

CHAPTER 10
GENERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

10.01 Purpose	10.05 General Assistance Application
10.02 Definitions	10.06 Review by the Board
10.03 Eligibility for General Assistance	10.07 Appeal
10.04 General Assistance Manual	10.08 Appeal Hearings

10.01 PURPOSE. It is the position of the County that provision of assistance to poor or needy persons is a matter of public benefit as well as a statutory duty of the County, and to that end general assistance, as defined herein, shall be administered to poor or needy families and individuals, as identified by General Assistance Manual guidelines, promptly, humanely, and equitably, in order to assure those persons decent, healthful living situations.

10.02 DEFINITIONS. For purposes of this chapter, the following terms are defined.

1. “Designee” means qualified General Assistance staff appointed by the Director to help administer the County’s General Assistance program.
2. “Director” means the General Assistance Director appointed or designated by the Board of Supervisors to oversee the County’s General Assistance program.
3. “Family” means the person applying for general assistance, that person’s spouse, children under 18 years of age, older children who are dependent on the applicant due to school attendance or incapacity, and anyone else domiciled with the applicant and dependent upon the applicant according to guidelines used by the State Department of Revenue in collecting income tax.
4. “General assistance” means County payment made on behalf of poor or needy persons for rent, utilities, food, medical services, burial, and miscellaneous expenses.
5. “Poor” defined by Section 252.1 of the Code of Iowa, as persons who have no property, exempt, or otherwise and are unable, because of physical or mental disabilities, to earn a living by labor.
6. “Needy” means a lack of resources to maintain self or family in a decent, healthful situation defined by Section 252.1 of the Code of Iowa, as persons who have some means when conducive to their welfare and the best interests of the public.
7. “Vendor payment” means a County Auditor’s warrant to the supplier of goods or services.

10.03 ELIGIBILITY FOR GENERAL ASSISTANCE. Eligibility for general assistance shall be determined on the basis of need as established and verified by the General Assistance Director or designee, according to the guidelines set out in Sections III and IV of the General Assistance Manual and shall be determined without regard to race, creed, religion, national origin, sex, or age.

10.04 GENERAL ASSISTANCE MANUAL.

1. The rules, regulations, standards, and guidelines for administrating general assistance shall comprise the General Assistance Manual.
2. The General Assistance Manual shall be adopted by resolution of the Board of Supervisors.
3. Amendments to the General Assistance Manual shall be made by resolution pursuant to Section 331.302 of the Code of Iowa, following publication of notice of the proposed change and opportunity for the public to be heard.
4. Copies of the General Assistance Manual shall be available to the public in the office of the Director.

10.05 GENERAL ASSISTANCE APPLICATION. Application for general assistance shall be made to the Director or designee on forms supplied by the General Assistance Office. Upon receipt of a completed application, the Director or designee shall give written notification to the applicant of the decision to grant,

pend, or deny the application within five working days. Such notice shall include the factual basis for the Director's or designee's decision, a statement of the right to appeal, and a recital of appeal procedures.

10.06 REVIEW BY THE BOARD. The Board of Supervisors may review the determination of eligibility made by the Director or designee. If the Board of Supervisors questions any allowance of assistance benefits allowed by the Director or designee, it shall take no action concerning such allowance until it conducts a hearing. Notice of the hearing shall be given to the applicant in the same manner as if the applicant had taken the appeal. This hearing shall proceed in the same manner as an appeal by the applicant from the Director's or designee's determination.

10.07 APPEAL.

1. Every applicant, whether granted assistance or not, shall be informed in the Director's or designee's written decision of the applicant's right to appeal from such decision to the Board of Supervisors. The applicant shall be informed:
 - A. Of the method by which an appeal may be taken; and
 - B. That they may represent themselves or may be represented by counsel at applicant's expense.
2. The written appeal or communication shall be made to the Director within 10 days after the Director's or designee's determination, shall provide the applicant's current address and telephone number, and shall state the reasons for the appeal. Any written appeal or communication to the Director, by or on behalf of an applicant requesting appeal of the Director's or designee's determination, shall be received by the Director and put upon the Board of Supervisors agenda in accordance with Chapter 21 of the Code of Iowa, for the next regular Board of Supervisors meeting, provided that such appeal shall not be heard sooner than five working days after appeal is taken. The applicant shall be informed immediately, by telephone and by ordinary mail, of the date and time of hearing before the Board of Supervisors. Applicant and applicant's attorney, upon written authorization from applicant, shall be granted access by the Director to applicant's case file upon request.

10.08 APPEAL HEARINGS.

1. The Board of Supervisors shall hear applicant's appeal at the time scheduled in the agenda unless continuance is requested by applicant and granted by the Board of Supervisors. Applicant shall be permitted to present any evidence desired in support of the appeal by personal testimony, by having other witnesses testify, by offering documentary evidence and by reasonable cross examination of other witnesses, if present. The technical rules of evidence shall not apply. The Board of Supervisors may set reasonable times for the present action of the parties at any appeal. The applicant's file shall be admitted into evidence. The Board of Supervisors may question the applicant, and the Director shall present the Board of Supervisors with the reasons for the determination. The appeal shall be tape recorded. The hearing before the Board of Supervisors shall not be an open meeting under Chapter 21 of the Code of Iowa, since the confidential files of the applicant will be in evidence. When the Board of Supervisors deliberates on the appeal, no persons other than Board of Supervisors members shall be present. The Board of Supervisors deliberations shall not be tape recorded.
2. The Board of Supervisors shall make a decision on the appeal within 10 working days after the hearing. The Board of Supervisors findings of fact and decision shall be based only on the evidence submitted during the hearing. Immediately after making its decision, the Board of Supervisors shall mail to the applicant at their last known address, by ordinary mail, its decision in writing. The decision shall state the reasons for the action and shall also state that an appeal may be taken to District Court from the Board of Supervisors determination, and shall state the method by which such appeal may be taken.
3. Any appeal from the Board of Supervisors decision to the District Court shall be allowed within the time and by the manner and procedures established under the Iowa Administrative Procedures Act, Chapter 17A of the Code of Iowa.