

Town of Henniker NH - Human Service Department



GENERAL ASSISTANCE GUIDELINES

MISSION STATEMENT

Henniker Town Human Service Department mission is to meet our legal obligations, free of bias, in the most professional, thoughtful, and cost-effective manner possible. The Department provides case management services that strive to promote and educate people toward self-sufficiency and financial independence.

Approved By Board of Selectmen June 14, 2022

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I. Definitions

AGENCY: Any health, social service or other entity that provides services to a client. Any such entity to which a Human Service Director may refer a client for additional resources and/or assistance.

APPLICANT: A person who expresses a desire to receive general assistance or to have his/her eligibility reviewed and whose application has not been withdrawn. This may be expressed either in person or by an authorized representative of the applicant.

APPLICATION (RE-APPLICATION): Written action by which a person requests assistance from a Human Service Director. This application must be made on a form provided by the Human Service Director. The application form may be written or completed electronically if available, by means of an interview conducted by a Human Service Director and verified by the applicant's signature.

ASSETS: All cash, real property, personal property and future assets owned by the applicant.

AVAILABLE LIQUID ASSETS: Amount of liquid assets after exclusions enumerated in Section IX (D). Includes cash on hand, checking accounts, bank deposits, credit union accounts, stocks, bonds, and securities. IRA (Individual Retirement Account), 401k accounts, insurance policies with a loan value, and non-essential personal property shall be considered as available liquid assets when they have been converted into cash.

CASE MANAGEMENT: A holistic collaborative process of assessment, planning, facilitation and advocacy for options and services to meet an individual's and/or household's short- and long-term emergency needs through communication, ongoing regular schedule meetings and available resources to promote safe cost-effective outcomes. Welfare applications and related records must be retained during the active phase of any application plus 7 years.

CLAIMANT: A recipient or applicant who has requested, either in person or through an authorized representative, a fair hearing under Section XIV of these guidelines.

CLIENT: An individual who receives services from the welfare department. May be a single person or encompass a family as defined per Human Service guidelines.

ELIGIBILITY: Determination by a Human Service Director, in accordance with the guidelines, of an applicant's need for general assistance under the formula provided in Section IX.

FAIR HEARING: A hearing which the applicant or recipient may request to contest a denial, termination or reduction of assistance. The standards for such a hearing are in Section XIV.

GENERAL ASSISTANCE: Financial assistance provided to applicants in accordance with RSA 165 and these guidelines.

HOUSING:

Emergency Shelter: A temporary or non-permanent and non-tenancy housing which is a temporary housing from a housing provider through which an individual or family may seek emergency housing when no other housing is available.

Non-Permanent Non-Tenancy Housing: Applicant(s) pay for room(s) in Rooming or Boarding House; Hotels, Motels, Inns or Tourist Home or other dwellings which rent for recreational or vacation use. Room(s) in a single- family home with no lease which is the primary and usual residence of the owner. Other occupancies noted as non- tenancy under RSA 540:1, I

Permanent Tenancy Housing: Applicant(s) rent apartment, home or room or real property for the sole purpose of residential and non-transient purposes. Applicants(s) may or may not have lease or contract.

Transitional Housing: A non-permanent and non-tenancy housing which is usually provided by an Assistance Program which can require rules or policies to stay in their housing and programs.

Tenant or Tenancy: Permanent Housing where occupants shall be deemed to rent at will or have a contract or lease in which have protections of eviction as noted in NH RSA chapter 540.

HOUSEHOLD: A household is defined as:

- The applicant/recipient and persons residing with the applicant/recipient in the relationship of father, mother, stepfather, stepmother, son, daughter, husband, wife, or legal domestic partner; and/or
- The applicant/recipient and any adult (including an unrelated person) who resides with the applicant/recipient “in loco parentis” (in the role of a substitute parent) to a minor child (a person under 18 years of age). A person “in loco parentis” is one who intentionally accepts the rights and duties of a natural parent with respect to a child not their own and who has lived with the child long enough to form a “psychological family.”

HUMAN SERVICE DIRECTOR: The Henniker Board of Selectmen's appointed official who performs the function of administering general assistance and has the authority to make all decisions regarding the granting of assistance under RSA 165. A Deputy to the Director of Human Services is the Town Administrator. Town Administrator may temporarily appoint another person in the event the Director of Human Services will be unavailable for an extended time to act in the Director's stead. (Human Service Director also referred to as Welfare Director)

INTAKE ASSESSMENT: The initial in-person interview at which time the potential applicant's situation is reviewed and assessed by a Human Service Director prior to a formal appointment.

MINOR: A person under 18 years of age.

NEED: The basic maintenance and support requirements of an applicant, as determined by a Human Service Director under the standards of Section IX (E) of these guidelines.

RECIPIENT: A person who is receiving general assistance.

RELIEVE AND MAINTAIN: The sustaining of basic needs necessary to the health and welfare of the household.

RESIDENCE: Residence or residency shall mean an applicant's place of abode or domicile. The place of abode or domicile is that place designated by an applicant as their principal place of physical presence for the indefinite future to the exclusion of all others. Such residence or residency shall not be interrupted or lost by a temporary absence from it, if there is intent to return to such residence or residency as the principal place of physical presence. RSA 165:1 (I); 21:6-a.

RESIDENTIAL UNIT: All persons physically residing with the applicant, including persons in the applicant's household that are family or non-family members.

UTILITY: Any service such as electric, gas, oil, water, or sewer necessary to maintain basic health and welfare of the household.

VENDOR/PROVIDER: Any landlord, utility company, store or other business which provides goods or services needed by the applicant/recipient.

VOUCHER SYSTEM: The system whereby a municipality issues vouchers to the recipient's vendors and rather than cash to the recipient. RSA 165:1(III).

WELFARE OFFICER: In Henniker the Welfare Officer, sited in RSA's, is the Henniker Human Service Director.

WORKFARE: Labor performed by welfare recipients at municipal sites or human service agencies as reimbursement for benefits received. RSA 165:31.

II. Severability

If any provision of these guidelines is held at law to be invalid or inapplicable to any person or circumstances, the remaining provisions will continue in full force and effect.

III. Confidentiality of Information

Information given by or about an applicant or recipient of general assistance is confidential and privileged, and is not a public record under the provisions of RSA 91-A. Such information will not be published, released, or discussed with any individual or agency without written permission of the applicant or recipient except when disclosure is required by law, or when necessary to carry out the purposes of RSA 165. RSA 165:2-c.

IV. Roles of Local Governing Body and Human Service Director

The responsibility of the day-to-day administration of the general assistance program should be vested in the appointed Human Service Director. The Human Service Director shall administer the general assistance program in accordance with the written guidelines of the municipality. The local governing body (Board of Selectman) is responsible for the adoption of the guidelines relative to general assistance. RSA 165:1 (II).

V. Maintenance of Records

A. Legal Requirement

The Human Service Director is required by NH RSA 41:46 to keep complete paper and/or electronic records concerning the number of applicants given assistance and the cost for such support. Separate case records shall be established for each individual or family applying for general assistance. The purposes for keeping such records are:

- 1 To provide a valid basis of accounting for expenditure of the municipality's funds.
- 2 To support decisions concerning the applicant's eligibility.
- 3 To assure availability of information if the applicant or recipient seeks administrative or judicial review of the Human Service Director's decision.
- 4 To provide the Human Service Director with accurate statistical information; and
- 5 To provide a complete history of an applicant's needs and assistance that might aid the Human Service Director with ongoing or potential future case management and in referring the applicant to appropriate agencies and other support entities.

B. Case Records

The Human Service Director shall maintain case records containing the following information:

- 1 The complete application including any authorizations signed by the applicant allowing the Human Service official to obtain or verify any pertinent information in the course of assisting the recipient, to include a signed Authorization to Release Information from the New Hampshire Division of Health and Human Services.

2. Written grounds for approval or denial of an application, contained in a Notice of Decision (NOD). Each NOD will list conditions the client(s) must accomplish. Client progress is documented during weekly meetings between Human Service Director and client. NOD - Conditions must be completed before additional financial assistance is given
 - a) A narrative history recording need for assistance, the results of investigations of applicants' circumstances, referrals, changes in status and other relevant communications as determined by the Human Service Director.
 - b) A Client Account Summary, which has complete data concerning the type, amount and dates of assistance given which may be kept on paper or electronically.

VI. Application Process

A. Right to Apply

Anyone may apply for general assistance by appearing in person or through an authorized representative, and by completing a written or electronic application form. The Welfare Official should determine the process by which eligibility determinations shall be made, either by in-person appointments, via telephone or video, or home visits. If more than one adult resides in a household, each may be required to appear at the human service office to apply for assistance, unless one is working at a place of employment or otherwise reasonably unavailable. Unrelated adults in the applicant's residential unit may be required to apply separately if they do not meet the definition of household as defined in these guidelines. Each adult in the household may be requested to sign separate release of information forms.

