

**THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF STANISLAUS
BOARD ACTION SUMMARY**

DEPT: Community Services Agency

BOARD AGENDA: 5.B.11
AGENDA DATE: February 4, 2025

SUBJECT:

Approval of the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Adjustment for the Community Services Agency to Recognize Growth in the General Assistance Program Funded by Savings in Program Services and Support

BOARD ACTION AS FOLLOWS:

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-0067

On motion of Supervisor Withrow ----- Seconded by Supervisor Chiesa -----
and approved by the following vote,

Ayes: Supervisors: Chiesa, Withrow, C. Condit, and Chairman B. Condit -----

Noes: Supervisors: None -----

Excused or Absent: Supervisors: Grewal -----

Abstaining: Supervisor: None -----

- 1) Approved as recommended
- 2) Denied
- 3) Approved as amended
- 4) Other:

MOTION:

ATTEST: Kelly Rodriguez
KELLY RODRIGUEZ, Assistant Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

File No.

**THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF STANISLAUS
AGENDA ITEM**

DEPT: Community Services Agency

BOARD AGENDA:5.B.11
AGENDA DATE: February 4, 2025

CONSENT:

CEO CONCURRENCE: YES

4/5 Vote Required: Yes

SUBJECT:

Approval of the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Adjustment for the Community Services Agency to Recognize Growth in the General Assistance Program Funded by Savings in Program Services and Support

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. Accept the Community Services Agency (CSA) report on trends in General Assistance caseloads and grants which demonstrate program growth, consistent with the Fiscal Year 2025 actual expenditure and revenue data and necessitating an increase to the CSA General Assistance budget, offset by savings in the CSA Program Services and Support budget.
2. Direct the Auditor-Controller to increase Net County Cost and appropriations in the CSA General Assistance budget and to decrease Net County Cost in the CSA Services and Support budget, as detailed in the attached budget journal.

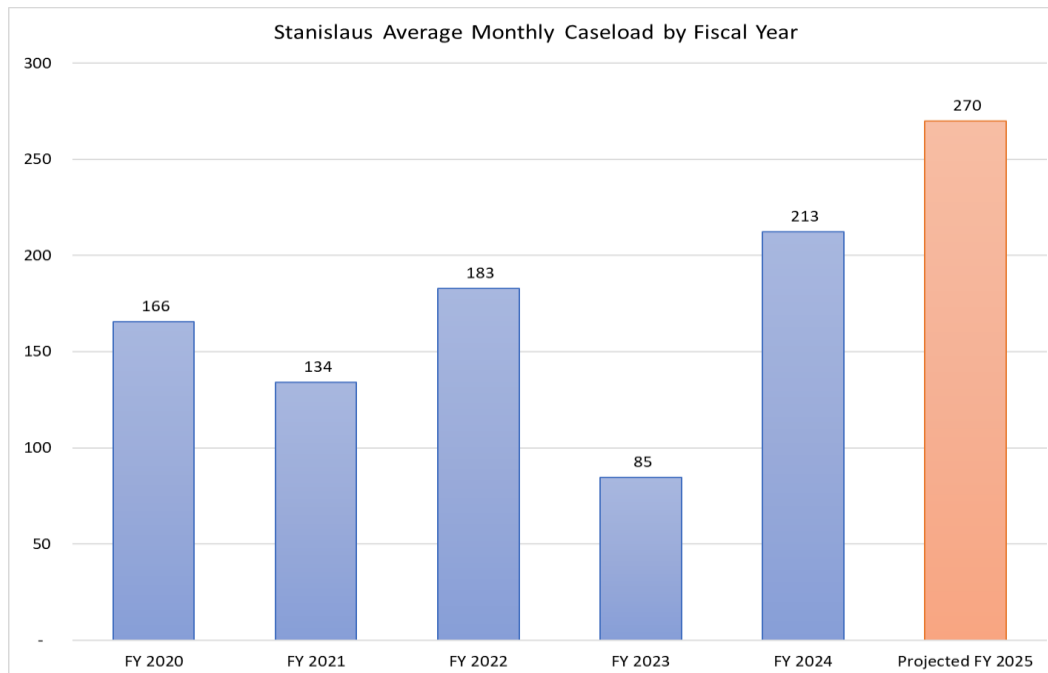
DISCUSSION:

