
Updated July 2, 2020

State General Assistance Programs Very Limited in Half the States and Nonexistent in Others, Despite Need

By Liz Schott¹

State General Assistance (GA) programs, meant to provide a safety net of last resort for people who are very poor and do not qualify for other cash assistance, often fail to perform that basic task. There is no federally supported cash assistance program for poor adults without minor children other than those with disabilities serious enough to qualify for Supplemental Security Income (SSI); state Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs only serve families with minor children. Thus, state or local GA programs are generally the only cash assistance for which poor childless adults can qualify. Yet only half the states provide *any* type of general assistance, and often it is available only to a limited slice of those in need.

Moreover, state GA programs have weakened considerably in the last three decades. The number of states with GA programs has fallen from 38 to 25 since 1989, and benefits have shrunk in inflation-adjusted terms in nearly every state since 1998. The result is that, as our nation faces the most serious economic crisis since the Great Depression, general assistance for people experiencing great need is unavailable in many states and very limited in the others. Also, in a number of states individuals who cannot work and have no minor children at home may have only limited access to *non-cash* benefits, such as SNAP (formerly food stamps) or health coverage.

The 25 states with GA programs generally serve very poor individuals who do not have minor children, are not disabled enough to qualify for (or do not yet receive) SSI, and are not elderly.² Only 11 of the 25 states provide any benefits to childless adults who do not have some disability; the others only serve childless adults the state has deemed “unemployable,” generally due to a physical or mental condition.³ (See Figure 1.) Some are uniform statewide programs; others have mandatory

¹ Eleanor Bragg contributed to this report.

² These 25 states include the District of Columbia, which this report treats as a state. The remaining 26 states have no statewide GA program or state mandate for counties to provide such assistance, although some counties may offer a program at the county or local level. Because there is neither a statewide program nor state mandate, we consider these states as having no program in Figure 1. In four of the states labeled as “No State Program” we have identified at least one county with a GA program; those states are identified in Appendix II.

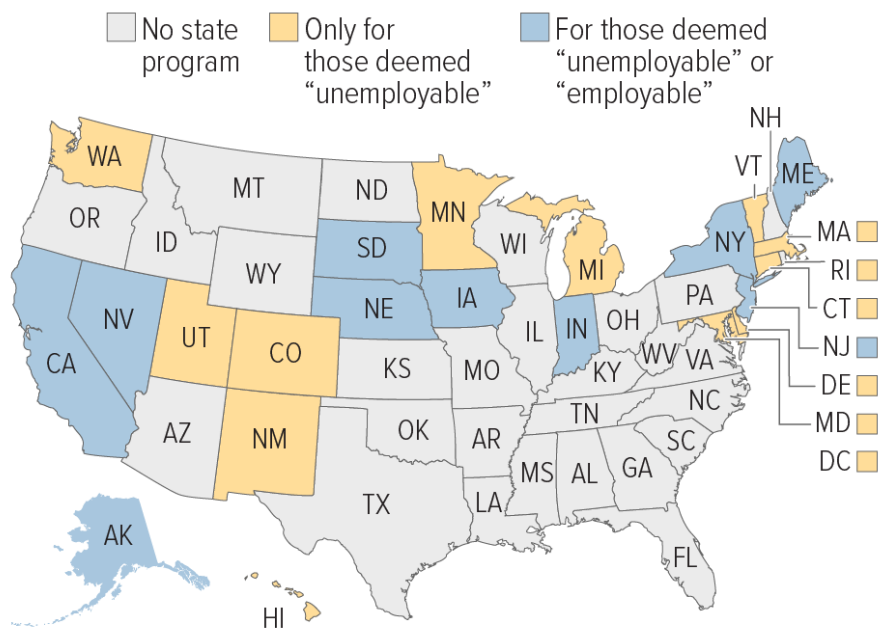
³ A number of states use the term “unemployable” for the group of persons the state has chosen to serve, generally individuals who have a disability or meet other criteria such as being over age 55. Similarly, some of the 11 states that

state guidelines but allow county programs to adopt varying eligibility standards. (See Appendices II and III for greater detail.)

FIGURE 1

State General Assistance Programs in 2020

Statewide programs by eligibility requirements



Note: Criteria for "unemployable" vary by state; examples include physical disability, age over 55, and need to care for young child or disabled family member. "Employable" refers to individuals who do not meet those criteria but whom some states have chosen to serve due to financial need.

