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Gen. Relief

A CRITICAL EVALUATION
OF THE GENERAL RELIEF ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
AS AN EFFECTIVE METHOD OF EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE

by

Michael Reibel

Prepared for the
Alaska Public Interest Research Group
National Association of Social Workers
Anchorage Housing Opportunities Made Equal

January, 1985

Recommendations - p. 28.

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PREFACE

This project was undertaken as a summer internship under the auspices of the Internship Program for Alaska. It proved to be an especially challenging one due to AHOME's lack of an office and a permanent staff. As a result, the success of this inquiry is largely due to the generous and patient assistance of a considerable number of individuals. The organizations whose help was indispensable include: the Alaska Public Interest Research Group (AKPIRG) which provided office space and critical support; the Internship Program for Alaska; the Alaska Legal Services Corporation; the AHOME Board of Directors; and all social service agencies which allowed me to interview clients.

Persons who provided critical support to the project include:

Michael Baffrey	Michael Barring-Gould
Linda Beecher	Betty Bender
Brother Bob	Joanie Clery
Gloria Engel	Monte Engel
Lauren Ewing	James Gamble
Ron Hirsh	Michael Huelsman
Karla Huntingdon	Steve Kadish
Joyce Lee	Lauren Muller
Rosalie Nadeau	Joe O'Connell
Diane Payne	Ilecn Self
Linda Snyder	Gail Stolz
Karen White	Leslie Zeloof

Thanks also to all interviewers whose names don't appear. Thanks to all the people who were kind to me, who showed me around and helped me out in various ways either with my work or in gaining a deep appreciation and love for the Great Land.

Special thanks to Maureen Kennedy of AKPIRG who served as my Project Supervisor, and to all the kind people who sheltered me during my stay when I was officially classified as "Homeless".

I. INTRODUCTION

Basic human rights should include safe, adequate housing, adequate food and water, and access to medical care. Yet of the acknowledged necessities, the right to decent housing continues to receive a low priority in the funding of existing social service programs. Unlike the other necessities mentioned above, there is no Federal program dedicated to emergency rental assistance, nor has there ever been. Subsidized public housing is potentially effective in providing low cost housing for low and moderate income families despite problems associated with such programs, but public housing does not address the critical problem of short term and emergency need.

In Alaska, the only source of emergency rental assistance available Statewide is the General Relief Assistance Program. The purpose of this study is to investigate the need for emergency rental assistance, evaluate the effectiveness of the General Relief Program in meeting that need, and explore ways in which perceived needs might be better met.

II. THE GENERAL RELIEF PROGRAM

The General Relief Program was created by an act of the territorial legislature and has remained substantially unchanged since April 1, 1953 (six years before Statehood). Subsequent amendments made minor changes to clarify and simplify the text without making substantive changes in the program.

General Relief Assistance (GRA) and its sister program, General Relief Medical (GRM) are administered under Title 47, Chapter 25, Article 2 of the Alaska Statutes. The framework for the program is in the first part of Article 2:

"Eligibility for Assistance: Financial assistance may be given under AS 47.25.120-47.25.300, so far as practicable under the conditions in this State, to a needy person who is eligible under the regulations of this department." (AS 47.25.110)

"Amount of Assistance: The amount of assistance for needy persons shall be determined by the Department with regard to the resources and needs of the person and the conditions existing in each case. Where possible, assistance shall be sufficient to provide the applicant with reasonable

subsistence according to the standards of assistance established by the Department. However, the amount of assistance for subsistence needs may not exceed \$80 a person a calendar month." (AS 47.25.120)

The Department of Health and Social Services administers the General Relief Assistance and General Relief Medical programs through its Division of Public Assistance. Both of these programs are 100% State funded, receiving no Federal dollars. Although created by the same act, awarded under the same eligibility criteria, and bearing a similar name, the two programs are different in two important respects. First of all, they are funded separately: General Relief Assistance has been allocated \$537,000 for fiscal year 1985; General Relief Medical has been allocated \$10,259,500 for fiscal year 1985 (nearly twenty times as much). The other important distinction is the maximum allowable grant. AS 47.25.120 forbids grants larger than \$80 per person, per calendar month for subsistence needs. General Relief Medical grants are not limited to this \$80 figure. Since our analysis is of General Relief as an avenue of rental assistance, General Relief Medical will not be considered of primary importance to our inquiry.

The stated purpose of the General Relief Program is to provide "subsistence for needy persons when no other source of assistance is available to them" (Division of Public Assistance [DPA], General Relief Manual). The manual which is used as a reference by DPA eligibility workers, emphasizes that General Relief is an emergency program "designed to meet the needs of Alaskans experiencing extreme financial crisis."

General Relief is to be used as a last resort only when all other resources (including other assistance programs) are exhausted. Under current Department regulations, General Relief clients must reapply every month, documenting emergency needs each time. Proof of emergency needs means an eviction notice, a utility cutoff notice, or similar notice of termination.

Ordinarily, all General Relief assistance grants are made in the form of payments, made directly to the client's creditor rather than to the client. Thus, the State can be reasonably assured that the grant is being used for the intended purpose.

SCOPE

The Scope of the General Relief Program is broad. DPA regulations and guidelines interpret "reasonable subsistence" to mean "the basic necessities of life: Medical Care (General Relief Medical), shelter, utilities, food, and clothing." Additionally, if death occurs and the deceased is eligible, General Relief can provide for burial expenses.

In practice, General Relief grants are divided almost evenly between rental assistance, with other types of grants lagging far behind. In a recent study prepared for the Department, total General Relief grants over a six month period were distributed as follows: Rental assistance 44.5%; Burials 42.6%; Utilities 1.6% and other miscellaneous 11.2%. Burials account for so much of the General Relief allocation partially because burials of unidentified persons have come to be administered through the General Relief Program.

COMMENTARY

The logic behind funding pauper's funerals through a relief program designed to provide subsistence for the living is not entirely clear. Perhaps having extended burial assistance to eligible (i.e., impoverished) families of equally impoverished deceased persons (already distant from the original intent of providing for subsistence), the State decided to incorporate the administration of pauper funerals into the General Relief Program for the sake of consistency: Why not have one program handle all of the State funded funerals? Rational enough, from the standpoint of efficiency, but definitely a great leap of abstraction from the stated purpose of providing for the subsistence of needy persons.

According to estimates of Department researchers, General Relief outlays break down geographically at approximately:

Anchorage area	65%
Fairbanks	17%
Southeast	8%
Rest of the State	10%

Although these figures correspond roughly to the population distribution of the State, it has been suggested that the breakdown of payments by type, if

not the relative frequency or amount of the grants, varies between urban and rural areas. Heather Noble, an attorney at the Kotzebue Legal Service Corporation office, cites fuel costs as a very heavy burden on resident of that area who often require assistance in paying their heating bills. Although unfortunately, no regional breakdowns are available from the Department, it seems likely that grants for utilities and fuel make up a larger portion of the outlays in the more remote (and colder) regions.

FACTORS OF ELIGIBILITY

(for more detailed information on eligibility criteria,
see the DPA's GR manual)

- Specific Need: an immediate and specific need for subsistence items, transportation, or burial.
- Inadequate Resources: a lack of personal resources including liquid assets, personal property or credit, as well as eligibility for, or access to, prior resources (other assistance programs).
- Applicant must be physically present in the State of Alaska at the time of application: no other residency requirement exists.

ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

- Inadequate resources: personal resources - a GR household will not be eligible if it has:
 - More than \$500 in liquid assets
 - any substantial assets beside owning one's home and one car and/or snowmobile and/or boat (exceptions are made in special circumstances)
- Prior Resources: GR can not be granted if the applicant has other resources (assistance programs) available that allegedly meet the specific need. In the event that another program will provide for part of the amount for which an applicant is eligible under GR guidelines, GR will provide only the unmet part of the need. Some prior resources for GR are: AFDC, food stamps, social security, and various disability programs.

NEEDS STANDARD

After an applicant's monthly income has been determined (according to DPA guidelines) the eligibility worker consults the following need standard (estimate of minimum subsistence cost) to determine unmet need.

Adult only households:

<u># of Adults</u>	<u>Rent Under \$35/month</u>	<u>Rent \$35/month or More</u>
1	\$235	\$300
2	335	400
3	435	500
4	535	600
5	635	700

\$100 shall be added for each additional adult

Households with children and adults:

<u># of Persons</u>	<u>Maximum Needs Standard</u>
Adult + 1 child	\$300
+ 2 children	350
+ 3 children	400
+ 4 children	450

\$100 shall be added for each additional adult, \$50 for each child.

Note: The tables demonstrate how outdated DPA's estimates of living costs have become.

Aside from the unrealistically low figures in the need standard, the category headings are revealing: the mere fact that less than \$35/month (especially for five adults) could be considered a realistic rental charge testifies to the antiquity of the need standard. The current guidelines have not been changed since 1978, when rents were approximately half of what they are today.

The amount of a subsistence grant is calculated by subtracting the applicant's income from the appropriate need standard, and determining the unmet need. A grant for this amount is authorized unless it exceeds the \$80/person/month maximum.

The statute clearly limits the amount of GR grants for subsistence to \$80/person/month. The key word is "subsistence". Apparently DPA does not consider medical or burial costs to constitute subsistence, thereby rendering the \$80 cap inapplicable to those categories of assistance. While the cost for funeral services (including the casket) may not exceed \$750, there is no absolute limit on the costs associated with burial. Similarly, once deemed

eligible, there are no absolute limits on dollar amounts for GR medical grants, although regulations specify limitation on the type of coverage, conditions of care, etc. Rent, utility, and other subsistence grants, on the other hand, are strictly limited to \$80/person/month. For details on DPA guidelines for eligibility determination, rules and policy pertaining to GRA and GR Medical see the GR and GRM manuals prepared for offices of the Division of Public Assistance and/or the pertaining sections of the Alaska Administrative Code.

III. RECENT FISCAL HISTORY OF THE GRA

The data arranged on the following two pages are from fiscal records of the old Social Services Department and from the ten recent fiscal years (1976-1985) of the Department of Health and Social Services.

GRA appropriations (first graph) have an erratic history, the result of factors other than changing needs and attitudes toward social spending.

