

GENERAL ASSISTANCE FACT SHEET

WHO CAN GET GENERAL ASSISTANCE

Santa Cruz County residents may qualify, depending on household composition, income, resources and other eligibility factors.

LOAN PROGRAM

General Assistance (GA) is a LOAN program. You will be required to apply for other types of available income as a condition of eligibility.

ELIGIBILITY BASICS

Eligibility is determined by:

- US Citizenship or lawful non-citizenship
- Must Have CA ID
- County residency
- Household/living arrangement
- Income & Resources/Property
- Student status

WHAT IS A HOUSEHOLD?

For General Assistance eligibility, a “household” is a family unit living together and sharing resources and expenses. All members of your household must apply for and be eligible in order for you to receive General Assistance.

Homeless persons may also qualify for General Assistance.

Persons under the age of 18 may qualify if living independently from their parents/guardians and meet special conditions of eligibility for minors.

INCOME

All income received is deducted dollar for dollar from your General Assistance benefit. The income limit depends on your living arrangement.

Income includes all earnings, self-employment income, alimony, child support, social security, SSI/SSP, unemployment benefits, state disability, worker’s compensation, gifts, contributions, loans, student financial aid, retirement and credit card purchases.

RESOURCES

To qualify for General Assistance, you must not exceed the following resource limits:

- Cash or other liquid assets – no more than \$200 per single person or \$300 per household.
- Vehicle – vehicle value cannot exceed \$4,650 after deducting any amount owed; a household may own motor vehicles equal to the number of persons who are employable and actively seeking employment.
- Property – may own a home in which you are living; the value cannot exceed \$25,000 after deducting any amount owed. The value of any other property will be considered a resource.
- The value of other property (not including personal household property, heirlooms and tools required to work) cannot exceed \$100 per single person or \$200 per household.

COLLEGE STUDENTS

College students who are able to work (not disabled) are not eligible for General Assistance.

WORK REQUIREMENTS

If you are not disabled and are able to work, you will be required to attend a Job Search Workshop and look for employment. Before or after attending said workshop, you will be required to do 20 job searches per month. You must provide proof of your job search to your Benefit Representative. You must also accept any reasonable offer of employment.

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DISABLED PERSONS

If you are disabled, you will need to get a doctor's statement. Most disabled persons will be required to apply for SSI and must work in cooperation with County staff during the application and approval process for SSI.

HOW MUCH GENERAL ASSISTANCE WILL YOU GET?

Depending on your living arrangement and income:

- Single person with no rent= \$163; with rent can be a maximum of \$392.
- Two-person household with no rent= \$328; with rent can be a maximum of \$645.

For those living in a licensed board and care home, residential facility or recovery house, a separate benefit schedule is used.

HOW TO USE GENERAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS

You will receive your cash benefits on a plastic EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer) card. You may use this card at any participating retail store, bank or ATM.

You may receive some General Assistance rent benefits as a check payable to you and your landlord. These benefits are designated only to pay rent. Written landlord verification is required.

YOUR RIGHTS

Whether you are eligible or not, you have the right to be treated with dignity, respect, and courtesy when you apply for General Assistance. The Human Services Department will not discriminate against anyone because of race, color, national origin, political affiliation, religion, age, sex, marital status, physical or mental disability, ethnic group identification, sexual orientation, or domestic partnership. If you believe that you have not been treated equally, contact the Civil Rights Officer at (831) 454-4117.

INTERVIEW LANGUAGE

Applicants may be interviewed in English, Spanish, American Sign Language, and others if necessary.

HOW TO APPLY

Apply online: <http://www.mybenefitscalwin.org>

Or visit us at the Human Services Department's Customer Service Centers:

In Santa Cruz:
1020B Emeline Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 454-4165

In Watsonville:
18 W. Beach Street
Watsonville, CA 95076
(831) 763-8500

If you are unable to apply in person, call either of our offices and we will mail you an application packet. You may also designate a person familiar with your circumstances to apply as your representative.

You will be given an appointment to meet with a Benefit Representative. The appointment will take 1-2 hours. Benefits can only be approved if you are eligible and we receive and process all required documents (for example, pay stubs or bank statements).

This Fact Sheet is not to be used as a substitute for Santa Cruz County General Assistance regulations.