



Wright County Managed Care Manual Section Six: General Assistance

Wright County Community Services
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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this manual is to describe the forms of assistance provided by Wright County, in accordance with Chapter 252, to poor persons, needy persons and emergency situations. This manual establishes criteria, which must be met by an applicant before assistance is approved.

III APPLICATION PROCEDURE

A. Application

All applicants for General Assistance must complete the Wright County Community Services application or review form when applicable, in its entirety. The applicant must also have an interview with general assistance staff prior to approval for any assistance. This requirement will be waived only in an emergency situation.

Applicants for General Assistance will verify all aspects of eligibility as requested. Failure to provide verification will result in denial or termination of General Assistance benefits. Recipients shall report any and all circumstances that change, such as income, resources, address, etc. Recipients, who fail to report changes within ten days of the change, will be ineligible for assistance for three consecutive months.

If it becomes apparent that an applicant or recipient has knowingly withheld information or provided false information in order to gain eligibility or to remain eligible for General Assistance, that applicant or recipient will not be eligible for any further assistance. The recipient will be responsible for reimbursing Wright County in full for all assistance granted to them under these circumstances.

B. Appeals

The State of Iowa, rather than Wright County, must sometimes pay for services provided to you. The Iowa Administrative Procedures Act, Iowa Code Chapter 17(A), governs by administrative agency rules and appeals about these cases and the Department of Human Services program eligibility decisions. The Department of Human Services will provide more information about these appeals to you. The purpose of this section is to describe how Wright County Community Services decisions can be appealed.

1. If you disagree with the decision you may seek an appeal of that decision. Only appeals initiated by you or your representative will be heard.
2. To appeal, you must send a written notice of appeal within ten (10) working days of receipt of your Notice of Decision. Send your request to the Director, Wright County Community Services, 115 1st St. SE, PO Box 4, Clarion, Iowa 50525.
3. Within five (5) working days of the receipt of the written request for an appeal, the CPC Administrator of Wright County Community Services, shall deliver to you, either personally or by certified mail, a written notice informing you of the date, time and place the appeal will be heard.
4. A written decision will be issued no later than ten (10) working days after the appeal is heard. A copy of the decision will be sent to you and your

representative, if any, by certified mail. The decision will be accompanied by a notice explaining the effect of the Administrator's decision regarding the services provided to you and your rights regarding a subsequent appeal to the Board of Supervisors.

5. If you elect to appeal the Administrator's decision, you must comply with the procedure outlined in paragraph 2, within ten (10) working days of the Administrator's decision.
6. Within five (5) working days of the receipt of the written request for an appeal, the Board of Supervisors, shall deliver to you, either personally or by certified mail, a written notice informing you of the date, time and place the appeal will be heard.
7. Any appeal hearing before the Director or Board of Supervisors will be held in private. At an appeal hearing, you have the right to have an attorney or other advocate accompany and represent you at your own expense. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may contact legal services Corp. of Iowa, the Iowa Volunteer Lawyer Project, or Iowa Protection and Advocacy Services, inc., for assistance. Telephone numbers for these agencies are available from the Director upon request.
8. The Board of Supervisors will render its decision within 30 days of the date of the hearing. A copy of the decision will be sent to you and your representative, if any, by certified mail.

IV. ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility will be determined and a written Notice of Decision (NOD) mailed within thirty days from receipt of a completed application according to the guidelines established herein.

Wright County is the funder of last resort. All Applicants must apply for and accept any and all other benefits prior to county funding. If the applicant refuses or fails to apply for and accept these benefits, the applicant shall be denied initial or continued eligibility for General Assistance.

Persons who are discharged from the Family Investment Program (FIP) due to meeting the sixty-month maximum are ineligible for General Assistance. The Federal Government Welfare Reform Act of 1996 created an expectation that a person receiving welfare would work with their Department of Human Services (DHS) worker to become self-sufficient within five years. Wright County will not have General Assistance policies that are in conflict with the Federal Government. **

If an applicant is a full-time college student, unemployed and not seeking employment, they must provide proof that no loans or grants were given for living expenses during the current college year.

Applicants who have a doctor's statement indicating that they are unable to work for thirty or more days may receive one to three months of General Assistance depending on duration of disability.

