



## RIVER FOREST TOWNSHIP

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April 7, 2021

To: River Forest Township Board of Trustees

Avis Rudner and I are pleased to present you with our Fiscal Year 2021 Annual Report of activities and services related to the General Assistance Program. This includes the period April 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021.

### ***What is General Assistance?***

General Assistance (GA) is an Illinois statute-mandated Township program that provides financial assistance to unemployed or disabled River Forest residents in accordance with the Illinois Department of Human Services guidelines. Applicants must meet income and asset guidelines and cannot be eligible for other government-sponsored income assistance. General Assistance is intended to be a temporary financial assistance program, to help “bridge the gap” while a recipient is searching for employment or awaiting SSI/disability benefits.

River Forest Township offers a monthly flat grant for General Assistance. The grant can be paid directly to the GA client, to a landlord and/or to a utility. River Forest Township adheres to the guidelines provided by the Townships of Illinois (TOI) in the General Assistance Handbook.

GA clients, GA applicants and others in financial need also receive services including case management, job search guidance, help with Social Security/Disability eligibility, the Holiday Food and Gift Basket Program, and social service agency referrals, such as Housing Forward, Beyond Hunger, Legal Aid Chicago, and LIHEAP.

### ***Transfer of GA Management to Oak Park Township***

River Forest Township has a steady stream of social service-related inquiries but typically very few GA clients. Avis Rudner, GA Administrator, went on leave starting in October 2020; we had no GA clients at that time. To ensure that River Forest Township could most quickly and effectively meet the needs of future GA applicants and clients, we temporarily transferred the management of GA applicants and clients to Oak Park Township.

OPT has a much larger GA client base and a full-time GA Administrator. This transfer of GA administration was done on a pilot basis until the end of FY2021. River Forest Township still handled social service inquiries unrelated to General Assistance.

We will evaluate this transfer at the beginning of FY2022, at which time a more permanent decision will be made. An intergovernmental agreement will be implemented if GA Administration stays with Oak Park Township. River Forest GA clients would continue to receive the flat GA grant set by the River Forest Township Supervisor.

River Forest Township will continue to handle social service inquiries unrelated to General Assistance.

### ***Services Delivered***

- FY2021 began with 1 River Forest GA client, whom we assisted in finding a better residential situation in Oak Park. That client then applied for GA in Oak Park and became an Oak Park Township client after June 1.
- No further GA clients were approved in FY2021.
- At least 5 residents were referred to social service agencies for assistance other than GA.
- Approximately 97 River Forest residents across 28 households participated in the Holiday Food and Gift Basket program. A little over half were children. Due to the pandemic, HFGB was 100% gift card-based in 2020; RF residents received \$6,230 in Target gift cards for both holidays combined. This change required more funds vs. 2019, when RF residents received \$1815 in Jewel gift cards at Thanksgiving and donated gifts at Christmas.

Sincerely,

Avis S. Rudner  
Administrator of Mental Health Services

Carla Sloan  
River Forest Township Supervisor