



## GENERAL ASSISTANCE TASK FORCE MINUTES

Thursday, September 30, 2010  
#255, Alameda County Administration Building

Co-Chairs: Supervisor Nate Miley, District 4 and Supervisor Scott Haggerty, District 1

Contact: Robyn Hodges, District 4 at (510) 272-3691 or [robyn.hodges@acgov.org](mailto:robyn.hodges@acgov.org)

The 2<sup>nd</sup> GA Task Force meeting is on **Thursday, October 28, 2010 at the County Administration Building, 1221 Oak Street, Oakland, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, #255 -- 9:30 am to 11:30 am.** (This time period is for only the 10/28 meeting.)

---

The following is a DRAFT of the highlights of the first GA Task Force meeting. To clarify, correct and/or add/delete text – please email your requested changes to the two persons listed at the end of these draft minutes by 5:00 pm on Monday, October 25<sup>th</sup>.

\* \* \*

- A. Welcome - Supervisor Nate Miley, District 4.
- B. Quick review of the agenda (marked draft) for 9/30/10.
- C. Introduction of attendees – Task Force members and public members. See attached sign-in sheet for a list of attendees.
- D. Purpose and Goals of General Assistance Blue Ribbon Task Force (GA Task Force)
  - 1. Supervisor Miley’s referenced his memo of September 14<sup>th</sup> -- the Alameda County Board of Supervisors during their 2010-2011 final budget deliberations in June, agreed to convene a blue ribbon task force related to General Assistance to address related issues such as shared housing, time limits, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and employment and training. These are very challenging issues.

The Task Force members represent a broad spectrum of stakeholders with the intent of addressing GA and related items. More creative heads dealing with tough and challenging issues – will likely have better outcomes. Supervisor Miley asked that we use our collective wisdom to improve upon the GA system.

The Task Force may recommend an approach or a model that may be the same, better or revolutionary which would improve the safety net system – that is fair for the clients and cost effective for the county.

The Task Force would meet on a monthly basis through March 2011 and present their recommendations to Board of Supervisors in April. The purpose of the Task Force is to review the GA process and to recommend possibly better ways that would be fair, just and cost appropriate.

Supervisor Miley wanted to point out that the SSA staff has been providing GA services for a long-time – within the given structure, the timeframes, the limited resources and constraints that were provided to the staff.

2. The Social Services Agency provided a binder of very useful information to the Task Force members. SSA Director Yolanda Baldovinos will be making a presentation on the materials in the binder shortly. Supervisor Miley thanked Yolanda and her staff for the informative materials in the binder.
  3. Also, experts in the field will be making presentations in the upcoming meetings as well.
  4. All participants will act professionally and as adults. Also, the Supervisor stated that he is results oriented and that this process will be fast moving.
  5. Robyn Hodges is the “go-to” person for this Task Force at (510) 272-3691 or [robyn.hodges@acgov.org](mailto:robyn.hodges@acgov.org).
  6. The Task Force meetings are open to the public. There are a limited number of Task Force members to make it manageable. It is the Supervisor Miley’s expectation that Task Force members will attend every meeting. If that is not possible, then a substitute representative who reflects the organization’s views should be actively participating. Please advise Robyn of any changes.
- E. Expectations of the Task Force Members – reintroduced self, organization and expectations:
1. With extremely limited resources – find creative ways to expand the amount of impact given our resources.
  2. Here to do hard work and produce.
  3. Do the right thing.
  4. Accommodate the severely mental ill and ensure they are protected.
  5. Creative solutions with limited resources. Great information in SSA binder, especially the demographics. Result in providing meaningful work opportunities.
  6. Innovative/creative. Difficult to prepare people to join the workforce in 3 months – many challenges.
  7. Assist mentally ill persons – to reach those who may not know that they are eligible for services.
  8. Increase the resources available to transition from GA to SSI; target employment services/resources, streamline program rules for the GA program, and that the Program meets people’s basic needs.
  9. Mission to provide care for homeless persons and SSI recipients.
  10. Learn from the members/participants – be more strategic in grant making, policy and advocacy support.
  11. Improve the SSI process and expand services for mentally ill and homeless persons.
  12. Increase/strengthen the safety net and advocacy support.
  13. Creative, participatory and develop good ideas to address issues.
  14. Expedited delivery of GA services (related to the SSA workforce).
  15. Find solutions that actually help individuals on GA.
  16. Transition from GA to SSI.
  17. Resources for people who need it the most.
  18. Transition from GA to SSI, Medicare, Medicaid to jobs to housing.
  19. Current system is insufficient. Work with partners – bringing in other resources – look for other solutions and resources, supplement/complement and increase services.
  20. Liberate the positive power and tap the inner capacity of the persons on GA. See what other communities are doing.
  21. Don’t make changes that create more problems for homeless persons. Continue to marry various services to stabilize and keep people away from being homeless.
  22. Make sure that we garner resources for the people who need them.