Source: CBPP analysis of state General Assistance programs

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General Assistance benefits are extremely modest. In nearly all states with programs, the maximum benefit is below half of the poverty line for an individual; in half of those states it is below *one-quarter* of the poverty line. In many states, benefit levels have not changed in decades and thus have shrunk significantly in inflation-adjusted terms. Some states have cut benefits further, reducing them in nominal dollars. Some other states have raised benefits at some point over the last 25 years, but generally not by enough to restore the lost purchasing power.

serve individuals more broadly based on financial need use the term "employable" to describe eligible individuals. (Some states have multiple programs with more limited benefits for those considered "employable.") This report uses *deemed "unemployable"* and *deemed "employable"* to describe the coverage of these two types of programs, reflecting that these are state or county determinations and may not accurately depict a person's ability to work. In reality, many individuals with disabilities or other health conditions or over age 55 are able to work. Similarly, being deemed "employable" only means that a person does not have an eligible work-limiting disability or other incapacity that meets state or county standards; many individuals deemed "employable" face serious barriers to employment, including homelessness, lack of in-demand job skills, prior involvement with the criminal justice system, or racial discrimination.

In each of the past three decades, some states have eliminated their General Assistance programs and others have cut funding, restricted eligibility, imposed time limits, and/or cut benefits. Between the late 1980s and late 1990s, 12 states eliminated General Assistance for people who do not have a disability, and three other states eliminated their state GA programs altogether. Between 1998 and 2010, five additional states terminated their GA programs, and at least ten other states cut their programs back. Since 2011, four more states have ended their statewide programs and several others have reduced funding or tightened eligibility.

This report describes the weakening of General Assistance programs over the years and provides an overview of program policies across the 25 states with programs in 2020. The information in this report is based on our updated national survey of General Assistance programs.⁴

Overview of General Assistance Programs

As of April 1, 2020, 25 states had a GA program that either operated statewide or was mandated and governed by statewide guidelines. (See Figure 1.) This section reviews key eligibility provisions and related benefits for these states; see Appendices II and III for more details.

Eligibility Groups

Every state General Assistance program assists individuals with disabilities. Some also assist other individuals.

- *Individuals with a disability.* GA programs in 25 states serve needy individuals who are unable to work due to incapacity or disability but are not receiving SSI. Some of these programs assist those deemed “employable” and individuals with a disability alike, based solely on financial need. Most, however, only serve individuals who have a disability or are otherwise deemed “unemployable.”

Programs limited to individuals with a disability require some type of medical documentation of incapacity. Most states require a minimum *duration* of disability — that is, the disability must be expected to last for anywhere from at least 30 days to at least 48 months, depending on the state. State policies vary in the severity of the disability that qualifies an individual for General Assistance, ranging from a temporary inability to work due to incapacity to the much more severe SSI disability standard (a disability expected to last at least 12 months or to cause death). Some of the states using the SSI disability standard require GA recipients to apply for SSI, often requiring them to sign an interim assistance agreement to repay the state once they begin receiving SSI. Claims for SSI are often denied, and claimants face long delays as they pursue appeals.

- *Other individuals deemed “unemployable.”* In addition to individuals with a disability, seven states serve other categories of individuals who are deemed “unemployable” because they are, for example, over age 55, have a learning disability or limited literacy that prevents employment, or are needed at home to care for a young child or a family member with a disability.

⁴ This paper is an update of Liz Schott and Misha Hill, “State General Assistance Programs Are Weakening Despite Increased Need,” July 9, 2015. Appendix I sets forth the programs for which we collected data and how we collected it. It also discusses other studies on which we relied for historical information.

- *Individuals deemed “employable.”* Some 11 states assist individuals whom the state considers “employable” but who are ineligible for other cash public assistance programs, though benefits are very limited. (These states also serve those deemed “unemployable,” in the same program or a separate one; some states have different eligibility criteria, benefit levels, or administrative structure for the two groups. For example, in New Jersey, maximum benefits are \$185 per month for an “employable” recipient and \$277 for an “unemployable” recipient.)

TABLE 1

Overview of General Assistance Programs, 2020

	Eligibility			Time limit
	Individuals With a Disability	Other Individuals Deemed “Unemployable”	Individuals Deemed “Employable”	
Alaska	X		X	
California	X		X	X (for some recipients)
Colorado	X			X (for some recipients)
Connecticut	X			
Delaware	X	X		X (for some recipients)
DC	X			
Hawai’i	X			
Indiana	X		X	
Iowa	X		X	Varies by county
Maine	X		X	
Maryland	X			X
Massachusetts	X	X		
Michigan	X	X		
Minnesota	X	X		
Nebraska	X		X	Varies by county
Nevada	X		X	X
New Hampshire	X		X	
New Jersey	X		X	X
New Mexico	X	X		
New York	X	X	X	
Ohio	X			
Rhode Island	X			
South Dakota	X		X	
Utah	X			X
Vermont	X	X		
Washington	X			

Time Limits

Seven of the 25 states have statewide limits on how long an individual can receive aid, ranging from one month out of a year to five years total in a lifetime. The length, nature, and application of time-limit policies vary across and within states.

