

CHAPTER 256D

GENERAL ASSISTANCE ACT

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256D.01 DECLARATION OF POLICY; CITATION.

Subdivision 1. The objectives of sections 256D.01 to 256D.21 are to provide a sound administrative structure for public assistance programs; to maximize the use of federal funds for public assistance purposes; and to provide an integrated public assistance program for those persons in the state meeting the eligibility criteria contained in this chapter.

It is hereby declared to be the policy of this state that persons unable to provide for themselves and not otherwise provided for by law and who meet the eligibility requirements of sections 256D.01 to 256D.21 shall be entitled to receive such grants of general assistance, within the time limits set forth in this chapter as may be necessary to maintain a subsistence reasonably compatible with decency and health. The furnishing of such assistance and services is a matter of public concern and a necessity in promoting the public health and welfare.

A principal objective in providing general assistance shall be to provide for persons ineligible for federal programs who are unable to provide for themselves. To achieve these aims, the commissioner shall establish minimum standards of assistance for general assistance. The minimum standard for cash payments to recipients shall be: as to shelter and utilities, 100 percent of the actual need or state standards therefor, subject to the maximum established for shelter in the aid to the blind, aid to the disabled, and old age assistance programs in December, 1973; and as to other budgetary items, 50 percent, of those established for said items in the aid to the blind, aid to the disabled, and old age assistance programs in December, 1973. The minimum standards of assistance shall authorize the payment of rates negotiated by local agencies for recipients living in a room and board arrangement. In order to maximize the use of federal funds, the commissioner shall promulgate regulations, to the extent permitted by federal law for eligibility for the emergency assistance program under aid to families with dependent children, and under the terms of sections 256D.01 to 256D.21 for general assistance, to require the use of the emergency program under aid to families with dependent children as the primary financial resource when available. The commissioner shall provide by regulation for the eligibility for general assistance of persons with seasonal income, and may attribute seasonal income to other periods not in excess of one year from receipt by an applicant or recipient.

[For text of subd 2, see M.S.1980]

History: 1981 c 360 art 2 s 31

NOTE: The amendment to subdivision 1 by Laws 1981, Chapter 360, Article 2, Section 31 is repealed by Laws 1981, Chapter 360, Article 2, Section 54, as amended by First Special Session Laws 1981, Chapter 4, Article 4, Section 22, effective June 30, 1983.

256D.02 DEFINITIONS.

[For text of subs 1 to 3, see M.S.1980]

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Subd. 4. "General assistance" means cash payments to persons unable to provide themselves with a reasonable subsistence compatible with decency and health and who are not otherwise provided for under the laws of this state or the United States. It shall include cash payments for goods, shelter, fuel, food, clothing, light, necessary household supplies, and personal need items. General assistance shall not include payments for foster care, child welfare services, or other social services. Vendor payments may be made only as provided for in section 256D.09.

[For text of subds 4a to 7, see M.S.1980]

Subd. 8. "Income" means any form of income, including remuneration for services performed as an employee and net earnings from self-employment, reduced by the amount attributable to employment expenses as defined by the commissioner. The amount attributable to employment expenses shall include amounts paid or withheld for federal and state personal income taxes and federal social security taxes.

"Income" includes any payments received as an annuity, retirement, or disability benefit, including veteran's or workers' compensation; old age, survivors, and disability insurance; railroad retirement benefits; unemployment benefits; and benefits under any federally aided categorical assistance program, supplementary security income, or other assistance program; rents, dividends, interest and royalties; and support and maintenance payments except that such payments may not be considered as available to meet the needs of any person other than the person for whose benefit they are received, unless that person is under a legal duty to support another family member. Goods and services provided in lieu of cash payment shall be excluded from the definition of income.

Subd. 9. [Repealed, 1981 c 360 art 2 s 52]

Subd. 10. [Repealed, 1981 c 360 art 2 s 52]

[For text of subds 11 to 14, see M.S.1980]

History: 1981 c 360 art 2 s 32,33

256D.03 RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE GENERAL ASSISTANCE.