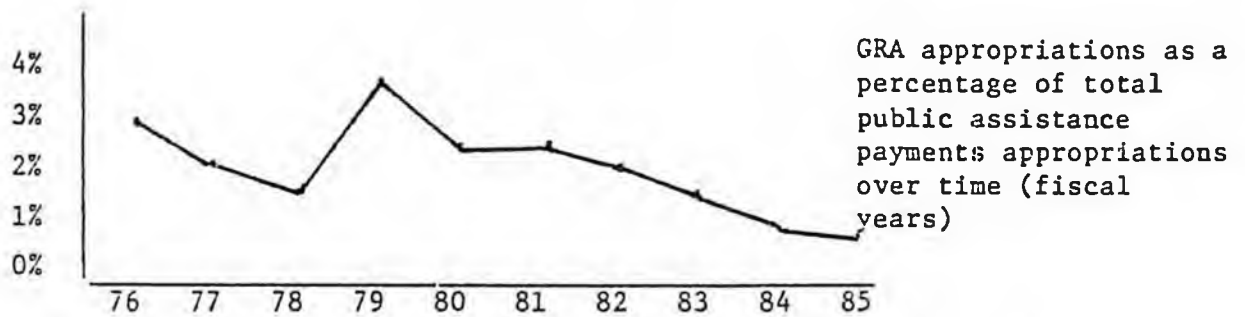
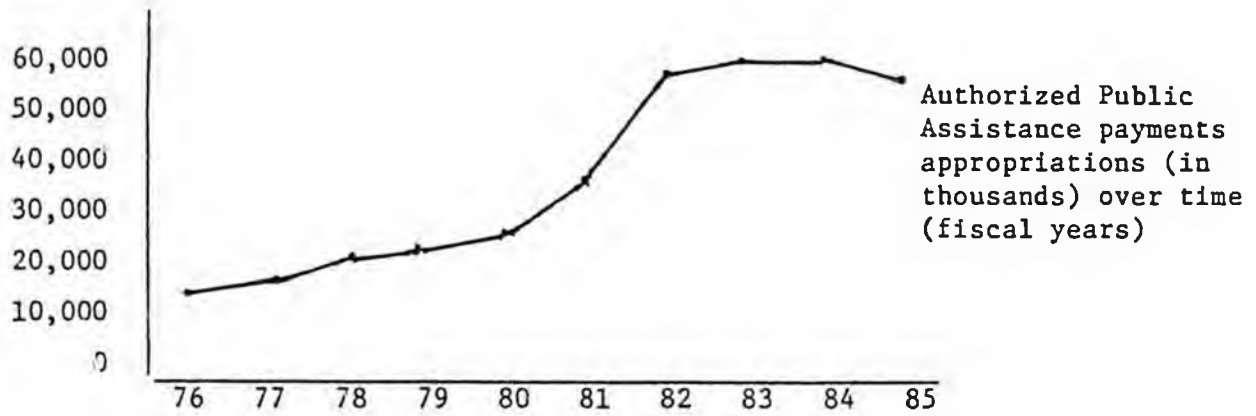
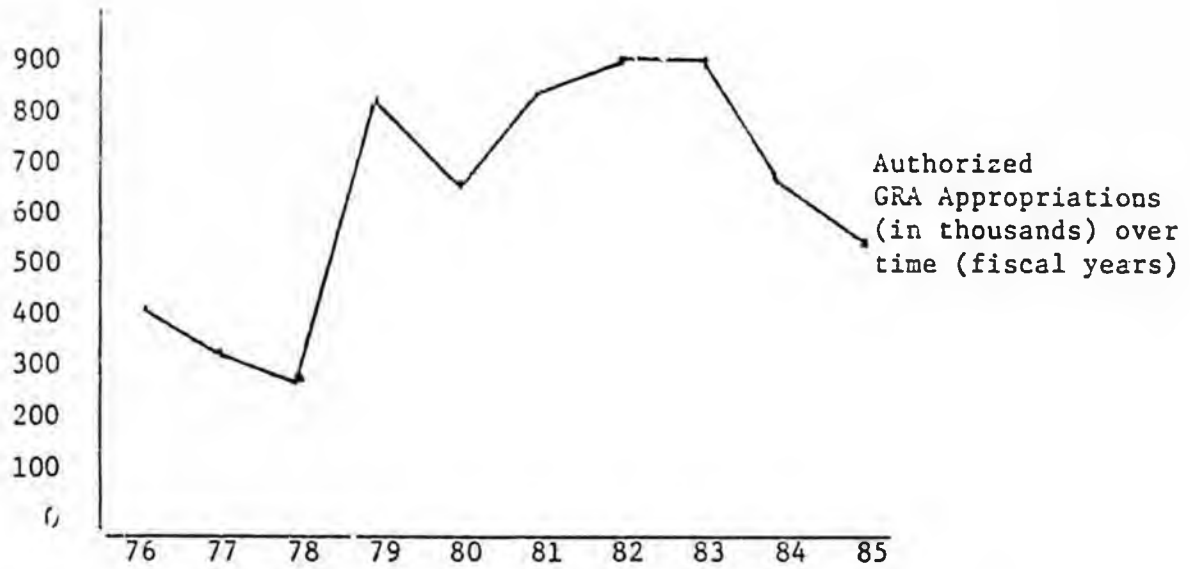
The middle graph represents total authorized public assistance payment appropriations over time. It indicates a rising curve, leveling off in 1982 and 1983, beginning to decline slightly in 1985. This curve reflects recent patterns of population growth in the State and prevailing attitudes toward social spending.

The third graph represents that portion of the total Public Assistance payments budget which was earmarked for GRA. It shows a consistent decline in importance over the last six fiscal years, from 3.7% of the total Public Assistance allocation in fiscal year 1979 to 1.0% in fiscal year 1985.

What variables are causing this roller coaster pattern in GRA appropriations and the steady decline in GRA as an important component of the Public Assistance umbrella? The point of origin for the cycling effect is indicated in the 4th column on the chart (% of initial GRA appropriations actually spent). The restrictive eligibility criteria, low need standard and creditor's option to decline a GR vendor payment (see issues section) make GR grants inaccessible to many truly needy persons, resulting in unspent allocations.

<u>FISCAL YEAR</u>	<u>AJTHORIZED GRA APPROPRIATION</u>	<u>SUPPLEMENTAL APPROP</u>	<u>ACTUAL EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>% OF INITIAL APPROP ACTUALLY SPENT</u>	<u>CHANGE IN INITIAL APPROP PREVIOUS YEAR</u>	<u>TOTAL PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS BUDGET</u>	<u>GRA BUDGET AS A % OF TOAL PUB ASSIST PAYMENTS BUDGLT</u>
85	537.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	-113.0	52,506	1.0 %
84	650	0	N/A	N/A	-250	55,318.0	1.2%
83	900	0	451.8	520.2 %	0	55,677.8	1.6 %
82	900	0	530.0	58.9 %	+100	51,174.8	1.8 %
81	800	0	607.5	75.9 %	+150	33,729.3	2.4 %
80	650	250	797.7	122.7 %	-173	27,286.1	2.4 %
79	823.3	0	707.1	85.9 %	+535.5	22,267.6	3.7 %
78	288	404.2	500.7	173.9 %	?	20,937.9	1.3 %
77	330.0	0	293.9	89.1 %	-71	17,437.63	1.9 %
76	401	0	192.5	48.0 %	N/A	14,922.7	2.7 %

A recent fiscal history of the General Relief Assistance Program - all appropriations are in thousands.



The apparent surplus in question is not really a surplus at all, but rather a reflection of legitimate need which is obscured by serious defects in the structure of the program. Nonetheless, without a clear understanding of the flaws in the program, the apparent surplus is seen as fat to be trimmed and legislators respond by authorizing smaller appropriations. When authorized appropriations get small enough (as they did in fiscal year 1978) the burden of claims can quite suddenly grow larger than the inadequate funds despite structural barriers to the successful filing of claims. When this happens the legislature responds with a supplemental appropriation and grudgingly authorizes a larger grant budget for the following year. Then the cycle begins again.

An undercurrent to this negative feedback (cycling) is an associated positive feedback effect. The consistently recurrent cuts in the program caused by the apparent surplus bring about further restrictions on eligibility and a reluctance among caseworkers to make use of, or depend on, GRA to meet the applicant's needs resulting in less use of the program, less of the allocation spent, and consequently an even smaller appropriation the next year. On occasion, the legislature itself has demanded tighter regulations, helping to set the stage for more surpluses and more budget cuts.

The fiscal year 1978 GRA budget authorization indicated legislative intent that, "The appropriation for assistance payments is contingent on the following: the Department shall adopt regulations excluding from eligibility for GR childless employable singles and children of couples of which one is employable." The fiscal year 1980 appropriation included a warning that "the legislature will not consider any supplemental requests" (emphasis added). There can be little doubt that eligibility workers would respond by carefully hoarding GR grants so as not to use up the allocation until the end of the fiscal year. (Ironically, the legislature later that year approved a supplemental GRA appropriation of \$250,000 in response to an unexpected volume of eligible claims.)

Perhaps the most serious effect of this erosion process is that the viability and credibility of the GRA program have deteriorated to the point where potential applicants, public assistance workers, and legislators alike find the program exasperating, cumbersome, and difficult to take seriously. Although the program's shortcomings are manifested in the budgeting process,

they have their roots in structural program flaws. Until these flaws are corrected, no amount of fiscal wisdom or compassion can increase the program's effectiveness in the long term.

IV. SURVEY OF THE HOMELESS AND PRE-HOMELESS

As a tool, the survey of the homeless and pre-homeless (persons presumed to be at great risk of becoming homeless by virtue of economic hardship), was chosen to provide a broader view of the rental emergency problem from the individual's standpoint. Time and resources were limited, however a large scale survey was completed. Homeless persons were interviewed at most of the major shelters in Anchorage and homeless and pre-homeless persons were interviewed while applying for Public Assistance at the DPA office on 4th and Gambell in Anchorage. In addition, interviews with nine needy persons were completed at the Alaska Legal Services Corporation (ALSC) office in Juneau. In all, 102 completed interviews were included in the sample.

Due to the relatively small sample size, concluding are not strictly statistically significant. The results of the survey must be considered as a catalog of indicators rather than statistically proven facts. Conclusions and assertions in the survey results necessarily include the author's impressions resulting from hours of interviewing. More detailed information on the methodology can be found in Appendix B.

