

**REPORT/RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF THE COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO
AND RECORD OF ACTION**

May 18, 2021

FROM

GILBERT RAMOS, Director, Transitional Assistance Department

SUBJECT

General Relief Policy Handbook, Chapter A - General Policy and Provisions

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Approve the following updates, effective June 1, 2021, to the General Relief Policy Handbook, Chapter A - General Policy and Provisions:

1. Increase the maximum payment amount from \$280 per month to \$332 per month for a case containing a single individual.
2. Replacement of Pages A-1 through A-4 and Pages A-7 through A-12 pertaining to Needs-Based Budgeting, Room and Board Payment, Treatment of Income In-Kind, and Vendor Payments.
3. Expanded evaluation criteria of a vehicle when used as primary residency.

(Presenter: Gilbert Ramos, Director, 388-0245)

COUNTY AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Provide for the Safety, Health and Social Service Needs of County Residents.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This item does not require additional Discretionary General Funding (Net County Cost). Currently homeless recipients are eligible to receive a maximum payment of \$280 per month, which includes basic need levels for rent, utilities, food, and personal and incidental needs. The policy change will increase the maximum payment to \$332 per month for individual applicants, without pre-designation of basic need levels, resulting in an increase of \$52 per month. Aid will decrease from the \$332 when an applicant/recipient reports other income. Adequate appropriation and revenue have been included in the Human Services Administrative Claim 2020-21 budget and will be included in future budgets.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The County's General Relief Program is administered by the Transitional Assistance Department and provides loan assistance to indigent individuals and families in temporary need of housing, food and/or transportation. The program is mandated by and operated per Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) sections 17000 – 17039.1, which requires Board of Supervisors (Board) approval of the standards of aid and care for General Relief Program recipients as contained in the General Relief Policy Handbook, Chapter A - General Policy and Provisions. The recommended updates to Chapter A will align the County's General Relief policies with current WIC regulations and guidelines established by case law.

In addition to minor non-substantive formatting revisions, updates to the General Relief Policy Handbook, Chapter A - General Policy and Provisions include:

Maximum Payment

- Current Policy - Maximum payment amounts were based on a 1991 subsistence needs study and utilized a needs-based methodology. Only verified items of need were allowed when calculating the payment amount.
- Recommended Policy - A full payment is based on the number of Assistance Unit (AU) members, and is not subject to needs-based eligibility. A payment amount will be reduced if additional income is reported.

Needs-Based Budgeting, Room and Board Payment

- Room and Board payments and needs-based budgeting created a two-tiered program, with a separate policy for homeless and housed applicants. By eliminating these policies, the program will:
 - Administratively streamline policy procedures into a unified budgeting methodology not based on housing status.
 - Encourage customers to report correct housing arrangements as their payment would not be subject to reduction due to a needs-based or Room and Board structure.
 - Provide customers the opportunity to have a more consistent payment allowing them to work towards a more stable living situation.
 - Align with a majority of other counties within the state.

Income In-Kind, and Vendor Payments

- Current Policy – Income In-Kind and Vendor Payments reduced the payment by excluding certain needs, and may be treated as unearned income.
- Recommended Policy Removal – Income In-Kind and Vendor Payments not paid directly to a customer, are no longer considered when determining the payment. Payments given to a customer (even if the money is intended for a specific expense) is treated as unearned income.

Vehicle Evaluation

- Current Policy – Vehicles were not assessed as Real Property when used as a primary residence.
- Recommended Policy - Vehicles are assessed as Real Property when used as a primary residence. Motorcycles, scooters, and standard boats are not eligible to the Real Property evaluation and will continue to be evaluated under the Personal Property guidelines.

Upon Board approval, the updates to the General Relief Policy Handbook, Chapter A - General Policy and Provisions will be effective June 1, 2021.

PROCUREMENT

N/A

REVIEW BY OTHERS

This item has been reviewed by County Counsel (Adam Ebright, Deputy County Counsel and Adam Miederhoff, Deputy County Counsel, 387-5455) on May 3, 2021; Finance (John Hallen, Administrative Analyst, 388-0208) on April 29, 2021; and County Finance and Administration (Tanya Bratton, Deputy Executive Officer, 388-0332) on April 29, 2021.

General Relief Policy Handbook, Chapter A - General Policy and Provisions
May 18, 2021

Record of Action of the Board of Supervisors
County of San Bernardino

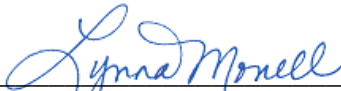
APPROVED (CONSENT CALENDAR)

Moved: Joe Baca, Jr. Seconded: Janice Rutherford

Ayes: Col. Paul Cook (Ret.), Janice Rutherford, Dawn Rowe, Curt Hagman, Joe Baca, Jr.

Lynna Monell, CLERK OF THE BOARD

BY



DATED: May 18, 2021



cc: File - Transitional Assistance Department w/attach
CCM 05/26/2021