1. Intake Assessment will be conducted by the Director to any individual requesting assistance. During this intake resources, programs and service will be shared with individuals. The Director will assist client in accessing any resources that can provide assistance. In addition, the client / household will be given a Henniker financial assistance packet and explained the process to apply.
2. The Human Service Director shall not be required to accept an application for general assistance from a recipient who is subject to a suspension pursuant to Section XIII(C) of these guidelines (RSA 165:1-b,VI); provided that any applicant who contests a determination of continuing noncompliance with the guidelines may request a fair hearing as provided in Section XIII(C)(7);

B. Human Service Director's Responsibilities at Time of Application

When application is made for general financial assistance, the HumanService Director shall inform the applicant of:

1. The requirement of submitting a completed application requesting financial

assistance. The Human Service Director shall provide assistance to the applicant in completing the application, if necessary (e.g., applicant is physically or mentally unable or has a language barrier);

2. The application is completed when all required documents, signed forms, and an in-person intake interview.
3. Eligibility requirements, including a general description of the guideline amounts and the eligibility formula.
4. The applicant's right to a fair hearing, and the manner in which a review may be obtained, if sought.
5. The applicant's responsibility for reporting all facts necessary to determine eligibility, and for presenting records and documents as requested and as reasonably available to support statements.
6. The joint responsibility of the Human Service Director and applicant for exploring facts concerning eligibility, needs and potential resources.
7. Verifications needed are listed in the application.
8. An investigation will be conducted in order to verify facts and statements presented by the applicant.
9. The applicant's responsibility to notify the Human Service Director of any change in circumstances that may affect eligibility.
10. Other forms of assistance for which the applicant may be eligible are given to applicant.
11. The requirement of placing a lien on any real property owned by the recipient, or any civil judgments or property settlements, for any assistance given, except for good cause.
12. The statutory requirement of placing a lien on any real property owned by the recipient, or any settlements, for any assistance given, except for good cause. The applicant will be requested to sign a lien document to demonstrate the applicant's knowledge and understanding of the lien. Such document shall be recorded at the Merrimack County Registry of Deeds per RSA 165:28. However, neither the absence of signature of the applicant nor the failure to record such document shall diminish the validity of the lien. The right to also place liens on civil judgments per RSA 165:28a.
13. Reimbursement from the recipient will be sought if he/she becomes able to repay the amount of assistance given.
14. The applicant has the right to review guidelines.
15. The fact that the Child Protection Act requires the Welfare Official or any person who suspects that a child under age 18 has been abused or neglected must report that suspicion immediately to NH DHHS Division of

Children, Youth and Families (DCYF). RSA 169-C:29-31.

16. The fact that the Adult Protection Law requires the Welfare Official or any person who has a reason to believe that a vulnerable adult has been subjected to abuse, neglect, exploitation, or self-neglect to make a report immediately to the NH DHHS Bureau of Elderly & Adult Services (BEAS). RSA 161-F:46.

C. Responsibility of Each Applicant and Recipient

At the time of initial application, and at all times thereafter, the applicant/recipient has the following responsibilities:

1. To provide accurate, complete and current information concerning needs and resources and the whereabouts and circumstances of relatives who may be responsible under RSA 165:19.
2. To notify the Human Service Director promptly when there is a change in needs, resources, address or household size.
3. To apply for immediately, but no later than 10 days from completed application, and accept any benefits or resources, public or private, that will reduce or eliminate the need for imminent or potential future general assistance. RSA 165:1-b, I (d);
4. To keep all appointments as scheduled.
5. If financial assistance is approved, the applicant/co-applicant are required to check-in with Human Service Director as stated in Henniker Notice of Decision (NOD) – Conditions
6. To provide records and other pertinent information and access to said records and information when requested.
7. To provide a verifiable doctor's statement if claiming an inability to work due to medical problems.
8. Following a determination of eligibility for assistance, to diligently search for employment and provide a verification of work search, as determined by the Human Service Director, to accept employment when offered (except for documented reasons of good cause (RSA 165:1-d)), and to maintain such employment. RSA 165:1-b, I (c).
9. Following a determination of eligibility for assistance, to participate in the workfare program (if required) and if physically and mentally able. RSA 165:1-b, I (b).
10. To reimburse assistance granted if returned to an income status and if such reimbursement can be made without financial hardship. RSA 165:20-b.
11. An applicant shall be denied assistance if he/she fails to fulfill any of these

responsibilities without reasonable justification. A recipient's assistance may be terminated or suspended for failure to fulfill any of these responsibilities without reasonable justification, in accordance with Section XIII(C).

12. Any recipient may be denied or terminated from general assistance, in accordance with Section XIII, or may be prosecuted for a criminal offense, if he/she, by means of intentionally false statements or intentional misrepresentation, or by impersonation or other willfully fraudulent act or device, obtains or attempts to obtain any assistance to which he/she is not entitled.

D. Actions on Applications

Director utilizes these Guidelines to determine an applicant's or recipient's eligibility, while ensuring that each applicant/recipient receives due process. Following the submission of a completed application by an applicant or his/her representative, the welfare official shall make a decision concerning the applicant's application eligibility within 5 business days. If the request is determined to be an emergency, Section VI: D (3) Emergency Assistance guideless shall apply.

NOTE: Business hours are generally considered 5 days per week, Monday through Friday during daytime hours. A written Notice of Decision shall be provided on or within two businessday following the making of the decision. The notice of decision shall state that assistance of a specific kind and amounhas been given and the time period of aid, or that the application has been denied, in whole or in part, with reasons for denial.

The Notice of Decision shall contain a first notice of conditions for continued assistance and shall notify the applicant of his/her right to a fair hearing if dissatisfied withthe welfare official's decision. RSA 165:1-b, II, III.

1. **Pending Notice of Decision.** A decision may also be made tosuspend
2. An application subject to receipt of specified information, documentation, or verifications from the applicant within a specific amount of time not to exceed five business days. A Notice of Decision should be provided following the expiration of time on the Pending Notice of Decision.

E. Emergency Assistance

If, at the time of initial contact, the applicant demonstrates and verifies that an immediate need exists, because of which the applicant may suffer a loss of a basic necessity of living and imminent threat to life or health (such as loss of shelter, utilities, heat, or lack of food or life-saving/sustaining prescriptions) and no reasonable alternative can be found, then temporary aid to fill such immediate need shall be given immediately, pending a decision on the application. Such emergency assistance shall not obligate the Human Service Director to provide further assistance

after the application process is completed.

F. Temporary Assistance

In circumstances where required records are not available, the Human Service Director may give temporary limited approval of an application pending receipt of required documents. Temporary status shall not extend beyond two weeks. The Human Service Director shall not insist on documentary verification if such records are totally unavailable.

G. Withdrawn Applications

An application shall be considered withdrawn if:

1. The applicant has refused to complete an application or has refused to make a good faith effort to provide required verifications and sufficient information for the completion of an application. If an application is deemed withdrawn for these reasons, the Human Service Director will consider this case nonactive.
2. The applicant dies before assistance is rendered.
3. The applicant avails him/herself of other resources to meet the need in place of assistance.
4. The applicant requests that the application be withdrawn (preferably in writing); or
5. The applicant does not contact the Human Service Director after the initial interview after being requested to do so.

H. Home Visits

A home visit may be made by appointment at the request of any applicant, but only when it is impossible for the applicant or their representative to apply in person. Home visits or phone or video, intakes can be schedule. The home visit or telephone or video appointment shall be conducted in such a manner as to preserve, to the greatest extent possible, the privacy and dignity of the applicant. The person conducting the visit shall not be in uniform or travel in a law enforcement marked vehicle and shall not knowingly discuss or mention the application within the hearing area of someone who is not a member of the household.

VI. Verification of Information

Any determination or investigation of need or eligibility shall be conducted in a manner that will not violate the privacy or personal dignity of the individual or harass or violate his or her individual rights.

A. Required Verifications

Verification will normally be required of the following:

1. Applicant's address.
2. Facts relevant to the applicant's residence, as set forth in sections IX(B) and X.
3. Names of persons in applicant's residential unit.
4. Applicant's and household's income and assets.
5. Applicant's and households' financial obligations.
6. The physical and mental condition of household members, only where relevant to their receipt of assistance, such as ability to work at a place of employment, determination of needs, or referrals to other forms of assistance.
7. Any special circumstances claimed by applicant.
8. Applicant's employment status and availability in the labor market.
9. Names, addresses, and employment status of potentially liable relatives.
10. Utility costs.
11. Housing costs.
12. Prescription costs; and
13. Any other costs that the applicant wishes to claim as a necessity.

B. Verification Records

Verification may be made through records provided by the applicant (for example, birth and marriage certificates, pay stubs, pay checks, rent receipts, bank statements, relevant police report, etc.) as primary sources. The failure of the applicant to bring such records does not affect the Human Service Director's responsibility to process the application promptly. The Human Service Director shall inform the applicant what records are necessary, and the applicant is required to produce records possessed as soon as possible for application consideration. However, the Human Service Director shall not insist on documentary verification if such records are not available but should ask the applicant to suggest alternative means of verification.

