

Illegal Substance Dependence Screening and Treatment for Recipients of City Public Assistance*

Digest by the Ballot Simplification Committee

Status: Draft for Consideration
On: Tuesday, November 28, 2023
Members: Packard, Anderson, Unruh, Wong

Deadline to Request Reconsideration: TBD

The Way It Is Now: State law requires every county to provide public assistance programs for poor, single adults under age 65. San Francisco does so through the County Adult Assistance Programs (“CAAP”). CAAP ~~does not serve families~~only serves single adults under age 65 with no dependent children ~~-or adults over age 65~~. CAAP recipients collect benefit packages that pay for or provide needed services such as housing, shelter, utilities, and food. In 2023, housed CAAP recipients generally received \$712 per month. CAAP recipients experiencing homelessness received access to shelter and food through the City’s shelter system and a cash grant of up to \$109 per month. CAAP recipients are entitled to full benefits regardless of whether they are dependent on illegal drugs.

The Proposal: Proposition ___ would require anyone who receives CAAP benefits to be screened for substance use if the City reasonably suspects the person to be dependent on illegal drugs. Where screening indicates that a CAAP recipient is dependent on illegal drugs, the City will provide a professional evaluation for substance use and may refer the recipient to an appropriate treatment program. If a free treatment program is available, the recipient will be required to participate in it to continue receiving CAAP benefits. The measure does not require recipients to maintain sobriety to remain eligible for benefits.

Under Proposition __ CAAP recipients who stop receiving benefits because they refuse to participate in a required screening, evaluation, or treatment will still continue to receive housing assistance for at least 30 days. The City may extend their housing benefits beyond 30 days if necessary to avoid eviction.

Proposition __ will create a City fund to support the costs of screening, evaluation, and treatment. Any cost savings to CAAP from discontinuing public assistance because some recipients do not comply with the new screening, evaluation, or treatment requirements, would go into that fund.

A "YES" Vote Means: If you vote “yes,” you want to require single adults under age 65 who receive City public assistance benefits and who have a substance use disorder to participate in screening, evaluation, and treatment of illegal drug dependency for them to keep receiving most of those benefits.

A "NO" Vote Means: If you vote “no,” you do not want to make these changes.