

## GENERAL ASSISTANCE FUND

The ***General Assistance Fund*** accounts for all revenues and expenditures used to finance General Assistance. The primary revenue source for this Fund is property taxes.

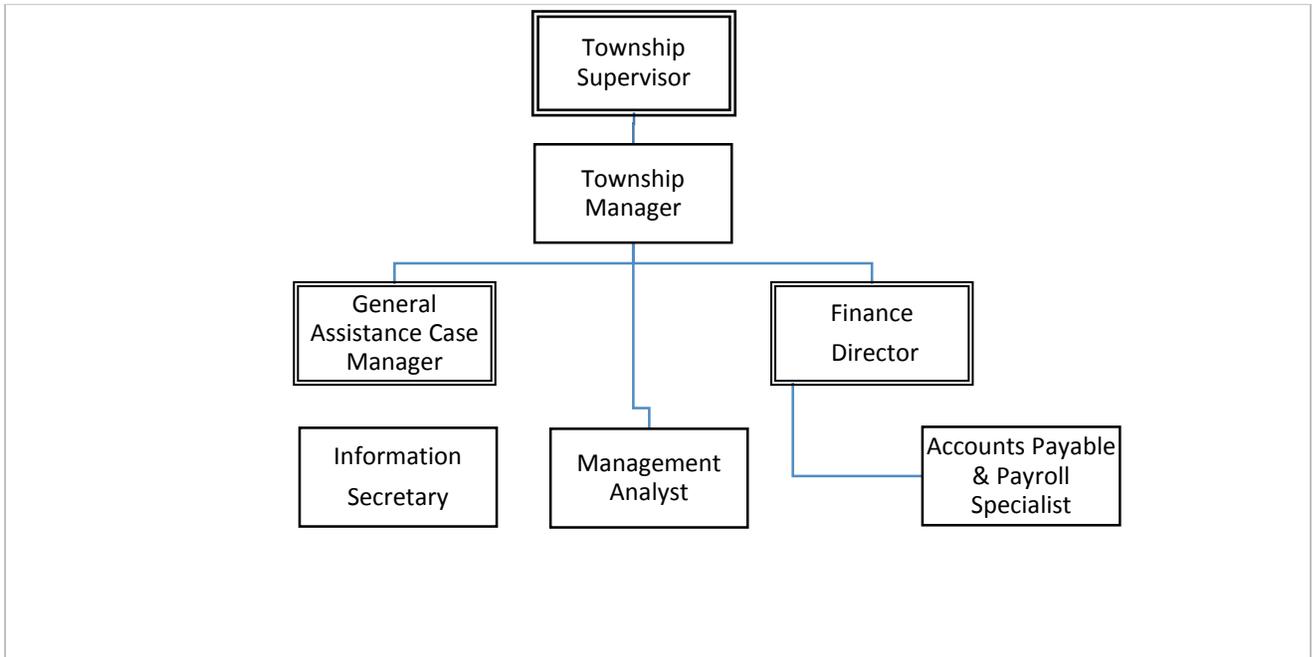
# PROGRAM SUMMARY and ORGANIZATIONAL CHART GENERAL ASSISTANCE

Administration:

100.000      GA Administration

Assistance:

100.610      Assistance



The Information Secretary reports directly to the Township Administration Administrative Associate. See General Government Organization Chart, P. 90.

Illinois Statute 60 ILCS 1/70-50 provides that the Township Supervisor shall administer General Assistance in the Township. The Township Supervisor, as an elected official, is not included in the employee computation.

