



# SACHS Research Summary: Innovative State and County General Assistance/ General Relief (GA/GR) Program Models

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## **Executive Summary**

This research review was prepared at the request of the Southern Area Consortium of Human Services (SACHS) directors. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the historical context and current reality of General Relief/General Assistance (GA/GR) programs throughout the United States, with particular attention to innovative program models in states with mandated GA/GR programs.<sup>1</sup>

The report begins with a background section exploring the original intent of GA/GR, recent lawsuits, controversies, and trends, as well as current knowledge about the demographics of typical GA/GR recipients. Next, the report explores evidence of program effectiveness. The second half of the report provides examples of innovative GA/GR programs at both state and county levels across the United States, with an emphasis on county-level programs within the few states that require counties to develop their own guidelines and program structure. An overview of general trends for each of the states with innovative county-level GA/GR programs is also included. The report concludes with suggestions for future directions and research.

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix A of the report includes a national overview of state GA/GR assistance programs (as of 2020) and Appendix B includes a few examples of counties that are continuing to provide GA/GR benefits even though the GA/GR program has been eliminated at the state level and/or is not mandatory at the state level.

## Background

### *Original Intent of General Assistance*

General Assistance or General Relief, hereafter referred to as GA/GR, is a catchall term for state or county-funded assistance programs that serve low-income, single adults without dependent children. These individuals are often ineligible for federal assistance such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Social Security Income (SSI), either because they do not have a severe disability or because they do not have young children. GA/GR programs provide direct cash assistance, and occasionally in-kind services, with varying eligibility requirements and limitations. The defining feature of GA/GR programs is their focus on filling existing gaps among federal assistance programs to create a safety net for indigent adults.

The historical beginning of GA/GR programs in the United States dates back to 1935 when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt implemented the Social Security Administration as part of the New Deal. When GA/GR was initially developed, it was viewed as “‘the safety net of last resort’ for the least resourceful of the poor.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, the original intent of GA/GR was to provide a financial cushion for those who are not able to support themselves and who are not eligible for other assistance programs. This general intent continues today, with an added focus on decreasing dependence on welfare services. The extent of this focus on reducing dependency varies across state and county programs. For instance, while California describes their GA/GR program as a program to “provide relief and support to indigent adults who are not supported by their own means, other public funds, or assistance programs,”<sup>3</sup> Hawaii describes the goal of their GA program as, “to provide temporary financial assistance to those eligible for economic support, to ensure they receive at least a minimally adequate standard of living.”<sup>4</sup> Further, the stated intent of the GA program in

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<sup>2</sup> Rycroft, R.S. (2017). *The American Middle Class: An Economic Encyclopedia of Progress and Poverty*. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood.

<sup>3</sup> General Assistance Benefits & Services (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/general-assistance>

<sup>4</sup> General Assistance (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/bessd/ga/>

Cedar County, Iowa is “to direct the applicant in removing barriers to self-sufficiency and economic self-support to prevent, reduce, or eliminate dependency.”<sup>5</sup>

In California, as in some other states, GA/GR is a mandated program. California is one of only a few states that require GA/GR programs to be entirely funded and administered at the county level as a matter of law.<sup>6</sup> The California Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) reads:

*Every county and every city and county shall relieve and support all incompetent, poor, indigent persons, and those incapacitated by age, disease, or accident, lawfully resident therein, when such persons are not supported and relieved by their relatives or friends, by their own means, or by state hospitals or other state or private institutions.*<sup>7</sup>

In contrast to California, most GA/GR programs in other parts of the country have uniform, statewide guidelines for how county-level GA/GR programs must be implemented. Exceptions to this model include Iowa, Maine, and South Dakota.<sup>8</sup> At least one state, Maine, allows counties to administer their own GA/GR programs while also providing them with partial reimbursement for the cost of their GA/GR programs.<sup>9</sup>

### *Lawsuits and Controversy*

An extensive review of state and county GA/GR program websites revealed that the relationship between states and counties with regard to GA/GR varies across the country. Some states mandate that each county provide a GA/GR program, others have no such mandate. Some states (e.g. Maine) reimburse counties for part of the cost of GA/GR,<sup>10</sup> while others, including California,<sup>11</sup> expect counties to provide the revenue themselves - even though the program is mandated by the state.<sup>11</sup> Further,

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<sup>5</sup> Cedar County, Iowa - General Assistance (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.cedarcounty.org/offices/genassist/index.htm>

<sup>6</sup> Spiller, S.L. (2017, November 1). General Relief Program. Public Social Services Workshop. Retrieved from <https://www.selacowdb.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/2017-General-Relief-Overview-Powerpoint-1101174.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> The California Welfare and Institutions Code (W&I) Division 9, Part 5 (Sections 17000-17410)

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix A for more information.

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix A for more information.

<sup>10</sup> Bar Harbor, Maine - General Assistance (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.barharbormaine.gov/134/General-Assistance>

<sup>11</sup> General Assistance Benefits & Services (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/general-assistance>

some programs have guidelines that are set at the state level while others allow counties to develop individualized approaches with regard to eligibility and program models. Because GA/GR programs involve these varied relationships between states and counties, and possibly because GA/GR is a program that administers aid to a particularly stigmatized group (i.e. single indigent adults without dependent children, who are often homeless), GA/GR is subject to lawsuits and resulting court mandates in jurisdictions around the nation. Highlights from a few recent controversies are included below.

#### State of Maine General Assistance Program: Assisting Undocumented Immigrants<sup>12</sup>

- In 2014, the governor of the state of Maine, Paul LePage, threatened to withhold all reimbursements for GA from municipalities providing assistance to undocumented immigrants. Since Maine reimburses its municipalities for 50 to 90 percent of the costs of GA, the state holds a lot of leverage over municipalities - even though, in Maine, GA is technically administered at the county level.
- The Maine House responded by proposing a bill that argues GA may be offered to non-citizens "within available resources." This bill would not allocate any money to immigrants or asylum seekers but would allow them to legally qualify for assistance if funding is available.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Moretto, M. (2014, June 24). LePage Threatens to Cut Assistance Funding to Cities That Continue to Aid Undocumented Immigrants. *Bangor Daily News*. Retrieved from [https://bangordailynews.com/2014/06/24/politics/lepage-tells-towns-all-general-assistance-funding-will-be-cut-off-if-they-buck-new-rule-blocking-aid-for-undocumented-immigrants/?\\_ga=2.49975649.631151400.1587765583-1865948437.1587765579](https://bangordailynews.com/2014/06/24/politics/lepage-tells-towns-all-general-assistance-funding-will-be-cut-off-if-they-buck-new-rule-blocking-aid-for-undocumented-immigrants/?_ga=2.49975649.631151400.1587765583-1865948437.1587765579)

<sup>13</sup> Miller, K. & Thistle, S. (2019, June 19). Maine House votes to relax welfare restrictions on asylum seekers. *The Portland Press Herald*. Retrieved from <https://www.pressherald.com/2019/06/19/maine-house-votes-to-relax-welfare-restrictions-on-asylum-seekers/>

### Portland, Maine General Assistance Program: Mismanagement of GA Funds<sup>14</sup>

- In 2015, the city of Portland, Maine was accused of “wasting” GA funds when a state audit found that some homeless shelter residents had over \$20,000 in their bank accounts.
- Advocates of the homeless argued that these individuals have severe mental illnesses, are all long-term residents, and need the ongoing support that the shelter provides. Undeterred by this argument, the state decided that Portland had not been conducting effective income eligibility screenings and charged the city with developing a plan to enforce future screenings.