[For text of subd 1, see M.S.1980]

Subd. 2. After December 31, 1980, state aid shall be paid to local agencies for 75 percent of all general assistance grants up to the standards of section 256D.01, subdivision 1, and according to procedures established by the commissioner. Any local agency may, from its own resources, make payments of general assistance: (a) at a standard higher than that established by the commissioner without reference to the standards of section 256D.01, subdivision 1; or, (b) to persons not meeting the eligibility standards set forth in section 256D.05, subdivision 1, but for whom the aid would further the purposes established in the general assistance program in accordance with rules promulgated by the commissioner pursuant to the administrative procedure act.

[For text of subd 3, see M.S.1980]

Subd. 4. **General assistance medical care.** (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of sections 256D.01 to 256D.21 and 261.23, or any other law to the contrary, for the biennium ending June 30, 1983, state aid shall be paid to local agencies or counties for 90 percent of general assistance medical care paid by the local agency or county on behalf of persons eligible for general assistance or persons meeting

the income and resource criteria established in the program for aid to families with dependent children. Nothing in this provision shall be construed to modify the spenddown required in appropriate cases for general assistance medical care. Reimbursement for medical care provided under sections 256D.01 to 256D.21 or 261.23 shall be limited to the following categories of service only: inpatient hospital care, outpatient hospital care, prescription drugs, physician's services, medical transportation, and dental care. In addition, payments of state aid shall be made for medications prescribed for persons who have been diagnosed as mentally ill as necessary to prevent more restrictive institutionalization.

(b) At the option of the county board and with the approval of the commissioner of public welfare, reimbursement for inpatient hospital care, outpatient hospital care, and prescription drugs may be limited to designated medical care providers.

(c) The commissioner of public welfare may reduce payments provided under sections 256D.01 to 256D.21 and 261.23 in order to remain within the amount appropriated for general assistance medical care, within the following restrictions. Reductions below the cost per service unit allowable under section 256.966, shall be permitted only as follows: payments for inpatient and outpatient hospital care provided in response to a primary diagnosis of chemical dependency or mental illness may be reduced no more than 45 percent; payments for all other inpatient hospital care may be reduced no more than 35 percent. Reductions below the payments allowable under section 256.967 for the remaining general assistance medical care services allowable under this provision may be reduced no more than 25 percent.

(d) If the commissioner or county refuses to pay all or part of the charge for a health service, they shall not be liable for the unpaid portion of the charge. Any county may, from its own resources, provide medical payments for which state payments are not made.

History: 1981 c 360 art 2 s 2 subd 4,34; 1Sp1981 c 2 s 16 subd 2; 1Sp1981 c 4 art 4 s 21

256D.04 DUTIES OF THE COMMISSIONER.

In addition to any other duties imposed by law, the commissioner shall:

(1) Supervise the administration of general assistance and general assistance medical care by local agencies as provided in sections 256D.01 to 256D.21;

(2) Promulgate uniform rules consistent with law for carrying out and enforcing the provisions of sections 256D.01 to 256D.21 to the end that general assistance may be administered as uniformly as possible throughout the state; rules shall be furnished immediately to all local agencies and other interested persons; in promulgating rules, the provisions of sections 15.041 to 15.052, shall apply;

(3) Allocate moneys appropriated for general assistance and general assistance medical care to local agencies as provided in section 256D.03, subdivisions 2 and 3;

(4) Accept and supervise the disbursement of any funds that may be provided by the federal government or from other sources for use in this state for general assistance and general assistance medical care;

(5) Cooperate with other agencies including any agency of the United States or of another state in all matters concerning the powers and duties of the commissioner under sections 256D.01 to 256D.21;

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(6) Cooperate to the fullest extent with other public agencies empowered by law to provide vocational training, rehabilitation, or similar services; and

(7) Gather and study current information and report at least annually to the governor and legislature on the nature and need for general assistance and general assistance medical care, the amounts expended under the supervision of each local agency, and the activities of each local agency and publish such reports for the information of the public.

History: 1981 c 360 art 2 s 35

256D.05 ELIGIBILITY FOR GENERAL ASSISTANCE.

