



San Francisco Human Services Agency 2011 Federal Legislative Plan (112th Congress)

The mission of the Human Services Agency (SF-HSA) is to promote well-being and self-sufficiency among individuals, families and communities in San Francisco. In accordance with this mission, SF-HSA helps to shape public policy at the state and federal level through the development of an annual plan that identifies legislative priorities; through proactive collaboration with the Mayor's Office, other City departments, the City's lobbyists, community partners, and state, regional and other affinity groups; and through communication and outreach to elected officials and other decision makers. This document will serve as a framework to guide the Agency's advocacy on federal legislative, regulatory and budget issues in 2011. (Revisions to the 2010 Plan are in underlined blue font.)

AGING & ADULT SERVICES

1. Support legislation that promotes the safety, health and well-being of seniors and adults with disabilities.
2. Support budget and legislative proposals that maintain or increase funding for programs that serve seniors and disabled adults, including but not limited to Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, adult health, nutrition, senior housing, transportation, community care and support, and other services funded under the Older Americans Act.
3. Support efforts to strengthen Social Security, and oppose efforts to weaken or privatize this crucial social insurance program. Support automatic annual COLAs for Social Security and SSI recipients, calculated on the Consumer Price Index for Elders (CPI-E) which measures the "market basket" relevant to seniors, rather than the Consumer Price Index for Workers (CPI-W) which is based on very different spending patterns. A full two thirds of elderly persons receive more than one half of their income from Social Security and one in five has no other income.
4. Support full funding and implementation of the Elder Justice Act provisions adopted in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010. Key provisions include: authorization of \$100 million annually for the Adult Protective Services (APS) program, plus \$25 million annually for state demonstration grants to improve APS; authorization of over \$8 million annually for long term care ombudsman programs; authorization of over \$6 million annually for elder abuse forensic centers; establishment of an Elder Justice Coordinating Council to make recommendations for improving intergovernmental coordination of activities related to elder abuse and neglect; and authorization of grants to enhance long-term care staffing through training, recruitment and use of incentives.
5. Support proposals that increase and rebalance long term care funding toward the entire spectrum of community-based options, and expand access to community-based living services that allow seniors and people with disabilities to avoid institutionalization and receive appropriate levels of care and support in the community.

6. [Support full implementation of long term care programs and supports enacted in The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010. Specifically, support implementation of the CLASS Act provisions, which would establish a voluntary national insurance program to help pay for long term care services and supports. This program is financed through a voluntary opt-out payroll deduction for all working adults and is authorized effective January 2011.](#)
7. Support proposals to update the Older Americans Act appropriation to reflect cost inflation and population growth since the last update in 2007. Support the President's proposal to increase funding for Older Americans Act programs by \$108.4 million (7.7%) in FFY 2011, although this does not fully cover the shortfall amount. [In particular, support the Administration's Caregiver Initiative which provides significant increases in Supportive Services.](#) The Older Americans Act funds critical programs such as meals, transportation, case management, disaster response, caregiver support, and protective services, which seniors rely on.
8. Support use of the Elder Economic Security Standard Index (EESSI) in order to more accurately measure the number of seniors living with economic insecurity and support efforts to meet the needs of seniors below the standard. In San Francisco, the percent difference between the 2009 federal poverty index and the actual basic cost of living for an elder person (the "Security Gap") was 156% for a home owner with no mortgage, 365% for an owner with mortgage payments, and 245% for a renter with one bedroom. The EESSI will modernize federal poverty measures and guidelines, capture regional variations in the cost of living, and recalculate the number and demographic profile of elders whose basic needs are not being met.
9. Support legislation that preserves and creates jobs for seniors and adults with disabilities, including increased funding for Dept of Labor's Senior Community Service Employment Program, the only employment and training program serving Americans age 55 and older.
10. Support efforts to amend California's "cash out" policy, under which SSI/SSP recipients cannot qualify for Food Stamps. Advocate for the federal government to reconsider its denial of the state's request to selectively repeal this policy in only those cases where it would benefit the recipient.
11. [Support reauthorization of the Older Americans Act. Urge strengthening of advocacy provisions of the Act and provide adequate funding for implementation.](#)
12. [Support Congressional appropriations of \\$32.5 million over four years for Long Term Care Ombudsman programs, and \\$10 million per year for four years to support state and national ombudsman training programs, as authorized under The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010. The City's most vulnerable elderly and dependent adults occupying the more than 3,000 beds in nursing homes and residential care facilities of all types in San Francisco rely on the Ombudsman for protection of their rights as mandated by the Older Americans Act.](#)
13. [Support full funding for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to provide adequate post-award administrative oversight, support and guidance for the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program \(BTOP\) recipients. San Francisco received \\$7.9 million for sustainable broadband adoption. Over \\$3 million of these funds will directly benefit seniors and persons with disabilities through installation of new technology at 48 sites including senior centers, senior and disabled](#)

