

# GENERAL ASSISTANCE UPDATE: RECOMMENDED REVISIONS

- ✘ Revise standards of aid to reflect a) Housing b) Utilities, and c) personal expenses
- ✘ Prioritize and utilize CSWD twelve-month Rental Assistance program for housing.
- ✘ Prioritize and refer all General Assistance participants to Housing Authority Section 8 voucher program
- ✘ Deduct housing and/or housing and utilities for General Assistance participants receiving in kind housing.
- ✘ Deduct housing and utilities for General Assistance participants who are homeless.
- ✘ Assist General Assistance participants in establishing eligibility for federal SSI and Social Security Disability.
- ✘ Work proactively with local developers and RMA on creation of low income housing units.
- ✘ Coordinate with local public agencies on work training and participation programs.
- ✘ Coordinate and prioritize with Behavioral Health on mental health and substance abuse treatment programs for General Assistance participants



# LEGAL REQUIREMENTS OF W&I CODE 17000

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- ✘ Every county and every city and county **shall** relieve and support all incompetent, poor, indigent persons, and those incapacitated by age, disease, or accident, lawfully resident therein, when such persons are not supported and relieved by their relatives or friends, by their own means, or by state hospitals or other state or private institutions.



# LEGAL REQUIREMENTS OF W&I CODE 17000

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- ✘ The board of supervisors in any county may adopt a general assistance standard of aid, including the value of in-kind aid which includes, but is not limited to, the monthly actuarial value of up to forty dollars (\$40) per month of medical care, that is 62 percent of a guideline that is equal to the 1991 federal official poverty line and may annually adjust that guideline in an amount equal to any adjustment provided under Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11200) of Part 3 for establishing a maximum aid level in the county. This subdivision is not intended to either limit or expand the extent of the duty of counties to provide health care.
- ✘ **The adoption of a standard of aid pursuant to this section shall constitute a sufficient standard of aid.**

# BRIEF HISTORY OF GENERAL ASSISTANCE IN SAN BENITO COUNTY

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- ✘ Prior to 2013 the County maintained a non-defined General Assistance Program
- ✘ In 2012 the County was notified of a potential law suit for non-compliance with Welfare & Institutions Code 17000
- ✘ In 2014 San Benito County adopted a revised general Assistance Program to comply with Welfare & Institutions Code 17000 and no suit was filed
- ✘ In June, 2106 the Board requested that the HHSA review the program requirements and costs of 2014 adopted General Assistance Program
- ✘ On July 26, 2016 the HHSA presented a newly revised General Assistance Program for consideration by the Board of Supervisors.

# STANDARDS OF AID

## Recommended New Standard of Aid Payment for San Benito County General Assistance Program

Proposed adjusted grant amount for clients receiving rental assistance and/or IIK

### Current Standard of Aid

Person(s)	Maximum Aid Payment	Housing portion	Utilities portion	Personal needs and incidentals portion (30%)	Value of income in kind (IIK) if applied	
1	\$360	\$206	\$34	\$104	(\$206 Housing)	(\$34 Utilities)
2	\$779	\$446	\$74	\$224	(\$446 Housing)	(\$74 Utilities)

### Recommended 2016-17 Standard of Aid

Person(s)	Maximum Aid Payment	Housing portion	Utilities portion	Personal needs and incidentals portion	Value of income in kind (IIK) to be applied	
1	\$331	\$199	\$33	\$99	(\$199 Housing)	(\$33 Utilities)
2	\$541	\$325	\$54	\$162	(\$325 Housing)	(\$54 Utilities)

The calculation for the 2016-17 GA standard of aid is based on 62% of the 1991 federal poverty level and takes into account the various AFDC/CalWORKs adjustments (increases and decreases) that took place after 1991 as provided for in W&I Code 17000.



# CSWD RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

- ✖ Available to Low Income County Residents
- ✖ Prioritize General Assistance population in current housing
- ✖ Stabilizes and pays housing and utilities for up to twelve months
- ✖ Need a plan for those who use up twelve month eligibility under Rental Assistance

# SECTION 8 HOUSING VOUCHER PROGRAM

- ✘ Coordinate with Housing Authority to prioritize General Assistance and Homeless population for Section 8 vouchers.
- ✘ Explore with Housing Authority project based housing vouchers for existing and future low income housing units
- ✘ Explore feasibility of landlord awareness program for Section 8 vouchers and supported lease programs

# IN KIND HOUSING/UTILITIES DEDUCTION

- ✘ In kind housing is voluntary housing of General Assistance participants in the home of others
- ✘ Proposal – Deduct housing/utilities part of standard of aid form grant for person in in kind housing
- ✘ Refer to CSWD Rental Assistance Program for alternative benefits.



# FEDERAL SSI & SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY BENEFITS

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- ✖ Continue to work with unemployable general Assistance participants to qualify for Federal SSI & Social Security Disability benefits
- ✖ Track eligibility for such benefits for General Assistance payments recovery
- ✖ Coordinate with CSWD and Housing Authority on eligibility and availability of housing

# LOW INCOME HOUSING

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- ✘ Work proactively with local developers and RMA on creation of low income housing units
- ✘ Track new State Legislation – No Place Like Home
- ✘ Coordinate and work with local developers on additional low income units in San Benito County

# WORK TRAINING AND PARTICIPATION PROGRAMS

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- ✖ Where administratively feasible implement public agency work participation programs for general Assistance participants
- ✖ Feasibility Issues
  - + Human Resources
  - + Supplanting labor force
  - + Training and safety
  - + Public agency supervision
  - + Costs



# MENTAL HEALTH/SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT

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- ✖ Coordinate and prioritize with Behavioral Health on mental health and substance abuse treatment programs for General Assistance participants
- ✖ Voluntary nature and confidentiality of treatment programs
- ✖ Capacity of local mental health/substance abuse treatment programs

# PROPOSED 16-17 GENERAL ASSISTANCE BUDGET

HH Size	Standard of Aid	Housing/Utilities	P&I	Avg Caseload	Annual Costs
1	\$331	\$232	\$99	70	\$214,157
2	\$541	\$379	\$162	1	\$ 6,429
				Total	\$220,649
				Offsets	\$ 86,380
				Net Costs	\$134,269

## Projected Offsets

❖ Rental Assistance	\$44,060
❖ In Kind Assistance	\$34,800
❖ SSI Reimbursement	\$ 7,500
Total	\$86,380

# RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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- ❖ Review and adopt Staff Recommendations
  - ❖ Revise standards of aid to reflect a) Housing b) Utilities, and c) personal expenses
  - ❖ New General Assistance Handbook
  - ❖ Effective September 1, 2016