An applicant may receive three months of assistance if they have a doctor's verification that states they have a permanent disability, which does not allow them to

be substantially gainfully employed and they have applied for Social Security benefits. Applicants who have applied for Social Security Benefits must provide proof of application and sign a Social Security Interim Assistance Reimbursement form before assistance is granted.

If a disability determination from Social Security has not been made at the end of three consecutive months an extension of three additional months of assistance may be granted.

Applicants who are denied Social Security benefits within the first ninety days of eligibility will need to appeal the denial of benefits and provide a new doctor's statement as to their inability to be substantially gainfully employed to be eligible for the three month extension.

Applicants who are not filing for disability will have a one-month limitation of funding through General Assistance. This limitation will be implemented for a one-year period beginning with the first payment. An extension of one additional month may be granted if the applicant is facing eviction or disconnect which most likely will cause an emergency. Applicant must provide proof that payment toward their bill was made in good faith. They must also provide proof that they have made payment arrangements for the remaining balance of their current bill and have a means to pay future bills (rent, utilities). *

An applicant for General Assistance must have residency according to code and law. The applicant must have a permanent fixed abode and no present intent to remove themselves from the county. Assistance requested and/or granted will be referred to the applicant's county of legal settlement for reimbursement. A person who has legal settlement in Wright County is any person who has lived in Wright County for one full year without receiving any mental health, mental retardation, developmental disabilities or substance abuse services or supports. Exceptions are described in the Code of Iowa, Section 252.

Applicants for or recipients of General Assistance that are under the age of 60, and not disabled, will be required to register for work through the Iowa Work Force Development Center.

Applicants who claim disability must have such disability verified by a physician. The General Assistance Medical Statement will be used for verification of the disability. The medical statement must define the possible duration of disability. If it is a time limited disability, a new medical statement will be required at the end of the duration.

If the applicant is unable to pay for an examination to verify disability and has not already verified the disability through a physician, the examination may be billed to the Wright County Community Services after prior approval (see scope of payment under Medical Assistance). If the disability will endure for an extended period of time, the applicant will be required to apply for benefits through Social Security.

Persons on strike will be ineligible for General Assistance.

If an adult residing in the household has applied for General Assistance and has quit or been involuntarily terminated from employment, they will be ineligible for assistance for ninety days from the last date of employment. Recipients, who quit or have been involuntarily terminated from employment while receiving General Assistance, will be cancelled from further assistance for ninety days from the final date of employment. If an applicant or recipient refuses reasonable employment or a referral to reasonable employment, they will be ineligible for General Assistance.

Relatives of applicants or recipients of General Assistance shall not be held liable for support unless a legal obligation for support exists. The possibility of assistance from parent(s) or adult children shall be explored with the applicant or recipient.

Minor children will remain the responsibility of their parent(s), will not be eligible for General Assistance, and will be referred to the DHS.

Wright County reserves the right to enact the provision of Section 252.13, Code of Iowa for recovery of assistance.

A. Income

Gross Income/Month				Gross Income/Year				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
\$	-	\$	408.33	\$	-	\$	4,900.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
\$	408.42	\$	550.00	\$	4,901.00	-	\$	6,600.00	10	5	0	0	0	0	0
\$	550.08	\$	691.67	\$	6,601.00	-	\$	8,300.00	20	10	5	0	0	0	0
\$	691.75	\$	833.33	\$	8,301.00	-	\$	10,000.00	30	20	10	5	0	0	0
\$	833.42	\$	975.00	\$	10,001.00	-	\$	11,700.00	40	30	20	10	5	0	0
\$	975.08	\$	1,116.67	\$	11,701.00	-	\$	13,400.00	50	40	30	20	10	5	0
\$	1,116.75	\$	1,258.33	\$	13,401.00	-	\$	15,100.00	70	50	40	30	20	10	5
\$	1,258.42	\$	1,400.00	\$	15,101.00	-	\$	16,800.00	90	70	50	40	30	20	10
\$	1,400.08	\$	1,603.75	\$	16,801.00	-	\$	19,245.00	100	90	70	50	40	30	20
\$	1,603.83	\$	1,807.50	\$	19,246.00	-	\$	21,690.00	100	100	90	70	50	40	30
\$	1,807.58	\$	2,011.25	\$	21,691.00	-	\$	24,135.00	100	100	100	90	70	50	40
\$	2,011.33	\$	2,215.00	\$	24,136.00	-	\$	26,580.00	100	100	100	100	90	70	50
\$	2,215.08	\$	2,418.75	\$	26,581.00	-	\$	29,025.00	100	100	100	100	100	90	70
\$	2,418.83	\$	2,622.50	\$	29,026.00	-	\$	31,470.00	100	100	100	100	100	100	90
\$	2,622.58	\$	2,826.25	\$	31,471.00	-	\$	33,915.00	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
\$	2,826.33	\$	-	\$	33,916.00		\$	-	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