The Community Services Agency (CSA) builds community by cultivating safety, stability, and resiliency – strengthening the foundation for all. CSA operates and has oversight of various social welfare programs that provide cash assistance, and social services and supports for the benefit of the community. CSA strives to serve, aid, and protect needy and vulnerable children and adults in ways that strengthen and preserve families, encourage personal responsibility, and foster independence.

The General Assistance (GA) Adult program, mandated by Section 17000 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, provides cash aid payments to indigent adults who reside in Stanislaus County who are not supported by their own means, other public funds, or assistance programs. If an applicant is classified as employable, they can receive GA for three months in a twelve-month period and are offered job training assistance. If the applicant is exempt from the employable classification, the applicant can receive GA until their Social Security application determination is made. The GA Foster Care (FC) is used as a last resort for FC placements that are not eligible for state or federal reimbursement. GA costs are a County General Fund (GF) responsibility and included in the County Operations - Mandated County Match Budget. The 2025 Adopted Budget included a Mandated County Match of \$1,381,702 for GA.

Caseload Trends

In March 2024, GA adult began to experience a sharp increase in caseloads, from 204 cases in February 2024 to 296 cases in March 2024. From July to November 2025, there was an average of 270 adult cases per month receiving GA. The chart below depicts the GA adult average monthly caseload trend for the current and prior five fiscal years and demonstrates a sustained, steady increase in caseload starting in Fiscal Year 2024.



As can be seen in the preceding chart, the Fiscal Year 2024 GA Adult caseloads increased by 108.6% over Fiscal Year 2023 and caseloads are projected to increase by another 27.7% in Fiscal Year 2025. The projection for Fiscal Year 2025 is based on year-to-date actual caseloads through November 30, 2024, and estimated caseloads for December 2024 through June 2025.

As depicted in the following chart, the Stanislaus County GA caseload hovers between .11% and .13% of the Statewide GA caseload, with Fiscal Year 2023 an outlier at .06%. Current GA data trends for the County's eight comparable counties show the average monthly caseload trend experience has varied from Fiscal Year 2020 through Fiscal Year 2024. During this time period, the Statewide caseload has increased by 15%, while the Stanislaus County caseload has increased 28%. Of note, both San Joaquin and Merced counties have experienced a decline in GA caseloads from Fiscal Year 2020 through Fiscal Year 2024 at 26% and 47% respectively.

General Assistance Adult Average Monthly Caseload					
County	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Fresno	2,804	1,353	922	1,024	1,376
Kern	1,573	1,051	823	789	1,185
Madera	72	42	40	22	46
Merced	90	85	45	45	48
Monterey	393	340	201	260	341
Sacramento	3,968	2,867	2,917	2,753	2,318
San Joaquin	494	217	225	314	366
Stanislaus	166	134	183	85	213
Tulare	462	252	237	266	251
Statewide	140,606	130,096	131,637	153,911	162,295

Source: GR 237 found on www.cdss.ca.gov Caseload data reflects cases open during the month (certified eligible to participate during the month)

1. Madera County 1 month of data not available in FY 2023

Staff will be conducting additional research into the Fiscal Year 2023 Stanislaus County caseload experience to better understand the program and demographic variables that could lead to such fluctuation in the program. As well, given the local GA experience of increasing caseloads exceeding the Statewide growth experience during the five year period versus the eight county experience of caseload decrease, Staff will also benchmark the local program with our neighbors in San Joaquin and Merced to understand population variables and identify any potential program changes to improve customer service while mitigating exposure to the County General Fund.

