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To: Welfare Officials and Contracted Agents

From: Sara Denson, Program Manager, General Assistance

Date: September 4, 2024

Subject: New GA Maximums for October 1, 2023

Enclosed please find the following items:

- MMA's updated **General Assistance Ordinance** (9/2024)
- MMA's new (October 1, 2024–September 30, 2025) **"General Assistance Ordinance Appendices"** (A – H).
- Recovery Residence Housing Maximums (October 1, 2024-September 30, 2025)
- **"GA Ordinance Adoption Form"** which was developed so that municipalities may easily send DHHS proof of the adoption of any updated or changed GA Ordinance. Once the selectpersons or council adopts the new ordinance, the enclosed form should be signed and submitted to DHHS. *(see "Filing of GA Ordinance and/or Appendices" below for further information).*
- **"GA Maximums Adoption Form"** which was developed so that municipalities may easily send DHHS proof of GA maximums adoption. Once the selectpersons or council adopts the new maximums, the enclosed form should be signed and submitted to DHHS. *(see "Filing of GA Ordinance and/or Appendices" below for further information).*

Updates

Please note that updates have been made to Appendix A (overall maximums), Appendix B (food maximums), Appendix C (housing maximums) and Appendix H (funeral maximums) of the General Assistance Ordinance. There is also a new Recovery Residence Housing Maximums guide. You can find information about the MMA Model Ordinance on the Maine Welfare Director's Association (MWDA) website at www.mainewelfaredirectors.org.

Appendix A – H

The enclosed Appendices A – H have been revised for your municipality's General Assistance Ordinance. These new Appendices, **once adopted**, should replace the existing Appendices A – H. Even if you are not updating your GA Ordinance, **the municipal officers must approve/adopt the new Appendices yearly.**

The Adoption Process

The **municipal officers (i.e., selectpersons/council) adopt the local General Assistance Ordinance and yearly Appendices**, even in town meeting communities. The law requires that the municipal officers conduct a ***notice and hearing*** prior to the adoption of the Ordinance and/or Appendices. Seven days posted notice is recommended, unless local law (or practice) provides otherwise.

At the hearing, the municipal officers should:

1) Allow all interested members of the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed ordinance;
2) End public discussion, close the hearing; and
3) Move and vote to adopt the ordinance and/or appendices either in its posted form or as amended in light of public discussion.

Municipalities May Establish Their Own Maximums

Municipalities may establish their own maximum levels of assistance provided that the proposed levels of assistance are reasonable and meet adequate standards sufficient to maintain the health and safety of applicants in the municipality. The municipality must submit to the Department documentation to justify these levels of assistance and verify that the figures developed are appropriate to maintain health and decency.

A municipality's maximum assistance level for Food may not be below the Department provided figures which are issued by the USDA and published annually following a study of cost of food for various family sizes. A market basket survey may be used to establish food maximums if the maximums provided by the USDA are insufficient to maintain health in the municipality. (C.M.R. 10-144, Chapter 323, Section V).

Filing of GA Ordinance and/or Appendices

Please remember that General Assistance law requires each municipality to send DHHS a copy of its ordinance once adopted, should that ordinance differ from the MMA Model. Any changes or amendments, such as new Appendices, must also be submitted to DHHS. DHHS will accept the enclosed "adoption sheet" as proof that your Municipal Officers have adopted the current MMA Model GA maximums and/or ordinance. If you are not making changes to your adopted ordinance, you are only required to submit verification that the new Appendices have been adopted.