

#### **IV. Types and Amounts of Assistance**

The City Welfare Department provides assistance in the form of a voucher system made out to a particular person, business, or company for the specific monetary value of acquired goods or services (RSA 165:1 (III).) The Department does not provide cash assistance nor is a check issued directly from the welfare office. Tobacco products, alcohol beverages, gasoline, soda and pet food cannot be purchased with the vouchers.

In addition, the amount shown on the voucher is the amount to be used for payment. The municipality will not pay any amount in excess of the amount listed on the voucher. If there is an unused amount the voucher shall be returned to the municipality for payment of the correct amount listed on the bill or register tape. If the voucher is not returned, with the itemized bill or register tape within 60-days, it is void and will not be paid out to the vendor. Vouchers are not transferable to other individuals and may be used only by the individual named on the voucher and with the specified vendor.

The department does not accept responsibility for any services rendered before application to the City Welfare Department nor for services rendered without issuance of a voucher from this department listing type of service, amount of payment, complete with signatures of recipient and the Welfare Administrator. Vouchers are non-transferable and must be used by the individual to whom it was issued. Payment will not be issued to a vendor who accepts a voucher from someone to whom it was not issued or for services/products not specified on the voucher.

- A. Food- The amount of assistance granted for food is determined in accordance with the most recent standard food stamp allotment as put forth by the Food Stamp Program administered by the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services Division of Family Assistance. More of an allowance may be allowed if recipient's physician specifically prescribes a special diet. The Department requires that anyone applying for assistance with food first avail themselves of the food pantries within the City. The Welfare Department may disqualify from receiving further assistance any applicants/recipients who refuse to apply for, and comply with requirements to remain eligible for food stamps, WIC, or to use any other food program available in the community including but not limited to food pantries and soup kitchens. Food vouchers will not be granted for restaurants, delis or convenience stores.

Family Size	Eligible Amount of Assistance (daily/weekly amounts granted)
1-person	\$6.67 per day /\$46.67 per week

2-people	\$12.23 per day/\$85.63 per week
3-people	\$17.53 per day/\$122.71 per week
4-people	\$22.27 per day/ \$155.87 per week
5-people	\$26.43 per day/\$185.03 per week
6-people	\$31.73 per day/ \$222.13 per week
7-people	\$35.07 per day/ \$245.47 per week
For each additional person add \$5.00/ day or \$35.00 per week.	

- B. Rent- It is the department's policy to assist with only the cost of rent necessary to actually provide shelter. Such costs may be determined by local market factors and the aid of the most recent United States Department of Housing & Urban Development published fair market rents.

The Department reserves the right to negotiate with landlords or the landlord's agent on behalf of the recipient. The department assists with rent on a weekly basis in most cases. The formula used to determine weekly voucher amounts for rent is the amount of the monthly rent charged by the landlord multiplied by twelve months and then divided by fifty-two weeks. For example: A monthly rent of \$550/month x 12-months/52 weeks= \$126.93 per week.

The Department must receive a completed verification of rent form from the landlord or landlord's agent before rent assistance can be granted. No monies can be released to the landlord until the City has a signed W-9 on file as rent is taxable income and must be reported to the Federal Government.

In the case of an eviction the landlord or agent will be required to verify in writing on the verification of rent form that eviction proceedings will be terminated while the individual is receiving assistance. The applicant/recipient must be on the lease or rental agreement. In cases where a rental unit is shared with other adults, to whom the applicant /recipient is not married; rent will be calculated on a pro rata scale. Whenever a relative of an applicant is also the landlord, the landlord will be expected to assist his relative pursuant to [RSA 165:19](#). Otherwise, the landlord must prove an inability to assist before any assistance payment for rent is made to him/her. Under [RSA 165:4-a](#), whenever the owner of property rented to a person receiving General Assistance is in arrears in sewer, water, electricity, or tax payments to the municipality, the municipality may apply the assistance which the property owner would have received in payment on behalf of the assisted person to the property owner's delinquent balances. This is regardless of whether such delinquent balances are in respect to the property occupied by the assisted person.

