

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HILDA L. SOLIS AND

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JANICE HAHN

General Relief (GR) TAYportunity Guaranteed Income Demonstration Project

On July 13, 2021, the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) issued a [report](#) articulating a roadmap and outlining the benefits of implementing Guaranteed Income (GI) demonstration projects. According to the report, GI helps to alleviate the “poverty trap” that is traditionally associated with individuals associated with social service programs, given they lack the necessary investment and resources to raise themselves out of poverty. Through a GI program, individuals will be provided with critical financial support, with the freedom of investing in their education or participating in job training programs that could lead to higher paying jobs.

Although economic security issues are not new challenges, they have been exacerbated since the COVID-19 pandemic began. This is especially true of young people, particularly transition age youth (or TAY) who receive General Relief (GR). To that end, they are the ideal demographic to pilot the GI concept as these young people transition into adulthood. Some of these young people may have transitioned out of foster

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care or the probation system—and approximately 31% of them are homeless with no support system. They are primarily African American and Latinx males and unfortunately, have limited education and career opportunities, and experience a significant number of challenges on their path to adulthood.

This population is especially critical to serve through a GI program as GR is a County-funded program for individuals who do not qualify for other State or federal cash assistance program. These young people receive a small amount of funding through GR, \$221 per month in cash aid, and require further investment to attain a measure of financial stability and independence.

The pandemic has robbed many TAY of opportunities to seek gainful employment. Without increased financial support during and immediately after the pandemic, TAY will face severe challenges to achieve permanent self-sufficiency. DPSS has structured their approach to serving TAY through a new employment, apprenticeship, and entrepreneurship program called “TAYportunity,” which provides pathways toward economic stability. When young people actively participate in TAYportunity, they are more successful in obtaining employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. Adding a GI component to this innovative program will create financial stability and a clear incentive for them to participate and stay actively engaged in the TAYportunity program.

A well-crafted GI program would provide participants with a monthly stipend for no more than three years, include wraparound services and job placement assistance, have a robust evaluation plan, and be structured to inform and influence future program and policy design. Preliminary research of GI programs concluded that program participants showed less income volatility and improved well-being. GI participants were also able to

cover unexpected expenses and, most importantly, pursue full-time employment without having to worry about short-term financial pressures.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Director of the Department of Public Social Services to submit a high-level plan to the Board within 45 days for the creation of a three-year Guaranteed Income Demonstration Program (GIDP), a pilot project for 150 individuals aged 18-24 who are currently receiving General Relief benefits and actively participating in the Department's TAYportunity program. This pilot project will provide \$1,204 (\$1,000 for GI and \$204 for CalFresh) to these individuals.

WE FURTHER MOVE that the Board delegate authority to the Chief Executive Office, in consultation with County Counsel, to execute agreements with a research institution, and/or other agencies that provide benefits counseling to assist in the creation and/or study the potential efficacy of the GIDP.

WE FURTHER MOVE that County Counsel review Chapter 2.102 of the County Code, which governs the General Relief program, and provide draft language for the Board's consideration to ensure that youth receiving GR and involved in the TAYportunity program can participate in the GIDP with no impact on their benefits. This draft language should be provided within 45 days.

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