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Recommend one of the costs saving reduction options to the General Assistance program:
a. Implement a six-month annual time limit for temporary disabled recipients, and a three-month time limit for the non-disabled, employable recipients down to only three months on the program for a savings of $309,892; or
b. Implement a three-month annual time limit for non-disabled, employable recipients, and a $50 grant reduction (from $340 to $290), for a savings of $309,891; or
c. Implement a six-month annual time limit for temporary disabled recipients, and a $12 grant reduction (from $340 to $328), for a savings of $304,466; or
d. Implement a grant reduction only of $62, (from $340 to $278); or
e. Maintain the existing program and the General Fund covers the shortfall.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:
Recommend one of the costs saving reduction options to the General Assistance program:
a. Implement a six-month annual time limit for temporary disabled recipients, and a three-month time limit for the non-disabled, employable recipients down to only three months on the program for a savings of $309,892; or
b. Implement a three-month annual time limit for non-disabled, employable recipients, and a $50 grant reduction (from $340 to $290), for a savings of $309,891; or
c. Implement a six-month annual time limit for temporary disabled recipients, and a $12 grant reduction (from $340 to $328), for a savings of $304,466; or
d. Implement a grant reduction only of $62, (from $340 to $278); or
e. Maintain the existing program and the General Fund covers the shortfall.

SUMMARY:

Over the last two years the General Assistance program has increased 56% from FY 23-24 and the current year is reflecting an additional 12% increase. The Department has had to return to this board to increase appropriations over the last several years. The Department is requesting guidance on the various cost-saving options so the General Assistance resolution can be amended and brought to the full board for approval and implementation.

DISCUSSION:
Monterey County's General Assistance program provides medical exams for applicants and recipients to confirm disability, or for applicants and recipients who inform the Department of Social Services that they are unable to work, as required under the program. Individuals who are experiencing disability and are unable to work receive help in applying for Supplemental Security Income (SSI/SSP). Individuals who are not disabled are enrolled in the General Assistance Work Experience Program (GA-WEP).

The GA-WEP had 288 active cases last fiscal year, and the Department is always seeking more agencies to partner. These individuals are assigned to complete work hours at local sites (The Food Bank for Monterey County, and Dorothy's Place for example) which assist these community partners with serving our mutual customers while building job skills for our General Assistance recipients to gain future employment.

The Department is recommending cost saving measures to the General Assistance program via time limits and/or grant reductions considering the County's budget constraints. The program in Monterey County currently provides a grant amount of $340 and a 6-month time limit for non-disabled, employable recipients and no limit for temporarily disabled recipients. Changes to the program time limit can only be applied to recipients who are not permanently disabled and who have been offered an opportunity to attend job skills or job training sessions. Any program changes will require modifying the Boards' existing resolution for the Program and returning to the Board for final approval before program changes can be implemented.

There are various cost-saving options for the Board to consider:
a.) Implement a six-month annual time limit for temporarily disabled recipients for a savings of $229,340 annually;
b.) Implement of a three-month annual time limit for non-disabled, employable recipients for a savings of $64,355 annually;
c.) Implement a grant reduction reflecting savings below:

Grant Reduction	Revised Grant Aid Payment	Savings
$12	**$328**	**$58,929**
$50	**$290**	**$245,536**
$62	**$278**	**$304,465**

Time limits are authorized under WIC 17001.5 (a) (4). Grant amounts are authorized under WIC 17000.5 (b) and 17001. Under these sections of the Welfare and Institutions Code counties may:

17000.5 *(b) The adoption of a standard of aid pursuant to this section shall constitute a sufficient standard of aid.*
17001 *The board of supervisors of each county, or the agency authorized by county charter, shall adopt standards of aid and care for the indigent and dependent poor of the county or city and county.*

17001.5. *(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, including, but not limited to, Section 17000.5, the board of supervisors of each county, or the agency authorized by the county charter, may do any of the following:*
(4) Prohibit an employable individual from receiving aid under this part for more than three months in any 12-month period, whether the months are consecutive. This paragraph shall apply to aid received on or after the effective date of this paragraph. This paragraph shall apply only to those individuals who have been offered an opportunity to attend job skills or job training sessions.

The Department has provided five different options for the Board to consider:
a.) Implement a six-month annual time limit for temporary disabled recipients, and a three-month time limit for the non-disabled, employable recipients down to only three months on the program for a savings of $309,892. Although this would have a slight increase in workload, there would be no adjustment to the monthly grant aid amount. This will establish a time limit for the temporary-disabled recipients, reducing their benefits to six months out of every twelve-month period, regardless of if they continue to be temporarily disabled; or
b.) Implement a three-month annual time limit for non-disabled, employable recipients, and a $50 grant reduction (from $340 to $290), for a savings of $309,891. This is a combination of the grant aid reduction and reducing the time that a non-disabled, employable recipient could be on the program; or
c.) Implement a six-month annual time limit for temporary disabled recipients, and a $12 grant reduction (from $340 to $328), for a savings of $304,466. This is a combination of a slight decrease in the grant aid and establishing a time limit for a recipient to be temporary disabled; or
d.) Implement a grant reduction only of $62, (from $340 to $278). This has no impact staff workload, however a larger impact to our program recipients. The Department is not recommending this option as the benefit amount would be insufficient; or
e.) No modification to the program and the General Fund would cover the estimated budget shortfall of $300,000.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT/COMMITTEE ACTIONS:
The County Administrator's Office - Budget Office - concurs with these actions. This item received support from the Budget Committee on April 29, 2026, to bring options to the Board.

FINANCING:
With an approximate $300,000 budget shortfall in the current fiscal year for the General Assistance program, the Department of Social Services is seeking guidance from the Board on reducing program costs to stay within budget.

The Department is recommending the Board consider one of the following reduction options:
a.) Implement a six-month annual time limit for temporary disabled recipients, and a three- month time limit for the non-disabled, employable recipients down to only three months on the program for a savings of $309,892; or
b.) Implement a three-month annual time limit for non-disabled, employable recipients, and a $50 grant reduction (from $340 to $290), for a savings of $309,891; or
c). Implement a six-month annual time limit for temporary disabled recipients, and a $12 grant reduction (from $340 to $328), for a savings of $304,466; or
d.) Implement a grant reduction only of $62, (from $340 to $278) not recommended by the Department; or
e.) No modification to the program and the General Fund would cover the estimated budget shortfall of $300,000.

This report reflects that there is a current $300,000 budget shortfall during the development of the current Fiscal Year 2026-27 Adopted Budget for the General Assistance Program. This report is seeking guidance from the Board on how to mitigate the budget shortfall. Once direction has been provided, the Department will return to the Board with either a revised board resolution for changes to the General Assistance Program, or to increase appropriations.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS:
Recommended actions would support the Department of Social Services in keeping program expenses within budget as part of the Administrative Strategic Plan Goal. However, it has been the County's mission to assist their indigent residents, and to ensure that all have a safety net of support as they work towards self-sufficiency - adopting a reduction in services would lessen services under the Well-Being and Quality of Life Strategic Plan Goal.

Mark a check to the related Board of Supervisors Strategic Plan Goals:

_X_ Well-Being and Quality of Life
____ Sustainable Infrastructure for the Present and Future
____ Safe and Resilient Communities
____ Diverse and Thriving Economy
_X_ Administrative

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Attachments: GA Reductions Strategies (PowerPoint)