

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR DON KNABE

March 6, 2012

MAIL FOR HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS

Federal regulations for the CalFresh Program currently require the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) to send paper mail to all participants, including homeless participants who use the DPSS District Office address to receive mail. As a result, it is estimated that DPSS mails over one million pieces of U.S. mail to itself each year, and stores the mail until the participant comes to the DPSS office to pick it up. The large volume of mail received by DPSS offices for homeless participants creates a costly and inefficient burden for DPSS and hinders its daily operations.

Participants often fail to come to the DPSS office to pick up their mail and when they do, the workload involved in staff having to search through the thousands of pieces of mail results in long wait times for the both the participant waiting for his/her mail and other participants waiting to be served.

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As such, DPSS has developed a far more efficient alternative where DPSS would send electronic mail to an e-mail account that DPSS would establish for each participant. The participant would then be able to access his/her mail from anywhere internet access is available, or, at the participant's option, the participant could come to the DPSS office as they do now and DPSS staff would print the electronic communication for participants. The ability to send mail electronically would eliminate both postage and storage costs, and provides an alternative to coming to the DPSS office to homeless participants. Unfortunately, current federal regulations for the CalFresh Program preclude this option, even though this option would satisfy all other applicable legal notice requirements.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Instruct the Chief Executive Office, in collaboration with the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), to develop a legislative strategy to overcome any federal/State regulation and/or law which requires DPSS to send paper mail to homeless participants and instead enable DPSS to send electronic mail to homeless participants, provided that DPSS shall provide paper copies of electronic mail to homeless participants who come to a DPSS office to receive their mail.

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