- *Who is subject to time limits?* Maryland, Utah, and New Jersey apply time limits to all GA recipients. California, Colorado, Delaware, and Nevada apply different time limit policies based on eligibility category. For example, in California, those deemed “employable” can receive benefits for nine months out of every year, while those deemed “unemployable” have no limit.⁵
- *What is the duration of the time limits?* Colorado, Delaware, and New Jersey impose cumulative time limits over an individual’s lifetime. For example, New Jersey has a lifetime limit of five years. California, Maryland, Nevada, and Utah have intermittent time limits. For example, in Maryland, individuals may receive benefits for 12 out of every 36 months.

Some states that do not have statewide time limits may have variable limits across specific categories. For example, Polk County, Iowa, has no time limit, but other Iowa counties have limits as low as one month out of a year. Similarly, Douglas County, Nebraska, has no time limit, but two other Nebraska counties have limits of 12 months in a lifetime and six months out of a 12-month period.

Benefit Levels

General Assistance benefit levels are very low. Most state or county guidelines set maximum standard benefit levels. These maximum levels are below half of the federal poverty level for an individual in all but two states and below one-quarter of the federal poverty level in half of the programs.

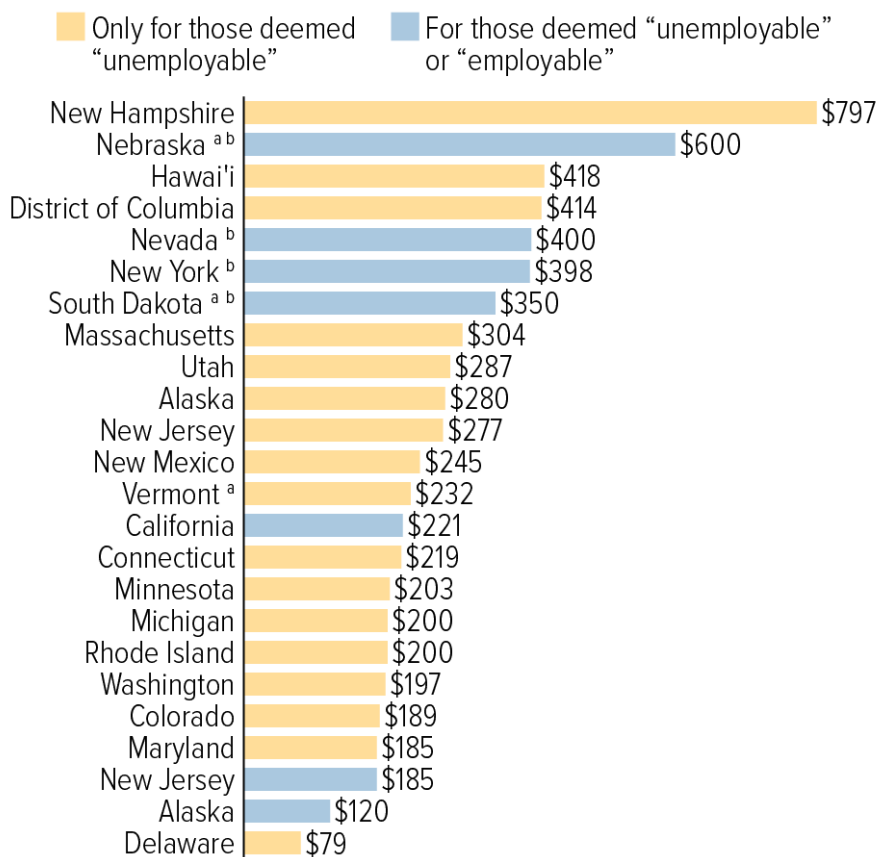
Some of the states with the lowest benefits only serve individuals meeting the state’s criteria for disabilities or other specified work-limiting conditions, even though such individuals are, by definition, unable to supplement their benefits with earnings. (See Figure 2.) For example, Delaware and Maryland, which serve only those deemed “unemployable,” set the maximum benefit level at \$79 and \$185, respectively.

⁵ The California information is based on the Los Angeles County program. Some other counties have different time limits; many have a limit of three months out of every 12.

Some states provide benefits to recipients either in cash or through vouchers; others make all payments directly to landlords or service providers. GA benefits are intended to help recipients meet basic needs such as shelter and utilities, though the specific needs covered vary by state.

FIGURE 2

General Assistance Maximum Monthly Benefit Levels



^a Figure shown is maximum for one person; these states or counties base benefit amounts on a standard of shelter costs.

^b Benefit levels vary by county. The county referenced is specified in Appendix III.

Note: Criteria for "unemployable" vary by state; examples include physical disability, age over 55, and need to care for young child or disabled family member. "Employable" refers to individuals who do not meet those criteria but whom some states have chosen to serve due to financial need. Chart does not include Indiana, Iowa, and Maine because their benefits vary by county and the counties examined for this report do not set maximum benefit levels.

