GETTING BEYOND GENERAL ASSISTANCE
Welfare Reform and the Local Self-Sufficiency Design Project

Rikki Baum, Ph.D.
Maria Martin, M.S.W.
Michael J. Austin, Ph.D.

Project Design Team:
John Cullen, Director, Contra Costa County Social Services Department
Terry Longoria, Director, Napa County Health & Human Services Department
Michael Wald, General Manager, San Francisco Department of Human Services

Nancy Acosta, Program Coordinator, Santa Clara County Social Services Agency
Mary Donovan, Manager, Marin County Office of Employment & Training
Luann DeWitt, Administrative Assistant, Alameda County Social Services Agency
Cecilia Espinola, Administrator Assistant, Santa Cruz County Human Resources
Linda Kallinek, Division Director, Sonoma County Human Services
John Lee, Division Manager, Contra Costa Social Services Department
John Meermans, Revenue Manager, San Mateo County Human Services Agency
Lynn Perez, Staff Manager, Napa County Health & Human Services Department
Tom Snow, Program Manager, Stanislaus County Department of Social Services
John Vera, Deputy Director, San Francisco Department of Human Services

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Bay Area Social Services Consortium (BASSC)

BASSC was founded in 1987 and is composed of the directors of Bay Area county social service and human service agencies, deans of Bay Area graduate social work departments, and foundation representatives. BASSC has the objective of directing educational programs, conducting applied research, and developing policy. Housed at the Center for Social Services Research (CSSR) at the University of California at Berkeley, the BASSC Research Response Team was organized in 1995 to respond rapidly to the emerging needs of county social service agencies for information about their changing environments. Research projects are undertaken in close collaboration with agency administrators and program staff. The CSSR conducts research, policy analysis, program planning, and evaluation toward the improvement of the publicly supported social services. The Center responds to the concerns of community professionals and consumers of services to develop research activities that are practice- and policy-relevant. The focus of the work is on populations that are considered needy or disadvantaged and on human service agencies through analysis of agency management, finance, professional development, and service systems.

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Will Lightbourne, BASSC Chair was instrumental in helping to clarify project goals and guide the analysis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont'd)

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont'd)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October, 1996, a team of social services directors and program managers from ten Bay Area counties undertook a project to identify the potential effects of welfare reform on the people they serve and to explore ways to move beyond traditional, last resort General Assistance Programs. Toward this end, participating counties wanted to:

- identify the kinds of data and information they would need to create new programs capable of moving able-bodied adults toward self sufficiency.
- consider how any new or revised programs could better coordinate with the nonprofit and private sectors in their respective counties, and
- explore how local public agencies might work with each other on an inter-county basis.

With these considerations in mind, this project tackled five areas of inquiry:

1. What do we know about the way GA programs operate across the country?
2. What do we know about the county-administered GA programs here in California?
3. What do we know about the current GA caseloads and program costs in Bay Area counties, and what information *should* we collect in the future to document actual changes in local caseload composition, needs, and costs?
4. Given what we now know about the new reforms (but absent final state

legislation), can we begin to anticipate possible caseload and cost shifts that will affect local public and non-profit service providers?

5. What are the key policy questions which county officials may want to consider—acting independently, on an inter-county basis, and/or in collaboration with their private and non-profit sectors— in order to devise cost-effective new programs and models of service delivery for the changing and possibly growing caseloads?

This report takes a first step toward answering these questions.

Background

On August 22, 1996, President Clinton signed new federal welfare reform legislation into law. The first Democratic President in 12 years and the first Republican Congress in decades have collaborated on the most radical overhaul of the nation's public assistance programs since the 1935 creation of the Social Security Act. The crux of the new law is the repeal of the 60-year old federal entitlement program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), and its replacement with a fixed-sum block grant program called Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

This shift to a block grant, together with myriad other amendments in the new law, will affect, directly or indirectly, nearly every major means-tested program, including AFDC, the JOBS welfare-to-work program (known as GAIN in California), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Food Stamps, Child Support Enforcement, child care, child welfare services and foster care, the Social Services Block Grant, Medicaid (Medi-Cal in California), county funded General Assistance programs, and on down the list.

Virtually every major disadvantaged demographic group will be affected, including poor and disabled children, certain elderly, disabled, and blind adults (particularly legal immigrants), poor childless adults, drug-addicted and alcoholic adults, and the working poor. And while it may not be immediately self-evident, every level of government and every local community will feel the ripple effects of these far-reaching changes. The federal government will improve its balance sheet by cutting its total welfare spending by roughly $55 to $60 billion over the next six years. Assuming no startling changes in recipients' and/or private sector employers' behavior, state and local governments, along with the private and non-profit sectors, will eventually absorb these costs, one way or another.

California is expected to bear a disproportionate share of the federal cuts, losing about $6.8 billion in federal support by the year 2002. Unless the state, local governments, and the private and non-profit sectors replace those lost federal dollars— whether in wages or benefits— there will be far less money for poor households to spend on rent, food, clothing, medical care (through direct Medi-Cal payments to doctors, clinics, and hospitals), appliances, transportation, and the small, but daily necessities of life. Local landlords, businesses, health-care providers, and merchants in lower-income neighborhoods cannot help but feel the pinch. If a community's net purchasing power continues to decline over time, the general "quality of life" will deteriorate for everyone, not just for the very poor whose benefits are most directly affected.

Understanding General Assistance

The county General Assistance Programs historically have been the last line of defense in protecting some semblance of quality of life in our communities. However, these programs were already coming under scrutiny even before the new federal legislation. Restrained by judicial decisions, growing GA caseloads and costs in the 1980s were particularly burdensome to counties. California's population grew by 26.2% between 1981 and 1991.Yet, over the same decade, the average monthly number of individuals receiving GA in the state grew by 295%

(from 26,979 in 1981 to 106,557 in 1991), and the number of families receiving assistance grew by 226% (from 1,034 in 1981 to 3,371 in 1991). Expenditures skyrocketed along with burgeoning caseloads, rising 369% (from $86.3 million to $404.5 million) over the same time period. However, the counties' total tax and other revenues increased by only 107% (from $12.1 billion to $25 billion) from 1981 to 1991.

Despite the high costs of General Assistance to counties, we know astonishingly little about the nuts and bolts of GA programs either across the country or in California. And this project's review of GA programs operating in the Bay Area counties is constrained by the same lack of reliable information.

1. GA Programs Nationwide

Most states (42 currently) operate some sort of General Assistance program, however only 33 of these are statewide and only 25 operate uniformly in all localities. Because these GA programs are state and local creations and are funded exclusively with state and locally raised revenues, there are no uniform eligibility requirements, benefit payments, financing or administrative arrangements among states or even among counties within a state.

2. GA Programs in California

Currently, nobody in the State of California can say with any accuracy who receives GA benefits, why they are poor and in need of such aid, what benefits they receive, what happens to them over time, and the cost-effectiveness of GA expenditures. Not only does this hamper informed policy making by state and county officials with respect to current GA recipients, programs, and costs, it also greatly complicates future policy-making with respect to proposed welfare reforms. Absent reliable and up-to-date information, state and county officials can only guess at how GA caseloads, program needs, and costs will change over time as a consequence of changes in federal and state law. Moreover, any attempts to revise or reinvent GA can only be evaluated against current program operations, which are not well understood.

3. GA Programs in BASSC Counties

It is difficult to design effective programmatic responses without understanding the nature and needs of the target population. The GA population is heterogeneous now and may become even more diverse in the future. Popular opinion notwithstanding, a "one-size" program does not fit all. Different GA sub-populations in the current caseload— those with physical or mental disabilities that are not severe enough to qualify as "disabled" for purposes of SSI, those with emotional problems, substance abusers, those who are homeless, persons recently paroled from prison, unskilled adults who can not find steady work— will need different kinds of services if they are to be helped to become more self-sufficient. Under new federal and state welfare reforms, the GA caseloads may expand to include more poor parents with children, legal immigrants, and additional substance-abusing adults. Counties may want to modify the nature of the services they provide to such future GA applicants, particularly families with children.

Some important data for making programmatic decisions are not available because they are not now collected. In thinking about information that would be useful to policy makers and program administrators, both now and in the future, the project design team concluded that a great deal of necessary data are not now collected in any shape or form. If policy makers decided to obtain such information in the future, it would still have to be defined in common operational terms; it would still need to be collected, formatted, and reported in a uniform way; and it would still need to become part of an easily accessible database.

California legislators will once again consider, as part of the welfare reform debate, whether the state should shoulder some or all GA costs. Counties have been asking for additional fiscal relief, but they will make a far more compelling case when they can document, with reliable data, the nature of the people they serve, the complexities of their needs, and the corresponding costs of trying to make them self-sufficient. A first step is to collect meaningful information, that is comparable across counties, and that will accurately reflect the relative GA burdens borne by different counties.

As the unit of government on the proverbial "front lines," county expertise on how all of these public assistance and social services programs actually work is highly prized. The counties have a unique role to play in any discussions involving GA— largely because they now bear the entire costs of their 58 different programs. Thus, it is important that the BASSC counties participating in this project, together with the larger CWDA, reach consensus on how they want GA to be incrementally modified or radically revamped as part of the larger statewide debate on welfare reform. Not only will county coffers be affected by the coming changes, but the fate of some of California's poorest and most vulnerable residents depends on the outcome.

4. Potential Caseload and Cost Shifts

Take, for example, an elderly legal immigrant in Alameda County about to lose his SSI/SSP benefits, worth $640 per month (effective January 1, 1997). If this individual's only option is to turn to GA, his monthly cash benefit would drop to only $221 per month, a loss of $419 per month. Leaving aside any related services (IHSS or Medi-Cal), this individual will find it very difficult, if not impossible to manage on such a reduced benefit payment.

If the state cannot or will not extend additional public resources to households in this fix, then it will fall to the counties, non-profit and for-profit sectors to try to alleviate such new hardship. It is for this reason, that we strongly recommend that participating BASSC counties try to gauge the "benefit gap" between old-law and new-law. It is clear that counties, alone, cannot make up the entire federal/state benefit deficit with GA payments. Nor should they, if they desire to move beyond mere income-transfer payments to programs that move people toward self-sufficiency.

Key Policy Questions

Although there is not a great deal of comparable information about GA programs around the country, around California, or here in the Bay Area, we are certain of three things: First, GA, particularly here in California, has always been the residual step-child of public assistance programs. It is the default program that is left after all other avenues of assistance have been exhausted. As such, it is the program that does the least, pays the least, and costs the least. Second, the people who have relied on GA in the past have been primarily single adults or childless couples who have diverse problems, including chronic physical and mental health conditions, criminal records, substance abuse, homelessness, poor education, and lack of regular employment. With welfare reform, this population may expand to include legal immigrants, families with children, and those previously eligible for other public assistance programs. Finally, to effectively reinvent GA— to make it a program that does more than transfer minimal income to troubled people— will take new energy, creativity and commitment. It will also take new resources.

If GA is to become something different, the first serious question is what is its new mission? One often mentioned goal is to help people become self-sufficient. This term can mean different things, however. On the one hand, a person can be made independent of public welfare, but remain poor. On the other hand, a person can be helped to leave not only welfare, but poverty behind. In short, is the new program meant to create a ladder out of poverty or merely a step-stool off of welfare?

Another fundamental question has to do with the new program's objectives regarding hardship. Is the program meant to relieve economic hardship and the social pathology that often accompanies it? To what degree? If an individual is homeless, is this new program going to provide shelter? Will the shelter be temporary or permanent? If an individual has a chronic health problem, but is not sufficiently disabled to qualify for SSI and Medi-Cal, will the new program provide health care? Will such care include routine and preventive care, as well as acute or emergency care? If an individual has a substance abuse problem, will the program find and assure effective drug treatment?

Proponents of work-oriented strategies, generally assert that such up-front investments should, over time, produce long-term savings. But the most rigorous studies involving AFDC adults have always shown the savings to be modest. Participants in the JOBS program (GAIN here in California), were, on average, able to increase their work effort and earnings, and some local governments achieved net savings. These modest improvements have not been enough to satisfy taxpayers and elected officials. Thus, it is important to take notice of our real-world experience to date: Trying to put poor welfare adults to work is neither easy nor cheap.

If counties expect to have difficulty finding net new resources in their own budgets to help foot any of these new programmatic costs, they have three general options: First, they can seek an infusion of state revenues. Second, they can collaborate with each other and hope to achieve some economies of scale. Third, they can seek to collaborate with non-profit providers and/or for-profit entities.

With regard to non-profits, it is particularly noteworthy is that while total charitable giving rose by 7.8% from 1994 to 1995, the amount donated for human services *declined* by nearly 3% over the same time period. And while total charitable giving rose by 7.3% between 1990 and 1995, giving to human services *declined* by nearly 18% over the same five years (from $14.22 billion in 1990 to $11.7 billion in 1995). All of these figures are in constant dollars. It seems that charitable giving for human services is following the same downward trend of public-sector spending for human services.

Local non-profit providers in the Bay Area are worried about the capacity of their organizations to meet current needs, much less absorb net new need. Private for-profit giving will always be variable. It will change with market conditions and the whims of senior managers. What has changed is that this variability now increasingly characterizes public-sector spending for the poor, as well.

PREFACE

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, signed into law by President Clinton on August 22, 1996, is expected to have profound implications for the poor, as well as for the local governments and non-profit service providers who assist them.

Through the Bay Area Social Services Consortium, the social services directors of ten local counties are seeking to identify the potential effects of the new reforms on the people they serve now with the 100% county-funded General Assistance (GA) programs, as well as the additional people they may be serving in the near future. They are considering how their present local agency operations may have to change in order to provide the most cost-effective programmatic responses possible. They are interested in exploring how they can get beyond their traditional, last-resort General Assistance programs.

Toward this end, participating county social services directors want to:

- identify the kinds of data and information they would need to create new programs capable of moving able-bodied adults toward self sufficiency.
- consider how any new or revised programs could better coordinate with the nonprofit and private sectors in their respective counties, and
- how local public agencies might work with each other on an inter-county basis.

In undertaking this project, the directors recognize that the new federal law is extremely complicated and devolves enormous new programmatic and fiscal responsibilities to state and local governments. Moreover, the federal law sets out certain requirements and penalties that, if left unmitigated, will reduce federal (and possibly state) spending for certain groups of poor people and could shift significant new costs to local governments, the private and nonprofit sectors. Nevertheless, the final shape of future policies and programs will remain uncertain until the state passes new implementing legislation, a process in which the statewide California County Social Services Directors Association (CWDA) fully intends to participate. Because informed policy making requires useful information, it will be extremely important to take good base-line measures of current GA programs' costs and recipient characteristics, and to track how they may change over time, in whatever way the new law is finally implemented. With these considerations in mind, this project tackles five areas of inquiry:

1. what do we know about the way GA programs operate across the country?
2. what do we know about the county-administered GA programs here in California?
3. what do we know about the current GA caseloads and program costs in Bay Area counties, and what information *should* we collect in the future to document actual changes in local caseload composition, needs, and costs?
4. given what we now know about the new reforms (but absent final state legislation), can we begin to anticipate possible caseload and cost shifts that will affect local public and non-profit service providers?
5. what are the key policy questions which county officials may want to consider— acting independently, on an inter-county basis, and/or in collaboration with their private and non-profit sectors— in order to devise cost-effective new programs and models of service delivery for the changing and possibly growing caseloads?

This report takes but a first step toward answering these questions.

INTRODUCTION

In the pantheon of government-provided public assistance payments, those referred to as "General Assistance" (GA) can best be characterized as the most threadbare layer of the nation's increasingly tattered safety net. Needy individuals and households who are unable to qualify for the more generous programs subsidized by the federal and/or state governments can turn for help to the state and/or locally funded GA programs.

As modest as their benefits may be, the GA programs are often the last line of defense for impoverished individuals and families. Yet states and counties have found it increasingly difficult to meet current GA expenses. GA benefits have been allowed to erode against inflation and, in some cases, have been affirmatively cut back or even eliminated.[1] Yet, the enactment into federal law, on August 22, 1996, of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act— which reduces or eliminates federal welfare spending for large numbers of people, and permits states to further reduce their own welfare-related spending— is likely to increase the demand for GA-type programs over time.

According to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the new federal law is expected to reduce total federal spending by about $55-$60 billion over the next six years nationwide. Here in California, the non-partisan Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) has estimated that California could lose $6.8 billion (net) in federal spending over the same time period. Until the State of California enacts its own new authorizing and appropriations legislation, it is impossible to know whether state welfare expenditures will hold steady, increase, or decrease over time.

Even if the state maintains its own level of current welfare spending in the near term, the loss of nearly $7 billion in federal expenditures will hurt California's poor and the communities in which they live. A slowing or stagnant economy will exacerbate matters. In a recession, need for assistance rises just as state revenues decline. California's economy has rebounded since the last recession, but even with robust economic growth this last year, the state's unemployment rate (nearly 7.0%) is still about 40% higher than the national average unemployment rate (nearly 5.0%). When the state's economy slows again, demand for GA will surely increase.

States and localities that support GA-type programs are, therefore, legitimately concerned about the potential for new program demands and costs. Moreover, the GA programs may become the only source of public relief left to many vulnerable individuals and families. Given their growing importance of GA we begin by reviewing what we know about GA programs as they currently operate, across the nation, here in California, and in the participating Bay Area counties. Next, we identify the sort of information that would help us better understand the needs of current and future recipients, and how future GA caseloads and costs may change over time as a consequence of the new federal law. Finally, we will review some key programmatic and policy issues that are likely to arise in any efforts to revamp "GA as we know it," whether these efforts involve single counties, multiple-county partnerships, or public-private partnerships.

1. REVIEW OF GA PROGRAMS IN BASSC COUNTIES

As noted in Appendices A and B, we know astonishingly little about the nuts and bolts of GA programs across the country and here in California. It should come as little surprise, therefore, that our review of GA programs operating in the Bay Area counties is constrained by the same lack of reliable information.

To help bridge this information gap, the directors of the ten counties participating in this BASSC project assigned senior staff in their departments to work with us as an "inter-county design team." Over the course of several lengthy meetings, the team sought to identify the kinds of information that would help local policy makers assess their current GA program operations and caseloads, as well as evaluate any future program and caseload changes that may occur due to new federal and state welfare reforms. The team also recognizes that such information is essential to the directors, their staffs, and other key local decision makers who seek to devise new means of service delivery— models that move beyond the conventional, last-resort GA-type programs.

We were hampered by four key factors. First, we lacked common, operational definitions. Terms that are regularly used in the public assistance lexicon ("employable," "unemployable," "aged," "disabled," "exempt for good cause," and so on) can and do mean entirely different things in different counties. "Aged" may seem pretty cut and dried. But in our discussions, we learned that some counties consider people over age 65 too old to work, while others see no impediment to work at any age for GA recipients, unless a medical doctor has certified that a person is too disabled to work.

An infinitely tougher example has to do with the idea of "employability." Every county can presently tell you what portion of its caseload is deemed "employable," but each county means something different by that term. Some merely mean "able bodied" — that is, lacking a medically certified disability or debilitating disease. Others start there, but also factor in education, previous work experience, and current job skills — the readiness of the GA applicant to enter the labor force. Some go further, taking into consideration the social skills or emotional problems that may make an otherwise able-bodied adult an unlikely job candidate.

We ran into similar problems with the idea of "disability." When is a person so disabled that he or she can not work? Is a mildly retarded individual incapable of working? Not necessarily. Suppose this same individual also lacks certain social skills and is borderline illiterate, but could probably work in a small, well-supervised "supported work" setting. Some counties will classify this person as "employable" and others will classify him as "unemployable." Is an individual who has drug or alcohol problems "disabled"? Is an individual with a learning disability and who has difficulty taking instructions "disabled"?

It was beyond the scope of this project to plumb the depths of all the relevant terms that would have to be carefully defined for purposes of GA-relevant data collection. We do recognize, however, that it would be highly desirable to undertake such an effort in connection with any future data collection efforts.

Second, we lacked comparable data collection and reporting methods. Many counties collect similar information on their GA application forms (see Appendix C for a sample of these forms). However, they do not necessarily record and save it in the same format. For example, most counties are interested in knowing GA applicants' work experiences, but they may ask for this information in different ways and over different time periods. For example, applicants may be asked in one county only about their current or last job, while another county may require a detailed work history going back through the applicant's first job. Even on fairly straightforward variables, such as age or educational achievement, counties will aggregate the data using different "age brackets" or categories of "grades" completed. As long as the counties retain the original applications, a records search could permit some of that raw data (age, last grade completed) to be extracted and reformatted in a comparable way across counties.

Which brings us to our third problem. Counties do not have effective access to the bulk of the raw data they collect. If they did, it might be possible to reach consensus on how best to aggregate and report age, education, or work-experience data; search old records; and reconstruct common data sets among counties. But some counties do not save their raw data for long. Indeed, one urban county has *only* current-month data for its GA caseload.

Even when counties do save some or all of the raw data originally collected, they do not, as a rule, enter it into an automated, retrievable database. This information is effectively inaccessible. The time and cost of undertaking a manual search of old records is prohibitive. Consequently, when the design team found that all or most of the counties collected certain necessary information, they also quickly realized that they could not, without undertaking costly and cumbersome manual searches, access these data for purposes of reorganizing it in a common format.

Fourth, some important data are not available because they are not now collected. In thinking about information that would be useful to policy makers and program administrators, both now and in the future, the design team concluded that a great deal of necessary data are not now collected in any shape or form. If policy makers decided to obtain such information in the future, it would still have to be defined in common operational terms; it would still have to be collected, formatted, and reported in a uniform way; and it would still have to be made part of an easily accessible database.

To take but one small example of how these data-related problems can impede informed policy making: The new federal welfare law instructs state and local governments to deny food stamps to able-bodied adults, aged 18-50 and without dependents, after three months in any three-year period, unless they are working at least 20 hours per week.[2] Significant numbers of GA recipients currently receive food stamps and the vast majority of these recipients are single or childless adults, most of whom will be subject to this new work requirement.

Unless the state requests a federal waiver for high-unemployment areas, counties will face the daunting task of implementing this new federal requirement. Although this particular change in federal law will have no direct effect on GA eligibility or costs, four policy questions come immediately to mind:[3] How many GA recipients fit the profile and are already meeting the work requirements? How many more can be helped to find 20 hours of work per week? For the remainder, who are subject to the requirement but cannot find sufficient work, how much income in food stamps will they lose and where can they be referred (food banks, soup kitchens, and other non-profit providers) to help compensate for that loss? If all else fails, for what sort of nutrition and health issues should the health agencies in each county be preparing?

To answer these questions and to plan effectively, it would be helpful if counties could look at their current GA caseload data and quickly identify the sub-population that fits the targeted age bracket, as well as ascertain their previous and current work experiences. It would be even more helpful if counties could look at their previous case records to get a sense of how this target group may change (if at all) over time— both as a share of the overall GA caseload and in terms of work effort.

All of our counties will make informed guesses about the impact of this provision on their GA caseloads. None can be terribly precise. To begin with, most counties do not now aggregate their GA age brackets precisely in this 18-50 fashion. Second, none of the counties presently collect detailed individual work histories (weekly hours worked). Third, they cannot afford to undertake a manual search of old records to try to figure out how this target group varies as a share of their GA caseloads over time. In short, counties have neither all the necessary data nor the means to accurately estimate the numbers of people and the potential costs involved with respect to this one provision of the new law.

Given the difficulties of compiling meaningful and reliable information with current GA program data, the design team spent a good deal of time pondering the sort of information it would like to see collected in the future. More detailed, uniform, and comparable information would probably be helpful on such things as educational background, health status (particularly treatment for any substance abuse and/or mental health problems), and work histories.

Recognizing that current GA caseloads could change with the onset of new federal and state welfare reforms, the team included data elements that could help capture possible changes in caseload composition. For example, although very few GA households now include children under the age of 18, this may change under the new law. Consequently, we thought it important to establish a baseline and then to track, over time, any growth in the number of families with dependent children. We also would want to know how the average length of stay on GA for such families differs from the average length of stay for other types of GA households (those with substance abuse problems, those with mental health problems, those paroled from prison, and so on).

We also thought it important to collect information on the marital status of both current recipients and new applicants. It is well understood that individuals with work histories may be eligible for Social Security benefits, based on their own prior earnings. It's also possible that some applicants might be eligible for Social Security as the survivors or dependents of covered workers, and not know of their eligibility. Similarly, any new single mothers with dependent children, whose former husbands or partners are alive but not living with the family, should be referred to the child support enforcement agency, if they have not already been so.

In the same vein, we wanted to collect more information on individuals' military service and citizenship status. Honorably discharged veterans might be eligible for veterans' pension and/or health benefits. And because the new law exempts certain legal immigrants from the general prohibition on receiving federal benefits, it will become increasingly important to obtain relevant citizenship information.

Finally, we wanted to obtain more information on recipients' and applicants' encounters with the criminal justice and mental health systems. Among the more interesting findings in the Moon and Schneiderman study was that GA caseloads and costs did not vary significantly with California counties' poverty and unemployment rates, but did correlate with the number of parolees and mental health patients. Consequently, our design team wanted to know whether GA recipients had ever been convicted of felonies (particularly drug-related felonies) or misdemeanors, their parole status, and the amount of time they served in prison. Although our draft template did not include specific questions on health (or mental health status), the design team thought much of this information would come to light as part of their counties' efforts to gauge GA applicants' and recipients' ability to work.

The working draft of this GA information template (see Appendix D) is far from a final product. Certain program elements are missing altogether and should be added in, including the availability and nature of in-kind benefits (such as health care services and transportation vouchers), and the treatment of income and assets. Whatever its present imperfections, the draft template makes a concerted effort to better understand the characteristics and needs of present (and future) applicants and recipients, of which we know woefully little at present.

The team's general purpose for emphasizing this sort of data collection is that it will help to capture any dynamic changes in the ebb and flow of GA caseloads as a consequence of changes in the law. (Some anticipated caseload shifts are discussed at greater length in the next section of this paper.) Tracking the volume and nature of these changes will be important to public and private sector officials for both programmatic and fiscal planning.

From the programmatic standpoint, if caseloads do change appreciably because of the features in the new law, knowing how and why they changed will help counties and their private sector collaborators (both non-profit and for-profit entities) craft improved strategies for moving these GA households toward self-sufficiency.

It is difficult to design effective programmatic responses without understanding the nature and needs of the target population. The GA population is heterogeneous now and may become even more diverse in the future. Popular opinion notwithstanding, a "one-size" program does not fit all. Different GA sub-populations in the current caseload— those with physical or gmental disabilities that are not severe enough to qualify as "disabled" for purposes of SSI, those with emotional problems, substance abusers, those who are homeless, persons recently paroled from prison, unskilled adults who can not find steady work— will need different kinds of services if they are to be helped to become more self-sufficient. Under new federal and state welfare reforms, the GA caseloads may expand to include more poor parents with children, legal immigrants, and additional substance-abusing adults. Counties may want to modify the nature of the services they provide to such future GA applicants, particularly families with children.

From the fiscal standpoint, if any of these new GA applicants and recipients prove to be eligible for other sources of income— whether from child support, sponsors of legal immigrants, social insurance and/or public assistance programs funded by other levels of government— counties should move aggressively to help them obtain that income. This will help preserve county budgets and will, in most cases, provide greater levels of assistance to the poor households in question.

Moreover, current GA caseloads and costs have grown faster than most counties' budgets can sustain. Benefits have been significantly reduced in a number of counties and are likely to continue to erode in real purchasing power. Yet, the need for such assistance seems to be increasing, despite improved economic conditions in most counties. California legislators will once again consider, as part of the welfare reform debate, whether the state should shoulder some or all GA costs. Counties have been asking for additional fiscal relief, but they will make a far more compelling case when they can document, with reliable data, the nature of the people they serve, the complexities of their needs, and the corresponding costs of trying to make them self-sufficient. A first step is to collect meaningful information, that is comparable across counties, and that will accurately reflect the relative GA burdens borne by different counties.

Should the BASSC directors decide to proceed with this effort, they will want to consider having their policy staffs carefully review and modify the draft template. Ideally, other CWDA principals and staff, state Department of Social Services (DSS) staff, and state legislative staff should be involved in this process. Both the counties and the state will greatly benefit from having a strong GA data collection instrument.

With the understanding that our participating BASSC counties could not undertake costly data collection efforts, we asked them to take our draft GA template and try to supply whatever information they could, based on their current caseloads and programs.

Eligibility

Eligibility data are based on reports from seven of the 10 participating counties.

Universal or categorical: As noted earlier, all California counties are required to serve all poor persons who cannot qualify for other sources of assistance. In theory, therefore, eligibility is universal. However, the fact that counties vary widely in the proportion of their populations that receive GA (ranging from 0.08% to 1.5%), in the proportion of GA expenditures as a percentage of the total county budget (0.2% to 3.6%) and in the proportion of the total caseload that are considered "employable" (12% to 74%), suggests that the way counties administer GA may be more or less discouraging to different categories of potential recipients. Re-certification of eligibility typically is annual, but at least one smaller county re-certifies recipients monthly and several conduct re-certifications semi-annually.

