

March 1, 2024

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 24-12

The purpose of this letter is to inform County Welfare Departments of the statutory changes made by [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 120 \(Chapter 43, Statutes of 2023\)](#) to the Home Safe program.



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DIRECTOR

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March 1, 2024

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 24-12

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: **NOTICE OF STATUTORY CHANGES FOR HOME SAFE
PROGRAM: IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSEMBLY BILL (AB) 120**

REFERENCE: [ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 120; WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE \(WIC\) SECTIONS 15770 AND 15771; WIC SECTIONS 8255 AND 8256; ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER \(ACWDL\) DATED OCTOBER 15, 2021](#)

The purpose of this All County Letter (ACL) is to provide guidance to all County Welfare Departments (CWDs) regarding the implementation of [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 120](#) (Chapter 43, Statutes of 2023). AB 120 includes several policy changes distinct to the Home Safe program which are outlined and summarized below.

AB 120 expands the definition of “adult protective services,” and adds the definition of “older adults,” to the Home Safe statute. AB 120 also extends the match requirement exemption to June 30, 2025.

I. HOME SAFE PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Home Safe program provides housing-related supportive services to older adults and dependent adults who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and who experience abuse, neglect, exploitation, or are unable to care for their own needs or interests as outlined in Welfare and Institutions Code ([WIC\) Sections 15770 and 15771](#). Examples of housing-related supportive services that may be provided by the program include, but are not limited to, housing-related case management, rental assistance and help with arrears, interim housing, assistance searching for and applying for new housing (housing navigation), landlord mediation, referrals to legal aid, and utility payments. Home Safe is state-funded and administered by eligible counties, tribal grantees, and regional partnerships. Current and prospective grantees should review [ACWDL dated October 15, 2021](#), for a complete overview of Home Safe program eligibility, services, and requirements.

II. CHANGES TO HOME SAFE PROGRAM BY AB 120

[AB 120](#) amends [WIC Sections 15770-15771](#) to make several changes to the Home Safe Program, which impact eligibility and other programmatic areas. These changes are effective July 1, 2023, and are enumerated below.

1. Expansion to the definition of “adult protective services”

Prior to AB 120, the definition of adult protective services (APS) was limited to the meaning set forth in [WIC Section 15610.10](#). AB 120 expands the definition of adult protective services to also include activities performed, in accordance with tribal law or custom, on behalf of older and dependent adults who have come to the attention of a Tribe, or tribal grantee, due to potential abuse or neglect. ([WIC Section 15770\(a\)](#)). This expanded definition clarifies how eligibility applies to tribes, or tribal entities or agencies, that do not participate in APS. Further, AB 120 adds [WIC Section 15771\(h\)](#), which specifies that the Home Safe Program does not require Tribes, or tribal entities or agencies, to establish an APS program.

2. Defining “older adults”

AB 120 added the term “older adult” to expand and clarify the use of the term “elder” in APS statute. Prior to AB 120, some Home Safe age-based eligibility criteria relied on the APS definition of “elder” as defined in [WIC Section 15750\(b\)\(2\)](#). The term “elder” is defined as any person residing in this state who is 60 years of age or older. The new term “older adult” encompasses the existing definition of “elder” but clarifies that for individuals receiving services from a Tribe, or tribal entity or agency, eligibility includes any person residing in this state within the age range established by tribal law or custom for tribal programs serving needy, and vulnerable older adults.” ([WIC Section 15770\(c\)](#)). Therefore, the addition of the term “older adults” provides some discretion to tribal grantees for determining age-based eligibility criteria in accordance with tribal law or custom.

3. Extension of the Match Required Funding Waiver

Prior to AB 120, the requirement that grantees provide dollar-for-dollar match funds was waived from July 1, 2021, until June 30, 2024. AB 120 extends this exemption period to June 30, 2025. ([WIC Section 15771\(e\)\(1\)\(B\)](#)). A county that receives state funds for Home Safe shall not be required to match any funding provided through that period.

III. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical Assistance (TA) is available for all grantees needing assistance planning, developing, or implementing a program and may be provided by CDSS or contracted TA providers. Examples of TA topics include:

- Understanding specific program eligibility rules
- Developing screening and prioritization processes for a specific program
- Creating a housing navigation and/or landlord engagement program
- Creating an effective homelessness prevention program
- Using data to understand and improve program outcomes
- Training your local workforce in skills needed to operate these programs
- Creating programs that are streamlined and administratively efficient
- Advancing equity on a systems level
- Improving collaboration with the local homeless response network

Please note that this list of potential TA topics is not exhaustive, as TA is available to assist with all aspects of program planning, development, operation, and assessment.

Requests for TA can be sent to housing@dss.ca.gov. Grantees are also encouraged to explore available TA through the [Change Well Project](#), which supports the creation and implementation of equitable and interconnected social service programs. The Change Well Project has a team dedicated to providing TA to grantees. Grantees can request tailored 1:1 support through the technical assistance request form on the [Change Well website](#).

In some instances, grantees may be required to utilize TA to grow and improve their funded programs, including as part of CDSS-identified program improvement needs, at CDSS' discretion. Grantees may utilize program funds to provide program-specific training in areas identified by the grantee or by CDSS to support continuous quality improvement.

CDSS is committed to providing responsive TA and communication with all grantees participating in CDSS housing and homelessness programs with the goal of building trust and making programs accessible and equitable.

IV. CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact the CDSS Housing and Homelessness Division at housing@dss.ca.gov with any questions regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By

HANNA AZEMATI
Deputy Director
Housing and Homelessness Division