The City chooses to apply the payments first to taxes, then sewer, then water. Rent payments will be withheld from landlords who are not in compliance with the City's housing ordinances, fire ordinances and health ordinances until such time as they come into compliance, at which time payments shall be released. Landlord's may be asked to present proof that they have either a certificate of compliance, an interim certificate of compliance, have applied for a transfer of certificate upon the sale of a property or are otherwise in compliance with requirements of the building inspector, housing inspector, health officer and fire department if they have been notified of a problem. Under state law landlords may not penalize tenants if rent is withheld until such health and safety issues are in compliance.

Applicants/recipients must apply with all other agencies that offer assistance with rent and comply with their requirements. Refusal to do so will lead to denial of assistance until compliance is met.

In the case of homeless applicants, or those facing eviction, it is not the department's responsibility to find permanent housing. If a homeless applicant/recipient refuses to allow the department to contact shelters or the homeless outreach workers, or if an applicant/recipient refuses to go to a shelter when room is available, they will be denied rental/shelter assistance as the City has met its obligation. If no shelter room is available temporary emergency shelter may be afforded in a motel.

Efforts need to be made daily by recipient to find shelter space, or a rent, while receiving said assistance. Assistance with shelter (motel) for those who are homeless will be issued on a daily basis as needed. If the applicant/recipient is housed temporarily in a shelter or motel and is asked to leave for not following rules or for acting in a disruptive or disrespectful manner or for participating in illegal activities the City will not have further responsibility as it had met its obligation in providing for or arranging for said shelter.

The City is not responsible for the housing or maintenance of pets or livestock. If minors are a part of the family make-up in a homeless situation the Welfare Official will be forced to make a report to the Department of Children, Youth and Families as required by law (RSA 169:C). If the recipient/applicant refuses the shelter offered, whether it be a homeless shelter, or motel room if all other emergency shelter is full, the City has met its obligation by providing for or arranging said accommodations. The Department will require an apartment search form to be completed. Should no shelter space or motel space be available or if no area rental agencies will rent to the applicant/recipient; the City has fulfilled its obligation and cannot be held responsible for lack of available housing/shelter.

The applicant must take the first available housing/rental unit that fits their income level, family size, and meets health and safety standards. Refusal to do so will lead to denial of assistance until compliance is met. All recipients will be required to apply for HUD at the Berlin Housing Authority and follow through with whatever steps are required to become eligible for section 8 vouchers. If the recipients refuses to apply or does not comply with the necessary steps needed to receive or maintain the voucher once issued the Welfare Office will no longer be responsible for assisting the recipient.

<u>Family Size</u>	<u>Amounts without heat/hw included</u>	<u>Amount w/ heat/hw included</u>
	(According to Berlin Housing Authority)	
1	\$385.00-efficiency	\$550.00
	\$550.00 1-bedroom	\$650.00
2	\$650 1-bedroom	\$650 to \$700
	\$650.00 2-bedroom	\$650 to \$750
3	\$750 2-bedroom	\$750 to \$775
	\$650 3-bedroom	\$650 to \$800
4 or more	\$750 3-bedroom	\$750 to \$900
	\$850house	
	\$850-950house 4-bedroom	\$900 to \$1000

(Amounts may be lower than those listed; a single person may only be considered for a 1 bedroom apartment or efficiency as HUD will not allow more bedrooms. It is the Welfare Department's policy to have all clients in apartments that would be HUD approvable.)

- C. Mortgage payments- The City Welfare Department may be able to assist with interest charges as agreed upon by the mortgage holder and the welfare official as to prevent foreclosure. The applicant/recipient's name must be on the mortgage in order for assistance to be granted. The City Welfare Department under RSA 165:28 reserves the right to place a lien on any real estate owned by an assisted person. The liens are effective until enforced or until discharged by the department; provided that there shall be no enforcement of the lien so long as the real estate is occupied as the sole residence of the assisted person, surviving spouse, or surviving children under age 18 or blind or permanently disabled.

Interest at the rate of six percent per year shall be charged after twelve months on the amount constituting such lien. Assistance would be granted, if eligibility criteria are met, on the property of primary residence only. The lien may be placed on any real property owned in New Hampshire even outside of the City of Berlin. The lien can be placed on any properties purchased within six years of the client having

received assistance. If the recipient refuses to comply with referrals to programs that can help with refinancing, forbearances, deferment, etc. they may make themselves ineligible for further assistance.