There are three basic objectives in conducting the survey: to assess need, to evaluate the effectiveness of existing institutions in meeting need, and to describe the needy population. Similarly, the variables broke down roughly into three categories: housing status, economic status, and deomgraphic information. The results of the survey are presented below:

There are no homeowners in our sample. Mobile home dwellers, who own their homes, but must pay space rent comprise an intermediate category between homeowners and renters (total 4%). Other renters total 25%, including those in public/subsidized housing. The remainder (72%) are homeless.

The category "staying temporarily with friends or relatives" (11%) implies that the subject made no regular contribution to the cost of the home. This is another contradictory category; such people are homeless in that they have

no dwelling of their own and are at the mercy of others, but they are not homeless in that they have a private place to sleep and receive mail and may contribute sporadically to the cost of the home. Often single mothers with pending AFDC claims fall into this category.

A. HOUSING STATUS

1. Type of shelter currently occupied

Shelter for the homeless	52%
Staying temporarily with friends/relatives	11%
Camper, tent, or vehicle	5%
Homeless, no shelter of any kind	4%
 Subtotal: Homeless	 72%
 Apartment	 17%
Public/subsidized housing	5%
Mobil home	4%
Rented house	2%
Rented duplex	1%
 Subtotal: Renters	 29%
 Owned house	 0%
Condominium	0%
 Subtotal: Homeowners	 0%
 TOTAL	 101%*

*Totals may be greater or less than 100% due to rounding.

Of the 61% of the sample who can be described as hardcore homeless, the great majority make use of the several shelters for the homeless in Anchorage. Of those in the Anchorage area who do not, a certain proportion must be presumed not to be aware of the existence of the shelters (due to their recent arrival and/or isolated situations). A number of interviewees preferred not to avail themselves of an open door to a roof over their heads, perhaps because of some stigma attached to using such facilities.

The distribution is biased toward shelter dwellers by the fact that nearly half of the interviews (45%) were conducted in the shelters. It is perhaps more instructive to look at the distribution of the other forms of housing.

2. How shelter is obtained by those unable to afford their own homes. (Note: those able to regularly meet existing housing payments are excluded from the sample).

Shelter for the homeless	58%
Staying temporarily with friends/relatives	18%
Rental assistance (includes public housing)	12%
Camping out/sleeping out	7%
Living in vehicle	1%
Credit from landlord (includes public housing, i.e., failure to pay rent not yet resulting in eviction)	4%

Again, the figure for those staying in shelters has been inflated because of the sampling technique. There were also many combined answers, e.g., "sleep out, shelter when in rains." It seems clear from the interviews that many more people are compelled to engage in brinksmanship by falling behind in their rent than actually reported this as a remedy when unable to afford their own home (4%). Many low income renters view this type of marginal tenure as an occasionally necessary tactic of one who, on the balance, is usually able to afford his/her own home, rather than an often involuntary subsidy on the part of the landlord.

3. Reason for being homeless (Note: only those classified as homeless are included in the sample).

Recent arrival, can't find or afford housing	30%
Recently left family, spouse, or loved one, can't find or afford housing	19%
Recently evicted for economic reasons, can't find or afford housing	13%
Chronically unemployed, actively seeking work	13%
Homeless by choice	11%
Recently left parent's home, can't find or afford housing	2%

Recently evicted, other than economic reasons	0%
Other reason	13%

Only part of the first category consists of those recently arrived in Alaska. Many of the recent arrivals are lured to urban areas, especially Anchorage, from around the State by the prospect of employment, only to find themselves unemployed and homeless in an unfamiliar urban environment.

Those having recently left family, spouse, or loved one form the next largest category. They were previously able to afford housing due to their stable family or family-like situations which allowed them to take advantage of relatively favorable rents for larger units. When the household unit is split, one or both of the resulting smaller households must relocate at added expense and generally higher rents. This category includes divorces in addition to women who are compelled to leave their homes in fear of physical abuse. Those women with children who are eligible for AFDC often experience long delays in the processing of their claims. This problem will be discussed in greater detail in the Issues Section.

At first glance, the next two categories seem redundant, but they are composed of primarily different kinds of people: those evicted due to insufficient income ordinarily have either recently lost a job or are underemployed. The subjects in this category have invariably lost their homes recently and many will recover economically before becoming chronically homeless or jobless.

Of those who cited chronic involuntary unemployment as their reason for homelessness, many have become resigned to, if not satisfied with, homelessness and unemployment as a way of life. Indeed, many speak as if they have no real hope of finding steady work, making success in job hunting unlikely even if they are "actively seeking".

In general, those in the chronically unemployed category showed much less stability than the recently evicted types. They are more transient (within Alaska), almost exclusively single, and overwhelmingly male. They generally seem to be accustomed

psychologically to the role of the faceless drifter at the fringes of society. Although unfortunately such data was not recorder, a disproportionate number of the men in the category are war veterans, in particular Viet Nam era war veterans.

With a few exceptions, the next category, homeless by choice, consists of men who have accepted and embraced homelessness as a permanent condition of their lives. The exceptions were persons who wished to leave Alaska and opted to leave their homes while continuing to work and live in a shelter in order to save money for travel and relocation expenses.

Lastly, an additional unforeseen category deserves comment: a number of individuals who, in listing "other" as their reason for homelessness, specified that they had been recently discharged from a hospital, had lost their homes during hospitalization and were unable to afford a home.

4. Eviction history

Had been evicted or had mortgage foreclosed in the past 12 months	22%
Had not been evicted or had mortgage foreclosed in the past 12 months	78%

Unlike the previous two questions, the entire sample and not just those classified as homeless are included in this distribution. Many people who are not now homeless have been evicted in the past 12 months, and presumably a number of these experienced a period of homelessness. The figure also does not include individuals who left their homes due to economic hardship (generally to become homeless) before a formal eviction process could be completed. When both factors are taken into account, a figure of 22% actually evicted in the last 12 months alone is remarkably high and indicates great hardship. The following distribution prepared from survey data illustrates the extreme difficulty of working one's way back into a home after becoming homeless due to low income:

Housing status of recently evicted persons: type of shelter occupied:

Shelter for the homeless	14 or 64%
Staying temporarily with friends or relatives	3 or 14%
Mobile home	2 or 9%
Apartment	1 or 4.5%
Camper, tent, or vehicle	1 or 4.5%
Homeless, no shelter of any kind	1 or 4.5%

Of the 22 persons evicted in the past 12 months, 16 are truly homeless and three are marginal (staying temporarily with friends or relatives). Only three have been able to recover and find homes.

B. ECONOMIC STATUS

1. Rent. Rent broken down by category (Note: Item sample includes all those who have rented in the past twelve months, not just current renters).

<u>\$ Rent Level Monthly</u>	<u># of Subjects in Sample</u>	<u>% of Subjects in Sample</u>
0- 149	2	3.8
150- 299	13	25.0
300- 499	14	26.9
500- 749	16	30.8
750-1000	6	11.5
over 1000	<u>1</u>	<u>1.9</u>
TOTAL	52	99.9
Median Rent:	\$457	
Mean Rent:	\$475	

These figures include tenant's share of subsidized rent in Alaska State Housing Authority (ASHA) and other subsidized rental accommodations, which deflates them somewhat. Actual market rentals for the population in question would correspondingly be somewhat higher.

2. Monthly Household Income

<u>\$</u>	<u>%</u>
0- 299	62
300- 599	15
600- 899	16
900-1199	5
1200+	2

In gathering and recording information on income, the most striking and surprising development was the number of people who reported absolutely no income of any kind. About half of the people in the lowest income category went out of their way to point out that their income was not zero to 300 dollars, but rather zero dollars. More than three quarters of the total sample, with homes and homeless alike, live on less than \$600 per month. A quick comparison of this statistic with the rental figures reveal two things.

Obviously, many people cannot afford any kind of housing. Less obvious is the implication, still quite strong, that many low income renters are of necessity spending more than 50% of their income on housing (compared to thirty percent of gross adjustment income, the rent-to-income ratio used by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development as a "reasonable" figure on which to base subsidies). It is easy to see how such a heavy rental burden would tend to destabilize low income families and all to frequently result in the loss of the home.

3. Question: In the past twelve months, have you gone without food in order to pay other bills? (for vital necessities)

Yes	50%
No	50%

Perhaps more than any other, this question illustrates the suffering caused by high rents and low incomes. The question does not tap such issues as malnutrition, but rather simply points to an unenviable choice which many Alaskans face.

4. Employment Status

Full time permanent	7%
Part time permanent	10%
Temporary/seasonal work	9%
Unemployed, seeking work	51%
Unemployed, not looking; discouraged/no work	1%
Unemployed, not looking; unable to work	8%
Unemployed, not looking; don't want to work	1%
Unemployed, not looking; other reason	13%
Hunting, fishing, trapping, etc.	1%

The overall impression that the numbers as well as the interviews convey is one of a very strong desire to work. Only one person flatly stated that she did not want to work, compared to seven who openly declared their preference to remain homeless. Similarly, only one person responded as a discouraged worker (no longer seeking work). Although certainly many of the unemployed who are seeking work experience varying degrees of discouragement, and clearly some job searchers are more diligent than others, people in this (unemployed, seeking work) category share the qualities of a desire to work, hope that work can be found, and the energy to search for it. The numbers indicate that these qualities distinguish a majority of the unemployed.

As we have seen, many people who work at low paying jobs or who find only part time work must spend a large portion of their income on rent, leaving very little for other regular necessities and no margin for unforeseen expenses. In a few cases, relatively small but unavoidable expenses were the straw that broke the camel's back resulting in loss of the home despite retention of the job. Once homeless, it often takes several months to save enough money to move into a new apartment. The spectre of debts incurred during even a brief spell of joblessness can further lengthen the recovery period.

Many of the respondents in the "other" category were retired, a group for whom there was no precise response. The "other" group also contains sporadic itinerant workers who did not define themselves as

"seasonal/temporary". Some of these workers as well as others in the distribution regularly supplement their income by hunting, trapping, and/or fishing.

5. Aid Received: Non-Medical Household

No aid	47%
\$ 1-150	8%
\$151-300	5%
\$301-500	2%
over 500	8%
Claim pending	24%
Receive aid, no amount specified	7%

The large number of pending cases is because many interviews were held at the DPA office where subjects had come to apply or reapply for aid.

Generally speaking, the larger grants were AFDC or disability payments while the smaller grants tended to be food stamps or GR.

6. Aid Received: Medical (Household)

Question: Have you or any member of your household received medical aid in the past 12 months?