Hearing various points of view from a broad spectrum of stakeholders, Supervisor Miley stated he was very optimistic.

F. Background Materials - Yolanda Baldovinos, SSA Director and Daniel Kaplan

Ms. Baldovinos stated this binder has a lot of background and resource information, although not all inclusive. She reviewed the materials in the binder that she and her staff pulled together.

1. Tab 1 - Agenda
2. Tab 2 – 12/08: Final GA Working Group Report, including data – “pertinent info and good background info”.
3. Tab 3 – Demographics/Trend – general info: employable; unemployable, SSI, trends.
4. Tab 4 – Fiscal – presented by Daniel Kaplan re: GA program costs and offsets, overpayments, expungements, staffing costs, a range of contractor/service provider/MOU costs, transportation benefits, food stamps, Non-FSET Program, SSI Advocacy and medical exams.. Cost about \$31.2M per year.
  - Questions related to mental health screenings – a flow chart for GA and SSI eligibility.
  - Questions on employable/unemployable – that don’t meet the SSI criteria. This needs to be reviewed.
  - It’s challenging to get onto SSI.
  - 4,200 screening – high number of persons who fall through the gaps are re-entry persons.
  - Good news – didn’t know - that there is screening to capture other residents who meet the criteria but not provided services.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Screening – determine employable/unemployable, Assessment -- if unemployable --.different path within GA.
  - Challenges in processing SI eligible persons.
5. Tab 5 – SSI Advocacy – Plan for Approving SSI Advocacy; SSI Advocacy Trust and Projected Costs and Savings of SSI Advocacy.
6. Tab 6 - Welfare Institutions Code 17000 -- GA Regulations, Title 7 of County Ordinance
7. Tab 7 - GA Client Focus Group
8. Tab 8- Other Models
9. Tab 9 – (open/blank for now)
10. Tab 10 – Addendum - analysis of the LA Program – “Where We Sleep”
  - Question: level of education, incarcerated – Response: pulled a sample in last Task Force report – will give the flavor.
  - Question: copy of binder for general public – Response: will see if the info in the binder can be placed online.

G. Visioning and Characteristics of a New Model – as if we had a clean slate.

Supervisor Miley – in the future, we’ll have easel post-it paper – and post our notes on the walls.

1. May be reviewing SSA is the wrong way -- to start, should start earlier – e.g., foster care, re-entry, homelessness. Need a commitment to succeed and look more broadly -- review and reduce failures in the other systems which should affect GA. Question – how do we get there? This is a core issue for the county.
2. Consumer advocates have gotten together with their vision and will report the characteristics of a new model – and wish to report to the Task Force at a future meeting.
3. Violence, crime and reentry – need to be addressed. Education and reentry (65% of their clients are homeless and released from prison) – bring in the richness of all the service providers to ensure provision of services.
4. Unless the basic needs are met – nothing will happen. Unless the personal situation is stabilized (housing, employment and medical care), nothing will happen.
5. Community/churches are resources – they face challenges too.
6. Give people hope and have them be part of the community – believe in possibility that life can change for the better – a partnership.