Subdivision 1. **Standards.** Each person or family whose income and resources are less than the standard of assistance established by the commissioner, and who is not eligible for the federally aided assistance programs of emergency assistance or aid to families with dependent children, or any successor to those programs, shall be eligible for and entitled to general assistance if the person or family is:

(a) A person suffering from an illness, injury, or incapacity which is both medically certified and prevents the individual from engaging in suitable employment, if a plan for rehabilitation approved by the local agency through its director or designated representative is being followed when the situation is certified as temporary;

(b) A person whose presence in the home on a substantially continuous basis is required because of the certified illness or incapacity of another member of the household;

(c) A person who has been placed in a licensed or certified facility for purposes of physical or mental health or rehabilitation, if the placement is based on illness or incapacity, and is pursuant to a plan developed or approved by the local agency through its director or designated representative;

(d) A person who resides in a shelter facility described in subdivision 3;

(e) A person who is or may be eligible for displaced homemaker services, programs, or assistance under section 4.40. In determining eligibility of the person for general assistance, income received as a stipend shall be disregarded as provided in section 4.40;

(f) A person who is unable to secure suitable employment due to inability to communicate in the English language, and who, if assigned to a language skills program by the local agency, is participating in that program;

(g) A person not described in clause (a) or (c) who is diagnosed by a licensed physician or licensed consulting psychologist as mentally ill; or

(h) A person who is unable to secure suitable employment due to a lack of marketable skills as determined by the local agency, and who, if assigned to a vocational counseling, vocational rehabilitation, or work training program by the local agency, is participating in that program. Eligibility for general assistance under clause (h) of this subdivision is limited to five weeks per calendar year.

[For text of subds 2 to 4, see M.S.1980]

History: 1981 c 360 art 2 s 36; 1Sp1981 c 4 art 4 s 23

NOTE: The amendment to subdivision 1 by Laws 1980, Chapter 360, Article 2, Section 36 is repealed by Laws 1981, Chapter 360, Article 2, Section 54, as amended by First Special Session Laws 1981, Chapter 4, Article 4, Section 22 effective June 30, 1983.

256D.06 AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE.

[For text of subds 1 and 1a, see M.S.1980]

Subd. 2. Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision 1, a grant of general assistance shall be made to an eligible individual or family for an emergency need, as defined in rules promulgated by the commissioner, where the recipient requests temporary assistance not exceeding 30 days if an emergency situation appears to exist and the individual is ineligible for the program of emergency assistance under aid to families with dependent children and is not a recipient of aid to families with dependent children at the time of application hereunder. If a recipient relates facts to the local agency which may be sufficient to constitute an emergency situation, the local agency shall advise the recipient of the procedure for applying for assistance pursuant to this subdivision.

[For text of subd 3, see M.S.1980]

Subd. 4. When a general assistance grant is used to pay a negotiated rate for a recipient living in a licensed or certified facility, the rate payable hereunder to that facility shall be no more than that paid by an individual not receiving general assistance.

Subd. 5. Any applicant, otherwise eligible for general assistance and possibly eligible for maintenance benefits from any other source shall be obligated to (a) make application for those benefits within 30 days of the general assistance application; and (b) execute an interim assistance authorization agreement on a form as directed by the commissioner. If found eligible for benefits from other sources, and a payment received from another source relates to the period during which general assistance was also being received, the recipient shall be required to reimburse the local agency for the interim assistance paid. Reimbursement shall not exceed the amount of general assistance paid during the time period to which the other maintenance benefits apply and shall not exceed the state standard applicable to that time period. This provision shall not require repayment of per diem payments made to shelters for battered women pursuant to section 256D.05, subdivision 3.

History: 1981 c 360 art 2 s 37,38

256D.07 TIME OF PAYMENT OF ASSISTANCE.

An applicant for general assistance or general assistance medical care authorized by section 256D.03, subdivision 3 shall be deemed eligible if his application and the verification of the statement on that application demonstrate that he is within the eligibility criteria established by sections 256D.01 to 256D.21 and any applicable rules of the commissioner. Any person requesting general assistance or general assistance medical care shall be permitted by the local agency to make an application for assistance as soon as administratively possible and in no event later than the fourth day following the date on which assistance is first requested, and no local agency shall require that a person requesting assistance appear at the offices of the local agency more than once prior to the date on which the person is permitted to make the application. The application shall be in writing in the manner and upon the form prescribed by the commissioner and attested to by the oath of the applicant or in lieu thereof shall contain the following declaration which shall be signed by the applicant: "I declare that this application has been examined by me and to the best of my knowledge and belief is a true and correct statement of every material point." On the date that general assistance is first requested, the local agency shall inquire and determine whether the person