C. Other Sources of Verification

Verification may also be made through other sources, such as relatives, landlords, employers, former employers, banks, school personnel, and social or government agencies. The cashier of a national bank or a treasurer of a savings and trust company is authorized by law to furnish information regarding amounts deposited to the credit of an applicant or recipient. RSA 165:4. Better practice to have any verification of bank deposits only be obtained through a proper release of information form signed by the applicant.

D. Written Consent of Applicant

When information is sought from such other sources, the Human Service Director shall explain to the applicant or recipient what information is desired, how it will be used, and the necessity of obtaining it in order to establish eligibility. The applicant may be required to provide any or all of the written consents set forth in Forms B, D, E, H, I and J. Before contact is made with any other source, the Human Service Director shall obtain written consent of the applicant or recipient. unless the Human Service Director has reasonable grounds to suspect fraud. In the case of suspected fraud, the Human Service Director shall carefully record his/her reasons and actions, and before any accusation or confrontation is made, the applicant shall be given an opportunity to explain or clarify the suspicious circumstances.

E Legally Liable Relatives

The Human Service Director may seek statements from the applicant's legally liable relatives regarding their ability to help support the applicant. RSA 195:19.

F. Refusal to Verify Information

Should the applicant or recipient refuse comment and/or indicate an unwillingness to have the Human Service Director seek further information that is necessary, assistance may be denied for lack of eligibility.

VIII. Disbursements

The town of Henniker provides assistance and payment in form through a voucher system. RSA 165:1 (III). Vouchers are payable directly to the vendors (utilities, landlords, stores, etc.) in accordance with the Town's financial policies. No cash or reimbursement is provided to recipients. RSA 165:1(III) involved. The amount shown on the voucher is the maximum amount to be used for payment.

The amount shown on the voucher is the maximum amount to be used for payment. In accordance with the Town's finance policies, a recipient may be required to sign the voucher to insure proper usage. The vendor returns the voucher with the required documentation, for payment, to the Welfare Official. After the initial transaction, if there is any unspent money, the voucher shall be returned to the Town for payment of the actual amount listed on an itemized bill or register tape. Vouchers altered by the recipient or vendor may not be honored.

IX. Determination of Eligibility and Amount

A Eligibility Formula: An applicant is eligible to receive assistance when:

1. He/she meets the non-financial eligibility factors listed in Section C below; and
2. The applicant's basic welfare maintenance need, as determined under Section E below, exceeds his/her available income (Section F below) plus available liquid assets (Section D below). If available income and available liquid assets exceed the basic maintenance need (as determined by the guideline amounts), the applicant is not eligible for general assistance. If the need exceeds the available

income/assets, the amount of assistance granted to the applicant shall be the difference between the two amounts, in the absence of circumstances deemed by the Human Service Director to justify an exception.

B. Non-Financial Eligibility Factors

1. **Age.** General assistance cannot be denied any applicant because of the applicant's age; age is not a factor in determining whether or not an applicant may receive general assistance. Minor children are assumed to be the responsibility of their parent(s) or legal guardian(s), unless circumstances warrant otherwise
2. **Support Actions.** No applicant or recipient shall be compelled, as a condition of eligibility or continued receipt of assistance, to take any legal action against any other person. The municipality may pursue recovery against legally liable persons or governmental units. See Section XVI.
3. **Eligibility for Other Categorical Assistance.** Recipients who are, or may be, eligible for any other form of public assistance must apply for such assistance immediately, but no later than ten (10) days after being advised to do so by the Human Service Director. Failure to do so may render the recipient ineligible for assistance and subject to action pursuant to Section XIII of these guidelines.
4. **Employment.** An applicant who is gainfully employed, but whose income and assets are not sufficient to meet basic necessary household expenses, may be eligible to receive general assistance. However, recipients who without good cause refuse a job offer or referral to suitable employment, participation in the workfare program, or who voluntarily leave a job without good cause may be ineligible for continuing general assistance in accordance with the procedures for suspension outlined in the guidelines. The Human Service Director shall first determine whether there is good cause for such refusal, taking into account the ability and physical and mental capacity of the applicant, available transportation, working conditions that might involve unreasonable risks to health or safety, availability of safe and reasonable childcare, or any other factors that might make refusing a job reasonable considering the financial situation of the household. Employment requirements shall extend to all adult members of the household.
5. **Registration with the New Hampshire Department of Employment Security (NHES) and Employment Search Requirements.** All unemployed recipients and adult members of their households shall, within ten days after completing an intake or after having been granted assistance, register with NHES to attain employment and must conduct a reasonable, verifiable job search as determined by the Human Service Director. Each recipient must apply for employment to each employer to whom he/she is referred

by the Human Service official. These employment search requirements apply unless the recipient and each other adult member of the household is:

- a. Gainfully employed full-time and permanent employment status;
 - b. A dependent 18 or under who is regularly attending secondary school;
 - c. Unable to work at a place of employment due to illness or mental or physical disability of him/herself or another member of the household, as verified by the Human Service Director; or
 - d. Solely responsible for the care of a child under the age of one. A recipient responsible for the care of a child aged one to twelve shall not be excused from employment search requirements but shall be deemed to have good cause to refuse a job requiring employment during hours the child is not usually in school, if there is no reasonably responsible person available to provide care, and it is verified by the Human Service Director that no other care is available.
 - e. The Human Service Director shall give all reasonably necessary assistance to ensure compliance with registration and employment requirements, including resume the granting of allowances for transportation and clothes for employment as part of an allowable budget expense. The Human Service Director will discuss job search techniques, resume writing and strategies for attaining employment. Failure of a recipient to comply with these requirements (NOD - Conditions) without good cause will be reason for denial of assistance.
6. **Students.** Applicants who are post-secondary school students with unreasonable employment availability limitations or refusing to seek full-time employment are not eligible for general assistance.
7. **Non-Citizens.** The Human Service Director may, in his/her sole discretion, provide limited emergency life-safety need assistance to non-citizens not otherwise eligible for general assistance.
- a. A non-citizen who is not:
 1. A qualified alien under 8 USCA 1641,
 2. A non-immigrant under the federal Immigration and Nationality Act, or
 3. An alien paroled into the United States for less than one year under 8 USCA 1182(d)(5) is not eligible for general assistance from the municipality. 8 USCA 1621(a).
 - b. Qualified aliens include aliens who are lawfully admitted for permanent residence under the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 USCA 1101 et seq.), aliens who are granted asylum under that act,

certain refugees, and certain battered aliens. 8 USCA 1641.

- c. A non-citizen who is not eligible for general assistance may be eligible for state assistance with health care items and services that are necessary for the treatment of an emergency medical condition, which is defined as a medical condition (including emergency labor and delivery) manifesting itself by acute symptoms of sufficient severity (including severe pain) such that the absence of immediate medical attention could reasonably be expected to result in:
 - Placing the patient's health in serious jeopardy;
 - Serious impairment to bodily functions; or
 - Serious dysfunction of any bodily organ or part. 8 USCA 1621(b) and 42 USCA 1396(v)(3).
 - d. A non-citizen may also be eligible for general assistance for treatment of an emergency medical condition, pursuant to Section IX (E)(8)(a) of these guidelines.
 - e. Non-citizen applicants for general assistance may be required to provide proof of eligibility. 8 USCA 1625.
8. **Property Transfers.** No applicant who is otherwise eligible shall receive such assistance if he/she has made an assignment, transfer, or conveyance of property for the purpose of rendering him/herself eligible for assistance within three years immediately preceding his/her application. RSA 165:2-b.
9. **Employment of Household Members.** The employment requirements of these guidelines, or participation in the workfare program, shall be required for all adults aged 18 to 65 years residing in the same household, except those regularly attending secondary school or employed on a full-time basis, who are:
- a. Members of the recipient's household.
 - b. Legally liable to contribute to the support of the recipient and/or children of the household; and not prevented from maintaining employment and contributing to the support of the household by reason of physical or mental disability or other justifiable cause as verified by the welfare official.
 - c. The Human Service Office may waive this requirement where failure of the other household members to comply is not the fault of the recipient and the welfare official decides it would be unreasonable for the recipient to establish a separate household. RSA 165:32.
10. **Disqualification for Voluntary Termination of Employment.** Any applicant eligible for assistance who voluntarily terminated employment shall be ineligible to receive assistance for ninety (90) days from the date of employment termination, provided the applicant:

- a. Has received local welfare within the past 365 days; and
- b. Has been given notice that voluntary termination of employment without good cause could result in disqualification; and
- c. Has terminated employment of at least 20 hours per week without good cause within 60 days of an application for local welfare; and
- d. Is not responsible for supporting minor children in his/her household, and
- e. Did not have a verifiable mental or physical impairment, which caused an inability to maintain employment.