[housing, supportive housing and Adult Day Care centers, paired with training and coaching to bridge the digital divide. The City Controller's Survey of 2009 indicated only 42% of City seniors used broadband technologies. San Francisco also will benefit from a Bay Area wide grant awarded to a private company for public safety communications technology. Underfunding of the NTIA will negatively affect grant recipients' access to the comprehensive and timely guidance and support, needed for these complex projects to ensure understanding of how to avoid waste, fraud and abuse.](#)

CHILD CARE

1. Support budget and legislative proposals that maintain or increase funding for child care, expand access to affordable child care for working families and families on welfare, and promote high quality child care programs through investments in the early education workforce, facilities and other quality improvement strategies.
2. Support reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Fund block grant, which was last reauthorized in 2002. [The block grant currently requires that market surveys be completed every two years but it does not require that the new rates be implemented. California has not implemented a rate increase since 2004, which means families with vouchers have an increasingly difficult time accessing the market. Rate suppression is an issue of increasing concern in San Francisco. Because rates have not kept up with the market cost of providing care, City investments in quality have eroded to basic operating support, and licensed capacity is being lost for the first time. Reauthorization should provide increased funding for expansion, new investments in the quality of care, and development of the child care workforce. The quality investment should require basic levels of routine visits by licensing and should also support local planning efforts.](#)

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

1. Support budget and legislative proposals to maintain and increase funding for programs that promote family and child well-being, prevent entries and reentries into the foster care system, support foster children and youth while they are in care, ensure the unique educational needs of foster youth are met, and help foster youth transition to self-sufficiency through the provision of pre- and post-emancipation assistance. Federal funding is disproportionately directed to children who have already been removed from their homes; additional resources or increased flexibility in the use of existing resources is needed to support prevention activities that could help avoid family disruption.
2. Support federal laws that acknowledge the need to provide cash assistance and other supports for *all* children and families who have been identified as needing child welfare services in order to promote permanency and maintenance of family ties. Specifically, support legislation that builds on the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 by eliminating the foster care “look-back” provision that links eligibility for federal foster care payments from family income and recognize that all abused and neglected children deserve support.
3. [Support efforts to reform child welfare financing, and support inclusion of funding for prevention and early intervention activities in any reform initiative.](#)

4. Support legislation codifying the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s administrative rule excluding payments to relative caregivers of former foster children from income for purposes of determining the monthly rent for residents of public housing and holders of Section 8 housing vouchers.
5. Support legislative amendments to the Adam Walsh Act that would reinstate the opt-out provisions regarding caregiver background checks for dependent children, allow states and counties to continue administering their own system of conducting background checks, and support the requirement that foster parent licensing staff conduct checks of criminal history in other states only upon completion of an automated interstate system.
6. Support legislative and budgetary proposals that help to build a professional and well-trained child welfare workforce with access to education, training and other resources. Also support investment in child welfare research and evaluation to build a body of information about practices that have been proven effective.
7. Support a federal legislative agenda that shifts child policy and practice away from punishment and incarceration to prevention, intervention and early child investment. Support investments in early child and maternal health, early childhood education, early literacy, poverty alleviation and alternatives to the institutionalization of children in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.
8. Support the following legislative “fixes” to the Fostering Connections Act of 2009: (1) Allow for successor guardians in the same manner as successor adoptive parents are allowed today in order to minimize disruption for children whose guardians die or become incapacitated; and (2) Reconsider the limitation on extended guardianship and adoption for only those youth whose adoption or guardianship was established at age 16 or older in order to remove the disincentive for permanency for these children.

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (FORMERLY FOOD STAMPS) & NUTRITION

1. Support budget and legislative proposals to maintain and increase funding for and promote greater access to SNAP and other federal nutrition programs. Support adequate funding that accounts for inflation in food costs for the Commodity Supplemental Food Box and other food programs.
2. Support proposals that would reduce the “transaction costs” associated with administering the SNAP Program and re-establish federal participation in SNAP administrative expenses. Ensure that states have adequate administrative flexibility and expand opportunities for states to test innovative methods and alternative application strategies that could enhance benefits uptake. Oppose proposals that would adversely affect state quality control and program integrity activities or restrict access to benefits.
3. [Support maintained or increased funding and flexibility for the Food Stamp Employment and Training \(FSET\) Program. Advocate for ongoing federal approval of housing subsidies as an FSET-eligible expense for whatever period of time is deemed “reasonable and necessary” to help homeless individuals secure employment.](#)