**Total Number of  
Positions  
2.51**

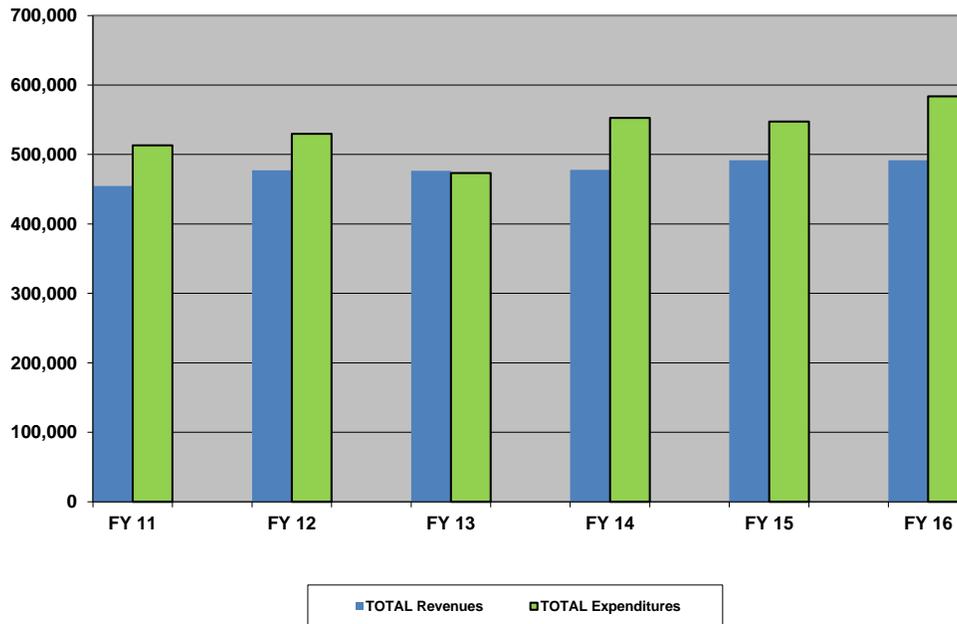
**FULL TIME EQUIVALENT POSITIONS  
GENERAL ASSISTANCE**

<b>Position Title</b>	<b>FY14 Actual</b>	<b>FY 15 Budget</b>	<b>FY15 Actual</b>	<b>FY 16 Budget</b>
Township Manager	.20	.20	.20	.20
General Assistance Case Manager	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Clerical Assistant	.45	.45	.45	.45
Finance Director	.20	.20	.20	.20
Accounts Payable & Payroll Specialist	.20	.20	.20	.20
Information Secretary	.15	.15	.15	.15
Part-time Information Secretary	.09	.09	.07	.07
Building Services Supervisor	.15	.15	.15	.15
Building Services Janitor	.15	.15	.15	.09
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.59</b>	<b>2.59</b>	<b>2.57</b>	<b>2.51</b>

**Total Salaries \$140,169**

**STATEMENT OF GENERAL ASSISTANCE FUND  
REVENUES BY SOURCE AND EXPENDITURES BY FUNCTION  
LAST FIVE YEARS**

	FY 11 Actual	FY 12 Actual	FY 13 Actual	FY 14 Actual	FY 15 Actual	FY 16 Budget
<b>Revenues:</b>						
Property Taxes	432,121	439,013	456,624	467,802	468,037	479,226
Other Taxes	20,082	24,388	10,080	8,176	11,638	7,000
Interest	1,987	345	1,819	1,848	-12,065	1,500
Other Revenue	<u>574</u>	<u>13,577</u>	<u>7,884</u>	<u>243</u>	<u>23,999</u>	<u>4,000</u>
<b>TOTAL Revenues</b>	<b>454,764</b>	<b>477,323</b>	<b>476,407</b>	<b>478,069</b>	<b>491,609</b>	<b>491,726</b>
<b>Expenditures:</b>						
Administration	185,531	180,243	182,440	228,525	224,857	230,771
General Assistance	327,620	349,583	286,861	322,270	320,390	350,000
Other	0	0	4,200	1,950	2,107	3,000
Capital Outlay	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>TOTAL Expenditures</b>	<b>513,151</b>	<b>529,827</b>	<b>473,501</b>	<b>552,745</b>	<b>547,354</b>	<b>583,771</b>
<b>Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenditures</b>	<b>(58,387)</b>	<b>(52,504)</b>	<b>2,906</b>	<b>(74,676)</b>	<b>(55,745)</b>	<b>(92,045)</b>
<b>Fund Balances, Beginning 4/1</b>	<b>523,539</b>	<b>465,152</b>	<b>412,648</b>	<b>415,554</b>	<b>340,878</b>	<b>285,133</b>
<b>Fund Balances, Ending 3/31</b>	<b>465,152</b>	<b>412,648</b>	<b>415,554</b>	<b>340,878</b>	<b>285,133</b>	<b>193,088</b>
<b>Total Net Increase (Decrease) in Fund Balance</b>	<b>(58,387)</b>	<b>(52,504)</b>	<b>2,906</b>	<b>(74,676)</b>	<b>(55,745)</b>	<b>(92,045)</b>



