

Section Three: Cash Assistance Programs

- How Much Cash Reaches Homeless Persons
- What Type of Cash Assistance is Granted to Homeless Persons



Distribution of Funds for Cash Assistance

Cash assistance funds for homeless persons are granted through Food Stamps, General Relief, and the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. In the past, as explained on page 13, cash assistance also included rental assistance for homeless. This allocation was provided by the County of San Diego and the San Diego Housing Commission. They allocated funds through contracts with homeless service providers who provided case management and supportive services. Since the funds are connected to programs with services it is consistent with other reporting to now report them in the programs section.

As can be seen on page 7 the County of San Diego provides \$6,064,312 and the City of San Diego provides no cash assistance. In the past the City's cash assistance allocation came from the San Diego Housing Commission. All of the Housing Commission funds are now reported in the programs section.

Overall, cash assistance funds have increased almost \$500,00 from last year. The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency administers the cash assistance funds.

The homeless food stamps allocation increased by more than 14 percent from last year. It makes up the largest portion of cash assistance with \$4,848,276.

State and Federal regulations require that persons presenting themselves as homeless receive "expedited services." This homeless status requires that the department determine eligibility within three days of application, and that eligible persons be certified for payments four months at a time. Persons not deemed to be homeless must report monthly. Additionally, able-bodied

adults without children are limited to three months of benefits in any 36-month period unless they are working at least halftime.

TANF (\$583,120) provides cash benefits to families in which a needy child has been deprived of parental support. In general, the program covers single-parent families with children under the age of 18. The program limits clients to 60 months of support in a lifetime.

The General Relief allocation is approximately one percent less than last year's allocation. General Relief is a program that provides assistance to persons not supported by other public assistance programs, family and friends, or other resources. It is a program of last resort for persons who have no other way to meet their basic needs, including food and shelter.

Federal, State, and County welfare reform has greatly impacted the amount of homeless funding available for individuals and families. General Relief (local welfare) offers only temporary, and very limited, support. Its objective is to reduce and/or eliminate long-term dependency. Those who do not demonstrate a willingness to work are dropped from the rolls. Together, these changes have significantly curtailed the level of support for persons who are already homeless, and reduced the amount of support for those who are currently housed and receiving assistance. For some, it will mean the choice between food and rent.