- D. Personal or Household Needs or Supplies - Assistance may be granted for personal care and household needs and supplies. These vouchers are to be used for personal cleansing/hygiene items and household cleansing, storage, cooking items not including food, drinks, candles, incense, pet food or care items, electrical appliances and knick-knacks, pre-paid phones or phone cards, etc. Misuse of the voucher may lead to suspension from receiving this type of assistance. These vouchers cannot be used for cable bills, telephone bills, or other utilities.

<u>Family Size</u>	<u>Weekly Amount</u>
1	\$ 6.50
2	\$ 8.00
3	\$ 9.50
4	\$11.00
5	\$12.50
6	\$14.00

\$1.50 per person for each additional person in household

Additional amounts may be added for diapers based on the number of children still in diapers and the cost of a bag of diapers at that time.

- E. Utilities- Includes electricity, oil, natural gas, water, and sewage. Excludes: cable, phone unless documented to be medically necessary (basic local service only), cell phone and internet service. According to P.U.C. 303.08 (C) (1) (d) it is not necessary for a municipality to pay the entire amount owed on a back utility bill if the municipality guarantees enough for one month of service and guarantees payment of future bills for as long as the applicant/recipient is eligible.

The applicant/recipient must make a reasonable (as defined by the utility) payment plan on the "back" amount with the utility within seven days of receiving assistance. Recipients must apply to all social service agencies and the State for assistance if it is deemed they may qualify for these programs. Refusal to apply to these programs or to follow through with requirements to meet eligibility for these programs will result in suspension of assistance until compliance is met. Utilities must be in the applicant/recipient's name in order to render assistance.

As with rent, in cases where utilities are shared with other adults, to whom the applicant/recipient is not married, the amount of assistance will be calculated on a

pro rata scale. Recipients will be required to apply for the Energy Assistance Program and once on the program to take the necessary steps to remain in compliance with the program, refusing to do so will lead to disqualification from receiving assistance. Under extraordinary circumstances the Department will consider providing assistance for the following:

- F. Medical/Medication - Generally, the department will consider providing for medical, dental, or optical services only if sources of assistance designed to fill such needs have been investigated and have failed to produce. Such sources include State & Federal Programs, local and area clinics, area service organizations, and area hospital programs, including Hill-Burton Act funding. In such instances the Department will pay Medicaid rate only. Further, an applicant must provide written documentation from a doctor, dentist or optometrist indicating the services are absolutely necessary and cannot be postponed without running significant risk and placing the applicant/recipient's well-being in serious jeopardy. Any services received before application to this department and without prior approval of this department will not be paid for or reimbursed.

If a prescription is not current (older than 5-days) it will not be filled. A new prescription will need to be obtained and brought to the Welfare Department. Only up to a thirty day supply will be issued at any one time. A prescription will not be filled more than once in a thirty day period unless the dosage or quantity to be taken has been changed by a physician in writing. Assistance with prescriptions will be granted only if the physician verifies in writing that the medication is required for the patient so that health does not decline putting the patient at risk for serious medical or physiological damage and placing the patient in the position of being unable to function within his/her "normal" capacity.

Naturalistic, Homeopathic, experimental and non-medical treatments or therapies will not be considered a basic need.

Should a recipient be eligible for free medical services and/or prescriptions through the Veteran's Association, free clinic service or any other public or non-profit agency or assistance group and refuse to apply for such services, or make use of such services if available, the Welfare Department may disqualify said recipient from receiving further medical assistance until they are in compliance with the guidelines. If the applicant/recipient has health insurance which requires a co-pay for prescriptions they may apply with the Welfare Department to meet this need.

