

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Administrative Code - County Adult Assistance Programs]

Ordinance amending the Administrative Code to: 1) streamline the statutory authority for the City's indigent aid programs by eliminating redundancies and moving the authority for all programs under one renumbered Article; 2) create the Family General Relief program, to provide aid under limited circumstances to indigent households with minors who are ineligible for state aid; 3) authorize the Department of Human Services to create an intensive employment services program; 4) remove the authority to impose recoupments to collect overpayments resulting from agency error; 5) expand the types of identification that are acceptable as proof of identity; 6) repeal the requirement that applicants transfer to the City any interests in real property; 7) conform to changes in state law governing time limits applied to receipt of benefits under the CalWORKs program; 8) delete outdated provisions that no longer reflect current operation of the General Assistance program; and 9) reduce the time during which records must be retained from five to three years.

Existing Law

The Department of Human Services (DHS) administers the County Adult Assistance Programs (CAAP) for the City and County of San Francisco, which provide financial assistance and social services to indigent adults. CAAP includes four separate programs:

- General Assistance
- Personal Assistance Employment Services (PAES)
- Cash Assistance Linked to Medi-Cal (CALM)
- Supplemental Security Income Pending (SSIP)

Currently, the General Assistance, PAES, CALM and SSIP programs are codified in Articles VII, IX, X, and XI of Chapter 20 of the Administrative Code, respectively.

Each Article sets forth the standards governing the administration of the specific program, including, but not limited to: eligibility, applications, work requirements, allowable income and assets, maximum grant amounts, special allowances, sanctions, discontinuances and hearing rights. Currently, there is considerable redundancy from Article to Article, as many of the standards are identical across programs.

Amendments to Current Law

This ordinance moves the statutory authority for the PAES, CALM, and SSIP Programs to Article VII of Chapter 20 of the Administrative Code, and renumbers the sections of that Article. Locating the statutory authority for the City's CAAP programs in a single Article will eliminate redundancies in the Administrative Code, allow greater alignment between the CAAP programs, and simplify program administration.

The ordinance creates a fifth CAAP Program, Family General Relief, which will provide aid to indigent families with minors who would be eligible for the state CalWORKs program, but for the application of the Maximum Family Grant rule, and/or the income deeming rule for sponsored noncitizens. DHS will administer the Family General Relief program, and will promulgate regulations establishing procedures for determining program eligibility, processing applications, recertifications, sanctions, discontinuances, notices and administrative appeals.

The ordinance also aligns the CAAP Programs with changes in the state CalWORKs program, eliminates outdated provisions that no longer reflect current program operations, targets intensive employment services more effectively, and incorporates other programmatic changes designed to make the application for, and administration of, CAAP benefits simpler. Specifically, the ordinance:

- Clarifies the work requirements expected of employable recipients, and exempts from mandatory work requirements persons: who are 60 years of age or older; recipients of assistance under the CALM and SSIP programs; minors, unless they are emancipated; and employable recipients of PAES and General Assistance who have a temporary disabling condition;
- Authorizes DHS to create an intensive employment services program for PAES participants;
- Removes the authority to recoup overpayments resulting from agency error;
- Expands the types of identification that are acceptable as proof of identity;
- Repeals the requirement that applicants transfer to the City any interests in real property;
- Conforms the codified definition of "housing" to the definition approved by the voters in Proposition N (also known as Care not Cash);
- Aligns income and asset limits with the limits used in the state Medi-Cal and CalWORKs programs;
- Conforms to changes in state law governing time limits for the receipt of benefits under the CalWORKs program;
- Conforms to changes in state law repealing the ban on receipt of benefits by individuals with a prior felony drug conviction;
- Eliminates the Employer Wage Subsidy program, which is not currently administered by DHS;
- Reduces the time during which records must be retained from five to three years.

Background Information

Article VII of Chapter 20 of the Administrative Code, which governs the General Assistance Program, was enacted in 1980, and fulfills the City's duty under state law to provide financial assistance to indigent residents who are not supported by other means. (Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code §§ 17000 et seq.) The standards governing the administration of the General Assistance program, as set forth in Article VII, comply with the requirements of state law.

Articles IX, X, and XI of Chapter 20 of the Administrative Code govern the PAES, CALM and SSIP programs, respectively. These programs were enacted in 1998 to meet the specific needs of applicants for assistance who are: employable; eligible for Medi-Cal on the basis of being aged, blind, or disabled; or awaiting a determination of eligibility for federal disability benefits. The administration of these programs is not governed by the California Welfare and Institutions Code applicable to the administration of General Assistance. Nevertheless, the standards governing these programs, as set forth in Articles IX, X and XI, are very similar to the program standards governing General Assistance.

In 2002, San Francisco voters approved Proposition N, also known as Care not Cash. Proposition N amended Articles VII, IX, X and XI of Chapter 20 of the Administrative Code to permit the City to provide homeless recipients with in-kind benefits (housing, shelter and meal services) in lieu of cash benefits, where in-kind benefits are available.

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