

Janet T. Mills
Governor

Sara Gagné-Holmes
Commissioner



Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Office for Family Independence
11 State House Station
109 Capitol Street
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011
Tel.: (207) 624-4168; Toll-Free: (800) 442-6003
TTY: Dial 711 (Maine Relay); Fax: (207) 287-3455

To: Welfare Officials and Contracted Agents
From: Sara Denson, Program Manager, General Assistance
Date: September 3, 2026
Subject: New GA Maximums for October 1, 2026

Enclosed please find the following items:

- MMA's most recent **General Assistance Ordinance** (September 2026)
- MMA's new (October 1, 2026–September 30, 2027) “**General Assistance Ordinance Appendices**” (A – H).
- Recovery Residence Housing Maximums (October 1, 2026-September 30, 2027)
- “**GA Ordinance Adoption Form**” which was developed so that municipalities may easily send DHHS proof of the adoption of any updated or changed GA Ordinance. Once the selectpersons or council adopts the new ordinance, the enclosed form should be signed and submitted to DHHS. (*see “Filing of GA Ordinance and/or Appendices” below for further information*).
- “**GA Maximums Adoption Form**” which was developed so that municipalities may easily send DHHS proof of GA maximums adoption. Once the selectpersons or council adopts the new maximums, the enclosed form should be signed and submitted to DHHS. (*see “Filing of GA Ordinance and/or Appendices” below for further information*).

Updates

Please note that updates have been made to the allowances within Appendix A (overall maximums), Appendix B (food maximums), and Appendix C (housing maximums) of the General Assistance Ordinance. There is also a new Recovery Residence Housing Maximums guide.

Although no changes have been made to the allowances within Appendices D – H, we have updated their effective dates and included them for your convenience.

Appendix A – H

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

The Adoption Process – Notice and Hearing

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

The municipality is responsible for determining how notice of the hearing must be provided based on applicable law and the municipality's own charter, ordinances, and established procedures. **OFI does not prescribe a particular method of public notice.** Municipalities should use their established process for providing notice of public hearings and ensure that the required notice is provided before the hearing. Seven days of posted notice is recommended, unless local law or established municipal procedures provide otherwise.

At the hearing, the municipal officers should:

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

Municipalities May Establish Their Own Maximums

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

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

Municipal General Assistance Ordinance

There were no changes to the body of the MMA Model General Assistance Ordinance this year; only the appendices containing maximums have been updated to reflect new dates and new amounts for Appendices A – C. However, if your municipality is not using the most recent version (September 2026), we strongly recommend reviewing your current ordinance and considering an update to ensure it remains aligned with applicable statutory and rule changes.

Municipalities that use their own locally developed ordinances may, of course, continue to do so; however, it is important to ensure that those ordinances are reviewed and updated regularly. Even seemingly minor changes or provisions can have important implications for the administration of

General Assistance and may provide protections or address requirements that could otherwise be overlooked. The MMA Model Ordinance is intended to incorporate these changes and provide municipalities with a current framework for administering the program.

You can find information about the MMA Model Ordinance on the Maine Welfare Director's Association (MWDA) website at www.mainewelfaredirectors.org.

Filing of GA Ordinance and/or Appendices

If your municipality is making changes to the GA Ordinance or Appendices, General Assistance law requires the municipality to submit a **red-lined** copy to the Department for review and approval.

If your municipality is not making changes to the GA Ordinance or Appendices, the Department will accept a signed and dated "adoption sheet" (enclosed) as proof that your Municipal Officers have conducted a public hearing and adopted the current MMA Model GA maximums and/or ordinance.

Please note: If you are not making changes to your adopted ordinance, you are only required to submit verification that the new Appendices have been adopted. A municipality which does not submit verification of its Appendices adoption may be found out of compliance with the General Assistance program.

If you have questions about the adoption process, please contact the GA Hotline at 1-800-442-6003.