Yes	48%
No	43%
Pending	8%

If we assume that while all members of the sample are in dire financial straits and therefore are needy of assistance payments, whereas fewer subjects incurred medical expenses requiring aid, it follows that a higher proportion of medical than non-medical need is being met by existing aid programs even though the percentages of the sample receiving each of the two kinds of aid are nearly identical. One reason for this is the easy access for Native persons to medical care through the ANS system.

Another reason is the existence of Medicaid, a Federal program which has no counterpart in the area of non-medical subsistence relief. Still another explanation is the State's apparently greater willingness to expend grant money for medical needs, as evidenced by the absence of an \$80 cap on GRM payments and a GRM allocation 20 times larger than the allocation for GRA.

C. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Age

Under 20	5%
20-30	44%
30-40	28%
40-50	17%
50-60	4%
Over 60	2%

2. Gender

Male	60%
Female	40%

3. Race or Origin (Note: person of Hispanic origin can be of any race).

White	67%
American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut	28%
Hispanic	3%
Black	2%
Asian or Pacific Islander	0%

4. Length of Time in Alaska

Less than 3 months	14%
3 months to 1 year	8%
1 to 5 years	25%
5 to 10 years	10%
More than 10 years	44%

While the numbers suggest that a large proportion of those who have very recently migrated to the State are impoverished, it is not true that the majority of the needy population is composed of recent arrivals: More

than half of the sample has resided in the State for five years or longer; 44% for over ten years. A great number of those in the latter category stressed that they were lifelong residents. The following crosstabulation provides detail:

Homelessness vs. Length of Alaska Residency

Length of Residency	# Homeless	# With Homes	% Homeless w/in Category
Less than 3 months	6	6	50%
3 months to 1 year	5	1	83%
1 year to 5 years	12	9	57%
5 to 10 years	5	3	63%
over 10 years	19	16	54%

Although sample sizes within categories are small, a consistent pattern seems to emerge in which slightly over 50% of respondents in each length of residency category are homeless. This would imply that inability to find and maintain a home are not only characteristics of newcomers to the State but rather of long and short term Alaska residents in nearly equal numbers.

DISCUSSION OF SURVEY RESULTS

Despite the limitations of the study, the resulting information paints a clear portrait of Alaska's homeless and pre-homeless persons which is very different from the traditional homeless stereotype of the middle aged or elderly half crazy alcoholic male whose conscious choice of a vagrant's life mitigates the pity which many reflexively feel for him. The homeless population described in this study is clustered in diverse groups, many of which have little in common but the constant burden of economic hardship. Notwithstanding the unique conditions found in Alaska, the typology of homeless persons implicit in the survey results and analysis is consistent with findings from other major U.S. urban centers.

Although it may never be possible to measure the amount of homelessness or suffering due to imperfections in the economy versus that which is due to failure of individual initiative, there is no doubt that many people are losing their homes or experiencing material deprivation due to personal crises, unemployment, and displacement caused by rapid economic changes; just plain being poor. It is time for the State to more formally study the problems of homelessness and emergency subsistence needs in order to reassess its policies and programs and evaluate alternatives.

V. ISSUE DISCUSSION

1. Inadequacy of the \$80 Grant

This is clearly the central issue of the analysis. The following discussion attempts to describe the various ways in which the current structure falls short of meeting need as well as exploring economic and social factors which continue to erode the effectiveness of the \$80 grant.

Rent levels in Alaska nearly doubled between 1978 and 1983. According to statistics compiled by Municipality of Anchorage researchers from newspaper classified ads over that five year period, the average requested rent for housing units in Anchorage was as follows:

	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>
EFFICIENCY	255	240	236	300	322	450
1 Bedroom	323	314	311	371	567	581
2 Bedroom	434	427	397	619	825	710
3 Bedroom	535	580	553	874	1123	998
4 Bedroom	707	699	715	1045	1309	1238
5 Bedroom	921	741	750	1550	1350	1383

Although unfortunately average rental figures for years prior to 1978 were unavailable without undertaking a similar compilation effort, common sense and a serviceable memory tell us that rent levels have been climbing for quite some time. For evidence, we look no further than the needs standard for GR, which was drafted in some distant time when separate categories

for persons whose rent was greater or less than \$35 (for five adults) seemed like a reasonable breakpoint to use. (This need standard is the one still in use.)

In any case, even if the discussion is limited to the period for which data exist, it is easy to imagine how rent increases averaging 70 to 80% over a five year period would erode the effectiveness of an \$80 per month per person grant that has remained constant.

Fuel and utility costs have followed a similar trajectory, often making heating a home a bigger problem than paying for it in many parts of rural Alaska. When fuel and utility costs are added to rents, the absurd inadequacy of an \$80 total grant for subsistence becomes compounded.

As the numbers in the Municipality's compilation indicate, larger households tend to be more rent-efficient than smaller ones. In other words, cost per capita decreases as household size increases. The statute authorizes \$80 per month per person, a formula which ignores the lower rental efficiency of smaller households and therefore could be said to effectively discriminate against them, or conversely to favor large households. (These large households are not necessarily families with children but rather could consist of unrelated adults.)

The need standard (see GR description) makes an attempt to address this problem by implementing higher per capita figures for the smallest households, increasing the figures by a constant amount for each additional household member to create a rudimentary curve of estimated minimum subsistence cost over size of household. The problem with the need standard is that it is too low. Three adults can simply not live on \$550 a month, nor four on \$600, etc.

Recent cuts in Federal assistance programs have placed an additional burden on GR. The program was amended to provide cash benefits to 18 year old high school students who had previously received AFDC. Until recently, eligible families of high school students could continue receiving AFDC benefits as long as the child was in high school, even if he or she turned 18. When this provision of the AFDC program was abolished, GR moved to pick up the slack.

Similarly, redistribution of food stamps to total dwellers (August, 1984) resulted in a slight decrease in the food stamp allotment of urban dwellers in the State, forcing them to shift more personal resources to make up the difference.

Additional evidence of unmet need can be found in the following comparative distribution compiled from survey data:

Question: In the past 12 months have you gone without food in order to pay other bills (for Vital necessities)?

Renters: Yes	60%
No	38%
No Response	2%

Homeless Yes	40%
No	60%

The discrepancy indicates that low income people must choose in the long term, between having a home and occasionally going hungry, and being out on the streets with a full belly. The fact that low income people often have to choose among several absolute necessities is not terribly surprising.

What is disturbing about this comparison is the implication that people are being forced to choose between chronic (if not necessarily acute) hunger and long term homelessness as conditions of their lives, rather than being able to successfully play one problem off against the other, borrowing from Peter to pay Paul as it were, to avoid being engulfed by either one.

The emergency focus of the program is problematic as well. In the case of rental assistance, the applicant must show an eviction notice before being considered for aid. At this point the applicant generally owes at least one month's rent if not more. As often as not, \$80 only constitutes 10% of back rent owed after a relatively short period of nonpayment.

If the applicant is eligible, the procedure is for the eligibility worker to contact the landlord and offer him or her \$80 per applicant in exchange for a waiver of the landlord's right to evict for the length of the rental period in question. The landlord has the option to decline a GR offer and proceed with the eviction if the offer is smaller than the amount of indebtedness. Very often landlords do just that. Who can blame them?

In a reasonably tight rental market they easily can find someone new to agree to rent a unit. The financial risk involved in re-renting will often appear preferable to the potential loss of revenue were they to accept the GR offer. Such a dynamic benefits landlords by allowing them to minimize their risk in either case while it leaves the fate of tenants to the vagaries of the marketplace. Clearly the effectiveness of a relief program should not be impacted by such factors as change in the vacancy rates of rental units.

Another sign of ineffectiveness of the GR program is that many needy persons are unaware of its existence. There is also widespread perception among those who are aware of GR that the program is useless. This is worth noting because needy persons are extremely knowledgeable about programs that have proved to be of some benefit to them and they pass the information along an informal but highly effective grapevine.

2. Planning

There currently exists no effective comprehensive social services planning process in the State of Alaska. A recent report (Human Services Provider Regional Meetings Report, Feb. 29, 1984) prepared by the Department acknowledges this fact and calls for the State to require and support integrated human service planning throughout the State.

Current health and social services planning includes the State Health Plan, The Title XX Plan required by the Federal government for programs receiving Federal funding, and other plans such as the handicapped and gifted plan which focus on narrow, specific areas of need. Without an integrated social services planning process, it is impossible to make a comprehensive needs assessment in order to weed out situations of unmet

need. Such a comprehensive needs assesment would no doubt bring about a major reassessment of the GRA program and its role as the ultimate guarantor of subsistence aid.

The irony of the situation is that there exists in the Alaska Statutes an entire Chapter (AS 47.75) mandating just such an integrated planning process in great detail, complete with provisions for input from services providers and the general public. This Chapter, which was enacted during the 1976-77 session of the legislature, has never been implemented. The Bill establishing the program (SB 654) had an attached \$175,000 fiscal note but no allocation was ever made to fund the program. According to Newton Chase at the Department of Health and Social Serices, the Department requested an appropriation from the legislature to comply with the terms of AS 47.75 but none was forthcoming. The Department then contacted the Attorney General's office concerning the matter and was told that if no appropriation had been made, the Department was not obligated to comply. Hence arose the absurd situation in which the legislature refuses to give the Department the means to follow laws that the legis. ture itself has passed, rendering those laws effectively void.

David Williams of the Department explained that Federal Law 93-641 require and subsidizes comprehensive health planning (the origin of the State Health Plan) which (he claims) is equivalent to the type of social services planning mandated by AS 47.75. Although the law does not require such planning for social services, Williams said that the Department hopes to expand the model to include a Statewide social service plan similar to the State Health Plan. As yet no such attempt has been made.

3. Demographic Issues

The following is a discussion of special subgroups of the population who seem to share special subsistence need which regularly goes unmet:

- a. Victims of abuse - Interviews with women at the Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC) shelter in Anchorage revealed a consistent pattern of difficulty in obtaining aid to start over again after leaving violence-ridden homes. Many of these women have children but often they experience long delays in qualifying for AFDC because of the requirement for birth and welfare records, often left behind in other states.

Until recently, many such women were deemed ineligible for aid because they owned property; often a home to which they couldn't return. A recent court decision ruled that assets which are inaccessible due to an ongoing situation of abuse should not disqualify a person from receiving aid. Despite such steps to help families of abused women, the considerable initial cost of a new home (two month's rent, security deposit) is often greater than AFDC benefits can pay.

