

December 13, 2021

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this letter is to notify All County Welfare Directors of funds available for counties to establish, continue, and expand housing and homelessness assistance through the CalWORKs Housing Support Program (HSP). The [Budget Act of 2021](#) (Senate Bill 129, Chapter 69, Statutes of 2021) appropriated a total of \$285 million for HSP in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22. This letter announces a FY 2021-22 allocation for all fifty-eight (58) counties and the expansion of HSP eligibility to include homelessness prevention.



KIM JOHNSON  
DIRECTOR

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

December 13, 2021

LETTER TO ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTOR

**SUBJECT: CALWORKS HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAM NOTICE OF FUNDING AND EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY TO INCLUDE HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION**

REFERENCE: [SENATE BILL \(SB\) 129](#); [SB 80](#); [ASSEMBLY BILL \(AB\) 135](#); [WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE \(WIC\) 11330-11330.5](#); [8255](#); [8256](#); [GOVERNMENT CODE \(GOV\) 8899.50](#); [ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTOR LETTER \(ACWDL\) DATED JULY 19, 2021](#); [ACWDL DATED MAY 13, 2021](#); [ACWDL DATED AUGUST 2, 2018](#); [ACWDL DATED MAY 26, 2016](#); [ALL COUNTY LETTER \(ACL\) 19-114](#); [COUNTY FISCAL LETTER \(CFL\) 21/22-26](#); [CFL 21/22-05](#); [CFL 20/21-34](#)

The purpose of this letter is to notify All County Welfare Directors of funds available for counties to establish, continue, and expand housing and homelessness assistance through the CalWORKs Housing Support Program (HSP). This letter also summarizes recent statutory changes enacted through [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 135 \(Chapter 85, Statutes of 2021\)](#), outlines continuing HSP requirements and guidance, and provides new guidance on the expansion of program eligibility to include homelessness prevention.

The [Budget Act of 2021](#) (Senate Bill 129, Chapter 69, Statutes of 2021) appropriated \$285 million for HSP, including the annual, ongoing appropriation of \$95 million available for expenditure July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023, as well as a one-time appropriation of \$190 million available for expenditure July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2024. This letter announces availability of FY 2021-22 allocations for all fifty-eight (58) counties. These allocations include need-based, non-competitive allocations in addition to the Round 1 planning allocations for continuing counties as described below.

## **I. PROGRAM BACKGROUND**

The CalWORKs Housing Support Program (HSP), established by [Senate Bill \(SB\) 855 \(Chapter 29, Statutes of 2014\)](#), is intended to foster housing stability for families experiencing or at-risk of homelessness in the CalWORKs program. Per [Welfare and Institutions Code \(WIC\) Section 11330.5\(c\)](#), The HSP funding must be used to support projects that follow evidence-based housing interventions, including [homelessness prevention services](#) and/or the [core components of rapid rehousing](#). Further, [WIC Section 8256](#) requires that all state-funded housing programs, including HSP, operate in accordance with the core components of Housing First as enumerated in [WIC Section 8255](#) and further outlined in [All County Letter \(ACL\) 19-114](#).

Attachment One provides additional information on HSP requirements and core components. **Counties or staff new to the program are encouraged to review this letter, [All County Welfare Directors Letter \(ACWDL\) dated May 13, 2021](#), and the [HSP website](#) for current HSP guidance and additional resources.**

## **II. FY 2021-22 BUDGET UPDATES**

The [Budget Act of 2021 \(SB 129\)](#) appropriated \$285 million for HSP, including the annual, ongoing appropriation of \$95.0 million as well as a one-time appropriation of \$190.0 million.

CDSS will utilize five percent of the funds to administer and implement the program, ensuring that participating counties are provided technical assistance and support.

Additionally, continuing counties may also continue to spend any unspent funds allocated in FY 2020-21 via [County Fiscal Letter \(CFL\) 20/21-34](#) through June 30, 2022.

### **A. FY 2021-22 Allocations**

This letter announces the statewide availability of \$270.75 million in FY 2021-22 allocations, out of the \$285 million, for all fifty-eight (58) counties based on funding methodologies described below. Refer to Attachment Four for the allocation table for total FY 2021-22 allocations.