### California General Assistance: Time-Limited Assistance in Riverside County<sup>15</sup>

- In October 2019, through a legal settlement Riverside County, California, was forced to end its policy of stopping housing payments for people who are homeless after six months.

### Pennsylvania General Assistance: Elimination of GA Program<sup>16</sup>

- In July 2019, Disability Rights Pennsylvania and Community Legal Services filed a class-action lawsuit against the Department of Human Services in response to Pennsylvania’s decision to eliminate their GA program.
- The author of the litigation, staff attorney Maria Pulzetti stated:

*Our clients are telling us they are afraid. Without General Assistance, they may become homeless, or face utility shut-offs. They are afraid of having to return to an abusive partner for a place to stay, and of jeopardizing their recovery from addiction. They are afraid of what will happen to their health when they cannot afford co-payments for medication or transportation for appointments.*

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<sup>14</sup> Porter, T. (2015, February 27). Portland Officials Blast State Over General Assistance Issue. Retrieved from <https://www.mainepublic.org/term/general-assistance?page=2>

<sup>15</sup> Press Release: With Legal Settlement, Riverside County Now Providing General Assistance to Over 4,000 Individuals in Deep Poverty, Up from 100 in 2018 (2019, October, 22). Retrieved from <https://wclp.org/with-legal-settlement-riverside-county-now-providing-general-assistance-to-over-4000-individuals-in-deep-poverty-up-from-100-in-2018/>

<sup>16</sup> Pulzetti, M. (2019, July 25). Press Release: Lawsuit Challenging Unconstitutional General Assistance Cuts. Retrieved from <https://www.disabilityrightspa.org/newsroom/lawsuit-challenging-unconstitutional-general-assistance-cuts/>

- The lawsuit, *Weeks vs. The Department of Human Services* sought a preliminary injunction but was denied by the Commonwealth Court - and the GA program ended.
- As of February 2020, the Poor People's Campaign, an advocacy group, is still trying to get GA reinstated.<sup>17</sup>

### *Recent Trends*

Although rates of poverty continue to climb, GA/GR programs across the country have declined over the past few decades. A 2015 report from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities states, "The number of states with General Assistance programs has fallen from 38 to 26 since 1989, and benefits have shrunk in inflation-adjusted terms in nearly every state since 1998."<sup>18</sup> Further, only 23 mandated state programs were found in writing this report. The majority of the programs that continue today have eligibility guidelines that restrict beneficiaries to people who are unemployable due to disability, yet 11 programs serve adults who may not be disabled while a few others include pregnant women, those who are caring for a disabled family member, or individuals over 18 who are still in high school. Only four states include immigrants in their eligibility guidelines.<sup>19</sup>

Over 300 state and county programs were reviewed. This research revealed that cash assistance programs, where the money is granted directly to the recipient, is actually fairly uncommon within states that have a mandated GA/GR program that is implemented by individual counties. For example, throughout Iowa and Maine counties the most common model is assistance in the form of vouchers or payments that are made directly to the vendor (e.g., landlord, pharmacist), rather than the GA/GR

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<sup>17</sup> Meyer, K. (2020, February 27). Poor people's campaign wants to remind lawmakers about general assistance. Retrieved from <https://why.org/articles/poor-peoples-campaign-wants-to-remind-lawmakers-about-general-assistance/>

<sup>18</sup> Schott, L. and Hill, M. (2015, July 9). State general assistance programs are weakening despite increased need. *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/7-9-15pov.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> See Appendix A for more information.



recipient. In California, direct cash assistance is still offered in some counties, but usually, this assistance is considered a loan rather than a grant.

### *GA/GR Recipient Demographics*

Unlike for the beneficiaries of federal family assistance programs, descriptive data on GA/GR recipients is very limited. Because GA/GR is administered at the state and sometimes the county level, it is difficult for researchers to compile nationwide statistics. Nonetheless, existing county-level research suggests that GA/GR recipients are a highly vulnerable group. For example, a 2010 study found that GA/GR recipients in New York City were “older and more likely to be non-white than were Family Assistance (FA) recipients.”<sup>20</sup> A 2019 vulnerability study on 493 GA recipients in Riverside County, California, found that over 70% of respondents were homeless and that the majority did not have a paying job. This Riverside County study also reported that nearly two-thirds of GA/GR recipients were male.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Social Services reported in 2017 that 64% of their GR recipients were male and that most live alone with no income or property.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ifcher, J. (2010) “General Assistance Recipients and Welfare-To-Work Programs: Evidence from New York City,” *Poverty & Public Policy*: Vol. 2: Iss. 3, Article 9.

<sup>21</sup> Research, Analysis, and Decision Support (2019, April 16). “General Assistance Vulnerability Study.” *Riverside County Department of Public Social Services*.

<sup>22</sup> Spiller, S.L. (2017, November 1). *General Relief Program. Public Social Services Workshop*. Retrieved from <https://www.selacowdb.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/2017-General-Relief-Overview-Powerpoint-1101174.pdf>

## Program Effectiveness

There is no universal agreement on the specific intended outcomes of GA/GR programs across the nation. However, some limited evidence suggests that GA/GR programs have a positive impact on factors such as crime rates and housing insecurity, at least in some states and counties. For instance, a 2009 study conducted across several California counties found that homicide and GA/GR were inversely related.<sup>23</sup> A second study, conducted in Michigan, found that homelessness increased when the state's GA program was eliminated.<sup>24</sup>

Nonetheless, concern over the cost-effectiveness of GA/GR programs persists, especially when it comes to the predominant form of GA/GR benefits - which traditionally has been cash assistance. A 2002 San Francisco legislative analyst report on GA/GR program in five California counties referenced some limited research suggesting that government cash assistance leads to an increase in accidents, homicides, and lethal substance abuse.<sup>25</sup> However, the report also acknowledged that scholars have long argued that withholding cash assistance from marginalized groups is paternalistic and further limits the constrained choices of people who live in poverty.<sup>26</sup> There does not appear to be much, if any, available data on how GA/GR recipients are using funds in jurisdictions that continue to provide cash payments to individuals.