Good cause for terminating employment shall include any of the following: discrimination, unreasonable work employment demands or unsuitable employment, retirement, leaving a job in order to accept a bona-fide job offer, migrant farm labor or seasonal construction, and lack of transportation or childcare. An applicant shall be considered to have voluntarily terminated employment if the applicant fails to report for employment without good cause. An applicant who is fired or resigns from a job at the request of the employer due to applicant's inability to maintain the employer's normal work productivity standard shall not be considered to have voluntarily terminated employment. RSA 165:1-d.

C Available Assets

1. **Available Liquid Assets.** Cash on hand, bank deposits, credit union accounts, securities, and retirement plans (i.e., IRA's, deferred compensation, Keogh's, etc.) are available liquid assets. Insurance policies with a loan value, and non-essential personal property, may be considered as available liquid assets when they have been converted into cash. The Human Service Director shall allow a reasonable time for such conversion. However, tools of a trade, livestock and farm equipment, and necessary and ordinary household goods are essential items of personal property which shall not be considered as available assets.
2. **Automobile Ownership.** The ownership of one automobile by an applicant / recipient or his/her dependent does not affect eligibility if it is essential for transportation to seek or maintain employment, to procure medical services or rehabilitation services, or if its use is essential to the maintenance of the individual or the family.
3. **Insurance.** The ownership of insurance policies does not affect eligibility. However, when a policy has cash or loan value, the recipient will be required to obtain and/or borrow all available funds, which shall then be considered available liquid assets.
4. **Real Estate.** The type and amount of real estate owned by an applicant

does not affect eligibility, although rent or other such income from property shall be considered as available to meet need. Applicants owning real estate property, other than that occupied as their primary residence, shall be expected to make reasonable efforts to dispose of it at fair market value. Applicants shall be informed that a lien covering the amount of any general assistance they receive shall be placed against any real estate they own. RSA 165:28.

D. Standard of Need

The basic financial requirement for general assistance is that an applicant be poor and unable to support him/herself. An applicant shall be considered poor when he/she has insufficient available income/assets and available resources to purchase or obtain either for him/her or dependents any of the following:

- 1. Payment Levels for Allowable Expenses.** When adopting these guidelines, the municipal governing body shall establish payment levels for various allowable expenses which shall be based on actual local market conditions and costs. The payment levels shall be reviewed by the Human Service Director annually and modifications presented to the municipal governing body where market conditions have changed. RSA 165: II. The payment levels established as part of these guidelines are set forth in Appendix A.
- 2. Housing.** The amount to be included as “need” for housing is the actual cost of rent or mortgage necessary to provide shelter or housing in that municipality.
 - a. Permanent Tenancy Housing Arrearages.** Housing arrearages will be included in the “need” formula if, and only if, such payment is necessary to prevent eviction or foreclosure or to protect the health and safety of the household. However, if the amount of such mortgage or rental arrearage substantially exceeds the cost of alternative, available housing which complies with local health and housing code standards, or if the payment of arrears will not prevent eviction or foreclosure, the Human Service Director may instead authorize payment of security deposit, rent, and/or reasonable relocation expenses for such alternative housing if, under the circumstances of the case, it is reasonable to do so and would not cause undue hardship to the applicant household. Alternative housing may include transitional housing as an option. It is not the responsibility of the Municipal Human Service Department to locate permanent housing.
 - b. Security Deposits.** Security deposits may be included in the ‘need’ formula if, and only if, the applicant is unable to secure alternative housing or shelter for which no security deposit is required or is unable to secure funds, either him/herself or from alternative sources, for payment of the deposit. Any security deposit provided by the general

assistance program which is returned under RSA 540-A:7 shall be returned to the municipality, not the recipient.

c. **Relative Landlords.** Whenever a relative of an applicant is also the landlord for the applicant, a financial analysis shall be made in accordance with RSA 165:19

d. **Emergency Shelter:** In cases in which the municipality has made an appropriate referral for emergency, temporary shelter and the applicant refuses to accept such a referral, or if the applicant does not abide by

the rules of the emergency housing/shelter, the Human Service Director may suspend the applicant by refusing to pay for alternative emergency shelter but may not suspend the applicant by denying other forms of assistance to which he/she is otherwise entitled. The applicant must accept the least costly alternative for emergency housing assistance that is deemed suitable by the Human Service Director for applicant's household.

3. **Utilities.** When utility costs are not included in the shelter expense, the most recent outstanding monthly utility bill will be included as part of "need" by the welfare official. Arrearages will not normally be included in "need" except as set forth below. NOTE: The New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission (PUC) has established comprehensive rules governing the provision of some utility services.

a. **Arrearages.** Arrearages will not be included except when necessary to ensure the health and safety of the applicant household or to prevent termination of utility service where no other resources or referrals can be utilized. In accordance with the rules of the PUC relating to electric utilities, arrearages for electric service need not be paid if the Human Services Director notifies the electric company that the municipality guarantees payment of average electric bills as long as the recipient remains eligible for general assistance.

b. **Restoration of Services.** When utility service has been terminated and the Human Services Director has determined included in "need" when restoration of that alternative utility service is not available and alternative shelter is not feasible, arrearages will be necessary to ensure the health and safety of the applicant household. The Human Services Director may negotiate with the utility for payment of less than the full amount of the arrears and/or may attempt to arrange a repayment plan to obtain restoration of service.

c. When electric service has been terminated and restoration is required, arrearages may either be included as set forth in the above paragraph or may be paid in accordance with a reasonable payment plan entered into by the applicant and the electric company. The Human Services

Director may hold the recipient accountable for the payment arrangement for as long as the recipient continues to request general assistance on a regular basis. Payment of a payment plan may be a required element of a notice of decision or case plan.

- d. **Deposits.** Utility security deposits will be considered as “need” if, and only if, the applicant is unable to secure funds for the payment of the deposit and is unable to secure utility service without a deposit. Such deposits shall, however, be the property of the municipality.
4. **Food.** The Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) amount included as “need” for food purchases will be in accordance with the most recent standard allotment, as determined under the Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program administered by the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services. An amount in excess of the standard food allotment may be granted if one or more members of the household requires a special diet, as verified by the Human Service Director, the documented cost of which is greater than can be purchased with the family’s allotment for food. Food vouchers may not be used for alcohol, tobacco or pet food. Referrals to food pantries and food kitchens/meal centers may be given to meet applicant’s basic emergency food and personal hygiene needs.
5. **Household Maintenance Allowance.** Applicants may include, in calculating “need” for an allowable budget, the cost of providing basic personal and household necessities determined by the Human Service Director and used consistently for individuals and families. Need allowance for diapers shall be calculated based on usage.
6. **Telephone.** If the absence of a telephone would create an unreasonable risk to the applicant’s health or safety as verified by the Human Service Director, or for other good cause as determined by the Human Service Director, the lowest available basic monthly rate will be budgeted as “need.” While payments will not be made for telephone bills, under exceptional circumstances where no other source of assistance is available payments may be made to maintain basic telephone service.
7. **Transportation.** If the Human Service Director determines that transportation is necessary (e.g., for health or medical reasons, to maintain employment, or to comply with conditions of assistance) “need” should include the costs of public transportation, where available. If, and only if, the transportation need cannot be reasonably provided by cost effective alternative means, such as public transportation or volunteer drivers, a reasonable amount for car payments and gasoline should be included as part of “need” when determining eligibility or amount of aid.
8. **Maintenance of Medical Insurance.** In the event that the Human Service

Director determines that the self-maintenance of medical insurance is essential, an applicant may include as “need” the reasonable cost of such premiums, especially in the event that insurance payments are less than the cost of prescriptions.

9. Emergency and Other Expenses. In the event that the applicant has the following current expenses, the actual cost shall be included as emergency and other expenses to determine eligibility and amount of assistance:

- a. Medical Expenses.** The Human Service Director shall not consider including amounts for medical, dental or eye services unless the applicant can verify that all other potential sources have been investigated and that there is no source of assistance other than local Human Service office. Other sources to be considered shall include state and federal programs, local and area clinics, area service organizations and area hospital indigent programs designed for such needs. The Human Service Director will assist clients in applying for these other financial resources. When an applicant requests non-hospital related medical service, life- saving/sustaining prescriptions, including dental service to treat infection or eye service, the local Human Service Director may require verification from a doctor, dentist or person licensed to practice optometry in the area, indicating that these services are absolutely necessary and cannot be postponed without creating a significant risk that the applicant’s health will be placed in serious jeopardy.
- b. Legal Expenses.** Except for those specifically required by statute, no legal expenses, including fines/citations will be included.
- c. Clothing.** If the applicant has an emergency clothing need which cannot be met in a timely fashion by other community resources (i.e.: Salvation Army, Red Cross, church group), the expense of reasonably meeting that emergency clothing need will be included in an allowable budget.

10. Unusual Needs Not Otherwise Provided for in These Guidelines. If the Human Service Director determines that the strict application of the standard of need criteria will result in unnecessary or undue hardship (e.g., needed services are inaccessible to the applicant), such official may make minor adjustments in the criteria, or may make allowances using the emergency need standards stated in Section VI(D)(2) of these guidelines. Any such determination and the reasons, therefore, shall be stated in writing in the applicant’s case record.

