

March 1, 2024

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 24-13

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 Housing and Disability Advocacy Program (HDAP).



KIM JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

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

March 1, 2024

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 24-13

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: **NOTICE OF STATUTORY CHANGES FOR HOUSING AND
DISABILITY ADVOCACY PROGRAM: IMPLEMENTATION OF
ASSEMBLY BILL (AB) 120**

REFERENCE: [WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE \(WIC\) SECTIONS 8255
AND 8256; WIC SECTIONS 18999.1 AND 18999.4;
ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER \(ACWDL\) DATED
SEPTEMBER 13, 2021; ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 120](#)

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 Housing and Disability Advocacy Program (HDAP) which are outlined and summarized below.

AB 120 extends the interim assistance reimbursement (IAR) waiver and match requirement exemption to June 30, 2025. Additionally, AB 120 requires that CDSS adopt regulations for HDAP by July 1, 2024.

I. HDAP PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The HDAP provides housing supports and disability benefit advocacy to people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness who are likely eligible for disability benefits. The HDAP requires that grantees offer outreach, case management, advocacy and housing assistance to all program participants as outlined in [Welfare and Institutions Code \(WIC\) Sections 18999-18999.6](#). Examples of allowable housing supports that may be provided by the program include, but are not limited to, direct financial assistance in the form of rental subsidies, rental arrearages, landlord mediation, landlord incentives, landlord outreach, and housing identification and search activities. Current and prospective grantees should review [ACWDL dated September 13, 2021](#), for a complete overview of HDAP eligibility, services, and requirements.

II. CHANGES TO HDAP BY AB 120

For the HDAP program, [AB 120](#) amends [WIC Sections 18999.1 and 18999.4](#). These changes are effective July 1, 2023, and are enumerated below.

1. 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 the exemption period to June 30, 2025. ([WIC Section 18999.1\(b\)\(2\)\(B\)](#)). A county or tribal grantee that receives state funds for HDAP in excess of the annual, ongoing appropriation shall not be required to match any funding provided through that period.

2. Adoption of HDAP Regulations

Prior to AB 120, the department was only required to develop regulations for HDAP on specific statutory changes by July 1, 2024. AB 120 requires that the department adopts regulations for all the statutory provisions of the program by July 1, 2024. ([WIC Section 18999.1\(d\)\(2\)](#)).

3. Extension of Interim Assistance Reimbursement (IAR) Waiver

Prior to AB 120, the requirement for HDAP grantees to seek Interim Assistance Reimbursement (IAR) from program participants was waived from July 1, 2021, until June 30, 2024. AB 120 extends that period for one additional year so that the requirement to seek reimbursement of funds is waived through June 30, 2025. ([WIC Section 18999.4\(c\)](#)). The IAR program allows counties to recover General Assistance/General Relief and other types of cash assistance paid out to indigent individuals for the purpose of purchasing essential items while their disability benefits application is pending a decision.

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 [Change Well Project](#), which supports the creation and implementation of equitable and interconnected social service programs. 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 Project website](#). Other resources include training modules through [a Digital Learning Platform](#), [monthly Learning Labs](#) on a variety of topics, a [Disability Benefits Helpline](#), and a monthly [“Ask An Attorney”](#) for disability benefits advocacy staff.

In some instances, grantees may be required to utilize TA to grow and improve their program, 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