Source: CBPP analysis of state General Assistance programs

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General Assistance Has Eroded Severely

General Assistance has become a much weaker safety net over the years. Many states have eliminated their programs or scaled them back by reducing funding, imposing tighter eligibility

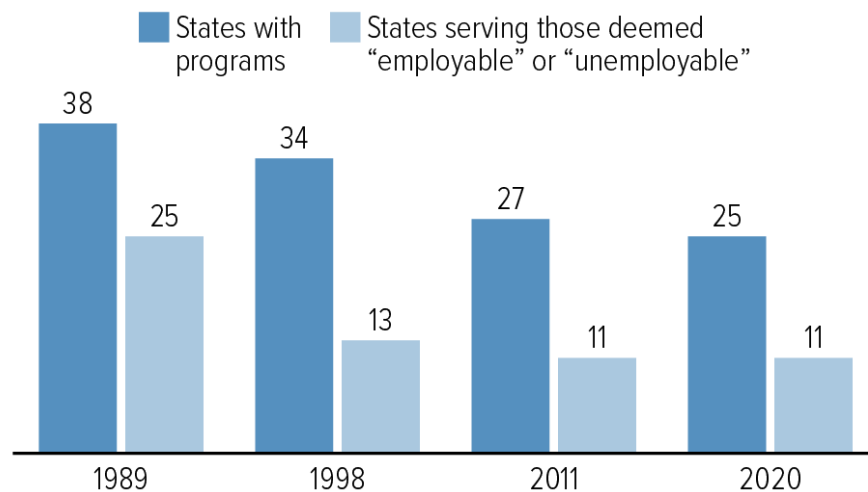
restrictions and/or time limits, and/or reducing benefits. These cutbacks continued during and after the Great Recession, despite high unemployment and a rise in the number of jobless workers who have exhausted their unemployment insurance benefits.

Because General Assistance benefits are funded with state or local dollars (with no federal funding), they are particularly vulnerable during state fiscal crises. For example, states may cut these programs further in light of the current health and economic crisis, which has caused a steep drop in state and local revenues. The likelihood of such cuts depends in part on the extent to which the federal government provides ample fiscal relief to states and localities to help them cope with the current crisis.

The last three decades show a gradual crumbling of access to state General Assistance. Between 1989 and 1998, Montana, South Carolina, and Wyoming eliminated their state programs altogether and 12 other states eliminated GA for those deemed “employable,” while continuing some aid to those deemed “unemployable.” By 1998, only 13 states offered any aid to individuals deemed “employable.” (See Figure 3.) Between 1998 and 2010, another five states — Missouri, Oregon, Arizona, Wisconsin, and Idaho — eliminated their statewide programs,⁶ and Utah eliminated GA for those deemed “employable” while maintaining it for those deemed “unemployable.”

FIGURE 3

Fewer States Providing General Assistance



Note: Criteria for “unemployable” vary by state; examples include physical disability, age over 55, and need to care for young child or disabled family member. “Employable” refers to individuals who do not meet those criteria but whom some states have chosen to serve due to financial need.

Source: Data for 1989 and 1998 were obtained from 1999 Urban Institute policy brief. Data for 2011 and 2020 were gathered by CBPP.

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⁶ Idaho eliminated its Aged, Blind, and Disabled program in 2010. Although the state statute still refers to General Assistance and at least one county (Ada County) continues to offer one, aid there is provided to recipients for only one month in a year, which the Urban Institute and this report consider emergency assistance rather than General Assistance.

This erosion continued over the last decade. In 2011 and 2012, Illinois,⁷ Kansas, and Pennsylvania⁸ eliminated their state GA programs. Most recently, Ohio phased out its Disability Financial Assistance program at the end of 2017.

Almost all the states that did *not* eliminate their programs over the last two decades provide lower benefits now than in 1998, after adjusting for inflation, as Figure 4 shows. Among the 18 states for which we have comparable data, only in Maryland and the District of Columbia do benefits exceed the 1998 level, and Maryland's benefits are extremely small: less than one-quarter of the federal poverty line.