11. Shared Expenses. If the applicant/recipient household shares shelter, utility, or other expenses with a non- applicant/recipient (i.e.: is part of a residential unit), then need should be determined on a pro rata share, based on number of adults in the residential unit (e.g.: three adults in residential unit, but only one applies for assistance—shelter need is 1/3 of

shelter allowance for household of three adults).

E Income

In determining eligibility and the amount of assistance, the standard of need shall be compared to the available income/assets. Computation of income and expenses will be by the week or month. The following items will be included in the computation:

- 1. Earned Income.** Income in cash or in-kind earned by the applicant or any member of the household through wages, salary, commissions, or profit, whether self-employed or as an employee, is to be included as income. Rental income and profits from items sold are considered earned income. With respect to self-employment, total profit is arrived at by subtracting business expenses from gross income in accordance with standard accounting principles. When income consists of wages, the amount computed should be that available after income taxes, social security and other payroll deductions required by state, federal, or local law, court ordered support payments and childcare costs, and employment related clothing costs have been deducted from income. Wages that are trusteed, or income similarly unavailable to the applicant or applicant's dependents, should not be included.
- 2. Income or Support from Other Persons.** Contributions from relatives or other household members shall be considered as income only if available and received by the applicant or recipient. The income of non-household members of the applicant's residential unit shall not be counted as income. (Expenses shared with non-household members may affect the level of need, however. See Section IX (E) (10) regarding determination of need in cases of non-household residential units.)
- 3. Income from Other Assistance or Social Insurance Programs.**
 - a. State categorical assistance benefits, OASDI payments, Social Security Payments, VA benefits, unemployment insurance benefits, and payment from other government sources shall be considered income.
 - b. Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) allotments cannot be counted as income pursuant to federal law. (7 USC 2017(b))
 - c. Low Income Heating and Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) (Also known as Fuel assistance) cannot be counted as income pursuant to federal law. 42 USC 8624(f)(1).
- 4. Court-Ordered Support Payments.** Alimony and child support payments shall be considered income only if received by the applicant or recipient.
- 5. Income from Other Sources.** Payment from pension, trust funds, and similar programs shall be considered income.
- 6. Earnings of a Child.** No inquiry shall be made into the earnings of a child 14

years of age or less unless that child makes a regular and substantial contribution to the family.

7. Option to Treat a Qualified State Assistance Reduction as Deemed Income.

The Human Service Director may deem as income all or any portion of any qualified state assistance reduction pursuant to RSA 167:82, VIII. The following criteria shall apply to any action to deem income under this section. RSA165:1-e

- a. The authority to deem income under this section shall terminate when the Qualified State Assistance Reduction no longer is in effect.
- b. Applicants for general assistance may be required to cooperate in obtaining information from the Department of Health and Human Services as to the existence and amount of any Qualified State Assistance Reduction. No applicant for general assistance may be considered to be subject to a Qualified State Assistance Reduction unless the existence and amount has been confirmed by the Department of Health and Human Services.
- c. The Human Service Director shall provide the applicant with a written decision which sets forth the amount of any deemed income used to determine eligibility for general assistance.
- d. Whenever necessary to prevent an immediate threat to the health and safety of children in the household, the Human Service Director shall waive that portion, if any, of the Qualified State Assistance Reduction as necessary.

F. Residents of Shelters for Victims of Domestic Violence

An applicant residing in a shelter for victims of domestic violence and their children who has income and owns resources jointly with the abusive member of the applicant's household, shall be required to cooperate with the normal procedures for purposes of verification. Such resources and income may be excluded from eligibility determinations unless the applicant has safe access to joint resources at the time of application. The verification process may be completed through an authorized representative of the shelter of residence. The normal procedures taken in accordance with these guidelines to recover assistance granted shall not delay such assistance.

X. Non-Residents

A. Eligibility

Applicants who are temporarily in a municipality which is not their municipality of residence and who do not intend to make a residence there are nonetheless eligible to receive general assistance, provided they are poor and unable to support themselves. RSA 165:1-c. No applicant shall be refused assistance solely on the basis of residence. RSA 165:1. The applicant's residence, prior to the temporary relocation, may be contacted if it is learned the temporary relocation was caused,

in part, by the municipal welfare departments unavailability or unwillingness to assist with the emergency situation. The applicant may be assisted with a referral to the former municipality if time, available transportation, and type of emergency, makes it reasonable to do so.

B. Standards

The application procedure, eligibility standards and standard of need shall be the same for nonresidents as for residents.

C. Verification

Verification records shall not be considered unavailable. The applicant's responsibility for providing such records even if they are located in the applicant's municipality of residence.

D. Temporary or Emergency Aid

The standards for the fulfilling of immediate or emergency needs of nonresidents and for temporary assistance pending final decision shall be the same as for residents, as set forth in Section VI (D)(2) and X (A.).

E. Determination of Residence

Determination of residence shall be made if the applicant requests return home transportation (See paragraph F below), or if the Human Service Director has reason to believe the applicant is a resident of another New Hampshire municipality from which recovery can be made under RSA 165:20.

Minors. The residence of a minor applicant shall be presumed to be the residence of his/her custodial parent or guardian.

Adults. For competent adults, the standard for determining residence shall be the overall intent of the applicant, as set forth in the Section I definition of "residence." The statement of an applicant over 18 as to his/her residence or intent to establish residence shall be accepted in the absence of strongly inconsistent evidence or behavior.

F. Return Home Transportation Request

At the request of a nonresident applicant, any aid, temporary or otherwise, to which he/she would be otherwise entitled under the standards set forth in these guidelines, may be used at the Human Service Director's discretion to cause the applicant to be returned to his/her municipality of residence. RSA 165:1-c.

G. Recovery

Any aid given to a nonresident, including the costs of return home transportation, may be recovered from his/her municipality of residence using the procedures of Section XVI (B).

XI. Municipal Work Programs

A. Participation

Any recipient of general assistance who is able and not gainfully employed may be required to work for the municipality or an appropriate local human service agency at any available bona fide job that is within his/her capacity for the purpose of reimbursement of benefits received. (RSA 165:31) Participants in the workfare program are not considered employees of the municipality, and any work performed by workfare participants does not give rise to any employee-employer relationship between the recipient/workfare participant and the municipality.

B. Reimbursement Rate

The workfare participant shall be allotted the prevailing municipal wage for work performed, but in no case less than the minimum wage. No cash compensation shall be paid for workfare participation; the wage value of all hours worked shall be used to reimburse the municipality for assistance given. No workfare participant shall be required to work more hours than necessary to reimburse aid rendered.

C. Continuing Financial Liability

If, due to lack of available municipal work or other good cause, a recipient does not work a sufficient number of hours to fully reimburse the municipality for the amount of his/her aid, the amount of aid received less the value of workfare hours completed shall still be owed to the municipality.

D. Allowance for Employment Search

The municipality shall provide reasonable time during working hours for the workfare participant to conduct a documented and verifiable employment search.

E. Workfare Program Attendance

With prior notice to the Human Service Director, a recipient may be excused from workfare participation if he/she:

1. Has a conflicting job interview;
2. Has a conflicting interview at a social service agency;
3. Has a medical appointment or illness;
4. As a parent or person "in loco parentis," must care for a child under the age of five. A recipient responsible for a child age five but under 12 shall not be required to participate in workfare during hours the child is not in school, if there is no responsible person available to provide care, and no other care is available;
5. Is unable to participate in workfare due to mental or physical disability, as verified by the Human Service Director;
6. Must remain at home because of illness or disability to another member of the household, as verified by the Human Service Director; or
7. Does not possess the materials or tools required to perform the task and the municipality fails to provide them.

8. The workfare participant should attempt to schedule appointments so as not to conflict with the workfare program and must notify his/her supervisor in advance of the appointment. The Human Service Director may require participants to provide documentation of their attendance at a conflicting interview or appointment.

F. Workfare Hours

Workfare hours are subject to approval of the supervisor and the Human Service Director. Failure of the participant to adhere to the agreed workfare hours (except for the reasons listed above) will prompt review of the recipient's eligibility for general assistance and may result in a suspension or termination of assistance. See Section XIII (C)(2)(b).

G. Workers Compensation

The municipality shall provide workers compensation coverage to participants in workfare programs in the same manner such coverage is provided to other municipal employees, RSA 281-A: 2, VII (b).

XII. Burials & Cremations

The Human Service Director shall provide for burial or cremation of eligible persons found in the Town of Henniker at time of death. In such cases, assistance may be applied for on behalf of the deceased person, however the application should be made before any burial or cremation expenses are incurred. The expense may be recovered from the deceased person's municipality of residence, or from a liable relative pursuant to RSA 165:3, II. If the Human Service Director verifies relatives, other private persons, the state or other sources are unable to cover the entire burial/cremation expense, the municipality will pay up to \$650.00 for burial/cremation. The Town will not pay burial and/or cremation benefits in the instance of passé funeral charges. The request should be made prior to the burial and/or cremation, in a timely manner, immediately following the time of death. The total burial/funeral expense is not to exceed \$2,000.00. RSA 165:3 and RSA 165:1-b; see also RSA 165:27 and 165:27-a.