The shift away from cash payments towards in-kind benefits in some California counties arose in direct response to concerns about program effectiveness and, more

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<sup>23</sup> Worrall, J. L. 2009. "Social Support and Homicide." *Homicide Studies* 13:124-143.

<sup>24</sup> Danziger, S. K., & Kossoudji, S. A. (n.d.). When a welfare program is terminated: a study of what happened to Michigan's general assistance recipients. Retrieved from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.622.2265&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Philips, D.P. (1999, November 11). An increase in the number of deaths in the United States in the first week of the month. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 341(20). AND Rosenheck, R. & Frisman, L. (1996). Do public support payments encourage substance abuse? *Health Affairs*; Chevy Chase; Vol 15, Issue 3.

<sup>26</sup> Grana, J.M. & Yamashiro, S.M. (1987, April 15). An Evaluation of the Veteran's Administration Housebound and Aid and Attendance Allowance Program. Project HOPE Center for Health Affairs.

specifically, the cost-effectiveness of cash assistance GA/GR programs.<sup>27</sup> A plausible core desired outcome for GA/GR programs is to enable clients to meet their basic needs. However, due to rising rental prices, even the maximum GA/GR cash payment in Northern California is no longer sufficient to meet the housing costs of a growing homeless population.<sup>28</sup> Recognizing this problem but unwilling or unable to raise the maximum payment, in recent years a number of California counties have chosen to replace cash payments with in-kind services. In 2002, San Francisco County conducted a review of five nearby California counties that had made this shift. Three out of four of these counties reported some degree of initial cost savings once they replaced GA/GR cash payments with in-kind services or a combination of cash payments and in-kind services.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> City and County of San Francisco. (2002). Legislative analyst report—Cash assistance programs (File No. 012179). Retrieved from <https://sfbos.org/legislative-analyst-report-cash-assistance-programs-file-no-012179>

<sup>28</sup> City and County of San Francisco. (2002). Legislative analyst report—Cash assistance programs (File No. 012179). Retrieved from <https://sfbos.org/legislative-analyst-report-cash-assistance-programs-file-no-012179>

<sup>29</sup> City and County of San Francisco. (2002). Legislative analyst report—Cash assistance programs (File No. 012179). Retrieved from <https://sfbos.org/legislative-analyst-report-cash-assistance-programs-file-no-012179>

## Compilation of Innovative GA/GR Program Models

### *Methodology & Criteria*

This section will share examples of innovative state and county GA/GR program models. Where possible, research on program effectiveness is included. Both state and county-level programs were determined to be “innovative” if they fell into one or more of the following thematic categories: (1) holistic programs, (2) programs that emphasize accountability, (3) programs with expanded eligibility, and (4) programs administered through local NGOs.

#### Holistic Programs

For the purposes of this report, “holistic programs” are defined as GA/GR programs that offer an unusual range of benefits and services. These may include cash assistance and/or voucher benefits but are not limited to them. Many of the programs identified as holistic programs include medical and behavioral health counseling services, job placement, and/or programs to integrate recipients back into their communities.

#### Programs that Emphasize Accountability

These programs employed an unusual degree of monitoring, follow-up, and work/community service requirements for GA/GR recipients. These programs were included to demonstrate how some states and counties are attempting to regulate how GA/GR dollars are being spent and for what purpose.

#### Programs with Expanded Eligibility

As of 2015, only eight states provide assistance to single adults who are considered employable.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, some statewide programs have expanded eligibility to include pregnant women, adults over 18 who will

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<sup>30</sup> Schott, L. and Hill, M. (2015, July 9). State general assistance programs are weakening despite increased need. *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/7-9-15pov.pdf>

graduate high school within two years, individuals who care for a disabled family member, the elderly, individuals who are participating in a drug rehabilitation program, and others. Eligibility guidelines among counties also vary.

#### Programs Administered through Local NGOs

The research uncovered some Midwestern counties that have chosen to outsource responsibility for their GA programs to a local nongovernmental organization (NGO). There was limited information available on these NGOs, but they are included for potential interest.

### *Innovative State-wide Programs*

#### Alaska - General Relief<sup>31</sup>/Adult Public Assistance<sup>32</sup>/Permanent Fund Dividend<sup>33</sup>

- Alaska has two programs for indigent adults without dependent children, Adult Public Assistance and General Relief Assistance.
  - Adult Public Assistance: provides cash assistance to blind and disabled adults and the elderly (over 65 years old).
  - General Relief Assistance: provides emergency assistance with basic needs including shelter, utilities, food, clothing, and burials. Payments are given directly to the vendor (e.g. landlord) and cannot exceed \$120 per month per person. Alaskan residents who are adults or eligible minors (those who are married or who live separately from their parents) can receive this aid.
- Alaska also has a Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD), which is given to all residents regardless of need (including indigent adults). Funds come from the state's wealth of nonrenewable oil revenues. Since 1982, the PFD has distributed equal annual payments to all residents, regardless of need. A study on the Permanent

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<sup>31</sup> General Relief Assistance (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/gra/default.aspx>

<sup>32</sup> Adult Public Assistance (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/apa/default.aspx>

<sup>33</sup> Berman, M. & Reamey, R. (2016, November). Permanent fund dividends and poverty in Alaska. *Institute of Social and Economic Research*. Retrieved from [https://iseralaska.org/static/legacy\\_publication\\_links/2016\\_12-PFDandPoverty.pdf](https://iseralaska.org/static/legacy_publication_links/2016_12-PFDandPoverty.pdf)

Fund estimates that it lifts 15,000 to 25,000 Alaskan residents out of poverty each year but is not sufficient to reverse the state's rising poverty rates.

#### Delaware - General Assistance<sup>34</sup>

- Delaware provides cash assistance but extends GA eligibility to adults over 18 who will graduate high school within two years and adults who must stay home during the day to care for a sick family member. Those who are too sick to work and those who are elderly may also be eligible.

#### Indiana Township Assistance<sup>35</sup>

- House Bill 1001, which was passed in April 2019, established an online pilot program for GA applications in Indiana. The purpose of the program is to “provide for ease of access and efficient application for township assistance, automate the application process for township assistance, and create a system to collect and report data regarding township assistance administration.”

#### Massachusetts - Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children<sup>36</sup>

- Similar to Delaware's program, this program extends eligibility to people who are staying home to take care of “a disabled person who would otherwise have to move to an institution” or a child who is unrelated to the caregiver.
- Adults who participate in the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Program, an independent living program for people with disabilities, may be eligible regardless of SSDI status.