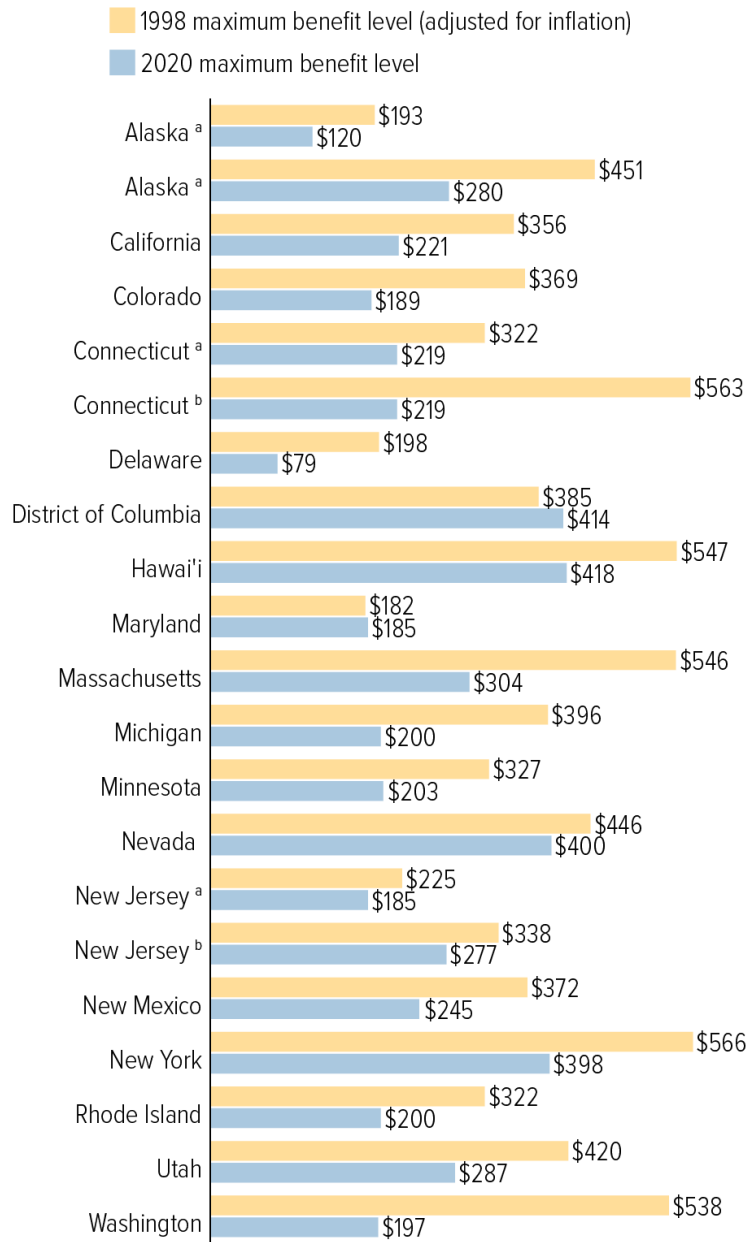
Since 2011, eight states have raised benefits in nominal terms (Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, and Utah), while four states have cut them (Delaware, Michigan, South Dakota, and Washington).

⁷ Illinois initially withdrew state GA funding from all municipalities except Chicago and then withdrew funding for Chicago in 2012, ending the city's GA program. Any remaining GA programs in Illinois are solely funded and administered at the municipal or county level.

⁸ Pennsylvania briefly reinstated its program in 2018 pursuant to court order, but the legislature did not fund it and it was discontinued again at the end of July 2019.

FIGURE 4

General Assistance Benefits Have Lost Value in Nearly Every State



^a Maximum benefit for those deemed "employable"

^b Maximum benefit for those deemed "unemployable"

Note: Criteria for "unemployable" vary by state; examples include physical disability, age over 55, and need to care for young child or disabled family member. "Employable" refers to individuals who do not meet those criteria but whom some states have chosen to serve due to financial need. Chart does not include the following states with General Assistance programs due to data limitations: Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Nebraska, New Hampshire, South Dakota, Vermont. The remaining states have no General Assistance programs.

Source: "A Shrinking Portion of the Safety Net: General Assistance from 1989-1998," The Urban Institute 1999 (1998 data); CBPP analysis (2020 data)

Health Coverage for General Assistance Recipients

Under the 2010 Affordable Care Act (ACA), states can extend Medicaid eligibility to all individuals with incomes up to 138 percent of the federal poverty line. The ACA thus allows low-income childless adults, including those receiving General Assistance, to qualify for Medicaid. However, in 2012 the Supreme Court made this Medicaid expansion a state option, which 37 states and the District of Columbia have taken up as of July 1, 2020.

Nearly all of the 25 states with statewide GA programs have expanded Medicaid. GA recipients in these states generally should qualify for Medicaid, although they may have to go through a separate application process. (Eleven of the 26 states *without* statewide GA programs have not expanded Medicaid through the ACA, leaving adults without severe disabilities or minor children at home with no access to either cash or health coverage through Medicaid.)

South Dakota is the only state with a statewide GA program that has not yet adopted the Medicaid expansion; Nebraska voters approved expansion in 2018 but the state will not implement it until October 2020. GA recipients in these two states may be able to obtain health coverage through county or local programs. For example, Minnehaha County, South Dakota covers emergency services for GA recipients, as well as non-emergency services when funds are available, and Douglas County, Nebraska enrolls all GA recipients found medically indigent in the Primary Health Care Network.

In some states, GA recipients with severe disabilities may qualify for Medicaid through a disability-related category rather than through the state's Medicaid expansion. Some states may also provide some state-funded health coverage to a subgroup of GA recipients who may not qualify for Medicaid.

Conclusion

By and large, the federal government has left it up to states to provide basic assistance to childless adults who are not elderly and do not meet the severe disability standard to receive SSI. States have never provided substantial support for this group, and the safety net for these individuals has weakened significantly over the past 30 years and continues to erode.

