

NEW HAVEN COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION
MODEST MEANS PROGRAM
FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY POLICY STATEMENT AND ASSET CEILINGS

Policy Considerations:

In establishing these guidelines incorporating asset ceilings, the Modest Means Program Oversight Committee (“MMPOC”) has considered the following factors:

- (1) The rate of unemployment has driven “new” people into poverty;
- (2) While the high cost of living affects the entire population, the poor pay a disproportionately higher price for goods and services than people of greater means;
- (3) The lack of mass transportation in New Haven County requires access to an automobile to secure employment and other basic needs;
- (4) Special flexibility in applying asset ceilings should be used when the applicant is disabled, institutionalized, elderly, or handicapped; and
- (5) The inability of a significant segment of our society to afford full-priced legal services.

Asset Ceilings:

In addition to income, the available liquid and non-liquid assets of all persons who are resident members of the applicant’s family unit shall be considered in determining eligibility. The value of such assets, after exclusions, shall be one of the factors utilized in determining the eligibility of applicants under the maximum income level. Available assets which do not exceed the asset ceilings need not be considered.

The Modest Means Program liquid asset ceiling is \$3,500 for an individual and an additional \$900 for each additional family member, to a maximum of five additional family members. Examples of liquid assets to be considered are cash, stocks, bonds, bank accounts and other money on deposit (certificates of deposit, IRA’s, retirement accounts, money market certificates), annuities, treasury bills, and other commercial paper.

The Modest Means Program non-liquid asset ceiling is \$15,000/household.

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Exclusions and Waivers:

None of the following shall be included as liquid or non-liquid assets:

- (1) One motor vehicle, only if
 - (a) the equity value of which does not exceed \$5,000;
 - (b) reasonable and necessary for employment of the applicant or member of the applicant's household;
 - (c) reasonable and necessary for medically related transportation of the applicant or member of the applicants household; or
 - (d) modified for operation by or for transportation of a handicapped person.
- (2) Personal and household effects.
- (3) Reasonable equity in work-related equipment or tools of the trade; and
- (4) The cash value of life insurance policies in excess of \$2,000 for an individual living alone or \$4,000 for a family/household.

Maximum Gross Income Levels:

For an individual to qualify for a referral to a Modest Means Program Service Attorney, the individual must complete a financial eligibility statement and must meet the following maximum gross income levels, which generally reflect income limits of 250% of the federal poverty guidelines:

<u>Number in Family Household</u>	<u>Total Annual Gross Income (\$)</u>
1	29,175
2	39,325
3	49,475
4	59,625
5	69,775
6	79,925
7	90,075
8	100,225
Additional Family Member(s) over 8	4,060 (each)