4. [Support restoration of cuts made to future SNAP benefits. The American Recovery & Reinvestment Act \(ARRA\) increased SNAP benefit amounts by 13.6%. Congress subsequently passed legislation returning benefits to the pre-ARRA levels effective March 31, 2014 as a way to pay for the August 2010 state aid package, which extended the ARRA FMAP increase and provided funds for teachers' salaries.](#)
5. Support legislative proposals and budgetary investments that make progress toward the goal of eradicating hunger in the United States, beginning with child hunger. In FY 09-10, over 42 million pounds of food were distributed by food pantries and soup kitchens, a 16% increase over the prior year. Specifically, increase access to a fresh and affordable diet for children and pregnant women, increase access to nutritious food in homeless shelters and food pantries, expand funding to provide healthy congregate and home-delivered meals to seniors and adults with disabilities, and prevent hunger through the implementation of federal policies that promote economic self-sufficiency for low-income and working poor families.

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

1. [Support legislative and budgetary proposals that further the goals of the Obama Administration's 2010 Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. Specifically:](#)
 - [Support the goal of ending chronic homelessness within 5 years.](#)
 - [Support the goal of preventing and ending homelessness for families, youth and children within 10 years. San Francisco shelters serve approximately 200 families per year and regularly have a waiting list. The City has invested a significant amount of local funding in rental assistance and eviction prevention programs for families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, but these programs are oversubscribed.](#)
 - [Support the goal of preventing and ending homelessness among veterans within 5 years. San Francisco's homeless veteran population is estimated to number 2,100 individuals, approximately 10-12% of whom are chronically homeless in San Francisco.](#)
2. [Support a permanent allocation of \\$1 billion in federal funding for prevention and re-housing. San Francisco is a current recipient of ARRA Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program \(HPRP\) funds, which expire in 2012, and McKinney rapid-re-housing pilot program funds, which expire in 2013. These grants, in combination with local dollars targeted to similar services, have helped hundreds of San Franciscans avoid or recover from homelessness.](#)
3. [Support changes made by the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing \(HEARTH\) Act of 2009, which is the primary source of federal funding to serve homeless families and individuals. Specifically, increase funding for prevention and assistance to families and for administration; maintain the same level of funding for new projects, including permanent supportive housing \(Shelter Plus Care\) and rapid re-housing; and support \\$2.4 billion in FY 2011 funding for the Homeless Assistance Grants program within the Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\) at \\$2.4 billion. In San Francisco, the Homeless Assistance Grants Fund supports approximately 50 programs including supportive housing, legal advocacy, services for homeless veterans, case management, and substance abuse and mental health services.](#)
4. [Support the Administration's request for \\$85 million for HUD in FY 2011 for two voucher assistance initiatives for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness: 6,000 vouchers for families that are](#)

[linked with services within the Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\) and the Department of Education, and 4,000 vouchers that are linked with Medicaid case management and substance abuse and mental health services](#)

5. Increase funding for the Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) program, and for services in supportive housing within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) administered by HHS. Enact the Services to End Long-Term Homelessness Act (SELHA) and create a System of Care within HHS for homeless populations living with mental illness.
6. Support proposals to address homelessness among veterans. Specifically, fund an additional 10,000 HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Section 8 vouchers for homeless veterans; approve the Administration's request for a 50% increase in funding to \$799 million for veterans homelessness assistance programs within the VA; and give the Veteran's Administration clear authority to make grants available to organizations that provide supportive services to veterans living in permanent supportive housing.
7. [Support appropriations of \\$165 million for the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act grant programs within HHS to expand Transitional Living opportunities and rapid re-housing activities, and to achieve enhanced family reunification through the Basic Center Programs. Increase funding by \\$20 million within HUD in FY 2011 for the Family Unification Program to offer housing support to youth-in-transition from foster care.](#)
8. Support proposals to make surplus federal property available for creation of permanent housing for the homeless.

MEDI-CAL / HEALTH CARE

1. [Support funding and implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, particularly the expansion of Medicaid to single adults up to 133% of the Federal Poverty Level, extension of Medicaid to former foster youth up to age 26, Elder Justice Act provisions and CLASS Act provisions.](#)
2. Support an increase in the monthly maintenance need for Medi-Cal applicants and recipients. The maintenance need is used in determining whether an individual is eligible for free or share-of-cost coverage, and for determining the share of cost. The maintenance level of need has not been adjusted for many years, while the cost of living has continued to increase, resulting in an inadequate maintenance need level.
3. Support a roll-back of Deficit Reduction Act requirements regarding citizenship documentation in establishing Medicaid eligibility, and/or revisions to the DRA that would reduce the administrative burden of compliance on counties and Medicaid applicants. Specifically, support the following provisions: relaxation of the rules governing which documents can be used to establish citizenship by allowing copies rather than originals, accepting confirmation of documents' existence from source agencies, allowing states and counties to claim the costs of securing documentation on behalf of low-income clients, allowing documents that match with the TANF list of documents, allowing self-

certification under penalty of perjury, and extending coverage to new applicants who meet all other eligibility requirements while they are making good faith efforts to meet citizenship documentation requirements. Additionally, support restoration of state options on verifying citizenship (i.e., return to pre-DRA status quo).