Few states serve adults without minor children at home if they are deemed “employable,” even though many of these individuals may not have the ability or opportunity to work and may not receive unemployment insurance benefits. These individuals are vulnerable to severe hardship. Moreover, half of the states have no statewide GA program for individuals even if they are unable to earn income to meet their basic needs due to disability. When benefits are available, they are often meager and subject to tight eligibility rules. These individuals who can get only limited cash help or none at all may also have very limited access to SNAP benefits due to a three-month limit on SNAP benefits. (While that limited has been temporarily suspended, it would apply in normal economic times.)

As a result, our nation — which is now facing the greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression — has no effective safety net for childless adults that is broadly available across the nation.

Appendix I: Methodology

We collected information on General Assistance current policies and proposals for 2020 by checking state and county public assistance agency websites (including manuals and rules) and, where needed, directly contacting agencies in states to seek or confirm information. We looked at policies and benefit levels as of April 2020.

Not all state programs are named “General Assistance.” We included state-funded programs available to individuals who are ineligible for other forms of cash public assistance, including programs such as Interim Assistance, State Disability Assistance, and Local Welfare (see Appendices II and III). Some state GA programs also serve *families* that are ineligible for other aid; we have included this information in Appendix II, but the details in this report focus on program features that apply to individuals.

For historical information, we relied on reports from the Urban Institute, which include information for 1998 and comparative information back to 1989. Urban has published several comprehensive national surveys of General Assistance programs; its most recent published data is from a 1998 survey of states and a shorter policy brief.⁹ Because we compared 2020 program information to Urban’s 1998 and 1989 data, we generally followed Urban’s classifications for states with county variability and gathered information for the same county used for the earlier Urban reports (which was, and often still is, the county with the largest population). In some cases, we included different information or classified it differently than in the earlier Urban reports.¹⁰

This report focuses on the 25 states with a statewide program or statewide mandate for county or local programs. Some counties in some other states may operate their own programs; Appendix II provides the information we collected but is not necessarily comprehensive. (We did not otherwise collect information on specific county programs.) In some cases, historical data from the Urban reports indicate that a county operated a program in the past but we were unable to determine whether it still does.

⁹ L. Jerome Gallagher *et al.*, *State General Assistance Programs 1998*, Urban Institute, 1999; L. Jerome Gallagher, “A Shrinking Portion of the Safety Net: General Assistance from 1989 to 1998,” Urban Institute, 1999.

¹⁰ For example, we included New Hampshire’s Aid for Permanently and Totally Disabled program in this report because we concluded that it was comparable to other state General Assistance programs, although the Urban Institute included only New Hampshire’s Local Welfare in its reports.

TABLE 2

Summary of State General Assistance Programs as of April 2020

	State Program Name	Uniform Statewide Program	State Mandate and Guidelines: Program Varies by County	No State Program or State Mandate for County Programs
Alabama	N/A			X
Alaska	General Relief Assistance	X		
	Interim Assistance	X		
Arizona	N/A			X
Arkansas	N/A			X
California	General Assistance or General Relief (GA/GR)		X	
Colorado	Aid to the Needy Disabled	X		
Connecticut	State Administered General Assistance (SAGA)	X		
Delaware	General Assistance	X		
District of Columbia	Interim Disability Assistance (IDA)	X		
Florida	N/A			X
Georgia	N/A			X
Hawai'i	General Assistance	X		
	Aid to the Aged, Blind, and Disabled (AABD)	X		
Idaho	N/A			X
Illinois	N/A			X*
Indiana	Township Poor Relief		X	
Iowa	General Assistance		X	
Kansas	N/A			X
Kentucky	N/A			X
Louisiana	N/A			X
Maine	Municipal General Assistance		X	
Maryland	Temporary Disability Assistance Program (TDAP)	X		
Massachusetts	Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children (EAEDC)	X		
Michigan	State Disability Assistance (SDA)	X		
Minnesota	General Assistance (GA)	X		
Mississippi	N/A			X
Missouri	N/A			X

TABLE 2

Summary of State General Assistance Programs as of April 2020

	State Program Name	Uniform Statewide Program	State Mandate and Guidelines: Program Varies by County	No State Program or State Mandate for County Programs
Montana	Indigent Assistance or General Assistance			X*
Nebraska	General Assistance		X	
Nevada	Financial Assistance		X	
New Hampshire	Local Welfare		X	
	Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled	X		
New Jersey	General Assistance (Work First NJ)	X		
New Mexico	General Assistance	X		
New York	Safety Net Assistance (SNA)	X		
North Carolina	N/A			X
North Dakota	N/A			X
Ohio	N/A			X
Oklahoma	N/A			X
Oregon	N/A			X
Pennsylvania	N/A			X
Rhode Island	General Public Assistance (GPA)	X		
South Carolina	N/A			X
South Dakota	County Poor Relief		X	
Tennessee	N/A			X
Texas	N/A			X
Utah	General Assistance (GA)	X		
Vermont	General Assistance (GA)	X		
Virginia	General Relief			X*
Washington	Aged, Blind, and Disabled (ABD)	X		
	Housing and Essential Needs (HEN)	X		
West Virginia	N/A			X
Wisconsin	N/A			X*
Wyoming	N/A			X

* While these states have no statewide program or mandate, we found a website for at least one county in the state that offers General Assistance and included the name of that county program in the State Program Name column. Of these states, Montana and Virginia have statutes for optional county-run programs.