Women without children can only resort to GR which is essentially useless for securing a new home. The lack of aid forces many women to remain at AWAIC for a period of months.

- b. Recently discharged patients - as we have seen in the survey results, it is not uncommon for persons to lose their homes during a period of hospitalization. This problem is compounded if they lose their jobs as well. Hospital social workers report increasing numbers of discharged patients ending up in shelters.
- c. Disabled persons whose claims are pending - disability claims (in particular for those programs which receive Federal funding) often take a long time to process. Often the only resource available to applicants pending award of a grant is GR. The applicant is involved in a kind of catch-22 situation in which an emergency grant is needed while a disability claim is pending but he/she may be ruled ineligible for GR because the pending (but not secured) check is considered a prior resource.

4. Housing for the Dead

As we have seen in the GR program description section, nearly half of all GRA grant money is spent on State subsidies for GR recipients' funerals or paupers' burials, regardless of whether the pauper had been on GR. In the former case, needy relatives of the deceased apply for burial assistance under the usual GR eligibility criteria. If deemed eligible they are awarded up to \$750 for funeral expenses (including the casket) and unlimited assistance for burial expenses. For reasons not entirely clear, paupers' burials are administered by the GR program.

The diversion of so much of the GR budget (42.6% according to a recent Department estimate) to burials is excusable in that the GR program exists for the expressed ("housing") purpose of providing subsistence for the living, rather than for the dead.

5. Emergency Criterion for GR Eligibility

As we have seen, the actual process of eviction or utility disconnection must be underway in order for an applicant to qualify for GR by which time the \$80 grant has ordinarily been dwarfed and rendered impotent by the magnitude of overdue fees. Not only does this requirement seriously impair the value of GR in preventing evictions, it completely rules out the possibility of using GR to help people establish themselves in new homes or meet day-to-day expenses. If the Department sees fit to encourage such home placement grants, they should be large enough to cover the cost of the security deposit and any other initial costs involved in taking possession of new home.

6. Policies and Strategies of Low and Moderate Income Housing Assistance

There is a tendency for people to discuss various methods of housing assistance in terms of relative merit with the goal of determining which one is "best". The fact of the matter is that the various methods (such as aided self-help, shelters for the homeless, emergency rental assistance grants, and subsidized public housing) address different aspects of housing need.

Aided self-help can provide materials and technical expertise to rural residents wishing to build their own homes. Shelters provide immediate short-term relief for the homeless. Rental assistance can serve as a shot in the arm to prevent eviction or place homeless people in homes and/or as a medium term remedy for a spell of unemployment or misfortune. Subsidized public housing provides long-term rental assistance for low income families. Far from being mutually exclusive, the various methods support each other by covering all segments in the spectrum of need. The common interest can best be served by supporting all these programs while taking care not to duplicate services.

The recent proliferation of emergency shelters in Anchorage is a response to a critical situation in which homeless people have been sleeping out year round and not infrequently freezing to death. The shelters serve an extremely valid purpose but their development has had an unfortunate side effect; the assumption shared by many that sufficient shelter beds will solve the problem of emergency housing need. The implication is that no matter how crushing a burden rents become and how many people are thrown out of their homes, accomodating them in emergency shelters (perhaps for a period of months) is a socially acceptable solution.

This solution is unacceptable. Emergency shelters are less than optimal places for children. They are also less than optimal places for adults. Sharing an extremely chaotic living space with extremely chaotic people is not conductive to the kind of effort and self discipline needed to pull one's way up out of destitution.

The State is making an important policy decision concerning what constitutes an adequate response to the emergency rental housing situation by default. This tacit policy has the effect of institutionalizing homelessness rather than counteracting it, encouraging the emergence of a permanent underclass of chronically homeless people. Such decisions should be made consciously and public rather than passively.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Remove \$80 per person per month statutory limitation on GR subsistence grants. Size of grants to be limited by needs standard.
2. Revise needs standard and financial eligibility criteria to bring them up to date with current cost of living and poverty levels, respectively.
3. Implement a more smoothly curved need standard with larger per capita figures for smaller households to correct remaining bias toward large households.
4. Authorize larger appropriations to fund an improved program.
5. Redefine Emergency Need By:

- a. Changing existing regulations so that no more eviction or cutoff notice is necessary for GR eligibility.
 - b. Allowing a certification period of several months to provide medium term assistance to applicants or special groups deemed needy of it. This intermediate approach would remove the administrative burden of processing emergency claims each month while avoiding the expense and habitual dependency associated with conventional long term entitlement programs.
6. Provide for additional home placement grants to meet the initial cost of securing housing (chiefly the security deposit). Such deposits would be refundable to the State.
 7. Create a new State burial program which would administer pauper's burials and burial assistance to needy persons. Thus restoring GR to its stated purpose of providing for subsistence.
 8. Institute some type of comprehensive Statewide social services planning either by funding the program mandated by AS 47.75 but never implemented, or through legislation replacing it with an alternative which would actually be funded and carried out in the prescribed fashion.
 9. Based on the findings of the comprehensive needs assessment included in the planning process recommended above, the legislature should draft a statement of intent articulating its policies on the issue of homelessness and emergency rental assistance, or in some other appropriate manner, formally address these issues.
 10. The GRA program in particular should be thoroughly scrutinized with the aim of determining if perceived need would better be met by radical overhaul of the existing structure or its outright replacement by a new program. The recommendations in this section are presented as guidelines for the former option but could also serve as part of a blueprint for the latter.

APPENDIX A

Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

1. AFDC - Aid to Families with Dependent Children - a Federal entitlement program designed to help single parent households.
2. Authorized Appropriation - An allocation to a specific program authorized by the legislature.
3. Department (Dept.) - Refers to the Department of Health and Social Services, which administers the GRA and GRM programs.
4. Division (DPA) - Refers to the Division of Public Assistance of the Department, which implements the GRA and GR programs.
5. Eligibility Worker (EW) - a caseworker in the Division.
6. FY - Fiscal Year.
7. GR - General Relief. In the strict sense, the designation "GR" refers to all aspects of General Relief, medical and non-medical alike. In common usage (including in the DPA's manual) "GR" refers to General Relief Assistance.
8. General Relief Assistance - The non-medical GR program. Primarily used for rental and burial assistance. (Abbreviated "GRA".)
9. GRM - General Relief Medical. The medical component of General Relief. Funded and awarded separately from GRA.
10. L.S.C. - The (Alaska) Legal Services Corporation.
11. Needs Standard - The Department's estimation of what it costs to stay alive, upon which they base assistance grants.
12. Pre-Homeless - Individuals at considerable risk of losing their homes due to economic hardship.

13. Supplemental Appropriation - An additional appropriation authorized during the course of a fiscal year to meet unforeseen expenses.

APPENDIX B

Survey Methodology for Survey of the Homeless and Pre-Homeless

1. The Instrument

The survey instrument was a 51 item questionnaire composed of questions concerning:

- Nature of specific need
- Coping strategies
- Housing status and history
- Economic status and history
- Employment status and history
- Public assistance status
- Demographic characteristics

Item development focused on operationalizing these variables. Many of the questions were adapted from other surveys, in particular the empirical assessment of the inner city homeless of Los Angeles, prepared by the Basic Shelter Research Project in that city (Ropers, Robertson et.al., 1984).

Numerous persons helped in the development of the instrument: in particular Michael Hueltsman of the Municipality of Anchorage and Professor Michael Baring-Gould of the University of Alaska at Anchorage.

There were three preliminary and one final draft of the survey. All the drafts were pretested in interview situations except the first, which was revised without pretesting.

2. Interview Sites

In an effort to approach a representative survey sample and to tap segments of the population with unique characteristics, the decision was made to conduct interviews at a number of sites. Several shelters for the homeless and other service providers agreed to conduct the interviews themselves and their caseworkers were trained in the interviewing technique.

Interview schedules and instructions were sent to the branch offices of the Alaska Legal Services Corporation (LSC) in an effort to gather Statewide data, but due to the short time line, only the Juneau LSC office was able to return completed schedules in time for them to be included in the study.

The following is a list of agencies which participated in the survey and the number of interviews completed at each. Agencies whose staff members administered the survey are indicated with an "*". Except for the Juneau LSC office, all survey sites are in Anchorage:

- | | |
|--|----|
| - Division of Public Assistance, | 41 |
| - Gambell Street office | |
|
 | |
| - Brother Francis Shelter | 32 |
|
 | |
| - Juneau LSC Office* | 9 |
|
 | |
| - Clare House* | 8 |
|
 | |
| - Abused Women's Aid in Crisis | 6 |
| - (AWAIC) shelter | |
|
 | |
| - Cook Inlet Native Association* | 5 |
|
 | |
| - McKinnel Shelter (Salvation Army) | 1 |
|
 | |
| - Clare house and the AWAIC shelter are for women and their children only. Cook Inlet serves only natives. | |

Subjects at the DPA office were interviewed in the waiting room. Subjects at the Brother Francis Shelter were interviewed in the common areas. Assisted Group self-enumeration was employed at AWAIC. The agencies whose staff people conducted interviews incorporated the interview into their intake procedures. All pretesting took place at the DPA office.

3. Time Frame

Pretests were held during the week of June 25-29. Interviews were held between July 11 and 27, 1984.

4. Interviewer Training

In addition to the caseworkers at the agencies listed above, four volunteers participated in administering the interviews at the DPA office and the Brother Francis Shelter. All interviewers were briefed and supplied with an interviewer's instruction packet. The packet:

- Clarifies details and definitions in the interview schedule.
- Briefly describes the objectives and conditions of the survey.
- Addresses points of procedure and protocol, especially confidentiality.

5. Interview Procedure

At the sites where interviews were not incorporated into an intake process, an effort was made to randomize subject selection by approaching potential subjects at regular spatial intervals. Interviewers indentified themselves and AHOME alerted the potential subject to the following conditions of participation: Strict confidentiality of information gathered; voluntary nature of participation; and the fact that the survey was not being administered in conjunction with any agency of government or any organization other than AHOME and that participation would in no way jeopardize assistance payments or other benefits.

After notification of the above considerations, if the subject was willing the interviewer asked the questions in order. Except under controlled circumstances at the AWAIC shelter (where group interviews were deemed less sensitive) no self enumeratin was allowed. Interviews were encouraged to skip questions if they proved too offensive and continue the interview.

