

(h) “Governmental program for persons with disabilities” means any Federal, State or local program that provides benefits of any kind to persons whose eligibility is determined on the basis of mental and/or physical disability.

(i) “Income” means actual current annual total cash receipts before taxes of all persons who are resident members and contribute to the support of an applicant’s household, as that term is defined by the recipient. Total cash receipts include, but are not limited to, wages and salaries before any deduction; income from self-employment after deductions for business or farm expenses; regular payments from governmental programs for low income persons or persons with disabilities; social security payments; unemployment and worker’s compensation payments; strike benefits from union funds; veterans benefits; training stipends; alimony; child support payments; military family allotments; public or private employee pension benefits; regular insurance or annuity payments; income from dividends, interest, rents, royalties or from estates and trusts; and other regular or recurring sources of financial support that are currently and actually available to the applicant. Total cash receipts do not include the value of food or rent received by the applicant in lieu of wages; money withdrawn from a bank; tax refunds; gifts; compensation and/or one-time insurance payments for injuries sustained; non-cash benefits; and up to \$2,000 per year of funds received by individual Native Americans that is derived from Indian trust income or other distributions exempt by statute.

§ 1611.3 Financial eligibility policies.

(a) The governing body of a recipient shall adopt policies consistent with this part for determining the financial eligibility of applicants and groups. The governing body shall review its financial eligibility policies at least once every three years and make adjustments as necessary. The recipient shall implement procedures consistent with its policies.

(b) As part of its financial eligibility policies, every recipient shall specify that only individuals and groups deter-

mined to be financially eligible under the recipient’s financial eligibility policies and LSC regulations may receive legal assistance supported with LSC funds.

(c)(1) As part of its financial eligibility policies, every recipient shall establish annual income ceilings for individuals and households, which may not exceed one hundred and twenty five percent (125%) of the current official Federal Poverty Guidelines amounts. The Corporation shall annually calculate 125% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines amounts and publish such calculations in the FEDERAL REGISTER as a revision to Appendix A to this part.

(2) As part of its financial eligibility policies, a recipient may adopt authorized exceptions to its annual income ceilings consistent with § 1611.5.

(d)(1) As part of its financial eligibility policies, every recipient shall establish reasonable asset ceilings for individuals and households. In establishing asset ceilings, the recipient may exclude consideration of a household’s principal residence, vehicles used for transportation, assets used in producing income, and other assets which are exempt from attachment under State or Federal law.

(2) The recipient’s policies may provide authority for waiver of its asset ceilings for specific applicants under unusual circumstances and when approved by the recipient’s Executive Director, or his/her designee. When the asset ceiling is waived, the recipient shall record the reasons for such waiver and shall keep such records as are necessary to inform the Corporation of the reasons for such waiver.

(e) Notwithstanding any other provision of this part, or other provision of the recipient’s financial eligibility policies, every recipient shall specify as part of its financial eligibility policies that in assessing the income or assets of an applicant who is a victim of domestic violence, the recipient shall consider only the assets and income of the applicant and members of the applicant’s household other than those of the alleged perpetrator of the domestic violence and shall not include any assets held by the alleged perpetrator of the domestic violence, jointly held by

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the applicant with the alleged perpetrator of the domestic violence, or assets jointly held by any member of the applicant's household with the alleged perpetrator of the domestic violence.

(f) As part of its financial eligibility policies, a recipient may adopt policies that permit financial eligibility to be established by reference to an applicant's receipt of benefits from a governmental program for low-income individuals or families consistent with § 1611.4(c).

(g) Before establishing its financial eligibility policies, a recipient shall consider the cost of living in the service area or locality and other relevant factors, including but not limited to:

(1) The number of clients who can be served by the resources of the recipient;

(2) The population that would be eligible at and below alternative income and asset ceilings; and

(3) The availability and cost of legal services provided by the private bar and other free or low cost legal services providers in the area.

§ 1611.4 Financial eligibility for legal assistance.

(a) A recipient may provide legal assistance supported with LSC funds only to individuals whom the recipient has determined to be financially eligible for such assistance. Nothing in this part, however, prohibits a recipient from providing legal assistance to an individual without regard to that individual's income and assets if the legal assistance is wholly supported by funds from a source other than LSC, and is otherwise permissible under applicable law and regulation.

(b) Consistent with the recipient's financial eligibility policies and this part, the recipient may determine an applicant to be financially eligible for legal assistance if the applicant's assets do not exceed the recipient's applicable asset ceiling established pursuant to § 1611.3(d)(1), or the applicable asset ceiling has been waived pursuant to § 1611.3(d)(2), and:

(1) The applicant's income is at or below the recipient's applicable annual income ceiling; or

(2) The applicant's income exceeds the recipient's applicable annual in-

come ceiling but one or more of the authorized exceptions to the annual income ceilings, as provided in § 1611.5, applies.

(c) Consistent with the recipient's policies, a recipient may determine an applicant to be financially eligible without making an independent determination of income or assets, if the applicant's income is derived solely from a governmental program for low-income individuals or families, provided that the recipient's governing body has determined that the income standards of the governmental program are at or below 125% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines amounts and that the governmental program has eligibility standards which include an assets test.

§ 1611.5 Authorized exceptions to the annual income ceiling.

(a) Consistent with the recipient's policies and this part, a recipient may determine an applicant whose income exceeds the recipient's applicable annual income ceiling to be financially eligible if the applicant's assets do not exceed the recipient's applicable asset ceiling established pursuant to § 1611.3(d), or the asset ceiling has been waived pursuant to § 1611.3(d)(2), and:

(1) The applicant is seeking legal assistance to maintain benefits provided by a governmental program for low income individuals or families; or

(2) The Executive Director of the recipient, or his/her designee, has determined on the basis of documentation received by the recipient, that the applicant's income is primarily committed to medical or nursing home expenses and that, excluding such portion of the applicant's income which is committed to medical or nursing home expenses, the applicant would otherwise be financially eligible for service; or

(3) The applicant's income does not exceed 200% of the applicable Federal Poverty Guidelines amount and:

(i) The applicant is seeking legal assistance to obtain governmental benefits for low income individuals and families; or

(ii) The applicant is seeking legal assistance to obtain or maintain governmental benefits for persons with disabilities; or