Analysis of GA to other Public Assistance program experience has been completed since CalFresh and CalWORKs trends have historically aligned with trends in General Assistance. Current data for the County's eight comparable counties show the average monthly caseload for the current fiscal year is projected to be higher than the previous fiscal year for most counties, as depicted in the tables below. Stanislaus County is consistently reporting CalFresh caseloads equal to 1.7% of the statewide caseload, with CalWORKs hovering between 2% and 2.2% of the statewide caseload in that program. From Fiscal Year 2020 through the Fiscal Year 2024, Stanislaus County CalFresh caseload grew 28%, aligned with the Statewide caseload growth of 29%. During this same time period, the CalWORKs caseload in Stanislaus County declined 8%, aligned with the Statewide caseload decline of 9%. This further suggests that GA program projections will need to be closely monitored through the remainder of the year to determine the potential for monthly or seasonal variation in caseload that will inform more detailed projections in the development of the 2026 Proposed Budget.

CalFresh Average Monthly Caseload						
County	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025 (Jul-Oct)
Fresno	96,048	92,994	97,990	111,544	119,980	125,556
Kern	74,728	75,149	76,436	90,335	99,475	106,087
Madera	11,888	12,399	13,250	15,387	16,650	17,106
Merced	25,254	24,597	25,942	29,617	31,783	31,708
Monterey	19,224	20,201	21,171	20,705	28,831	29,229
Sacramento	111,201	118,310	122,419	132,721	136,426	140,321
San Joaquin	48,017	48,690	53,030	60,105	64,319	66,313
Stanislaus	39,002	36,884	38,095	44,279	50,076	50,876
Tulare	55,920	50,470	52,780	47,988	62,329	64,187
Statewide	2,271,299	2,446,442	2,368,938	2,926,664	2,932,722	3,039,221

Source: CF 296 found on www.cdss.ca.gov Caseload data reflects cases open during the month (certified eligible to participate during the month)

1. Merced and Tulare County 1 month of data not available in FY 2022

CalWORKs Average Monthly Caseload						
County	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025 (Jul-Sep)
Fresno	20,299	17,429	16,633	17,814	17,428	19,802
Kern	17,715	15,794	14,450	15,545	17,157	18,268
Madera	2,689	2,514	2,319	2,499	2,586	2,631
Merced	6,093	5,470	5,038	5,260	5,433	5,434
Monterey	2,965	2,742	2,475	2,898	3,409	3,334
Sacramento	22,261	18,852	17,804	19,297	17,991	20,880
San Joaquin	10,467	9,161	8,723	9,197	9,614	9,866
Stanislaus	7,483	6,435	5,738	5,608	6,871	7,017
Tulare	11,757	10,095	9,821	10,415	10,871	
Statewide	359,168	304,311	308,498	323,884	325,595	319,882

Source: CA 237 found on www.cdss.ca.gov Caseload data reflects cases open during the month (certified eligible to participate during the month)

1. Tulare 2 months of data not available in FY 2023

2. Tulare 2 months of data not available and Monterey 1 month of data not available in FY 2024

3. Tulare zero months of data and Monterey 2 months of data not available in FY 2025

CSA has also been monitoring GA FC caseloads, which can be volatile since secure placement options for youth are costly and the need for 24-hour one-on-one supervision can exacerbate that cost. Fiscal Year 2025 year-to-date GA FC caseloads appear to be stable. As of November 2024, it is estimated that there are sufficient appropriations to support GA FC operations through the end of the fiscal year.

Cost of Living Adjustment

On May 5, 2015, the Board of Supervisors authorized the CSA Director to establish and implement annually the General Assistance Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) in alignment with legislated changes in the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility for Kids (CalWORKs) program, one fiscal year in arrears (Board Resolution 2015-0201). Application of COLAs is in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) section 17000.5 and reinforced by litigation. Counties throughout the State align GA grant increases one fiscal year in arrears with State legislated increases in the CalWORKs program, which provides temporary financial assistance to families with minor children.