TABLE 3

Details on State General Assistance Programs

	State Program	Eligibility Criteria (in addition to financial need)	Duration of Incapacity	Benefit Levels (Max. for One Person)	Time Limits
Alabama	N/A			X	
Alaska	General Relief Assistance	Eligibility based solely on financial need	N/A	\$120	None; eligibility redetermined each month
	Interim Assistance	Elderly, blind, disabled, and awaiting SSI determination	Expected to last for at least 12 months or terminal	\$280	None, but eligibility ends upon final SSI determination
Arizona	N/A			X	
Arkansas	N/A			X	
California (Los Angeles County)	General Assistance or General Relief (GA/GR)	Employable	N/A	\$221	9 months in a 12-month period if employable. None for unemployable individuals
		Temporary Unemployable: temporary physical and/or mental incapacity preventing employment	less than 12 months		
		Unemployable: physical and/or mental incapacity preventing employment	Expected to last for at least 12 months or terminally ill		
Colorado	Aid to the Needy Disabled	Age 18 – 59 with a disability that precludes working	6 months or more	\$189	If the diagnosis is alcoholism or drug abuse, 12 cumulative months in a lifetime
Connecticut	State Administered General Assistance (SAGA)	Unemployable: 1 - severe physical and/or mental incapacity preventing employment, or 2 - over 65; over age 55 and no recent work history; full-time high school student; needed at home to care for child under 2 or incapacitated spouse or child; or pending receipt of a state or federal means-tested program	6 months or more	\$219	None

TABLE 3

Details on State General Assistance Programs

	State Program	Eligibility Criteria (in addition to financial need)	Duration of Incapacity	Benefit Levels (Max. for One Person)	Time Limits
		Short-term Transitional: physical and/or mental incapacity preventing employment	2 to 6 months (must have recent work history)	\$219 if applicant has a rental obligation; \$55 if living rent-free	
		Long-term Transitional: physical and/or mental incapacity preventing employment	6 months or more		
Delaware	General Assistance	1 - ill or incapacitated, preventing employment, or 2 - appealing SSI or SSA decision (not to exceed 2 months); needed at home to care for child under 6 or an ill or incapacitated household member; over age 55; or full-time high school student	None specified	\$79	2 months if appealing SSI/SSA decision; 24 months for high school students. None otherwise
District of Columbia	Interim Disability Assistance (IDA)	Permanently and totally disabled and awaiting SSI determination	12 months or more	\$414	None, but eligibility ends upon final SSI determination
Hawai'i	General Assistance (GA)	Physically and/or mentally disabled (including drug abuse); unable to work more than 30 hrs/week; don't meet SSI requirements	60 days or more	\$348	None
	Aid to the Aged, Blind, and Disabled	65 or older; blind; or physically or mentally disabled and unable to work; or unable to work and have a terminal condition; or on Social Security or SSI but getting too little money; or living with and caring for an individual receiving AABD.	Expected to last for at least 12 months or terminal	\$418	None
Indiana (Center Township of Marion County)	Township Poor Relief	Based solely on financial need. Must seek and accept employment unless individual is disabled, a minor, over 65, or caring for incapacitated spouse or child	None	No overall maximum	None (each application is for one month's assistance)
Iowa (Polk County)	General Assistance	Eligibility based solely on financial need	N/A	Varies widely by county. Annual maximum determined by Board of	Varies by county. No time limit in Polk County; other

TABLE 3

Details on State General Assistance Programs

	State Program	Eligibility Criteria (in addition to financial need)	Duration of Incapacity	Benefit Levels (Max. for One Person)	Time Limits
				Supervisors in Polk County.	counties have limits as low as one month out of each year.
Maine	Municipal General Assistance	Eligibility based solely on financial need	N/A	Varies by locality (municipal ordinance)	None, but must renew application for assistance every 30 days
Maryland	Temporary Disability Assistance Program (TDAP)	Physical and/or mental incapacity preventing employment	3 months or more	\$185	12 months out of a 36-month period unless pursuing or appealing SSI. If disabled 12 months or more, must file SSI application
Massachusetts	Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children (EAEDC)	1 - physical and/or mental incapacity preventing employment, or 2 - over 65 years old and waiting for SSI payments; participating in a Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission program; or needed at home to care for a child not related to the individual or an incapacitated individual	60 days or more	\$303.70	None
Michigan	State Disability Assistance (SDA)	1 - unable to work due to mental or physical disability, or 2 - receiving disability-based Medicaid or reside in a special facility (such as a licensed Adult Foster care Home)	90 days or more	\$200	None
Minnesota	General Assistance (GA)	1 - has or takes care of someone with an illness or disability, or 2 - awaiting determination for SSI or SSDI, or 3 - in a mental, physical or drug rehabilitation facility or domestic violence shelter, or	45 days or more	\$203	None