6. Analysis

In the process of tabulation and analysis, data collected on a number of periferal question items were omitted; in other cases, responses to several related items were compressed into a single statistic in the interest of achieving concise results.

Raw data from the survey were coded and entered in matrix form using an Osborne 1 personal computer and the Supercalc spreadsheet package. Apart from the central tendency statistics for rent levels, which were generated using the package, the results are either simple frequency distributions or crosstabulations in percentage form, tabulated from the matrix. Because of small sample size, elaborate crosstabulations were impractical.



HB 231

ALASKA CHAPTER
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS, INC.

P.O. Box 10430
Fairbanks, AK 99701
(907) 456-5914

ISSUE: GENERAL RELIEF PAYMENTS

The maximum payment for a destitute person under Alaska's General Relief statute is \$80 per month! THAT AMOUNT HAS REMAINED UNCHANGED SINCE 1957!!!! Further, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services Regulations provide that payments must go to a vendor on-behalf of the person and not to the person himself. Such regulations also provide that General Relief payments cannot be paid on a regular basis, but rather are mostly restricted to a one-time payment. The result of such law and regulation is that people who are extremely poor receive virtually no assistance from a State which is so wealthy it can afford to subsidize home mortgages!

Action Requested:

The Alaska Chapter, National Association of Social Workers recommends legislation amending A.S.47.25 to double the General Relief maximum payment from \$80 to \$160 per month with a corresponding increase in the appropriation to the Division of Public Assistance to enable them to make such payments.

In addition it is recommended that the Legislative Regulation Review Committee review the General Relief Regulations to determine how they could better serve people who are poor.

Further, it is recommended that the Department of Health & Social Services be directed by the Legislature to conduct a study of the distribution and adequacy of payments and make a report to the legislature by January, 1986.

HB 231 - INCREASING GENERAL RELIEF ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS (CLOCKSIIN)

HOUSE-PASSED VERSION INCREASED MAXIMUM PAYMENT FROM \$80 TO \$200.

(SENATE H.E.S.S. APPROVED THIS VERSION.)

SENATE FINANCE VERSION INCREASES FROM \$80 TO \$120.

THE MAXIMUM PAYMENT HAS NOT BEEN CHANGED SINCE 1957.

APPROXIMATELY 375 NEEDY ALASKANS ARE SERVED EACH MONTH.

ELIGIBILITY AND THE AMOUNT OF COVERAGE ARE BASED ON NEED AND

THE CONDITIONS EXISTING IN EACH CASE.

PAYMENTS GO DIRECTLY TO VENDORS (LANDLORD, ELECTRIC COMPANY, ETC.)

NOT AS CASH TO THE INDIVIDUAL.

"PROVIDES ASSISTANCE FOR OBTAINING THE NECESSITIES OF LIFE FOR

PEOPLE WHO TEMPORARILY HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO OTHER PERSONAL,

PRIVATE, OR PUBLIC RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO MEET THEIR NEEDS."

IT PROVIDES A SAFETY NET FOR ALASKANS IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS.

Offered: 5/11/85
Referred: Rules

Original sponsors: Clocksin, Gruenberg
and Goll

1 IN THE HOUSE BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE
2 SENATE CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 231 (Finance)
3 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
4 FOURTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION
5 A BILL
6 For an Act entitled: "An Act relating to amount of general and temporary
7 relief assistance."
8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:
9 * Section 1. AS 47.25.130 is amended to read:
10 Sec. 47.25.130. AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE. The amount of assistance
11 for a needy person shall be determined by the department with regard
12 to the resources and needs of the person and the conditions existing
13 in each case. Where possible, assistance shall be sufficient to
14 provide the applicant with reasonable subsistence according to stan-
15 dards of assistance established by the department. However, the
16 amount of assistance for subsistence needs may not exceed \$120 [\$80] a
17 person a calendar month.
18 * Sec. 2. AS 47.25.250 is amended to read:
19 Sec. 47.25.250. TEMPORARY RELIEF. When a needy person is not
20 entitled to assistance under AS 47.25.120 - 47.25.300 and has no
21 relatives in the state liable for support under AS 47.25.230 and
22 47.25.240, the needy person may receive temporary assistance in the
23 form and amount which the department considers necessary. Temporary
24 assistance for needs other than transportation and medical care may
25 not exceed \$120 [\$80] per person per month.

GENERAL RELIEF (GR)

Program Purpose

Alaska's General Relief Program provides assistance for obtaining the necessities of life for people who temporarily have absolutely no other personal, private, or public resources available to meet their needs.

Eligibility Criteria:

Recipients of GR must meet the following criteria:

1. They must be in financial need;*
2. They must have inadequate resources to meet their basic needs;
3. They must be 18 years old or be eligible minors;
4. They must have proof of a specific unmet need for a subsistence item such as an eviction notice for overdue rent, or a utility shut-off notice;
5. They must be physically present in Alaska at the time of application;
6. They must register for work unless otherwise exempted.

*NEED STANDARDS (Monthly allowances) Note: Financial eligibility for GR-GRM exists only if need exceeds net income (need standard minus net income equals unmet need, which equals vendor or direct cash payment).

Need Standards

Adult-only households:

<u>Number of Adults</u>	<u>Maximum Need Standard</u>
1	\$300
2	400
3	500
4	600
5	700

\$100 shall be added for each additional adult.

Households with children and adults:

<u>Number of Persons</u>	<u>Maximum Need Standard</u>
Adult plus 1 child	\$300
Adult plus 2 children	350
Adult plus 3 children	400
Adult plus 4 children	450
Adult plus 5 children	500
Adult plus 6 children	550
Adult plus 7 children	600

\$100 shall be added for each additional adult and \$50 for each additional child.

If income is larger than the need standard, even by \$1, the applicant is not eligible. Need standards above were in effect June, 1983.

Exception: In open APA and AFDC cases with no prior resource to provide drugs needed for medical treatment, GRM eligibility will exist.

Coverage: GR can pay up to \$80 per month, per eligible person, to vendors on behalf of needy clients, and can provide cash payments of up to \$80 per month per person for certain needy high school students and older persons who have no other resources and who have applied for regular cash assistance from other programs.

Normally, GR provides assistance for such needs as rent, heating fuel, or electrical bills in amounts not to exceed the maximum of \$80 per eligible person.

Also, under certain very limited circumstances, indigents who are recent arrivals in Alaska can be provided one-way tickets to their last place of residence.

Certain burial costs can be paid through GR for burial of indigent deceased persons who were eligible by virtue of having no resources available to meet their needs. Relatives who are unable to provide for the costs of the burial may apply for assistance.

GR applications are available at all Division of Public Assistance offices. Office addresses are listed on page 3 of this booklet.

Applications are also available from fee agents in most smaller towns.



REPRESENTATIVE DON CLOCKSIN
Alaska House of Representatives

MAJORITY LEADER

1024 WEST SIXTH AVENUE
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99501
(907) 274-4031

WHILE IN JUNEAU:
POUCH V
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811
(907) 465-3704

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Bettye Fahrenkamp DATE: May 6, 1985
Chair
Health, Education and Social
Services Committee

FROM: Representative Don Clocksin, SUBJECT: HB 231
Majority Leader

I am requesting that you schedule HB 231, entitled "An Act relating to amount of general and temporary relief assistance", for a hearing in the Senate Health, Education, and Social Services Committee. This program was established during territorial days to provide a safety net for Alaskans in emergency situations.

I introduce this bill because the maximum monthly payment of \$80 has not been raised since the 1950's. This bill would raise the \$80 limit to \$200.

General Relief serves approximately 375 needy Alaskans each month. The assistance payments are paid in the form of vendor payments directly to landlords, utility companies and others.

In order to be eligible, a single adult's monthly income may not exceed \$300, and the person must have no other personal, private or public resource available to meet their needs.

Attached are the fiscal note and other back-up information.

Thank you for the attention to this bill.

DC:NG:blg

Attachments

Alaska State Legislature

BETTYE FAHRENKAMP, Chairman
ARLISS STURGULEWSKI, Vice Chairman
JOE JOSEPHSON
PAUL FISCHER
EDNA ARMSTRONG-DE VRIES



POUCH V
STATE CAPITAL
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811
(907) 465-3834
(907) 465-3835

Senate Committee on Health, Education and Social Services

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Members, Senate Committee on Health, Education and Social Services

FROM: Committee Staff

RE: Committee Meeting, May 7, 1985

DATE: May 7, 1985

Today, Thursday, May 2, at 1:30 pm in the Beltz Room, the Senate Committee on Health, Education and Social Services will hear an additional bill:

HB 231, Relating to amount of general and temporary relief assistance.

HB 231 increases the maximum general and temporary relief assistance payment from \$80 to \$200 a month. The relief program provides assistance in obtaining the necessities of life for people who temporarily have no other personal or public resources. Eligibility and the amount of coverage is based on need and the conditions existing in each case.

The program currently serves approximately 375 needy Alaskans each month. The Governor's FY 86 budget request for the program was \$302,000; passage of HB 231 would increase costs \$400,000. The amount of the maximum monthly payment has remained unchanged since 1957.

STATE OF ALASKA 1985 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
FISCAL NOTE

Revision Date: _____

REQUEST

Bill/Resolution No.: HB 231
 Title: An Act Relating to Amount of General and Temp. Relief Assistance.
 Sponsor: Reps. Clocksin & Gruenberg
 Requestor: _____
 Date of Request: _____

FISCAL DETAIL

Agency Affected: DHSS/Div. of Public Assistance
 Program Category Affected: Social and Economic Assistance Programs for General Population
 BRU, Program or Subprogram(s) Affected: Assistance Payments BRU - General Relief Assistance

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY 85	FY 86	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90
OPERATING						
100 PERSONAL SERVICES			34.3	35.7	37.1	38.6
200 TRAVEL						
300 CONTRACTUAL						
400 SUPPLIES						
500 EQUIPMENT			2.0			
600 LAND & STRUCTURES						
700 GRANTS, CLAIMS	0	399.2	439.1	461.1	479.5	498.7
800 MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING		399.2	475.4	496.8	516.6	537.3

CAPITAL						
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REVENUE						
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FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND	0	399.2	475.4	496.8	516.6	537.3
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL	0	399.2	475.4	496.8	516.6	537.3

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME			1	1	1	1
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS: Attach a separate page if necessary

See Attached Analysis

Prepared By: John R. Taber, Director
 Division: Public Assistance

Phone: 465-3347
 Date: March 6, 1985

Approved by Commissioner: John R. Taber
 Agency: Health & Social Services

Date: 4-2-85 *JCC*

Distribution (by Agency preparing fiscal note):
 Legislative Finance
 Legislative Sponsor
 Requestor

FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS - HB 231

GRA Caseload Characteristics (Burial Assistance Not Included)

<u>Service Category</u>	<u>Percent of GRA Expenditures</u>
Rental Assistance	87.6 %
Utility Assistance	4.7 %
Miscellaneous Assistance (18 yr. olds in High School, Food, and Clothing)	7.7 %

<u>Household Size</u>	<u>Percentage of GRA Caseload</u>
1	55.0
2	18.5
3	11.6
4	7.3
5	5.5
6 or more	2.1

FY 1986 GRA caseload was derived by increasing projected current year caseload (excluding burial assistance) by 8.8 percent. This projected caseload increase is based on the anticipated response to an increased benefit level. Benefits will not always equal the \$200 per person limit. Vendor payments are made for specific needs of eligible households, and will often be less than the allowable limit. (See projected payment amount by household size below).

