

Basics of Emergency General Assistance

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Emergency General Assistance (EGA) is a state program that provides income assistance in emergency situations.

What is EGA?

EGA is a state program that provides income assistance in emergency situations. It is administered by Minnesota counties. EGA was established in 1973 as part of a broader legislative initiative that replaced county “Poor Relief” and the “Township Relief System” with General Assistance.

What is an “emergency situation”?

An emergency situation is a situation in which an individual or family is without, or will lose within 30 days after application, a basic need item and requires immediate financial assistance. “Basic needs” are limited to food, clothing, shelter, utilities, and other items, the loss or lack of which pose a direct, immediate threat to the physical health or safety of the applicant.

The assistance must be temporary and must not exceed 30 days following the date of application. Assistance must be paid for needs that accrue before the 30-day period when it is necessary to resolve emergencies arising or continuing during the 30-day period.

Who is eligible?

An individual, childless couple, or family without financial resources immediately available to resolve an emergency situation is eligible for EGA if:

- The person or family is not eligible for Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), the Diversionary Work Program (DWP), or county emergency assistance through the MFIP consolidated fund;
- The person or family has annual net income no greater than 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG) for the previous calendar year (in 2022, for a family of three, 200 percent of FPG was \$43,920);
- The person or family is without financial resources immediately available to resolve the emergency;
- The emergency did not arise because the person or family member has been disqualified from General Assistance (GA) or MFIP; and
- The person or family meets all other eligibility criteria adopted by the county agency.

Persons or families in need who are not state residents may also receive assistance to meet emergency needs. State law requires that nonresidents must reside in Minnesota for 30 days before applying for EGA.

Applicants for or recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Minnesota Supplemental Aid who have emergency need may apply for EGA.

An individual or family may only receive EGA once in any 12-month period.

How is EGA funded and how are benefits paid?

EGA is funded with state general fund dollars.

EGA is provided within the limits of available appropriations, and funds are allocated to counties by the state. The minimum county allocation is \$1,000 per fiscal year. Counties may make expenditures above the amount of their state allocation but additional expenditures must be made from county funds.

EGA grants are paid for with vouchers or in the form of a vendor payment unless the county determines that a cash grant will better meet the needs of the emergency situation.

How has EGA changed over time?

The EGA statute has been modified several times over the years. Changes include limiting state funding to the appropriation, authorizing county agencies to adopt written criteria for determining emergency situations, limiting receipt of EGA to not more than once in a 12-month period, and establishing a minimum county allocation of \$1,000 per fiscal year.

For more information: See the House Research publication [Minnesota Family Assistance](#), January 2022.



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