

# NH Local Welfare Administrators Association Annual Meeting & Q&A on Model Welfare Guidelines



**NH Local Welfare Administrators Association** is an Affiliate Association of the NH Municipal Association. Information and membership is available [www.nhlwaa.org](http://www.nhlwaa.org)

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the New Hampshire Local Welfare Administrators' Association is to provide and maintain support to its membership through leadership and education to assure the uniform, humane, equitable and ethical administration of RSA 165 – municipal assistance.

## **Values Statement**

The New Hampshire Local Welfare Administrators' Association practices a professional, empathic and empowering approach to meet our legal obligations to assist people in need. The needs of people requesting assistance shall be met, free of bias, in the most humane and cost effective manner possible, while respecting the confidentiality of the applicants. This is accomplished through fair and uniform interpretation and application of laws and guidelines. We strive to promote and educate people toward maximum self-sufficiency and financial independence.

# Municipalities Responsible for Adopting and Amending Welfare Guidelines



Statutory Requirement of Local Governing Body per RSA 165:1,II “*every town or city in the state shall adopt written guidelines relative to general assistance*”. Guidelines shall include but not limited to:

- Process of Application for General Assistance.
- Criteria for determining eligibility.
- Process of various laws, including application of rents per RSA 165:4-b, RSA 281-A:2 Workers Compensation for workfare clients, RSA 167:82, VIII for Qualified State Assistance Reductions, etc.
- Adoption and amendments should reflect reasonably current community basic need costs, including housing.

# NHLWAA Process for Recommending Changes to NH Municipal Association Model Welfare Guidelines



- May 2020 Model Welfare Guidelines Committee created to review and update 2012 NHMA Model Welfare Guidelines.
- Committee presented their recommendations and the NHLWAA Board approved on 10/1/20.
- NHLWAA President provided the attorneys of NHMA with the update recommendations with a plan to present the completed Model Welfare Guidelines in June 2021.
- Attorneys of NHMA reviewed and approved the Welfare Model Welfare Guidelines.

# Welfare Guidelines include Updates to New Laws and Regulations Since Last Approval



- General Assistance eligibility and practice update for APTD/OAA recipients per 2014 RSA 167:27 change.
- Expected agency payment of “current bill” to “average bill” for utility assistance/payment arrangement eligibility per 6/9/2020 NH Public Utility Commission change.
- Ability to access \$2000.00 from deceased bank account for burial/cremation expenses per 8/20/19 RSA 165:27-a change.

# Updated Model Welfare Guidelines also include



- Housing and Shelter definitions and references.
- Application Process to include alternative options for interviews/appointments.
- Disbursement to include local finance policies, including municipal credit card usage when needed.
- Child age change for Job Search expectation, as RSA 165:31 reflects lower age for “Workfare” and not job search for paid employment.
- New names/acronyms, including SNAP for Food Stamps, NHMA for Local Government Center, etc.
- Example/Model Application and Forms.

# Model Welfare Guidelines include More Guidance and Clarification



- Adding the Pending Decision as a limited formal use decision option.
- Adding more guidance for Home Visits.
- Adding “Maintained” definition in Legal Standard and Interpretation.
- Adding language regarding Emergency Shelter referrals, applicant refusals and involuntary exits for shelter rule/policy violations.
- Adding guidance per RSA 611-B:25 regarding Unclaimed Bodies from medical examiner.

# NHLWAA Model Welfare Guidelines Committee



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# NH GAP (General Assistance Program)



A professional software package, known as NH GAP (General Assistance Program) has been available since 11/01/14. NH GAP provides more effective, efficient and uniform local welfare administration, including standard decision print outs, case notes, statistics, shared applicant contacts with other NH GAP users and much more. Information for NH GAP, including pricing based on municipal populations, can be obtained from Stonehill Municipal Solutions at [GAPSupport@shms.us](mailto:GAPSupport@shms.us).