



NEWS

From County Supervisor Paul Biane

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Supervisor Biane Calls Attention to Funding Shortfall

SAN BERNARDINO – State funding for mandated human service programs in San Bernardino County falls millions short of what is needed to adequately serve the growing number of clients seeking help in the midst of the ongoing economic recession, according to a report presented to the Board of Supervisor on Tuesday.

“That has to change at some point,” said Second District Supervisor Paul Biane, who requested the presentation. “Even in this state budget crisis, we can’t lose sight of the fact that we aren’t getting reimbursed for services we are mandated to provide.”

The report developed by the California State Association of Counties and the California Welfare Directors Association of California points out that state funding for mandated programs such as food stamps and CalWorks has remained stagnant since 2001. This has created an annual funding shortfall of about \$1 billion statewide and \$47.3 million in San Bernardino County alone.

The County Department of Human Services has dealt with funding shortfalls by reducing staffing and increasing caseloads, but the current economic crisis is making it more and more difficult to keep up. The number of residents seeking food stamps has increased 50% since last year. As a result of the increased demand and fewer caseworkers, those seeking aid often have to wait long periods as their applications are processed.

“Working families who never dreamed they would need public assistance need it now, and the county cannot keep up because the state hasn’t been providing adequate funding for the past eight years,” Biane said.

In addition to pointing out funding shortfalls, the report also noted that human service programs such as food stamps help stimulate local economic activity. According to the report, every \$1 in food stamps generates about \$1.32 in economic activity.

San Bernardino County Legislative Affairs Director Lance Larson will share the report's finding with the County's state and federal lawmakers to educate them about the need for increased funding.

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