Unclaimed Body. If a dead body is unidentified or unclaimed for a period of not less than 48 hours following completion of the death investigation, the medical examiner shall release the body to the overseer of public welfare in the town or, in the case of an unincorporated place, to a county commissioner, who shall decently bury or cremate the body, or, with the consent of the commissioners or the overseer, it may be sent to the medical department of a medical school or university, to be used for the advancement of the science of anatomy and surgery, as provided for by law **611-B: 25**. The Human Service Director shall coordinate burial/cremation arrangements with a funeral and/or cremation service establishment.

XIII. Right to Notice of Adverse Action

A. Right to a Written Decision

All persons have a constitutional right to be free of unfair, arbitrary or unreasonable action taken by government. This includes applicants for and recipients of general assistance, whose aid has been denied, terminated or reduced. Every applicant and recipient shall be given a written notice of every decision regarding assistance (See Section VI (D) for notice where application is granted.) The Human Service Director will make every effort to ensure that the applicant understands the decision.

B. Action Taken for Reasons Other Than Noncompliance with the Guidelines

1. Whenever a decision is made to deny assistance or to refuse to grant the full amount of assistance requested, a notice of the decision shall be given or mailed to the applicant either the same day or next business/workday following the making of the decision or within seven business/working days from the time the application is completed and submitted, whichever occurs first.
2. In any case where the Human Service Director decides to terminate or reduce assistance for reasons other than noncompliance with the guidelines, the official shall send notice at least seven days in advance of the effective date of the decision to the recipient stating the intended action.
3. The notice required by paragraphs 1 and 2 above shall contain:
 - a. A clear statement of the reasons for the denial or proposed termination or reduction.
 - b. A statement advising the recipient of his/her right to a fair hearing and that any request for a fair hearing must be made in writing within five business/working days.
 - c. A form on which the recipient may request a fair hearing, if such a hearing is sought.
 - d. A statement advising the recipient of the time limits which must be met in order to receive a fair hearing.
 - e. A statement that assistance may continue, if there was initial eligibility, until the date of hearing, if requested by the claimant and aid could be revoked or must be repaid if the claimant fails to prevail at the hearing.

C. Suspension for Noncompliance with the Guidelines

1. **Due Process.** Recipients must comply with these guidelines and the reasonable requests of Human Service Director. Human Service Director must enforce the guidelines while ensuring that all recipients and applicants receive due process. Recipients should be given reasonable notice of the conditions and requirements of eligibility and continuing eligibility and notice that noncompliance may result in termination or suspension.

2. **Conditions.** Any applicant/recipient otherwise eligible for assistance shall become ineligible under RSA 165:1-b if he/she willfully and without good cause fails to comply with the requirements of these guidelines relating to the obligation to:
 - a. Disclose and provide verification of income, resources or other material financial data, as set out in Sections VI(C) and VII of these guidelines, including any changes in this information.
 - b. Participate in the workfare program under Section VI(C), to the extent assigned by the Human Service Director.
 - c. Comply with the employment search requirements imposed by the Human Service Director under Section VI(C): as determined by the Human Service Director; and
 - d. Within 10 days, apply for other public assistance, as required by the Human Service Director under Section VI(C).
3. **First Notice.** No recipient otherwise eligible shall be suspended for noncompliance with conditions unless he/she has been given a written notice of the actions required in order to remain eligible and a seven-day period within which to comply. The first notice should be given at the time of the notice of decision and thereafter as conditions change. Additional notice of actions required should also be given, as eligibility is re-determined, but without an additional ten-day period unless new actions are required. RSA 165:1-b, II.
4. **Noncompliance.**
 - a. If a recipient willfully and without good cause fails to come into compliance during the ten-day period, or willfully falls into noncompliance within 30 days from receipt of a first notice, the Human Service Director shall give the recipient a suspension notice, as set forth in paragraph 5.
 - b. If a recipient falls into noncompliance for the first time more than 30 days after receipt of a first notice, the Human Service Director shall give the recipient a new first notice with a new ten-day period to comply before giving the recipient the suspension notice. RSA 165:1-b, III.
5. **Suspension Notice.** Written notice to a recipient that he/she is suspended from assistance due to failure to comply with the conditions required in a first notice shall include:
 - a. The section(s) of the guidelines with which the recipient is not in compliance and a description of those actions necessary for compliance.
 - b. The period of suspension (See paragraph 6 below).
 - c. Notice of the right to a fair hearing on the issue of willful noncompliance and that such request must be made in writing within five days of receipt of the suspension notice.

- d. A statement that assistance may continue in accordance with the prior eligibility determination until the fair hearing decision is made if the recipient so requests on the request form for the fair hearing, however, if the recipient fails to prevail at the hearing: 1) the suspension will start after the decision, and 2) such aid must be repaid by the recipient; and
 - e. A form on which the individual may request a fair hearing and the continuance of assistance pending the outcome.
- 6. Suspension Period.** The suspension period for failure to comply with these guidelines shall last:
- a. Either seven days, or 14 days if the recipient has had a prior suspension which ended within the past six months, and
 - b. Until the recipient complies with the guidelines if the recipient, upon the expiration of the seven or 14-day suspension period, continues to fail to carry out the specific actions set forth in the notice.
 - c. Notwithstanding paragraph C(6)(b) above, a recipient who has been suspended for continued noncompliance for at least six months may file a new application for assistance without coming back into compliance.
- 7. Fair Hearing on Continuing Noncompliance.** A recipient who has been suspended until he/she complies with the guidelines may request a fair hearing to resolve a dispute over whether or not he/she has satisfactorily complied with the required guidelines, however no assistance shall be available under paragraph C (5)(d) above.
- 8. Compliance After Suspension.** A recipient who has been subject to a suspension and who has come back into compliance shall have his/her assistance resumed, provided he/she is still otherwise eligible. The notice of decision stating that assistance has been resumed should again set forth the actions required to remain eligible for assistance but need not provide a seven-day period for compliance unless new conditions have been imposed.
- 9. Misrepresentation.** Misrepresentation of information by a client is grounds for denial and suspension of Town assistance and may result in prosecution for the crimes, including Unsworn Falsification RSA 641:3, Theft by Deception 637:4 and /or Identity Fraud RSA 638:27.

The Human Service Director is not required to accept applications for assistance during a period of suspension.

XIV. Fair Hearings

A. Requests

A request for a fair hearing is a written expression, by the applicant or recipient,

or any person acting for him/her, to the effect that he/she wants an opportunity to present his/her case to a higher authority. When a request for assistance is denied or when an applicant desires to challenge a decision made by the Human Service Director relative to the receipt of assistance, the applicant must present a request for a fair hearing to the Human Service Director within five (5) business/working days of receipt of the notice of decision at issue. RSA 165:1-b, III.

B. Time Limits for Hearings

Hearings requested by claimants must be held within seven (10) business/working days of the receipt of the request. The Human Service Director shall give notice to the claimant setting the time and location of the hearing. This notice must be given to the claimant at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the hearing or mailed to the claimant at least seventy-two (72) hours in advance of the hearing.

C. The Fair Hearing Officer(s)

The fair hearing officer or officers may be chosen by the town Administrator. The person(s) serving as the fair hearing authority must:

1. Not have participated in the decision causing dissatisfaction;
2. Be impartial;
3. Be sufficiently skilled in interviewing to be able to obtain evidence and facts necessary for a fair determination; and
4. Be capable of evaluating all evidence fairly and realistically, to explain to the claimant the laws and regulations under which the Director operated, and to interpret to the Director any evidence of unsound, unclear or inequitable policies, practices or action.

D. Requests for Postponements

A claimant who has verifiable good cause to request a postponement of a scheduled Fair Hearing shall contact the Human Service Director at the earliest possible time prior to the Fair Hearing. Upon receiving documentation deemed by the Human Service Director to be verifiable good cause, the Fair Hearing will be rescheduled at the earliest available date. A claimant shall provide documentation of such verifiable emergency circumstances to the Human Service Director within three (3) business/working days of the date that the request for postponement has been made. Claimants are entitled to only one (1) such postponement per Fair Hearing request.

Verifiable Good Cause: The claimant shall include, but not be limited to, a verified medical emergency, or other verified unforeseen emergency circumstances, which precludes the claimant from attending the Fair Hearing.

E. Fair Hearing Procedures

1. All fair hearings shall be conducted in such a manner as to ensure due process of law. Fair hearings shall not be conducted according to strict

rules of evidence. The burden of proof shall be on the claimant, who shall be required to establish his/her case by a preponderance of the evidence.

