

June 26, 2023

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 23-56

This All County Letter (ACL) reminds County Welfare Departments (CWDs) of time-limited and ongoing guidance regarding California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Homeless Assistance (HA) flexibilities as the COVID-19 State of Emergency ended on February 28, 2023, and the Federal Public Health Emergency ended on May 11, 2023.



KIM JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

CALIFORNIA HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
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GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

June 26, 2023

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 23-56

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CALWORKS PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
ALL CALFRESH PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
ALL CONSORTIA PROJECT MANAGERS

SUBJECT: CALIFORNIA WORK OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO
KIDS (CALWORKS) HOMELESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: END
OF THE COVID-19 STATE AND FEDERAL DECLARED
EMERGENCY

REFERENCE: [ALL COUNTY LETTER \(ACL\) 16-119](#); [ACL 19-118](#); [ACL 17-57](#);
[ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE \(ACIN\) I-60-13](#);
[WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE SECTION 11450](#);
[MANUAL OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES \(MPP\) SECTION
44-302.2](#); [MPP SECTION 44-211.541](#);

The purpose of this All County Letter (ACL) is to notify County Welfare Departments (CWDs) of the end of the flexibilities allowed in the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Homeless Assistance (HA) program in response to the COVID-19 State and Federally Declared Emergency. This letter also summarizes existing HA policies and guidance as a result of prior changes to statute and regulations.

BACKGROUND

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Newsom proclaimed a State of Emergency on March 4, 2020. In response, guidance related to the HA program was provided outlining the existing flexibilities to HA program requirements, including the allowability for HA benefits to be provided under the disaster exception if homelessness was a direct and primary result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 State of Emergency ended on February 28, 2023, in California. The U.S. Department of Health

and Human Services (HHS) has announced that the [COVID-19 Public Health Emergency \(PHE\)](#) ended on May 11, 2023.

FLEXIBILITY ENDING WITH THE COVID-19 STATE OF EMERGENCY and PHE

- On October 17, 2022, Governor Newsom announced the COVID-19 [State of Emergency ends on February 28, 2023](#). HHS has announced that the [federal PHE will end on May 11, 2023](#). As such, effective May 12, 2023, families may no longer receive HA benefits under the disaster exception when *homelessness is a direct and primary result of the COVID-19 pandemic* ([MPP section 44-211.541\(a\)](#)) and counties may no longer issue temporary HA payments in a 16-day lump sum to families whose homelessness is due to COVID-19. Although families affected by COVID-19 are no longer eligible under the disaster exception, they may still be eligible for HA based on an exception due to a medically verified physical or mental illness. For example, if a parent is concerned that they have been infected and requests HA to isolate themselves from the rest of their family, HA should be granted based on an exception due to a medically verified physical or mental illness. For more information about HA exceptions, please see [MPP section 44-211.541](#).

EXISTING POLICIES CONTINUING POST-EMERGENCY

- HA applications are not required to be made in person or include a face-to-face interview; therefore, counties have the discretion to complete the CW 42 for the client and have them sign electronically to avoid having them come into the County Welfare Office. See [ACL 16-119](#) for more information about electronically conducted interviews.
- In lieu of providing required paper verifications, such as motel receipts or daily permanent housing searches, counties may accept sworn statements or verbal attestations from clients affirming that HA benefits were appropriately spent or housing searches were completed. For counties who do not have the capability to record a verbal attestation over the phone, they can enter a case journal entry stating the individual attested to the information provided per [ACL 16-119](#). Counties may also grant good cause for not providing paper verifications ([ACL 19-118](#)). Please note that these flexibilities do not apply to medical or immigration status verifications.
- When a county is unable to obtain a written or electronic signature on the CW 42, the county can record a verbal attestation in person or over the phone. For counties who do not have the capability to record a verbal attestation over the phone, they can enter a case journal entry stating the individual attested to the information provided per

[ACL 16-119](#). Verbal attestations and journal entries are only allowable until an integrated telephonic signature solution is implemented ([WIC section 11054](#)).

- Existing guidance requires counties to issue vendor/voucher payments when a finding of mismanagement has been determined. However, if there is no feasible way to issue a vendor/voucher payment, counties should consider issuing benefits directly on the client's EBT card per [MPP section 44-302.2](#), as clients remain entitled to their remaining days of benefits, despite a finding of mismanagement. For more information about mismanagement, please see [MPP section 44-211.517](#).

If you have any questions or need additional guidance regarding the information in this letter, contact Housing and Homelessness Division at (916) 651-5155 or at housing@dss.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By

HANNA AZEMATI
Deputy Director
Housing and Homelessness Division