Income and assets: Income limits vary from county to county, but typically are tied to maximum grant levels. The maximum monthly income allowable ranges from $286 to $795, with grants adjusted downward based on earned income. Counties also vary in the amount of income of earned income that is disregarded in calculating monthly grants, and not all counties offer these disregards. Income disregards range from a flat $20 to various percentages of earned income (for example, one county allows new applicants $295 minus 25% of earned income and current recipients $441 minus 50% of earned income). Most counties allow asset disregards for liquid assets, home equity, motor vehicles and life insurance face value up to a certain level. Maximum allowable liquid assets range from $50 to $1000. Allowable face values of life insurance policies range from $100 to $500. (Some counties include life insurance in liquid assets, some count it separately.) Allowable home equity ranges from $5,000 up. At least three counties have no limit on home equity. Allowable values of motor vehicles range from $1,000 to $2,500. Some counties may allow only one vehicle and at least one specifies that the vehicle be five years or older. Other personal belongings that are disregarded by most counties include clothing, household furnishings (one county specifies a maximum of $500 in value), wedding rings, tools needed for employment, and the value of a burial plot or burial insurance.

County residency: All counties surveyed require 15 days residency in the county.

Benefits

Form and amount: All BASSC counties provide GA benefits in the form of cash. Maximum grants vary by household size, with the maximum grant for a one-person household ranging from $221 to $345 and the maximum grant for a three-person household ranging from $504 to $863. In one county the maximum grant is the same ($299) regardless of household size. Average monthly grants range from $213 to $314. In all but one county, the average monthly grant is less than the maximum for a one-person household. Average monthly grants range from 77% to 124% of the maximum grant for a one-person household.

Duration: Average months on GA ranges from 2 to 26.

Recipient Characteristics

Belying the stereotype of the GA recipient as being male, several counties have more female than male recipients and several more have about equal numbers of male and female recipients. The percentage of GA recipients that are male ranges from 44% to 64%. The proportion of male to female recipients is not correlated with the size of the county or geographic location. Seven counties reported data on the ages of GA recipients. Few recipients in any county are under age 30 (5% to 19%); the average age ranges from 41 to 48. The proportion of GA recipients who are 65 and older ranges from 22% to 43%, most likely reflecting differences in the proportion of elderly county residents who are immigrants and ineligible for Social Security or SSI.

Again reflecting the diversity of BASSC counties, racial and ethnic backgrounds of GA recipients vary dramatically county by county, with the proportions of Caucasians ranging from 12% to 85%, African Americans from 5% to 68%, and Asians from 2% to 48% (most of the 48% being Vietnamese). Relatively few GA recipients in any county are Latinos-- 2% to 17%. In most cases, English is the primary language of GA recipients. The one county with the high proportion of Vietnamese recipients has only 41% English speakers in its caseload; the other counties have 70% to 97%. Only very small proportions of the caseloads speak other languages such as Spanish, Chinese or Slavic languages.

One county collects information on military status and reports that 12% of GA recipients are honorably discharged veterans and 2% are veterans who received other types of discharges.

Three counties collect statistics on education levels, but in two of the counties data are not available for all recipients, so percentages do not add to 100%. In the one county that has complete data, 38% of GA recipients have some college education, 30% have a high school diploma and 32% have less than a high school education. The other two counties report 10% and 3%, respectively, with some college, 32% and 14% with a high school diploma, and 20% and 23% with less than a high school education.

All counties have identified a portion of their caseloads as "employable" and a portion as "unemployable", and some have further quantified the unemployable population as constrained due to substance abuse, mental illness, physical disability, old age, or as being "functionally or socially unemployable," which reflects an assessment of qualities such as personal hygiene and ability to interact with other people. However, definitions of employable clearly vary widely across counties, since the proportion of those who are deemed to fall into this category ranges from 12% to 74%. Among the few counties that use subcategories of unemployability, the proportion judged to be mentally ill ranges from 25% to 76%, and functionally/socially unemployable from 2% to 24%, making these data practically incomparable.

Six counties collect and report data on the housing situations of GA recipients, but again definitional problems render these data incomparable. For example, the percentages of recipients who rent ranges from 3% to 74%, who live in shared housing ranges from 30% to 85% and who are homeless ranges from 3% to 50%.

Information on the past, present and future receipt of other types of benefits is sketchy at best. Most counties report on the number of GA recipients who are receiving food stamps (80% to 100%). Three counties report the proportions that receive MediCal (3% to 20%). Two counties project the proportion that they expect will eventually receive SSI (46% and 60%). A few counties report on other sources of income such as unemployment insurance, disability insurance, earned income and irregular lump sum income, but the proportions of GA recipients who are thought to receive these types of income are very small, typically around 1%.

Caseloads and Expenditures

A wide range of county populations is represented among the BASSC counties, ranging from about 240,000 in several of the smaller counties to 1.3 million in Alameda County and 1.6 million in Santa Clara County. These overall population sizes as well as other factors such as geography and labor markets are reflected in the vast differences in the GA populations from county to county. Few counties are able to track or even estimate the annual unduplicated count of GA recipients. The annual number of cases, including those who may have left and returned to the rolls ranges from 657 to 45,696. Monthly average caseloads range from 165 to 13,563. The total caseload for the month surveyed (September, 1996) ranged from 169 to 11,691, representing 0.08% to 1.5% of total county residents. Certain counties have experienced significant drops in caseloads recently, and others experience large seasonal differences, accounting for the difference between average monthly and currently monthly caseloads. In most counties, 98% to 99% of GA cases are one-person households although in two counties about 10% of the cases are households of more than one person.

Again, reflecting the diversity of BASSC counties, annual GA budgets range from $720,000 to $59.8 million, representing anywhere from 0.2% to 3.6% of total county budgets. Counties spend anywhere from 72% to 92% of their budgets on benefits to recipients and 8% to 28% on administration. The ratio of administrative costs to benefits is not correlated to the size of the overall budget.

2. WELFARE REFORM: POSSIBLE CASELOAD AND COST SHIFTS

As a consequence of the new federal law, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-93), there are a number of critical areas where state and county governments can expect to lose federal financial support. On October 9, 1996, the State of California filed its state plan with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), in order to qualify for the new federal block grant money. However, this was chiefly an administrative device to assure that the state receives the highest possible amount of federal block grant money available to it in this federal fiscal year (FY 97).

As of January, 1997, therefore, the state and counties continue to run their old-law programs pretty much unchanged.[4] Early in the Spring of 1997, the welfare reform debate in California will begin in earnest. Governor Wilson outlined his welfare reform plan in his new budget proposal to the legislature on January 10, 1997. Shortly thereafter, both houses of the legislature can be expected to begin holding hearings on the subject. By early Spring, various Assembly and Senate committees should be well along in developing proposed legislation. Ideally, by summer, the Democratically controlled legislature and Republican Governor will have hammered out a compromise package and passed the necessary authorizing and appropriations legislation. The new federal law requires that states implement many of the key reforms not later than July 1, 1997.

The CWDA will, no doubt, be intimately involved in the entire welfare reform policy-making process, partly because the counties actually administer and help to fund some of the major federal-state programs that will be debated. There is one area, however, in which the CWDA's role will be particularly crucial— representing the 58 counties' best interests and best policy insights during that part of the debate involving the interaction between the re-invented federal/state programs and the 100% county-funded and administered GA programs.

As the unit of government on the proverbial "front lines," county expertise on how all of these public assistance and social services programs actually work is highly prized. The counties have a unique role to play in any discussions involving GA— largely because they now bear the entire costs of their 58 different programs. Thus, it is important that the BASSC counties participating in this project, together with the larger CWDA, reach consensus on how they want GA to be incrementally modified or radically revamped as part of the larger statewide debate on welfare reform. Not only will county coffers be affected by the coming changes, but the fate of some of California's poorest and most vulnerable residents depends on the outcome.

In the remainder of this section, we briefly review the key changes in the federal law and consider how they might directly and/or indirectly affect the public, non-profit, and private sectors. Thereafter, we discuss how counties might want to approach estimating the impact of some of these federally proposed changes on their GA caseloads and costs. Because the state and/or federal governments may yet take steps to mitigate some of the more challenging provisions in the federal law, it is impossible to say, with any precision, what counties will actually experience. By the same token, we cannot possibly predict how public assistance applicants and recipients may alter their behavior and/or how private sector employers may change their practices as a consequence of the new law. All of the discussion regarding post-reform caseload and cost shifts should, therefore, be considered theoretical.

Significance of the new federal law

On August 22, 1996, President Clinton signed new federal welfare reform legislation into law. The first Democratic President in 12 years and the first Republican Congress in decades have collaborated on the most radical overhaul of the nation's public assistance programs since the 1935 creation of the Social Security Act. The crux of the new law is the repeal of the 60-year old federal entitlement program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), and its replacement with a fixed-sum block grant program called Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

This shift to a block grant, together with myriad other amendments in the new law, will affect, directly or indirectly, nearly every major means-tested program, including AFDC, the JOBS welfare-to-work program (known as GAIN in California), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Food Stamps, Child Support Enforcement, child care, child welfare services and foster care, the Social Services Block Grant, Medicaid (Medi-Cal in California), county funded General Assistance programs, and on down the list.

Virtually every major disadvantaged demographic group will be affected, including poor and disabled children, certain elderly, disabled, and blind adults (particularly legal immigrants), poor childless adults, drug-addicted and alcoholic adults, and the working poor. And while it may not be immediately self-evident, every level of government and every local community will feel the ripple effects of these far-reaching changes. The federal government will improve its balance sheet by cutting its total welfare spending by roughly $55 to $60 billion over the next six years. Assuming no startling changes in recipients' and/or private sector employers' behavior, state and local governments, along with the private and non-profit sectors, will eventually absorb these costs, one way or another.

California is expected to bear a disproportionate share of the federal cuts, losing about $6.8 billion in federal support by the year 2002.[5] Unless the state, local governments, and the private and non-profit sectors replace those lost federal dollars— whether in wages or benefits— there will be far less money for poor households to spend on rent, food, clothing, medical care (through direct Medi-Cal payments to doctors, clinics, and hospitals), appliances, transportation, and the small, but daily necessities of life. Local landlords, businesses, health-care providers, and merchants in lower-income neighborhoods cannot help but feel the pinch. If a community's net purchasing power continues to decline over time, the general "quality of life" will deteriorate for everyone, not just for the very poor whose benefits are most directly affected.

Key provisions of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act of 1996[6]

Repealing the federal entitlement: P.L. 104-93 repeals the 60-year old guarantee of federal support for poor children and their families by converting the AFDC, JOBS, and Emergency Assistance (EA) entitlement programs to a single block grant called Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Generally, federal funding will be frozen at $16.4 billion per year for federal fiscal years 1997-2002, regardless of caseload growth (or decline) and/or increased (or decreased) spending needs.[7] A state's administrative expenditures may not exceed 15% per year (exclusive of information technology and computer costs associated with new recipient-tracking requirements). Any expenditure of federal TANF dollars, whether in the form of a cash subsidy, in-kind services (such as transportation assistance), or even "wages" paid in exchange for community service, will count against the five-year lifetime limit on TANF benefits (see below). By contrast, any expenditure of state-only dollars may not count against the five-year limit. In fact, states may be able to use their own revenues to pay for any benefits or services prohibited by the new federal law.[8]

Maintenance of effort: In order to qualify for the federal TANF block grant, states must spend at least 80% of state expenditures in FY 94. Thus, states can qualify for full federal funding, but spend 20% fewer state dollars than required in the base year. This maintenance of effort requirement can be reduced to 75% if a state meets the federally required work participation rates (see below).

State options on eligibility and benefits: In some respects, the new TANF program gives states greater latitude to define eligibility and benefits. The federal AFDC requirements— that states guarantee uniform coverage statewide, that two-parent families be served, that all AFDC households automatically qualify for Medicaid— are gone. Rules of eligibility and benefits may now vary within a given state, as well as across states. States may lower benefit payments, deny two-parent families aid, and impose a "family cap" (denying increased assistance to a mother who has another child while on welfare). States may treat families who have moved across state lines differently for the first 12 months— paying them according to the rules operating in their states of origin, if those rules and benefit payments are more restrictive than their own.

New federal mandates: In other respects, TANF attaches new, more restrictive federal rules: States will face tough federal sanctions if they fail to get 50% of all TANF families participating in work activities by 2002, and 90% of all two-parent TANF families participating in work activities by 1999.[9] States may not use federal TANF dollars to assist unmarried minor parents not living at home or in an approved adult-supervised setting and participating in education and training. The new law imposes a five-year lifetime limit on receipt of federal TANF dollars; although states may exempt up to 20% of their caseloads for reasons of hardship.[10] The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office has estimated that between 2.5 and 3.5 million children could be affected by the five-year time limit, even after taking into account the 20% hardship exemption.[11] It is worth noting that, at present, no state has the administrative capacity to track individual work histories or welfare receipt over time and across multiple jurisdictions (inter-state and intra-state).

Legal immigrants: The new law requires that legal immigrants already here be denied all federally means-tested benefits, including SSI and Food Stamps. Of the net $6.8 billion in federal aid that California is estimated to lose by 2002, over $5 billion is expected to come from denying SSI ($3.75 billion) and Food Stamps ($1.56 billion) to current legal immigrants now receiving these benefits.[12] Legal immigrants arriving after August 22, 1996, will not only be denied Food Stamps and SSI, but are also banned, for at least five years from date of entry, from receiving TANF, Medicaid, and Title XX social services. Effective January 1, 1997, states will have the option of terminating these benefits for legal immigrants already here and receiving such benefits.

Medicaid: Although the controversial proposal to make Medicaid a block grant was defeated prior to enactment, the new law creates some administrative headaches for state and local administrators. The old law automatically linked AFDC families to Medicaid. That link has been severed. Generally, the new law states that families will qualify for Medicaid if they meet the state's old AFDC eligibility rules in effect on July 16, 1996. Thus, state and local administrators appear to be required to maintain a dual eligibility determination process— one for their new TANF programs and a second that can replicate July 16, 1996, AFDC rules solely for establishing Medicaid eligibility. In addition, Medicaid will be denied to most legal immigrants. In California, denying Medi-Cal and Medi-Cal-funded In-Home Supported Services to legal immigrants will cost the state about $554 million in federal funding over six years.[13]

Food Stamps: Denying food stamps to legal immigrants, together with a number of other changes in program rules and benefit calculations, will cut federal Food Stamp funding by about $28 billion over six years— effectively reducing benefits by about 20%.[14] In California, the state is estimated to lose $1.563 billion from denying food stamps to legal immigrants and another $1.679 billion in federal funding over six years due to new benefit reductions and tighter eligibility rules.[15] The average loss in food stamps per household is estimated to be $537 in 1998, rising to $603 in 2002.[16] The new law also bars able-bodied adults, aged 18-50, who are not caring for dependents, from receiving food stamps for more than three months in a three-year period unless they are working at least 20 hours per week. State and local governments do not now have the administrative capacity to track individual work experiences.

Supplemental Security Income: The new law restricts all but the most severely disabled children from qualifying for SSI benefits.[17] The Congressional Budget Office estimates that, by 2002, this will remove about 315,000 low-income children from the SSI rolls and cut federal expenditures by about $7 billion.[18] Because of these changes, California is expected to lose $542 million in federal SSI benefits through 2002.[19]

Social Services Block Grant: The new law cuts Title XX social services 15% from its FY 95 funding level, freezing federal funds at $2.38 billion per year through 2002. This will cost

California $302 million in lost federal revenues over the next six years.[20] At the same time, the new law permits states to transfer up to 30% of federal TANF block grant funds to Title XX and the Child Care and Development Block Grant. Not more than 10% may be transferred to Title XX, and those funds must be used only for services to children and their families with incomes less than 200% of the poverty line. Federal TANF dollars spent through Title XX or the Child Care and Development Block Grants will not count against the five-year lifetime limit on TANF receipt. In addition, states may use their Title XX funds to provide services and vouchers (not direct cash assistance) to families who have exhausted their five-year limits.

Pregnancy prevention: The new law emphasizes the importance and desirability of deterring out-of-wedlock births, particularly among teenage girls. For example, the law requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish and implement by January 1, 1997, an unspecified strategy to reduce illegitimate teen births and to assure that at least 25% of U.S. communities have teen pregnancy prevention programs in place. The law also offers federal bonus payments to the five states which achieve the greatest reductions in out-of-wedlock births without increasing abortion rates.

Drug penalties: Any individuals convicted of felony crimes involving illegal possession, use, or distribution of drugs is barred for life from receiving TANF or food stamps, although a state may limit the penalty period or opt out altogether if it passes new state legislation after enactment of the federal law.

Child Welfare and Foster Care: The new law retains the open-ended federal entitlement status of Title IV-E's foster care and adoption assistance programs; Title IV-B family support and family preservation services are also retained intact. Among the new provisions in IV-E: States are required to give preference to kinship care, reinforcing recent trends in foster care. For the first time, the new law permits states to make foster care payments to for-profit providers.[21] Additionally, the new law prohibits federal TANF dollars from being used to assist any otherwise eligible child who has been or is expected to be absent from the home for a period of 45 consecutive days, or at state option between 30 and 180 consecutive days. States may establish good cause exemptions to this rule.

Under old law, a child's IV-E eligibility was generally based on AFDC eligibility. With AFDC's repeal and states free to vary their new TANF rules, the new law requires states to continue to use the AFDC rules they had in effect on June 1, 1995, to determine a child's future eligibility for foster care and adoption assistance. Thus, states appear to have to maintain *three* sets of eligibility rules— one for TANF, one for Medicaid, and one for IV-E programs. Finally, annual appropriations permitting, the new law authorizes a national study (using a random sample) of abused and neglected children.

Implications of TANF for local public and non-profit sectors

Block grant limits: The counter-cyclical benefits of the old-law AFDC program are gone. In the past, when need began to increase and AFDC benefits rose, the expenditure of state and local dollars immediately triggered the flow of federal dollars. There was no lag time. Under the new block grant system, as need begins to increase, there is no automatic increase in the flow of federal dollars. Under some extraordinary circumstances, states may qualify for additional federal contingency funds, but these conditions will be relatively rare and the contingency funds are limited.[22]

Thus, in a recession, it is possible that the state or certain counties could experience an increased demand for services, without having any increase in federal dollars to help defray the new costs. In such instances, counties might contend not only with their normal GA-type costs increasing, but possibly with increased demand from groups of people who would ordinarily have been served by the old entitlement programs (such as working-poor legal immigrant families or families who have exhausted their time limits). In short, over time, the state may have to spend more of its own money , as well as ask counties for additional contributions toward the non-federal share of TANF. If the state does not spend more of its own money, the counties and non-profit sectors could bear the full brunt of any new unmet need.

County share of spending: Under the old-law AFDC program, counties were required to contribute five percent of the non-federal share of expenditures on benefits or 2.5% of total benefits expenditures. How this may change under a new TANF system has yet to be decided. The state may ask counties to continue to pay the same share of state expenditures (not less than 75- 80% of the state's FY 94 spending level). Or the state might entertain alternatives, such as a tradeoff in which the counties contribute a greater share, but the state offers to shoulder some or all of current GA costs.

Pass-through of federal incentives or penalties: There are also a number of federal incentives and penalties attached to TANF block grant dollars. On the plus side, there are bonuses for "high performance" states, as well as states which reduce their out-of-wedlock births under certain circumstances. There are also a number of potential federal fiscal penalties, one of the more serious of which is failure to meet ambitious work participation rates.[23] How (or if) the state will pass through to the counties any federal incentive dollars and/or how it may allocate any fiscal penalties has yet to be decided. These pass-through decisions have implications for county budgets and, hence, for future GA expenditures.

Allocation and expenditure of state dollars: Another broad funding issue has to do with how the state will allocate its (non-federal TANF) revenues among counties. The old AFDC money flowed on the basis of an individual household's entitlement. The new federal law makes explicit that there is no longer any individual entitlement. Will the state merely guarantee that whatever sums a county received under old law it will receive under new law? Will the state take population and rate of population growth into account? Are there other factors, like per capita income and/or the number of children living in poverty, that the state might use in determining how to allocate its funds?

The new law also makes clear that federal dollars can be spent in certain situations, but are flatly prohibited from being spent in others. Certain areas, such as providing TANF and Medicaid to legal immigrants already residing here and receiving such benefits, are left up to state option. State dollars (at least 75-80% of the FY 94 state share of AFDC spending), however, are presumably freed of most federal restrictions and might be authorized to be spent for those groups of people or services for which federal TANF dollars may not be spent. (There is still some dispute about just how much latitude states will have in spending their own dollars on federally prohibited services *and* having those expenditures count toward the federally mandated maintenance of effort requirement. See Note # 23 for more detail.)

Both what the state will agree to spend its own money on, and how the state plans to allocate its dollars among counties, have implications for county budgets and possible GA expenditures. For example, if the state agrees on a new allocation formula that alters the amount of dollars a county previously received for AFDC, JOBS, and EA, the county might either have additional money to spend or less, compared to the base year. If the county wants to make up any perceived shortfall, it will have to dip into its own coffers to do so, limiting the amount of county dollars available for all other county expenditures, including GA.

Similarly, if the state opts to spend its own money on people no longer served by federal TANF dollars— legal immigrants who enter the country after August 22, 1996, those not in work activities after two years, those who have exhausted their five-year time limits, minor parents not living at home and going to school, parents not cooperating with child support officials, drug-related felons, and so on — counties could be relieved from having to assume responsibility for any of those households through their GA programs. However, counties may well be contributing to the state share of expenditures for such families as part of a broader state-county "maintenance of effort" agreement. By contrast, if the state fails to pick up all or part of the tab for these needy families, counties and non-profit providers could find themselves the sole source of services— with program demand and costs increasing.

Administrative expenses: The federal law limits administrative expenditures to not more than 15% of the TANF block grant. This sum does not include information technology and computer costs associated with new requirements. This raises the question of how the latter will be paid for. It is not clear, at this time, what portion of state-raised revenues will be devoted to administrative costs, or what portion of these costs counties might be asked to share. To the extent that federal TANF and state dollars are spent on developing new technology, they will not be spent on benefits or routine administrative costs. If need increases, and some portion of the federal and state dollars are tied up in technology development and can not be easily redirected to meeting applicants' needs, there could be increased demand for county-funded and/or non-profit sector programs and services.

In addition, any net new GA caseload increases— whether they result from TANF or other changes in the new law— could require counties to add administrative personnel to handle the new demand for assistance. These new administrative and personnel costs will further strain limited county budgets.

Increased state latitude on eligibility and benefits: As the real value of the AFDC/TANF benefits continues to decline, both because of cuts and erosion against inflation, increasing numbers of families may find that they are unable to meet their fixed costs. Some will increase their work effort and earnings. Some may not be able to. Such families may find themselves turning to non-profit providers for additional help. In addition, the state has already passed legislation to pay reduced benefits to households previously eligible for greater sums, such as poor families moving here from lower-benefit states, or parents already receiving aid who have additional children (the family cap). As a result, such households may also find that they need additional help.

Any families receiving TANF, even at reduced payment levels, will have more income than they would on less generous GA benefits. Thus, these anticipated changes do not have direct implications for GA expenditures. However, there is some evidence that increased economic stress results in other family crises, including more child abuse and neglect. The relationship between benefit cuts and increased demand for child welfare services is not well documented, but a recent time-series study gives cause for concern: In Los Angeles, the monthly number of referrals to child protective services increased by 12% following an AFDC benefit cut of 2.7% in

1991. Subsequently, a 5.8% benefit cut— implemented in two phases late in 1992— was associated with about a 20% increase in referrals, even after controlling for overall trends and seasonal variations.[24]

Non-profit providers might also expect increased demand for nearly all services, as increasing numbers of households find that their reduced monthly AFDC/TANF benefits do not carry them through a month. With rent, utilities, and other bills being paid late or not at all, private sector landlords and merchants may also feel the effects of these benefit reductions.

Benefit terminations: There are a number of instances in the new law where individuals and households could lose their federally funded AFDC/TANF benefits altogether. In the near term, the most serious of these is the denial of benefits to legal immigrants. There is a small chance that the 105th Congress will reverse or at least mitigate some of these provisions, as the President has proposed. There is a greater probability that the state will maintain AFDC/TANF and Medi-Cal benefits for those legal immigrants already here and receiving such benefits. Whether the state will also agree to pay for these benefits, at 100% state (and county) cost, for future legal immigrants (those entering the country after August 22, 1996) is far less likely. These new immigrants may find, if their sponsors are unable to help them, that they have no recourse but to turn to the counties and non-profit providers for help. It is also possible that some portion of needy immigrants will return to their countries of origin, although we think this unlikely.

Federal TANF benefits are also to be denied to households not meeting the ambitious new work participation rates, which could affect numerous single-parent and, especially, two-parent families. The state could terminate TANF, as well as other benefits to persons with drug-related felony convictions. In every instance where the state opts to terminate TANF benefits, counties and non-profit providers can expect some increased demand for services. By the same token, whenever households lose their automatic Medi-Cal eligibility as a consequence of losing eligibility for TANF— whether as "future" legal immigrants or as families exhausting their TANF benefits— and fail to reapply successfully for Medi-Cal, county health departments, non-profit health-care providers, and emergency rooms everywhere may be forced into providing episodic and acute care, rather than the more cost-effective routine and preventive care intended by the Medi-Cal program.

Implications of food stamp reductions for local public and non-profit sectors

A number of federal amendments both reduce food stamp benefits and further restrict eligibility for benefits. Let us consider three general areas that will reduce food stamp consumption and possibly increase demand in the public and non-profit sectors. First, legal immigrants already in the country are to be denied food stamps, unless they qualify for exemptions (refugees, those granted asylum, those whose deportation is being withheld; honorably discharged veterans or those still serving on active military duty, their spouses and unmarried children under age 21; and immigrants who can document that they have worked the equivalent of 40 quarters in the U.S.). Exempt immigrants may continue to receive their benefits for five years. Non-exempt legal immigrants will have their benefits terminated over the course of the 12 months following enactment of the law, as they come up for redetermination. Unless considered exempt, new immigrants entering the country after August 22, 1996, are to be denied food stamp benefits.

Legal immigrants now here and receiving food stamps are expected to lose these benefits by August 22, 1997. As a result, they may turn to both public and non-profit programs for help. If their legal sponsors are unable or unwilling to help them, those immigrants not already receiving GA benefits may apply for them or seek in-kind help from food banks, soup kitchens, faith-based charities, and other community providers. Of course, some proportion of these legal immigrants have been in the country long enough to qualify for citizenship and there are significant numbers pressing to become naturalized citizens. However, there will also be a number who cannot become citizens, either because they have not been in the country for five years or because they are unable, due to age and/or general infirmities, to pass the citizenship tests. The same is true of new, non-exempt entrants. They are banned from receiving food stamps until they become citizens— at least five years from when they enter the country. Not all of them will be able to rely on their legal sponsors for help, should they suffer economic setbacks. County programs and non-profit providers may be their only source of relief. Should county agencies step up enforcement efforts — either trying to get legal sponsors to pay for services up front or trying to recover expenses from legal sponsors after services have been provided— counties will experience new administrative costs.

Second, aside from denying benefits to legal immigrants, the new law cuts the maximum food stamp benefit by three percent across the board, affecting poor families with children served by AFDC/TANF, the elderly and disabled on SSI, and the working poor. In addition, numerous amendments tighten eligibility and reduce benefit payments by freezing or disallowing various income disregards. Because food stamp benefits are calculated after taking into account all other sources of cash income, these food stamp benefit reductions will not directly affect GA benefits. A household's GA cash benefits will remain unaffected, even as their food stamp benefits are reduced. However, the size of the average annual food stamp benefit cut (estimated to be $435 in

1998 for families with children, $356 in 1998 for working poor families, and $167 in 1998 for households including elderly persons) may cause households to seek additional sources of assistance with income and/or food.[25] Non-profit food banks, soup kitchens, and other providers will undoubtedly see demand increase.

Third, the new work requirement for able-bodied adults, aged 18-50 and without dependents, if implemented according to the letter of the law, will cause many single adults and childless couples who work sporadically, but not 20 hours per week on average, to lose their benefits after three months in any three-year period.[26] If this group loses their food stamp benefits altogether, counties may experience an upsurge in GA applications and costs. Some of these adults may already be on GA, and their loss of food stamps will (as described above) create new need, but not affect their GA benefits. However, some of these adults may be scraping by with a combination of sporadic earned income and food stamps. If their work effort do not qualify them for continued eligibility and they lose all food stamps, they may turn to county-funded GA programs to help them make up the loss in income. Failing that, they may seek assistance from non-profit providers.

Implications of SSI reductions for local public and non-profit providers

There are three major changes in federal SSI law that are of concern. Two of these— having to do with legal immigrants and disabled children— arise in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act of 1996. The third, denying SSI benefits to those individuals whose principal cause of disability is drug or alcohol addiction, was enacted into law in March 1996 (P.L. 104-121). Let us take each in turn.

As with food stamps, the new law proposes to terminate federal SSI benefits to current legal immigrants and to deny the benefits to future legal immigrants. Losing SSI benefits sets off a benefit "domino" effect: Those on SSI also automatically qualify for California's State Supplemental Payments (SSP) and Medicaid (Medi-Cal in California). Presumably, losing SSI will mean losing SSP and Medi-Cal benefits, too. It is not clear whether the state will extend any SSP payments to those who lose SSI, although many of these immigrants may be able to requalify for Medi-Cal through the "medically needy" program. Whether they will reapply for benefits is another question.