2. The Human Service Director responsible for the disputed decision shall attend the hearing and testify about his/her actions and the reasons, therefore.
3. Both parties shall be given the opportunity to offer evidence and explain their positions as fully and completely as they wish. The claimant shall have the opportunity to present his/her own case or, at the claimant's option, with the aid of others, and to bring witnesses, to establish all pertinent facts, to advance any arguments without undue interference, to question or refute testimony or evidence, including the opportunity to confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses.
4. A claimant or his/her duly authorized representative has the right to examine, prior to a fair hearing, all records, papers and documents from the claimant's case file which either party may wish to introduce at the fair hearing, as well as any available documents not contained in the case file but relevant to the Human Service Director's action of which the claimant complains. The claimant may introduce any such documents, papers or records into evidence. No record, paper or document, which the claimant has requested to review but has not been allowed to examine prior to the hearing, shall be introduced at the hearing or become part of the record.
5. The Human Service Director (or a duly authorized representative) shall have the right to examine at the fair hearing all documents on which the claimant plans to rely at the fair hearing and may request a 24-hour continuance if such documents contain evidence not previously provided or disclosed by the claimant. Should the applicant have new documentation relevant to the disputed decision, he/she may reapply for assistance and file a written withdrawal of the fair hearing request.
6. The decision of the fair hearing officer(s) must be based solely on the record, these guidelines. Evidence, both written and oral, which is admitted at the hearing shall be the sole contents of the record. The fair hearing officer shall not review the case record or other materials prior to introduction at the hearing.
7. The parties may stipulate to any facts.
8. All fair hearings may be electronically recorded and retained for six(6) months.

F. Decisions

1. Fair hearing decisions shall be rendered within ten (10) business days of the hearing. Decisions shall be in writing setting forth the reasons for

decision and the facts on which the fair hearing officer relied in reaching the decision. A copy of the decision shall be mailed or delivered to the claimant and to the Human Service Director.

2. Fair hearing decisions will be rendered based on the officer's findings of fact, these guidelines and state and federal law. The fair hearing decision shall set forth appropriate relief.
3. The decision shall be dated. In the case of a hearing to review a denial of aid, the decision is retroactive to the date of the action being appealed. If a claimant fails to prevail at the hearing, the assistance given pending the hearing shall be a debt owed by the individual to the municipality.
4. The Human Service Director shall keep all fair hearing decisions on file in chronological order.
5. None of the procedures specified herein shall limit any right of the applicant or recipient to subsequent court action to review or challenge the adverse decision.

XV. Liens

A. Real Estate - RSA 165:28

The law requires the municipality to place a lien for financial assistance / welfare aid received on any real estate owned by an assisted person in all cases except for just cause. (This section does not authorize the placement of a lien on the real estate of legally

liable relatives, as defined by RSA 165:19.) The Selectman shall file a Notice of Lien with the County Registry of Deeds, complete with the owner's name and a description of the property sufficient to identify it. Interest at the rate of 6% per year shall be charged on the amount of money constituting the lien commencing one year after the date the lien is filed, unless waived by the municipality. The lien remains in effect until enforced or released or until the amount of the lien is repaid to the municipality. The lien shall not be enforced so long as the real estate is occupied as the sole residence of the assisted person, his/her surviving spouse, or his/her surviving children who are under age 18 or blind or permanently and totally disabled. At such time as the lien may become enforceable, the Financial Director shall attempt to contact the attorney managing the real estate or estate before enforcing the lien. Upon repayment of a lien, the municipality must file written notice of the discharge of the lien with the County Registry of Deeds. RSA 165:28.

B. Civil Judgments – RSA165:28-a.

1. A municipality shall be entitled to a lien upon property passing under the terms of a will or by in estate succession, a property settlement, or a civil judgment for personal injuries (except Workers Compensation) awarded any person granted assistance by the municipality for the amount of assistance granted by the municipality.

2. The municipality shall be entitled to the lien only if the assistance was granted no more than 6 years before the receipt of the inheritance or the award of the property settlement or civil judgment. When the Finance Department becomes aware of such a claim against a civil judgment, he/she shall contact the attorney representing the recipient.
3. This lien shall take precedence over all other claims.

XVI. Recovery of Assistance

The Human Service Director shall seek to recover money expended to assist eligible applicants. There shall be no delay, refusal to assist, reduction or termination of assistance while the Human Service Director is pursuing the procedural or statutory avenues to secure reimbursement. Any legal action to recover must be filed in a court within six (6) years after the expenditure. RSA 165:25.

A. Recovery from Responsible Relatives

The amount of money spent by a municipality to assist a recipient who has a father, mother, stepfather, stepmother, husband, wife, or child (who is no longer a minor) of sufficient ability to also support the recipient, may be recovered from the liable relative. Sufficient ability shall be deemed to exist when the relative's income is more than sufficient to provide a reasonable subsistence compatible with decency and health. The Human Service Director may determine that "in kind" assistance or the provision of products/services to the client is acceptable as a relative's response to liability for support. Written notice of money spent in support of a recipient must be given to the liable relative. The Human Service Director shall make reasonable efforts to give such written notice prior to the giving of aid, but aid to which an applicant is entitled under these guidelines, shall not be delayed due to inability to contact possibly liable relatives. RSA 165:19.

B. Recovery from the Municipality of Residence

The Human Service Director shall seek to recover from the municipality of residence the amount of money spent by the municipality to assist a recipient who has a residence in another municipality. Written notice of money spent in support of a recipient must be given to the Human Service Director of the municipality of residence. In any civil action for recovery brought under RSA 165:20, the court shall award costs to the prevailing party. RSA 165:19 and 20. (See RSA 165:20-a providing for arbitration of such disputes between communities.) RSA 165:20.

C. Recovery from Former Recipient's Income

A former recipient who is returned to an income status after receiving assistance may be required to reimburse the municipality for the assistance provided if such reimbursement can be made without financial hardship. RSA 165:20-b.

D. Recovery from State and Federal Sources

The amount of money spent by a municipality to support a recipient who has

made initial application for SSI and has signed HHS FORM 151 "AUTHORIZATION FOR REIMBURSEMENT OF INTERIM ASSISTANCE" shall be recovered through the SSA and the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services. Prescription expenses paid by the municipality for applicants who have applied for Medicaid shall be recovered through the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services if and when the applicant is approved for medical coverage.

E. Delayed State Claims

For those recipients of general assistance deemed eligible for state assistance, New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services shall reimburse a municipality the amount of general assistance as a result of delays in processing within the federally mandated time periods. Any claims for reimbursement shall be held until the end of the fiscal year and may be reimbursed on a pro-rated basis dependent upon the total claims filed per year. RSA 165:20-c. A Form 340 "REQUEST FOR STATE REIMBURSEMENT" may be obtained from the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services for this purpose.

XVI. Application of Rents Paid by the Municipality

Whenever the owner of property rented to a person receiving general assistance from the municipality is in arrears in sewer, water, or tax payments to the municipality, the municipality may apply the assistance which the property owner would have received in payment of rent on behalf of such assisted person to the property owner's delinquent balances, regardless of whether such delinquent balances are in respect of property occupied by the assisted person. RSA 165:4-a.

A. Payment Arrears

A payment shall be considered in arrears if more than thirty (30) days have elapsed since the mailing of the bill, or in the case of real estate taxes, if interest has begun to accrue pursuant to RSA 76:13. RSA 165:4-a.

B. Order of Priority

Delinquent balances will be offset in order of the following priority: 1) taxes, 2) water 3) sewer

C. Procedure

The Human Services Director will issue a voucher on behalf of the tenant to the landlord for the allowed amount of rent. The voucher will indicate any amount to be applied to a delinquent balance owed by the landlord, specifying which delinquency, and referring to the authority of RSA 165:4-a.

The Human Services Director will issue a duplicate voucher to the appropriate department (i.e.: tax collector, sewer department, water precinct, municipal electric facility), which shall forward the voucher to the treasurer or finance director for payment. Upon receipt of payment, the department will issue a receipt of payment to the delinquent landlord.

XVII. Department Threat Policy

To assure safety and healthy working conditions, applicants/clients who make threatening statements and/or actions against staff personnel may be prohibited from returning to the Human Service Department office. In such cases, applicants/clients may be required to conduct the application process with appropriate safety measures to ensure the safety of personnel. Threats shall be reported to appropriate authorities.

XIX. Child Protection Act

169-C: 29 Persons Required to Report. – Any physician, surgeon, county medical examiner, psychiatrist, resident, intern, dentist, osteopath, optometrist, chiropractor, psychologist, therapist, registered nurse, hospital personnel (engaged in admission, examination, care and treatment of persons), Christian Science practitioner, teacher, school official, school nurse, school counselor, social worker, child care worker, any other child or foster care worker, law enforcement official, priest, minister, or rabbi or any other person having reason to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected shall report the same in accordance with this chapter.

XX. Appendix A

ALLOWABLE LEVELS OF ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS FOR HENNIKER NH MONTHLY SHELTER ALLOWANCES

	0 BR	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4 BR
Rent	\$ 876	\$ 1,118	\$ 1,498	\$ 1,506	\$ 1,781
Heat	\$ 122	\$ 146	\$ 184	\$ 206	\$ 250
Electricity	Monthly				

(Top row is allowance for heated shelter. If unheated, add amounts indicated in heat" columns to basic shelter cost in top row. Allowances MUST reflect actual housing market.)

