

## Title 10. General Welfare Exclusion - Chapter 1001 ONEIDA GENERAL WELFARE

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### **1001.1. Purpose and Policy**

1001.1-1. *Purpose.* The purpose of this law is to govern how the Nation provides assistance to eligible members on a non-taxable basis, pursuant to the principles of the General Welfare Exclusion.

(a) The federal government through the Tribal General Welfare Exclusion Act of 2014, codified at 26 U.S.C §139E and the Internal Revenue Service, through its traditional application of the general welfare doctrine and subsequent guidance, has recognized the sovereign right of Indian tribal governments to provide financial assistance to its members under certain circumstances on a non-taxable basis.

1001.1-2. *Policy.* It is the policy of the Nation to provide assistance to members through approved programs that promote the general welfare of the Nation. This law provides a framework for approved programs to follow to ensure compliance with the General Welfare Exclusion, 26 U.S.C. §139E, and applicable Internal Revenue Service regulations or revenue procedures including I.R.S. Rev. Proc. 2014-35. Further, it is the intent of the Oneida Business Committee that all assistance provided under this law:

- (a) is available to any recipients who satisfy the program policies, subject to budgetary restraints;
- (b) is made under an approved program that does not discriminate in favor of members of the Nation's governing body;
- (c) is not provided as compensation for goods or services; and
- (d) is not lavish or extravagant under the facts and circumstances, as determined by the Oneida Business Committee.

### **1001.2. Adoption, Amendment, Repeal**

1001.2-1. This law was adopted by the Oneida Business Committee by resolution BC-12-08-21-A.

1001.2-2. This law may be amended or repealed by the Oneida Business Committee or the General Tribal Council pursuant to the procedures set out in the Legislative Procedures Act.

1001.2-3. Should a provision of this law or the application thereof to any person or circumstances be held as invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions of this law which are considered to have legal force without the invalid portions.

1001.2-4. In the event of a conflict between a provision of this law and a provision of another law, the provisions of this law shall control.

1001.2-5. This law is adopted under authority of the Constitution of the Oneida Nation.

### **1001.3. Definitions**

1001.3-1. This section shall govern the definitions of words and phrases used within this law. All words not defined herein shall be used in their ordinary and everyday sense.

(a) "Approved program" means any program(s) to provide general welfare assistance that is intended to qualify as non-taxable as a General Welfare Exclusion, administered under specific guidelines, and is adopted by the Oneida Business Committee through resolution

or law of the Nation.

(b) "Assistance" means benefits or payments under an approved program, which are paid to or on behalf of a recipient pursuant to this law. Assistance provided under an approved program shall not be considered income of the recipient.

(c) "Lavish" or "Extravagant" shall have the meaning determined by the Oneida Business Committee in its discretion and based on the circumstances, taking into account needs unique to the Nation as well as the social purpose being served by the particular assistance at hand, except as otherwise may be required for compliance with final guidance issued under 26 U.S.C. §139E following consultation between the Nation and the federal government.

(d) "Limited term" means a defined start and end date, or utilizes third-party funding and is not intended to be permanent.

(e) "Member" means an individual who is an enrolled member of the Nation.

(f) "Nation" means the Oneida Nation.

(g) "Recipient" means any member entitled to receive assistance in accordance with approved program requirements.

#### **1001.4. General Welfare Assistance**

1001.4-1. *General.* The Nation may provide general welfare assistance to eligible members on a non-taxable basis pursuant to the principles of General Welfare Exclusion. The federal government recognizes that benefits to recipients under an approved program for the promotion of the general welfare of the Nation is excludable from the gross income of those recipients. General Welfare Exclusion provides that any assistance shall be treated as non-taxable under federal law so long as it:

(a) satisfies the requirements for exclusion under 26 U.S.C. §139E;

(b) is provided under a Safe Harbor Program listed and detailed in I.R.S. Rev. Proc. 2014-35 or subsequent Internal Revenue Service procedures or regulations; or

(c) meets the criteria of the General Test under the I.R.S. General Criteria of General Welfare exclusion listed in I.R.S. Rev. Proc. 2014-35, section 5.02(1).

1001.4-2. *General Test.* The General Test provides criteria used to determine if any assistance provided through an approved program to a recipient shall be treated as a General Welfare Exclusion. The criteria of the General Test include the following:

(a) The assistance is paid on behalf of the Nation;

(b) The assistance was provided pursuant to an approved program;

(c) The assistance does not discriminate in favor of members of the governing body of the Nation;

(d) The assistance is available to any member who meets the guidelines of the approved program;

(e) The assistance is provided for the promotion of general welfare;

(f) The assistance is not lavish or extravagant;

(g) The assistance is not compensation for services; and

(h) The assistance is not a per capita payment.

1001.4-3. *Approved Programs.* Any assistance provided by the Nation under the General Welfare Exclusion shall occur through an approved program and qualify as non-taxable under the principles of the General Welfare Exclusion to the fullest extent permitted at law.