All types of gross income available to the applicant shall be considered in determining eligibility for General Assistance.

B. Resources

If an applicant for General Assistance has resources that exceed \$300.00; the applicant will not be eligible for General Assistance. Any and all resources, including, but not limited to the following, **bank accounts, time certificates, non- homestead property, life insurance with a cash value, value of vehicles (unless otherwise exempt), stocks/bond, antiques, burial trust and trust funds that are available to the applicant will be considered.**

Determination of the amount of resources of any applicant shall also include all resources available to other persons in the applicant's household. In regard to Burials, any remaining tangible property including current or future assets belonging to the estate will be considered a resource.

Exempt Resources

The household may have the following and still be eligible for General Assistance.

1. A homestead used as a place of residence.
2. Household furnishings and personal effects of reasonable value.
3. Automobiles or other vehicles with current market value of all vehicles owned not to exceed \$5,000.00.
4. An irrevocable pre-paid burial contract and lot.
5. Cash, bank accounts, stocks, bonds, annuities or personal property not to exceed a value of \$300.00.

If an applicant for General Assistance, has sold, traded, or transferred any personal or real property, within 6 months prior to their application for assistance, at less than fair market value, the applicant will be ineligible for General Assistance as determined by the amount of months the applicant could have paid for the assistance themselves. The cost of the requested assistance will be calculated against the market value of the resources sold, traded, or transferred. The applicant will be ineligible for assistance for the determined amount of time.

D. Veterans

Persons who meet the qualifications outlined in the Code of Iowa for the receipt of assistance from the County Commission of Veterans Affairs shall not be eligible for General Assistance. Such applicants shall be referred to the local Executive Director serving the area in which the applicant resides. A person and his dependents are eligible to apply for assistance from the Commission of Veterans Affairs if they received an honorable discharge and are a veteran of:

1. **World War I--April 6, 1917 to November 11, 1918**
2. **World War II--Dec. 7, 1941 to Dec. 31, 1946**

3. Korean Conflict--June 25, 1950 to Jan. 31, 1955
4. Vietnam Conflict--Dec. 22, 1961 to May 7, 1975
6. Persian Gulf—August 2, 1990 to the cessation of hostilities as determined by the U.S. Government.

E. Undocumented Residents of the United States

Adult applicants for General Assistance who are undocumented residents of the United States will not be eligible for General Assistance. Minor dependents of undocumented adult residents will only be eligible for General Assistance to prevent or rectify a serious or life threatening occurrence.

V. Scope of Assistance

The forms of assistance described shall be available only for the **current** month. In cases where disconnect or eviction notice is issued, and the current bill exceeds the maximum limit, the applicant must provide proof of how they will pay any remaining balance on their account. Proof must also be provided as to how the following month's payment will be made. **Applicant must be a residing at the residence for which assistance is being requested. Payment will not be made for deposits, reconnect fees or first month's rent.**

Rental assistance can only be granted to persons who rent from landlords living in a separate dwelling. Rent must be paid directly to the registered owner of the property unless someone else is designated as the caretaker of that property. Rental assistance will only be granted to applicant households who are listed on the rental agreement.

When it is determined that separate households are sharing the same dwelling, the amount of assistance shall be determined by dividing the actual monthly bill by the number of eligible applicant households.

If utilities are included in the monthly rental amount, a maximum of \$500.00 per month may be paid. The landlord must verify that utilities are included in the rent.