[NH-Housing-Rental-Survey-Report-2021.pdf \(nhhfa.org\)](#)

FOOD/NON-FOOD

Household Size	Monthly Food	Monthly Non-Food
1	\$ 200	\$ 30
2	\$ 350	\$ 60
3	\$ 500	\$ 80
4	\$ 600	\$ 90
5	\$ 700	\$ 100

[How Much Your Monthly Food Budget Should Be + Grocery Calculator \(intuit.com\)](#)

XXI. Appendix B

EXPLANATION FOR DISQUALIFICATION FOR NONCOMPLIANCE WITH GUIDELINES NH RSA165:1-B

The process of “Disqualification for Noncompliance with Guidelines,” RSA 165:1-b.

Once you determine that an applicant is eligible and you provide assistance, you can impose conditions on the person’s continued receipt of assistance. The conditions may require the recipient to comply with written guidelines relating to:

- 1) Disclosure of income and resources,
- 2) Participation in a work program,
- 3) Conducting an adequate work search, and/or
- 4) Applying for public assistance through other agencies.

Willful failure to comply with the conditions imposed can lead to the suspension of a recipient’s assistance, but there is a process which must be followed. Prior to suspension, a recipient must be given written notice from the local welfare office of the specific actions which must be taken, and the recipient must be given at least seven (7) days in which to comply prior to suspension. There can be no exception.

The Notice of Decision form may be used to grant an assistance application and simultaneously give notice of the conditions imposed on the recipient’s continued receipt of assistance. The Notice of Decision form may also be used to give notice of the conditions that must be complied with, if that notice was not given at the time assistance was granted or if the conditions to be complied with have changed.

If a recipient does not comply with the conditions in the time period allowed, he/she can be “sanctioned” and his/her assistance suspended. How long the suspension lasts depends on whether there have been other suspensions within the previous 6 months and whether there are actions the recipient can take to come into compliance. A written decision (the Notice of Decision form can be used) must be given notifying the recipient of the term of the suspension, the specific reason(s) for the suspension citing the guidelines, any action(s) which must be taken to come back into compliance and notice of the right to request a fair hearing within 5 days of receipt of the notice.

If this is a first sanction, assistance may be suspended for seven (7) days. If it is possible for the recipient to take action(s) to come into compliance, then assistance can remain suspended after the seven (7) day period and until such time as the recipient takes the action(s) required to come into compliance (e.g. recipient only made 3 work search contacts instead of 10-the recipient must complete 7 more work search contacts; e.g. the recipient failed to apply for food stamps-if the recipient applies within the initial 7 day suspension, then the suspension ends after 7 days, otherwise, the suspension continues until the recipient applies). After the 7-day suspension period, the sanction must be lifted upon compliance with the condition.

If this is the second sanction (or more) for the recipient within a 6-month period, assistance may be suspended for fourteen (14) days. The reason for the sanction need not relate to previous sanctions to extend. If it is possible for the recipient to take action to come into compliance, then assistance can remain suspended after the 14-day period and until compliance, as described above.

If more than six months elapses between the first and second sanctions, follow the procedures

for a first sanction.

All notices of decision telling a recipient that he/she has been suspended must provide an opportunity for the recipient to request a fair hearing. If the recipient timely requests a hearing, the welfare officer must provide the recipient with the option of continuing to receive assistance consistent with any prior eligibility determination until the fair hearing decision is made. If there is a dispute over whether the recipient has taken the actions required to come back into compliance, the recipient must be provided the opportunity for a fair hearing on that issue, but there shall be no assistance provided pending the outcome of that hearing.

The welfare officer is not required to accept applications for assistance during a period of suspension.

XXI. Appendix C

ADOPTED ETHICS RESOLUTION ON RESPONSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WHO CHANGE THEIR RESIDENCE WHILE, OR AS A RESULT OF, APPLYING FOR LOCAL WELFARE

(New Hampshire Local Welfare Administrators Association)

I. "Dumping" is hereby declared to be an unethical practice. For purposes of this resolution, "dumping" consists of attempting to end, or avoid acquiring, a local welfare financial responsibility by encouraging, persuading or pressuring a client:

- A. not to establish, or to discontinue, a residence in the town which he/she has applied for assistance, or
- B. to establish a residence in another town.

II. In order to avoid "dumping" the following standards should be observed:

A welfare administrator should not encourage, direct, or knowingly allow a client who has applied for assistance in his/her town to apply for assistance in another town without making a good faith effort to contact the welfare administrator in that other town to explain why the person is coming to the other town. This applies whether or not the welfare administrator has accepted initial financial responsibility for the person (i.e. treat him/her as a resident) unless:

- A. he/she has an established place of abode (specific address, place to sleep) in another town which he/she intends to return to (even for just one night – i.e., hasn't moved out of yet), or
- B. he/she has NO established place of abode ANYWHERE, (i.e., any prior specific address was in some other town and has been abandoned) AND has a specific intent to go somewhere else rather than staying in the town for any time.

(Even when an applicant falls into A. or B. above, some temporary, non-resident assistance may be necessary, depending on the circumstances, in order to send the person on his/her way.)

III. Where a town has accepted initial financial responsibility under paragraph II above, the welfare administrator should not grant any assistance which he/she knows will be used so as to help establish the recipient's residence in another town, unless:

- A. a good faith effort is made to explore local resources, after which it is discovered that

none within reason is available, or

- B. unless the client has indicated an intent to move to another town for some non-welfare-related reason.

In either case the welfare administrator who has accepted initial financial responsibility should contact the official of the other town and offer to pay up to one month's assistance following the move if necessary.

Towns must avoid "special" treatment. If a town never pays security deposits, the town must not pay security deposits in special instances to establish a client's residence elsewhere. The sending town should pay actual allowable shelter costs as determined by the receiving town's guidelines.

IV. Residency

According to RSA 126-A:30, persons receiving emergency housing (shelter) shall continue to maintain their legal residence as it existed at the time of entering the emergency housing facility. When a person leaves the originating shelter of their own free will, the liability no

longer remains the responsibility of the original town. A person does not gain or lose residency while in a shelter, hospital or treatment center.

Persons who are sanctioned by local welfare, and arrive in another community, are not the liability of the community where the sanction originated. However, arrangements may be made between the two communities to have the sanction resolved, including resolving sanctions from another municipality if determined reasonable by the welfare official of the receiving municipality.

XXIII. Appendix D

BENEFIT PROGRAM	PERSONS ELIGIBLE	SOURCE OF FUNDS	GOVERNMENT WHICH ADMINISTERS	GOVERNMENT WHICH SETS STANDARDS
TOWN				
1. Municipal Welfare RSA 165:1, I	Poor and in need	Local Property Tax	Town/City	Town/City
STATE				
2. APTD Aid to the Permanently & Totally Disabled RSA 167:6, VI	Low income Adults 18-64 Permanently & Totally Disabled	County & State	State	State
3. OAA Old Age Assistance RSA 167:6, I	Low Income Adults, 65 and over	County & State	State	State
4. ANB Aid to Needy Blind RSA 167:6, IV	Low Income Blind Adults	State	State	State
5. TANF Temporary Assistance to Needy Families 42 USC §601 RSA 167:6, V	Low Income Families with Dependent Children	State & Federal	State	State & Federal
FEDERAL				
6. SNAP* 7 USC §2011	Lower Income	Federal Households	State	Federal
7. SSI Supplemental Security Income 42 USC §1381	Low Income	Federal	Federal	Federal

XXIV. Appendix D

Legal Standard and Interpretation

“Whenever a person in any town is poor and unable to support himself, he shall be relieved and maintained by the overseers of public welfare of such town, whether or not he has residence there.” RSA 165:1.

- a. An applicant cannot be denied an application for assistance because he/she is not a resident. See Section X.
 - b. “Whenever” means at any or whatever time a person is poor and unable to support him or herself, and without reasonable alternative resource options to deem general assistance unnecessary.
 - c. The Human Service Director, or a person authorized to act on his/her behalf, shall be available during normal business hours.
1. The eligibility of any applicant for general assistance shall be determined no later than ten (7) business/working days after the application is submitted. If the applicant has an

emergency life safety need, then assistance for such emergency need shall be immediately provided in accordance with VI (D)(1), (2) provided an application is submitted.

2. Assistance shall begin as soon as the completed applicant is determined to be eligible.
3. "Poor and unable to support" means that an individual lacks income, available liquid assets and resources to adequately provide for the basic welfare maintenance needs of him/herself or family as determined by the Henniker guidelines.
4. "Relieved" means an applicant shall be assisted to meet those basic welfare needs described by Henniker guidelines.
5. "Maintained" means that assistance could be continued as long as the applicant is eligible as determined by the Henniker Guidelines.