



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

File #: 19-036

Board Meeting Date: 1/8/2019

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Nicole Pollack, Director, Human Services Agency

Subject: Adopt a resolution authorizing the Director of the Human Services Agency or her designee to modify the Rules and Regulations of the General Assistance Program

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution authorizing the Director of the Human Services Agency or her designee to modify the Rules and Regulations of the General Assistance (GA) Program by increasing:

- A) The General Assistance grant to the same level as the CalWORKs grant, consistent with the statutory formula, effective April 1, 2019; and
- B) 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 from \$1,173 per month to \$1,194 per month, effective January 1, 2019.

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 Board of Supervisors to set the County "standard of aid."

Since 1993, San Mateo 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

who 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 GA program administration. These recommendations are brought to the Board for approval as required by San Mateo County Ordinance Code Section 2.30.050:

- A. Increasing the GA grant to the same level as the CalWORKs grant, consistent with the statutory formula, effective April 1, 2019.
- B. Increasing the maximum grant of the SSI board and care rate for those GA recipients who reside in board and care facilities pending SSI approval from \$1,173 per month to \$1,194 per month, effective January 1, 2019.

The State Department of Social Services has advised counties that effective April 1, 2019, the maximum aid payment to CalWORKs families will increase by ten percent (10%). Consistent with the 1991 legislative intent that permits counties to set GA grants according to the CalWORKs grant, we recommend that the monthly GA standard for aid be increased effective April 1, 2019 as follows:

- From \$355 to \$391 for individuals who live alone, in shared housing, or who are homeless.
- From \$310 to \$341 for individuals residing in a drug & alcohol treatment facility.
- From \$419 to \$461 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, 2019, the SSI board and care rate increased from \$1,173 per month to \$1,194 per month. Therefore, HSA is recommending that the monthly GA standard for aid be increased effective January 1, 2019 as follows:

- From \$1,173 to \$1,194 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 outcome of a prosperous community by providing funds to indigent individuals in the community until they gain employment or federal disability assistance and become self-sufficient.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The FY 2018-19 fiscal impact of the 10% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) is estimated at \$33,850 in additional Net County Cost. This estimate covers both the minority of GA clients subject to the change in SSI board and care rates, whose COLA will be effective as of January 2019, and the majority of GA clients whose COLA increase is anticipated to begin April 1, 2019.