#### Minnesota - General Assistance<sup>37</sup>

- Minnesota's GA program provides cash assistance to a range of vulnerable individuals, including:

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<sup>34</sup> DSS Cash Assistance Services: General Assistance. (n.d). Retrieved from <https://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dss/genast.html>

<sup>35</sup> Indiana House Bill 1001 (2019). Retrieved from <https://legiscan.com/IN/bill/HB1001/2019>

<sup>36</sup> Check EAEDC Eligibility and How to Apply. (n.d). Retrieved from <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/check-eaedc-eligibility-and-how-to-apply>

<sup>37</sup> General Assistance (GA) (2020, May 12). Retrieved from <https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/seniors/economic-assistance/income/programs-and-services/ga.jsp>

- Adults who are ill or disabled
- Adults who are taking care of someone who is ill or disabled
- Adults who are in a rehabilitation facility for mental health, physical health, or addictions
- Seniors who are unable to get a job due to age (must be over 55)
- Adults who are completing court-ordered services that prevent employment due to time constraints
- Adults who have learning disabilities or drug/alcohol dependencies
- Minors who do not live with family
- Displaced homemakers who are full-time students
- Adults attending high school who have a first language other than English

#### New Hampshire Local Welfare<sup>38</sup>

- New Hampshire's Local Welfare program is mandated by the state and administered at the county level. To ensure accountability and uniformity across municipalities, New Hampshire formed a Local Welfare Administrators Association to ensure "the uniform, humane, equitable, and ethical administration [of municipal assistance]."<sup>39</sup>

#### New York State - Safety Net Assistance Program<sup>40</sup>

- In New York cash benefits are provided for up to two years, then only in-kind benefits. Individuals who are found to be abusing drugs or alcohol or who refuse a drug/alcohol screening are also given in-kind benefits rather than cash assistance.
- Eligibility includes single adults and childless couples, families of people with drug and/or alcohol addictions, children who do not live with an adult relative, and some immigrants who are ineligible for federal reimbursement.

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<sup>38</sup> NH Local Welfare Administrator's Association. (n.d). Retrieved from <http://nhlwaa.org/>

<sup>39</sup> NH Local Welfare Administrator's Association. (n.d). Retrieved from <http://nhlwaa.org/>

<sup>40</sup> Temporary Assistance. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/temporary-assistance/>

- The Substance Abuse Case Management Program (SACM)<sup>41</sup> provides intensive case management services to New York Safety Net program participants who are identified as possibly struggling with substance abuse. Recipients enrolled in SACM are assessed to determine the type and degree of substance abuse and then receive referrals to treatment and/or the welfare-to-work program. A 2009 study found that the SACM participants were more likely than other Safety Net program participants to enroll in substance use treatment and employment services. However, SACM participation did not lead to an increase in employment during the 18-month follow-up period.

#### Washington - Aged, Blind, or Disabled Cash Assistance Program<sup>42</sup>

- Provides cash assistance to people who are blind, disabled, or elderly (over 65) along with a housing referral to the Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) program.
- HEN program provides essential needs (including rent and utility assistance, move-in costs, cleaning supplies, personal health and hygiene products, and transportation assistance) and potential rent assistance.
- Recipients may also qualify for healthcare through the Medical Care Services (MCS) program.

#### *Innovative County-Level Programs (organized by state)*

In five states with mandated GA/GR programs, counties and municipalities bear both the responsibility and the authority to determine the specific structure and guidelines of their GA/GR programs. These states include New Hampshire, California, Iowa, Maine, and South Dakota. In New Hampshire, municipalities formed a Local

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<sup>41</sup> Martinez, J., Azurdia, G., Bloom, D., & Miller, C. (2009, March). Results from the substance abuse case management program in New York City. *MDRC*. Retrieved from

<https://www.mdrc.org/publication/results-substance-abuse-case-management-program-new-york-city>

<sup>42</sup> Aged, Blind, or Disabled Cash Assistance Program. (n.d.). Retrieved from

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/community-services-offices/aged-blind-or-disabled-abd-cash-assistance-program>



Welfare Administrators Association to ensure “the uniform, humane, equitable, and ethical administration [of municipal assistance.]”<sup>43</sup> However, in the other four states, county programs are not necessarily uniform. The following section will provide an overview of innovative county programs within each of these four states. Overall trends, including the most common models within each state, are also described.

## California County Programs

### *General Overview*

California has some of the most diverse program models of the states that were studied, ranging from in-kind benefits, to loan-based programs, to mixed models. A comprehensive internet search revealed that, as of April 3, 2020, 24 of California’s 58 counties require GA/GR cash assistance to be paid back by the recipient. The categorization of GA/GR benefits as a loan is less common among counties that provide only in-kind benefits. Many in-kind and cash assistance GA/GR programs require individuals to participate in work readiness or job training programs as long as they are receiving benefits.

### **Contra Costa County, California – General Assistance Program<sup>44</sup>**

- This program provides cash assistance to both employable and disabled adults. Pregnant women are eligible for this program for the first six months of their pregnancy. After that, they are encouraged to apply for CalWORKs assistance. Employable adults receive \$336 per month, while those who are disabled receive \$375. The grant amount may increase if more than one person is receiving the benefit.
  - GA recipients receive 47% of their monthly payment in the form of cash assistance. This money is intended to be used for transportation, food, and personal needs. The remaining 53% is sent directly to the recipient’s landlord to subsidize rent.

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<sup>43</sup> NH Local Welfare Administrator’s Association. (n.d). Retrieved from <http://nhlwaa.org/>

<sup>44</sup> General Assistance (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://ehsd.org/elderly-disabled/general-assistance/>

- All employable recipients must be available to either work or seek employment, on a full-time basis. Those who have a substance use disorder must enter a treatment program.
- This program is time-limited; employable adults can receive assistance for a maximum of three months in one year. Those who are disabled receive assistance until they either recover or begin receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

#### El Dorado County, California - General Assistance Program<sup>45</sup>

- This is a loan-based program that offers repayable benefits in the form of vouchers. These vouchers may be used for personal needs, utilities, transportation, and housing. The El Dorado County program separates recipients into one of four categories and awards repayable vouchers based on membership in a particular group. The categories are:
  - non-residents who need transportation in order to return home,
  - people who are disabled and awaiting Social Security benefits,
  - people who do not have jobs but are capable of working, and
  - indigent people who have died and require burial assistance.

