The Portland Observer



PHOTO BY WYNDE DYER/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Mohammad Bader of Multnomah County Aging and Disability talks with case manager Cheryl Sanders about how to identify clients who are most at risk for homelessness and suicide as a result of next month's cuts to the state's General Assistance and Medically Needy programs.

General Assistance Funds Dry Up

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state's termination of the Oregon Supplemental Income Program Medical - Medically Needy, This program, which provides free medicine for low-income medically needy individuals, will also disappear on Feb. 1.

Mohammad Bader, north and northeast Portland Area Manager trying to identify those clients who health." for Multnomah County Aging and will be most at risk for housing Disability Services, said 628 of the displacement to get them set up ministrator for the state Office of 9,721 clients served by his two offices on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Albina Avenue will be affected when the Medically Needy program ends.

"These are people with multiple and complicated illnesses with no access to pay for treatment," Bader said. "Our concern is that they will die."

Lauren Gill, one of Bader's case managers at the Albina ADS office, said she has two clients who are on a list for organ transplants. Before receiving new organs, transplant patients must show proof that they will be able to afford post-operative medication. Without the Medically unable to get their transplants. Oth- are devastating." ers will not be able to afford more than \$1,000 a month for HIV and AIDS treatment.

"I have some clients who are paranoid schizophrenics," Gill said. "With no counseling and no meds, they would run out into traffic and kill themselves."

people should try to get medication samples from pharmaceutical com- who has been with the Albina of-

www.needymeds.com.

sources to offer clients the best support network in this time of crisystem in anticipation of a high make the difference between havdevelop a human resources directory for clients. Caseworkers are with emergency housing programs

Our concern is that they will die. - Mohammad Bader, north and northeast Portland Area Manager for Multnomah County Aging and Disability Services

or in shelters. So far, Bader's staff more complicated.' has identified 96 people who are at high risk for homelessness.

'We're trying to establish protocols and figure out what our tri- check each month, Centeno will age resources are," Bader said. "It's horrible because these are people's Needy program, her clients will be lives we're dealing with. These cuts

Not only does Bader have his live with them. clients to worry about, but also his staff. His offices will loose 11 caseworkers by Feb. 1 and twice as many during the next round of cuts. she left eight years ago. She ran Bader said some members of his away to Oregon to escape the drug staff have requested for him to bring lifestyle that left her with Hepatitis a therapist to work to help them deal Bader said some medically needy with the upcoming layoffs.

Case manager Chervl Sanders.

she and her coworkers know they He and his caseworkers are do- will loose their jobs, but their real ing their best to pool together re- concern is for the clients they help. We love to help these people that's why we work here," Sanders sis. They have modified their phone said. "For our clients, budget cuts

caller volume and are working to ing a roof over their head and being homeless. We know we'll loose our jobs, but at least we have our

> Jim Edge, acting assistant ad-Medical Assistance Programs, said even if Measure 28 passes on Jan. 28, General Assistance would not be restored. However, the measure may enable legislators to temporarily restore some of the Medically Needy program.

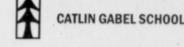
"The measure will restore funds for the next biennium, but not for the next 24 months," he said. "Things are definitely going to get

The complications for Lana Centeno are only about to begin. Without her General Assistance be faced with eviction. Unlike many of Oregon's disabled, she has a family support network in California who will allow her to

Centeno will have to sell all her belongings and interrupt her medical treatment to return to the state C. She sobered up, stayed clean and left everything behind her in San Jose. Now she will go back.

"It's really just one day at a time panies or by logging on to fice of ADS for two years, said that from here on out," Centeno said.

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Interested Prospers may obtain a copy of the RFP documents at the Housing Authority of Portland, 8910 N Woolsey, Portland, Oregon 97203, 8:30 AM through 4:30 PM.

Proposals are due not later than 4:00 PM PST, March 11, 2003.

Questions regarding this project should be directed to H. David Walter, Capital Improvements Manager for the Housing Authority of Portland, (503) 735-4210 or Ron Coulam at (503) 735-4214

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Application materials and formal job announcements are available at: www.multcojobs.org; in person at 1120 SW Fifth Avenue, 1st Floor Lobby; or by mailing a selfaddressed stamped envelope requesting application forms to: Multnomah County Human Resources Division, PO Box 14700, Portland OR, 97293-0700. Assisted access to Multnomah County job information and web site is available at Multnomah County Libraries.

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