# **GENERAL ASSISTANCE FUND BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of General Assistance (GA) is to provide financial assistance to Oak Park resident adults who are unemployed, applying for the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability benefits or otherwise exempt from seeking employment, or with income and assets below certain levels in accordance with the Township Supervisors of Illinois General Assistance Handbook, and to provide referrals and information regarding additional assistance programs.

## **SERVICES**

General Assistance is a locally funded and administered welfare program. Unemployed adults seeking employment, exempt from seeking employment, or applying for SSI may be eligible for General Assistance. Applicants must meet income and asset guidelines and not be eligible for any other government sponsored assistance. For example, adults with minor children are eligible for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and are referred to the Illinois Department of Human Services.

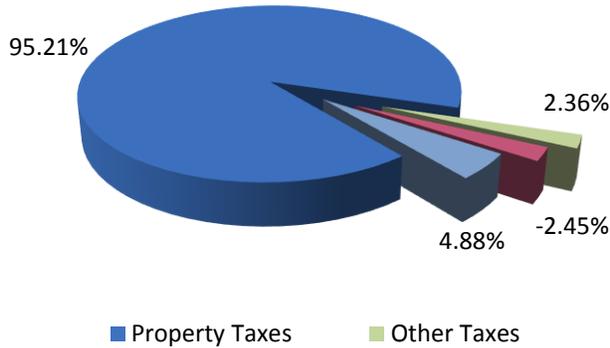
SSI is a federal assistance program administered by the Social Security Administration for the aged, blind and disabled. Individuals applying for SSI may receive General Assistance while their application is being processed. Payments received by SSI applicants during the processing period are referred to as Interim Assistance. The Social Security Administration reimburses the Township for the Interim Assistance provided to clients who are awarded SSI.

While receiving General Assistance, individuals must adhere to program guidelines. Guidelines include actively seeking employment, reporting to the GA Case Manager in a timely manner, maintaining residency in Oak Park, participating in any required Community Work Program, or applying for SSI, and following up on any social service referrals.

## **REVENUE**

Revenue for General Assistance includes funds from property taxes, tax increment financing (TIF) district distributions, interest and SSI reimbursement. These revenues fall into the revenue categories: Taxes, Use of Money and Property, Intergovernmental and Miscellaneous. An explanation of each of these categories may be found in the section titled Township Revenue Descriptions, Assumptions and Projections.

Chart 1  
GA FY 15 Revenue Distribution



The majority of revenue for General Assistance is from local property taxes. In FY 15, 95% of actual revenue was from local property taxes. Chart 1 to the left illustrates the distribution of revenue among the different revenue sources. The remaining revenue sources; Other Taxes (TIF district distributions), Interest and Intergovernmental revenue combine to equal 5% of the total revenue source. The program does not receive any revenue directly from the state.

It is difficult to project reimbursements for Interim Assistance. During FY 15 the Township received \$23,999 in reimbursements from SSI. In FY 14 the Township received \$243 in SSI reimbursements. Reimbursement amounts vary based on the number of GA clients with pending SSI benefits and the outcome of their cases. The reimbursements for the last five years are presented in the following table.