By virtue of their SSI eligibility, some portion of these SSI recipients are also receiving In-Home Supported Services (IHSS), funded primarily by Medi-Cal and the Title XX Social Services Block Grant. To date, the state has taken the position that legal immigrants losing their SSI benefits will also lose their IHSS benefits. Finally, there is a subset of SSI recipients residing in "board and care" institutions; their SSI/SSP benefits are sent directly to the institutions, to pay for their care.

As noted previously, any immigrants who are exempt or able to become naturalized citizens in the near future will be able to retain SSI and the related benefits. For those unable to become naturalized citizens quickly or at all, or for those who arrive after enactment of the law and who must wait for at least five years, this avenue of assistance is pretty much closed off. These changes have cost implications for counties and non-profit providers, especially if the state decides against picking up some or all of the costs associated with this population.

As always, sponsors of immigrants should be the first line of defense. Should they be unable or unwilling to assist, however, needy immigrants are likely to turn next to county-funded benefits. The difference between county-funded GA benefits (ranging from $221 to $345 per month for a single individual around the Bay Area) and the combined federal SSI-SSP payment for a single aged or disabled adult (about $640 per month, effective January 1, 1997) is substantial. Thus, even if they qualify for GA benefits, these poor elderly and disabled persons may have to seek additional help from the non-profit sector to help make up the loss of federal and state benefits.

Of particular concern to counties are those legal immigrants on SSI who are using IHSS services or who are residing in "board and care" institutions. IHSS services help improve the quality of life for the elderly and disabled and may even help to maintain them in their own homes, avoiding the need for institutional care. Should they lose these services, some of them may have to enter more expensive facilities. For those legal immigrants already in "board and care" homes, the loss of SSI-SSP benefits is catastrophic. Counties will have to pick up the entire cost of these homes— far more than GA benefits ordinarily pay— or face the prospect of having these frail, disabled residents put out on the streets.

The second significant SSI change in the new law has to do with disabled children. Eligibility has been further restricted, thereby denying SSI and related benefits to all but the most severely impaired children. Families who have been able to keep these moderately disabled children at home, with the extra income provided by SSI, may now find their upkeep too difficult to manage. Some of these families have income and assets too high to qualify for TANF, much less GA; for these families, there is no immediate cost consequence to counties. However, over time, some of these higher-income families who previously qualified for SSI may resort to placing emotionally troubled or physically challenged children in foster care, rather than trying to keep them at home. This will add to the counties' share of foster care payments. Other families may move from the more generous SSI benefits to the less generous AFDC/TANF benefits and will become subject to the new five-year time limits. Households such as these might qualify for the 20% hardship exemption, however. Counties will presumably share in the new AFDC/TANF costs for these former SSI families.

The third major change in SSI, denying benefits to alcoholics and drug addicts, while enacted into law prior to this new welfare reform legislation, will take effect January 1, 1997. Substance abusers who are denied SSI benefits may have no alternative source of income and may lose their access to medical (and drug) treatment, if they lose their Medicaid benefits. Counties have, for years, sought to move individuals "disabled" by their addictions out of their GA programs and into the more generously funded SSI program. Now, the opposite is about to happen. Not only will counties face increased GA costs, they will likely face additional medical and treatment costs for these addicted and alcoholic adults. No doubt, the non-profit providers working with substance abusers will see their waiting lists for treatment grow even longer.

Estimating county caseload and cost effects

In discussions with the inter-county design team, there was consensus that these changes in federal law, if left unmitigated by subsequent federal and state actions, could well increase the number of needy people seeking help from county welfare and health agencies, as well as from non-profit community providers. The logical follow-up question was "by how much?" We were not able, in the time available to us, to come up with a precise means of calculating caseload and cost shifts. However, we did propose a general two-pronged approach for any future efforts.

Costs to the counties: The obvious starting point is to try to get a fix on potential new costs to the counties— both now and in the future. These costs will occur as households and individuals previously eligible for federally and state subsidized programs lose these more generous benefits and turn to county GA programs instead. To arrive at an estimate of new county GA costs, it would be helpful, as a start, to evaluate current SSI, AFDC, and food stamp caseloads and try to identify all of the current recipients likely to be subject to benefit reductions or terminations.

If we begin by assuming that *all* of those current recipients who are slated to lose their federal and state benefits turn to the counties for public assistance, we can estimate the "worst case" scenario. But not everyone will turn to the counties for assistance. Some will manage to find work and take care of themselves. Others will get help from their families or friends, from their legal sponsors (in the case of immigrants), or other sources in the community. Thus, we recommended that counties estimate a range of possible caseload shifts (100%, 50%, 25% and 10%), to capture the worst and successively more optimistic outcomes.

To calculate their potential costs, counties would multiply their GA benefit amounts (maximum benefit payments for the worst case scenario and average benefit payments for the mid-range estimate) by the potential number of new cases (across the range cited above). However, it is important to note that these calculations will understate potential new costs because they only reflect current GA benefit expenditures. That is, this product (GA benefit cost multiplied by potential new cases) does not attempt to include new administrative and personnel costs borne by the counties. Nor does it attempt to include the costs of any new services that might be thought useful (education and job-skills training, child care, and so on) or even essential, such as costs for medical services provided by county health departments (for those no longer receiving Medi-Cal).

The next step in this cost-estimating process would be to predict future year terminations (from failure to meet TANF work requirements or exhausting the TANF five-year lifetime limit, for example) and associated county costs. This will be somewhat harder to do, because we would expect applicant and recipient behavior to alter over time. Nevertheless, we could start with a linear projection of current caseload figures— in effect, projecting the "worst future case" as no change in recipients' current behavior.

A more optimistic set of future costs might be calculated by taking lower ratios of current behavior. In other words, if one-third of the *current* caseload is not working at all after two years on the AFDC program, and another one-fourth have already been on aid for five years or longer, we might begin by assuming that these proportions will remain constant in future years. Thus, the worst future case is that one-third of the TANF caseload could lose their benefits for failure to work after two years and one-fourth of the caseload will exhaust their five-year lifetime limit. If all of these families (less the 20% hardship exemption for the five-year time limit) turned to counties for GA assistance, we'd have our future "worst case" costs. However, since we hope that the current and future beneficiaries will change their behaviors as a consequence of these tough new program requirements, we might assume that, in future, only one-fifth of the caseload (down from one-third) will reach the two-year limit without working regularly and that only fifteen percent of the caseload (down from 25 percent) remain on the rolls for five years or longer. These more optimistic "future" ratios will produce less onerous "future"cost estimates for counties.

Unmet need for applicants and recipients: Second, we agreed it was equally important to identify the amount of "unmet need" experienced by individuals and households who will lose the more generous federally subsidized benefits. Some of these households will seek to replace the lost federal and/or state benefits and services through other means. For planning purposes, it is important for both public and non-profit agencies to try to estimate the size of the "benefit gap" that remains.

Take, for example, an elderly legal immigrant in Alameda County about to lose his SSI/SSP benefits, worth $640 per month (effective January 1, 1997). If this individual's only option is to turn to GA, his monthly cash benefit would drop to only $221 per month, a loss of $419 per month. Leaving aside any related services (IHSS or Medi-Cal), this individual will find it very difficult, if not impossible to manage on such a reduced benefit payment.

If the state cannot or will not extend additional public resources to households in this fix, then it will fall to the counties, non-profit and for-profit sectors to try to alleviate such new hardship. It is for this reason, that we strongly recommend that participating BASSC counties try to gauge the "benefit gap" between old-law and new-law. It is clear that counties, alone, cannot make up the entire federal/state benefit deficit with GA payments. Nor should they, if they desire to move beyond mere income-transfer payments to programs that move people toward self-sufficiency.

It will be critical, therefore, to identify for these private-sector providers the scope and nature of various households' needs— whether families with children, the elderly and disabled, or the working poor. Clearly, these needs will differ. Those who are considered "able to work" will need different incentives, disincentives, and services than those who are "unable to work" through no fault of their own. Those with children will need different sets of services than those who are childless. Those with addictions will need different programs than those who need better language skills.

Next steps: As a group, we were able to develop a first-draft instrument designed to identify the number of current legal immigrants who might experience benefit reductions or termination. (see Appendix E for a copy of this model instrument). At present, participating county staff told us they could not break out most of the exempt categories (refugees, those granted asylum, veterans or those on active duty, and those who have worked 40 quarters in the U.S.), which makes it more difficult to estimate the universe of non-exempt immigrants subject to benefit reductions or terminations. However, if counties could collect this sort of information, they could make the calculations described above to come up with a range of possible caseload shifts and associated new GA costs.

We did not have time to develop similar instruments for estimating non-immigrant-related caseload and cost changes. However, we did find another draft instrument, this one developed by the Senate Office of Research Policy Analysis, that attempts to calculate costs to Sacramento County for caseload and cost shifts related to: legal immigrants losing AFDC/TANF and SSI; drug addicts and alcoholics losing SSI; disabled children losing SSI; AFDC/TANF households exhausting their five-year lifetime limits and subject to the new family cap provision. This instrument (Appendix F) is not comprehensive, but it offers one approach for trying to make some of the cost calculations for counties. It does not attempt to capture the "benefit gap" for the households in question.

If the participating BASSC counties want to pursue these sorts of calculations, they should consider raising this issue with CWDA and appointing an ongoing working group to develop uniform instruments that would help both to estimate a range of county caseload and cost effects, and to estimate any "unmet need" among households losing benefits under the new reforms.

3. GETTING BEYOND GA: POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Although there is not a great deal of comparable detailed information about GA programs around the country, around California, or here in the Bay Area, we are certain of three things: First, GA, particularly here in California, has always been the residual step-child of public assistance programs. It is the default program that is left after all other avenues of assistance have been exhausted. As such, it is the program that does the least, pays the least, and costs the least. Second, the people who have relied on GA in the past have been primarily single adults or childless couples who have diverse problems, including chronic physical and mental health conditions, criminal records, substance abuse, homelessness, poor education, and lack of regular employment. With welfare reform, this population may expand to include legal immigrants, families with children, and those previously eligible for other public assistance programs. Finally, to effectively reinvent GA— to make it a program that does more than transfer minimal income to troubled people— will take new energy, creativity and commitment. It will also take new resources.

The directors of the counties participating in this project wanted to explore what it would take to move beyond GA as a simple income-transfer program, to a program which helps people become more self-sufficient. In the remainder of this section, we will try to identify the key conceptual policy questions that should be considered— whether the counties act independently, work in regional groups or join in a state-wide effort, and/or seek to collaborate with non-profit and for-profit organizations.

Program objectives

If GA is to become something different, the first serious question is what its new mission will be. One often mentioned goal is to help people become self-sufficient. This term can mean different things, however. On the one hand, a person can be made independent of public welfare, but remain poor. On the other hand, a person can be helped to leave not only welfare, but poverty behind. In short, is the new program meant to create a ladder out of poverty or merely a step-stool off of welfare?

A program designed to build human capital— to teach the skills necessary for finding and keeping a job in today's more sophisticated economy— will differ from a program meant to effect quicker exits from public welfare. Both approaches intend to reconnect recipients to the world of work. But the former implies an education and training infrastructure, while the latter emphasizes aggressive job search and placement.

Of course, the two approaches need not be mutually exclusive. One could help lead to the other. Honest work, even though unskilled and of short duration, could lead to better opportunities down the road. The nagging concern is that constant unskilled work, in today's economy, will lead an individual not down the road, but rather to the proverbial dead-end job.

Perhaps there is some happy medium: to require work of any sort— because work is always better than not working— but still strive to build future human capital as well. Whichever variation is adopted, any work-based program requires that consideration be given to a host of related issues: transportation, adequate hygiene and appropriate clothing, child care if necessary, and so on.

Another fundamental question has to do with the new program's objectives regarding hardship. Is the program meant to relieve economic hardship and the social pathology that often accompanies it? To what degree? If an individual is homeless, is this new program going to provide shelter? Will the shelter be temporary or permanent? If an individual has a chronic health problem, but is not sufficiently disabled to qualify for SSI and Medi-Cal, will the new program provide health care? Will such care include routine and preventive care, as well as acute or emergency care? If an individual has a substance abuse problem, will the program find and assure effective drug treatment?

In the end, the scope of these objectives will have everything to do with the new program's design. These questions, and the tension that their competing answers engender, have always been the crux of any welfare reform debate. The policy predicament is this: The more a program alleviates hardship, the more attractive the program becomes. Indeed, the risk is that the program becomes far more attractive than the unsubsidized "real world" alternative.[27] And if the program makes a deliberate attempt to build up human capital— with remedial education and job skills training, and other appropriate support services, what will prevent all working poor people from applying for such assistance? In the name of equity, how could such a program be denied to those who are working, but who are still poor and seeking to further improve their lots?

Unfortunately, this central dilemma has yet to be resolved. We merely seesaw back and forth between the two camps. At present, with the new federal welfare reforms, we are embarked on an effort that limits human capital investment (as provided by federal TANF dollars) and emphasizes a "work first" approach. The fervent hope is that work, any work, will help recipients take more responsibility for themselves and their families, and that *any* work will eventually lead to *better* work with *better* pay. At present, this remains a hope, rather than accomplished, demonstrable fact.

While, we cannot resolve the dilemma here, we can think about the shape of a different sort of GA program. Against the larger and still largely unknown backdrop of the federal and state welfare reforms, what might counties contemplate for the next iteration of GA? We will briefly discuss potential eligibility criteria, benefits, administrative and funding arrangements, as well as some of the key difficulties that constrain these programmatic decisions.

Eligibility

Perhaps the two most important features of program eligibility are the criteria that will be used to qualify people for aid and how poor those people must be to actually receive any benefits. Section 17000 of the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) already requires that "Every county and every city shall relieve and support all incompetent, poor, indigent persons, and those incapacitated by age, disease, or accident, lawfully resident therein, when such persons are not supported and relieved by their relatives or friends, by their own means, or by state hospitals or other state or private institutions." Unless amended, counties will be required by state law to continue to provide universal GA eligibility.

Categorical versus universal criteria: Within the confines of the current law, counties could seek to alter these broad eligibility criteria. They might want to consider carving out several different categorical programs, with varying eligibility criteria and benefits. Given the interest in helping people to become self-sufficient, counties might want to begin by differentiating between those who can work and those who cannot.

Most GA programs already require that "employable" adults work, yet few counties have aggressive work-placement or work-training programs. Some counties rely on GA recipients' participation in the federally mandated, but state-designed Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) program to fulfill their own county work requirements. Counties participating in this project report that over 80% of their GA recipients are currently receiving food stamps; thus, it makes good sense to use the federally subsidized FSET program to reach much of the GA caseload. However, the Urban Institute reports, based on its 1996 survey, that of the 21 states with some sort of GA work program requirement, only ten coordinate with the Food Stamp Employment and Training program.[28]

As long as counties are required and/or remain willing to serve employable adults, and if they are serious about helping people to become self-sufficient, they should give serious thought to beefing up their GA work requirements and work-preparation activities. New applicants and ongoing recipients deemed "employable" should continue to be required, as a condition of eligibility, to accept bona fide private-sector work and/or participate in "workfare", work-training, and/or remedial education. To give the requirement teeth, however, counties will have to do a great deal more, on a year-round (rather than a seasonal) basis, to find or provide work for their recipients.

To make this practicable, however, counties should consider carefully how they define "employable." Those childless adults who suffer no physical or mental health complaints could probably be placed in private-sector jobs or public/non-profit workfare or training slots. If the county expands the "employable" population to include all but the most severely disabled, they may find that they have a larger pool of people than they can realistically employ. While it is true that many individuals with minor afflictions, both physical and mental, can do some work, and might do quite well in highly supervised, "supported" or "sheltered" work environments, such placements can be very labor intensive and costly for counties to operate.

As a result, counties might want to set up another program for the disabled who cannot easily work. Applicants would have to be medically assessed, for both physical and mental health conditions. Anybody qualifying with a serious disabling condition should be helped with the SSI application process and receive "interim" GA assistance until SSI is granted.[29] For those who have only moderate or temporary disabilities, not severe enough to qualify for SSI, or whose principal disability is substance abuse, reasonable GA benefits might be provided as long as the problems persist, and on the condition that the individuals accept and participate in any medically prescribed treatments (including rehabilitation for alcohol or chemical addictions).

At recertification, those recipients found to be fully recovered could be transferred to the work-oriented program. Resources permitting, counties could seek to place the mildly disabled in appropriate sheltered or supported work settings as a condition of their ongoing aid. Counties would have to weigh the administrative costs against the value of frequent recertifications of this disabled group.

Counties might seriously consider establishing statewide eligibility criteria for such a disability program, in order to avoid having persons migrate from one county to another. Non-medical benefits might vary with the cost of living in various regions of the state. Counties might also wish to explore, with the state, a means of "buying" moderately or temporarily disabled GA recipients into the Medi-Cal program— particularly into lower-cost HMO type arrangements for basic and preventive care.

A third program might be set up for families with dependent children. The counties might want to negotiate with the state to set up a parallel TANF-type program, with substantial state funding and some federal TANF dollars funneled through Title XX. Able-bodied adults would have to be provided with child care in order to take jobs and/or participate in work-training programs. Other support services, such as transportation might also be necessary. Ideally, a program such as this should operate uniformly across the state, but permit the counties wide latitude in designing the content and delivery of work-related and other social services. If possible, such a program should blend seamlessly— as far as federal law will permit— with normal TANF operations, thereby minimizing the need to duplicate administrative and other services at the county level.

Finally, should the legislature agree to repeal the Section 17000 mandate for universal eligibility, counties might want to propose that employable adults be made ineligible for all benefits but emergency care. Other states, like Michigan, have essentially ended all forms of non-emergency assistance to employable adults. Their results, which we discuss further along, are less than heartening.

Income and assets: Leaving aside the larger question of categorical versus universal eligibility criteria, counties already have the authority to impose residency requirements (up to 15 days), and have much greater latitude now, than in years past, to limit benefit payments and to define income and assets tests of their own devising.

If counties continue to tie their income tests to the low monthly maximum grants they typically pay, many of the households losing aid under the new federal reforms will not qualify for assistance— at least at the outset. Their income and/or assets may exceed the values set by counties. If counties are primarily concerned with keeping their GA-related costs manageable, they may wish to reexamine their income and assets tests with an eye toward further tightening the rules. In this way, they can keep all but the most destitute of households from qualifying.

If, on the other hand, counties are interested in both alleviating hardship and giving households more of an incentive to find additional sources of income, they may wish to consider moderating their income and assets tests. For example, those who work might be permitted to have higher amounts of income and assets than those who don't. (Some counties are doing this now.) Costs permitting, this advantage might be granted to applicants, as well as to ongoing recipients. In the same vein, counties might want to stretch this conventional approach and consider granting higher income and assets limits to any households that bring in some additional income from specific unearned sources, such as legal sponsors (in the case of immigrants) or absent parents paying court-ordered child support. This might help improve applicant and recipient households' cooperation in securing such independent sources of unearned income.

In either case, the trade-off involves net new expenditures. Any liberalization in the income and assets tests will make more people eligible if granted to applicants, and will make benefits available to more recipients for a longer period of time. On the plus side, total income adequacy may improve for those households which can produce any earnings or obtain revenues from other sources.

With regard to both income and assets, counties may want to consider devising statewide rules on exemptions— a home and personal belongings, the value of an automobile, some amount of liquid assets, and so forth— before the tests are applied. Counties should also try to reach agreement on whether the tests will apply to gross or net income or whether different limits will apply to each.

Benefits

The nature and scope of benefits to be provided to people in need is the heart of any program redesign. As discussed earlier, the more adequate the benefit package, the more difficult it becomes to control program participation and costs. Among the key generic issues for setting benefits are these: their form and amount— including whether benefits should vary with household size or composition, how they should be calculated— including the relationship between work effort and benefits, and their duration.

Form and amount: Counties generally pay GA benefits in the form of cash. They might consider reconstituting their benefit packages— making greater use of in-kind benefits (shelter, food, child care, transportation, health care services, and so on), vouchers, or direct vendor payments— based on the eligible populations being served. For example, disabled persons not expected to work might receive cash, except for their medical services. Persons with drug problems might be required to have representative payees or qualify only for in-kind benefits or direct vendor payments. Employable adults might receive only in-kind assistance (shelter, food, transportation, and medical care). Or, cash and in-kind assistance could be offered on a "work-first" basis. In other words, once individuals have worked some pre-designated number of supervised hours for public or non-profit agencies, they would be provided with benefits.

The trade-off here is cost. Simple cash transfer payments have always been the least costly to administer. The more elaborate the in-kind transfer system, the greater the administrative costs. And vouchers, vendor payments, and representative payee systems, unless very closely monitored, are hardly free of error and fraud. In any event, varying eligibility criteria and benefits could encourage poor adults to migrate to the more generous counties, so it might make sense to try to adopt regional, if not statewide, eligibility and benefit standards. Benefits might be permitted to vary with the cost of living in different regions of the state.

The total amount of benefits ultimately paid— whether cash and/or in kind— will necessarily be influenced by two things: the program's objectives (alleviating hardship without undermining the drive to become self-sufficient) and potential costs. Again, the generosity of the total benefits package might be allowed to vary with the nature of the population being served. Those who are disabled through no fault of their own and not expected to work might receive more adequate benefits than those who have to overcome health problems of their own making (alcohol or drug dependencies) or who are able-bodied and expected to work. This approach poses its own risks: Individuals will have strong incentives to feign or prolong the appearance of disability in order to retain higher benefit levels. Only increased administrative spending on in-depth verifications, frequent redeterminations, and anti-fraud efforts can offset this risk.

Although very few families with children currently receive GA, most counties currently allow GA benefits to increase for larger households. For example, while the maximum monthly grant for an individual on GA ranges from a low of $221 to a high of $345 among our participating Bay Area counties, the maximum monthly grants that can be paid to households of three (either two parents with a child or one parent with two children, for example) range from $504 to $863.

At the higher end, these GA payments for three-person households *exceed* the current state-set maximum monthly AFDC/TANF cash payment (effective January 1, 1997) of $565 in higher cost-of-living counties and $538 in lower cost-of-living counties. Earlier, we suggested that counties might be serving more families with children in the future because of the new law's provisions affecting legal immigrant families and the TANF limits and penalties (two-year work requirements, drug penalties, limits on teen mothers, five-year time limits). Consequently, counties should consider bringing their multiple-person GA grant levels (at least for adults with children) in line with state-set TANF benefits for households of comparable size. As noted earlier, counties should probably strive to set up a statewide family assistance program that parallels TANF as closely as possible and that blends its administrative apparatus with TANF as much as federal law will permit.

In any event, counties that choose to pay higher benefits for any or all of their caseload may find that some households will migrate from less generous counties. As mentioned elsewhere, it would be advisable for counties to try to "harmonize" their benefits on a regional, if not statewide, basis that reflects the cost of living in each area.

Calculating benefits: At one time, counties were required to set their GA benefits at no less than 62 percent of the 1991 federal poverty line. In recent years, however, the legislature has permitted counties to lower their payment standards in a variety of ways. If counties are going to reinvent their GA programs, they may wish to take a hard look at the adequacy of their benefit payments, given their program objectives.

Counties might want to begin by updating their old need standards and setting minimal payment levels relative to those need standards, based on the real cost of living in their areas. Given the risk of poor households migrating from less generous to more generous counties, every effort should be made to establish a fair statewide (or at least regional) minimum benefit payment, that might then be allowed to vary only with differences in the cost of living (perhaps using an index of housing costs). Indeed, counties should strive to develop a uniform equation for determining their need standards and then be allowed to plug in their county-specific numbers for each variable.

Although it would be extremely costly, counties should also consider indexing their need standards and payment levels to some fair measure of inflation. Even if they cannot afford to increase their benefit payments regularly, it would be helpful to faithfully report the real costs of living for this vulnerable population, if for no other reason than to remind policymakers, the press, and the public just how fragile their economic circumstances are.

As noted previously, benefits might take different forms (a combination of cash and in-kind goods and services) and vary in generosity based on the nature of the population being served (those able to work, those in a parallel TANF program, and those deemed disabled and not easily able to work). However, it would be helpful if counties could agree on uniform rules regarding the treatment of earned income and other unearned income (such as court-ordered child support or financial help from the sponsors of legal immigrants). While the temptation to offset such income dollar for dollar with benefit cuts is great, counties might want to consider more lenient treatment with the hope of encouraging work and cooperation in securing other sources of income.

As part of their income and assets rules, counties should consider whether they want to use prospective or retrospective accounting methods, and over what time period; what, if any, earned income disregards to permit; what, if any, income and assets to exempt; and how other sources of benefits should be linked to, or offset against, the GA package of benefits. (For example, should the grant be reduced if an applicant or recipient is in shared housing? Should a GA recipient automatically be linked to the state Medi-Cal program?)

Finally, counties should consult with each other and try to establish uniform sanctions and fair-hearing procedures for those recipients who fail to comply with program requirements without good cause. Ideally, counties would be able to establish and enforce the same rules, incentives, and penalties. For example, an individual who has acted fraudulently in one county and is being denied benefits there should not be able to obtain benefits in another county while the sanction is in force.

Duration: With time limits looming in TANF, counties should reconsider the efficacy of limiting the duration of some or all benefits in their reformulated GA programs.[30] Ideally, certain essential benefits should be made available without limits. These might include emergency, routine, and preventive health care benefits. Basic shelter and nutrition should be available, at least on an in-kind basis, for those in need of these basics. When it comes to cash payments and other supportive services, counties might want to differentiate between those who are disabled and not expected to work and those who are expected to work.

For example, for those unable to work because of illness or disability, benefits would not be subject to time limits, as long as the disabling condition persists and is being treated. For those able to work, there might be a sequential set of limits imposed: When an individual first applies for GA benefits and is deemed able to work, a county might agree to pay benefits to that household for three months, conditional on that individual's active and supervised job search. If during that time, the individual is unsuccessful in finding an unsubsidized private-sector job, the county might then convert to a "work-first" workfare program, in which the individual must spend some designated number of supervised hours per week in a public or non-profit sector job. (In this example, the individual is working in exchange for his or her benefits.) In addition to this unpaid work, counties might wish to require the individual to participate, costs permitting, in any necessary remedial education and/or job-skills training, plus continued active and supervised job search. Only when an individual completes the designated combination of work, training, and/or job search, would a benefit payment be made. Such an arrangement may be allowed to continue indefinitely, or a county might impose further time limits. For example, after another three months, if the individual still has no private-sector job, a county might allow the individual to continue in the combination workfare/training/job-search slot, but require that all benefits be paid in-kind, either through direct vendor payments or the direct furnishing of goods and services.

Presumably, with these increasingly restrictive benefit payments and time limits, recipients will have strong incentives to find and take any suitable private sector jobs. Once again, the tradeoff for such an elaborate program— with strictly supervised work requirements, time limits, and benefits that shift from cash to progressively more in-kind transfers— is cost. To administer such a program would be complicated, cumbersome, and costly.

Administrative and funding arrangements

In the preceding pages, we have talked at some length about possible ways of reorganizing GA— of distinguishing between some of the diverse sub-populations and crafting more targeted program interventions. In the remainder of this section we discuss some of the knottiest policy considerations: the costs of these more ambitious programs, who might help bear those costs, and who controls program operations.

As we have all come to appreciate, those who can afford to pay the piper call the tune. Even the new federal welfare reform— which repeatedly pledges to give states and localities wide latitude to implement programs of their own devising— attaches numerous new strings to the federal block grant money (dictating who can and can not receive money over time, as well as the sorts of services states can and can not deliver with federal revenues). And, at this writing, there is a new and even more mischievous wrinkle: Officials in the federal Department of Health and Human Services have suggested that state-only expenditures may not count toward the federally mandated maintenance of effort requirement (75%-80% of a state's FY 94 qualified spending) if new state expenditures do not comply with the rules governing federal TANF expenditures.[31] This will complicate the State of California's forthcoming welfare reform debate and that will, in turn, complicate county and state deliberations regarding a new approach to GA.

Should the counties look for fiscal resources outside of their own coffers, they can expect other entities, whether the state or private-sector collaborators, to want to exert some influence over how *their* money gets spent. Even if counties seek to collaborate with each other— as we've been urging throughout this paper— they will find it difficult to share costs and power equitably.

Getting beyond GA will cost more

Welfare program administrators and policy analysts have always understood one thing that often seems to elude elected officials and taxpayers: Next to no welfare, the cheapest welfare program is a simple cash-transfer system. It is the great advantage touted by those who support universal plans. Everybody is entitled to the same sum, so it's very inexpensive to cut the checks. Even conservative economists like the cash part of the cash transfer because it permits individuals to spend the money in the market as they please, rather than having government constrain their spending in any way.

Targeted strategies: The moment one tampers with this pure approach, the new costs start piling up. A program that targets certain groups of people for assistance, by means-testing and/or introducing categorical criteria (parents with children, the disabled, childless adults able to work, etc.) must, of necessity, cost more to administer. An applicant's need must be measured; the other screening tests imposed. The more complicated the eligibility criteria and the more intently we try to keep all but the neediest from qualifying for and actually receiving benefits, the greater the program's administrative and personnel costs will be.

The new GA programs we have been discussing start with the premise that the people on GA have differing needs and problems. Consequently, the most effective responses— intended both to help people take more responsibility for themselves and to help them achieve better lives— will require different approaches. As a start, therefore, we are proposing a more complicated and costly program (or constellation of programs) than is currently the norm.

