

# General Assistance: a Critical Program for Pennsylvania

The General Assistance program is a bridge to self-sufficiency.

General Assistance is a targeted program providing a small amount of cash support to people who need it urgently in order to stabilize their situation, prevent serious decline, and work toward self-sufficiency. This support goes only to specific populations who need immediate and urgent assistance, which includes;

People with  
disabilities  
who cannot  
work



People in  
treatment for  
a substance  
use disorder



Children  
cared for by  
neighbors  
or friends



People  
fleeing  
domestic  
violence



People  
caring for  
someone with  
a disability



  
Over 4 in 5 are disabled  
and unable to work

10% are participating in  
substance use disorder treatment  
that prevents them from working

**General Assistance is a small, targeted and temporary program.** People receive on average only \$200/month, and eligibility is time-limited. People use General Assistance to cover basic needs, like toiletries, washing clothes, paying medical copays, or paying for rides to the grocery store or disability hearings. The money is spent in local communities, benefitting local businesses like grocery stores, laundromats, and transportation companies.

**General Assistance keeps people out of shelters.** Many use their benefit to contribute toward informal housing situations, like renting a room. This reduces demand on more costly alternatives like shelters.

**General Assistance typically functions as a loan.** Disability claims can take more than 24 months to process and people often have to apply multiple times. When they are approved for SSI, they repay the General Assistance they receive out of SSI funds.

**Please oppose House Bill 33 which would eliminate General Assistance.**