7. Focus on tangible objectives – housing/wraparound services. Focus on mainstream systems - low hanging and high hanging fruits.
8. Foster care – how to get on SSI soonest for wraparound services.
9. Missed opportunities – why less than 50% success rate.
10. Employment opportunities are barren – need to make an investment.
11. Camp Sweeny – EMT training – can the County obligate the County’s transport companies to train/hire?
12. There are some models already – need to review them.
13. Going from one system to another – there may be lack of resources but also, some people just get lost. Important to know that the person moves from one system to another vs. getting lost.
14. Provide training opportunities. – e.g., Fire and Police Departments
15. Help those falling through the cracks, remove barriers, embrace solutions and achieve results.
16. A similar CBO task force – identifying what’s working and what’s not working. Change may not cost money.
17. Subsidy housing is a challenge – if we could just give another year for re-entry persons (\$50k to the county) that could make a big difference.
18. Improve coordination. Understand population. Need to know what the overlap is. Where are they on the continuum? Consumer input needed. Response from SSA – in one of the attachments – data match - can see overlap, serve the same population.
19. SSA staff needs to be recognized. The SSA staff needs to buy-in and embrace the new model. Also to receive support and training.
20. Alameda County has a \$2B budget. Require County contractors hire employees (%) from the GA population. Also, work as temp employees for the County. Need to leverage the money - e.g., hire from GA – based on percentage of contract amount.

Supervisor Miley stated that it’s a blank slate – so, there are no stupid questions. We’ll roll-up our sleeves, all work together and committed to making it happen.

21. Do we have data some recipients have been trained via County programs and employed?
22. How do we bring other businesses to the table – large corporations, health care companies, Warriors, A’s, etc. Any tax provisions/benefits to employers? Marketing – think differently on employability of GA clients. HCSA observed training of reentry persons and HCSA was able to identify other grants – Single Stop.
23. Purposeful movement forward. Some shelter persons have undiagnosed mental health issues at various levels – it’s real and every day. We need a system-wide change where providers are saying to shelter residents – we can help you.

Supervisor Miley indicated he wants to remove barriers and make positive changes. He also indicated that he may be on SSA Board Committee next year. The Supervisor emphasized that SSA employees are good people.

Supervisor Miley wants to be sure that he is advancing the ball (as in football). Also, he will secure a member from behavioral health and the criminal justice for the Task Force.

Supervisor Miley thanked everyone for participating.

This is a draft of the 9/30 GA Task Force meeting minutes. If you have corrections or wish to clarify a statement – or add/delete words, please communicate in writing via e-mail with Crystal Hishida Graff, Clerk of the Board and Robyn Hodges, District 4 by Monday, 10/25 by 5 pm at [Crystal.hishida@acgov.org](mailto:Crystal.hishida@acgov.org) and copy Robyn at [robyn.hodges@acgov.org](mailto:robyn.hodges@acgov.org)

H. Follow-ups:

1. Determine if materials in the binder can be placed online and provide websites...
2. For the next meeting – have easel-size post-it paper – to post notes on the walls/ easel pens...
3. Consumer advocates have been working on their vision and wish to present the characteristics of a new model to the Task Force at a future meeting.
4. Supervisor Miley will invite a member of behavioral health and criminal justice to the next GATB meeting.
5. **Next meeting is on Thursday, 10/28 – at 9:30-11:30 am** at the County Administration Building, 1221 Oak Street, Oakland, #255 -- 9:30 am to 11:30 am. (This time is for only the 10/28 meeting and the time was confirmed after the 9/30 meeting.)

Thank you for your attendance and contributions to this first meeting of the GA Task Force...

DRAFT