Fiscal Year	Reimbursement
2011	\$ 574
2012	\$ 13,577
2013	\$ 7,884
2014	\$ 243
2015	\$ 23,999

**EXPENDITURES**

Expenditures for General Assistance are divided into three program areas: Administration, Assistance and Other Charges. Administration includes personnel and operating costs. Assistance includes financial assistance to eligible Oak Park residents. Other charges include funding for a Job Readiness program for general assistance clients through Prevail, formerly known as Walk-In Ministry, to help them gain the skills to search for employment.

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

A. **GOAL:** Manage program resources responsibly to ensure financial stability of the program.

Objectives:

1. Observe and implement program guidelines for eligibility and exercise diligence regarding enforcement of program requirements.
2. Develop financial forecasting tools for use in the budgeting process.
3. Track client statistics using database and reporting tools in Visual GA software.
4. Explore opportunities to shorten the wait time for SSI approval and reimbursement.

- B. **GOAL:** Foster development of a network of supportive agencies and services for the benefit of the program participants.

Objectives:

1. Network with professional organizations in the community that provide services and programs to benefit program participants.
2. Work with program participants to encourage and enable them to take advantage of community resources.

- C. **GOAL:** Ensure program quality through assessment of needs, resource allocation and utilization of program outcomes measures.

Objectives:

1. Assess community needs, identify program outcome measures and evaluate program efficiencies and effectiveness.
2. Define and implement policies and procedures to provide guidance and financial assistance to clients.
3. Develop programs to assist clients with job and life skills.

- D. **GOAL:** Create an awareness of assistance programs to ensure those in need know of available programs and services.

Objectives:

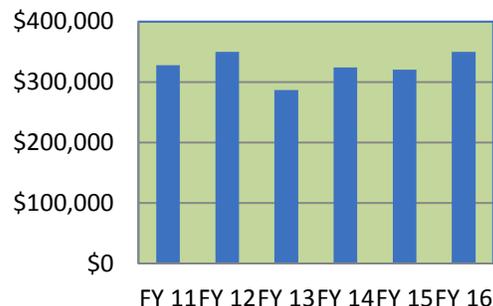
1. Educate residents about programs for the financially struggling members of the community.
2. Serve as an information and referral point for community services.
3. Improve the GA information available on the Township's website.

**PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

Assistance

The demand for General Assistance Services fluctuates. After several years of increases in the client population, demand had decreased and leveled off in the past two years. Generally, expenditures for assistance payments have closely tracked the fluctuations in client population. Actual expenditures increased from \$327,620 in FY 11 to \$349,583 in FY 12, which was a 7% increase, decreased by \$62,722 or 17% to \$286,861 in FY 13, increased to \$322,270 or by 12% in FY 14, and then slightly decreased by \$1,880 or 0.6% in FY 15 to \$320,390. Chart 2 shows the total dollar value of General Assistance grants for each of the past five years as well as projected expenditures for FY 16. Demand for FY 13 was lower because of changes to

**Chart 2  
GA Expenditures  
Assistance**



Residency Guidelines, and other steps taken to verify eligibility on a more regular basis. An increase in the rate structure of GA benefits was reviewed and adopted by the Board of Trustees at its March 26, 2013 meeting with a flat payment of up to \$200 for clients and up to \$250 for shelter payments. As a result, benefit amounts increased in FY 14. Assistance is budgeted in FY 16 to be at a higher expenditure level from FY 15.

In addition to the public information efforts to all households in Oak Park Township, the Township has provided flyers to the Oak Park and River Forest Food Pantry about services available through General Assistance.