- G. Telephone- An applicant/recipient may apply for assistance with the basic service only if absence of a telephone would create an unreasonable risk to the recipient's health or safety verifiable in writing by a physician. The recipient must apply for the "link up" discount offered to individuals receiving any type of public assistance. Refusal to do so may lead to disqualification until such time as the recipient is in compliance. Applicant(s) must also apply for the free phone through Safe Link available at the DHHS office. Cell phones are not included in this category and are not considered a basic need nor is long distance service or any "optional" services the telephone or long distance provider may offer. Charges for services before applying will not be considered. Payments to "bundle" services are not considered.
- H. Clothing- Assistance may be granted for the actual cost of necessary items only and then only if said items are not available at used clothing outlets or through social service agencies that provide clothing and outerwear free to the public. The Department will assist with the least expensive item in the needed size if the applicant is eligible.
- I. Footwear- Assistance may be granted for the actual cost of necessary items only and then only if said items are not available at used clothing outlets or through social service agencies which provide clothing and outerwear free to the public. The Department will assist with the least expensive item in the needed size if the applicant is eligible.
- J. Medical Insurance Premiums-Assistance may be granted for the actual cost of the medical insurance premium if it is deemed that to assist would be cost effective. The applicant/recipient must also apply for all programs that provide free or discounted medical/medication services.
- K. Property Insurance Premiums- Assistance may be granted only if necessary to prevent foreclosure on property which is the sole residence of the applicant /recipient and only if the mortgage holder will not provide said insurance as part of the escrow package.
- L. Household Goods- Assistance may be granted for the actual cost of items such as mattresses, kitchen table and chairs, stove and refrigerator. Washing machines and dryers will not be considered as there are public laundry facilities available. Used items are the first choice of the department. Rental plans and charge accounts are excluded. Applicants/recipients must contact agencies such as St. Vincent De Paul Society which give free household goods to families when such items are available.

- M. Past Due Utilities- Assistance will be granted only if necessary to prevent imminent termination of services. Only the amount for one month of service will be issued along with guarantee of future bills for as long as applicant/recipient is eligible as is required per P.U.C. 303.08 (c) (1) (d). Applicant/recipient must apply to social service agencies which assist with cutoffs or the State if applicable.
- N. Past Due Rent- Assistance may be granted for the actual amount needed if necessary to prevent imminent eviction and only when adequate alternative housing or funding is not available. The applicant/recipient must apply with all other social service, State or Federal agencies that assist with past-due rent. The Department reserves the right to negotiate on applicant/recipient's behalf with landlord or their agents to stop evictions or to make payment arrangements.
- O. Cremation/Burial Expenses- Under [RSA 165:3](#) assistance may be granted for burial or cremation. No assistance can be granted or reimbursed for services rendered prior to approval from the Welfare Office. The City of Berlin has agreed upon a rate of up to \$750.00 for burial or cremation, whichever is most cost effective. This rate is one set by the State of New Hampshire and surrounding Municipalities. If some payment has been made to the funeral home, only the difference between that payment and \$750.00 will be considered. It is the responsibility of the surviving relatives to make contact with a funeral home after having applied for the assistance with City Welfare and to let them know of the financial status of the deceased and surviving relatives.

The exception is unclaimed bodies. [RSA 611-B:25](#) states that if a dead body is unidentified or unclaimed for a period of not less than 48hours following the view thereof, the medical examiner shall deliver the body to the overseer of the public welfare in the town or the county commissioner, who shall decently bury the same or the body may be sent to the medical department of Dartmouth College, to be used for the advancement of the science of anatomy and surgery, as provided for by law. Assistance is granted only when the individual does not have liquid assets to cover the expense of burial or cremation or where relatives, other people, the State, or other sources will not cover the entire expense of burial or cremation, and only if costs do not exceed \$750.00. The Welfare Department is not responsible for providing for prearranged services, special services, religious ceremonies, flowers, grave markers or cremation urns. The City is not responsible for both cremation and burial. Assistance may be given with either cremation or burial, not both. Assistance will be based on whichever is most cost effective.



- P. Home Repairs- Assistance is granted only in cases where the repairs are essential to health and safety. Only the actual cost of the repair will be granted. Welfare is not responsible for bills for repairs before assistance was granted or for contracts signed prior to approval from the Welfare Department. The home in question must be the primary residence owned and resided in by the applicant.
- Q. Property Taxes- Only the actual amount owed would be considered for assistance and only for the recipient's home, and then only if necessary to prevent foreclosure or issuance of tax deed. In the case of foreclosure taxes would only be paid if the mortgage holder will not provide for the taxes themselves as generally taxes can be added to the loan agreement. The applicant's name must be on the deed. All other financial possibilities must have been sought out. If the property is held jointly each party is responsible for a pro rata share and only this amount will be considered. A welfare lien would be placed upon the property and interest would accrue after the first year at 6% per year as per [RSA 165:28](#).