

March 30, 2020

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 20-29**

This ACL provides guidance to counties on the need for back-up providers to assist In-Home Supportive Services' (IHSS) recipients during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.



**KIM JOHNSON**  
DIRECTOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**  
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**GAVIN NEWSOM**  
GOVERNOR

March 30, 2020

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 20-29

TO: ALL COUNTY PROGRAM MANAGERS

FROM: DEBBI THOMSON, Deputy Director  
Adult Programs Division

SUBJECT: IN-HOME SUPPORTIVE SERVICES (IHSS) PROGRAM  
IMPLEMENTATION OF EMERGENCY BACK-UP PROVIDER  
SYSTEM DUE TO COVID-19

The purpose of this letter is to provide guidance to counties on the need for emergency back-up providers to assist In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) recipients during the COVID-19 crisis. All of the guidelines and policies set forth in this ACL are effective immediately upon release of this ACL and continue in force through June 30, 2020.

**IHSS BACK-UP PROVIDER SYSTEM**

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, a critical need for an emergency back-up system of IHSS providers to ensure that IHSS recipients continue to receive their services during pandemic conditions has been identified. As such, it is required that each county implement a system in which providers can be quickly assigned to IHSS recipients when their provider can no longer work due to COVID-19 or COVID-19-response-related impacts. Counties should work with the county Public Authority to implement this system. To support counties with these efforts, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) will augment IHSS administrative funding to support the cost of implementing and supporting an emergency back-up system. If a county chooses to have the public authority complete all or a portion of these activities, the county should provide an appropriate portion of this funding to the Public Authority. Additionally, IHSS providers referred by the county or Public Authority staff to provide emergency back-up services because of circumstances related to COVID-19 will be paid a differential of two dollars above the current county wage rate. The CDSS will issue claiming details in a forthcoming County Fiscal Letter.

Back-up systems should be focused on activities such as, but not limited to:

- Ensuring that phone calls requesting back-up providers are answered and/or returned as quickly as possible.
- Creating a system or network of providers that can be contacted and deployed in emergency situations to provide services to IHSS recipients whose providers are not able to work due to COVID-19 impacts.
- Creating business processes that support the timely assignment of back-up providers to IHSS recipient cases in CMIPS, ensuring that timesheets are issued, and that providers are paid at the appropriate pay rate.

### **CMIPS FUNCTIONALITY**

CMIPS has been modified to add an additional wage rate that includes a two-dollar differential for emergency back-up providers, for each county, except Los Angeles County, which already pays a wage differential to back-up providers through their Back-Up Attendant Program. This wage rate is meant to be used only for providers who are providing emergency back-up services for IHSS recipients whose provider cannot work due to COVID-19 impacts.

Counties should use the normal process in CMIPS to assign the emergency back-up provider to the IHSS recipient case. County staff should access the *Assign Case Provider* screen, complete the fields, and choose the new differential wage rate for emergency back-up providers. County staff should also utilize the “Begin Date” and “End Date” on the *Assign Case Provider* screen to identify the period the provider is being assigned to provide emergency back-up services to ensure providers are only eligible for the pay differential during the period of time in which they were approved to provide emergency back-up services due to COVID-19 impacts. County staff should be terminating the provider from the recipient case once the emergency back-up services are completed. If the IHSS recipient decides to hire the emergency back-up provider as a regular ongoing IHSS provider, county staff should create a new provider segment utilizing the standard county wage rate.

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[Questions](#) regarding the information transmitted in this ACL may be directed to the Adult Programs Division, CMIPS and Systems Enhancements Branch, at the following email address: [CMIPSI-Requests@dss.ca.gov](mailto:CMIPSI-Requests@dss.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

***Original Document Signed By***

DEBBI THOMSON  
Deputy Director  
Adult Programs Division