#### Fresno County, California - General Relief Program<sup>46</sup>

- This program provides either cash assistance or in-kind services to “needy individuals and childless couples who are not eligible for assistance under any other categorical aid program” in the form of grants. What is innovative about this program is that it specifically extends eligibility beyond adults to emancipated minors, childless minor couples who are legally married and one-time legally married but separated or divorced minors who do not have dependent children.

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<sup>45</sup> General Assistance (n.d.). Retrieved from [https://www.edcgov.us/Government/HumanServices/Cash%20Aid%20Services/pages/general\\_assistance.aspx](https://www.edcgov.us/Government/HumanServices/Cash%20Aid%20Services/pages/general_assistance.aspx)

<sup>46</sup> General Relief (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.co.fresno.ca.us/departments/social-services/assistance-programs/general-relief>

- The maximum allowable assistance per month is \$245 for a single person, \$400 for a couple, and \$495 for three people. Fresno County provides a breakdown of how much money should be directed towards housing, utilities, food, clothing, personal needs, and household operation to reach these totals.

#### Kings County, California - General Assistance Program<sup>47</sup>

- This program provides rent assistance and vouchers for basic needs for disabled and employable low-income adults. Employable adults are expected to be “available for and actively seeking employment within their capabilities,” but the County does not require them to participate in a work training program. Like Fresno County’s program, this program extends eligibility to emancipated minors, childless married minors, and separated/divorced minors without dependent children.
  - Kings County sends rent and utility payments to the GA recipient’s landlord and/or utility company, respectively.
  - Disabled persons are required to apply for Social Security Income (SSI). If they receive it, the County expects recipients to pay back the cash value of any GA benefits they have received.
  - Residents of the County who have died may be eligible for burial/cremation services.

#### Lake County, California - General Relief Program<sup>48</sup>

- This is a loan-based program that offers repayable in-kind benefits, including food assistance, medical care, rent assistance, and cremation services to indigent adults. Both disabled and employable persons are eligible for benefits,

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<sup>47</sup> General Assistance (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.countyofkings.com/departments/human-services-agency/benefit-services-division/health-care-benefits/general-assistance>

<sup>48</sup> General Relief Program. (n.d.). Retrieved from [http://www.lakecountyca.gov/Government/Directory/Social\\_Services/Programs/General\\_Relief\\_Program.htm](http://www.lakecountyca.gov/Government/Directory/Social_Services/Programs/General_Relief_Program.htm)

but those who are employable must actively look for a job and join the General Relief Work Program.

- GR recipients are entered into the County Medical Services Program (MSP), through which they receive medical care.
- GR recipients receive food vouchers and a small personal allowance, which they must use for basic needs including personal and home hygiene (e.g. toothpaste, soap, paper products). Some recipients are also eligible for CalFresh.
- The program subsidizes GR recipients' rent by issuing housing payments directly to the recipient's landlord.
- All employable recipients are expected to complete an unpaid work project, assigned by GR staff. The number of hours of work is commensurate with how much assistance the recipient receives. This work must be completed *before* the recipient receives food vouchers and cash assistance for personal needs.
- All unemployable (disabled) recipients are required to apply for State Disability Insurance (SDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). If they receive these benefits, recipients are expected to repay the cash value of all GR assistance they have received using this income.<sup>49</sup>

#### Los Angeles County, California - General Relief Program<sup>50</sup>

- This program offers financial assistance to both employable and disabled adults in the form of a Housing Subsidy and Case Management Program. Assistance is time-limited for those who are deemed employable (no more than nine months of support in a year). Rent subsidies are paid directly to the recipient's landlord.

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<sup>49</sup> Lake County's GR program is similar to the one in Humboldt County.

<sup>50</sup> General Relief (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://dpss.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/dpss/main/programs-and-services/general-relief/>

- Applications can be completed online. GR emergency housing is available along with housing subsidies and case management services.<sup>51</sup>
- All employable GR recipients must participate in General Relief Opportunities for Work (GROW),<sup>52</sup> a job training program that is offered through the County. Participating in this program is optional for those who are categorized as unemployable due to a disability.
  - Resources offered through GROW include educational, youth, training, and employment development services as well as substance abuse treatment and counseling to address intimate partner violence and mental health issues.

### Monterey County, California - General Assistance Program<sup>53</sup>

- This program provides repayable rent assistance, which is paid directly to the landlord, and a personal needs voucher to eligible indigent adults. Children under 18 years old may be eligible for assistance if they are married to a legal adult.
  - Travel assistance is also available for people who are willing to return home to a former residence (outside the County or state).
  - Assistance is considered a loan; those who are employable must work at a "County assigned Work Project site" in order to pay back their benefits.

### Napa County, California - General Assistance<sup>54</sup>

- As of May 2020, Napa County will be grouping what were previously separate vouchers for utilities, food, transportation, and incidentals into a single

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<sup>51</sup> Spiller, S.L. (2017, November 1). General Relief Program. Public Social Services Workshop. Retrieved from <https://www.selacowdb.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/2017-General-Relief-Overview-Powerpoint-1101174.pdf>

<sup>52</sup> General Relief Opportunities for Work (GROW). (n.d). Retrieved from <http://dpss.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/dpss/main/programs-and-services/general-relief-opportunities-for-work/>

<sup>53</sup> General Assistance (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://mc-choice.co.monterey.ca.us/programs/general-assistance/>

<sup>54</sup> General Relief (n.d.) Retrieved from <https://www.countyofnapa.org/376/General-Assistance>

category- essential needs. This change intends to enable recipients to be able to allocate their loans to various needs, as necessary.

#### Santa Barbara County - General Relief Program<sup>55</sup>

- This program provides small, short-term loans to indigent adults without dependent children. The loans are in the form of cash and are given directly to recipients.
  - Disabled clients must pay any GR benefits back to the County if and when they receive Social Security Income (SSI).
  - Employable adults are expected to repay the County by participating in a Work Project, where they provide needed labor and services for local homeless charities, social services, or parks and recreation departments. Employable adults may also receive up to four weeks of employment assistance through two programs known as Job Club and Job Search.

#### Santa Clara County - General Assistance Program<sup>56</sup>

- This program used to require recipients to pay back the cash aid, but as of 2014 they no longer consider GA a loan.
- GA cash grants are given directly to the recipient or, in the case of rent assistance, to the recipient's landlord.

#### San Francisco County, California - County Adult Assistance Program (CAAP)<sup>57</sup>

- CAAP strives to reduce homelessness and improve the health and welfare of homeless indigent adults receiving cash assistance through permanent housing options and enhanced services. CAAP operates four separate programs to meet the specific needs of this population: General Assistance (GA), Personal Assisted

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<sup>55</sup> General Relief (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.countyofsb.org/dss/services/cash-aid/general-relief.sbc>

<sup>56</sup> Financial Assistance for Adults: General Assistance Program (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/ssa/debs/calworks/Pages/adults.aspx>

<sup>57</sup> County Adult Assistance Programs (CAAP). (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.sfhsa.org/services/jobs-money/county-adult-assistance-programs-caap>

Employment Services (PAES), Cash Assistance Linked to Medi-Cal (CALM), and Supplemental Security Income Pending (SSIP).

