



A Tradition of Stewardship  
A Commitment to Service

Agenda Date: 2/11/2020

Agenda Placement: 6J

## NAPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Letter

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Shelli Brobst for Jennifer Yasumoto - Director  
Health & Human Services Administration  
**REPORT BY:** JoAnn Melgar, Staff Services Analyst II - 707-253-4722  
**SUBJECT:** Adoption of a Resolution Amending the General Assistance Regulations

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

Director of Health and Human Services requests adoption of a resolution amending the Napa County General Assistance Regulations effective May 1, 2020.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The proposed amendment before the Board includes changes to the General Assistance (GA) Regulations that: 1) consider current cost of living needs; 2) more closely align the GA program with good cause practices and noticing timelines of the CalWORKs cash assistance program; and 3) improve timelines and processes to ensure that customers are provided the most effective and timely service.

### **FISCAL & STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT**

Is there a Fiscal Impact? No  
County Strategic Plan pillar addressed: Livable Economy for All

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

**BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION**

Section 17000 of the Welfare and Institutions Code (W&I) requires that each County provide relief and support for all incompetent, poor, and indigent persons, as well as those incapacitated by age, disease, or accident, when such persons are not supported by their relatives or friends, by their own means, by state hospitals or other state or private institutions.

Each County's General Assistance (GA) program is established and funded 100 percent by its own Board of Supervisors. Because the state is not involved in this program, benefits, payment levels, and eligibility requirements vary by County and are determined by each County.

In 1979, the Napa County Board of Supervisors enacted the GA Program by Resolution, which established standards and provided guidelines to employees and agents of the County for administering the GA Program. In 1987, the Board amended the Resolution to include regulations for the General Assistance Program covering procedures, standards, guidelines, and schedules of payment. GA Program regulations have not been updated since 1987 with the exception of a few minor changes to allow for flexibility in the maximum aid payments, as well as allowing eligible customers to receive GA while attending a local drug and alcohol treatment facility.

Napa County's GA program is a loan-based program that provides assistance with food and incidentals, transportation (in the form of bus passes or gas vouchers) and housing and utilities. All payments from the GA program are issued in the form of a voucher; customers do not receive any direct cash payments. The current maximum GA allotment a person can receive is \$380 per month.

Current allotment allows for a maximum of:

- | \$90 in Food and Incidentals,
- | \$20 in Transportation,
- | \$30 in Utilities, and
- | \$240 in housing, however, a customer may choose to use the entire \$380 towards housing

The proposed amendment will change the current GA allotment categories as follows:

- | Housing is \$240 or a customer can choose to use the entire \$380 allotment towards housing
- | Essential Needs which includes food, incidentals, transportation, and utilities is a maximum of \$140.

The average monthly GA caseload size and average GA assistance provided per customer, per month is as follows:

1. Fiscal Year 18/19 - 15 customers, \$165
2. Fiscal Year 17/18 - 18 customers, \$144
3. Fiscal Year 16/17 - 35 customers, \$101
4. Fiscal Year 15/16 - 23 customers, \$147

**Potential Impact of Changes****Financial Impact**

The proposed amendment to the GA Regulations will change the GA grant amount by the same percentage increase or decrease as CalWORKs grant amount. Because CalWORKs provides for cost of living adjustments, the GA payment will also include cost of living adjustments, however, any increases or decreases in the GA payment will be apportioned 9/10ths to Housing and 1/10th to Essential Needs.

Because the amendment will limit GA assistance for those customers deemed employable to 3 months per year, it is possible that the overall number of customers receiving GA may decrease, which would reduce the total amount of GA assistance provided each fiscal year.

#### Customer Impact

Although most of the proposed changes to the regulations are administrative and therefore will not have a direct impact on customers, GA customers will find that the new payment structure will allow for more flexibility in payments and more flexibility for customers to choose how to spend Essential Needs payments.

More people may become eligible for GA Assistance due to changes in the property allowances and establishing eligibility criteria for students.

Current or returning customers will have new reporting, employability and increased visits with Self Sufficiency Services staff from quarterly to monthly. Current customers will be provided with 2 months prior notice of these changes.

New customers will not be impacted. GA regulations will be reviewed with new customers during the application process.

#### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

- A . Resolution
- B . GA Regulations Tracked Changes Exhibit A
- C . GA Regulations Clean Copy Exhibit B

CEO Recommendation: Approve

Reviewed By: Ben Guerrieri