On October 1, 2022, California enacted a 10% temporary CalWORKs grant COLA, which became permanent in Fiscal Year 2024. In Fiscal Year 2024, an additional 3.6% COLA was enacted and became effective on October 1, 2023. On July 1, 2024, the CSA Director granted a 13.6% (10% + 3.6%) COLA to GA Adult recipients. The 13.6% COLA equates to approximately \$203,893 per year, and was calculated according to the table below:

FY 2025 Year-to-Date Average Monthly Cases	Total Estimated FY 2025 Cases	FY 2024 Average Grant	13.6% COLA	Estimated Annual Cost of COLA
270	3,240	\$ 462.69	\$ 62.93	\$ 203,893

Recommended Budget Adjustment

On June 25, 2024, the Board of Supervisors approved a \$500,000 increase in appropriations in the CSA General Assistance Legal Budget Unit (LBU) to support increases in utilization of the GA Adult program and the cost of GA FC program (Board Resolution 2024-0331). There was sufficient General Fund savings in the CSA Public Economic Assistance LBU to offset the increase and \$500,000 was transferred to the CSA General Assistance LBU to mitigate the impact to the County General Fund.

In July 2024, CSA completed additional caseload and cost analysis which demonstrated a need for additional appropriations and County General Fund in Fiscal Year 2025. CSA submitted an Adopted Budget request to increase appropriations and County General Fund Contribution by \$965,000, which was deferred by the Chief Executive Office until the Midyear Financial Report. In preparation for the 2025 Midyear Financial Report, CSA evaluated actual revenue and expenditures recorded year-to-date and updated financial projections for the remainder of the year. The Department has determined that an adjustment is still needed in the CSA General Assistance LBU.

CSA estimates that there are only sufficient appropriations and estimated revenue to support the provision of General Assistance to the community through January 2025. Due to the continued increases in GA Adult caseloads and the COLA that was applied on July 1, 2024, CSA is now recommending an adjustment to increase appropriations and County General Fund Contribution by \$1.2 million. This increase will ensure sufficient appropriations are available to cover GA Adult costs through June 30, 2025, and is based on the most recent updated projections.

CSA was unable to bring this matter to the Board's attention sooner, since data to support the trend projections was not available until December. Once the trend was known, CSA immediately notified the Chief Executive Office and began preparing this agenda item. To mitigate the impact to County General Fund, CSA is recommending to reduce County General Fund Contribution by \$1.2 million from the CSA Services and Support LBU as a temporary solution.

POLICY ISSUE:

Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 17000 mandates that the Board of Supervisors adopt a general assistance standard of aid.

According to County Code 2.08.050, the Chief Executive Office is responsible for the evaluation of the annual budget adopted by the Board of Supervisors and County

government expenditures and revenues to ensure they are consistent with the annual budget. All requests for changes to the annual budget shall first be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer, who shall transmit them to the Board of Supervisors together with recommendations.

Additionally, Government Code Section 29125 provides that transfers and revisions to the adopted appropriations may be made by an action formally adopted by the Board of Supervisors at a regular or special meeting by a four-fifths vote, as is the use of Appropriations for Contingencies.

FISCAL IMPACT:

CSA’s 2025 Adopted Budget for the CSA General Assistance budget unit contains appropriations of \$1,556,702 funded with \$175,000 in estimated revenue and \$1,381,702 in Net County Cost. Estimated revenue is derived from Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) repayments or other types of collection and recoupment efforts, which are not considered a routine, measurable source of income. For this reason, CSA is not requesting a budget adjustment to account for the projected increase in estimated revenue. Any excess revenue received will be used to offset actual Net County Cost at fiscal year-end.

