

Issue Brief – General Assistance

WFS.04

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

The Analyst recommends that the Legislature approve \$4,000,000 in ongoing General Fund and \$1,000,000 in one-time General Fund for a FY 06 supplemental.

WHAT GENERAL ASSISTANCE IS

General Assistance provides financial assistance to single adults or married couples without dependant children who have medical or mental health problems which prevent them from making more than \$500 per month. People waiting to qualify for federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are temporarily helped through General Assistance. Cash assistance is limited to 24 months within a 60 month period. Monthly assistance is \$261 for singles and \$362 for couples.

CASELOAD GROWTH

Since the summer of 2000 cases have increased 96%, steadily rising from about 1,200 to over 2,350.

Cases have increased faster than projected. To keep the program fully functioning, the department has covered employment and case management services to General Assistance customers with about \$2 million per year of federal Wagner/Peyser grant funding, but expenditures are forecast to run \$1.5 million beyond that. The department is requesting a \$1.5 million supplemental.

The department is also requesting \$6 million for FY 07.

FEDERAL REIMBURSEMENT

The federal government reimburses the state for payments made to those who become SSI eligible and that is about 60% of the total General Assistance budget.

CASE COUNTS

Case counts growth seems to be slowing, although they are still increasing