- CAAP offers cash assistance (maximum \$588 per month) and employment, housing, and a range of other services to low-income adults without dependent children. All recipients must receive MediCal and CalFresh. Some immigrants are also eligible to participate in the CAAP program.
  - CAAP recipients get access to JobsNOW! (a job/internship assistance program), Youth Employment and Training Services, and assistance with placement in a job with a minimum starting wage of \$15 an hour.
  - CAAP also provides possible placement in a shelter, a free public transit pass, and counseling services for intimate partner violence, mental health, and substance abuse, as well as help with applications for a Free California DMV Identification Card and Supplemental Security Income (SSI), if appropriate.
  - Finally, CAAP recipients are entitled to a range of discounted or free resources, such as kids' recreation programs, legal services, diapers, utilities, restaurants, grocery stores, transportation, and museum admissions.
- The number of adults enrolled in CAAP continues to follow a trend of declining enrollment. As of December 2019, the CAAP caseload has been in overall decline for the past five years, generally mirroring the regional decline in unemployment, although at a slightly slower rate due to San Francisco's improved economic conditions. Between Fiscal Year (FY) 2010-11 and Fiscal Year 2018-19, the average monthly CAAP caseload dropped 36.7% from 7,515 to 4,754 active cases.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> City and County of San Francisco. (Dec. 2019). City Performance Standards County Adult Assistance Programs (CAAP) Active Caseload. Retrieved from <https://sfgov.org/scorecards/safety-net/county-adult-assistance-programs-caap-active-caseload>

## Iowa County Programs

### *General Overview*

Based on a review of all available county websites, most programs include employable persons and provide assistance in the form of vouchers and/or direct payments to vendors (e.g., landlords). Many are loan-based, and many separate assistance into three categories—emergency assistance for needy persons, assistance for low-income persons, and assistance of an extended nature. A few unique Iowa County program models are highlighted below.

#### Clay County, Iowa - General Assistance Program<sup>59</sup>

- This program provides emergency financial assistance for “unanticipated problems” with housing, rent, and utility payments and also fund county burials.
  - The program coordinates with the Department of Human Services, Upper Des Moines Opportunity (UDMO), and local churches to address other needs such as food and clothing.
  - Substance abuse services are coordinated with treatment facilities and the court system, though it is not specified how these are funded.
  - Their website indicates that medical and housing services may also be provided, although it is not specified how or through what channels.

#### Hamilton County, Iowa - General Assistance Program<sup>60</sup>

- Provides cash assistance for rent, food, utilities, and clothing (up to \$500 per year).
- Assistance with paying for emergency situations, which may include:
  - Food insecurity - \$25 voucher (\$10 for each additional household member).

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<sup>59</sup> General Assistance. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.co.clay.ia.us/offices/comservices/generalassistance.htm>

<sup>60</sup> Hamilton County Emergency Assistance Guidelines. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.hamiltoncounty.org/Emergency%20Assistance%20Guidelines%20Revised%20January%2026%202016.pdf>



- Medical - the cost of medical and drug expenses may be covered if they are pre-approved. Doctors, optometrists, and dentists are paid 80% of their usual cost in the case of an emergency (e.g., tooth extraction).
- Burial costs - GA offers \$1,500 to fund cremation services.
- Transportation - Funds may be offered in the case of a medical or family emergency, job search, or new employment.
- Other goods and services - Only to address a life-threatening situation.

### Humboldt County, Iowa - Community Services<sup>61</sup>

- Offers a range of community services for indigent adults, of which general assistance is one.
- GA is described as short-term economic relief, but no specifics are given on their website.
- Other community services available for indigent adults include mental health services, targeted case management for people with disabilities, an advisory board, funding for detoxification services for drugs and/or alcohol, and a money management program where trained volunteers provide assistance to people with disabilities and the elderly.

### Johnson County, Iowa - General Assistance<sup>62</sup>

- This program offers cash assistance to address needs related to “rent, utilities, provisions, prescriptions, and funeral expenses.” There are four different kinds of assistance:
  - Short-term program: may be used for up to 3 months in a year.  
Applicants must be at or below 50% of the federal poverty line. Maximum \$550 per month per one-person household.

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<sup>61</sup> Community Services (n.d.). Retrieved from [https://www.humboldtcountyia.org/offices/services/community\\_services/index.php](https://www.humboldtcountyia.org/offices/services/community_services/index.php)

<sup>62</sup> General Assistance (n.d.). Retrieved from [https://www.johnson-county.com/dept\\_gen\\_asst.aspx?id=381](https://www.johnson-county.com/dept_gen_asst.aspx?id=381)

- One-time program: may be used for one month out of the year. Applies when the applicant is between 51% and 100% of the federal poverty line. It also has a maximum of \$550 per one-person household.
- Interim assistance reimbursement program: ongoing financial assistance for disabled people applying for Supplemental Security Income (SSI). If applicants receive SSI, then they must pay back the county. If they are denied SSI, they become automatically ineligible for interim assistance.
- Burial assistance: maximum \$2,100 for the funeral expenses for a resident of the county who has died.

### Montgomery County, Iowa -General Assistance<sup>63</sup>

- Services include emergency rent, utility, and burial assistance. In addition, this program provides emergency food assistance through a partnership with local food pantries and “holiday help” in November and December.
- It also provides protective payee services through Social Security and notary services and has applications available for Southern Iowa Regional Housing Authority (SIRHA) and Rent Reimbursement Claims.

### Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation (NEICAC)<sup>64</sup>

- This private non-profit offers a wide variety of programs serving low-income individuals (and families). Examples are early childhood education, housing, family services, public transit, and energy assistance programs.
- NEICAC administers the GA program in four Iowa counties: Chickasaw, Fayette, Howard, and Winneshiek.<sup>65</sup> Eligibility is based on the guidelines of each particular county, even though the county does not directly administer the

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<sup>63</sup> General Assistance (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.montgomerycountyiowa.com/index.php/general-assistance>

<sup>64</sup> Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.neicac.org/>

<sup>65</sup> Howard County Iowa, General Assistance (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://co.howard.ia.us/general-assistance/>

benefits. NOTE: In December 2019, Dubuque County also decided to transition their GA program to a private non-profit called Resources Unite.<sup>66</sup>

#### Polk County, Iowa - General Assistance<sup>67</sup>

- Provides “temporary assistance with basic and special needs” to indigent county residents who are vulnerable due to a mental or physical disability and/or a temporary crisis.
- Basic needs include food, rent assistance, utility payments, and household as well as personal items.
- Special needs encompass health supplies, clothing, traveler’s aid, and furniture.
- Property tax and cremation assistance may also be available.

