



Lift more than 1 million Californians out of poverty: Prioritize SSI/SSP in the 2016-17 Budget

Californians for SSI (CA4SSI) is a statewide coalition of over 200 organizations across the aging, disability rights, housing and homeless, anti-hunger and anti-poverty sectors. CA4SSI seeks to ensure that blind, aged and people living with disabilities living on SSI/SSP obtain adequate support to lead their lives with dignity. Sadly, the Governor's budget is silent on the plight of SSI recipients.

We ask the Legislature to prioritize SSI/SSP funding in the 2016-17 budget.

The Magnitude of Cuts to SSI/SSP

- For decades California periodically provided an annual SSI/SSP COLA until it was repealed in 2009.
- In addition, since 2009 the state-funded SSP portion of grants to individuals has been cut from \$233 a month to the federal minimum of \$156 a month today.
- Since January, 2009 SSP grants for couples declined from \$568 a month to \$396.20 today.

The SSI/SSP caseload has climbed by nearly 72,000 since 2007, yet the Administration spends just \$2.5 billion – a \$1.4 billion cut from 2007-8 – after adjusting for inflation according to the California Budget & Policy Center.

- During this period of cuts, the cost of living has risen by roughly 14 percent.

SSI/SSP Cuts Pushed 1 Million People into Poverty

In January 2009 the SSI/SSP grant of \$907 per month was worth 100.5 percent of the federal poverty level for a single individual.

- Today SSI/SSP grants to individuals are worth just 90.7 percent of the federal poverty level.
- If the grant cuts had not occurred and the COLAs applied each year, SSI/SSP grants to individuals would be worth 108 percent of the federal poverty level, according to CBPC.

The High Cost of Low SSI/SSP Grants

The grant cuts and the COLA repeal have pushed more than 1 million Californians who are blind, aged or living with disabilities into poverty, a significant reason why, according to the Census Bureau's Supplemental Poverty Measure, we have the highest poverty rate of any state.

- SSI/SSP recipients increasingly rely on emergency food, shelter, and health providers. **Many are becoming homeless and going hungry, requiring expensive food, medical and nursing home services that would not be needed if grants covered basic needs.**
- Women are the majority of SSI/SSP recipients.
- California is the only state where SSI/SSP recipients are barred from receiving food stamps.

Restore the SSI/SSP Grant Cuts and the COLA

No person on SSI/SSP should be living in poverty or even at the Supplemental Poverty Level.

CA4SSI is requesting that the Legislature restore both the SSP grant cuts and the cost of living adjustment.