

State of Alaska FY2003 Governor's Operating Budget

Department of Health and Social Services General Relief Assistance Component Budget Summary

Component: General Relief Assistance

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Component Mission

The mission of the Division of Public Assistance is to provide basic living expenses and self-sufficiency services to Alaskans in need.

Component Services Provided

General Relief Assistance is the bottom tier in Alaska's welfare system. It provides a small amount of aid on behalf of persons who are extremely poor and facing an emergency need. To qualify, a person must have an immediate and specific need for food, clothing, shelter, or burial, and lack the financial means to meet the need(s). If eligible, a maximum monthly payment of \$120.00 per person is allowed by State statute for meeting subsistence needs. The General Relief Assistance program pays vendors directly on behalf of eligible persons to ensure that emergency needs for food, clothing, or shelter are met. General Relief Assistance also funds indigent burials. Without this basic state service, the cost of approximately 390 burials per year would fall on the communities and funeral homes of the State.

Component Goals and Strategies

PROVIDE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES.

- Reimburse vendors for rent, food, clothing, and necessary utilities on behalf of indigent Alaskans experiencing an extreme financial crisis.
- Reimburse vendors for funeral and burial services provided on behalf of indigent deceased persons.

Key Component Issues for FY2002 – 2003

Alaska's General Relief Assistance (GRA) program was developed as a safety net program for very low-income individuals who are not eligible for other state or federal assistance. It is used as a last resort program to meet the emergency needs of low income Alaskans who have no other resources available to meet those needs. Currently, about 75 percent of GRA program expenditures are used to pay for funeral and burial expenses of indigent deceased persons. The remainder is used primarily to assist low-income individuals and families who are facing eviction.

Individuals and families that access the program continue to represent one of Alaska's most needy and vulnerable populations. They are often marginal members of the community and may have a variety of significant barriers that preclude successful participation in mainstream society. The Division of Public Assistance wishes to increase funding for the GRA program to continue to provide emergency services to individuals and families who lack other resources.

Major Component Accomplishments in 2001

- Provided GRA program vendor payments for funeral and burial expenses for approximately 375 deceased indigents.
- Prevented the eviction of approximately 100 individual and families each month.

Statutory and Regulatory Authority

AS 47.25.120-300 General Relief Assistance
7 AAC 47.020-290

**General Relief Assistance
Component Financial Summary**

All dollars in thousands

Formula Program:	FY2001 Actuals	FY2002 Authorized	FY2003 Governor
Component Expenditures:			
71000 Personal Services	0.0	0.0	0.0
72000 Travel	0.0	0.0	0.0
73000 Contractual	0.0	0.0	0.0
74000 Supplies	0.0	0.0	0.0
75000 Equipment	0.0	0.0	0.0
76000 Land/Buildings	0.0	0.0	0.0
77000 Grants, Claims	945.6	829.3	1,061.4
78000 Miscellaneous	0.0	0.0	0.0
Expenditure Totals	945.6	829.3	1,061.4
Funding Sources:			
1004 General Fund Receipts	945.6	829.3	1,061.4
Funding Totals	945.6	829.3	1,061.4

General Relief Assistance

Proposed Changes in Levels of Service for FY2003

The FY2003 GRA request increases funding by \$232.1 to meet projected GRA formula need. In the last six years annual GRA program expenditures have ranged from a high of \$1,024.9 in FY96 to a low of \$829.9 in FY99. The FY2003 GRA program need is expected to be about \$1,060.0.

Summary of Component Budget Changes

From FY2002 Authorized to FY2003 Governor

All dollars in thousands

	<u>General Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
FY2002 Authorized	829.3	0.0	0.0	829.3
Adjustments which will continue current level of service:				
-GRA Formula Need transfer from OAA/ALBHH	232.1	0.0	0.0	232.1
FY2003 Governor	1,061.4	0.0	0.0	1,061.4