

DATE: April 5, 2023

OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM #23-04-03

SUBJECT: Guaranteed Income (GI) Pilots

TO: Executive Directors

FROM: Tanoa Fagan
Director
Bureau of Operations

PURPOSE

To inform the County Assistance Office (CAO) staff regarding GI pilot projects.

BACKGROUND

In response to growing interest, local community agencies or universities, through both governmental and private funding, are creating pilot projects to study what effect unconditional funds have on low-income individuals, and whether such funds benefit their long-term economic stability. Known as [GI](#) pilots, these programs provide cash stipends to a select group of individuals, often for a defined period of time. These payments have no restrictions on how they may be spent, and help recipients achieve or maintain a standard of living that's above the poverty line.

CAOs should be aware of any Guaranteed Income programs (or any GI variants, including Basic Income [BI], Universal Basic Income [UBI], Partial Basic Income, and citizen dividends) operating in or affecting their county, and how the income an individual receives from such pilot projects affects their assistance programs.

The Bureau of Policy (BOP) attempts to collaborate with GI pilot project coordinators in advance to the pilot project start date when we are aware of the GI pilot. BOP informs the GI pilot project coordinator about any impacts the income stipend will have on a recipient of public assistance. BOP also informs the project coordinators that the income is reportable and any pilot participant receiving public assistance needs to report the income to the CAO.

DISCUSSION

Recurring GI payments may or may not have an impact on Cash Assistance, Medical Assistance, Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program or Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program. Each GI program is unique in how it is set up and how it is funded. The agencies overseeing the pilots decide the criteria for their

particular project. How the income provided by the pilot is treated for each public assistance program may vary based on the unique GI program design.

BOP will evaluate each pilot project to determine which county or counties the pilot project operates in, how the pilot is funded, and how the income must be treated for public assistance eligibility and benefits. Because these pilot programs can target very narrow demographics, an Information Memorandum (Info Memo) with details on the project and impacts to public assistance programs will be provided to the CAO of the county when a project starts in their area. The Info Memo will detail the specifics of the pilot including start and stop dates, the amount and frequency of the payments, the pilot's funding source and an explanation as to how the income the pilot project provides is counted towards the household's benefits. These Info Memos will also be available via DocuShare should a GI recipient move to a new county, and that county needs to locate guidance on the pilot project. If the CAO learns of a GI pilot project operating in their county that they did not receive an Info Memo for, and for which no Info Memo is listed under Operations Information Memorandums in DocuShare, CAOs are to inform their Area Manager who will then notify BOP about the project.

NEXT STEPS

1. Review this Operations Memorandum with appropriate staff.
2. Direct all questions to your area manager.