

March 20, 2020

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**PROGRAM MANAGER LETTER**

This Program Manager Letter sets forth the details of temporary changes to Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI) procedures necessitated by the current state of emergency in California surrounding COVID-19 (coronavirus) and efforts to contain its spread.



**KIM JOHNSON**  
DIRECTOR

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**GAVIN NEWSOM**  
GOVERNOR

March 20, 2020

**PROGRAM MANAGER LETTER**

**TO:** ALL COUNTY CASH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR IMMIGRANTS (CAPI) PROGRAM MANAGERS

**SUBJECT:** TEMPORARY CHANGES TO CASH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR IMMIGRANTS (CAPI) PROCEDURES DUE TO COVID-19 EMERGENCY

**REFERENCE:** [EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. N-29-20](#);  
[WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE \(WIC\) §§18938\(b\), 18939\(a\)](#);  
MANUAL OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (MPP)  
§§30-009.224, 49-010.13, 49-015, 49-045.1;  
[ALL COUNTY LETTER \(ACL\) NO. 17-31](#).

This Program Manager Letter announces temporary changes to the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI) to allow efficient continuation of approval of CAPI applications and maintenance of recipients' CAPI benefits during the current COVID-19 (coronavirus) emergency in the State of California.

**Background**

On March 4, 2020, Governor Newsom declared a state of emergency in the State of California as a result of the threat to public health resulting from the spread of COVID-19. Some of California's most vulnerable citizens, including the aged and disabled, are among those most susceptible to infection by this deadly virus. Accordingly, on March 18, 2020, the Governor signed [Executive Order No. N-29-20](#), temporarily waiving redeterminations in several state social services programs, including CAPI.

## **Temporary Waiver of CAPI Face-to-Face Interview**

Until further notice, the face-to-face interview requirement, described in [All County Letter \(ACL\) No. 17-31](#), is waived for CAPI initial applicants.

### *CAPI application procedures*

Counties and CAPI consortia shall accept CAPI applications via mail and telephone. For telephone applications, county staff shall read each question on the CAPI Statement of Facts ([SOC 814](#)) and the CAPI Statement of Household Expenses and Contributions ([SOC 453](#)) to the applicant in their preferred language (with the aid of interpretation services, as necessary) and shall record the answers provided. In the case of CAPI applications received by mail, the county shall resolve any discrepancies in information provided, and shall obtain any required information missing from CAPI application forms by contacting the applicant by telephone. During phone conversations with applicants, the county or consortium shall provide any necessary explanations of the application process (including explanations of available benefits and immigration documents that must be submitted) and shall generally assist the applicant in qualifying for CAPI benefits. (Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) §49-015.22).

As an alternative to completing CAPI applications by telephone, counties and CAPI consortia shall have the option of completing the application process via teleconferencing technology (Skype, Facetime, etc.) that is available to and usable by both the county and the applicant.

### *Signatures*

At the time that a county accepts a telephonic CAPI application, the county shall request the applicant's permission to sign the application as proxy for the applicant (MPP §30-009.224), for the purpose of preserving the protected application date. Such permission, if granted, extends to all required forms associated with the CAPI application other than [SSP 14](#), which SSA will accept only if signed by the claimant. As described below, the SSP 14 must be sent to the counties by mail.

When a county worker receives permission from an applicant to sign the application on his or her behalf, the county should make a notation in the case file indicating that such permission was verbally granted to the county. If the applicant refuses to grant the county permission to sign the application on his or her behalf, the county must send the completed application forms to the applicant to sign and return to the county. In such cases, the protected application date will be the date on which the

county receives the signed application. To obtain proof of that date, counties should date stamp CAPI applications upon receipt.

Completed application forms, including Interim Assistance Reimbursement forms (SSP 14 and [SOC 455](#)) must be sent to the applicant by mail (or by email, if the applicant agrees) for the purpose of obtaining the applicant's signature and for the applicant to review for omissions or errors. The applicant must either mail the signed application forms or scan and email them to the county.

#### *Timing of CAPI application process*

CAPI regulations specify that "eligibility information must be verified **or** the applicant must sign the application during a face-to-face contact." (MPP §30-009.224). As the face-to-face interview requirement is waived until further notice, the county or CAPI consortium must take steps to verify information provided by the applicant. The county shall inform the applicant of any documents needed to assist with such verifications (*e.g.*, pay stubs, copies of leases, copies of rent checks, etc.).

To avoid unnecessary delay in approving CAPI benefits, once a county has taken a CAPI application via phone or video, the county shall promptly proceed to determining the applicant's eligibility for CAPI benefits (MPP §49-015.23) without waiting for receipt of signed forms or requested documentation.

#### **Extension of CAPI Redetermination Dates**

CDSS policy requires that redeterminations be conducted at least annually. ([Welfare and Institutions Code \(WIC\) §18938\(b\)](#); ACL No. 17-31). However, in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order No. N-29-20, the CAPI redetermination requirement is suspended for 90 days, through June 16, 2020. Counties and CAPI consortia are not required to conduct any CAPI redeterminations until that date has passed, and are not required to go back and conduct redeterminations for individuals whose redetermination period falls between March 18, 2020 and June 16, 2020.

#### **SSI/SSP Application Requirement for Qualified Aliens**

To qualify for initial and continuing eligibility for CAPI benefits, claimants who are qualified aliens (lawfully admitted permanent residents, refugees, asylees, etc.) must be denied SSI/SSP benefits solely based on their immigration status. ([WIC §18938\(a\)](#); MPP §49-010.13). Accordingly, counties must refer such claimants to a local SSA field office for the purpose of applying for SSI/SSP. (MPP §49-045.1; ACL No. 17-31). While SSA has temporarily closed its field offices to the public to

Program Manager Letter  
Page Four

prevent the spread of COVID-19, SSA staff continue to accept all SSI/SSP applications, including appeals, by telephone.

Counties and CAPI consortia must continue to require CAPI applicants and recipients who are qualified aliens to apply for SSI/SSP benefits, and should direct them to *telephone* their local field office for the purpose of applying for SSI/SSP. SSA has agreed to work with the counties to transmit SSI/SSP denial letters to counties via email in order to avoid undue delay in approval of CAPI benefits.

County program managers with questions regarding the contents of this Program Manager Letter should contact Aron Smith, Benefit Programs Unit Manager, California Department of Social Services Adult Programs Division at 916-651-1174 or [aron.smith@dss.ca.gov](mailto:aron.smith@dss.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

***Original Document Signed By***

DEBBI THOMSON  
Deputy Director  
Adult Programs Division