

§4307. Municipality of responsibility; residency

1. General assistance required. Municipalities shall provide general assistance to all eligible persons at the expense of that municipality, except as provided in section 4311.

A municipality may not move or transport a person into another municipality to avoid responsibility for general assistance support for that person. A municipality that illegally moves or transports a person, or illegally denies assistance to a person that results in that person's relocation, in addition to the other penalties provided in this chapter, shall reimburse twice the amount of assistance to the municipality that provided the assistance to that person. That reimbursement must be made in accordance with subsection 5.

A. [PL 1987, c. 349, Pt. H, §15 (RP).]

B. [PL 1987, c. 349, Pt. H, §15 (RP).]
[RR 2021, c. 2, Pt. B, §198 (COR).]

2. Municipality of responsibility. Except as provided in subsection 4, a municipality is responsible for the general assistance support of the following individuals:

A. A resident of the municipality. For the purposes of this section, a "resident" means a person who is physically present in a municipality with the intention of remaining in that municipality to maintain or establish a home and who has no other residence; and [PL 1987, c. 349, Pt. H, §15 (NEW).]

B. Eligible persons who apply to the municipality for assistance and who are not residents of that or any other municipality. If a person is not a resident of any municipality, the municipality where that person first applies shall be responsible for support until a new residence is established. [PL 1987, c. 349, Pt. H, §15 (NEW).]
[PL 1987, c. 349, Pt. H, §15 (RPR).]

3. Durational residency requirement prohibited. No municipality may establish a durational residency requirement for general assistance.
[PL 1987, c. 349, Pt. H, §15 (RPR).]

4. Special circumstances. Overseers of a municipality may not move or transport an applicant or recipient into another municipality to relieve their municipality of responsibility for that applicant's or recipient's support. The municipality of responsibility for relocations and institutional settings is as follows.

A. When an applicant or recipient requests relocation to another municipality and the overseers of a municipality assist that person to relocate to another municipality, the municipality from which that person is moving continues to be responsible for the support of the recipient, including processing applications and determining eligibility for assistance, unless otherwise agreed upon by the affected municipalities, for 6 months after relocation. As used in this paragraph, "assist" includes:

(1) Granting financial assistance to relocate; and

(2) Making arrangements for a person to relocate. [PL 2023, c. 575, §4 (AMD).]

B. If an applicant is in a group home, shelter, rehabilitation center, nursing home, hospital or other institution at the time of application and has either been in that institution for 12 months or less or had a residence immediately prior to entering the institution that the applicant had maintained and to which the applicant intends to return, the municipality of responsibility is the municipality where the applicant was a resident immediately prior to entering the institution and that municipality continues to be responsible for the support of the recipient, including processing applications and determining eligibility for assistance, unless otherwise agreed upon by the affected municipalities.

For the purpose of this paragraph, a hotel, motel or similar place of temporary lodging is considered an institution when a municipality:

- (1) Grants financial assistance for a person to move to or stay in temporary lodging;
- (2) Makes arrangements for a person to stay in temporary lodging;
- (3) Advises or encourages a person to stay in temporary lodging; or
- (4) Illegally denies housing assistance and, as a result of that denial, the person stays in temporary lodging. [PL 2023, c. 575, §4 (AMD).]

C. [PL 2017, c. 130, §1 (RP).]
[PL 2023, c. 575, §4 (AMD).]

5. Disputes between municipalities. Nothing in this section may permit a municipality to deny assistance to an otherwise eligible applicant when there is any dispute regarding residency. In cases of dispute regarding which municipality is the municipality of responsibility, the municipality where the application has been filed shall provide support until responsibility has been determined by the department. The department shall make a written determination within 30 working days of a complaint or notification of a dispute. The department's decision must include the sources of information relied upon, findings of fact and conclusions of law regarding which municipality is responsible and the reimbursement due, if any, from the responsible municipality to the municipality providing assistance. If after 30 days the reimbursement has not been paid, the municipality to which reimbursement is due shall notify the department, the department shall credit the municipality owed the reimbursement and either deduct that amount from the debtor municipality or refer the bill to the Treasurer of State for payment from any taxes, revenue, fines or fees due from the State to the municipality. [RR 2009, c. 2, §59 (COR).]

6. Appeals. Any municipality or person who is aggrieved by any decision or action made by the department pursuant to this section shall have the right to appeal pursuant to the Maine Administrative Procedure Act, Title 5, chapter 375. A request for that appeal shall be in writing and shall be made within 30 days of the written department decision. The appeal shall be held within 30 days of receipt of that request and shall be conducted by one or more fair hearing officers. In no event may an appeal be held before a person or body responsible for the decision or action. Review of any decision under this subsection shall be pursuant to the Maine Rules of Civil Procedure, Rule 80C. [PL 1987, c. 349, Pt. H, §15 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1983, c. 577, §1 (NEW). PL 1987, c. 349, §H15 (RPR). RR 2009, c. 2, §§58, 59 (COR). PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. II, §1 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 130, §1 (AMD). RR 2021, c. 2, Pt. B, §198 (COR). PL 2023, c. 575, §4 (AMD).

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