

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Agenda Number:
Prepared on: 7/15/04
Department Name: Social Services
Department No.: 044
Agenda Date: 8/17/04
Placement: Departmental
Estimate Time: 30 minutes
Continued Item: NO
If Yes, date from:

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Kathy Gallagher
Director, Social Services

STAFF CONTACT: Edna Terrell, Deputy Director Social Services
681-4485

SUBJECT: Consider and Adopt General Relief Regulation Changes

Recommendation(s):

That the Board of Supervisors:

Consider and adopt recommendations to change the regulations of the General Relief Program as follows:

1. Adopt regulation 90-301.11 (a) through (d) (page 15-16) that prohibits an employable recipient from receiving general relief assistance for more than three months in a twelve month period.

Time Limits for Aid to Employable Recipients

- .a Benefits to all employable recipients, including employable persons (adults) in married and family cases, shall be granted for no more than three month cycles of assistance in a twelve month period. These provisions shall apply only to those individuals who have been offered the opportunity to attend job skills or job training sessions.
- .b Twelve Month Period (TMP)
 - (1) The effective date of this policy is October 1, 2004.
 - (2) For new applicants the twelve month period begins the first month cash aid is received.

.c The Three Month Cycle Period of Eligibility

- (1) The three month cycle period of eligibility includes only months when the recipient is aided as employable. Months in which the recipient is aided as unemployable are not to be included in the three month limit.
- (2) The three month period does not have to be consecutive. Recipients are entitled to any three months in a twelve month period. General Relief assistance received in any locality would be applied to the three month time limit.

.d Sanctions

Employable applicants/recipients are subject to employable and/non-compliance sanctions.

- (1) Sanction periods are to be applied concurrent with periods of ineligibility. If a sanction period lasts longer than the period of ineligibility, the recipient will not be eligible until the sanction period has expired. A new twelve month period will begin when the recipient reapplies and is found otherwise eligible.

2. Adopt regulation 90-500.2 (page 40) establishing that if the single applicant/recipient shares housing with unrelated persons or with persons who are not legally responsible for the applicant/recipient, maximum aid payment levels are reduced by the following percentages:

Shares housing with one	15%
Shares housing with two	20%
Shares housing with three or more	25%

New maximum aid amounts after shared housing deductions are shown on page 48 – attachment 3 Shelters and licensed board and care facilities are exempt.

3. Adopt regulation 90-501.2 (page 42) that states the portion of the payment for shelter/housing costs shall be made only by vendor payment.

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

The recommendation(s) are primarily aligned with Goal No. 4. A Community that is Economically Vital and Sustainable.

Executive Summary and Discussion:

The recommendations proposed are options permitted in the W & I Code Section 17000 et. Seq. that counties may choose to implement in their local programs.

We are experiencing unanticipated growth in the General Relief program, with monthly caseloads the highest we have ever had since 1998. There are only eight counties statewide with caseloads higher than the General Relief caseload in Santa Barbara County. These eight are: Alameda, Fresno, Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin and Santa Clara. The recommended regulation changes are legally

allowable under W&I Code 17000 et. Seq. and are consistent with the regulations implemented by the majority of counties in the State.

In FY 04/05 our aid payment budget is currently \$1,561,356 with an estimated shortfall of \$237,444 based on a projected caseload of 600 cases per month. Our department presented a budget expansion request to your Board in June 2004 Budget Hearings for \$237,444 to give us sufficient funding to meet the projected caseload. Our current caseload exceeds 600 cases per month. We are starting the budget year over our budget expansion projected needs. The proposed GR regulation changes have the potential to mitigate our potential shortfall, slow caseload growth, and to bring our program into alignment with other counties. If your Board approves the recommended regulation changes, the effective date of implementation would be October 1, 2004.

After considerable study, the Department of Social Services recommends that the attached General Relief regulations be adopted by your Board.

Mandates and Service Levels:

The changes to the Santa Barbara County General Relief Regulations are allowable under W&I Code Section 17000 et. Seq. and Santa Barbara County General Relief program manual.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Approval of Recommendation 1, “Time Limits for Aid to Employable Recipients” only, implementation date: October 1, 2004:

It is estimated that there will be no general fund savings in FY 04/05; however, assuming the same caseload and cost per case as FY 04/05, we are estimating a potential savings of \$170,800 in FY 05/06.

Approval of Recommendation 2, “Shared Housing” only, implementation date: October 1, 2004:

It is estimated that a minimum savings of general fund dollars could be realized in FY 04/05 in the amount of \$147,700 and \$197,000 in FY 05/06.

Approval of Recommendation 3, “Institute a Shelter Vendor Pay Policy” only, implementation date: October 1, 2004:

We estimate that implementing a shelter vendor pay policy will result in a general fund savings; however we are unable to estimate this amount at this time.

Approval of all Recommendation, implementation date: October 1, 2004:

It is estimated that the general fund savings for the implementation of all options will be at a minimum of \$147,700 for FY 04/05 and \$349,200 for FY 05/06.

Note: The above are estimated savings to the County. Since the budget expansion request of \$237,444 has yet to be officially approved, the Department of Social Services will not be able to reflect these reductions in the current budget.

Assumptions for above fiscal impacts are described below:

Recommendation 1: It is estimated that 38% of the total caseload receives assistance as an employable person. Most employable persons receive aid for three months or less and are ineligible to receive aid for 180 days (6 months) due to non-compliance of program requirements. We assume that the majority would reapply and receive assistance for three more months or a total of six months in a fiscal year. Therefore we assume a 3 months savings for 38% of the total caseload.

Recommendation 2: It is estimated that 73% of the total caseload lives in a shared housing situation with a least one other non-related or non-legally responsible person. We assumed a 15% drop in the average cost per case for 73% of the total caseload.

Recommendation 3: Neighboring counties vendor pay all benefits and do not issue cash. We estimate annual migration from neighboring counties to be 228 individuals and that instituting a shelter vendor pay policy will deter migration of these individuals to our county because our program is currently less restrictive.

All Recommendations: We believe the above assumptions are still valid, however we had to account for a reduction in the cost per case resulting from approval of Option 2 when calculating the savings from the approval of Option 1.

Special Instructions:

After execution by the chair, please return one certified copy of the minute order to the Social Services Department attention Jennifer Lock.

Concurrence:

Santa Barbara County Counsel
Santa Barbara Auditor Controller