General Assistance Legal Budget Unit Fund 1633	Fiscal Year 2025 Adopted Budget	Fiscal Year 2025 Year-To- Date Through November	Estimated Annualized Fiscal Year 2025	(Shortfall)/ Surplus	Requested Budget Adjustment Increase/ (Decrease)
GA Adult Expenditures	\$ 574,321	\$ 720,937	\$ 1,730,249	\$ (1,155,928)	\$ 1,200,000
GA Foster Care Expenditures	\$ 982,430	\$ 388,839	\$ 933,214	\$ 49,216	\$ -
Total Expenditures	\$ 1,556,751	\$ 1,109,776	\$ 2,663,463	\$ (1,106,712)	\$ 1,200,000
Charges for Service	\$ 143,367	\$ 92,543	\$ 222,103	\$ 78,736	\$ -
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$ 31,682	\$ 9,809	\$ 23,542	\$ (8,140)	\$ -
Total Revenue	\$ 175,049	\$ 102,352	\$ 245,645	\$ 70,596	\$ -
General Fund Contribution	\$ 1,381,702	\$ 1,007,424	\$ 2,417,818	\$ (1,036,116)	\$ 1,200,000

CSA is requesting an increase of \$1.2 million in appropriations, funded with Net County Cost, in the CSA General Assistance budget. To offset this increase in Net County Cost, the Department is requesting to decrease the use of Net County Cost and increase the use of allowable fund balance in the CSA Services and Support budget, pending further analysis. These adjustments are detailed in the attached budget journal. The increase to appropriations and transfer of County General Fund are projected to support the provision of Adult and FC General Assistance through June 30, 2025.

CSA is unsure whether sufficient savings in County General Fund will materialize in the Program Services and Support budget due to the Department’s efforts to fill all allocated positions. Staff will monitor expenditures and revenue through the remainder of the year. Further, the department is currently performing a deep dive analysis of individual programs revenue and expenditures for the three most recent years, along with a full reconciliation of fund balance. It is anticipated that this work will resolve any budget exposure in the current fiscal year. If the needed savings do not materialize, the Department will return to the board with an alternate strategy for funding.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' PRIORITY:

Acceptance of the recommended actions supports the Board of Supervisors' priorities of *Supporting a Healthy Community and Delivering Efficient Public Services* by prudently budgeting for and monitoring the financial impact of cash assistance and social services and supports for the benefit of the community.

STAFFING IMPACT:

There is no additional staffing impact associated with the approval of this agenda item.

CONTACT PERSON:

Christine Huber, MSW
Director, Community Services Agency

209-558-2500

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Budget Journal



Budget Adjustment Template

Budget Entry Identifier (For department tracking only)	CSA JP JV100296
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*SC_FUND[.] (4 char)	*SC_COST CENTER[.] (7 char)	*SC_ACCOUNT[.] (5 char)	*SC_PROJECT[.] (7 char)	*SC_LOCATION[.] (6 char)	*SC_MISC[.] (6 char)	*SC_INTERFUND[.] (4 char)	*SC_FUTURE[.] (5 char)	Increase to Expense, Decrease to Revenue	Decrease to Expense, Increase to Revenue	Net Increase/(Decrease)	Comment
1633	0045901	70080	0000000	000000	000000	0000	00000	1,200,000		1,200,000	General Assistance - Adjustments at Detail Level
1633	0045901	46620	0000000	000000	000000	0000	00000		1,200,000	1,200,000	County Match - Adjustments at Detail Level
1631	0045051	46620	0000000	000000	000000	0000	00000	1,200,000		(1,200,000)	County Match - Adjustments at Detail Level
Total								2,400,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	

Explanation: CSA General Assistance Fund 1633 Board Agenda Item Adjustments FY 2025 to increase appropriations and County General Fund Contribution

Requesting Department	CEO	Auditor-Controller's Office
John Pursley	Joshua A. Woolworth	Christopher L. Barnes
Prepared by	Approved By	Approved By
1/3/2025	1/25/2025	1/27/2025
Date	Date	Date