#### Poweshiek County, Iowa - General Assistance<sup>68</sup>

- Provides cash assistance for eligible needs and all payments are made directly to the vendor (e.g., landlord, pharmacist). Applicants must sign a repayment agreement before receiving any aid.
- Services include: emergency food assistance (consists of referrals to the food pantry, SHARE program, Food Recovery Network, and Food Stamps), rent assistance, utilities, burials, some medical services (non-psychiatric prescriptions and medical needs that do not require a prescription), emergency dental assistance, and “other emergency services” at the discretion of the GA director and based on available funds.

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<sup>66</sup> Dubuque Makes Changes to General Assistance Policy (2019, December). Retrieved from <https://www.kcrg.com/video/?vid=566266692>

<sup>67</sup> General Assistance (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.polkcountyiowa.gov/community-family-youth-services/community-and-family/general-assistance/>

<sup>68</sup> General Assistance (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://poweshiekcounty.org/general-assistance/>

## Maine County Programs

### *General Trends*

A sampling of 35 of Maine's 432 municipalities suggested that the majority of their GA programs provide assistance in the form of vouchers and in-kind benefits, rather than cash, and may require participation in a work project. Assistance is typically determined within a 24-hour period and recipients may be required to present receipts proving they used the funds appropriately. Counties receive partial reimbursement for their GA/GR expenses from the state of Maine, although the percentage that is reimbursed varies. Although not all municipal websites were reviewed, no exceptions to this program model were found.

## South Dakota County Programs

### *General Trends*

Based on a review of all available county websites, most South Dakota county programs provide rent, utility, food, and burial assistance through cash payments made directly to the vendor and/or vouchers. All the programs found provided some degree of financial support to help indigent residents pay for medical needs, including hospitalizations, prescription medicines, and sometimes mental health, eyeglass services, and/or emergency dental care. Some counties also have funding available to cover transportation costs (e.g., gas, bus tokens). Applicants may be required to participate in workfare programs and assistance is often in the form of a loan.

## **Catastrophic County Poor Relief (CCPR) Program<sup>69</sup>**

- The CCPR was established in 1984 to assist counties with paying "catastrophic medical expenses incurred on behalf of individuals who are medically indigent" and who are unable to pay for their medical expenses.

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<sup>69</sup> South Dakota Association of County Commissioners (n.d.). Catastrophic county poor relief program. Retrieved from [https://sdcountycommissioners.org/?page\\_id=165](https://sdcountycommissioners.org/?page_id=165)

- The CCPR program is administered by the South Dakota Association of County Commissioners (SDACC) and the Catastrophic County Poor Relief (CCPR) Board. The Board consists of five county commissioners appointed by the SDACC executive board.

#### **Western South Dakota Community Action Agency<sup>70</sup>**

- This is a private nonprofit that serves low-income individuals and families in 15 South Dakota counties and was established to implement the Federal Administration's War on Poverty programs in 1965.
- This nonprofit's anti-poverty programs and projects include Operation Mainstream, a job training program, Head Start, a detox program, and Legal Aid. They also provide services through the Department of Energy's Weatherization Program and have organized a network of 14 low-income volunteer organizations that deliver goods and services to the low-income populations in their counties.

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<sup>70</sup> About Western SD Community Action Agency (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.wsdca.org/about>

## Directions for Future Research

This research report provided an overview of innovative GA/GR program models in the United States based on information drawn from county and state government websites as well as various reports, academic studies, and news articles. It could also be beneficial to gather more information about some of the innovative programs listed in this report by directly contacting GA/GR offices by email or phone. Secondly, studies on the cost and program effectiveness of GA/GR program models are extremely lacking; there is a need for high-quality studies comparing and contrasting GA/GR program models and outcomes. Further research could also explore the responses of counties in states without a mandated GA/GR program in more depth. Finally, at least one program in Garfield County, Colorado has already significantly extended their GA/GR program in response to the coronavirus pandemic.<sup>71</sup> It may be interesting to explore to what extent this current national crisis may change the eligibility guidelines, aid amounts, and structure of GA/GR programs over the next few months.

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<sup>71</sup> Phippen, T. (2020, April 9). Garfield County extends cash assistance program for rent, food during COVID-19. Retrieved from <https://www.postindependent.com/news/garfield-county-extends-cash-assistance-program-for-rent-food-during-covid-19/>.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: National Overview of State GA/GR Assistance Programs (2020)

State	State Program Name	State Guidelines: Uniform Statewide	State Guidelines: Vary by County	Eligibility
Alaska	General Relief Assistance/Adult Public Assistance (GRA is for emergencies, APA is available for people over 65 or people who are blind/disabled) <a href="http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/apa/default.aspx">http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/apa/default.aspx</a> <a href="http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/ga/default.aspx">http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/ga/default.aspx</a>	X		Disabled and employable
California	General Assistance or General Relief <a href="https://www.cdss.ca.gov/general-assistance">https://www.cdss.ca.gov/general-assistance</a>		X	Disabled, employable, and immigrants
Colorado* <i>(*Additional CO counties reference county-specific General Assistance programs/services so additional research is recommended)</i>	Aid to the Needy Disabled <a href="https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/adult-financial-programs">https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/adult-financial-programs</a>	X		Disabled only
Connecticut	State Administered General Assistance (adults who are not able to work b/c of medical reasons) <a href="https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Departments-and-Agencies/DSS/Economic-Security/SAGA_CASH_FactSheet.pdf?la=en">https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Departments-and-Agencies/DSS/Economic-Security/SAGA_CASH_FactSheet.pdf?la=en</a>	X		Disabled only
Delaware	General Assistance (includes high school students over 18 and able-bodied people caring for a sick family member. State-funded). <a href="https://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dss/genast.html">https://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dss/genast.html</a>	X		Disabled and others
District of Columbia	Interim Disability Assistance <a href="https://dhs.dc.gov/service/interim-disability-assistance">https://dhs.dc.gov/service/interim-disability-assistance</a>	X		Disabled only



