

## **BLACK HAWK COUNTY GENERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM POLICY**

### **Legal Reference**

This policy is enacted to implement Black Hawk County's obligation under Iowa Code Chapter 252, Support of the Poor.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Black Hawk County General Assistance Program is to provide aid to a needy or poor person who needs immediate assistance not obtainable from any other source.

There are two categories of assistance in Black Hawk County ("County"):

1. Emergency assistance for needy persons; and
2. Assistance for poor persons.

### **Definitions**

- A. Needy person:** a person domiciled in Black Hawk County, or a transient of the County for less than three days, who needs immediate assistance.
- B. Poor person:** a person who has no property, exempt or otherwise, and who is unable, because of physical or mental disabilities, to earn a living by labor, and cannot otherwise make a living.
- C. Assistance:** rent, utilities, medications, and bus tickets for transients. Assistance shall also include funeral and/or burial services for a person who is a resident of the County pursuant to the County Burial Policy.

### **How to Apply**

Anyone wishing to apply for assistance shall call (319) 292-2261. They may be referred to a contracting agency for rent or utility assistance.

The Black Hawk County Board of Supervisors may assign functions of this Policy to an outside agency that has contracted to provide services to the County.

### **Eligibility**

To be eligible for assistance, the applicant must be a resident of Black Hawk County and a Citizen of the United States. When nonresidents request assistance in Black Hawk County, the county of their residency will be contacted regarding the assistance.

***See page 4 for Income Guidelines***

## Assistance

### *A. Utility: (gas, LP, water, electric)*

Utility Assistance is available for applicants in a disconnect situation. In order to be eligible for assistance with payment of a utility bill, the applicant must have made a minimum of three payments, or a reasonable effort during the moratorium, toward the utility bill. If the applicant has not made any effort to make payments during the moratorium, the applicant shall be deemed ineligible for utility assistance.

***See page 4 for Award Allotments***

### *B. Shelter*

The Black Hawk County General Assistance Program can assist applicants who are renting and have received a notice of unpaid rent and can assist homeowners who have received a default/late payment notice concerning mortgage payments. If an applicant is moving into a new dwelling, all deposits will need to be paid, or worked out, with the landlord before any assistance may be authorized.

Shelter assistance will be pro-rated for a recipient who moves into a new dwelling after the first of the month. Shelter assistance will be paid only to an owner or property manager which has provided a Tax ID Number or Social Security Number to the County. A landlord or mortgagee must agree to allow the applicant to remain in the property for the period covering County assistance. Assistance will not be paid to a relative, even if that relative is the applicant's actual landlord or mortgagee.

***See page 4 for Award Allotments***

### *C. Homeless*

A person who is in a homeless shelter or living on the streets may apply for assistance of up to \$500.00 toward her or his first month's rent. Black Hawk County works cooperatively with homeless outreach staff at People's Community Health Clinic in addressing cases of homelessness.

### *D. Medications*

Black Hawk County may assist applicants with the cost of their medications on a limited basis if awaiting approval for medical insurance. Black Hawk County cannot and shall not assist any applicant who is insured under any health insurance coverage.

Black Hawk County will assist with medication in a generic form only, unless no generic form exists, or the prescribing physician specifies a brand name. The County cannot and

shall not help for purchasing any form of nicotine, contraception, diet medication, or diabetic medication and/or supplies. The County cannot and shall not help for purchasing any pain medications.

## Reimbursement

Applicants shall be informed of their obligation to reimburse Black Hawk County when an applicant becomes financially capable to reimburse.

## Exception

The County General Assistance Coordinator (“Coordinator”) may issue a policy exception, allowing an applicant to exceed the established award allowances, and/or approving an applicant for assistance when the applicant does not meet eligibility criteria, if upon review it is determined that allowing an exception to the policy is consistent with, and better satisfies, Black Hawk County’s mission to protect the health and safety of County residents.

## Appeal Process

Any applicant who is denied assistance shall be informed of that decision in person, by telephone, or by mail. The applicant may appeal that decision in writing to the General Assistance Coordinator within five (5) working days of the date of being informed of denial. The date of being informed of denial shall be (a) the date of the conversation, if informed in person or by telephone, or (b) three (3) days following the date of mailing of written notice, if informed by mail. The Coordinator shall conduct a 1<sup>st</sup> level appeal interview within five (5) working days of the appeal request. The Coordinator shall issue a decision within five (5) working days of the appeal interview. Applicants not satisfied with the Coordinator’s decision may proceed to appeal the decision to the Black Hawk County Board of Supervisors. The County shall aid in filing the appeal to any applicant who has difficulty because of inability to read, write, or understand the appeal process.

## Monthly Income Guidelines

The monthly income guidelines to be used will be 100% of the federal poverty guidelines. Amounts will be adjusted annually each July 1.

The rates for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026 are reflected below, as an example:

<u>FAMILY SIZE</u>	<u>100% POVERTY GUIDELINES</u>
1	\$1,304.17
2	\$1,762.50
3	\$2,220.83
4	\$2,779.17
5	\$3,337.50
6	\$3,895.83
7	\$4,454.17
8	\$5,012.50

## Utility (gas, LP, water, electric):

The maximum monthly gas and electric allowance is \$75.00, per person in an eligible household, for both gas and electric, and this assistance may also be used toward a minimum fill for households that use L.P. gas or fuel oil if they, or either of them, are used for home heating, water heating, cooking, or clothes dryers. The funding may also be approved to provide up to a maximum of \$100.00 toward a water bill. County assistance cannot and shall not be used to pay reconnect charges, late fees, or deposits.

## Shelter:

Monthly rent/mortgage assistance may be authorized up to the following maximum allowances, determined by the number of persons in an eligible family:

<u>PERSONS IN FAMILY</u>	<u>RENT ALLOWANCE</u>
1	\$200.00
2	\$225.00
3	\$250.00
4	\$275.00
5	\$300.00

*\*For each additional person, add \$25.00*