<u>Household Size</u>	<u>Annual Cases/Payment Amount</u>	<u>Total</u>
1	1100 X 195	\$214,500
2	370 X 385	142,450
3	232 X 560	129,920
4	146 X 680	99,280
5	110 X 750	82,500
6	42 X 775	32,550
	<u>1998</u>	<u>\$701,200</u>

FY 1986 Need With New Payment Standard	701.2
Less FY 86 Governor's Request (Rental and Misc. Assistance Only)	302.0
FY 86 Increment Increase to Fund New Standard	<u>399.2</u>

FY 1987 caseload was derived by increasing FY 1986 by 10 percent. This projected caseload growth is due to increased benefit amounts attracting more clientele, and the spreading knowledge of higher payments through agency outreach efforts. The caseload should expand considerably during the first two years as the new benefit level becomes known. At this point, one Eligibility Technician (R/S 12B Anchorage) would be needed to accommodate the larger caseload. One-time funding of 2.0 is budgeted for purchase of office equipment for 1.0 PFT new position.

FY 1988 expenditures are calculated at a 5 percent rate of growth.
FY 1989-1990 are calculated at a 4 percent rate of growth.

LAW OFFICES OF
ALASKA LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION
419 SIXTH STREET, SUITE 322
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801
TELEPHONE 586-6425

May 3, 1985

Representative Don Clocksin
State of Alaska House of Representatives
Capitol Building, Room 216
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: House Bill 231

Dear Representative Clocksin:

This letter is in response to your inquiry as to the type of clients Alaska Legal Services Corporation refers to the General Relief Assistance program.

Our offices across the state represent many types of indigent clients with various legal problems. During the course of this representation we employ various legal solutions, but many times a legal approach proves ineffective. Faced with little money and few options, our clients depend on State and Federal assistance programs to provide their basic needs.

The programs to which we consistently refer clients include Aid to Families With Dependent Child (AFDC), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Old Age Survivors Disability Insurance (OASDI). These are categorical programs which require the applicant to demonstrate great need and lack of alternatives. SSI and OASDI both impose stringent criteria for proving disability. While these programs provide life-saving aid, they fail to meet the needs of certain persons who either fall between the cracks or are waiting for a determination on their claims. Those persons depend on alternative programs to survive.

General Relief Assistance helps provide for these basic needs. It authorizes the Department of Public Assistance to make a vendor payment in the amount of eighty dollars (\$80) per person per calendar month. The program was enacted to deal with emergencies. Below are typical profiles of ALSC clients who depend on this assistance.

Jane Doe is a thirty-four year old mother of four. She has only a tenth grade education. Her husband works and she stays home with her three pre-school age children. Her husband has deserted her and she applies for AFDC to provide aid to her children. However, the application may take up to 45 days to process. While it is being processed she is past due in her rent and the landlord has served her with an eviction notice. She has no friends or relatives who can provide her with financial assistance. She takes the eviction notice to the Department of Public Assistance and applies for General Relief Assistance. The Department pays her landlord \$400 and she is allowed to stay in her apartment until she can pay her rent with the AFDC funds.

Betty Smith is a 61 year old Tlingit with an eighth grade education. She has a chronic heart condition, severe rheumatoid arthritis and a ruptured disk. She has been hospitalized repeatedly in the prior four years. She has applied for disability under the SSI program. Her initial decision was unfavorable. She has been receiving \$280 per month in Adult Public Assistance (APA) benefits since the onset of her condition. However, a recent Alaska Superior Court decision has ruled that once her Federal SSI claim was denied she could no longer receive APA benefits. Although she appeals her unfavorable SSI decision, she has no other source of monthly income pending the appeal. She applies for General Relief Assistance and DPA pays \$80 to her landlord or a public utility.

Ed Johnson is a 45 year old carpenter. He recently was injured on the job site when he slipped on ice and snow and fell two stories. He has a broken back and numerous other medical problems. He has applied for workman's compensation and SSI but he must wait for those claims to be processed. He is single and has no other friends or family. He also has no sources of monthly income. He applies for General Relief Assistance and the DPA pays \$80 to Alaska Electric Light and Power Co., who agrees not to shut off the electricity to his all-electric house.

These illustrations point out segments of our society which are often forgotten. At wits end, many persons have nowhere left to turn. General Relief Assistance is essential in dealing with these real and present emergencies. However, \$80 per month does not go far in today's economy, particularly in rural Alaska. The proposed increase to \$200 per person per calendar month would be a tremendous help to all applicants but would particularly benefit smaller households. Since the amount of the vendor

payment is limited by the specific need, the cost to the state would likely remain unchanged for larger households.

Alaska Legal Services Corporation supports House Bill 231. We feel the increase would do much to restore dignity and hope to many people who have run out of options. We also commend the Alaska State Legislature for its support of this piece of humane legislation.

Sincerely,

ALASKA LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

Vance A. Sanders

VANCE A. SANDERS
Attorney at Law

VAS/if

SOME FACTS ABOUT ALASKA'S GENERAL RELIEF
PROGRAM

General Relief Appropriations

FY '82	\$530,000
FY '83	\$451,000
FY '84	\$650,000
FY '85	\$537,000

General Relief Utilization *

Average of 351 clients per month	Shelter & Utilities
Average of 21 burials per month	Funeral costs

Average payment

\$80 per client	Shelter & Utilities
\$806 per client	Burial

Per-cent of Appropriation for Different Services

Utilization for burial	48%
Utilization for shelter & utilities	52%

If GR appropriation were doubled, at least double the number of persons now served could be expected to apply, and more landlords would accept GR payment since it would be nearer to the actual amount of rent owed them.

*State-wide figures, but the majority is utilized in Anchorage.
Burial numbers have increased since BIA no longer provides burial payments

*Figures provided by the Anchorage Office of the Division of Public Assistance
November, 1984



ALASKA CHAPTER
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS, INC.

Box 10430
Fairbanks, Alaska 99710

ISSUE: GENERAL RELIEF PAYMENTS

The maximum payment for a destitute person under Alaska's General Relief Statutes is only \$80 per month! THAT AMOUNT HAS REMAINED UNCHANGED SINCE 1957!!! Further, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services regulations provide that payments must go to a vendor on-behalf of the person and not to the person themselves. Such regulations also provide that General Relief payments cannot be paid on a regular basis, but rather are mostly restricted to a one-time payment. The result of such law and regulation is that people who are extremely poor receive virtually no assistance from a State which is so wealthy it can afford to subsidize home mortgages.

ACTION REQUESTED

The Alaska Chapter, National Association of Social Workers recommends legislation amending A.S.47.25 to double the General Relief maximum payment from \$80 to \$160 per month with corresponding increase in appropriation to the Division of Public Assistance to enable them to make such payments.

In addition, it is recommended that the Legislative Regulation Review Committee review the General Relief regulations to determine how they could better serve people who are poor.

Further it is recommended that the Department of Health & Social Services be directed by the Legislature to conduct a study of the distribution and adequacy of payments and make a report to the Legislature by January, 1986.

April 29, 1985

by: Rep. Clocksin
re: HB 231

opinion

Anchorage Daily News



Winner, 1976 Pulitzer Prize Gold Medal for Public Service

Gerald E. Grilly
Publisher

Howard Weaver
Managing Editor

Steve Lindbeck
Editorial Page Editor

Katherine Fanning, Editor and Publisher 1971 to 1983
Lawrence Fanning, Editor and Publisher 1987 to 1971

Alaska's Only Morning Newspaper • Founded in 1946 by Norman C. Brown

Simple call to aid the not-so-wealthy

Alaska's oil wealth has brought comfort and opportunity to thousands of Alaskans, but it has not purged the Last Frontier of poverty. In fact, the maximum payment a person may receive under Alaska's general relief statutes — \$80 a month — has remained unchanged since 1957. That's why two Anchorage Democrats, Reps. Don Clocksin and Max Gruenberg, have sponsored a bill that would raise general relief to \$200 a month.

About 350 people get state emergency general relief for shelter, utilities, food, transportation and clothing each month. Another several hundred people a year receive a pauper's burial at state expense.

State regulations say general relief payments must go directly to utilities, landlords or other vendors, not the needy individuals themselves. These regulations also restrict most general relief to one-time payments, which means those destitute will be on their own again after they have received general relief emergency money.

The state appropriated \$537,000 for general relief this fiscal year. If the Clocksin-Gruenberg proposal is adopted, the legislature would add another \$400,000 to the program next year. That's less than two-thirds the dollars the state has spent to find out what impact the Susitna dam might have on moose.

General relief is the last resort for Alaskans who have not shared in the wealth of recent years. The legislature, which has turned its back on the truly needy before, should not do so again whatever the talk of falling revenues. The Clocksin-Gruenberg bill is a simple call for the most fundamental kind of humanitarian aid — and legislators who told us at election time how much they care about Alaska should not ignore that call now.

LAW OFFICES OF
ALASKA LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION
ANCHORAGE REGIONAL OFFICE
550 WEST 8TH AVENUE, SUITE 200
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99501
TELEPHONE (907) 372-9431

May 1, 1985

Representative Don Clocksin
Pouch V
Juneau AK 99811

Don,

I am responding to your request to our Juneau office for information about the kinds of persons we would be referring to DPA for General Relief Assistance.

