.1 The EGA Fund will try to resolve the emergency situation in the most cost-effective manner. The EGA money must resolve the emergency, not postpone it.
  - 2.2.2 If a household unit includes an individual who previously has received GA/MSA Emergency Assistance or MFIP Emergency Assistance in the state of Minnesota, during the past 12-month period, the county agency will deny the request.
- 2.3 All individuals or household members without resources available to meet a crisis as identified in section 5 of this policy may be eligible for EGA when the individual or household unit meets and verifies all the following conditions:
  - 2.3.1 Individual or household unit net income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines from the previous calendar year. Annual income is calculated using current month income times 12.
  - 2.3.2 The individual must not be eligible for or a current recipient of MFIP (Minnesota Family Investment Program) or DWP (Diversionary Work Program). The individual must not be eligible for assistance under the county MFIP Consolidated Fund (EA).

- 2.3.3 The individual or at least one household member must be a resident of Aitkin County before the date of application and must currently be a resident of Aitkin County.
- 2.3.4 The individual or household unit is without resources available to resolve the crisis; the county agency will assess the income, both available and anticipated, assets, and current living expenses of each member of the household unit.
- 2.3.5 EGA is necessary to avoid destitution (including the threat of destitution) or to provide emergency shelter arrangements.
- 2.3.6 In order for EGA to be approved and issued, the assistance provided must resolve the crisis and enhance stability. All eligible and covered expenses of EGA will not be issued unless it is confirmed that assistance, combined with payments by the applicant or funding from any other verified sources, will continue or restore the needed service, and resolve the crisis. The individual or household must not have used, without good cause, more than 50 % of net income for purposes other than basic needs during the 60 days prior to application. Basic needs are defined as:
- Shelter
  - Utilities paid by household
  - Food costs up to the amount of the Thrifty Food Plan allotment
  - Medical expenses not covered under a private, state, or federal program
  - Transportation costs (\$.20/mile or monthly cost of bus pass)
  - Child care expenses
  - Other expenses to retain or obtain employment.

**Section 3. Processing Emergency General Assistance applications and payments.**

- 3.1 To apply for EGA, the individual or family unit must complete a DHS Combined Application Form.
- 3.2.1 All individuals or household unit will be notified in writing whether their application was approved, denied or pended within 15 days after the county agency receives a completed application.
- 3.2.1 If notice is sent that an application was pended, the county agency will notify the individual or household unit as soon as possible whether their application was approved or denied.
- 3.3 Funding approved under the EGA guidelines will be vendor paid.

**Section 4. Verifications.**

- 4.1 If statements on application are questioned, required verifications for EGA may include : Income, assets, living expenses, living situation (landlord statement), and household composition.

4.2 Other documentation will be requested, only as necessary, to verify validity of need or payment to vendor.

4.3 Failure to provide requested documentation will be valid grounds for denial.

Section 5. **Emergency General Assistance is limited to:**

5.1 Emergency needs that may be funded by EGA are limited to the following:

5.1.1 **Rent.**

5.1.1.1 The county agency may issue EGA for rent to prevent eviction from rented or leased shelter.

5.1.1.1.1 The county agency will deny EGA when the county agency determines the household unit's anticipated income will not cover continued payment for the shelter.

5.1.1.2 EGA will not be issued for payment of late fees or interest charges.

5.1.1.3 EGA will not be issued for more than three months rent, (includes current month.)

5.1.2 **Mortgage and contract for deed arrears.**

5.1.2.1 When a home is owned, occupied, and maintained by the individual or household unit, the county agency may issue EGA for mortgage or contract for deed arrears on behalf of an otherwise eligible individual or household unit.

5.1.2.1.1 EGA may only be issued when the individual or household unit has been refused refinancing through a bank or other lending institution.

5.1.2.1.2 EGA may only be issued when the creditor will accept the assistance payment, combined with any payments made by the individual or household unit, as full payment of arrears.

5.1.2.1.3 Household unit will be required to provide County agency with a letter from that other funding is not available.

5.1.3 **Damage or utility deposits.**

5.1.3.1 The county agency may issue EGA for damage or utility deposits when necessary to alleviate the emergency.

**5.1.5 Utility costs.**

- 5.1.5.1 EGA for utility costs may be made when an otherwise eligible household unit has had a termination or is threatened with a termination of municipal water and sewer service, electric, gas or heating fuel service, or refuse removal service, or lacks wood when that is the heating source.
- 5.1.5.2 The county agency may not issue assistance unless it receives confirmation from the utility provider that assistance combined with payment by the applicant and funding from any other verified sources will continue or restore the utility.
- 5.1.5.3 All other sources of fuel assistance must have been exhausted. The individual or household unit must have applied for Energy Assistance benefits through Lakes & Pines.

**5.1.6 Moving expenses.**

- 5.1.6.1 The county agency may issue EGA for expenses incurred when an individual or household unit must move to a different shelter.
  - 5.1.6.1.1 Moving expenses include the cost to transport personal property belonging to the individual or household unit and the cost for utility connection.
  - 5.1.6.1.2 Moving expenses may be paid only when the county agency determines that a move is cost-effective.
  - 5.1.6.1.3 Moving expenses may be paid when the county agency denies assistance to pay rent to prevent an eviction because the county agency has determined that a household unit's anticipated income will not cover continued shelter obligation at that location.
  - 5.1.6.1.4 The County must authorize expenses before the expense is incurred.

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