**General Assistance: A Critical Program for Pennsylvania\***

**General Assistance is a small, targeted and temporary program.** People receive on average only $200/month, and eligibility is time-limited. People use General Assistance to cover basic needs, like toiletries, washing clothes, paying medical copays, or paying for rides to the grocery store or disability hearings. The money is spent in local communities, benefitting local businesses like grocery stores, laundromats, and transportation companies.

**General Assistance keeps people out of shelters.** Many use their benefit to contribute toward informal housing situations, like renting a room. This reduces demand on more costly alternatives like shelters.

**General Assistance typically functions as a loan.** Disability claims can take more than 24 months to process and people often have to apply multiple times. When they are approved for SSI, they repay the General Assistance they receive out of SSI funds.

* GA serves PA's most vulnerable populations, including people with disabilities, their caregivers, people in treatment for a substance use disorder, people fleeing domestic violence, and children being cared for by friends or neighbors;
* GA is a small, targeted, and temporary program;
* GA keeps people out of shelters; and
* GA typically functions as a loan -- the state is reimbursed for GA funds when people are approved for SSI.

**The General Assistance program** is a bridge to self-sufficiency.

To learn more about HB 33 [**click here**](https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billInfo/billInfo.cfm?sYear=2019&sInd=0&body=H&type=B&bn=33)**.**

\**Information source – Pennsylvania Health Access Network (PHAN)*

**Please oppose House Bill 33 which would eliminate General Assistance.**