State	State Program Name	State Guidelines: Uniform Statewide	State Guidelines: Vary by County	Eligibility
Hawaii	General Assistance / Aid to the Aged, Blind, and Disabled (GA is for people who are temporarily disabled, AABD is for people permanently disabled) <a href="https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/bessd/ga/">https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/bessd/ga/</a> <a href="https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/bessd/aabd/">https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/bessd/aabd/</a>	X		Disabled only (includes immigrants)
Indiana	Township Assistance <a href="https://westfieldwashingtontwp.us/DocumentCenter/View/80/Township-Assistance-Standards-and-Guidelines-2017-PDF">https://westfieldwashingtontwp.us/DocumentCenter/View/80/Township-Assistance-Standards-and-Guidelines-2017-PDF</a>	X (but implemented by individual counties)		Disabled and employable
Iowa	General Assistance <a href="https://www.dmcountry.com/174/General-Assistance">https://www.dmcountry.com/174/General-Assistance</a>		X	Disabled and employable
Maine	General Assistance <a href="https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ofiservices/general-assistance/">https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ofiservices/general-assistance/</a>		X	Disabled, employable, and immigrants
Maryland	Temporary Disability Assistance <a href="http://dhs.maryland.gov/weathering-tough-times/temporary-disability-assistance/">http://dhs.maryland.gov/weathering-tough-times/temporary-disability-assistance/</a>	X		Disabled only
Massachusetts	Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children <a href="https://www.mass.gov/service-details/check-eaedc-eligibility-and-how-to-apply">https://www.mass.gov/service-details/check-eaedc-eligibility-and-how-to-apply</a>	X		Disabled and others
Michigan	State Disability Assistance <a href="https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71547_5526_7766---.00.html">https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71547_5526_7766---.00.html</a>	X		Disabled and others
Minnesota	General Assistance <a href="https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/seniors/economic-assistance/income/programs-and-services/ga.jsp">https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/seniors/economic-assistance/income/programs-and-services/ga.jsp</a>	X		Disabled and others

State	State Program Name	State Guidelines: Uniform Statewide	State Guidelines: Vary by County	Eligibility
New Hampshire	Local Welfare / Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled <a href="http://nhlwaa.org/">http://nhlwaa.org/</a> <a href="https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dfa/cash/disabled.htm">https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dfa/cash/disabled.htm</a>	X (but implemented by individual counties)		Disabled, employable, and immigrants
New Jersey	General Assistance / Emergency Assistance (Work First NJ) <a href="https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dfd/programs/assistance/">https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dfd/programs/assistance/</a>	X		Disabled and employable
New Mexico	General Assistance <a href="https://www.hsd.state.nm.us/LookingForAssistance/general-assistance-for-disabled-adults-and-unrelated-children.aspx">https://www.hsd.state.nm.us/LookingForAssistance/general-assistance-for-disabled-adults-and-unrelated-children.aspx</a>	X		Disabled only (includes some immigrants)
New York	Safety Net Assistance <a href="https://otda.ny.gov/programs/temporary-assistance/">https://otda.ny.gov/programs/temporary-assistance/</a>	X		Disabled, employable, and others
Rhode Island	General Public Assistance <a href="http://www.dhs.ri.gov/Programs/GPAProgramInformation.php">http://www.dhs.ri.gov/Programs/GPAProgramInformation.php</a>	X		Disabled only
South Dakota	County Poor Relief <a href="https://sdlegislature.gov/docs/interim/2015/documents/CGV08-19-15CountyWelfareProgram101.pdf">https://sdlegislature.gov/docs/interim/2015/documents/CGV08-19-15CountyWelfareProgram101.pdf</a>		X	Disabled and employable
Utah	General Assistance <a href="https://jobs.utah.gov/customereducation/services/financialhelp/general/">https://jobs.utah.gov/customereducation/services/financialhelp/general/</a>	X		Disabled only
Vermont	General Assistance <a href="https://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/EA-GA">https://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/EA-GA</a>	X		Disabled and others
Washington	Aged, Blind, or Disabled Cash Assistance Program (combines cash with a housing referral) <a href="https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/community-services-offices/aged-blind-or-disabled-abd-cash-assistance-program">https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/community-services-offices/aged-blind-or-disabled-abd-cash-assistance-program</a>	X		Disabled only

NOTE: The Bureau of Indian Affairs also has a Tribal GA program: <https://www.benefits.gov/benefit/801>

*Appendix B: Examples of Non-Mandated GA/GR Program Models*

There are several counties that are continuing to provide GA/GR benefits even though the GA/GR program has been eliminated at the state level and/or is not mandatory at the state level. Examples of some of these programs are highlighted below.

State & County*	Program Name	Key Features
Buffalo County, Nebraska	Community Action Partnership (CAP) of Mid-Nebraska <a href="http://communityactionmidne.com/">(http://communityactionmidne.com/)</a>	-In 2011, this private nonprofit organization was approved to manage Buffalo County’s General Assistance program. <sup>72</sup> -CAP currently serves 27 counties in Nebraska and two in Kansas. They offer a range of services, including cash, rent, and burial assistance for single indigent adults.
Williamson County, Illinois	General Assistance Program <a href="http://www.williamsoncountyl.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/GA-Guidelines-revised.pdf">http://www.williamsoncountyl.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/GA-Guidelines-revised.pdf</a>	-Benefits are offered for up to a year, then the recipient must wait 12 months before reapplying -\$50 rent and/or utilities voucher -\$150 per month for prescription drugs
Ramsey County, North Dakota	General Assistance Program <a href="https://www.co.ramsey.nd.us/163/Economic-Assistance">https://www.co.ramsey.nd.us/163/Economic-Assistance</a>	-From the website: “The General Assistance Program is an emergency assistance program intended to meet basic maintenance needs of families in financial crisis, disabled adults, and burial of deceased poor persons.”
State of Virginia	General Relief <a href="https://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/gr/index.cgi">https://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/gr/index.cgi</a>	-Counties may opt-in to having a GR program (it is not mandated by the state) -Virginia reimburses counties for 62.5% of GR costs -Criteria for use of funds is determined exclusively at the county level
Douglas County, Wisconsin	General Assistance <a href="https://www.douglascountywi.org/264/General-Assistance">https://www.douglascountywi.org/264/General-Assistance</a>	-Cash assistance for rent, fuel, heat, utilities, and emergency medical hospitalizations are paid directly to the vendor -The maximum allowable monthly benefit is \$250 -Benefits are for one month; applicants may reapply after four months

\*NOTE: This is not an exhaustive list.

<sup>72</sup> Friedrich, B. (2011, May 11). Buffalo County Approves Mid-Nebraska Contract for Assistance Program. Retrieved from [https://www.kearneyhub.com/news/local/buffalo-county-approves-mid-nebraska-contract-for-assistance-program/article\\_b994f784-7bf5-11e0-977c-001cc4c002e0.html](https://www.kearneyhub.com/news/local/buffalo-county-approves-mid-nebraska-contract-for-assistance-program/article_b994f784-7bf5-11e0-977c-001cc4c002e0.html)

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