



NEW GENERAL ASSISTANCE RULE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH A NOTICE TO APPEAR WHO ARE SEEKING ASYLUM – July 2019

The Governor of Maine announced a new rule about General Assistance (GA) on July 18, 2019. GA is a program in every Maine town that helps people who don't have enough money to pay their necessary expenses. GA gives vouchers (not cash) to pay for housing, food, and other basic needs.

This new rule means that you are eligible for GA if you have:

- **a Notice to Appear (NTA) from immigration saying you will need to go to immigration court**
- **AND are planning on applying for asylum.**

Bring a copy of your NTA with you to the GA office. If you have already done a change of address form or received a hearing notice, bring copies of those as well if you have them.

If you have an NTA, you do NOT need to file your asylum application to get GA benefits.

Filing a rushed application for asylum can hurt your immigration case. You have one year after arriving to the United States to apply for asylum. Even if you have filled out an asylum application, if you have an NTA, you do NOT need to send it to the immigration court to get GA.

Since this rule is so new, it is possible that you may hear something different from the GA office. If you have shown them the papers listed here and are denied GA, please call Maine Equal Justice at 207-626-7058. Maine Equal Justice is a non-profit organization and not a part of the government.

If you are planning on applying for asylum but do not have an NTA, we will provide further information when we have more information from Maine's government.