

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

Digest by the Ballot Simplification Committee

Status: Final Digest

On: Friday, December 1, 2023

Members: Packard, Anderson, Wong

The Way It Is Now: State law requires every county to provide public assistance programs for poor, single adults age 65 and under. San Francisco does so through the County Adult Assistance Programs (CAAP). Generally, CAAP serves only single adults age 65 and under with no dependent children. CAAP recipients collect benefit packages that pay for or provide needed services such as employment assistance, 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 disorder if the City reasonably suspects the person to be dependent on illegal drugs. When screening indicates a recipient may be dependent on illegal drugs, the City will provide a professional evaluation and may refer the recipient to an appropriate treatment program. If that program is available at no cost, the recipient will be required to participate to continue receiving CAAP benefits. The measure does not require recipients to maintain sobriety to be eligible for benefits.

Under Proposition __ CAAP recipients who stop receiving benefits because they refuse to participate in a required screening, evaluation or treatment would 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 __ would create a City fund to support the costs of screening, evaluation and treatment. Any cost savings from discontinuing public assistance would go into that fund.

A "YES" Vote Means: If you vote "yes," you want to require single adults age 65 and under with no dependent children who receive City public assistance benefits and are reasonably suspected to be dependent on illegal drugs to participate in screening, evaluation and treatment to be eligible for most of those benefits.

A "NO" Vote Means: If you vote "no," you do not want to adopt this requirement.

**Working title, for identification only. The Director of Elections determines the title of each local ballot measure; measure titles are not considered during Ballot Simplification Committee meetings.*