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requesting assistance is in immediate need of food, shelter, clothing, assistance for necessary transportation, or other emergency assistance pursuant to section 256D.06, subdivision 2. A person in need of emergency assistance shall be granted emergency assistance immediately, and necessary emergency assistance shall continue until either the person is determined to be ineligible for general assistance or the first grant of general assistance is paid to the person. A determination of an applicant's eligibility for general assistance shall be made by the local agency as soon as the required verifications are received by the local agency and in no event later than 30 days following the date that the application is made. Any verifications required of the applicant shall be reasonable, and the commissioner shall by rule establish reasonable verifications. General assistance shall be granted to an eligible applicant without the necessity of first securing action by the board of the local agency. The amount of the first grant of general assistance awarded to an applicant shall be computed to cover the time period starting with the date that assistance is first requested or if the applicant is not eligible on that date, the date on which the applicant first becomes eligible, and the first grant may be reduced by the amount of emergency general assistance provided to the applicant.

If upon verification and due investigation it appears that the applicant provided false information and the false information materially affected his eligibility for general assistance or general assistance medical care provided pursuant to section 256D.03, subdivision 3 or the amount of his general assistance grant, the local agency may refer the matter to the county attorney. The county attorney may commence a criminal prosecution or a civil action for the recovery of any general assistance wrongfully received, or both.

History: 1981 c 40 s 1

256D.09 FORM OF PAYMENT; VENDOR PAYMENTS.

Subdivision 1. Until the local agency has determined the initial eligibility of the applicant in accordance with the provisions of section 256D.07, grants for emergency general assistance shall be in the form of vouchers or vendor payments unless the local agency determines that a cash grant will best resolve the applicant's need for emergency assistance. Thereafter, grants of general assistance shall be paid in cash and shall be paid once per month on the first day of the month.

[For text of subd 2, see M.S.1980]

History: 1981 c 40 s 2

256D.11 [Repealed, 1981 c 360 art 2 s 52]

256D.14 VIOLATIONS.

Whoever obtains or attempts to obtain, or aids or abets any person to obtain by means of a willfully false statement or representation, or by the intentional withholding or concealment of a material fact, or by impersonation, or other fraudulent device:

- (1) Assistance to which he is not entitled; or
- (2) Assistance greater than that to which he is reasonably entitled;

shall be considered to have violated section 256.98, and shall be subject to both the criminal and civil penalties provided therein.

History: 1981 c 360 art 2 s 39

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256D.18 RESIDENCE; COUNTY OF FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY; DETERMINATION.

[For text of subd 1, see M.S.1980]

Subd. 2. "County of financial responsibility" means (a) the county in which an individual resides; or (b) if an individual is a patient in a hospital or nursing home, as defined in sections 144.50, or 144A.01, or if an individual participates in a long-term sheltered workshop as defined in chapter 129A, or is placed in a county as a result of a correctional program or a treatment plan for health, rehabilitation, foster care, child care or training, at the time of making application, and immediately prior thereto resided in another county, then that other county.

Subd. 3. Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision 2, the county of financial responsibility shall not change as a result of successive placements in one or more counties pursuant to a plan of treatment for health, rehabilitation, foster care, child care or training; nor as a result of placement in any correctional program; nor as a result of participation in a sheltered workshop as defined in chapter 129A.

[For text of subd 4, see M.S.1980]

History: 1981 c 355 s 1,2

256D.42 SUPPLEMENTAL AID; ADJUSTMENTS.

Subdivision 1. **Personal needs allowance.** Recipients of Minnesota supplemental aid living in nonmedical congregate care or foster care shall receive the same personal needs allowance as recipients of medical assistance residing in intermediate care facilities.

Subd. 2. **Cost of living.** The commissioner of public welfare shall adjust the benefits payable to the aged, blind and disabled recipients pursuant to sections 256D.36 and 256D.37 who do not reside in congregate care or foster care facilities in an amount equivalent to the cost of living adjustments in the federal supplemental security income program.

History: 1981 c 360 art 1 s 23