### Community Outreach

General Assistance clients receive services from agencies outside the Township. The GA Team meets with representatives of these agencies at least on an annual basis. In FY 15, in addition to fostering ongoing partnerships with Housing Forward (formerly PADS), Prevail (formerly Walk-in Ministries), and the Oak Park Food Pantry, the GA Team met with staff at the Oak Park Public Library, the West Cook YMCA, and Housing Forward to discuss client needs and opportunities for cross referrals (Goal B.1). In addition to these meetings, the GA Team will work with Township partners to develop specific programs to meet client needs beyond financial assistance (Goal C.3.)

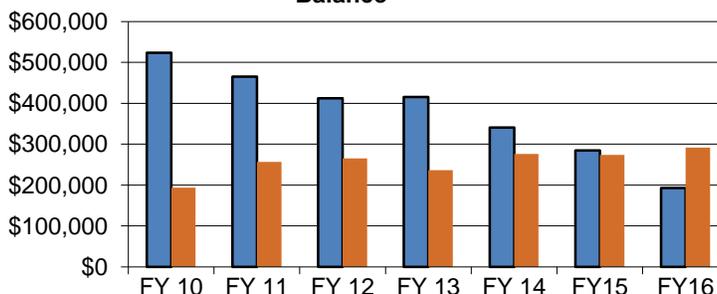
The GA Team assists with the administration of other community programs outside the Township such as NICOR (Northern Illinois Gas Corporation) Gas Sharing and the Holiday Food and Gift Basket program. Finally, a number of clients are referred to other services in the community (Goal B.2, Goal D.1)

### Fund Balance

Fluctuation in demand for the program makes managing the fund balance challenging. The fund balance is the difference between the fund assets and fund liabilities. The Township Board Policy on fund balance is to maintain a General Assistance fund balance equal to a minimum of four months of the current year’s budgeted fund expenditures, with a targeted maximum of six months of the current year’s budgeted expenditures.

The Township Board manages the fund balance by adjusting the property tax levy either up or down depending on the fund balance at the end of the fiscal year. The property tax levy is filed on an annual basis in December each year. The property tax levy funds the subsequent fiscal year. Chart 3 to the right shows that the fund balance at the end of FY 10 was higher than the targeted fund

**Chart 3  
GA Fund Balance and Targeted Maximum Fund Balance**



balance. As a result, the Township Board adjusted the property tax levies in subsequent years, attempting to reduce the fund balance and maintain a level of expenditures to bring the fund balance to an amount closer to the target range.

#### Ongoing Operations

- Monitoring General Assistance rates for food and shelter to meet expected client needs (Goal A.1)
  - Continued reporting of monthly General Assistance statistics and shared data with other local governments in Oak Park (Goal A.3)
  - Renewed a contract agreement with Prevail to provide selected GA clients with job readiness preparation classes and assist them with a customized comprehensive job search strategy (Goal C.2, C.2, C.3)
  - Coordinating enrollment of shelter providers to receive General Assistance benefits via direct deposit to reduce check misplacement and improve payment security (Goal C.1)
  - Coordinated third annual job readiness workshop at the Oak Park Public Library and publicized a job fair at Triton College to assist clients with preparing for a job fair and addressing gaps in work experience (Goal B.1, B.2)
  - Monthly verification of SSI client status with local and state agency offices (Goal A.4)
  - Administered second annual redetermination of client eligibility of GA through updating of client documents (Goal A.1)
  - Working with Salvation Army and Prevail to transfer the Gas Sharing application process to Prevail (Goal B.1)
  - Partnering with new staff at the YMCA and Housing Forward in regards to services and housing for individuals experiencing homelessness (Goal B.1)
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## GENERAL ASSISTANCE PERFORMANCE MEASURES

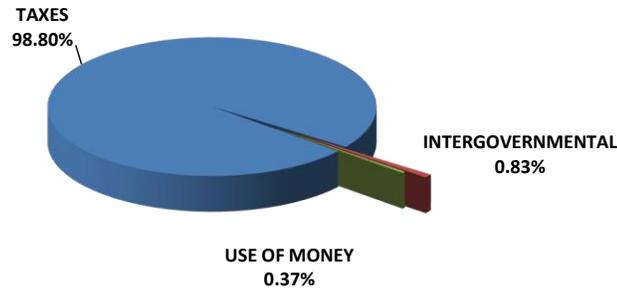
General Assistance Goals and Objectives can be found in the Budget Highlights section immediately preceding this chart. Township Goals can be found in the Introduction Section, FY 16 Oak Park Township Policy Statements, Mission, Goals and Objectives, pp. 28-31.