There are several classes of cases.

Many families are in emergency situations and are not eligible for categorical assistance such as families with both parents present. The emergencies are loss of housing or utilities. I'll give you a frequently recurring example: as trailer parks are converting, families are losing housing. GR might be the only way to obtain some emergency housing money. There are no other short-term family housing options available.

Another frequent GR situation is that faced by battered women. They and their children have emergency cash needs that may not be met, even assuming an expedited application process for AFDC.

We are seeing many single adults, who have been disabled, have used the last of their resources and are facing an emergency, while they are waiting for either a Social Security determination or state adult public assistance. Again, GR is the only option.

The amount of GR, \$80, which is made by the Department as a vendor payment, is often not enough to even meet the emergency needs. Limited as GR is, many times our clients are forced to literally beg for more time from landlords or to ask local churches for food or clothes.

An adequate GR amount would go a long way in these kinds of cases towards stemming more serious problems that often come when there are no emergency resources available.

May 1, 1985
Page Two

Thank you for the opportunity to present this information.

Sincerely,

ALASKA LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John Gant".

JOHN GANT
Supervising Attorney

JG/tc

Anchorage Daily News



Winner, 1976 Pulitzer Prize Gold Medal for Public Service

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GR
CENTR AMERIC
POVER
SOC INJU

America

PARIS — One of the most Americans abroad out about themselves they are politically a nomically much more servative than they they were at home. cans have fundamenta ferent views of the government and, the role of each individual.

As big as our gover has become, our belief has been shaken in the p that the least governm the best government, an individuals are respon for their own behavior for the behavior of their

Take the public probl the dogs of New York an dogs of Paris. They bot the same thing — and th it on the sidewalk. So do you do about it?

In New York, whe seemed the stuff was goi get ankle-deep, the city ers decided that dog ow

Monday
4/29/85
AB 231

\$399,000 from new legislation
let Groszek know

Alaska State Legislature

BETTYE FAHRENKAMP, Chairman
ARLISS STURGULEWSKI, Vice Chairman
JOE JOSEPHSON
PAUL FISCHER
EDNA ARMSTRONG-DE VRIES



POUCH V
STATE CAPITAL
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811
(907) 465-3834
(907) 465-3762

Senate Committee on Health, Education and Social Services

May 20, 1985

Jane Windsor
American Assoc. of Retired Persons
319 F. Bentley Dr.
Fairbanks, AK 99701

Dear Jane:

Thank you for contacting me to express your support for HB 231, regarding general relief assistance.

I am happy to report that just prior to adjournment the Legislature approved and sent to the Governor for signature into law a revised version of HB 231. As passed, the bill would increase from \$60 to \$120 the maximum monthly general relief payment. While this is not the \$200 that was originally proposed, in light of our current state revenue picture I feel it is a large step in the right direction.

Again, I appreciate hearing your views.

Sincerely,

Bettye Fahrenkamp
Chairman

LF/nd

TO: ALL, LEGISLATORS

FROM: JANE WINDSOR, CHAIR OF STATE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE,
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED PERSONS,
319 EAST BENTLEY DRIVE, FAIRBANKS 99701

PHONE: 456-6035

RE: OLDER ALASKANS COMMISSION

BE SURE OLDER ALASKANS COMMISSION IS GRANTED A 4 YEAR LIFE. TO
SHORTEN TO 2 YEARS ONLY CRIPPLES A DESIRABLE PROGRAM'S MOMENTUM.
SUPPORT HOUSE VERSION OF BUDGET FOR OLDER ALASKANS COMMISSION.

552

23

MAY 8 1985

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* DELIVER TO: JPOM
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* ORIGINAL
* SENT: 05/07/85 TIME: 13:57
* FROM: PAULA GRAY
* SUBJECT: POM-FAIRBANKS
* PRINT DATE: 05/07/85 TIME: 13:58
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TO: SENATOR FAHRENKAMP

FROM: SENATOR REPORTER, 1234 CANDLELITE LOOP, NORTH POLE, AK, 99705

PHONE: 488-9514-H 456-2553-W

RE: HB 231, GENERAL ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY PERSONS

MSG: HB 231, WHICH WOULD RAISE THE MINIMUM AMOUNT OF GENERAL RELIEF TO \$200/MONTH, IS NECESSARY TO ENSURE BASIC SURVIVAL FOR PERSONS IN GROSS NEED. THE OLD FIGURE OF \$50 IS MUCH TOO LOW GIVEN INFLATION OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS. PLEASE PASS HB 231 OUT OF SENATE HESS SOON.

MOORE BUSINESS FORMS, INC.

MAY 9 1985

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* DELIVER TO: JPOM
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* ORIGINAL
* SENT: 05/08/85 TIME: 09:04
* FROM: ANNIE NEUBAUER
* SUBJECT: POM/FAIRBANKS
* PRINT DATE: 05/08/85 TIME: 12:47
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TO: SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

SENS: FAIKS, SACKETT, KERTTULA, ELIASON, P. FISCHER, HALFORD, FERGUSON

INTERIOR DELEGATION

SENS: FAHRENKAMP, COGHILL, BENNETT

REFS: KOPONEN, M.W. MILLER, RINGSTAD, FRANK, DAVIS

FROM: DEANNA ST. LOUIS, #49 GOLD RUSH ESTATES, FAIRBANKS 99701

PHONE: 479-1726

RE: HB 231 GENERAL ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY PERSONS

RELIEF OF \$80.00 PER MONTH TO AID IN HOUSING IS NOT APPROPRIATE IN ALASKA DUE TO THE COST OF RENTING. THE AMOUNT SHOULD BE RAISED TO FIT THE NEED OF ALASKANS.

MAY 8 1985

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* DELIVER TO: JFOM
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* ORIGINAL
* SENT: 05/07/85 TIME: 10:51
* FROM: LIOFBX
* SUBJECT: POM FBX/LS
* PRINT DATE: 05/07/85 TIME: 10:51
*
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17

TO: SENATE FINANCE AND H.E.S.S. COMMITTEES

SENS: FAIKS, SACKETT, KERTTULA, ELIASON, P. FISCHER, HALFORD, FERGUSON

INTERIOR DELEGATION

SENS: BENNETT, FAHRENKAMP, COGHILL

REPS: DAVIS, KOPONEN, M.W. MILLER, RINGSTAD, FRANK, SHULTZ

FROM: MARSHA SCHNEIDER, PO BOX 10430, FBX, AK 99710

PHONE: 457-5914

RE: HB231, GENERAL RELIEF

147

MSG: INCREASING EMERGENCY GENERAL RELIEF ASSISTANCE TO TRULY NEEDY PERSONS FROM \$80 TO \$200 PER MONTH IS A TOP LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY OF THE FAIRBANKS BRANCH OF THE NAT'L ASSOC. OF SOCIAL WORKERS. PLEASE FUND THIS BILL.

EOM

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Alaska State Legislature

BETTYE FAHRENKAMP, Chairman
ARLISS STURGULEWSKI, Vice Chairman
JOE JOSEPHSON
PAUL FISCHER
EDNA ARMSTRONG-DE VRIES



POUCH V
STATE CAPITAL
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811
(907) 465-3834
(907) 465-3835

Senate Committee on Health, Education and Social Services

April 25, 1985

Carol Johnson
2113 Jack Street
Fairbanks, AK 99701

Dear Carol:

Thank you for contacting me to express your support for HB 231, relating to the amount of general and temporary relief assistance.

HB 231 would allow the Department of Health and Social Services to increase the amount of assistance paid to clients for both general and temporary relief from \$80 to \$200 per month. I must agree that if we are to provide assistance to the truly needy of our state, the amount provided should be realistic. Unfortunately, in this year of declining revenues, the fate of the bill will probably depend on just how much money is available for expanding service programs. The bill is currently under consideration by the House Finance Committee.

Carol, thank you again for contacting me. I will be sure to keep your views in mind if this bill comes to the Senate Committee on Health, Education and Social Services for consideration.

Sincerely,

Bettye Fahrenkamp
Chairman

BF:dc

Alaska State Legislature

BETTYE FAHRENKAMP, Chairman
ARLISS STURGULEWSKI, Vice Chairman
JOE JOSEPHSON
PAUL FISCHER
EDNA ARMSTRONG-DE VRIES



POUGH V
STATE CAPITAL
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811
(907) 465-3834
(907) 465-3835

Senate Committee on Health, Education and Social Services

April 25, 1985

Carol Johnson
2112 Jack Street
Fairbanks, AK 99701

Dear Carol:

Thank you for contacting me to express your support for HB 231, relating to the amount of general and temporary relief assistance.

HB 231 would allow the Department of Health and Social Services to increase the amount of assistance paid to clients for both general and temporary relief from \$80 to \$200 per month. I must agree that if we are to provide assistance to the truly needy of our state, the amount provided should be realistic. Unfortunately, in this year of declining revenues, the fate of the bill will probably depend on just how much money is available for expanding service programs. The bill is currently under consideration by the House Finance Committee.

Carol, thank you again for contacting me. I will be sure to keep your views in mind if this bill comes to the Senate Committee on Health, Education and Social Services for consideration.

Sincerely,

Bettye Fahrenkamp
Chairman

BF:dc

Danny

APR 16 1985

DELIVER TO

04/15/85 TIME 14:14
LIOFBK
SUBJECT: NON-FAIRBANKS
PRINT DATE: 04/15/85 TIME 11:21

TO HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE

REFS: ADAMS, BINGSTAD, BUNZON, LARSON, SIKONSKI, COTTEN, FRANK, SIKLEY, POURCHOT, RIEGER, TRENING

INTERIOR DELEGATION

REFS: DAVIS, KOPCHEN, H.W. NELLER, SHULTZ
GEN: BENNETT, FAHRENKAMP, COCHILL

FROM CAROL JOHNSON, 2113 JACK STREET, FAIRBANKS, AK, 99701

PHONE: 456-7999-H 456-4729-H

RE: GENERAL RELIEF, HB 231

MSG: I SUPPORT HB 231, WHICH PROVIDES FOR THE INCREASE OF GENERAL RELIEF PAYMENTS FROM 50 DOLLARS TO 200 DOLLARS PER MONTH. THE 50 DOLLARS HAS NOT BEEN CHANGED SINCE 1957 AND IS TERRIBLY LOW.