



**TOWN OF
NORTH BERWICK
GENERAL
ASSISTANCE**

**A Guide to the
Applicant's Rights
And
Responsibilities**

GENERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Program Overview

The General Assistance program is intended to assist people who are in need and have nowhere else to turn. It provides assistance for basic necessities such as rent, food, personal and household supplies, medication, heating fuel, utilities and other essential services. All assistance granted is in voucher form and no cash assistance is granted. Eligibility has to be determined within 24 hours.

How To Apply

You should apply at the town office. Anyone can apply to the town if they reside in North Berwick.

What to bring with you when you apply

Your GA Budget will be based on the 30-day period following your application. The town will also look back to 30 days before you applied to see what money you received and how you spent it. The town will need to see:

- Your driver's license or other identification
- Social Security number for yourself and ALL members of your household.

- Your most recent bills and/or other proof of expenses including: rent/mortgage, heating fuel, electricity, food, medical expenses;
- Cancelled checks, receipts, or other documents that show how you have spent your money and income in the past 30 days;
- Work related expenses;
- Name & Address of your landlord;
- A Doctor's statement if you are ill, disabled or not able to work;
- Proof of all household income including:
 - Wages
 - Cash on Hand
 - Income Tax Refunds
 - Unemployment Benefits
 - Child Support Benefits
 - TANF Benefits
 - Social Security Benefits
 - SSI/SSDI Disability Benefits
 - Checking/Savings Balance
 - Veteran's Pensions
 - Rental Income
 - Loans
 - Worker's Compensation
 - Savings Bonds
 - Trust Funds/Annuity
 - Life Insurance Policies
 - Retirement Accounts/401K'S
 - School Loans
 - Assistance from Relatives
 - In-kind Income

- Self-Employment Income
- Financial Resources
- Car/Recreational Vehicle
- Real Estate Holdings

When Assistance is Granted

The GA Administrator will determine your eligibility based on whether your countable income is less than your necessary expenses and the program's income maximum. Countable income is your actual income minus work related expenses.

The administrator or caseworker must issue a written decision within 24 hours of receiving a completed application. If you have not provided all the information needed to determine your eligibility you may be notified you are ineligible until the information is provided. If you are found eligible, assistance will be granted promptly.

Eligibility

With the exception of "first time" applicants, anyone applying for General Assistance must document their use of income. Current receipts showing how income has been spent are required. Only receipts for basic necessities are considered allowed expenses, which include but are not limited to allowable food, rent, heating fuel, utilities, medication and work-related expenses.

Work Requirement

If you are unemployed or underemployed (working less than full time) but you are able to work, you must:

- Register for work at the Career Center;
- Actively look for work;
- Accept any job offer (paying at least minimum wage);
- Participate in any no-cost training, retraining, educational or rehabilitative program that would help you get a job if referred to such a program by the administrator.

Use of Potential Resources

The Town can direct you in writing to apply for resources such as TANF, Food Stamps, LIHEAP, SSI, Social Security Disability, Child Support, and other Public Programs. The Town can also tell you in writing to get medical treatment or go to rehabilitation that is free. You will be allowed 7 days to show you applied for these resources.

Under 25 Years of Age

Any person under the age of 25 who is applying independently from his/her parents for general assistance will be informed that until reaching the age of 25, the applicant's parents are still legally liable for his/her support. With regard to any such application, the town may seek verification of applicant's need and parents ability to assist applicant from said parents,

Quitting Work or Getting Fired

If you have been working, but quit your job without a good reason or get fired from your job for misconduct, you are automatically ineligible to receive assistance for 120 days from the date of separation from your employment.

Remember that the administrator does not want to disqualify you from receiving the assistance you need, so it is in your best interest to fully comply with the work requirements.

Fraud

If the administrator finds out that you have not told the truth, you will be disqualified from receiving GA for 120 days. In addition, the administrator may refer your case over to the police department or District Attorney's Office for committing General Assistance fraud, which is a Class E crime. The administrator does not want to disqualify you or get you in trouble with the law, so make sure to always tell the truth when you apply for General Assistance.

Confidentiality

The information concerning your request for assistance, including the application, budget sheet, decision and other information regarding your case 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.

Contact Information

Rebecca Carter, GA Coordinator

Phone: 207-676-3353, X1 then X3

**GA Interview Hours:
(Appointment recommended)**

Tuesday 9:00am to 11:00am

**Applications may be picked up during
regular town office hours**