Emphasizing work: We have also suggested that work be heavily emphasized, as a means of moving those who can work toward self-sufficiency. Work programs require more resources than simple transfer programs: Participants require supervision. Their attendance and effort must be monitored. They may require remedial education or training in order to qualify for even entry-level jobs. People with children may require child care. People at any distance from job or training sites may require help with transportation. Very poor adults with sub-standard or no fixed place of residence may need help with basic hygiene and clothing. Many need varying degrees of health care. Some need to address their addictions. Needless to say, all of these ancillary services, no matter how basic and bare-bones they may be, cost more to provide than a simple subsistence check.

Proponents of work-oriented strategies, generally assert that such up-front investments should, over time, produce long-term savings. But the most rigorous studies involving AFDC adults have always shown the savings to be modest. Participants in the JOBS program (GAIN here in California), were, on average, able to increase their work effort and earnings, and some local governments achieved net savings. If these modest improvements were enough to satisfy taxpayers and elected officials, we would not be contemplating the newest round of welfare reforms. Thus, it is important to take notice of our real-world experience to date: Trying to put poor welfare adults to work is neither easy nor cheap.

In California, the best studies we have on the costs and benefits of work-training programs are the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation's (MDRC) six-county evaluation of the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program. Of the six counties evaluated (Alameda, Butte, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Diego, and Tulare), the one that has attracted the most attention is Riverside. It has consistently had the best and most sustained outcomes. Even though AFDC mothers differ in many respects from those on GA, MDRC's benefit and cost analysis is instructive.

In a July 1996 working paper, MDRC released data on employment, earnings, and AFDC receipt for households who began receiving AFDC between 1988 and 1990. Over the five-year study period, and across the six counties, GAIN increased the number of single-parent AFDC families working for wages by 4.3 percentage points over the control group and raised their average earnings by $2,853. AFDC savings for the six counties, over five years, averaged

$1,496. Riverside produced the largest increase in total earnings ($5,038) and the largest drop in AFDC spending ($2,705) over the five-year period. Across all six counties, GAIN increased the percentage of two-parent families with earned income by 6.3 percentage points over the control group over five years, with earnings gains averaging $1,906 over the same time period. AFDC-U benefits were reduced by an average of $1,432 over five years.[32] As impressive as these improved work and earnings data are to students of welfare policy, they are hardly the "silver bullet" longed for by the taxpaying public and impatient elected officials at all levels of government.

Unfortunately, this 1996 working paper do not include the average costs of participating in the GAIN program, but MDRC's previous three-year impact study does. These average participant costs are important, because they give some idea of the range of new expenditures counties might be shouldering if they try some variation of a work and training program for their GA recipients. Should counties start serving larger numbers of families with children, as a consequence of TANF and legal immigrant provisions in the new law, these MDRC findings are highly relevant.

In reviewing the MDRC data, it is important to keep in mind one important point: MDRC averages both costs and benefits over the entire participating sample, regardless of whether they all actually receive benefits or earn income. For example, ten people might have been required to participate in a GAIN training program, but only seven of them showed up and received services. The costs of the services they received, plus any administrative costs associated with trying to get the other three to participate, would be averaged across all ten of the required participants. If four of the seven who participated actually began earning income, their earnings would then be averaged over the entire ten-person sample, for purposes of measuring the average return. Since it is impossible to know in advance who will actually show up for training and/or find jobs, these average-cost calculations make sense from a programmatic standpoint.

For AFDC single-parents in all six counties, over the five-year estimating frame, the total cost of GAIN worked out to $4,415 ($3,832 if child care and other support services are excluded) per experimental participant. Of this sum, county welfare departments were estimated to have spent an average $2,899 per experimental participant, 60 percent for case management functions. Schools and non-welfare agencies spent an additional $1,515 per experimental participant to provide necessary education and training. If we add in the non-GAIN costs that experimental participants incurred on their own, across the six counties, over five years, the total cost averages out to $4,895 ($4,312 if child care and other support services are excluded) per experimental participant. Total costs ranged from a low of $3,469 over five years per experimental in Riverside (with San Diego at $3,918) to a high of $6,977 over five years per experimental in Alameda (with Los Angeles at $6,402). It is worth noting that Alameda and Los Angeles elected to serve only long-term AFDC recipients in their GAIN programs, which helps to explain their greater per capita costs.

Net costs were lower (total GAIN costs less costs for the control group participants). Over five years, across the six counties, the net cost was $3,422 ($2,839 if child care and other support services are excluded) per experimental, ranging from a low of $1,597 for Riverside ($1,429 if child care and other support services are excluded) to a high of $5,789 in Los Angeles ($5,062 if child care and other support services are excluded).[33]

Unfortunately, we have no reliable work-training cost-benefit analysis for California GA recipients. However, we have some scattered research findings on GA programs in other states that either terminated benefits to "employable" adults altogether or limited their access to benefits. These studies' findings reinforce what county social services directors know first hand: Connecting GA adults to the world of work— particulary steady work with steady income— is no easy task.

Michigan terminated GA for "employable" adults on October 1, 1991. At the time the program ended, a recipient could receive a maximum monthly payment of only $160 in cash, was eligible for a state run GA-medical program, and could qualify for food stamps. In 1993, about two years after benefits ended, University of Michigan researchers found "self-sufficiency was elusive after benefits were lost." At the time of the study, one-half of the sample was doing as well as when they had received GA, but when recipients receiving disability payments were excluded from the sample, only 35% were doing as well as before. When steady income is counted, only 26% of the non-disabled were doing at least as well as they had on GA.

Three findings will especially interest county directors intent on helping their GA recipients become productive workers: First, although 76% of the Michigan sample had previous work experience, only 38% found any formal employment at any time during the two years after they lost benefits, and only 20% were employed at the time of the study.

Second, the researchers found that after counting all sources of cash— including wages from formal and casual (occasional day-labor, baby-sitting, house-painting) jobs, spouses' earnings, money earned through "risky activities" (such as pawning goods, selling blood, panhandling, redeeming bottles and cans...), and private charitable support— "the vast majority of former recipients were still living on the edge of subsistence... [They] remain exceedingly poor, and their economic precariousness is complicated further by significant health and psychological deterioration."

Third, the researchers strike this cautionary note regarding the use of non-profit resources: "We are expecting the poor to rely on non-governmental sources to tide them over, but our data show that these are not adequate to the task."[34]

In Ohio, beginning in October 1991, individuals deemed "employable" were limited to receiving six months of GA benefits out of any 12-month period. Relying on Cuyahoga County (which includes Cleveland) GA case records from September 1991 (one month before the changes were adopted), researchers from Case Western Reserve University found that 15 percent of the able-bodied caseload were working that month. Their earnings were very low, since they remained eligible for GA benefits. The first group of recipients lost benefits in April of 1992. Three to six months later, the researchers interviewed a Cuyahoga County sample who had lost their benefits. They found that 17 percent were working, a small but not statistically significant increase over the baseline. However, the percentage of those working full-time doubled, from five to ten percent, while the percentage working part-time dropped from nearly ten percent to seven percent.[35]

Work preparation: In 1993, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities conducted a survey of GA employment programs in eight states (Connecticut, Minnesota, Montana, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Utah) and five local jurisdictions (Los Angeles County; Douglas County, Nebraska; Manchester, New Hampshire; Cuyahoga County, Ohio; and Milwaukee County, Wisconsin).

According to the Center, these 13 sites were chosen because they tended to offer a greater variety of employment services than other GA programs with work requirements. Even so, the Center found that the most commonly provided services were job search or unpaid work experience. They found little in the way of on-the-job training, skills training, or classroom education. All 13 of the states and localities used self-directed job search and community work experience or "workfare" activities. Some offered additional job search services, including instruction on how to fill out job applications, prepare résumés, and behave at interviews. Some operated group job-finding clubs. Eleven of the thirteen conducted individual assessments of the GA applicants' and recipients' educational and work histories. Some went on to prepare individual employability plans. Ten of the thirteen states and localities offered at least one educational and/or skills-training program, including adult basic education, GED preparation, vocational training, or on-the-job training. All thirteen offered to cover the costs of transportation to employment sites. This was the only support service offered in five jurisdictions. Some provided help with initial clothing costs.

The Center's researchers go on to report that the work outcomes for low-income men, in particular, were not very promising: "While a number of men participating in these programs subsequently found work, in general the employment rates and average earnings of program participants were no greater than those of a comparable group of low-income men who were not enrolled in an employment program."[36]

Moreover, a study commissioned by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service, which administers the food stamp program, found that a Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) program that emphasized low-cost job search did little to improve earnings potential: The rate at which single men in the program obtained employment and their level of earnings were no greater than the employment rate and earnings of comparable single men not in the program. Because such a large percentage of GA recipients are eligible for food stamps and closely resemble the single men in the FSET program, these findings are relevant to GA-work programs.[37]

To try to sum up the key lessons from these various studies: The relatively costly GAIN program produces positive, but modest gains in work effort and earnings for those who participate. By contrast, lower-cost job search and "workfare" programs provided to individuals who more closely resemble current GA recipients do not appear to improve work effort and earnings. That is, there is no discernible difference in work effort and earnings between those in such a program and those not in such a program. Finally, even in those instances where GA benefits are terminated or restricted, there is little improvement in overall work effort, although there does appear to be some increase in hardship for a significant number of those who lose their GA benefits.

It is worth repeating, that with the notable exception of the MDRC GAIN evaluations, none of the other studies cited above are long-term or rigorously designed. The information they provide, while hardly cheering, is not definitive. Michigan and Ohio are not California. Local job markets differ. The economy has improved since the studies. There are reasons to hope that work-training programs undertaken by the Bay Area counties participating in this project will have better results than those reported here.

However, "better" results may only be marginally better. And the cost of mounting any serious work-training programs that operate year-round for a significant portion of counties' GA caseloads will not come cheap. Let us construct a hypothetical example. Using MDRC's data, we will take Riverside County's cost data because it has the lowest rate of GAIN expenditures per experimental participant and has the highest rate of return for each dollar invested. Then we will take the average monthly GA caseload of some of our participating Bay Area counties, assume that only 40% of them are deemed "employable," and figure an average annual cost for enrolling them in an aggressive work-training program like Riverside's.

Riverside County had the lowest total GAIN expenditures per experimental participant at $3,469 over five years. If we take a subset of Riverside's expenditures, the roughly three-quarters which were spent on program orientation (16%), job search (25%), vocational training (35%), unpaid work experience and on-the-job training (.3%), we end up with a five-year total of $2,662 per experimental. Using this subset of total spending, over five years, Riverside spent, on average, about $532 per GAIN participant per year. (We are excluding Riverside's expenditures on adult basic education and GED preparation (13%), English as a second language (5%), child care and other support services (5%), which total $806 over five years or about $161 per year.)[38]

The average number of persons receiving GA per month in our participating counties ranges from a low of 165 to a high of 13,563. The percentage of these caseloads deemed able to work by our counties varied widely, from a low of 12% to a high of 74%, but three of the seven counties supplying data reported 43% to 48% as able to work. Hence, we've arbitrarily selected 40% for our example.

If we now multiply our mini-Riverside annual per capita cost ($532) by the number of persons thought able to work in each county (40% of each county's average monthly caseload), we arrive at new annual work-related costs. In making these calculations for the participating counties that reported data to us, we find new annual costs would range from a low of roughly $35,000 per year— a six percent increase in annual GA spending for one relatively rural county, to a high of $2.9 million per year— an increase of five percent in annual GA spending for one urban county. From another angle: In our lowest benefit-paying county, spending an additional $532 per year per GA recipient is tantamount to a 20% increase in total annual benefit expenditures for a single adult. (The lowest maximum monthly grant for a single adult is $221 or $2,652 annually.)

This mini-Riverside annual work-program cost may be understated because it excludes all support services, including transportation, tools, clothing, and so on. If any educational costs are restored, such as adult basic education, GED preparation, and English as a second language, the costs will go up. Given that lower-cost job-search and unpaid work experience programs didn't produce good results in the studies cited earlier, it is likely that counties would want to include necessary educational and skills-training components in their programs. Of course, if counties are determined to require work of a larger portion of their caseloads, including those with moderate mental, physical, and/or substance abuse problems (which do not qualify for SSI), they would have to add in the higher costs of sheltered workshops, health treatment, and drug treatment programs.

If increasing numbers of parents with children move to GA from AFDC/TANF, child care costs would have to be factored in. Some parents will find informal providers— family or neighbors. But if the county must pay going rates for child care, the costs can outstrip their monthly GA benefit payments. For example, the national chain, Kindercare, charges roughly $160 per week per child (this ranges from $205 per week for infants to $150 per week for children aged four and older).[39] The average monthly cost comes to $640 per month per child. That sum exceeds the maximum GA grant payable to a household of two (say a mother with one child) in every one of the Bay Area counties that provided us with benefit payment data. Even if child care could be had, on average, for half the Kindercare fee, say $80 per week or $320 per month, that sum exceeds the maximum monthly GA payment for two persons in one county and equates to between 50% to 83% of the two-person grants in our other counties.

Because even the most efficient work programs are so expensive, we strongly recommend that counties try to take advantage of existing work programs that are subsidized by other levels of government. For example, we have already mentioned the Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) program. Given the high overlap between GA and food stamp recipients, it makes good sense to coordinate county GA work efforts with this program. GA recipients are also eligible for the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). Finally, counties should seriously consider negotiating with the state to permit some or all of their able-bodied GA recipients to participate in whatever new work-training program is made available to TANF recipients.

<u>Finding new resources</u>: If counties expect to have difficulty finding net new resources in their own budgets to help foot any of these new programmatic costs, they have three general options: First, they can seek an infusion of state revenues. Second, they can collaborate with each other and hope to achieve some economies of scale. Third, they can seek to collaborate with non-profit providers and/or for-profit entities. Let us say a brief word about each.

It is impossible to say how much the state may be willing to contribute to a new and different GA program. Although there is a chance that the state will take the program over entirely, perhaps swapping the costs of trial courts for the costs of a statewide GA program, we think it unlikely. We are confident, however, that state fiscal relief will be a major bargaining chip in the larger welfare reform debate. If counties properly brief their legislative representatives, little in the way of welfare reform will happen without a deal on GA. That is why it is important for counties to provide useful and easily understood "caseload and cost-shift" data to their state Senate and Assembly members. Toward this end, we strongly recommend that our participating BASSC counties maintain close contact with their own legislative representatives, as well as coordinate their efforts with those of the CWDA.

As part of any negotiated GA settlement with the state, counties will want to pay special attention to how state funds will be allocated among counties. Counties will also want to consider carefully any "strings" the state may attach to expenditure of state dollars. More on this momentarily.

Counties might also seek to pool their collective GA resources and try to achieve some economies of scale. Toward this end, counties would have to reach consensus on certain operating features of their respective programs, find an equitable cost-sharing formula, and test the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of centralized service delivery and/or administrative functions.

For example, let us suppose that counties could meld their different GA programs into a fairly uniform operation— with one intake form for all counties, identical eligibility tests and benefit calculations (even though benefits might be allowed to vary with the cost of living). With a regionally uniform program, counties might be able to devote one or two offices to determining eligibility and making grant payments for all counties. That is, applications might be taken at numerous offices, as they are now. The data could be entered directly into computers and electronically delivered to "central operations" for review, verification, eligibility determination, benefit calculation, and payment. All counties could chip in for the overhead and administrative processing costs (perhaps on a per client basis). In theory, savings could be achieved by virtue of eliminating duplicative administrative processes and cutting down on overhead.

One of our directors suggested that work-training programs be considered for this sort of inter-county collaboration— perhaps by locating major training centers in the north bay, east bay and south bay. At the outset, participating counties would have to determine to whom they would provide such employment and training benefits, as well as work out the scope of benefits and services to be provided, the duration of any such benefits, ongoing managerial arrangements— including legal liability should anything go wrong, and the per capita costs for such benefits (and then perhaps develop a sliding-scale fee based on each county's ability to pay). Assuming we could reach such a consensus, and find suitable sites, counties would have to test the feasibility of moving GA recipients to and from the regional training centers. It would make for a fascinating pilot test.

If BASSC counties wish to pursue these collaborative approaches, we suggest that an inter-county working group try to hammer out a common plan of operation— including eligibility criteria, the nature and amount of cash and in-kind benefits, work-training programs, and other services (child care, health care, shelter, transportation, drug treatment). In the event the counties are very serious about trying such plans, we strongly recommend that an independent evaluator with relevant experience in mounting complex demonstration programs (such as MDRC) be added to the inter-county design team, both to help set up the pilot project and to analyze its costs and benefits.

Finally, counties may wish to consider forming partnerships with private-sector organizations. Here, there are three key considerations: What resources can these private sector entities bring to the table, how much can they make available for the sorts of "human service" programs we are talking about, and how reliable are their contributions over time?

As our participating counties know, public welfare agencies already do a fair amount of business with non-profit service providers. They do this primarily through contracts, in which counties purchase desired goods and services. Many non-profit providers are dependent on their government contracts. In 1995, government money accounted for nearly one-third of all non-profits' revenues in the United States; it accounted for just over half of all revenues for non-profits devoted to social services. [40] For our purposes, we can only count government money once, so counties will want to locate those non-profits working in the human services arena that bring their own, independently raised revenues to the table.

In 1995, total charitable contributions in the U.S. came to nearly $144 billion— 81% from individual donations, 7% from foundations, 7% from bequests, and only 5% from corporations. The manner in which these contributions were used is instructive: 44% went to religious purposes, 13% to education, 9% to health, and 8% to human services. The remainder went to a range of activities, from the arts to the environment to international affairs.

What is particularly noteworthy is that while total charitable giving rose by 7.8% from 1994 to 1995, the amount donated for human services *declined* by nearly 3% over the same time period. And while total charitable giving rose by 7.3% between 1990 and 1995, giving to human services *declined* by nearly 18% over the same five years (from $14.22 billion in 1990 to $11.7 billion in 1995). All of these figures are in constant dollars.[41] It seems that charitable giving for human services is following the same downward trend of public-sector spending for human services.

Local non-profit providers in the Bay Area are worried about the capacity of their organizations to meet current needs, much less absorb net new need. San Francisco's St. Anthony Foundation, which provides meals and other essential services to the poor, has an operating budget of roughly $11 million per year. A spokeswoman for St. Anthony's was recently quoted in the *San Francisco Examiner as* saying: "Right now we're trying to figure out how to deal with the effects of budget cuts. It's astounding to us, the impact this will have. We can not do any more. We maxed out in the '80s. We have waiting lists for drug rehabilitation programs, employment counseling, health clinics, senior housing." A spokesman for the San Francisco Food Bank, which distributed seven million pounds of food last year, said, "It's going to be a very different kind of year for food banks. Reductions in welfare and cuts in food stamps are going to put more pressure on food banks to make up that slack for people who just will not have enough to eat otherwise." The development director of the Alameda Food Bank expects food stamp cuts to triple the demand on his facility. Worse, he notes that this increased demand is coming at a time when supplies and donations to food banks are tapering off. Even the Boy Scouts' annual food drive is pulling in less— 100,000 pounds of food last year, compared to 140,000 pounds two years earlier.[42]

What can county agencies expect from the private for-profit sector? Corporations gave only 5% of all charitable donations in the U.S. in 1995, but perhaps they can be persuaded to do more. One recent trend that has drawn attention from the popular press is "cause-related marketing," or "strategic philanthropy." What these terms describe is corporate underwriting of selected social causes for commercial benefit: Companies have discovered that they can enhance their corporate images and improve their bottom-lines with well-publicized donations that are carefully targeted to socially popular causes, ranging from children's literacy to the environment to breast-cancer research.

In a 1995 survey, CEOs identified their primary motives for conducting "cause-related" campaigns as follows: improving customer relations (93%), enhancing corporate reputation or image (89%), and increasing sales (50%). Only 39% said their campaigns were based on the conviction that "companies must stand for something."[43]

Certainly, there is nothing wrong with for-profit businesses profiting from their largesse, but it does make corporate giving somewhat unreliable. Companies are likely to steer their publicly-hyped donations toward those causes that their potential customers find most sympathetic. Apparently, it is no accident that anti-hunger drives coincide with major holidays, and that women's health issues and children's literacy programs are popular with corporate donors. Marketing research suggests that women— a highly coveted market— are more likely to develop an affinity for companies based on their non-business activities. Just as politicians woo "soccer Moms," so does corporate America.

If the public sector hopes to develop a long-term partnership with its private, for-profit sector, public-sector leaders must convince their private-sector counterparts that the health of the community in which they all live and do business will deteriorate— posing a real threat to everybody's quality of life and profit margin— if poverty and dependency are left to fester. With the decline in federal and, possibly, state spending, it is important that the private sector help bridge the gap. At the very least, the for-profit sector needs to understand the connection between its hiring practices and salary scales and the plight of those who are able-bodied and willing to work, but who remain chronically unemployed or underemployed, or who work full-time and remain poor.

This sort of public education would be a useful first step. But public-sector leaders will have to do more than that. They must also be able to propose concrete ways in which their private-sector partners can realistically help. Large employers can only hire so many ill-skilled individuals. Moreover, large employers are not always in close proximity to the poor needing jobs. Small businesses that wish to expand their operations may also be willing to hire welfare recipients, but may be the least able to absorb the costs of hiring and training. Since California has never instituted a state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), perhaps larger employers could be induced to pay an additional percentage of their payroll into a private fund that would be made available to help subsidize small employers if they hire and train new employees from the welfare rolls (either from TANF or GA). Such a fund might also be used to subsidize the start-up costs of new enterprises, either in the inner cities or rural areas.

Ideas such as these do not foreclose the more conventional appeals to the private sector— to work with county schools and community colleges to improve their basic-skills training, to provide summer jobs to at-risk youth, to make their annual contributions to local food banks and drug-treatment centers. But whether it is an innovative new public-private partnership or the old annual United Way fund-raising campaign, this hard truth remains: Private for-profit giving will always be variable. It will change with market conditions and the whims of senior managers. It has always been thus. What has changed is that this variability now increasingly characterizes public-sector spending for the poor, as well.

Locus of control: If counties continue to operate 58 different GA programs, within the confines of current state law, each county will have relative freedom to modify its own eligibility criteria and benefit packages. In independence, there lies relatively certain administrative control. If the state were to release the counties from the mandate to provide GA altogether, counties would certainly have a great deal of latitude, but their underlying poverty problems may not change. Indeed, with the changes in federal and state law, county poverty problems may grow worse. If the state fails to provide any additional funding assistance with this new freedom, counties will be no better off than before. They will likely be forced to continue to limit and cut any assistance they provide.

If counties want to collaborate with each other, either on a regional or statewide basis, they will face a daunting task. Even within the strictures of current state law, county GA programs differ markedly from each other. Whether counties with very different budgets, tax bases, and spending priorities can find common ground on key programmatic features remains an open question.

To test the proposition, we suggest that our participating Bay Area counties try a small experiment. Over the course of a two-day retreat, we propose that the directors and some key agency staff come together for the sole purpose of mapping out a uniform, regional, revamped GA program. Such a public, multiple-county collaboration would set up some "winners and losers." Those counties operating more generous programs would presumably tighten eligibility and lower their benefit payments, while those now at the low end would have to make their programs somewhat more generous. The trade-offs are self evident: More generous counties might save some money at the expense of their GA recipients, while less generous counties might have to pay more, to the benefit of their GA recipients. If our diverse BASSC counties could overcome these difficulties and agree on the specifics of eligibility, benefits, work requirements, administrative control and funding, we'd have a working model that would be of great use elsewhere in the state.

If the BASSC counties are unable to reach consensus, they might be better advised to concentrate their efforts on a new state-county partnership. The fiscal disparities that prevent an inter-county agreement might be mitigated if the state were to contribute new revenues. The trick would be to find an equitable method of allocating those new state dollars across counties. This could prove to be very difficult. Counties that have maintained relatively generous GA programs will want state fiscal relief, while counties with the least generous programs will claim state dollars on the grounds that their poor citizens are most in need. Suburban legislators may be interested in funneling more money to their counties, at the expense of urban counties.

Whether the state and the counties can reach a fair and amicable settlement is impossible to predict. Whatever the final arrangement is, however, the counties have one other major concern regarding a new partnership with the state: What, if any, strings will the state attach to the new money it provides? Just as the nation's governors found themselves saddled with a number of congressionally dictated "dos and don'ts," county officials may find that the state will impose a quid pro quo for a GA bailout.

As we have suggested earlier, counties should strive to develop a firm CWDA position that they will uniformly support. One approach might include having the state set minimum eligibility and benefit criteria that the state would fund, permitting counties to offer optional (county-funded) supplemental payments on top of the state base. This is analagous to the federal/state SSI/SSP funding model. The downside to this approach is that poor households may choose to migrate from less generous to more generous counties. In addition, if caseloads rise and the state do not increase its spending, it might mandate counties to make up any shortfall (up to the minimum benefit level set).

Alternatively, the state could set maximum eligibility and benefit criteria and require that counties abide by these state-set limits as a condition of receiving any state aid for GA. Presumably, state dollars would flow to the counties on a fixed-sum block-grant basis. In a recession, if GA caseloads expanded, counties would be responsible for assuming the net new costs.

It is extremely unlikely that the state would structure its GA contributions on the old-law AFDC "entitlement" model, in which the number of poor households meeting designated eligibility criteria would automatically determine both state and county benefit expenditures.

Finally, as murky as inter-county and county-state collaborations can be, they may be further complicated by the participation of non-profit and/or for-profit entities. Unless such private sector organizations explicitly agree to abide by publicly set rules, each organization might wish to impose its own conditions in exchange for its fiscal contribution. Perhaps a faith-based organization is willing to provide substantial resources, but insists that those who benefit must attend church services. Or a private for-profit donor might be willing to provide paid work to some recipients, but only if they meet a specific demographic profile. Alternatively, a local foundation may offer to help, but only if it can extend benefits to households with more income or assets than permitted by the public program. In such instances, it may be easier to keep relationships with private-sector providers informal. If the public program cannot accommodate all who need help, the counties could make ad-hoc referrals to private-sector donors with extra-legal conditions.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1: Involve policy analysts and staff at the county and state level in a data collection planning process. Should the BASSC directors decide to proceed with data collection efforts, they will want to consider having their policy staffs carefully review and modify the proposed GA template. Ideally, other CWDA principals and staff, state Department of Social Services (DSS) staff, and state legislative staff should be involved in this process. Both the counties and the state will greatly benefit from having a strong GA data collection instrument.

A. *Develop common, operational definitions across BASSC counties for terms such as "employable," "disabled," "aged," "exempt," and so on.* It was beyond the scope of this project to plumb the depths of all the relevant terms that would have to be carefully defined for purposes of GA-relevant data collection. It would be highly desirable to undertake such an effort in connection with any future data collection efforts.

B. *Develop the capacity to access and analyze the full range of data collected in intake applications.* Counties do not have effective access to the bulk of the raw data they collect. If they did, it might be possible to reach consensus on how best to aggregate and report age, education, or work-experience data; search old records; and reconstruct common data sets among counties. Some counties do not retain their raw data; one urban county has *only* current-month data for its GA caseload.

C. *Identify data critical to decision-making and develop the capacity to collect and utilize this information.* The project design team wanted to know, for example, whether GA recipients had ever been convicted of felonies (particularly drug-related felonies) or misdemeanors, their parole status, the amount of time they served in prison and their health and mental health status in order to help gauge GA applicants' and recipients' ability to work.

D. *Develop the capacity to identify sub-groups of the GA population (e.g., by age group or employment history) in order to target services more effectively.* All of our counties will make informed guesses about the impact of this provision on their GA caseloads. None can be terribly precise. To begin with, most counties do not now aggregate their GA age brackets precisely in this 18-50 fashion. Second, none of the counties presently collect detailed individual work histories (weekly hours worked). Third, they cannot afford to undertake a manual search of old records to try to figure out how this target group varies as a share of their GA caseloads over time. In short, counties have neither all the necessary data nor the means to accurately estimate the numbers of people and the potential costs involved with respect to this one provision of the new law.

Recommendation #2: <u>Establish a CWDA working group to develop a detailed model for estimating the impact of federal changes on GA caseloads and costs.</u> A detailed calculus or estimate is needed regarding the likely effects using actual county data. Changes in federal law, if left unmitigated by subsequent federal and state actions, could well increase the number of needy people seeking help from county welfare and health agencies, as well as from non-profit community providers. A two-pronged approach is recommended: 1) identify potential new costs to the counties— both now and in the future. These costs will occur as households and individuals previously eligible for federally and state subsidized programs lose these more generous benefits and turn to county GA programs instead. To arrive at an estimate of new county GA costs, it is important to evaluate current SSI, AFDC, and food stamp caseloads and try to identify all of the current recipients likely to be subject to benefit reductions or terminations, and 2) identify the amount of "unmet need" experienced by individuals and households who will lose the more generous federally subsidized benefits. Some of these households will seek to replace the lost federal and/or state benefits and services through other means. For planning purposes, it is important for both public and non-profit agencies to try to estimate the size of the "benefit gap" that remains.