If a person gains employment during the one month of eligibility and will not receive wages until the following month or in the event of an eviction notice, a one-month extension may be granted.

If applicant is applying for assistance between the months of November and April and has received assistance from Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), applicant must provide proof that payment(s) were made on the utility bill during this time frame. If no payment was made toward the utility bill, assistance will be denied.

The following amounts will be allowed for assistance:

Rent	\$350.00
Rent/ Elec	\$500.00
Gas/ Electric	\$200.00
Water	\$75.00
LP/Fuel Oil	Minimum fill

E. Medical Assistance

Wright County will evaluate eligibility for medical costs based on the following guidelines:

If a poor or needy applicant is conditionally eligible for Private Insurance, Medicaid, Medicare or Medically Needy benefits, they must apply for those benefits prior to General Assistance being approved. General Assistance will not pay for spenddown, insurance deductibles or co-pay, or costs deemed to be beyond reasonable and customary.

Medical assistance must have prior approval to be eligible for county payment. Payments will be paid at the Medicaid rate and will be limited to one occurrence per year per applicant for life threatening emergencies only. County funds will not be used to pay for extensive medical testing. Payment for routine physical examinations will not be approved. Payment will not be made for over the counter products.

If this emergency is for a hospitalization and the applicant remains hospitalized a friend or relative may submit the application. If an application is not submitted within the allotted time period, payment for services will be denied.

Examination to Verify Disability

General Assistance will pay for one office visit if a free clinic is not available, with prior approval, at the Medicaid rate for persons who claim to have a disability but do not have verification of such.

Dental

Payment for dental care will only be approved based on life threatening emergency. Dentists will be paid the Medicaid rate with payment being limited to \$150 per emergency. Payment for orthodontist or denture repair will be limited to \$300.00 per year per applicant.

Hospitalization

Payment for hospitalization will be approved in cases of life threatening emergency only. The attending physician must verify that an emergency actually existed at the time of admittance to the hospital. There is a \$500.00 maximum payment per hospitalization. Physician services in connection with life threatening emergency hospitalization will be paid at a maximum of \$500.00.

Prescription drugs

Prescription drugs, other necessary supplies and necessary repair of medical appliances may be allowed with a maximum monthly payment of \$200.00. Assistance is not available for mental health medications. Assistance will be limited to a one-month time period. This limitation will be implemented for a one-year period.

Applicants must utilize all other resources available before granting General Assistance. This includes but is not limited to free samples, Indigent Patient Prescription Program and MAP (Medication Assistance Program).

**VII. BURIAL
I. ELIGIBILITY**

Eligibility will be determined and a written Notice of Decision (NOD) faxed or emailed to the funeral home within three business days from receipt of a completed application according to the guidelines established herein.

Wright County is the funder of last resort. All Applicants must apply for and accept any and all other benefits prior to county funding. If the applicant refuses or fails to apply for and accept these benefits, the applicant shall be denied cremation assistance.

Payment will only be made for poor and needy persons who resided in Wright County. Poor and Needy persons are defined as those who have no property, exempt or otherwise, and are unable, because of physical or mental disabilities, to earn a living by labor; but this section shall not be construed to forbid aid to needy persons who have some means, when the board of supervisors shall be of opinion that the same will be conducive to their welfare and the best interests of the public. The father, mother, and children of any poor or needy person, who is unable to pay their cremation, shall jointly or separately pay for all or a portion of the cremation in a manner as, upon application, the funeral home and county dictates.

The deceased person must have had residency according to code and law.

Wright County reserves the right to enact the provision of Section 252.13, Code of Iowa for recovery of assistance.

A. Income

Poor persons will have no income and resources less than \$2,000.00. Needy person will have income not to exceed \$564.00 for a single person or \$846.00 per household and have resources less than \$2,000.00. The deceased person's estate is a resource, their cemetery lot is not. [Sliding Fee?]

All types of gross income available to the applicant shall be considered in determining eligibility for General Assistance.

B. Resources

Any and all resources, including, but not limited to the following, **bank accounts, time certificates, non- homestead property, homestead property (if being sold), life insurance with a cash value, value of vehicles (unless otherwise exempt), stocks/bond, antiques, burial trust and trust funds that are available to the applicant will be considered.** Determination of the amount of resources of any applicant shall also include all resources available to other persons in the applicant's household. In regard to Cremations, any remaining tangible property including current or future assets belonging to the estate will be considered a resource.

