



COUNCIL AGENDA: 5-12-15
ITEM: 2.12

Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Toni J. Taber, CMC
City Clerk

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: 5-8-2015

SUBJECT: AB 702 (MAIENSCHIN) CALWORKS: TEMPORARY HOUSING ASSISTANCE

RECOMMENDATION

As recommended by the Rules and Open Government Committee on May 6, 2015 and outlined in the attached memo previously submitted by the Rules and Open Government Committee, approve a support position for AB 702(Maienschein) CALWORKS: Temporary Housing Assistance



CITY COUNCIL ACTION REQUEST

Department(s): Housing	Date: 4/29/15	Coordination: City Attorney's Office City Manager's Office	Dept. Approval: /s/ Jacky Morales-Ferrand CMO Approval: <i>[Signature]</i>
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SUBJECT: AB 702 (Maienschein) CalWORKs: Temporary Housing Assistance

RECOMMENDED POSITION: Support

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

1. Pursuant to the City's streamlined bill process for responding quickly to legislative proposals, support AB 702 (Maienschein).
2. Recommend a one-week turnaround so that the City's Legislative Advocate in Sacramento can indicate a support position for AB 702 (Maienschein).

BILL SYNOPSIS:

The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program is a public benefit program that provides short-term financial support and services to children and families in need of housing, food, utilities, clothing or medical care to individuals and families that meet certain eligibility criteria. The program currently provides for 16 consecutive days of temporary housing vouchers (typically a hotel voucher or other emergency shelter designated bed space) for people and families experiencing homelessness.

AB 702 removes the requirement for the benefit to be administered for consecutive days, instead allowing support for a maximum of 16 total calendar days, to be used as necessary. The proposed framework will allow for benefits to be applied to both shorter, and multiple periods of homelessness, as long as the maximum number of days are not exceeded. The current bill does not contemplate amending or expanding the total number of days of support, only the manner in which they are administered.

The 16-day benefit is a lifetime limit, making it a "use it or lose it" benefit under existing law. Requiring that the benefit be exhausted over 16 consecutive days presents a disincentive for families to disrupt their guaranteed 16-day temporary housing benefit to find a more permanent option before the benefit is exhausted. The same amendments are made to sections of the law that address domestic violence. The support limit for domestic violence cases is 32 days.

AB 702 is co-authored by a bi-partisan coalition of 20 members of the Assembly and Senate, including Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins.

IMPACTS TO CITY OF SAN JOSE:

Because CalWORKs is administered by counties, AB 702 would not create any administrative or service delivery impacts to the City. Yet, San José residents in need may benefit from increased CalWORKs resources, while the City itself may benefit from cost savings or efficiencies realized through reductions in public safety/emergency response and environmental services for people living outdoors. Improving the efficiency of the CalWORKs program aligns with the City's interest in having a robust service delivery and benefits network that, when layered with permanent supportive housing and other City-supported programs, allows San José residents to move towards economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible.

As we know, there are many causes of episodic homelessness, especially in Santa Clara County where the cost of living continues to outpace wage growth. For families living paycheck-to-paycheck and without emergency resources, sudden changes in employment, illness or changing family circumstances are likely to occur on multiple occasions.

Under the current law, a family that is experiencing multiple instances of homelessness will not have access to temporary housing support through CalWORKs if they've previously received assistance. The family may still be eligible for other emergency support under CalWORKs and similar programs even after the temporary housing support outlined in this bill is exhausted.

POLICY ALIGNMENT:

This bill aligns with the Council-approved *2015 Legislative Guiding Principles and Priorities* to “support efforts that increase the resources available for the City to effectively respond to homelessness, including efforts to facilitate the implementation of the Housing First model, to support the goals of Destination: Home, to increase the supply of tenant-based and project-based Section 8 vouchers to house this vulnerable population, and shaping legislation and programs that provide funding for homelessness response.”

SUPPORTERS/OPPONENTS:

Supporters: The Bill is co-sponsored by the Western Center on Law & Poverty, the Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations, and the San Diego Hunger Coalition. The bill is supported by the California Association of Counties and Housing California.

Opponents: There are no registered opponents at this time.

STATUS OF BILL:

The bill was introduced on February 25th and passed through the Committee on Human Services. It has moved on to a hearing before the Assembly Appropriations Committee. If passed by the Committee, the bill will then go to a full vote of the Assembly. Bills must pass out of their House of origin by June 5, which then goes to the second House for consideration. September 11 is the last day for bills pass out of both Houses.

FOR QUESTIONS CONTACT: Jacky Morales-Ferrand, 408-535-3851