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THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF STANISLAUS
ACTION AGENDA SUMMARY

DEPT: Community Services Agency

BOARD AGENDA # *B-2

Urgent

Routine

AGENDA DATE June 10, 2014

CEO Concur with Recommendation YES NO
(Information Attached)

4/5 Vote Required YES NO

SUBJECT:

Approval for the Community Services Agency to Increase General Assistance Grants by 5% Effective July 1, 2014 in Accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code Section 17001.5

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Approve the increase of General Assistance grants by 5% effective July 1, 2014 in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code section 17001.5.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The 5% General Assistance (GA) grant increase equates to approximately \$31,326. Fiscal Year 2014-2015 GA Program projections indicate that this grant increase will be offset by forecast demographic changes in GA customers and a decreased caseload. The GA Program estimated revenues and appropriations are sufficient to support the 5% grant increase which will be factored in the Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Final Budget submission. There will be no additional impact to the County General Fund.

BOARD ACTION AS FOLLOWS:

No. 2014-266

On motion of Supervisor Withrow, Seconded by Supervisor Monteith
and approved by the following vote,

Ayes: Supervisors: O'Brien, Chiesa, Withrow, Monteith, and Chairman De Martini

Noes: Supervisors: None

Excused or Absent: Supervisors: None

Abstaining: Supervisor: None

1) Approved as recommended

2) Denied

3) Approved as amended

4) Other:

MOTION:

Christine Ferraro

ATTEST: CHRISTINE FERRARO TALLMAN, Clerk

File No.

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DISCUSSION:

General Assistance (GA) regulations require grant adjustments in recognition of changes in costs of living indices. The Board of Supervisors has traditionally followed the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), one year in arrears. Other options exist in calculating grant adjustments besides the TANF model, such as using an annual survey of what it costs to live in Stanislaus County. Since there was no TANF COLA included in the Governor's Budget for Fiscal Year 2012-2013, there was no COLA requested for the GA in Budget Year 2013-2014.

The last COLA of 2.75% for GA was approved by the Board of Supervisors and implemented on July 1, 2005. The COLA for GA grants are requested from the Board of Supervisors according to Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 17001.5, which authorizes counties to set GA grant levels based on the 1991 poverty level, adjusted annually to reflect changes in the AFDC program, now identified as TANF. This method has been used in Stanislaus County since 1993 and has proven to be effective, demonstrating to customers our commitment to the mandate.

The Governor suspended the CalWORKs/TANF COLAs in Fiscal Year 2006-2007 through Fiscal Year 2012-2013. In the current year, 2013-2014, the State Budget has approved a 5% grant increase to CalWORKs recipients in March 2014. At this time, CSA would recommend a COLA for GA in Fiscal Year 2014-2015. In order for CSA to issue the appropriate grant amounts timely, effective July 1, 2014, Board of Supervisors action on the grant amounts is requested prior to the Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Final Budget process. This requested action will avoid the customer impact due to the transient nature of this population and the staff workload to process retro-active grant increases back to July, after approval of the Final Budget in September 2014. In many cases the time frame that a GA customer is eligible to aid is critical as an employable GA customer receives aid 3 months in every 12 month period.

As described in the fiscal impact section, the GA grant increase will be offset by a caseload decline with no actual net impact to the County General Fund provided for the General Assistance program.

POLICY ISSUES:

Approval to increase General Assistance grants supports the Board's priorities of A Safe Community and A Healthy Community by providing additional support to the indigent community to defray the increase in the cost of basic necessities.

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STAFFING ISSUES:

Community Services Agency staff are available to support the administration of the General Assistance Program in Stanislaus County.

CONTACT PERSON:

Kathryn M. Harwell, Director 558-2500