

General Assistance Program

By, Donovan Antelope

The NANDSS General Assistance (GA) is another program offered by the NANDSS to provide temporary assistance to non-custodial single and married individuals.

The program's General Administrator is Juanita LaFromboise and she oversees the program's daily functions. Case workers Geraldine Felter and Candace Redman interview clients to determine their eligibility for assistance.

The purpose of GA is to provide temporary assistance to non-custodial individuals single or married. The goal of GA is help their clients get back into employment and become self-sufficient once again. They also refer clients to apply for Social Security Income (SSI) and to other services offered by the state's Department of Family Services.

GA helps their clients with their basic needs such as food, shelter, and utility payments. When applicants are approved to be helped by the GA program, they help develop and sign an Individual Self-Sufficiency Plan (ISP) that outlines what they need to do become self sufficient. They need to provide documentation that they are trying to gain employment and working on goals to become self sufficient. They are referred to the Department of Work Force Services in Riverton, TERO and Workforce Investment Act. The job contacts need to be turned into the GA by the 15th of every month to stay in compliance with GA's guidelines. If a person does not have a driver's license, the possibility of getting one may be a goal in their plans within the GA Program. In cases where applicants do not have a high school diploma or a GED, they may attend classes to get a

GED and GA will work with the applicants to obtain a GED because getting one takes a few months. Applicants must show documentation that they are taking classes each month to get their GED.

Able-bodied applicants are approved on a three month basis, and medically exempt clients are approved on a six month basis. If an applicant doesn't follow through with their ISP each month, then they're placed on a suspension period. At the end of either the three or six month approval period they may reapply if they are still in need of assistance.

However, many of GA's clients face a common obstacle when trying to stay in compliance with GA's guidelines and that is lack of transportation. Many of their clients do not have transportation to their GED classes in Lander, Riverton or Ethete. Lack of transportation also inhibits their ability to look for employment as well. Currently GA is unable to provide transportation themselves, and due to state restrictions, they are unable to utilize the TANF program's transportation services.

