

## **What Social Services Providers Should Know About the Discontinuance of General Assistance Cash Assistance Effective August 1, 2019**

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General Assistance (GA) is state-funded cash assistance that provides money and other services for eligible individuals who do not meet the requirements for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). GA cash assistance is on average \$200 per month. GA cash assistance recipients also receive Medical Assistance coverage as a part of the program. Act 2019-12, eliminated GA cash assistance as of August 1, 2019. Current recipients of GA cash assistance on that date will continue to receive Medical Assistance when their GA cash assistance ends.

### **Who Will Be Affected?**

GA cash assistance recipients are in one of the following categories:\*

- 18-20 years old and in secondary school expected to graduate by age 21
- Children under the age of 21 not eligible for TANF
- In a two-parent household with children under 13; or 13 and older and disabled
- Temporarily disabled
- Permanently disabled
- Non-parental caretakers of children under 13; or 13 and older and disabled
- Undergoing drug and alcohol treatment that precludes employment
- A pregnant woman not eligible for TANF
- A victim of domestic violence

\* - Please see the attached participant distribution by county (as of June 2019).

### **Were GA cash assistance recipients notified of the discontinuance?**

Notices informing recipients of the closure of the program were mailed to the majority of recipients on July 1, 2019.

### **Are GA cash assistance recipients potentially eligible for other types of assistance?**

- All GA cash assistance recipients will continue to receive Medical Assistance.
- Those recipients who are also receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits will continue to receive SNAP as long as they are eligible.
- Recipients will receive separate notices reflecting any changes in their SNAP or Medicaid benefits. Some recipients will see an increase in their SNAP benefits as a result of the discontinuance of GA.

### **Will GA cash assistance recipients be informed that they can apply for other benefits?**

The notice sent to all recipients informs the recipient that if they are pregnant or caring for a child, or have a serious disability, or are blind or have limited vision, to contact the county assistance office or apply online using COMPASS as they may potentially be eligible for TANF, Social Security benefits or State Blind Pension. DHS is also reviewing any available case data to see if current recipients meet the criteria for TANF or State Blind Pension benefits.

### **When will the last GA cash assistance payments be made?**

GA cash assistance will not extend beyond July 31, 2019. Recipients will receive July payments as scheduled.

### **Will recipients who have GA cash assistance on the EBT card be able to use them after July 31, 2019?**

When GA cash assistance is deposited, clients will be able to access their cash assistance until they have exhausted any available cash balances.

### **How could community organizations and private donors assist GA cash assistance recipients in their local communities?**

- Provide information regarding where to go for services, and connect them with services through warm hand-offs, understanding the needs of former GA recipients. *(Note: warm hand-offs may be difficult in many circumstances where community organizations have limited capacity and use voicemail to manage call volume)*
- PA 2-1-1 is available as a resource for people affected. Although cash assistance is not available from community-based organizations, 2-1-1 can connect people to services that may be able to help people meet basic needs such as food and housing.
  - Organizations should contact 2-1-1 to ensure their information is included and up-to-date so they may be a resource to people seeking assistance. Use the following form to submit your information to 2-1-1:  
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeK39nNqzEgXbIX563JE-AJ3fR1k1jGFPhb5OmPDJONF7jUqA/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1>
  - Display the attached flyer in places most accessible to recipients.
- Connect program participants with organizations such as the local Community Action Agencies to provide additional information and case management, where available.
  - For information on the Community Action Agency serving your county, visit: <https://www.thecaap.org/agency-info/pa-community-action-agencies.html>
  - To learn more about the services provided by your local Community Action Agency, visit: <https://www.thecaap.org/agency-info/caap-matrix.html>
- Social services organizations may work with private partners and the local community, including the business and faith-based communities, to help provide the items that many families purchased with GA funds. This may include items that cannot be purchased with SNAP funds. Local non-profit organizations, faith-based groups and/or businesses may:
  - Collect and distribute items not covered under SNAP:
    - Cleaning supplies
    - Paper products, including toilette paper
    - Household supplies: laundry detergent, trash bags, etc.
    - Hygiene items: soap, shampoo, lotion, feminine products, diapers, etc.
    - Over the counter medicines and vitamins
    - Pet food
  - Coordinate targeted food drives or provide funding to local food banks to specifically help those affected by the elimination of GA.

**GENERAL ASSISTANCE PARTICIPANTS AS OF JUNE 2019**

	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,886</b>	
1	Philadelphia	5,992	50%
2	Allegheny	1,115	9%
3	Montgomery	267	2%
4	Delaware	255	2%
5	Westmoreland	241	2%
6	York	237	2%
7	Lancaster	216	2%
8	Erie	215	2%
9	Berks	192	2%
10	Chester	160	1%
11	Luzerne	155	1%
12	Lackawanna	142	1%
13	Washington	137	1%
14	Northampton	135	1%
15	Bucks	123	1%
16	Dauphin	119	1%
17	Cambria	113	1%
18	Lehigh	108	1%
19	Butler	95	1%
20	Crawford	95	1%
21	Cumberland	95	1%
22	Lycoming	79	1%
23	Beaver	77	1%
24	Fayette	72	1%
25	Armstrong	71	1%
26	Monroe	71	1%
27	Blair	70	1%
28	Mercer	67	1%
29	Clearfield	66	1%
30	Mifflin	65	1%
31	Indiana	61	1%
32	Schuylkill	60	1%
33	Lawrence	54	0%
34	McKean	53	0%
35	Lebanon	50	0%
36	Clarion	44	0%
37	Jefferson	42	0%
38	Tioga	39	0%
39	Greene	38	0%
40	Northumberland	37	0%

41	Bradford	36	0%
42	Clinton	34	0%
43	Columbia	34	0%
44	Franklin	32	0%
45	Warren	31	0%
46	Adams	30	0%
47	Somerset	30	0%
48	Venango	28	0%
49	Huntingdon	26	0%
50	Centre	25	0%
51	Carbon	22	0%
52	Bedford	21	0%
53	Pike	20	0%
54	Wayne	19	0%
55	Union	17	0%
56	Elk	16	0%
57	Perry	16	0%
58	Susquehanna	15	0%
59	Juniata	13	0%
60	Wyoming	13	0%
61	Snyder	11	0%
62	Cameron	**	
63	Forest	**	
64	Fulton	**	
65	Montour	**	
66	Potter	**	
67	Sullivan	**	

\*\* - Data is suppressed to ensure personally identifiable information is not indirectly revealed in instances where there are 10 or fewer records.