Recommendation #3: <u>Reassess GA Program Elements.</u>

A. *Focus on GA work-preparation activities and coordinate with already-existing work programs.* Because even the most efficient work programs are so expensive, we strongly recommend that counties try to take advantage of existing work programs that are subsidized by other levels of government. Given the high overlap between GA and food stamp recipients, it makes good sense to coordinate county GA work efforts with the FSET program. GA recipients are also eligible for the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). Finally, counties should seriously consider negotiating with the state to permit some or all of their able-bodied GA recipients to participate in whatever new work-training program is made available to TANF recipients. As long as counties are required and/or remain willing to serve employable adults, and if they are serious about helping people to become self-sufficient, they should give serious thought to beefing up their GA work requirements and work-preparation activities. To make this practicable, however, counties should consider carefully how they define "employable." In addition, counties should develop a clear sense of the per capita costs of moving various subcategories of GA recipients to work.

B. *Consider establishing a separate program for the disabled who cannot work.* Statewide eligibility criteria for such a disability program would need to be established in order to avoid having persons migrate from one county to another. Non-medical benefits might vary with the cost of living in various regions of the state. Counties might also wish to explore, with the state, a means of "buying" moderately or temporarily disabled GA recipients into the Medi-Cal program— particularly into lower-cost HMO type arrangements for basic and preventive care.

C. *Re-examine income and assets tests.* If counties are primarily concerned with keeping their GA-related costs manageable, they may wish to reexamine their income and assets tests with an eye toward further tightening the rules. In this way, they can keep all but the most destitute of households from qualifying. If, on the other hand, counties are interested in both alleviating hardship and giving households more of an incentive to find additional sources of income, they may wish to consider moderating their income and assets tests.

D. *Consider making greater use of in-kind benefits as an alternative to cash.* Counties generally pay GA benefits in the form of cash. In-kind benefits (shelter, food, child care, transportation, health care services, and so on), vouchers, or direct vendor payments may be more appropriate for some of the eligible populations being served. For example, disabled persons not expected to work might receive cash, except for their medical services. Persons with drug problems might be required to have representative payees or qualify only for in-kind benefits or direct vendor payments. Employable adults might receive only in-kind assistance (shelter, food, transportation, and medical care). Or, cash and in-kind assistance could be offered on a "work-first" basis. In other words, once individuals have worked some pre-designated number of supervised hours for public or non-profit agencies, they could be provided with benefits.

E. *Consider bringing multiple-person GA grant levels (at least for adults with children) in line with state-set TANF benefits for households of comparable size.* Counties should probably strive to set up a statewide family assistance program that parallels TANF as closely as possible and that blends its administrative apparatus with TANF as much as federal law will permit. Counties that choose to pay higher benefits for any or all of their caseload may find that some households will migrate from less generous counties. It would be advisable for counties to try to "harmonize" their benefits on a regional, if not statewide, basis that reflects the cost of living in each area.

F. *Reconsider the efficacy of limiting the duration of some or all benefits in the GA programs.* Ideally, certain essential benefits should be made available without limits. These might include emergency, routine, and preventive health care benefits. Basic shelter and nutrition should be available, at least on an in-kind basis, for those in need of these basics. When it comes to cash payments and other supportive services, counties might want to differentiate between those who are disabled and not expected to work and those who are expected to work.

Recommendation #4: <u>Maintain close contact with legislative representatives, and coordinate BASSC and individual county efforts with those of the CWDA.</u> If counties properly brief their legislative representatives, little in the way of welfare reform will happen without a deal on GA. That is why it is important for counties to provide useful and easily understood "caseload and cost-shift" data to their state Senate and Assembly members.

Recommendation #5: <u>Educate the private sector.</u> If the public sector hopes to develop a long-term partnership with its private, for-profit sector, public-sector leaders must convince their private-sector counterparts that the health of the community in which they all live and do business will deteriorate— posing a real threat to everybody's quality of life and profit margin— if poverty and dependency are left to fester. With the decline in federal and, possibly, state spending, it is important that the private sector help bridge the gap. At the very least, the for-profit sector needs to understand the connection between its hiring practices and salary scales and the plight of those who are able-bodied and willing to work, but who remain chronically unemployed or underemployed, or who work full-time and remain poor.

Recommendation #6: <u>Experiment with small scale collaboration</u>. If counties want to collaborate with each other, either on a regional or statewide basis, they will face a daunting task. Even within the strictures of current state law, county GA programs differ markedly from each other. Whether counties with very different budgets, tax bases, and spending priorities can find common ground on key programmatic features remains an open question. To test the proposition, we suggest that our participating Bay Area counties try a small experiment. Over the course of a two-day retreat, we propose that the directors and some key agency staff come together for the sole purpose of mapping out a uniform, regional, revamped GA program. Such a public, multiple-county collaboration would set up some "winners and losers." Those counties operating more generous programs would presumably tighten eligibility and lower their benefit payments, while those now at the low end would have to make their programs somewhat more generous. The trade-offs are self evident: More generous counties might save some money at the expense of their GA recipients, while less generous counties might have to pay more, to the benefit of their GA recipients. If our diverse BASSC counties could overcome these difficulties and agree on the specifics of eligibility, benefits, work requirements, administrative control and funding, we would have a working model that could be useful throughout the state.

APPENDIX A: REVIEW OF GA PROGRAMS NATIONWIDE[44]

Most, but not all states or localities provide GA programs. Because they are locally initiated and managed, no uniform data are routinely collected on these programs on a national basis. However, there have been periodic sample studies. In 1978, 1982, and 1989, the federal Department of Health and Human Services conducted GA studies. Facing increasing budget constraints, the Department has not undertaken such a study since 1989. In 1992, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, together with the National Conference on State Legislatures, conducted a study similar in scope to those previous federal efforts entitled *General Assistance Programs: Gaps in the Safety Net* (1995), which added one particularly useful feature: It summarizes the then-available (and limited) studies of attempts to get more able-bodied GA recipients to work. We will discuss these findings in the final section of our paper.

More recently, the Urban Institute, as part of its *Assessing the New Federalism* project, conducted a telephone survey (between June and August 1996) of all 50 states and the District of Columbia to obtain updated information on the status of GA programs. In states where GA programs are allowed to vary significantly from county to county, the Urban Institute collected GA program information only from the most populous county. Thus, in California, the Urban Institute's data come only from Los Angeles County. Nevertheless, the Urban Institute's recently released report, *State General Assistance Programs, 1996*, provides an up-to-date, if somewhat limited, summary of GA programs around the country and serves as a useful backdrop for considering possible GA program changes in California, generally, and in Bay Area counties, specifically. The remainder of this section's summary information is drawn from the Urban Institute's report.[45]

GA program availability and administration

Most states try to provide some assistance to those individuals and households who are unable to qualify for federally subsidized programs, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), for the elderly, blind, and disabled poor, and Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), for poor families with children (replaced in the new federal law with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or TANF block grant program). For example, poor adults with disabilities not deemed severe enough for SSI, but who have trouble finding and keeping employment, may turn to GA programs for help. Poor childless adults, including pregnant women in their first two trimesters of pregnancy, might turn to GA. Even some parents with children, whose personal circumstances disqualify them from AFDC/TANF may seek relief from local GA programs.[46]

At present, of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 42 operate some sort of GA program.[47] Of these, 33 operate programs throughout the state, nine have GA assistance in some, but not all localities in the state, and nine offer no program at all. Most of the latter are found in the south.

Of the 33 states running programs statewide, only 25 operate them uniformly in all localities.[48] The other eight states in this group offer GA in all localities, but allow features of the program (such as eligibility criteria and benefit payments) to vary among localities.[49] California is one of these eight states.

Eighteen states do not require GA programs at all. In nine of these states, some of the more populous cities and/or counties have elected to provide some GA assistance.[50] In the other nine states, there are no discernible GA programs operating. [51]

Because these GA programs are state and local creations, and are funded exclusively with state and locally raised revenues, there are no uniform eligibility requirements, benefit payments, financing, or administrative arrangements among states, or even among counties within a state, like California, that permits programs to vary across jurisdictions. Moreover, different states and localities do not use comparable definitions. Terms like "elderly," "disabled," and "unemployable" (to name but a few examples), mean different things in different places. Nor do different states and localities use the same reporting methods. Consequently, it is very difficult to provide reliable descriptions of GA programs across the country. What follows therefore, should be considered a rough summary of the nation's GA programs.

Eligibility

<u>Universal or categorical</u>: Regarding eligibility criteria, the Urban Institute's recent study found that only 12 states provide GA to all financially needy persons (who don't qualify for federally subsidized programs) who meet state and/or local eligibility requirements. The other 30 states provide GA only to certain categories of people, such as the elderly, disabled, and others deemed unemployable, and/or households with children. All 42 states with any GA program offer assistance to the elderly, disabled, or others thought unemployable. In fact, many of the elderly and disabled may be waiting for SSI determinations. (If such individuals are eventually granted SSI benefits retroactive to the application date, many states/localities will require that the new SSI beneficiaries reimburse them for the "interim" GA benefits paid in the meantime.)

By contrast, 31 of the 42 states with any GA programs offer assistance to poor children or families with children. Only 16 states offer GA to able-bodied or "employable" adults who do not care for dependent children.

Los Angeles County allows all financially needy individuals and households, who do not otherwise qualify for federally subsidized programs, to apply for GA benefits.

Income and assets: Income limits usually vary according to household size and sometimes with where the households reside. For example, higher limits may be permitted in areas with higher than average costs of living. Income limits can also vary with the eligibility category. For example, new applicants may be subject to lower income limits than ongoing recipients; those deemed unemployable may be permitted higher income limits than those deemed employable; and households in subsidized public housing may have lower income limits than those in private housing. Assets limits, on the other hand, do not generally vary by household size or eligibility category. Most states permit GA households between $1,000 and $2,000 in assets, often modeled after the assets limits in the SSI or the old AFDC programs.

Income limits vary considerably across states. At the low end of the spectrum, Florida, Kentucky, and New Hampshire require that GA applicants have zero income to qualify for assistance. At the high end, Hawaii permits individuals to have monthly incomes of up to $1,239 and families of three to have monthly incomes of up to $2,109.

Most states permit certain income and assets to be exempted in making these eligibility determinations. Asset exemptions usually include homes, personal goods, and all or some portion of a car's worth. Income exemptions may include all or some portion of unearned income, such as other sources of benefits (federally provided Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program or Women, Infants, and Children benefits, e.g.) and some portion of earned income.

Los Angeles County permits individual applicants to have monthly incomes of up to $221, while employed GA recipients may have up to $611 per month and unemployed recipients $221 per month (or less, depending on living arrangements). A family of three applying for GA could have up to $431 per month in income, while employed recipients could have up to $831 in monthly income and unemployed recipients could have up to $431 in monthly income. LA permits no income exemptions. After exemptions ($34,000 in real property and up to $4,500 for a car), LA permits individual applicants to have only $50 in assets, and a family of three to have $100 in assets, while ongoing GA recipients are permitted up to $1,500 in assets.

Citizenship and residency: Thirty-six states currently restrict GA eligibility to citizens or legal residents (including legal immigrants and refugees) and deny GA to illegal or undocumented persons. Only three states (Idaho, New York, and North Carolina) have no citizenship requirements. The District of Columbia does not require citizenship for persons under age 18, and Maine requires that only its able-bodied applicants prove citizenship or legal alien status.

Virtually all jurisdictions offering GA programs require that applicants currently reside in the state or locality where they are applying for benefits. Some also require that the applicants declare their intent to remain in that jurisdiction, while seven require that applicants prove they've lived in the jurisdiction for some specific length of time, ranging from 15 days to nine months.

Los Angeles County requires that GA recipients be citizens or legal residents and that all applicants prove they have resided in the county for not less than 15 days.

Work requirements: Of the 42 states offering GA programs in all or some of their jurisdictions, half (21) require that recipients participate in work programs as a condition of continued eligibility. Although nine states provide some education and training options, most states emphasize finding an unsubsidized job as quickly as possible and/or participating in "workfare"type programs, in which the value of the GA benefit is "worked off." These requirements generally apply to those programs which offer GA to "employable" adults. In addition, many GA recipients also receive Food Stamps and are, therefore, required to meet the federally set work requirements for that program. At the time of the Urban Institute study, however, only about half of those states with GA work requirements coordinated their work requirements with those of the Food Stamp work programs. [52] Los Angeles County does impose work requirements on able-bodied GA recipients, but does not permit any GA applicant to be employed full time.

Drug screening and treatment: At the time the Urban Institute conducted its survey, none of the 42 states running GA programs required drug screening as a condition of eligibility, although two are likely to begin such drug tests shortly. Colorado intends to test all applicants beginning January 1, 1997, and Los Angeles County is developing such a program.

Seven states do require that GA recipients agree to participate in treatment for drug or alcohol abuse if they are found to be substance dependent. Failure to do so could disqualify substance abusers from continued GA eligibility. In these cases, the GA benefits are often paid directly to vendors of specific services or to substitute payees.

Benefits

Form and amount: Benefits available under GA vary considerably, both in form and amount. The Urban Institute found that 28 states provide cash benefits to all recipients, while 11 states offer only in-kind benefits (either in the form of vouchers or vendor payments), and three states offer a mix of cash and in-kind benefits, depending on the reason for eligibility (e.g., the disabled qualify for cash payments, but all others receive only vendor payments or vouchers).

Three states (Idaho, New Hampshire, and South Dakota) do not limit GA benefits, preferring to provide vouchers sufficient to cover the actual cost of goods and services provided. And Iowa does not set monthly benefit limits, but does impose annual limits. However, most GA programs do cap the monthly amount of benefits a household can receive, and these maximum amounts can vary by household size, reason for eligibility, and/or living arrangements. For one-person households, these maximum monthly payments seem to range from a low of about $100 to a high of about $400; for three-person households, from about $200 to about $700.

It is important to remember, however, that the GA amounts actually paid are, on average, less than the maximum permitted. (Any non-exempt income that the household receives in a given month is generally subtracted from the maximum grant amount, resulting in a lower average GA payment.)

Of the 28 states providing cash benefits, the average benefit comes to roughly 40% of the federal poverty line, ranging from a low of 12% of poverty in Missouri, to a high of 100% in Nebraska.[53] With the exception of Hawaii (average GA benefit comes to 71% of poverty) and Nebraska (100% of poverty), all other states with cash benefits make average GA payments to individuals of less than 55% of the poverty line.

Los Angeles County, effective March 1996, provides a one-person household with a maximum monthly cash payment of roughly $221, and a three-person household with about $431 per month. The average payment per individual is roughly 34% of the federal poverty level.

Duration: With respect to the duration of GA benefits, the Urban Institute found that 18 states provide benefits on an ongoing basis, while 15 impose time limits on some portion of their GA caseloads, and nine states time-limit GA benefits to all recipients. At present, states are more likely to exclude certain categories of recipients, such as employable adults without dependents, than to impose time-limited GA benefits.

States with time limits either provide assistance for some set number of months within a given time period or establish a lifetime limit. Some states without time limits often require that GA cases be reevaluated periodically, in order to be certain that the households remain eligible for assistance. Others require that the household reapply for specific vouchers whenever a given need (like rent) reoccurs.

At the time of the Urban Institute study, Los Angeles County provided ongoing assistance, without time limits.

Medical assistance: Medicaid benefits, which are linked automatically to SSI benefits for the elderly, disabled, and blind, and were linked to AFDC households (and will likely be available to all TANF and most former AFDC households found ineligible for TANF), are only provided to GA recipients by three states (Delaware, Hawaii, and Oregon) and the District of Columbia.

Of the remaining 38 states with GA programs, 29 provide medical assistance to some or all GA recipients through state and/or county medical programs or by allowing GA programs to reimburse for certain medical expenses. Some states will make their GA-medical programs available to needy households who do not meet the eligibility criteria for the cash GA programs. However, these county/GA medical benefits are usually less comprehensive than those provided under the Medicaid program. In some states, such medical benefits are limited to life-threatening conditions.

There are nine states with GA programs which do not include medical assistance components, but most offer alternative means of acquiring health care, such as public hospital systems or indigent health care programs. States without GA programs may also provide limited medical coverage to their poor citizens who don't qualify for Medicaid.

Los Angeles County refers its GA recipients to the LA County Health Department for services (except for those who are permanently disabled and likely to be eligible for Medi-Cal). Covered services include inpatient and outpatient care, physician services, prescription drugs, and nursing home care.

Caseloads and expenditures

Reliable caseload and cost data are nearly impossible to obtain, primarily because of the wide variation in eligibility criteria across and within states, program changes over time in numerous localities, and lack of uniform reporting methods. Because the Urban Institute was able to survey only the most populous county in each of 17 states (that either mandate GA statewide but permit key program features to vary from one county to another or only offer GA in some of their localities), we do not have cost and caseload data for all states.

Among the 25 states operating uniform GA programs statewide, the Urban Institute found that average monthly state caseloads varied considerably in absolute numbers (from fewer than

1,000 persons in Alaska and Rhode Island to almost 340,000 persons in New York), but that as a percentage of state population, GA caseloads were consistently very small— ranging from less than 0.1 percent in Oregon and Utah to about 1.8 percent in New York. Statewide expenditures also varied widely, from about $4 million annually in Utah and Vermont to nearly $1.1 billion in New York.

Los Angeles County's estimated average monthly caseload in 1995 was nearly 92,000, or about one percent of the county's general population. Annual GA expenditures for the county were about $21 million.

APPENDIX B: REVIEW OF CALIFORNIA'S GA PROGRAM

Assessing California's GA program is no less difficult than evaluating the programs nationwide. Although the program is mandated by Section 17000 of the state's Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC), the 58 counties have broad discretion in structuring the program's eligibility criteria and benefits. In fact, there is not a single GA program operating in the State of California; rather, there are 58 different variations on a theme. The state does not set out uniform standards or definitions and does not require regular reporting of county data. As a consequence, we have neither a statewide database on GA, nor comparable data among the 58 counties.

In short, nobody in the State of California can say with any accuracy who receives GA benefits, why they are poor and in need of such aid, what benefits they receive, what happens to them over time, and how cost-effective GA expenditures are. Not only does this hamper informed policy making by state and county officials with respect to current GA recipients, programs, and costs, it also greatly complicates future policy-making with respect to coming welfare reforms. Absent reliable and up-to-date information, state and county officials can only guess at how GA caseloads, program needs, and costs will change over time as a consequence of changes in federal and state law. Moreover, any attempts to revise or reinvent GA can only be evaluated against current program operations, which are not well understood.

The most recent review of California's GA program was published in 1995, based on survey data collected by UCLA researchers in the spring of 1992. Only 37 counties responded to the questionnaire, but the study's authors also reviewed other records to obtain some information on the remaining 21 counties.[54]

Although the information in this report is somewhat dated, it provides useful data for nearly two-thirds (37) of California's counties, including those with the largest populations and GA caseloads and costs. Additionally, the study analyzed the relationship between GA caseload size and expenditures and demographic, economic, and social variables, with some cautionary findings. The remainder of this section draws on the material from this 1992 review of California's GA program.

Program background, availability, and administration

The State of California mandates that counties provide public assistance to the indigent, but the program is completely funded and administered by the counties. In fact, California is one of eight states with a mandatory "statewide" GA program that is permitted to vary from county to county. It is, however, the only state in the country which relies entirely on county-raised general revenues to support its program.

Today's GA program has its roots in California's Pauper Act of 1931 and subsequent amendments made in 1937. Until very recently, further changes in the GA program were mandated more by California's courts than by the state legislature. Prior to the 1970s, courts generally found that counties had an obligation to provide relief to all poor persons, but that they were permitted "broad discretion to determine eligibility for, the type and amount of, and conditions to be attached to indigent relief." Beginning in 1971, however, a series of court cases began to chip away at county discretion. In case after case, court decisions struck down various counties' attempts to control GA costs by limiting benefit payments and/or narrowing eligibility criteria.[55]

Restrained by judicial decisions, growing GA caseloads and costs in the 1980s were particularly burdensome to counties. California's population grew by 26.2% between 1981 and 1991.Yet, over the same decade, the average monthly number of individuals receiving GA in the state grew by 295% (from 26,979 in 1981 to 106,557 in 1991), and the number of families receiving assistance grew by 226% (from 1,034 in 1981 to 3,371 in 1991). Expenditures skyrocketed along with burgeoning caseloads, rising 369% (from $86.3 million to $404.5 million) over the same time period. However, the counties' total tax and other revenues increased by only 107% (from $12.1 billion to $25 billion) from 1981 to 1991.

Predictably, the combination of judicial restrictions and unprecedented growth in their GA programs caused most counties to seek fiscal relief. They could no longer sustain GA programs that outstripped their ability to raise revenues. (This was exacerbated by passage of Proposition 13, in 1978 GA costs were eating up available resources— threatening county investment in desirable public goods and social services, such as libraries, public transit, child welfare, physical and mental health programs. Eventually, some counties asserted that their GA costs were imperiling vital functions, such as police and fire protection.

Counties intensified their efforts to get the legislature to overturn, via new statutory law, various court rulings on GA. In 1991, the legislature began to respond. First, it revised Section 17000 of the WIC, permitting counties to satisfy their obligation to aid the indigent if their benefit levels were at least 62% of the 1991 poverty level ($342 per month for an individual), adjusted annually as were AFDC benefits. When Governor Wilson succeeded in getting the legislature to cut AFDC benefits, as part of his 1991-1992 budget, some counties sought corresponding reductions in GA benefits. This led to further litigation, but as part of the 1992-

1993 budget, the legislature moved to codify the counties' authority to cut GA benefits at the same rate that AFDC benefits were cut.[56]

In addition, counties with lower housing costs, as measured by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development "Fair Market Rents" index, were allowed to reduce GA benefits by another 1.5% to 4.5%. The state legislature also authorized counties to reduce GA grants for persons in shared housing, to include the value of in-kind benefits toward meeting the now-reduced county payment standards, to reduce or terminate aid to recipients who failed to comply with work requirements or other program rules without good cause, and to impose 15-day residency requirements.

More GA relief came with the 1993-1994 budget package, in which county property tax revenues were shifted from counties to the state, helping to defray the state's growing deficit as the recession deepened. To compensate for this revenue shift, the state legislature permitted counties, effective January 1, 1994, to further cut their GA grants (below the previously modified standards) if, after notice and a public hearing, the Commission on State Mandates finds that meeting the standard would cause petitioning counties serious fiscal problems. Even with the steady decline in GA benefits— they currently average $225 per month, down from $307 five years ago— counties spent $414 million on GA in the state's 1995-1996 fiscal year.

Ironically, even after the decade of extraordinary program growth in the 1980s, California's GA program was still more limited in scope than other states' GA efforts. According to 1992 summary data cited by Moon and Schneiderman, nationwide, the number of GA recipients was 17% higher in 1990 than in 1980. Although California was the most populous state in the nation, and the number of individuals in the state receiving GA grew by nearly 300% during roughly the same time period (1981-1991), compared to the rest of the country, California's GA caseload was only the fifth largest in absolute size and the fourteenth largest relative to total population. California had only 3.6 GA recipients per 1,000 population, compared to a national average of 4.9 per 1,000 population. This surprisingly low ratio is even more pronounced when California is compared to other major, industrial states running GA programs— New York (16.5), Michigan (17.2), Pennsylvania (13.6), Massachusetts (7.2), and Illinois (9.1).

This low rate of aid was not evident in other public assistance programs, however. In 1990, with 12% of the nation's entire population, California provided 17% of the nation's AFDC benefits, 40% of the nation's AFDC-U (two-parent) benefits, and 18% of the nation's SSI benefits. By contrast, it paid only 8.6% of the nation's GA benefits. This anomaly might be explained by the fact that only California relies entirely on county-raised revenues to fund its GA program.

Eligibility

Universal or categorical: Mandated by state law, the GA program operates in all 58 counties and is required to serve all poor persons who cannot qualify for other sources of assistance. It is the public assistance program of last resort and is residual in nature. Different counties may treat different categories of eligible recipients differently— imposing different requirements or standards on those deemed employable versus those considered unemployable, for example— but all counties are, in theory, serving individuals and childless couples, emancipated minors, families with children, the disabled, and elderly. The presumption is that all of these poor persons or households are ineligible for, are applying for, or are already receiving any other benefits.

Income and assets: Income limits vary from county to county. For the 37 counties that participated in the 1992 survey, most set their income limits at the same level as the maximum monthly grant amounts that the applying individuals or households could qualify for, assuming they had no other countable income. (For the 37 counties reporting, maximum individual GA grants ranged from a low of $209 per month in Tulare to a high of $395 per month in Humboldt.) At the time of the survey, two counties (Lake and Madera) had very low income limits, set at $50. A couple of other counties set their income limits at a nominal sum below their maximum grant amounts (Sacramento, for example, set its limit at $10 less than its maximum monthly grant payment).

Of the 10 BASSC counties participating in this project, eight reported their income limits as part of the 1992 survey. **Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz**, and **Sonoma** all reported income limits equal to their maximum grant amounts. **San Franscisco** reported setting its income limit at $5 less than the maximum grant amount. At the time, the maximum grant amounts for these eight counties were tightly clustered, ranging from $327 per month in Contra Costa to $345 in San Francisco.

At the time of the survey, only two counties, Alameda and San Francisco reported income disregards for those GA recipients who were working. **Alameda** permitted recipients to keep up to 50% of their gross earnings (up to a maximum of $170 per month) and still qualify for GA benefits. In 1992, the income limit for a single, employed GA recipient in Alameda was reported to be $629. The income limit for a working GA recipient in **San Francisco** was $610.

Assets limits vary widely from county to county. The sketchy material reported by Moon and Schneiderman suggests that, of the 37 counties participating in the 1992 study, many permit assets of up to $1,000 or $1,500— although it is unclear whether these are liquid assets or all assets. Neither is it always clear whether the reported limits vary by household size or whether certain items are exempt, such as homes and personal belongings.

Some counties do distinguish between real property and liquid assets, and some have separate assets limits on automobiles. Humboldt County reported an assets limit of $50, while Los Angeles reported assets limits of $34,000 in market value for real property, plus personal property of up to $500, plus $50 in cash for an individual ($100 in cash for a family), plus up to $1,500 value for a car.

Eight of the ten counties participating in the present BASSC project reported their assets, during the 1992 survey, as follows: **Alameda**— $1,500 in liquid assets; **Contra Costa**— $500, of which no more than $50 may be in cash or other liquid assets; **Marin**— $50 cash on hand plus $600 in liquid assets; **San Francisco**— savings up to $25, plus a vehicle valued up to $900, plus insurance of up to $600; **San Mateo**— $50 plus a vehicle valued up to $1,000; **Santa Clara**— $50; **Santa Cruz**— $200 in cash, plus a vehicle valued up to $1,500, plus other personal property valued up to $200; and **Sonoma**— $0 in liquid assets, but a vehicle valued up to $1,500.

Citizenship and residency: Of the 37 counties responding to the 1992 survey, six required that GA applicants be U.S. citizens as a condition of eligibility (Inyo, Lake, Mendocino, Plumas, Siskiyou, and Tuolumne). Another six counties required neither citizenship nor legal permanent resident status (Calaveras, Glenn, **San Francisco, San Mateo**, Shasta, and Yolo). The remaining 25 counties required only permanent resident status, including legal aliens able to work and to give proof of their intent to reside in the U.S. permanently.

As a consequence of the U.S. amnesty ruling in 1991, Glenn, Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento, **San Francisco, and Santa Clara** counties extended GA access to those aliens who did not have permanent resident status, but who were certified by the Immigration and Naturalization Service to work in the U.S. and who intended to remain in the country permanently. California counties do not intentionally provide GA benefits to individuals or households here illegally or legally, but on temporary visas.

Only ten of the 37 counties participating in the 1992 survey reported having no residency requirement (Amador, Colusa, **Contra Costa**, Humboldt, Inyo, Madera, Modoc, Mono, **Santa Clara,** and Yolo). The remaining 27 imposed varying requirements, ranging from statements of intent to reside in the county (Amador, Fresno, Los Angeles, Mendocino, Monterey, Orange, Sacramento, San Benito, **San Francisco, and Sonoma**), to providing proof of residence, such as rent receipts, descriptions of living arrangements, or even home visits (Calaveras, El Dorado, Glenn, Plumas, **San Mateo, Santa Cruz**, and Shasta). With the exception of Tuolumne, none of the 27 counties reporting some sort of residency requirement imposed a minimum period of county residence prior to applying for or qualifying for GA benefits. However, the legislature did not explicitly authorize counties to impose up to 15-day residency requirements until the 1992-1993 budget package was agreed upon.

Some counties reported that they changed their residency policies as a consequence of a 1987 court decision, which struck down a San Diego rule that a GA applicant have a "fixed address" within 60 days of applying for aid, in order to maintain eligibility. Before the lawsuit was initiated, most counties required "proof of address," which effectively disqualified homeless persons from receiving aid. **Santa Clara** abolished its proof of address requirement before 1985, **Contra Costa** did so in December 1985, **Alameda** in 1986, and **San Francisco** in 1989.

Work, relative responsibility, and other requirements: Of the 37 counties responding to the 1992 survey, all but three (Mendocino, San Luis Obispo, and Siskiyou) required GA recipients deemed employable to search for and accept work and/or to participate in "workfare" activities.

