



**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**  
Inter-Departmental Correspondence  
Human Services Agency



**Date:** November 21, 2016  
**Board Meeting Date:** January 3, 2017  
**Special Notice / Hearing:** None  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**To:** Honorable Board of Supervisors

**From:** Iliana Rodriguez, Director, Human Services Agency

**Subject:** Modifications to the General Assistance Standard of Aid

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt a resolution authorizing a modification to the rules and regulations of the General Assistance (GA) Program by:

- A) Increasing the General Assistance grant to the same level as the CalWORKs grant, consistent with the statutory formula; and
- B) Authorizing the maximum grant of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) board and care rate for those General Assistance recipients who reside in board and care facilities pending SSI approval.

**BACKGROUND:**

State law requires counties to provide support for indigent county residents who do not qualify for other financial assistance. Counties meet this requirement by providing financial assistance through the General Assistance (GA) program). The GA program provides this financial assistance in the form of vouchers for essential services and a minimal cash grant to individuals who have no minor children and whose income and property do not exceed certain limits. It is incumbent on the County Board of Supervisors to set the county "standard of aid".

Since 1993, the County has chosen to set its GA grant levels according to a statutory formula which requires GA to be based on and subject to the same annual adjustment as CalWORKs grant levels (Welfare and Institutions Code section 17000.5). Compliance with the formula relieves the County of the requirement of setting the grant based on the cost of subsistence in the County. It ensures consistency of grant levels between counties, and discourages recipients from "grant shopping".

Occasionally, a GA recipient, whose application for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is pending, will require the highly structured setting of a board and care facility. Since 1993, for those recipients that meet the criteria according to the GA guidelines, the maximum grant level of the current California SSI board and care rate has been allowed in order to provide recipients with the living situation which best suits their needs. If SSI is approved, the County is reimbursed for all interim assistance provided.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Human Services Agency (HSA) is proposing changes to the County's rules and regulations for General Assistance program administration. These recommendations are brought to the Board for approval as required by Ordinance Code Section 2.30.050:

- A. Increasing the General Assistance grant to the same level as the CalWORKs grant, consistent with the statutory formula.
- B. Authorizing the maximum grant of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) board and care rate for those General Assistance recipients who reside in board and care facilities pending SSI approval.

The State Department of Social Services has advised counties that effective October 1, 2016, the maximum aid payment to CalWORKs families will increase by 1.43%. Consistent with the 1991 legislative intent that permits counties to set General Assistance (GA) grants according to the CalWORKs grant, HSA is recommending that the monthly GA standard for aid be retroactively increased effective October 1, 2016 as follows:

- From \$350 to \$355 for individuals who live alone, in shared housing, or who are homeless.
- From \$306 to \$310 for individuals residing in a Drug & Alcohol treatment facility.
- From \$413 to \$419 for individuals residing in a Board & Care facility.

In 1993, the Board adopted a resolution which authorized a change in the General Assistance Program from a cash program to a program comprised of cash and vendor/vouchers for housing and food. The maximum cash payment issued to clients remains at \$80.

In addition, the State Department of Social Services has advised counties that effective January 1, 2017, the SSI board and care rate increased from \$1,145 per month to \$1,158 per month. Therefore, HSA is recommending that the monthly GA standard for aid for clients residing in Board & Care facilities pending SSI approval be retroactively increased effective January 1, 2017 as follows:

- From \$1,145 to \$1,158 for individuals residing in a Board & Care facility pending SSI approval.

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the resolution as to form.  
Approval of this resolution contributes to the Shared Vision 2025 of a Prosperous Community by providing funds to indigent individuals in the community until they gain employment or federal disability, becoming self-sufficient.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

General Assistance payments are funded by 100% Net County Cost. The estimated cost of the 1.43% increase is \$26,315. This adjustment is included in the FY 2016-17 Adopted Budget.