4. Support proposals to make permanent the Transitional Medical Assistance program, which allows families to retain Medicaid health coverage for one year after exiting welfare due to increased earnings.

TANF AND FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY

1. Enact meaningful TANF Reauthorization legislation that maintains or increases funding for the program and supports state and county efforts to increase work participation and promote well-being and self-sufficiency for low-income families. Specifically:
 - Maintain the overall work focus of the program, while recognizing that “work first” does not mean “work only.” Research indicates that the most successful welfare-to-work programs combine work with training, education and supportive services, as appropriate. State and county flexibility to tailor work and family stabilization activities to families’ individual needs should be restored and enhanced.
 - [Support a permanent authorization and appropriation of funding for subsidized employment as enacted originally in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.](#)
 - Because not every family can immediately enter the workforce, particularly in this economic climate, countable work hours should be expanded to include a longer period of vocational training and education, a longer period of job search and job readiness training, and vocational English as a Second Language training.
 - Measure states’ performance in a fair and comprehensive manner that recognizes multiple potential positive outcomes for families.
 - Provide for reasonable time to engage families. New cases should be excluded from the work participation rate for the month of application and the month following application, recognizing that it often takes 30 to 45 days to process an application and provide benefits retroactively, making the third month of assistance the first month in which a family can realistically be engaged in work activities for a full month.
 - Simplify the work verification requirements. The Deficit Reduction Act and subsequent program rules moved the program away from the task of enhancing work participation and family self-sufficiency, and back towards the process-heavy Aid to Families with Dependent Children model. Effective program oversight is welcome, but should be within the context of a more outcome-driven focus consistent with the TANF program envisioned in 1996.
2. Support changes to federal work participation requirements that emphasize client outcomes and allows states greater flexibility to implement strategies that serve families effectively. Specifically, support elimination of the 90% two-parent participation rate requirement; give states partial credit for clients’ partial participation in work requirements; give full credit for maximum participation by disabled adults; create new incentives for moving clients from welfare to work; and allow greater use of education and training programs designed to lead to work.

3. Support budget and legislative proposals that promote the ability of low-income families to increase their income, build and maintain assets, and attain self-sufficiency, including expansion of the federal Earned Income Tax Credit program.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

1. Support legislative and budget proposals that support San Francisco's efforts to build a coordinated and integrated system for the delivery of workforce services.
2. Support budget and legislative proposals that support workforce development programs targeted to welfare recipients, homeless individuals, current and former foster youth, other transitional aged youth, refugees and low-income people with limited skill sets.
3. Support reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Specifically, support provisions that preserve separate funding streams for adults, youth and dislocated workers; promote sector-based customized training; and make statutory links between the WIA and TANF programs. Oppose block granting or reduction of WIA funding.

CROSS-PROGRAM ISSUES

1. [Support legislation that extends the enhanced FMAP rate beyond June 30, 2011. The enhanced FMAP rate that California received as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has been a critical support to the programs that support San Francisco's most vulnerable populations, including those served by the IHSS and Family and Children's Services program.](#)
2. Support legislation to create an updated federal poverty measure based on the recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences and the Elder Economic Security Standard Index as defined and recommended to Congress by the California State Joint Resolution AJR6. The existing federal poverty measure is outdated, does not accurately reflect the incidence of poverty, does not capture regional or age-related variations in the cost of living, and cannot measure the impact of policy interventions.
3. Support a wholesale review and revision of current federal procedures for monitoring and auditing state administration of health and human service programs, as well as approval procedures and data collection requirements. Punitive, costly and redundant federal requirements should be streamlined, focused on client outcomes as opposed to process, and flexible enough to accommodate state by state variations and innovations.
4. Oppose proposed reductions in the Social Services Block Grant Program. SSBG is a flexible source of funding to the states which can be used to provide a wide range of human service programs, including protective services and the prevention of child and elder abuse.
5. Support adoption of a single process across federal agencies for approving state information upgrades and revise the enforcement of federal regulations that currently govern the claims process for reimbursement of "electronic data processing" expenditures. Advance requests and detailed special tracking requirements should be applied to large expenditures related to the development of big IT systems, not routine commodity purchases of personal computers, supplies, and off-the-shelf software.