Performance Measure	General Assistance Goal/Objective	Township Goal	FY 14 Actual	FY 15 Budget	FY 15 Est. Actual	FY 16 Budget
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<b>Outputs:</b>						
# of active cases - GA & Social Security Disability (per month – unduplicated)	A, C	Service Quality I B Community Needs II A	150	150	157	160
# of clients served via phone calls/appointments/walk-ins/other*	A, B, C	Community Needs II A Communications IV B	2,400	2,400	2,588	2,500
# of clients referred to other agencies	B, C, D	Service Quality I C Communications IV B	291	400	230	250
* internet, referrals from other agencies						

**ANTICIPATED REVENUE TO BE RECEIVED IN FY 16  
GENERAL ASSISTANCE FUND**

		FY 14	FY 15	FY 15	FY 16
		Actual	Budget	Estimated Actual	Budget
<b>General Assistance Revenue - 600-000.000</b>					
<b>TAXES</b>					
304.000	Property Taxes	467,802	470,452	468,037	479,226
331.000	Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	<u>8,176</u>	<u>7,000</u>	<u>11,638</u>	<u>7,000</u>
	<b>TOTAL TAXES</b>	<b>475,978</b>	<b>477,452</b>	<b>479,675</b>	<b>486,226</b>
<b>USE OF MONEY AND PROPERTY</b>					
320.000	Interest	<u>1,849</u>	<u>1,800</u>	<u>1,332</u>	<u>1,500</u>
	<b>TOTAL USE OF MONEY AND PROPERTY</b>	<b>1,849</b>	<b>1,800</b>	<b>1,332</b>	<b>1,500</b>
<b>INTERGOVERNMENTAL</b>					
<b>State and Federal</b>					
334.001	Supplemental Security Income Reimbursement	<u>243</u>	<u>4,000</u>	<u>23,999</u>	<u>4,000</u>
	<b>TOTAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>23,999</b>	<b>4,000</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>					
325.000	Miscellaneous	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	<b>TOTAL MISCELLANEOUS</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>OTHER REVENUE</b>					
389.000	Extraordinary Gain (Loss)	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(13,396)</u>	<u>0</u>
	<b>TOTAL OTHER</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(13,396)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL GENERAL ASSISTANCE REVENUE</b>		<b>478,070</b>	<b>483,252</b>	<b>491,610</b>	<b>491,726</b>

