



Board Agenda Item 54.1

DATE: March 24, 2020

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Delfino E. Neira, Department of Social Services

SUBJECT: Authorize Changes to General Relief and Emergency Aid Programs Applications and Redeterminations Processes

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Approve and Authorize the Director of the Department of Social Services to implement procedural changes for General Relief and Emergency Aid Programs to align with State and Federal direction for other assistance programs, effective immediately, during this period of pandemic.

There is no additional Net County Cost associated with the recommended action, which will allow the Department of Social Services to modify its General Relief and Emergency Aid Programs as needed, currently application and redetermination procedures, to minimize public interaction by suspending redeterminations for 90 days and allowing telephone applications. This action is intended to minimize exposure during the current Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. This item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

The Board may choose not to approve the recommended action for General Relief and Emergency Aid Programs; however, this action would be out of line with State and Federal recommendations regarding the COVID-19 response.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended action. The General Relief and Emergency Aid Program (GR) is completely funded with Net County Cost and provides cash assistance for individuals who do not qualify for any other public assistance programs. The suspension of redeterminations for 90 days and the availability of telephone interviews may enable additional individuals to apply for and continue to receive assistance. However, the fiscal impact is expected to be minimal with no change to Net County Cost. The GR caseload has been continually declining for the past several years, and the trend has continued for FY 2019-20.

DISCUSSION:

On March 17, 2020 your Board approved a proclamation of a local emergency related to COVID-19. The Department has received guidance from the State and Federal government regarding mandated assistance programs and lessening public interaction. GR is a County-administered program, mandated by California Welfare and Institutions Code sections 17000 - 17409 and funded through the County General fund. Your Board has established the County's General Relief program through the General Relief and Emergency Aid Program Resolution. Amid the COVID-19 outbreak, the Department recognizes the need to follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Department of Public Health guidelines and implement

measures to limit contact between members of the public and Department staff. The recommended action will enable the Department to make the necessary updates to GR processes now and as new information and direction becomes available.

Currently, GR program rules as established by the Department's GR Manual Section 90-105.2 require that GR applications are taken via face-to-face interviews only. Historically, GR has been administered in accordance with California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) regulations. Effective August 2019, the County was approved to implement telephone interviews for CalWORKs. Additionally, on March 18, 2020 the Governor passed Executive Order N-29-20 which suspends redetermination of public assistance programs for a period of 90 days. In order to update the GR regulations to align with CalWORKs regulation, minimize public contact, and make necessary changes during this time as they arise, the recommended action must be approved. Changes to standards of aid, as set forth in your Board's General Relief and Emergency Aid Program Resolution, shall remain unchanged by this action.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #15, May 17, 2011

CAO ANALYST:

Ronald Alexander