Twenty-eight counties required that close relatives assume financial responsibility for GA applicants and/or recipients— usually contacting related adults, spouses, and/or parents prior to granting aid. Nine counties did not have "relative responsibility" requirements (Colusa, Glenn, Inyo, Mono, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, and Shasta). Of the participating BASSC counties, eight reported as follows: **Alameda**— If a recipient/applicant lives with a relative, the relative will be asked whether he or she is willing to provide for rent; but it is optional; **Contra Costa**— spouse for spouse, and parent for minor child, and the county attempts to contact parents, adult children and sponsors of aliens to attempt to collect support; **Marin**— spouse for spouse and parents for minor children living in the home; **San Francisco**— spouse for spouse when a grant is for two persons, first degree consanguinity; **San Mateo**— no relative responsibility requirements; **Santa Clara**— spouse for spouse and parents for minor children; **Santa Cruz**— a GA applicant living with a relative is not eligible for aid; **Sonoma**— spouse for spouse, rent is not paid to parents, unless eligible for SSI.

According to Moon and Schneiderman, 16 counties reported "other" GA eligibility requirements. The most commonly cited were: applying for all other relevant income transfer programs (including SSI, State Disability Insurance, Unemployment Insurance, and Workers'

Compensation), verifying illness or disability for those claiming they could not work, and agreeing to treatment for substance abuse, if necessary.

Benefits

Form and amount: Of the 37 counties that participated in the 1992 survey, 18 reported providing benefits in the form of cash (Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Colusa, **Contra Costa**, Glenn, **Marin**, Mariposa, Mendocino, Modoc, Mono, San Luis Obispo, **San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz**, Shasta, Siskiyou, and Tulare). Three others provided only in-kind benefits (Inyo, Madera, and San Benito), and 13 offered some of both (**Alameda**, Fresno, Humboldt, Kern, Los Angeles, Monterey, Orange, Plumas, Sacramento, **San Francisco**, Santa Barbara, Tuolumne, and Yolo). Although the Moon and Schneiderman study offers no explanation, it reports that three counties appeared to offer neither cash nor in-kind benefits (El Dorado, Lake, and **Sonoma**).

In 1992, of the 37 survey counties, the maximum monthly grant payment for a single GA recipient ranged from a low of $209 in Tulare to a high of $395 in Humboldt, with a mean monthly payment of $321, and a median monthly payment of $340. For a two-person household, the maximum monthly grant ranged from $240 in Tulare to $628 in San Mateo, with a mean payment of nearly $504 (with 30 counties reporting), and a median payment of $535. For a three-person household, the maximum monthly grant ranged from $280 in Tulare to $703 in Humboldt and San Francisco, with a mean payment of $617 (with 30 counties reporting), and a median payment of $663.

Relative to the 1992 federal poverty line for a single person, reporting counties paid from 35% of poverty to 66%. The mean individual payment came to 54% of poverty and the median payment to 57%. For two-person households, payments ranged from 32% of poverty to 83%, with a mean payment of 66% and a median payment of 70%. For three-person households, payments ranged from 30% of poverty to 75%, with a mean payment of 66% and a median payment of 71%.[57]

Seven of the eight BASSC counties participating in the 1992 survey were offering above average maximum monthly benefits: **Alameda** was paying $340 per individual, $559 for two, and $693 for three; **Contra Costa** was paying $327 per individual, $566 for two, and $671 for three; **Marin** was paying $340 per individual, $560 for two, and $694 for three; **San Francisco** was paying $345 per individual, $567 for two, and $703 for three; **San Mateo** was paying $341 per individual, $628 for two, and $694 for three; **Santa Clara** was paying $341 per individual, $560 for two, and $694 for three; and **Santa Cruz** was paying $341 per individual, $519 for two, and $694 for three. Maximum grant data were not available for **Sonoma.**

It was shortly after the 1992 survey took place that California counties were authorized to reduce their GA grant payments. Not all counties have taken advantage of this option, but one dramatic example of a county that has done so is **Alameda.** Over the last four years, Alameda County has cut its maximum monthly grant for an individual by 35% — from $340 in 1992 to $221 in 1996; for a two-person (two adults) household by 47% — from $559 in 1992 to $296 in 1996; and a three-person household by only 12% — from $693 in 1992 to $607 in 1996. **Contra Costa** and **Marin** have also reduced their maximum monthly GA benefits, but far less dramatically, while **San Francisco** has maintained its standard for single persons and increased its maximum monthly GA grants for two- and three-person households. **Santa Cruz** has not altered its GA maximum grant payments over the last four years. In virtually all cases, the counties' maximum GA grant payments have eroded against inflation, if they have not been cut outright. Consequently, such payments, relative to the federal poverty line, have generally fallen.

Again, it is important to note that most GA recipients do not receive the maximum grants possible. In FY 1991, across all 58 counties, the average monthly grant paid to single persons was $302 and the average monthly grant paid to "families" was $444. Of the ten counties participating in this BASSC project, their average monthly payments to individuals and families were reported as: **Alameda** — $331 for individuals and $684 for families; **Contra Costa** — $291 for individuals and $547 for families; **Marin** — $264 for individuals and $491 for families; **Napa** — $213 for individuals and $490 for families; **San Francisco** — $319 for individuals and $800 for families; **San Mateo** — $300 for individuals $597 for families; **Santa Clara** — $292 for individuals and $436 for families; **Santa Cruz** — $313 for individuals and $466 for families; **Solano** — $388 for individuals and $703 for families; **Sonoma** — $170 for individuals and $104 for families; and **Stanislaus** — $307 for individuals and $332 for families.

Table 1: Average Monthly GA Grant as Percent of Poverty Level, 1992 and 1996

1992	Alameda	Contra Costa	Marin	Napa	San Francisco	San Mateo	Santa Clara	Santa Cruz	Sonoma	Stanislaus
Average monthly grant for one-person household	$331	$291	$264	$213	$319	$300	$292	$313	$170	$307
Percent of poverty level covered by grant $595 for one person household	56%	49%	44%	36%	54%	50%	49%	53%	29%	52%
1996										
Average monthly grant for one-person household	$179	$256	$295	N.A.	$330	$281	N.A.	$280	$271	N.A.
Percent of poverty level covered by grant $645 for one person household	28%	40%	46%	N.A.	51%	44%	N.A.	43%	42%	N.A.

Duration: Of the 37 counties participating in the 1992 survey, 33 described their GA programs as "ongoing," providing benefits for at least six months. These counties also offered shorter-term and emergency benefits. Four counties (Alpine, Inyo, **Marin**, and San Benito) described their programs as offering only short-term and emergency aid.

Average actual duration of GA receipt varied markedly from county to county. Based on 1991 data from 18 counties, GA lasted 2.5 months on average in Amador County, five months in **San Francisco**, 16.8 months in **Alameda**, and 18 months in **San Mateo**. Although the 1992 study do not specify, these "spells" on GA are most likely single episodes. We do not appear to have any data on cumulative time spent on GA or the frequency with which GA recipients cycle on and off the program within a given county, much less across multiple county jurisdictions.

Some of the counties elected to impose time limits on GA recipients who were deemed employable. For example, **Sonoma** County limited GA to 90 days for employable recipients. The 1992 survey also found that the actual average period of GA receipt differed markedly between employable and unemployable recipients. In 1991, in Los Angeles, employable recipients received GA on average for about three months, while unemployable recipients remained on the GA rolls for about seven months.

Medical assistance: Although the 1992 survey does not deal explicitly with medical care, it appears as if most counties provide some routine health care and all emergency care through their county health and hospital systems. GA recipients are not, as a rule, eligible for Medi-Cal benefits. Usually, any health benefits are delivered in-kind at county hospitals or clinics.

Recipient characteristics

The 1996 Urban Institute review of GA programs across the country did not even attempt to collect information on recipient characteristics. Because programs are so variable and standard criteria are non-existent, it is easy to understand why.

Here in California, however, the UCLA researchers attempted, as part of their 1992 study of county GA programs, to form a crude picture of the GA caseload across the 37 participating counties, many of which could not provide sought-after data. At best, Moon and Schneiderman produced, in their own words, an "impressionistic profile" of recipients: For the eight counties with the largest GA expenditures (**Alameda, Contra Costa**, Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento, San Diego, **San Francisco, and Santa Clara**), single adults made up 83% to 99% of the caseload, 24% to 63% of recipients graduated from high school, 13% to 24% were veterans, and somewhere between 5% and 45% were or had been substance abusers. With seven of these eight counties reporting, some 36% to 75% of the GA recipients were deemed employable, and between 71% and 93% had been in the labor force. Taking the other survey counties into account, somewhere between 3% and 64% of recipients were homeless and between 6% and 54% had been in prison.

Correlates of GA caseload size and expenditures

One of the more intriguing aspects of the 1992 survey is that the researchers ran the 58 counties' GA caseload and expenditure levels against 28 economic, demographic, and social variables. Somewhat surprisingly, they found that county GA caseloads and expenditures did not significantly correlate with county rates of poverty and unemployment, the ratio of veterans per 1,000 population, or the ratio of young adults aging out of the AFDC and foster care programs.

Rather, county GA caseloads and expenditures did significantly correlate with the following eight variables: (1) the number of SSI denials, due to recipient failure to pursue claims; (2) the number of felons released into the community on parole; (3) the size of the refugee population; (4) the number of clients served in county mental health and state hospital programs; (5) the number of renter-occupied housing units with gross rent under $200 per month; (6) per capita income; (7) the total amount of revenues from taxes and all other receipts; and (8) the average monthly GA payment.

Taken together with the "impressionistic" profile of California's GA population, these findings seem to suggest the following: First, the majority of GA recipients have prior work experience, which challenges the notion they have never worked or don't want to work. Second, the fact that GA caseloads and expenditures are not responsive to changes in the economy, such as the unemployment rate, implies that many of these GA recipients' ties to the labor force are so weak, that they are unlikely to be affected by cyclical swings in the economy. In short, robust economic growth may not, by itself, have much of an effect on GA caseloads and costs. Third, a significant portion of the caseload may have alcohol or drug problems and may be too troubled to obtain, or to stick with, effective treatment. Fourth, some portion of the GA caseload may have disabling conditions stemming from mental illness, but may be too dysfunctional to successfully complete the SSI application process. Finally, that GA caseloads and costs vary with the number of parolees and refugees suggests that prisons and federal refugee programs— the "systems" that deal with those sub-populations before they arrive "on the counties' doorsteps"— do not adequately address issues of self-sufficiency.

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE GA INTAKE FORMS

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
Statement of Facts Supporting Eligibility
for General Assistance
GENERAL ASSISTANCE APPLICATION

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Form 2133 Rev. 11-95

Date Received ____________

1. LIST ALL PERSONS FOR WHOM AID IS BEING REQUESTED

Applicant's Name (last, first, middle) | Phone

Home address(number, street, city, state, zip code)

Mailing Address (if different from above)

Social Security Number ______-______-______ NOTICE: DSS will computer match SSN(s) against records from tax, welfare,employment, the Social Security Admin. and other agencies to be sure you are reporting all your income and resources. We may check out differences with employers, banks,and/or others. We also use this information to determine eligibility, benefits, and to be sure that you are not getting aid from more than one case in this county, or from another county.

SEX: ( ) M ( ) F | Birthplace (City/State) | Birthdate ___/___/___

MARITAL STATUS:
( ) Married ( ) Never Married ( ) Common Law ( ) Widowed ( ) Separated ( ) Divorced

Spouse's Name | Spouse's Birthdate

Spouse's Address | Spouse's Social Security #

2. DO YOU LIVE WITH OTHERS (Adults/Children)? ___Yes ___No If YES, complete below

Name ______________________ / ______________ DOB___/___/___
(first, middle,last) Relationship

Name ______________________ / ______________ DOB___/___/___
(first, middle, last) Relationship

Are they applying for or receiving General Assistance, AFDC, SSI or SSA or any other income ? ____Yes ____No

Are you pregnant? ___Yes ___No If Yes, do you have verification? ___Yes ___No

3. CHECK WHAT TYPES OF IDENTIFICATION YOU HAVE:

( ) STATE ID , WHAT STATE ________ ( ) DRIVER'S LICENSE, WHAT STATE________

( ) PASSPORT, WHAT COUNTRY__________ ( ) SS CARD ( ) BIRTH CERT.

( ) ALIEN CARD ( ) MILITARY ID ( ) OTHER:____________________

4. CITIZENSHIP STATUS (Please check one) ( ) U.S. Citizen ( ) Undocumented Alien
( ) Naturalized Citizen ( ) Resident Alien ( ) Refugee/Asylum Applicant:
A# or I-94 ____________Expires __________

Registration # ______________Sponsored? ___Yes ___No If Yes,

Sponsor's Name or Agency's name:______________________________

Address:______________________________

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Copy of Social Security Card on FILE:______Yes _____No

MC 194 given ______Yes ______No

Form 2222 given _____Yes _____No

Spousal Information Verified:
____Yes _____No

Verification of Living Arrangements on file:
_____Yes _____No

Household income/aid verified:
_____Yes _____No

Applied other income/aid?
____Yes ____No

Pregnancy verification:
____Yes _____No

Referred to AFDC:____Yes ____No

Permanent ID on file:
______Yes _______No

Type_______________
#_________________

2119 on file _________

2315 issued for $6.00 check____

Proof of Legal Status in United Status: Copy on File.

__ I-551 #______________
__ I-151 #______________
__ I-94 #______________
__ I-668 #______________
__ I-668A #______________

Sponsor Verified: ________
No legal documentation:

	COUNTY USE ONLY
5. PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION CONCERNING YOUR RESIDENCE:	Rent Receipt Seen:
A. Do you presently live in San Francisco? ____ Yes ____ No	___ Yes ___ No
If YES, how long have you lived here? ______________	Amount $ ______________
Do you plan to stay in San Francisco? ____ Yes ____ No	Landlord's Name ______________
Why did you come to San Francisco? ______________	______________
Please list proof of residency in San Francisco. ______________	
Where did you live before coming to San Francisco? ______________	
B. Are you currently homeless? ___ Yes ___ NO If Yes, skip Section C. If No, check one of the boxes below and complete Section C.	THC info. given: _____Yes _____No
C. Do you: __ Rent or pay someone (share rental) for housing?	FORM 2509 GIVEN_______ FORM 2144 GIVEN_______
__ Own or are you buying your housing?	
__ Have free housing? _____Yes _____No If Yes, What is it in exchange for?	
How much money do you pay for housing each: Week__________ Month__________	
Do you pay utilities separately? ___ Yes ___ No	PROOF OF RENT ________
If YES, the total monthly cost of the utilities (gas, water, electricity) is $ ______________	PROOF OF UTILITIES_______ Rent Reduction Necessary: _______Yes _______No
Did you pay rent this month? __ Yes __ No If YES, date paid ______________ Amount paid $ ______________	2145 Issued _______
Do you share housing expenses? __ Yes __ No If YES, name of primary tenant ______________	
Landlord's Name ______________ Phone ______________	
Landlord's Address ______________	
6. Probation/Parole Status: Are you currently:	Probation Officer Called: Yes____ No____
__ On Probation __ On Parole __ Neither	
If YES, to what location ______________	Probation Officer: Phone #______________
Probation/Parole Officer's Name ______________ Phone Number ______________ | Have you been in jail/prison within the last year?	Name:______________
_____Yes _____No If YES, Where______________	Jail verification received: _____Yes _____No
When ______________ How long ______________	

7. EMPLOYABILITY

Are you able to work ? ______Yes ______NO If NO give reasons:
(sick, disabled,other)

____

Beginning date of problem:______________Expected recovery date:______________

Doctor's name ______________________ Phone ______________

Have you filed for SSI? _____Yes _____No If Yes when______________

If you were denied, when?____________ Did you file for reconsideration within the 60 days allowed? ____Yes____No. If Yes, when?____________.

COUNTY USE ONLY

( ) JS ( ) WORKFARE

( ) GATES ( ) TREATMENT PLAN

( ) 2107/2139 ON FILE

PEC Code _______/________

SSI filed: Yes_____ No_____

SSI denied: Yes____ No_____

____ Filed Reconsideration:

Yes ______ No ______

Referred to SSI Advocacy Unit

Yes ______ No _____

Reason:____________________

Other:_____________________

---

8. PROVIDE INFORMATION CONCERNING YOUR CURRENT OR LAST JOB:

Name of Employer:____

Address ____________________________ Tel.. # ______________

Supervisor's Name __________________________ Tel.. # ______________

Dates worked ____________________ Hours Worked:__________ __ Weekly __ Monthly

Last paycheck received on __________________ Amount $______________

Are you due another paycheck? __ Yes __ No Amount $ ______________

Reason for leaving the above job ______________________________

Were you in a job training program? __ Yes __ No

If yes, date job training ended ______________________________

___ Information Verified

Job Quit

____ Yes ___ No

DE 8720 sent______

To file for UIB ?

_____Yes ______No

GATES info. given:

____Yes _____No If NO,

Why:________________

Verified______

---

9. ARE YOU ON CALL WITH A UNION OR OTHER AGENCY __ Yes __ No

If YES, name of union or agency ______________________________

Verified_______

---

10. STUDENT STATUS

Are you currently ___ A student ___ In training ___ Neither

Name of School/Institution ______________________________

Course of study or name of program ______________________________

Hours per week __________Day or Night?__________ Completion date __________

Do you receive financial aid? __ Yes __ No

2174 Given:

__ Yes __ No

Proof of Financial aid received:

______Yes ______No

---

11. ARE YOU A VETERAN? ____Yes ____No If you consider yourself disabled, is your disability Armed Services-connected? ___Yes ___No

Are you DEPENDENT upon a person who is serving or has served in the military?
___ Yes ___ No If YES to either question, complete the following:

Name of Person who Served ______________________________
(Self or other)

Branch __________ Serial Number ______________Date of Entry______________

Date of Discharge ______________ VA Claim Number ______________

CA 5 completed?

____Yes ____No

CA 5 previously in file:

______Yes ______No

____Previously on file

____Verification on file

COUNTY USE ONLY

Monthly Income:$______

Verified ____ Yes ____ No

12. ARE YOU THE OWNER AND/OR PAYING MORTGAGE OF ANY LAND AND/OR BUILDINGS IN ANY STATE OR COUNTRY? __ Yes __ No If YES, complete below. Include all land you own, have title to, or share title in.

Type (land, house, apartment, etc.	Use (home, rental, etc.)	Address/Location	Owner(s)	Mort. Amount

13. DO YOU HAVE ANY OF THE RESOURCES LISTED BELOW? Check ( ) each item either YES or NO. Include all resources owned, used, controlled, shared, or held jointly with or for another person(s).

__ Resources verified?

Explain how:

Type of Resource	Yes	No	Type of Resource	Yes	No
Cash (on hand or elsewhere)			Trust Funds (whether or not available)		
Uncashed checks (on hand or elsewhere)			Notes, Mortgages, Trusts, Deeds, Contract of Sales, etc.		
Savings Accounts - Children's and Adult's			IRA or Keogh Plans		
Checking Accounts - Whether or not they are used.			Retirement Funds (such as PERS) which are available if you stop work		
Credit Union Accounts			Employee Deferred Compensation Plans		
Stocks, Bonds, Certificates of Deposit, Money Market Accounts, etc.			Other (type)		

Total Value:

$______

If you have any of the above, complete the section below

Type of Resource	Owner	Account #	Name and Address of Bank, etc.	Current Value
				$
				$

14. DO YOU OWN ANY LIFE INSURANCE POLICIES OR BURIAL PLANS? __ Yes __ No If YES, complete below.

__ Verification on File

Name of Insurance Company Phone	Policy Number	Who pays Premium?

CSV = $______

15. DO YOU OWN, USE OR HAVE YOUR NAME ON THE REGISTRATION OF ANY CARS, TRUCKS, BOATS, TRAILERS, VANS, CAMPERS, MOTORCYCLES, OR OTHER VEHICLES (EVEN IF NOT RUNNING)? __ Yes __ No

Owner of Vehicle	Name of Person Who Uses Vehicle	Year Make and Model	License #/State	Monthly Payment	Balance Owed
				$	$
				$	$
				$	$

Class ______

Year ______

Total Value:

$______

Source (circle)

Blue Book

Estimate

Chart

Verified cost of repairs:

$ ______

Net Value $______

COUNTY USE ONLY

16. HAVE YOU RECEIVED OR APPLIED FOR MONEY FROM ANY SOURCE LISTED BELOW? Has someone applied for or received money on your behalf? Check ( ) each item YES or NO

Source of Money	Yes	No	Source of Money	Yes	No
. Welfare money (from anywhere) AFDC/General Assistance/etc.			. Legal settlements/court actions pending		
. SSI/SSP (gold check)			. Financial aid - loans, grants, or scholarships		
. Child or spousal support			. Training allowances		
. Unemployment benefits			. Strike benefits		
. Disability benefits			. Rental income from property		
. Social Security (green check)			. Money for care of a foster child		
. Railroad Retirement			. Interest, dividends, royalties		
. Other retirement benefits			. Sale of property - contracts, trust deeds, promissory notes, etc..		
. Veteran's benefits, GI Bill or military allotments			. Vacation pay or any money coming from previous employment		
. Loans, gifts, or contributions			. Winnings (lottery, prizes, bingo,		
. Tax refunds/earned income credit			. Gate money		
. Refugee benefits			. Other (type)		

__ Verification on File:___Yes ___No

If No, how verified?

If Lawsuit, 826, 2133 C and WCAB6 on file.

__ Yes __ No

Referred Ver. on file to:

__ UIB
__ DIB
__ SSI/SSP
__ VA
__ SDI
__ VOLAG

If you receive any of the above, complete the section below

Source of Money	Date Received or Applied	Amount	How Often?	Date Ended
		$		
		$		
		$		

17. HAVE YOU SOLD, SPENT, OR GIVEN AWAY ANY REAL OR PERSONAL PROPERTY IN THE LAST TWO YEARS SUCH AS A HOUSE, LAND, CARS, BANK ACCOUNTS, MONEY FROM A LEGAL OR ACCIDENT INSURANCE SETTLEMENT, OR ANYTHING ELSE?

__ Yes __ No If YES, explain what and when:

____

____

Verification :
____Yes ____No

18. ARE YOU CURRENTLY RECEIVING FOOD STAMPS? _____Yes _____No If No, why not______________

A .HAVE YOU EVER PREVIOUSLY APPLIED FOR OR RECEIVED AID ANYWHERE? Include: Cash aid (AFDC, RCA, RDP, and ECA), Food Stamps, Medi-Cal, General Assistance, General Relief or any other benefits.

_____ Yes _____ No If YES, complete below.

Name	Where (City, County, State)	Date Applied	Date Last Received	Type of Aid

Food Stamps Referral:
____Yes ____No

County:__________
Phone#__________
Wkr Name:________
Verified by phone:
____Yes ____No
Meds Checked:
_____Yes ____No

19. HOW HAVE YOU BEEN SUPPORTING YOURSELF AND MEETING YOUR NEEDS FOR THE LAST SIX MONTHS? Please indicate your means of support/survival for each month. Please provide names and phone numbers for providers.	COUNTY USE ONLY
Means of support / Provider name / Phone	
Current month ______	Homeless ______
	In Jail ______
	5033 on file ______
Second Month ______	5033 given ______
Third Month ______	Other verification:
Fourth Month ______	
Fifth Month ______	
Sixth Month ______	
Why is this means of support no longer available? ______	Verification on file: ____Yes ____No

20. Person to be contacted in case of emergency: Name: ______

Address: ______ City: ______ State: ____ Zip: ______ Phone: ______

DECLARATION

I understand that the statements I have made on this application are subject to investigation and verification. I am also aware that my case may be selected for an additional review (e.g., home visit), to ensure that my eligibility was determined correctly.

I understand that if any of this information is found to be incorrect, I may be disqualified from the program.

I am aware of the possibilities of criminal penalties for making false statements or failing to report information or situations which may affect my eligibility or amount of grant.

I will immediately notify my worker of any changes in my address, health, or financial affairs.

I DECLARE UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY UNDER THE LAWS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA THAT THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS STATEMENT OF FACTS IS TRUE AND CORRECT.

______ ____/____/____

Client's Signature Date

______ ____/____/____

Signature of Witness to Mark, Interpreter or Person Assisting Client Complete Form Date

THIS APPLICANT IS:

__ INELIGIBLE TO GENERAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON(S):

______

__ ELIGIBLE TO GENERAL ASSISTANCE UPON COMPLETION OF FINAL REQUIREMENTS. ___NO FINAL

PRESUMPTIVE AID GIVEN FROM ______ THROUGH ______ AS FOLLOWS:

__ HOUSING $ ______ __ GA LODGING __ MEAL TICKET __ TOKENS $ ______ __ OTHER ______

COMMENTS:

WORKER'S SIGNATURE: ______ WKER #: ______ DATE: ______

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE: ______ WKER # ______ DATE: ______

APPLICATION FOR GENERAL ASSISTANCE

NAME OF APPLICANT (Last, First, Middle Initial)	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER
NAME OF SPOUSE	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER
PRESENTLY LIVING AT (Address) (City and State) (Zip)	Phone Number

I (We) have lived at this address since ____________ (date)

I (We) arrived in Santa Clara County on ____________ (date)

I (We) intend to reside in this County for ____________ (how long?)

I (We) have a residence in another County or State. [ ] YES [ ] NO

If YES, Name of County or State: ____________

I am a citizen of ____________ (name of Country)

My spouse is a citizen of ____________

I AM APPLYING FOR GENERAL ASSISTANCE (Check all that apply.) [ ] FOR MYSELF [ ] FOR MY SPOUSE [ ] FOR MY CHILD(REN) [ ] OTHER: ____________

[ ] I AM ABLE TO WORK.

	YES	NO
I am working.	[ ]	[ ]
I have been offered a job.	[ ]	[ ]
I have applied for UIB.	[ ]	[ ]
I am a student.	[ ]	[ ]

Name of school: ____________

The date I last worked: ____________

[ ] I AM NOT ABLE TO WORK due to a physical or mental condition which is expected to last until ____________ (date). I last saw my doctor on ____________ (date).

Doctor's Name: ____________

Doctor's Address: ____________

____

I have applied for SSI. [ ] YES [ ] NO

My spouse is [ ] ABLE TO WORK [ ] NOT ABLE TO WORK [ ] RECEIVING SSI [ ] A STUDENT.

I DECLARE UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA THAT THE ABOVE IS TRUE AND CORRECT, AND THAT THIS DECLARATION IS EXECUTED ON ____________ AT ____________, CALIFORNIA.

Signature of Applicant:	Signature of Spouse:
Signature of First Witness to Mark:	Signature of Second Witness to Mark:

COUNTY USE ONLY	Receptionist:	Date:

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO APPLICANTS

Santa Clara County provides General Assistance from its own funds. The program is based on policies adopted by the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors and on regulations and procedures of the Santa Clara Social Services Agency. General Assistance is available only to persons who do not qualify for any other state and/or federal assistance program.

You will be required to provide information and verification which the Social Services Agency considers necessary to determine your eligibility to receive General Assistance and to compute an accurate payment.

To be eligible to receive General Assistance, you must be a resident of Santa Clara County.

You may be required to repay any General Assistance which you receive. You will be required to sign a Reimbursement Agreement, which includes a lien on any real estate and other property you now own or acquire later.

You will be notified in writing of the Social Services Agency's decision on your application. If your application is denied, the reason(s) will be given. If you are not satisfied with the action taken, you have the right to file an appeal. This appeal must be filed within 30 days of the effective date of the action with which you are not satisfied. A hearing will be held by a hearing officer, and a decision will be made.

If you have any questions about your application for General Assistance, please contact your Eligibility Worker or the Social Services Agency office where you made your application.

STATEMENT OF FACTS FOR GENERAL ASSISTANCE

INSTRUCTIONS: Please complete this form in ink. Answer the following questions honestly and completely. All questions refer to you and your spouse (if living with you). All questions must be answered. Please read each question before answering. DO NOT SIGN THIS FORM. Your signature must be witnessed by your Eligibility Worker.

Applicant	Birthdate	Ethnic Group
SS No.	Birthplace	Preferred Language
Your Spouse	Birthdate	Ethnic Group
SS No.	Birthplace	Preferred Language

COUNTY USE ONLY

CASE NAME: ____________

CASE NUMBER: ____________

[] Initial Application
[] Reapplication
[] Reinvestigation

Date: ____________

EW Number: ____________

I. LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

1. Where are you living ? (Address) ____________
2. Phone Number ____________
3. List all others living at that address:

Name: ____________ Relationship: ____________
Name: ____________ Relationship: ____________
Name: ____________ Relationship: ____________
Name: ____________ Relationship: ____________
Name: ____________ Relationship: ____________

[] Utility Bills

[] GA 2

II. CITIZENSHIP

1. Are you a U.S. citizen? [] Yes [] No
2. Is your spouse a U.S. citizen? [] Yes [] No
3. If not a citizen(s) what is your Alien Registration Number?

