



## GENERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Aging & People with Disabilities/Oregon Department of Human Services  
JANUARY 2019

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### WHAT IS THE GENERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?

General assistance is a program of the Oregon Dept. Of Human Services. The program can provide housing assistance, a utility allowance and a personal incidental fund payment for homeless who have been determined disabled by Oregon DHS to assist them in surviving the lengthy application process for federal Supplemental Security Income benefits.

#### WHAT ARE THE INDIVIDUAL BENEFITS?

Benefits can include up to \$545 per month in housing assistance, \$90 in utility assistance per month, \$60 in cash assistance per month, and free assistance with the Social Security application and appeals process through the initial and reconsideration stages. When an eligible individual is approved for federal Supplemental Security Income benefits, the Social Security Administration reimburses the state for the general assistance benefits paid during the period that the Social Security Administration finds that the person was disabled.

#### WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS?

Individuals can receive General Assistance if they meet the following criteria:

- *Be homeless or at risk of homelessness;*
- *Be an adult, age 18–64, with no minor children living with them;*
- *Have a severe disability that meets Social Security disability criteria;*
- *Be receiving Presumptive Medicaid medical assistance;*
- *Meet all eligibility criteria for Supplemental Security Income (SSI);*
- *Apply for SSI and appeal any denials received; and*
- *Sign an Interim Assistance Agreement (IAR), allowing DHS to recover GA funds paid to them once awarded SSA benefits.*

The program acts as a bridge for up to 200 individuals/monthly that are awaiting approval of federal Supplemental Security Income benefits.

#### WHAT IS THE CURRENT BUDGET?

2017–19 Budget: \$1,701,243.00

*Authorized Funding for the following positions: 1 – Office Specialist 2; 1 – Human Services Specialist 1*

*The Oregon Dept. of Human Services Aging and People with Disabilities Division administers the program. The 2019–21 Governor’s Recommended Budget maintains current service level.*

#### WHAT IS THE CURRENT CASELOAD AND STAFFING?

134 total cases: 97–housed, 37 unhoused (as of January 1, 2019)

*Existing positions from other programs fulfill additional staffing needs on a rotational basis that include Disability Analyst 2. Staffing can be up to three FTE at any one time based on availability and current agency needs. The authorized funding amount is combined with other funding sources into two Human Services Specialist 3 positions.*

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WHAT DOES PROGRAM STAFFING PROVIDE?

- Assessment of eligibility for federal disability benefits: includes arranging for medical evaluation and collecting required documentation such as W-2 forms, military service, etc. as current staffing levels permits.
- Housing search/rental applications

WHAT DOES PROGRAM STAFFING DOES NOT PROVIDE?

- Assistance at the Administrative Law Judge level, the Appeals Council level or federal court appeals.  
Assistance with enrolling in other programs
- Rental deposits/Moving and transportation costs

OREGON FOOD BANK SUPPORTS THE GENERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AS PART OF OUR WORK IN ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF HUNGER. WE HAVE NO OFFICIAL ROLE IN THE PROGRAM OTHER THAN AS AN ADVOCATE FOR THE HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS IT SERVES. THIS FACT SHEET WAS CREATED TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE PROGRAM DURING THE 2019 LEGISLATIVE SESSION.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON**  
**OUR JOINT ADVOCACY WITH THE OREGON LAW CENTER**

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