II. CREMATION/BURIAL

A. PURPOSE:

It is the intent and purpose of Wright County to assist in the cost of cremations/Burial for poor and needy persons in Wright County. This policy is to clarify which items will be paid and the eligibility criteria for payment of cremation. Wright County Community Services General Assistance Staff will be responsible for determining eligibility.

B. APPLICATIONS:

Application must be submitted and arrangements made in advance of funeral services. The funeral home shall be responsible for obtaining all necessary information from the descendant's relatives.

D. CEMETERY LOT:

If an indigent lot is not available at other cemeteries, Wright County will provide a lot at the Galt Cemetery, of Blaine Township. The family may provide for a lot at other locations, but such lots will be at the family's expense.

E. CREMATION/BURIAL SERVICE:

Wright County will fund the following services as specified.

1. **CREMATIONS/BURIALS:** Wright County will pay a maximum of **\$2,000.00** to the funeral home toward the cost of a cremation, and **\$1,800.00** for a burial with **\$200.00** provided for the opening and closing of the grave.
2. **CEMETERY LOT NOT A RESOURCE:** If the deceased qualifies for county cremation/burial assistance, and the family or an organization elects, they may purchase a cemetery lot in a cemetery of their choice, the cost of such lot shall not be considered in determining the amount paid by Wright County towards the cremation/burial.
3. **FUNERAL HOME SERVICES:** Family or friends requesting assistance for the cremation/burial of a poor or needy person will complete an application for county assistance with the funeral home. The application will be

submitted to determine the person's eligibility for county assistance.

If approved the funeral home will be reimbursed for the following services:

Basic services of funeral home & staff, embalming (not required unless by state law), transportation from the place of death to the funeral home within 25 miles and other preparation (dressing, casketing, cosmetics). The day and time of the funeral will be at the discretion of the funeral home: no weekends or holidays. The funeral home will not be responsible for cash advances, the family may contribute up to **\$500.00** for the purchase of such items as honorariums, death certificates, etc. through the funeral home.

Burial: The family must pay an additional **\$500.00** to the funeral home and receive the minimum casket, grave liner and graveside services.

Cremation: one hour of visitation prior to the service, the funeral service (location determined by the funeral home) rental casket and cremation fee. An urn will not be provided. Remains will be returned to the family as cemetery lot and burial services are not provided.

F. GENERAL:

This policy is intended to provide specific guidelines on the maximum amounts to be paid, and how payment is made. Nothing in this policy shall be construed as attempting to limit or regulate the type or nature of the services provided by any funeral home. The funeral director shall notify the General Assistance Office of anticipated costs and services prior to the General Assistance Director's determination of eligibility for indigent cremation/burial assistance. The type and nature of church or funeral services, the specific arrangements for each funeral, and the extent of service or visitations shall remain within the discretion of each funeral home and the individual family members.

D. Undocumented Residents of the United States

Adult applicants for General Assistance who are undocumented residents of the United States will not be eligible for General Assistance. Minor dependents of undocumented adult residents will only be eligible for General Assistance to prevent or rectify a serious or life threatening occurrence.

VIII. PROVIDERS

Wright County will utilize providers who meet one or more of the following criteria and are willing to accept Wright County's requirements/contractual arrangement and work closely with the General Assistance Office.

The provider must be:

1. Currently licensed or certified as a service provider by state recognized accrediting bodies.
2. If the provider accepts Medicaid and/or Medicare funding they must accept Medicaid and/or Medicare payment as payment in full.

Wright County will follow the procedure below when contracting with providers of services:

- The provider will need to supply Wright County with a description of services to be contracted for, including financial and statistical reports that will show the net and gross cost of said services. (Providers may be reviewed for consumer satisfaction, and accurate billing statements.)

Current Contracted Provider is: Domestic/Sexual Assault Outreach Center.

Any agency requesting funds from the General Assistance Departmental Budget (24) must be a contracted Provider.

XI. EXCEPTION TO POLICY

In unusual circumstances the Agency Director may waive any or all rules.

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