Applicant: ____________ Date entered U.S. ____________

Spouse: ____________ Date entered U.S. ____________

[] Sponsored Alien

[] Naturalized

III. MILITARY SERVICE

Have you or your spouse ever served in the armed services? [] Yes [] No

[] CA 5

	COUNTY USE ONLY

IV. INCOME

1. Have you received any of the following during the past 30 days?

	Amount	Applicant YES	Applicant NO	Spouse YES	Spouse NO
A. Unemployment Insurance Benefits?	______	[]	[]	[]	[]
B. State Disability Insurance Benefits?	______	[]	[]	[]	[]
C. Worker's Compensation Benefits?	______	[]	[]	[]	[]
D. Social Security/SSI Benefits?	______	[]	[]	[]	[]
E. Veteran's or GI Bill Benefits?	______	[]	[]	[]	[]
F. Civil Service Retirement Benefits?	______	[]	[]	[]	[]
G. Railroad Retirement Benefits?	______	[]	[]	[]	[]
H. Other pensions or disability payments?	______	[]	[]	[]	[]
I. AFDC or Public Assistance Benefits?	______	[]	[]	[]	[]
J. General Assistance or General Relief?	______	[]	[]	[]	[]
K. Student loans, grant or scholarships?	______	[]	[]	[]	[]
L. Gifts, loans, awards or winnings?	______	[]	[]	[]	[]
M. Money from roomers or friends?	______	[]	[]	[]	[]
N. Tax Refunds?	______	[]	[]	[]	[]
O. Money resulting from accident or injury?	______	[]	[]	[]	[]
P. Estate or probate matters?	______	[]	[]	[]	[]
Q. Insurance settlements or awards?	______	[]	[]	[]	[]
R. Salary, wages, tips?	______	[]	[]	[]	[]
S. Other	______	[]	[]	[]	[]

	Applicant YES	Applicant NO	Spouse YES	Spouse NO
2. Have you ever applied for any benefits listed above?	[]	[]	[]	[]

If yes, when did you apply, and for which type of benefits?

Date: ______ Date: ______

Type: ______ Type: ______

VERIFICATIONS:

- |_| UIB/DIB Disposition Letter
- |_| SSA/SSI Denial Letter
- |_| CA 5
- |_| Wage Stubs
- |_| Other

V. EMPLOYMENT

	Applicant YES	Applicant NO	Spouse YES	Spouse NO
1. Are you currently employed or self-employed?	[]	[]	[]	[]
2. Have you been hired or are you to begin employment or training within the next 30 days?	[]	[]	[]	[]

	COUNTY USE ONLY
EMPLOYMENT (cont'd)	VERIFICATIONS:

3. What is the name, address and phone number of your current or prior employer or training agency, or name and address of your self-employed business?

Applicant
Name: ____________________
Address: ____________________
Phone: ____________

Spouse
Name: ____________________
Address: ____________________
Phone: ____________

4. When and where were you last employed?

Applicant (Date): ____________________
Spouse (Date): ____________________

5. Why are you no longer employed there?

Applicant: ____________________
Spouse: ____________________

6. Are you currently enrolled, or do you plan to enroll, or to begin school, college, training or ESL classes in the next 30 days?

Applicant: [] Yes [] No
Name of School: ____________________

[] SC 549

Spouse: [] Yes [] No
Name of School: ____________________

7. Do you have a medical condition which limits your ability to seek employment or participate in a work project?

Applicant: [] Yes [] No
Spouse: [] Yes [] No

[] SC 1400

[] SC 1404 on file

[] SSP 14

VI. PROPERTY

1. Do you or your spouse own any cars, motorcycles, motor homes, boats, trucks, trailers, campers?

	Applicant		Spouse	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
	[]	[]	[]	[]

Make and Model	Year	Owner
A.		
B.		
C.		

[] DMV Registration Fee $ ________

Value A. $ ________

B. $ ________

C. $ ________

PROPERTY (cont'd)	COUNTY USE ONLY VERIFICATIONS:

2. Do you or your spouse have any of the following?

		Amount	YES	NO
A.	Cash	______	[]	[]
B.	Checking Account	______	[]	[]
C.	Savings Account	______	[]	[]
D.	Credit Union Account	______	[]	[]
E.	Trust Funds or Accounts	______	[]	[]
F.	Stocks or Bonds	______	[]	[]
G.	Money Certificates	______	[]	[]
H.	Mortgages or Trust Deeds	______	[]	[]
I.	Stamp or Coin Collections	______	[]	[]
J.	Jewelry or Antiques	______	[]	[]
K.	Musical Instruments or Heirlooms	______	[]	[]
L.	Life Insurance Policies	______	[]	[]
M.	Burial Plot, Vault or Crypt	______	[]	[]
N.	Burial Insurance or Trust	______	[]	[]
O.	Tools, Equipment or Supplies for Employment	______	[]	[]

Value of Personal Propety

$ ______________

3. Do you or your spouse own or are you purchasing a home, land, or any other real property? Yes [] No []

Address and Description: ______________

[ ] SC 355

[ ] SC 588

4. Have you or your spouse sold, transferred, or given away any property, money, or other valuables in the last 2 years? Yes [] No []

[ ] Adequate Consideration

Description: ______________

Amount Received: ______________

BE SURE YOU HAVE READ EVERY ITEM AND ANSWERED ALL THE QUESTIONS.

I REALIZE THAT IF I DELIBERATELY MAKE FALSE STATEMENTS OR WITHHOLD INFORMATION, I MAY LOSE MY ELIGIBILITY FOR GENERAL ASSISTANCE AND/OR I CAN BE PROSECUTED FOR FRAUD. I UNDERSTAND THAT ALL MY STATEMENTS ARE SUBJECT TO VERIFICATION AND INVESTIGATION, AND THAT I WILL BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE DOCUMENTS TO PROVE WHAT I HAVE SAID.

I HEREBY DECLARE UNDER PENALTY OR PERJURY UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA THAT ALL OF THE FOREGOING STATEMENTS AND INFORMATION ON THIS APPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF.

Your Signature	**Date**	**Spouse's Signature**	**Date**
Signature of Legal Representative	Date	Signature of Witness	Date
Signature of Person Assisting Applicant	Date	Signature of EW	Date

Santa Clara County

Social Services Agency

GA RESIDENCY QUESTIONNAIRE

Case Name: ______________________

Case Number: ______________________

I. What date did you most recently arrive in Santa Clara County? ______________

II. What is your current address? ____

Street City State Zip Code

III. Do you have a residence in any other County or State? ___ Yes ___ No If yes, where?

____

IV. How long have you resided at your current address?

____ If less,

Days Months Years

V. How long do you intend to reside at your current address?

____ If less

Days Months Years

than 30 days, explain. ____

____

VI. List the addresses where you have resided for the last 6 months.

____

Address City/County/State Length of Stay

____

Address City/County/State Length of Stay

____

Address City/County/State Length of Stay

____

Address City/County/State Length of Stay

VII. Are you able to work? ___ YES ___ NO If no, why? ______________________

____

Are you currently working? ___ YES ___ NO If yes, where?

____

Are you registered? ___ YES ___ NO If yes, where? ______________________

____

VIII. Have you applied for work in Santa Clara County in the last 30 days? ___ YES ___ NO

IX. If you are unable to work, have you seen a doctor in Santa Clara County?

___ YES ___ NO If yes, who and when? ______________________________

Doctor Date

Have you applied for SSI? ___ YES ___ NO If yes, where and when? ______________

____

Address Date

X. Do you have a driver's license? ___ YES ___ NO If yes, what address does the Department of Motor Vehicles have for you?

____
Address City State Zip Code

XI. Do you own a car? ___ YES ___ NO If yes, what address is on the registration?

____
Address City State Zip Code

I DECLARE UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY THAT THE FOREGOING STATEMENTS OF FACTS ARE TRUE AND CORRECT.

____
Signature Date

____
EW SIGNATURE EW NUMBER DATE

County of Santa Cruz | Department of Social Services | COUNTY USE

STATEMENT OF FACTS
GENERAL ASSISTANCE

I. IDENTIFICATION

A. Legal Name (Last) (First) (Middle) (Maiden)

List all other names that you have used.

B. Present Address (Street, City, Zip Code)

Present Address (Street, City, Zip Code)	Dates From	Dates To	Landlord/Mortgagor Name & Address
Last three addresses			

C. There are other persons living in my house (friends, relatives, etc.).
( ) Yes ( ) No. If yes, give name(s) and relationship(s).

D. Type of living situation:

1. I live in a home which I own or am buying. ( ) Yes ( ) No. If yes, complete the following: Assessed market value of home $

   Parcel Number Money Owed on Home $

2. I live in a trailer, boat or motor vehicle which I own or am buying.

   ( ) Yes ( ) No. If yes, complete the following:

   Description Purchase price $

   Last license fee paid $ Money owed $

3. I have other living arrangements. ( ) Yes ( ) No. If yes, check which kind and write in the amount you pay.

   ( ) Rent an apartment or house.

   ( ) Hotel or rooming house.

   ( ) Room and Board

   ( ) Boarding home, institution, nursing home or hospital

   ( ) Free room and board

   ( ) Other (Please explain)

E. My phone number is . Message phone number is

WEL-4019 (Rev. 6/78)

COUNTY USE

F. Date of birth____/____/____. G. Social Security Number_____/____/_____.

H. I have a driver's license or Department of Motor Vehicles identification card.

( ) Yes ( ) No. Number__________Issuing State__________Date Expires__________

J. I have credit/charge cards. ( ) Yes ( ) No. If yes, complete.

Issued by	Card Number	Expiration Date	Current Balance

K. Education and Training. (Circle highest grade completed.)

1. Elementary School-High School. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12.

   College or University. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8.

2. Do you have a G.E.D. Diploma or Proficiency Equivalency Diploma?

   ( ) Yes ( ) No.

   List trade or vocational courses. If none, check here. ( )

   When__________________Where__________________Type of course_____________

3. Do you have a college degree. ( ) Yes ( ) No. Type of Degree___________

   Major field_________________________________.

L. I have served in the Armed Forces. ( ) Yes ( ) No. If yes, complete the following: Dates of Service. From_________To__________Branch______________

Type of discharge_____________.

M. At the present time I am:

1. ( ) Single
2. ( ) Living as a couple with another person (date occurred)______________
3. ( ) Widow or widower (date occurred)__________________________________
4. ( ) Legally divorced (date occurred)__________________________________
5. ( ) Legally separated (date occurred)________________________________
6. ( ) Separated by consent (date occurred)_____________________________
7. ( ) Legally married (date occurred)___________________________________

Spouse's name________________________ Address_______________________________

N. I have minor children. ( ) Yes ( ) No. Living with me. ( ) Yes ( ) No.

Their address____

WEL-4019 (Rev. 6/78)

COUNTY USE

O. Residence History

1. How long have you lived in Santa Cruz County? ______________________

2. Why did you come to this County? ______________________

3. How long do you expect to stay in this County? ______________________

4. What have you done to make this County your legal residence? ______________________

____

5. How long have you lived in California? Years __________ Months __________

6. Place of birth ______________________.

7. I am a citizen of the United States. ( ) Yes ( ) No.
If no, provide the following: Alien registration number ______________________

Date of entry ______________ Place of entry ______________________

P. I have received, or applied for, General Assistance, Food Stamps, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (A.F.D.C.), Medi-Cal or SSI/SSP previously. ( ) Yes ( ) No. If yes, complete the following:

What ______________ When ______________ Where ______________

What ______________ When ______________ Where ______________

What ______________ When ______________ Where ______________

Q. Work Status

1. At the present time I am able to work. ( ) Yes ( ) No.
I am seeking work. ( ) Yes ( ) No. If no, please explain: ______________________

____

2. I have currently applied for admission to a school or training program. ( ) Yes ( ) No. If yes, When ______________ Where ______________

3. I am enrolled in a training or rehabilitation program. ( ) Yes ( ) No.

If yes, where ______________________ Phone Number ______________

Counselor's name ______________________

4. I am on probation or parole. ( ) Yes ( ) No. If yes, dates:

From __________ To __________ Probation/Parole officer's name ______________

Phone number __________. Conditions of Probation/Parole ______________

____

R. Employment History (Begin with current job or last job worked)

From	To	Employer and Address	Job Title	Wages

1. Why did you leave your last job? ______________________

______________________ When? Mo. __________ Day ______ Yr. ______

WEL-4019 (Rev. 6/78)

COUNTY USE

2. When did you receive your last paycheck?__________ Amount $__________

3. Do you belong to a Union? ( ) Yes ( ) No. Active? ( ) Yes ( ) No.

   Local number__________ Address__________

II. INCOME & ASSETS

A. Have you applied for any of the following benefits? Please check.

( ) Unemployment Insurance
( ) Workmen's Compensation
( ) State Disability Insurance
( ) Social Security Disability
( ) Special Unemployment Assistance
( ) Vocational Rehabilitation Funds
( ) Educational Grants or Training Funds
( ) SSI/SSP

If you have applied for any of the above, complete the following:

What Kind__________ When__________ Where__________

What Kind__________ When__________ Where__________

What Kind__________ When__________ Where__________

B. How have you provided for your food and housing since you received your last income/paycheck?__________

C. Have you had any help from relatives or friends? ( ) Yes ( ) No.

   Explain:__________

D. I receive non-cash gifts or contributions each month (such as free rent, food, utilities, etc.) ( ) Yes ( ) No. If yes, explain:__________

E. I have a pending lawsuit, trust fund, insurance payments, and/or income from other sources which I expect to receive. ( ) Yes ( ) No. If yes, explain:__________

F. I have Life Insurance Policies. ( ) Yes ( ) No. If yes, complete.

Company	Person/Item Insured	Paid By Whom	Amount of Insurance	Policy No.	Date Issued	Cash Value

G. I own real property other than that used as a home. ( ) Yes ( ) No. If yes, complete the following: Location__________ Encumbrances $__________

H. I own or am buying the following motor vehicles: ( ) Yes ( ) No. If yes, complete the following.

Make & Model	Year	Last License Fee Paid	Amount Owed	Monthly Payments

WEL-4019 (Rev. 6/78)

COUNTY USE

J. I have, or expect, income from sources other than employment. ( ) Yes ( ) No. If yes, complete the following: (If not monthly, state how often.)

Type of Income	If None Check	Amount	How Often	If received jointly, give Name of other person(s)
Unemployment Insurance				
Veterans Benefits or Military Allotment				
Social Security				
Retirement or Pension				
Alimony				
Payment for Room & Board				
Loans, Grants, GI Bill				
Training Allowance				
Welfare Assistance				
Contributions or Gifts				
State Tax Return				
Federal Tax Return				
Worker's Compensation				
Self-Employment				
Other				

K. Liquid Assets

I have the following assets: Give amounts.

Item	If None Check	Amount	If owned jointly, give name of other person(s)
Checks or money on hand or in the house			
Money in Checking or Savings Account(s)			
Credit Union			
Checks or money in a safe deposit box or Trust Fund			
Stocks or Bonds (Mkt. Value)			
Notes, mortgages, trust deeds & sales contracts			

L. Personal Property

1. I have the following items of personal property: Camper, trailer, jewelry (except wedding ring), recreational equipment, livestock or poultry not for family use, other. ( ) Yes ( ) No. If yes, describe:____________________

2. Are any items of your personal property not in your possession? ( ) Yes ( ) No. If yes, where are they located?____________________

3. I have sold or given away property, money or other valuables in the last two years. ( ) Yes ( ) No. If yes, describe:____________________

I, ______________________________, Residing at ______________________
(Street)

______________ ______________, herewith make application for financial
(City) (Zip Code)
assistance from Santa Cruz County for myself. I am unable to support myself at this time.

I agree to notify the General Assistance Eligibility Worker at once if there are any changes in my income, property, expenses, address, or persons living at my address.

1. I REALIZE THAT DELIBERATE MISREPRESENTATION OR CONCEALMENT OF FACTS MAY CONSTITUTE FRAUD FOR WHICH I MAY BE PROSECUTED.

2. I UNDERSTAND THAT MY STATEMENTS ON THIS FORM ARE SUBJECT TO VERIFICATION AND INVESTIGATION, AND THAT MY SIGNATURE CONSTITUTES AUTHORIZATION FOR SUCH INVESTIGATION.

3. ANY PERSON WHO SIGNS THIS STATEMENT AND WHO WILLFULLY STATES AS TRUE ANY MATERIAL MATTER WHICH HE/SHE KNOWS TO BE FALSE IS SUBJECT TO THE PENALTIES PRESCRIBED FOR PERJURY IN THE PENAL CODE BY THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

I DECLARE UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY THAT THE FOREGOING STATEMENTS ON THIS FORM ARE TRUE AND CORRECT.

______________________________ ______________
Signature of Applicant Date

______________________________ ______________
Signature of Witness Date

I CERTIFY THAT I HAVE INFORMED THE APPLICANT OF THE POSSIBILITY OF CRIMINAL PENALTIES FOR MISREPRESENTATION OR CONCEALMENT OF FACTS WHICH DETERMINE HIS/HER ELIGIBILITY.

______________________ ______________ ______________
Eligibility Worker's Signature Worker Number Date

I, ______________________________ wish to withdraw my application for General Assistance which I signed ______________. This request is made with the knowledge that I may re-apply at any time.

______________________________ ______________
Signature of Applicant Date

______________________________ ______________
Signature of Witness Date

ACKNOWLEDGED BY: ______________________ this ________ day of ____________ 19_____.

Supervisor review: date ______________________ signed ______________________

WEL-4019 (Rev. 8/81)

NAPA COUNTY
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

GENERAL ASSISTANCE

APPLICATION

APPLICANT	Last Name	First Name	M.I.	SSN	DOB
SPOUSE	Last Name	First Name	M.I.	SSN	DOB

STREET ADDRESS CITY PHONE

Have you or your family received or applied for Public Assistance in the last 30 days?
Yes ☐ No ☐

Date and Place where last received Type of Aid Name Used

I/we hereby request General Assistance from Napa County.

I understand that it is my responsibility and hereby agree to immediately report any changes in my circumstances while I am receiving assistance.

I understand I may be required to execute a lien against real and personal property, a promissory note, and an agreement to reimburse.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing statements on this form are true and correct.

Signature (or mark) of applicant Spouse (if applicable)

Name of County Worker Date of application

NW 900a

NAPA COUNTY
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Department of Social Services

Statement of Facts for General Assistance

1)

A. *Applicant Information*

		Birthdate	Social Security No.
Name (First, Middle, Last)		Phone (where you can be reached)	
Home Address (Street, City)			
Marital Status			COUNTY USE ONLY

B. *Complete for each family member living in the home*

1. Name	Birthdate / /	U.S. Citizen Yes ☐	Student Yes ☐
* Social Security Number	Circle Sex M F	No ☐	No ☐
2. Name	Birthdate / /	U.S. Citizen Yes ☐	Student Yes ☐
* Social Security Number	Circle Sex M F	No ☐	No ☐
3. Name	Birthdate / /	U.S. Citizen Yes ☐	Student Yes ☐
* Social Security Number	Circle Sex M F	No ☐	No ☐
4. Name	Birthdate / /	U.S. Citizen Yes ☐	Student Yes ☐
* Social Security Number	Circle Sex M F	No ☐	No ☐
5. Name	Birthdate / /	U.S. Citizen Yes ☐	Student Yes ☐
* Social Security Number	Circle Sex M F	No ☐	No ☐

C. *Other persons living in the home*

Name	Name
Name	Name
Name	Name

2)

A. How long have you been a resident of Napa County: ____________

What was your last address? ____________

____

Do you intend to stay in Napa County? ____________

B. Are you a U.S. Citizen? Yes ☐ No ☐

If not, give alien registration number: ____________

C. Are you currently enrolled as a student? Yes ☐ No ☐

3) Personal Property

COUNTY USE ONLY

DO YOU OR YOUR FAMILY HAVE ANY OF THE RESOURCES LISTED BELOW?
Check each item. If YES, explain below.

	YES	NO		YES	NO
A. Savings Account	☐	☐	E. Notes, mortgages, trust deeds, sales contracts	☐	☐
B. Checking Account	☐	☐	F. Trust Fund	☐	☐
C. Credit Union Account	☐	☐	G. Stocks, Bonds or Certificates	☐	☐
D. Checks or money (at home or elsewhere)	☐	☐	H. Other resources which can be quickly changed into cash (specify)	☐	☐

TYPE OF RESOURCE	OWNER	CURRENT VALUE	NAME AND ADDRESS OF BANKS, ETC.	ACCOUNT NUMBER
		$		
		$		
		$		

DO YOU OR YOUR FAMILY OWN OR USE PERSONAL PROPERTY WHICH COST AT LEAST $100 FOR EACH ITEM OR ARE NOW WORTH AT LEAST $100 EACH? ☐ YES ☐ NO
If YES, list such things as: Boats, campers, recreational equipment, farm equipment, tools, livestock, trailers, musical equipment, jewelry, etc. Do not list: Clothing, wedding rings, rugs, furniture, appliances, televisions, other household furnishings.

NAME OF ITEM	DATE OF PURCHASE	Purchase Price (if gift check box)	AMT. OWED
		$ Gift ☐	
		$ Gift ☐	
		$ Gift ☐	
		$ Gift ☐	

Do you or your family have any of the following insurance coverage?

Check each item. If yes, explain below.

A. Life.... Yes ____ No ____ B. Burial.... Yes ____ No ____

Name of Insurance Co.	Policy No.	Persons Covered	Policy Value

Do you or your family own or use any motor vehicles? Yes ____ No ____
If yes, complete the following:

Owner of Vehicle	Current Value	Year, Make, Model	State of Regis.

COUN

4) Real Property

Do you or your family own or are you or your family in the process of buying real estate? Yes ____ No ____

If yes, list all land and buildings (including your house) that you own, have title to or share title in.

Type (Land, Home Apartment, etc.)	Use (Home, Income, Investments	Address or Location	Owner(s)	Assessed Value

Have you or your family sold, transferred or given away any real estate or personal property within the last 2 years? Yes ____ No ____

If yes, explain what and when:

____

____

____

____

____

5) Employability

A. Date last worked ________ Date last paid ________ Amount ________

B. Reason for leaving work: ______________________________

____

____

C. Are you currently able to work? Yes ____ No ____ If No, give reason: ______________________________

____

____

D. Are you registered for work at the Employment Office? ______________

E. Areyou available for full time employment? Yes ____ No ____

6) Income

COUNTY USE ONLY

Do you or your family receive or expect to receive income from any of the following sources? Check each item. If Yes, explain below.

		Yes	No
A.	Public Assistance (SSI/SSP, Gold Checks, General Assistance, etc.)	☐	☐
B.	Child/Spousal Support	☐	☐
C.	Unemployment or Disability Insurance/Worker's Comp	☐	☐
D.	Veterans' or GI Benefits, Military Allotments	☐	☐
E.	Social Security, Railroad Retirement	☐	☐
F.	Retirement Pensions	☐	☐
G.	Self-employment or Farm (attach explanation)	☐	☐
H.	Training Allowance	☐	☐
I.	Contributions, Cash Gifts	☐	☐
J.	Rental of Land, Buildings, Vehicles (Attach explanation and details)	☐	☐
K.	Sale of Property (Trust Deeds)	☐	☐
L.	Loans, Payments on Your Behalf	☐	☐
M.	Tax refunds	☐	☐
N.	Public Retirement, Vacation pay	☐	☐
O.	Legal or Accident Settlements Pending	☐	☐
P.	Strike Benefits	☐	☐
Q.	Money for Care of Foster Child	☐	☐
R.	Interest, Dividends, Royalties	☐	☐
S.	Scholarships, Grants, Loans for School	☐	☐
T.	Other (Specify) ______	☐	☐

Name of Person Receiving Income	Source of Income	Date Rec'd (or expected)	Amount	How Often? (weekly, mo.)

Do you or your family receive any of the following free or in exchange for work that you do? Check each item. If Yes, explain below.

Item Received	Yes	No	Name of Person Receiving Item		Value of Item
a. Housing/Rent	☐	☐			
b. Utilities	☐	☐			
c. Food	☐	☐			
d. Clothing	☐	☐			

APPENDIX D: PRELIMINARY GA DATA TEMPLATE

GENERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INFORMATION (FY 95-96)

COUNTY OF________________________________

COUNTY POPULATION AND GA CASELOAD

Total county population	Number	As % of Bay Area Population
Annual		

Population on GA	Number	As % of county population	Number of Households
Annual			
Monthly average			

Distribution by household size	Number	As % of GA caseload	% of households with children ≤ 18: 1 child	2	3 or more	Average length of time on GA (in months)
1						
2						
3						
4						
5 or more						

Average household size: ___________

Average number/percent of households with child under 18: #___________/______%

Average number of months on GA: ______________

Average monthly number/percent of households discontinued due to sanctions: #___________/______%

MARITAL STATUS	Number	Percent
Currently married		
Divorced		
Separated		
Widowed		
Never Married		

GENERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INFORMATION (FY 95-96)

COUNTY OF ______________________________

COUNTY BUDGET AND GA EXPENDITURES

Total county budget	FY 95-96	$ and % County-Raised Revenues
Annual		
Monthly average		

GA expenditures	Benefits	Administration	Total	As % of county budget	As % of county-raised revenues
Annual					
Monthly average					

GA grant payments by household size	Maximum monthly grant	Average monthly grant
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

For total caseload, average monthly grant: $__________

GENERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INFORMATION

COUNTY OF ______________________________

GA PROGRAM CONDITIONS

Requirement	Yes/No	Comments**	Effective Date/Under consideration
Time limits			
Work required			
Fingerprinting			
Drug testing			
Liens on property and future income			
Citizenship or legal alien status			
Other:			

** Under "comments," if such provisions are required, please briefly describe the length of any time limits (e.g., 3 months out of 12, or 12 months maximum...), the nature and duration of any work requirements, when fingerprinting is required (e.g., upon application...), when and how often any drug testing is required (e.g., upon application and randomly thereafter, or upon recertification), any special conditions regarding the imposition of liens, whether and when citizenship status is checked, and any other brief comments you think may be helpful. Please feel free to attached a separate sheet to describe the above items and any other special conditions your county imposes.

If your county is considering any of these sorts of requirements, but has not yet implemented them, please put NO in the first column, but describe the provision that is under consideration and write UNDER CONSIDERATION in the last column.

GENERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INFORMATION (September 1996)

COUNTY OF ______________________________

GA RECIPIENT CHARACTERISTICS (Currently Available)

	Number	% of caseload
TOTAL GA POPULATION		**100%**

GENDER	Number	% of caseload
Male		
Female		

AGE	Number	% of caseload
0-17		
18-21		
22-30		
31-40		
41-50		
51-60		
61-64		
65-70		
70-75		
76+		

Average recipient age: ____________

GENERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INFORMATION (September 1996)

COUNTY OF ________________________________

GA RECIPIENT CHARACTERISTICS (Currently available)

	Number	% of caseload
TOTAL GA POPULATION		**100%**

RACE/ETHNICITY	Number	% of caseload
Caucasian		
African-American		
Latino		
Asian		
Native American		
Other		

PRIMARY LANGUAGE	Number	% of caseload
English		
Spanish		
Chinese		
Vietnamese		
Cambodian/Hmong		
Laotian		
Japanese		
Korean		
Tagalog		
Slavic		
Arabic		
Other		

GENERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INFORMATION (September 1996)

COUNTY OF ______________________________

GA RECIPIENT CHARACTERISTICS (For Future Data Collection)

	Number	% of caseload
TOTAL GA POPULATION		**100%**

EDUCATION	Number	% of caseload
Grades 1-12		
High school graduate		
GED or equivalent		
Some college		
College graduate (4 yrs)		

Average grade level completed: ____________

MILITARY SERVICE	Number	% of caseload
Honorably discharged veteran		
Dishonorably discharged		
Medically discharged		
No military service		

CITIZENSHIP STATUS	Number	% of caseload
Born in U.S.		
Naturalized Citizen		
Legal Resident Alien		
Refugee		
Asylee		
Has worked 40 quarters in U.S.		
Honorably discharged veteran		

GENERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INFORMATION (September 1996)

COUNTY OF ______________________

GA RECIPIENT CHARACTERISTICS (For Future Data Collection)

	Number	% of caseload
TOTAL GA POPULATION		**100%**
STATE/COUNTY RESIDENCY (At time of application for assistance)	Number	% of caseload
Reside in state less than 12 months		
Reside in state 1 year or longer		
Reside in county less than 15 days		
Reside in county 16 days to one month		
Reside in county 1 to 3 months		
Reside in county 4 to 6 months		
Reside in county 7 months to 1 year		
Reside in county 1 year or longer		
PRISON/PAROLE STATUS	Number	% of caseload
Ever convicted (state or federal felonies)		
Convicted of drug felonies		
Ever convicted of misdemeanors		
Currently on probation or parole		
Served time in prison		
Under 1 year		
1-5 years		
6-10 years		
11 years or longer		

GENERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INFORMATION (September 1996)

COUNTY OF ________________________________

GA RECIPIENT CHARACTERISTICS (For Future Data Collection)

ABILITY TO WORK*	Number	% of caseload
Job ready		
Employable with physical limitations		
* Elderly		
* Physical disability		
Requires supported work		
* Mental illness		
Requires basic skills training		
Substance abuse		
Exempt for good cause		
Functionally/socially unemployable		

* County directors asked, on 11-1-96, that categories of "employable" and "unemployable" be removed and that future recipients be considered "employable" along an "employment continuum." In order to devise appropriate work and work-training strategies for recipients, it would be useful to have comparable definitions of various categories of individuals and the sort of problems or barriers they must overcome in order to successfully enter or remain in the private sector labor force.

GENERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INFORMATION (September 1996)

COUNTY OF ______________________________

GA RECIPIENT CHARACTERISTICS (For Future Data Collection)

	Number	% of caseload
TOTAL GA POPULATION		**100%**

HOUSING SITUATION	Number	% of caseload
Rent		
Own		
Shared housing		
In-kind housing		
Publicly subsidized housing		
Temporary shelter		
Homeless		

GENERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INFORMATION (September 1996)

COUNTY OF ______________________________

GA RECIPIENT CHARACTERISTICS (For Future Data Collection)

	Number	% of caseload	
TOTAL GA POPULATION		**100%**	
OTHER SOURCES OF INCOME/BENEFITS	% of GA caseload currently receiving	% of GA caseload previously received	% of GA caseload anticipate receiving
Public Assistance			
AFDC/TANF			
SSI/SSP			
Medi-Cal			
Food Stamps			
IHSS			
Foster Care			
Social Insurance			
Unemployment Ins.			
Disability Insurance			
Old Age/Survivors Ins.			
Workers' Compensation			
Other Sources of Income			
Earned income (stable)			
Seasonable earned income			
Irregular (not seasonal) earned income			
Unearned income (stable)			
Irregular lump-sum income			
Child/spouse support			
Earned Income Tax Credit			
Education/training stipends/loans/grants			
Other			

APPENDIX E: PRELIMINARY FORMULAS FOR ESTIMATING IMPACTS OF CHANGES IN ELIGIBILITY FOR LEGAL IMMIGRANTS

POTENTIAL COST SHIFT: LEGAL IMMIGRANTS

COUNTY OF ______________________

Number/percent of legal immigrants receiving GA: #__________/ %__________

Maximum monthly GA payment for household of one: $__________

Maximum monthly GA payment for household of three $_________

	AFDC[1]		Food Stamps		SSI/SSP[2]		Medi-Cal		IHSS	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total number/percent of legal immigrant households receiving:										
* Refugees										
* Asylees										
* 40 quarters										
* Veterans										
Number/percent of *non-exempt* legal immigrant households receiving:										
Maximum monthly payment by designated household size[3]										

---

[1] Reported AFDC cases exclude child-only cases.

[2] ______ percent of the SSI/SSP legal immigrant caseload are in Board and Care Institutions. The average monthly cost per case in Board and Care is $_________.

[3] For AFDC, household size is three and the payment rate is for a head of household deemed unemployable. The AFDC payment rate for the same family with an "employable" head is $_______. For Food Stamps, SSI/SSP, IHSS, and Medi-Cal, household size is one. SSI/SSP payment rate is for an elderly or disabled individual.

POTENTIAL COST SHIFT: LEGAL IMMIGRANTS

COUNTY OF ______________________

For Medi-Cal only, the total average monthly expenditures for legal immigrants: $_____________

Total number of non-exempt legal immigrant households currently receiving a combination of AFDC, Food Stamps, and Medi-Cal: _______

Average combined monthly value of AFDC, Food Stamps, and Medi-Cal benefits received by legal immigrant households[4]: $_________

Total number of non-exempt legal immigrant households currently receiving SSI/SSP and Medi-Cal:_________

Average combined monthly value of SSI/SSP and Medi-Cal benefits received by legal immigrant households[5]: $_________

Estimated monthly costs to the county if current (non-exempt) legal immigrant households lose other cash benefits and shift to GA[6]:

	100% shift to GA	**50% shift to GA**	**25% shift to GA**	**10% shift toGA**
AFDC/TANF[7]				
SSI/SSP[8]				
IHSS				

---

[4] Calculated using a household of three with no other income. Value of Medi-Cal is county's estimate of the average cost of a health insurance premium that would provide roughly equivalent care. For an AFDC household of three, the monthly health insurance premium is valued at $__________.

[5] Calculated using a household of one with no other income. Value of Medi-Cal is county's estimate of the average cost of a health insurance premium that would provide roughly equivalent care. For a one-person elderly or disabled individual, the monthly insurance premium is valued at $_______.

[6] Assume maximum monthly payments are lost for AFDC household of three, SSI/SSP household of one, and IHSS household of one.

[7] Calculated using maximum monthly AFDC benefit for a household of three, where the head of household is deemed unemployable.

[8] Calculated using the maximum monthly SSI/SSP benefit for a disabled or elderly household of one.

POTENTIAL COST SHIFT: LEGAL IMMIGRANTS

COUNTY OF ________________________

Estimated loss of maximum monthly income to legal immigrant households losing benefits:

	100% benefits lost	Net Loss if GA received
AFDC household of three with an unemployable head[9]		
SSI/SSP household of a single elderly or disabled person		
Food Stamps household of one		NA
Medi-Cal household of one[10]		NA
IHSS household of one		NA

[9] If the head of the AFDC household was employable, the difference would be $_______, and the net difference if GA were received would be $_________.

[10] Calculated using the county's estimate of the monthly value a health insurance premium that would provide roughly equivalent health care.

APPENDIX F: PRELIMINARY FORMULAS FOR ESTIMATING NON-IMMIGRANT CASELOAD AND COST SHIFTS

Calculating Impact of Immigrant Ineligibility			
Loss of AFDC		Sacramento Number	Source:
	CALCULATE NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS IMPACTED		
1	Estimate number of immigrants on AFDC	29,240	Welfare Department
2	Estimate percentage in country more than five years	0.3	Welfare Department
3	Number of existing cases losing AFDC	8,772	= (1) x (2)
4	Number of new immigrants 1990 - 1994	29,211	SOR, p.13
5	Estimate annual number of new immigrants	5,842	= (4) / 5 years
6	Estimate percentage of new immigrants who now get AFDC	0.3	Welfare Department
7	Number of new immigrants who won't get AFDC annually	1,753	= (5) x (6)
8	Number of immigrants impacted by ineligibility	10,500	= (3) + (7)
	CALCULATE COSTS OF IMMIGRANT INELIGIBILITY		
9	Determine average payment cost per AFDC person	$ (117.00)	Welfare Department
10	County Share	0.025	Standard share
11	Calculate county share cost savings for reduced case loads	$ (368,550)	= (8) x (9) x (10) x 12 months
12	Determine average payment cost per general relief case	$ 219.32	Welfare Department
13	Calculate new county cost for additional GR cases	$ 27,634,320	= (8) x (12) x 12 months
14	Determine average case load per staff in GR	250	Welfare Department
15	Calculate number of new GR positions required	42	= (8) / (14)
16	Determine average county cost per GR position	$ 44,952	Welfare Department
17	Calculate administrative cost for new GR cases	$ 1,888,000	= (15) x (16)
18	No reductions in AFDC admin. -- full cases not eliminated, only people		Welfare Department
19	Determine average CMIS cost per GR eligible	$ 373.33	Health Department
20	Calculate CMIS cost for new GR cases	3,920,000	= (8) x (20)

21	Calculate total cost of immigrant ineligibility for AFDC	$ 33,000,000	= (11) + (13) + (17) + (20)
Loss of SSI (1997)		Sacramento Number	Source:
	CALCULATE NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS IMPACTED		
1	Number of non-refugee immigrants in state on SSI	233,160	SOR, p.9
2	Estimate percentage of state total who live in the county	0.05	Social Security Administration
3	Number of existing cases losing SSI	11,700	= (1) x (2)
	CALCULATE COSTS OF IMMIGRANT INELIGIBILITY		
4	Determine average payment cost per general relief case	$ 219.32	Welfare Department
5	Calculate new county cost for additional GR cases	$ 30,800,000	= (3) x (5) x 12 months
6	Determine average case load per staff in GR	250	Welfare Department
7	Calculate number of new GR positions required	47	= (3) / (6)
8	Determine average county cost per GR position	$ 44,952	Welfare Department
9	Calculate administrative cost for new GR cases	$ 2,103,800	= (7) x (8)
10	Determine average CMIS cost per GR eligible	$ 373.33	Health Department
11	Calculate CMIS cost for new GR cases	4,370,000	= (3) x (10)
12	Calculate total cost of immigrant ineligibility	$ 37,270,000	= (5) + (9) + (11)

	Calculating Impact of SSI Changes for Addicts and Children		
	Addicts' Loss of SSI Eligibility (1996)	Sacramento Number	Source:
	CALCULATE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IMPACTED		
1	Determine number of people receiving SSI for addiction	3,000	Social Security Administration
2	Estimate percentage who would be eligible for GR	0.75	Welfare Department
3	Number of new GR cases	2,250	= (1) x (2)
	CALCULATE COSTS OF SSI INELIGIBILITY		
4	Determine average payment cost per general relief case	$ 219.32	Welfare Department
5	Calculate new county cost for additional GR cases	$ 5,920,000	= (3) x (4) x 12 months
6	Determine average case load per staff in GR	250	Welfare Department
7	Calculate number of new GR positions required	9	= (3) / (6)
8	Determine average county cost per GR position	$ 44,952	Welfare Department
9	Calculate administrative cost for new GR cases	$ 405,000	= (7) x (8)
10	Determine average CMIS cost per GR eligible	$ 373.33	Health Department
11	Calculate CMIS cost for new GR cases	840,000	= (3) x (10)
12	Calculate total cost of addict ineligibility for SSI	$ 7,200,000	= (11) + (13) + (17) + (20)
	Children's Loss of SSI Eligibility (1997)		
	CALCULATE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IMPACTED		
1	Number of children in state who would lose SSI	157,000	Various analyses of federal proposals
2	Estimate percentage in county (we used AFDC share)	0.05	Welfare Department
3	Estimate percentage who would be eligible for AFDC	0.50	Welfare Department
4	Calculate number from SSI to AFDC	4,000	=(1) x (2) x (3)
	CALCULATE COSTS OF SSI INELIGIBILITY		
5	Determine average cost increase per AFDC person	$ 117.00	Welfare Department
6	County Share	0.025	Standard share
7	Calculate new county costs for AFDC cases	140,400	=(4) x (5) x (6) x 12 months

Calculating Impact of Five-Year Time Limit (2001)

Number of People Impacted		Sacramento Number	Source:
	CALCULATE NUMBER WHO WOULD LOSE AFDC		
1	Percentage of state's recipients on aid > five years	0.26	State Department of Social Services
2	Determine number of non-immigrant county AFDC cases	36,000	Welfare Department
3	Calculate number of county's recipients on aid > 5 years	9,360	= (1) x (2)
4	Percentage losing eligibility	0.85	Conference committee
5	Calculate number losing eligibility (and going to GR)	8,000	= (3) x (4)
Cost Impacts			
	CALCULATE AFDC SAVINGS		
6	Determine average case cost in AFDC	$ 572.53	Welfare Department
7	County Share	0.025	Standard share
8	Calculate county savings for AFDC cases	(1,374,000)	= (5) x (6) x (7) x 12 months
9	Determine average case load per staff in AFDC	134	Welfare Department
10	Calculate number of AFDC positions eliminated	(60)	= (5) / (9)
11	Determine average county cost per AFDC position	$ 6,743	Welfare Department
12	Calculate administrative savings for AFDC reductions	$ (403,000)	= (10) x (11)
	CALCULATE NEW GR COSTS		
13	Determine average case cost in GR	$ 219.32	Welfare Department
14	Calculate county GR costs	21,050,000	= (5) x (9) x (10) x 12 months
15	Determine average case load per staff in GR	250	Welfare Department
16	Calculate number of new GR positions required	32	= (5) / (11)
17	Determine average county cost per GR position	$ 44,952	Welfare Department
18	Calculate administrative cost for new GR cases	$ 1,440,000	= (12) x (13)
19	Determine average CMIS cost per GR eligible	$ 373.33	Health Department
20	Calculate CMIS cost for new GR cases	3,000,000	= (5) x (15)
21	*CALCULATE TOTAL NET COSTS OF TIME LIMITS*	$ 23,700,000	= (8) + (12) + (14) + (18) + (20)

Calculating Impact of Family Cap (2001)

	Number of People Impacted	Sacramento Number	Source:
	CALCULATE NUMBER NOT ADDED TO AFDC		
1	Percentage of state's children on AFDC < 1 year old	0.065	State Department of Social Services
2	Determine number of children on county AFDC cases	98,150	Welfare Department
3	Calculate # of children added to existing cases each yr.	6,380	= (1) x (2)
4	Estimate percentage not already eliminated by immig.stat.	0.70	Welfare Department
5	Estimate percentage still be born under disincentives	0.75	Consensus of staff
6	Calculate number born not added to AFDC each year	3,300	= (3) x (4) x (5)
7	Calculate total over five-year period	16,500	= (6) x 5 years
Cost Impacts			
	CALCULATE AFDC SAVINGS		
8	No savings -- current state law		
	CALCULATE NEW GR COSTS		
9	Determine average case cost in GR	$ 219.32	Welfare Department
10	Calculate county GR costs	43,430,000	= (7) x (9) x 12 months
11	Determine average case load per staff in GR	250	Welfare Department
12	Calculate number of new GR positions required	66	= (7) / (11)
13	Determine average county cost per GR position	$ 44,952	Welfare Department
14	Calculate administrative cost for new GR cases	$ 2,970,000	= (12) x (13)
15	*CALCULATE TOTAL NET COSTS OF TIME LIMITS*	$ 46,400,000	= (10) x (14)

Endnotes:

1. Since 1992, only eight states have enacted GA benefit increases, but none increased enough to keep up with inflation. Six other states cut GA benefit levels. Here in California, for example, in 1993, the state gave counties the right to appeal the "standard of aid" mandated by the state, and to seek permission to lower their GA benefits.

Other states have eliminated their universal GA benefits altogether, as did Michigan in 1991. Michigan now retains only a disability program for disabled persons meeting SSI criteria, but whose disabilities last for 90 days or longer, instead of 12 months or longer, as required by SSI. Michigan also retains a State Family Assistance program for families ineligible for AFDC.

In January 1996. Wisconsin replaced its county-run, but state mandated GA program with a block grant approach, in which counties can opt whether or not to provide GA assistance. Some counties have chosen not to run the program at all, others have considerably narrowed eligibility for the program, and some counties only offer medical assistance.

A number of other states have eliminated GA assistance for certain categories of persons, including childless adults deemed employable. Others have eliminated GA benefits for families or pregnant women, and some states have tightened eligibility for the disabled or time-limited the duration of their benefits. For more information on these state trends, see Cori E. Uccello, Heather R. McCallum, and L. Jerome Gallagher, *Assessing the New Federalism: State General Assistance Programs 1996*, Urban Institute, Washington, D.C., October 1996.

2. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Title VIII, Section 824.

3. The federal food stamp program calculates an applicant's eligibility and benefit payment after taking into account all other sources of income. Thus, GA eligibility and benefits are determined prior to food stamp eligibility and benefits. In this instance, an individual subject to this new work requirement, who is presently receiving both GA benefits and food stamps, will find that his GA benefits will remain unchanged, but if he fails to meet the new work standard, he could lose the entire amount of his federally funded food stamps. This in no way alters his GA eligibility or benefits. From the county's standpoint, GA payments to this individual will not change, but the loss of federal income in the form of food stamps will leave the person with less resources and greater unmet need.

4. Certain changes in welfare provisions that the state legislature previously passed and the governor signed into law will go into effect in 1997, independent of the debate yet to come. These provisions include: new AFDC benefit reductions (the maximum benefit for a family of three will drop from $594 to $565 in higher cost-of-living counties and to $538 in lower cost-of-living counties); a family cap provision; and paying lower benefits to poor families who move to California for the first 12 months of their residence here (equal to benefit paid in the state from

which they moved, if that state's benefits are less generous than California's).

5. "Federal Welfare Reform (H.R. 3734): Fiscal Effect on California," Legislative Analyst's Office, State of California, August 20, 1996, p. 1.

6. Given the space constraints of this paper, this is an extremely abbreviated summary. For a fuller and more detailed description of the key provisions of this legislation, which exceeds 500 pages, please see: "Analysis of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Conference Agreement for H.R. 3734," prepared by the National Governors' Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the American Public Welfare Association, August 9, 1996. See also, Mark Greenberg and Steve Savner, "A Detailed Summary of Key Provisions of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Block Grant of H.R. 3734, The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996," Center for Law and Social Policy, Washington, D.C., August 13, 1996.

22. In the near term, assuming no economic downturns, California and some other states will actually receive more under TANF than under the old AFDC program. This windfall results, in part, because of the way the base-year for TANF block grant funding was chosen. States will receive the higher of federal spending in FY 94, FY 95, or the FY 92-94 average. The deep California recession resulted in record expenditures during this period, giving California a high level of base-year federal spending for TANF. (California's caseload peaked in spring of 1995.)

California's average monthly caseload in state fiscal year 1995-1996 has declined by nearly 2% compared to 1994-1995, mostly due to the economic recovery. According to California Department of Social Services data and as-yet unpublished data from the Legislative Analyst's Office, California's July 1996 AFDC caseload is 4.3% lower than the average monthly caseload for the state fiscal year 1994-1995.

Since old-law AFDC federal funding depended on the number of people actually receiving assistance and the amount of benefits paid, federal AFDC funds would have declined along with California's shrinking caseload and lower benefit payments. With annual TANF funding frozen at peak-year spending, the state does better in the near term, gaining $1.350 billion over six years, according to the non-partisan Legislative Analyst's Office. (op.cit., p.3) This cushion will not last, however. California's population continues to grow, as does the number of poor or near-poor people. Eventually, California's needy population and spending needs will exceed the initial TANF cushion. Moreover, the state's short-term gain in TANF is more than offset by other significant losses in federal funding, resulting in a net loss to the state of $6.8 billion by 2002.

8. In fact, there is some dispute over how states may spend their own state-raised revenues. There are some in Congress and the federal government who believe that the restrictions that govern federal expenditures under the new law are also meant to govern state expenditures. Some of this ambiguity arises in section 409, which, among other things, penalizes states for failure to

maintain a certain level of "historic" spending effort. This "maintenance of effort" is generally 80% of the state's spending in FY 94, although that amount can drop to 75% if a state meets the work participation rates.
Section 409(a)(7) of the new law then goes on to define "qualified state expenditures" and notes that these are expenditures made on behalf of "eligible families," which are, in turn, generally defined as "families eligible for assistance under the State program funded" with federal dollars. This seems to suggest that state-raised revenues can only count toward the maintenance of effort requirement if those dollars go to the same restricted group of families specified by the federal law.

Other portions of the federal law suggest otherwise: Section 401, states that the purpose of the new law is "to increase the flexibility of states" to operate such programs. And section 417 explicitly limits federal authority to "regulate the conduct of states..." At this writing, this area of ambiguity in the new federal law has yet to be resolved, although it has profound implications for how states and localities may structure their programs.

9. States must require able-bodied adults to engage in work (to be defined by the state) after not more than two years of assistance. Unless it opts out, the state must also require a parent to participate in community service employment after two months of receiving assistance. To avoid federal fiscal penalties, the state must meet federally specified work participation rates, beginning at 25% in FY 97 and rising to 50% in FY 2002 for all families. The parent must work at least 20 hours per week in 1997 and 30 hours per week beginning in 2000. The state must meet higher standards for two-parent families: Participation rates begin at 75% in FY 97 and rise to 90% in FY 1999 and beyond (with the parent working at least 35 hours per week). There are prescriptive federal rules about what work activities can count toward the first 20 hours of participation per week for all families (and toward the first 30 hours per week for two-parent families) and what activities may count toward required hours after the first 20 hours (or 30 hours) per week. There are additional limits, exemptions, and specifications regarding teen parents, single parents with children under age 6, and two-parent families where the second adult is not required to look after a disabled dependent. See Section 407 of the Act.

10. States are free to impose shorter time limits. This five-year limit (or less, at state option) only applies to federal TANF dollars; state-only revenues are subject to a time limit only at state option.

11.David A. Super, Sharon Parrott, Susan Steinmetz, and Cindy Mann, "The Welfare Conference Bill," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Washington, D.C., August 13, 1996, p. 2.

12. LAO, op. cit., p. 3. These savings may be overstated given the record number of legal immigrants now seeking to become citizens.

13. Ibid., p. 3

14. Super, et. al., op. cit., p.15.

15. LAO, op. cit., p. 3.

16. Jean Ross, "What Will the New Welfare Bill Mean for California?" California Budget Project, Sacramento, CA, October 15, 1996, p. 24.

17.The Individualized Functional Assessment, for evaluating physical disabilities, and the "maladaptive behavior" criterion, for evaluating mental disabilities, have been repealed. Under the new law, to qualify for SSI disability, a child must have a medically determined physical or mental impairment which results in severe functional limitations, which can be expected to end in death, or which has lasted or is expected to last for at least one year.

18. Super, et. al., op. cit., p. 24.

19. LAO, op. cit., p. 9.

20. Ibid., p. 19.

21. The use of for-profits to deliver social services remains extremely controversial, pitting quality of care against the bottom-line. The profit motive has been blamed for shoddy care and "warehousing" in those service industries that use for-profits, including HMOs, nursing homes, and prisons. Allowing states to use for-profit providers for children in foster care poses serious questions here in California, which has been sued by the San Francisco-based Youth Law Center for failing to adequately monitor how its counties care for abused and neglected children. Although current federal and state law requires the state's Department of Social Services to audit the 58 counties running these child welfare programs, the suit alleges that 23 counties have not been audited since 1986 and eleven others were audited in the early 1990s. If the state cannot monitor 58 counties, how can it keep up with multiple providers, particularly those that are trying to turn a profit? This potential lawsuit is reported by Robert B. Gunnison, "State to Be Sued Over Foster Kids," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 23, 1996, p. A14.

22.See section 403 of the new law.

23. See section 403(a)(2) regarding the "bonus to reward decrease in illegitimacy," and section 403(a)(4) for the "bonus to reward high performance states." See section 409 for the description of possible federal fiscal penalties for states.

24. Robert E. Sherman, unpublished report for the Institute for Human Services Management, Seattle, Washington, April 5, 1995. This report is cited in Mark E. Courtney, Preliminary Discussion Draft, "Welfare Reform and Child Welfare Services," Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin at Madison, October, 1996, Footnote 39, p. 40.

25. These estimates of average annual food stamp benefit reductions, by type of household, come from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities paper, "The Depth of Food Stamp Cuts in the Final Welfare Bill," Washington, D.C., August 12, 1996, p.2.

26. The new federal law seems to leave one substantial loophole for states who prefer not to undertake this ambitious work requirement for childless adults, age 18-50. In section 824(a), the law states that, at the request of a state, the Secretary can waive the work requirements if he determines that an area has an unemployment rate of over 10% or if the area has insufficient jobs to employ the individuals in question. At this writing, California officials have not yet indicated whether they will pursue this waiver. While a number of other states have already requested such waivers, some have declined to do so on the grounds that it is inequitable to require single mothers to work (after receiving assistance for two years under TANF), but not require childless adults to work.

27. In practice, of course, real world budgets constrain our humane impulses to make these programs more generous. Consequently, our current public assistance programs for those who are neither aged nor disabled make only modest inroads against poverty and are only attractive to the poorest of the poor.

28. Uccello, McCallum, and Gallagher, op.cit., p. 3-7.

29. Counties can generally recover most of their interim GA costs from SSI payments that are made retroactive to the date of application, for those found eligible.

30. Section 17001.5(a)(4) of the WIC permits counties to limit assistance to employable adults to three months in any 12-month period.

31. This issue came up recently at an American Public Welfare Association meeting, but has been given a higher public profile with an article by Robert Pear, "State's Authority on Welfare Money Disputed," in the *New York Times*, 12-29-96.

32. See Stephen Freedman, Daniel Friedlander, Winston Lin, and Amanda Schweder, *The Gain Evaluation, Working Paper 96.1, Five-Year Impacts on Employment, Earnings, and AFDC Receipt*, MDRC, New York, July 1996.

33. See James Riccio, Daniel Friedlander, Stephen Freedman, *GAIN: Benefits, costs, and Three-Year Impacts of a Welfare-to-Work Program*, MDRC, New York, September 1994, pp.88-90 and 93-94.

34. See Sandra K. Danziger and Sherrie A. Kossoudji, *When Welfare Ends: Subsistence Strategies of Former GA Recipients, Final Report of the General Assistance Project*, University of Michigan School of Social Work, Ann Arbor, February 1995.

35. The principal source (Claudia J. Coulton, Linda Crowell, and Nandita Verma, *General Assistance Program Reductions in Cuyahoga County, Summary Report*, November 1992.) is cited in the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities report on GA, *General Assistance Programs: Gaps in the Safety Net*, March 14, 1995, pp. 21-25.

36. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, ibid., p.31.

37.The principal source (Michael J. Puma, Nancy R. Burstein, Katie Merrell, and Gary Silverstein, *Evaluation of the Food Stamp Employment and Training Program: Final Report*, prepared for the Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, by Abt Associates, Inc., June 1990) is cited in the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities report on GA, ibid., pp. 31-32.

38. The Riverside data are taken from Riccio, et.al., op.cit., p.88.

39. Peter Passell, "Day Care: Quality vs. Equality: Parents Most in Need May Have the Least Access," *New York Times*, 12-25-96.

40. Ann E. Kaplan, ed., *Giving USA: The Annual Report on Philanthropy for the Year 1995*, 1996 edition, p. 12.

41. Ibid, p. 127.

42. These and other direct quotations from non-profit providers around the Bay Area appear in an article by Michael Dougan, *The San Francisco Examiner*, November 24, 1996.

43. Romesh Ratnesar, "Doing Well By Doing Good," *The New Republic*, January 6 & 13, 1997, pp. 18-20.

44. Although we use the term "General Assistance" throughout this report to describe state and/or locally funded public assistance programs, and many states in fact call their programs by this name, it is worth noting that such programs are known by other names across the country, including: General Relief, Home Relief, Poor Relief, Direct Assistance Service, and so on. Some localities specify the assistance provided by the group targeted for help, such as Aid to the Needy Disabled or Family and Children Assistance. Other names describe the program goals, such as Transitional Assistance or GA Self Sufficiency.

45. Uccello, Cori E., Heather R. McCallum, and L. Jerome Gallagher, *Assessing the New Federalism: State General Assistance Programs 1996*, Urban Institute, Washington, D.C., October 1996.

This recent national survey is helpful in understanding general eligibility criteria and benefit payments among states. However, the survey is not of great help in gauging total caseloads and costs across states because 17 states are county administered (like California), and their programs vary widely from locality to locality, making comparable, reliable data impossible to come by. In addition, the Urban Institute survey made no attempt to capture comparable data on recipient characteristics across states and localities.

46. For example, although the old federal AFDC law required all states to extend AFDC aid to poor two-parent households, some poor parents couldn't meet the federal rules on workforce

history or exceeded the so-called "100 hour rule," (which denied assistance to poor families where the head of household, usually the father, worked over 100 hours per month). Such households might well turn to GA programs instead.

47. For purposes of this report, GA programs do not include limited "Emergency Assistance" programs, which typically provide one-time grants for extraordinary circumstances.

48. According to the Urban Institute's recent survey, statewide programs with uniform operating rules across the entire state include: Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, and Washington.

49. The states with mandatory statewide GA programs, in which program features can vary from locality to locality, include: California, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire, and South Dakota.

50. The states in which some counties or localities offer some GA assistance, according to the Urban Institute's 1996 survey, include: Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

51. At the time of the Urban Institute's survey, these states offered no GA program: Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

52. States with GA work requirements include: Alaska, Los Angeles County in California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Idaho (Ada County), Illinois (Chicago), Indiana (Marion County), Kansas, Maine, Michigan (for its State Family Assistance prgram), Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada (Clark County), New Hampshire (Manchester), New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota (Minnehaha County), Utah, and Vermont.

Those states coordinating with the Food Stamp program work requirements are: Los Angeles County in California (the two work programs are the same), Hawaii, Illinois (Chicago), Kansas (but only in the larger cities), Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New York, and Utah.

53. The Urban Institute calculated these percentages using the federal Census Bureau's 1995 poverty thresholds of $7,763 for one-person households and $12,158 for three-person households.

54. Ailee Moon and Leonard Schneiderman, *Assessing the Growth of California's General Assistance Program*, California Policy Seminar, University of California, 1995. The 37 counties that responded to the 1992 survey include: **Alameda**, Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Colusa, **Contra Costa**, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Humboldt, Inyo, Kern, Lake, Los Angeles, Madera,

Marin, Mariposa, Mendocino, Modoc, Mono, Monterey, Orange, Plumas, Sacramento, San Benito, **San Francisco**, San Luis Obispo, **San Mateo**, Santa Barbara, **Santa Clara, Santa Cruz,** Shasta, Siskiyou, **Sonoma**, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yolo. The eight highlighted counties are participating in this BASSC project.

55. See Casey McKeever's (Western Center on Law and Poverty) September 1994 Appendix (3) to the Moon and Schneiderman report, which provides a succinct summary of key court cases and legislative responses. Ibid., p. 175-182.

56. In the 1990-1991 fiscal year, an AFDC household of three received a maximum monthly grant of $694. Today, that same family receives $594, a cut of 14.4%. Effective January 1, 1997, the state will reduce AFDC benefits by another 4.9% (to $565 per month) in higher cost-of-living counties, and by 9.4% (to $538 per month) in lower cost-of-living counties. These data come from the Legislative Analyst's Office.

57. I calculated these poverty rates using the Census Bureau's 1992 poverty thresholds of $7,143 for an individual, $9,137 for two persons, and $11,186 for three persons. See the *1996 Green Book*, U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Ways and Means, 104th Congress, 2nd Session, WMCP 104-14, November 4, 1996, p.1224.