(a) An approved program shall be established and operated to promote the general welfare

of the Nation, including programs designed to enhance the promotion of health, education, self-sufficiency, self-determination, and the maintenance of culture and tradition, entrepreneurship, and employment.

(b) Each approved program shall be limited to purposes consistent with treatment under the General Welfare Exclusion as to purpose, eligibility, and funding.

(d) An approved program shall meet all criteria of the General Test.

(d) Assistance provided through an approved program is not subject to information reporting by the Nation to the Internal Revenue Service.

1001.4-4. *Ratification of Prior Acts.* This law shall not be construed as creating new general welfare assistance rights which are an inherent right of Nation. Rather, this law is intended to codify existing procedures used by the Nation to administer its general welfare assistance. Assistance provided prior to the enactment of this law is hereby ratified and confirmed as general welfare assistance provided pursuant to the exercise by the Nation of its inherent tribal sovereignty.

### **1001.5. Approved Program Guidelines**

1001.5-1. *Creation of an Approved Program.* An approved program shall be adopted by the Oneida Business Committee through a resolution or law of the Nation. Approved programs adopted by the Oneida Business Committee are considered in force and effect and in accordance with this law

(a) *Law.* An approved program shall be adopted by the Oneida Business Committee through a law if the approved program will function on a permanent basis.

(1) Adoption of an approved program by the Oneida Business Committee through a law of the Nation shall comply with the process and procedures of the Legislative Procedures Act.

(b) *Resolution.* An approved program shall be adopted by the Oneida Business Committee through a resolution if the approved program will function for a limited term.

(1) An approved program to be considered for adoption through resolution by the Oneida Business Committee shall be accompanied by a statement of effect and submitted in accordance with the Oneida Business Committee's submission procedure and deadlines.

(c) *Contents of Proposed Approved Programs.* The law or resolution establishing an approved program shall contain the following information:

(1) Name of the approved program;

(2) Purpose of the approved program;

(3) Eligibility rules and limitations for approved program;

(4) Funding source for approved program;

(5) How the approved program qualifies for General Welfare Exclusion; and

(6) Start and end date of approved program, if applicable.

1001.5-2. *Eligibility.* Assistance provided by an approved program shall be limited to members of the Nation. Each approved program shall set forth any specific eligibility rules and limitations applied to that program.

1001.5-3. *Funding of Approved Programs.* Assistance authorized by this law shall be limited to funds appropriated, at the discretion of the Oneida Business Committee and no matter the source of the funds. All amounts budgeted by the Nation for assistance shall remain general assets of the Nation until payments are disbursed. The Oneida Business Committee shall designate approved programs for which funds shall be budgeted each fiscal year, consistent with the purposes of this

law. Approved programs may also be funded through third-party funding if available.

1001.5-4. *Use of Assistance.* All assistance provided through an approved program shall be used for the purpose stated in the approved program description. If assistance is used or pledged for a purpose inconsistent with the purpose set forth in an approved program the payment shall be deemed forfeited. The Nation may secure repayment from any recipient who forfeited their assistance.

1001.5-5. *Anti-Alienation.* Assistance provided to a member through an approved program shall not be subject to anticipation, alienation, sale, transfer, assignment, pledge, encumbrance, attachment or garnishment by creditors of the member.

#### **1001.6. Non-Recourse Designation**

1001.6-1. The Nation does not guarantee assistance under this law. Assistance shall not be treated as a resource or asset of a recipient for any purpose; and no recipient shall have an interest in or right to any funds budgeted for, or set aside for, approved programs until paid.

1001.6-2. The Oneida Business Committee reserves the right to cancel, adjust, modify or revoke any benefit.

1001.6-3. Approved programs shall be administered at all times to avoid triggering of the doctrines of “constructive receipt” or “economic benefit.”

#### **1001.7. Governing Law; Sovereignty**

1001.7-1. All the rights and liabilities associated with the enactment of this law, or the assistance made hereunder, shall be construed and enforced according to the Nation’s laws and applicable federal law. Nothing in this law or the related laws, policies, or procedures adopted for its implementation, if any, shall be construed to make applicable to the Nation any laws or regulations which are otherwise inapplicable to the Nation, or from which the Nation is entitled to exemption because of its sovereign status.

#### **1001.8. Federal Trust Obligations**

1001.8-1. The Nation reserves the right to provide assistance in circumstances where federal funding is insufficient to operate federal programs designed to benefit applicants and when federal funding is insufficient to adequately and consistently fulfill federal trust obligations. The Nation’s adoption of its approved programs is not intended to relieve or diminish the federal government of its funding and trust responsibilities. Nothing herein shall waive the Nation’s right to seek funding shortfalls or to enforce the trust rights of the Nation and its members. The Nation shall be entitled to government-to-government consultation and coordination with the federal government regarding these obligations.

*End.*

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