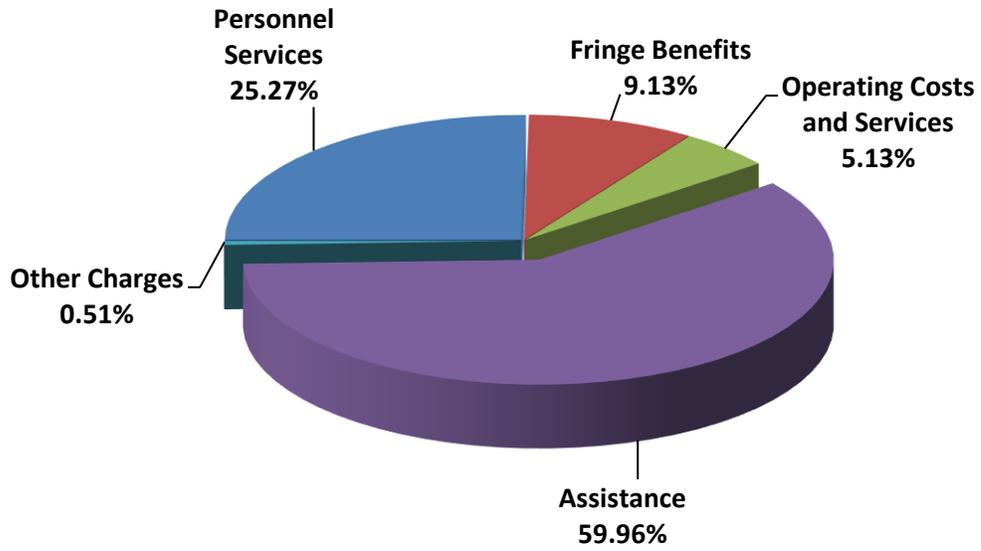


**TOTAL  
\$491,726**

**GENERAL ASSISTANCE FUND  
BUDGET FY 16**

		FY 14	FY 15	FY 15	FY 16
		Actual	Budget	Estimated	Budget
				Actual	
<b>GENERAL ASSISTANCE 600</b>					
<b>100.000</b>	<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>				
	<b>Personnel Services</b>				
400.100	Employee Salaries	133,405	136,293	136,002	140,169
400.500	Elected Official Salary	<u>7,089</u>	<u>7,236</u>	<u>7,222</u>	<u>7,330</u>
	<b>TOTAL Personnel Services</b>	<b>140,494</b>	<b>143,529</b>	<b>143,224</b>	<b>147,499</b>
	<b>Fringe Benefits</b>				
500.000	FICA Expense	10,051	10,980	10,232	10,763
510.000	Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IM	11,958	12,205	12,501	12,995
550.000	Health and Life Insurance	<u>38,113</u>	<u>27,950</u>	<u>28,679</u>	<u>29,552</u>
	<b>TOTAL Fringe Benefits</b>	<b>60,122</b>	<b>51,135</b>	<b>51,412</b>	<b>53,310</b>
	<b>Operating Costs and Services</b>				
600.101	Banking Services	600	600	600	600
600.102	Audit	1,562	1,606	1,394	1,464
600.126	Non-capital Furniture, Equipment & M	7,420	7,000	8,483	7,100
600.128	Office Supplies	1,813	2,100	1,206	1,750
600.137	Duplication and Printing	1,763	2,100	1,730	1,850
600.163	Insurance	4,225	5,227	5,830	6,100
600.172	Legal	1,078	1,200	1,046	1,200
600.205	Postage, Delivery and Messenger Servi	1,480	1,500	1,416	1,650
600.244	Telephone	3,163	3,200	2,893	3,000
600.255	Utilities	3,787	3,800	4,129	3,500
600.257	Professional Development	125	1,000	405	750
600.262	Workers Compensation	418	459	453	498
600.300	Miscellaneous	<u>477</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>636</u>	<u>500</u>
	<b>TOTAL Operating Costs and Services</b>	<b>27,909</b>	<b>30,292</b>	<b>30,221</b>	<b>29,962</b>
	<b>TOTAL Administration</b>	<b>228,525</b>	<b>224,956</b>	<b>224,857</b>	<b>230,771</b>
<b>100.610</b>	<b>ASSISTANCE</b>				
610.000	General Assistance	322,270	325,000	320,390	350,000
	<b>TOTAL Assistance</b>	<b>322,270</b>	<b>325,000</b>	<b>320,390</b>	<b>350,000</b>
<b>600.950</b>	<b>GA OTHER CHARGES</b>				
954.000	Job Readiness	1,950	4,000	2,107	3,000
	<b>TOTAL GA Other Charges</b>	<b>1,950</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>2,107</b>	<b>3,000</b>
	<b>TOTAL GENERAL ASSISTANCE</b>	<b>552,745</b>	<b>553,956</b>	<b>547,354</b>	<b>583,771</b>

**GENERAL ASSISTANCE FUND  
SUMMARY BY EXPENDITURE CATEGORY**



**TOTAL  
\$583,771**