TABLE 3

Details on State General Assistance Programs

	State Program	Eligibility Criteria (in addition to financial need)	Duration of Incapacity	Benefit Levels (Max. for One Person)	Time Limits
		4 - unemployable, has a drug or alcohol dependency, has a learning disability, is over 55, is a displaced homemaker who is a full-time student, a high school student over 18 for whom English is not the first language, or under 18 and not living with family			
Nebraska (Douglas County)	General Assistance	Eligibility based solely on financial need	N/A	Varies by county Douglas County (vendor payments only): Rent: \$600 Non-food items: \$25	None for most counties (during last review, one county had a lifetime limit of 12 months; another had a limit of 6 months in 12-month period)
Nevada (Clark County)	Financial Assistance	Employable	N/A	\$400	1 month in 12-month period
		Employable with employment barrier	N/A		3 months in 12-month period
		Unemployable: physical and/or mental incapacity preventing employment; or age 62 or older	Expected to last for at least 12 months or terminal		6 months in 12-month period
New Hampshire (City of Manchester)	Local Welfare	Eligibility based solely on financial need	N/A	Varies by county; City of Manchester provides vendor payments only	None
	Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled	Physical and/or mental incapacity preventing employment	Expected to last for at least 48 months or terminal	\$797	
New Jersey	General Assistance	Employable: single adults and childless couples without children	None	\$185	60-month lifetime limit

TABLE 3

Details on State General Assistance Programs

	State Program	Eligibility Criteria (in addition to financial need)	Duration of Incapacity	Benefit Levels (Max. for One Person)	Time Limits
	(Work First NJ)	Unemployable: individual doesn't need to meet work requirement if physical and/or mental disability prevents employment	6 months or more	\$277	
New Mexico	General Assistance	1 - physical and/or mental incapacity preventing employment, or 2 - dependent children who are ineligible for TANF and in financial need	30 days or more	\$245	None
New York	Safety Net Assistance (SNA)	Eligibility based on financial need for: single adults; childless couples; children living apart from any adult relative; families of persons abusing drugs or alcohol; persons who have exceeded the 60-month limit for TANF; immigrants who are eligible for temporary assistance but not eligible for federal reimbursement	N/A	Varies by county New York City: \$398	None
Rhode Island	General Public Assistance (GPA-Bridge)	Age 18-64; must have an illness, injury, or medical condition that precludes any working; must be applying for / awaiting SSI (with few exceptions for recipients of set-aside "Hardship Fund"); must have already been approved for Medicaid. Cannot be pregnant or live with a child under 18.	30 days or more	\$200	None, but must renew eligibility after 6 months and reapply after 12 months
South Dakota (Minnehaha County)	County Poor Relief	Eligibility based solely on financial need	N/A	\$350 for housing	None; each request a one-time request
Utah	General Assistance (GA)	Single individuals and married couples who have no dependent children residing with them 50% or more of the time and have a physical or mental impairment that prevents employment	60 days or more	\$287	12 months out of rolling 60-month period
Vermont	General Assistance (GA)	1) age 65 or older or has a dependent child under age 18, or 2) is not able bodied, or 3) is younger than 65, able-bodied, and the spouse or civil union partner of an	30 days or more	Permanent housing: Chittenden County: \$232 Other counties: \$198	None; each request a one-time request

TABLE 3

Details on State General Assistance Programs

	State Program	Eligibility Criteria (in addition to financial need)	Duration of Incapacity	Benefit Levels (Max. for One Person)	Time Limits
		SSI/AABD recipient or applicant who meets criterion 1 or 2 above, or 4) is younger than 65, able-bodied, but has two or more of the following employment barriers: 55 or older; illiterate or has no more than an 8th grade education; employed and/or full-time student for fewer than 6 months in the past 5 years; released from a mental health institution in the last 6 months; participating in a state or federally funded drug or alcohol treatment program		Groceries and personal needs: \$56 for 28 days	
Washington*	Aged, Blind and Disabled (ABD)	1 - age 65 or older, or 2 - blind, or 3 - has a long-term medical condition that is likely to meet SSA disability criteria Must be at least 18 years old or, if under 18, a member of a married couple	At least 12 months or terminal	\$197	None

*Washington also offers a state-funded Housing and Essential Needs program, which provides individuals with disabilities at risk of homelessness with vendor payments for rent or utilities and vouchers to obtain toiletries and household supplies from “essential needs banks.” The program is administered by local service providers such as community action agencies and aid is subject to funding.