#### **1. Instructions for Accepting Funds**

Counties wishing to accept all or a portion of the FY `2021-22 allocation amount listed in Attachment Four shall review, sign, and return the Director's Certification in Attachment Five. Counties choosing to decline their total FY 2021-22 allocation must also submit a signed certification. Groups of counties wishing to propose a regional HSP should consult the guidelines in Attachment Six. Completed certifications should be sent to [housing@dss.ca.gov](mailto:housing@dss.ca.gov).

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CDSS encourages review and acceptance of funds as soon as possible. **Director's Certification must be submitted by January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022** to receive funds. If a county is declining an allocation, a Director's Certification should still be submitted indicating that funds are being declined.

Funds that are not accepted on or before January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022 will be allocated to counties that indicate they can accept additional funds beyond the amounts listed in Attachment Four, as indicated in the Director's Certification in Attachment Five, and consistent with the methodology described below.

## 2. FY 2021-22 Allocation Methodology

### *Round 1 Funding*

For all continuing counties, an initial planning allocation was made available in [CFL 21/22-05](#) and is included in the total FY 2021-22 allocations in Attachment Four based on:

- A base allocation equal to the FY 2020-21 base funding allocation, as specified in [County Fiscal Letter \(CFL\) No. 20/21-01](#) and
- A performance allocation for each benchmark that the county meets standard or strong performance in FY 2019-20, as described in [All County Welfare Directors Letter \(ACWDL\) dated May 13, 2021](#).

### *Noncompetitive Allocations*

For all fifty-eight (58) counties an additional Noncompetitive allocation is distributed based on need. The methodology includes the following, in order of weighted importance:

- the percent of the statewide total of families experiencing homelessness living in the county (2020 Homelessness Point in Time Count estimate);
- the percent of the statewide CalWORKs caseload data (CA 237 CW Jan – Dec. 2019); and
- the percent of the statewide total of households with severe rent/mortgage cost burden living in the county (i.e., household income less than 50 percent area median income and paying more than 50 percent of income toward rent or mortgage).

A funding floor equal to \$250,000 or the FY 2020-21 allocation, whichever was greater, was applied to the FY 2021-22 allocations for all 58 counties. Additional funds for prior performance disputes per guidance released in [ACWDL dated May 13, 2021](#) were also allotted to final FY 2021-22 allocations.

## 3. Allocation Claiming and Fiscal Information

A County Fiscal Letter (CFL) for accepted total FY 2021-22 allocations will be released shortly after close of applications. Claiming instructions for HSP funds are included in

Attachment Three.

#### 4. Proposals for Regional Programs

Groups of counties may request to form a regional HSP. Regional programs rely on a shared administrative structure or program functions, which may be more efficient for some communities. Counties in rural communities, with a regional Continuum of Care (CoC), or with regional Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) awards may particularly benefit from a regional HSP.

Considerations and instructions are outlined in Attachment Six. A consultation meeting with CDSS is required before a regional agreement is formalized. Regional allocations are, at maximum, the sum of the FY 2021-22 allocation amounts for each participating county, plus an additional \$150,000, to the extent funds are available, to incentivize regional collaboration. Contact [housing@dss.ca.gov](mailto:housing@dss.ca.gov) to discuss regional opportunities.

### **B. Other Relevant Budget Updates**

The FY2021-22 State Budget also included investments in programs across the state that may assist families served through HSP, including expansion of CDSS [Bringing Families Home \(BFH\)](#) Program, [Home Safe](#), the [Housing and Disability Advocacy Program \(HDAP\)](#), and emergency shelter under [Project Roomkey](#), capital funding under [Homekey](#), the [Community Care Expansion](#) program, and several other investments to support people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.

See Attachment One for additional information and resources that should be considered as counties expand and adapt local HSPs. Counties are also encouraged to review the Homelessness Coordinating and Financing Council's [Putting the Funding Pieces Together: Guide to Strategic Uses of New and Recent State and Federal Funds to Prevent and End Homelessness](#).

### **III. FY 2021-22 STATUTORY CHANGES**

The changes summarized below reflect amendments to [WIC Sections 11330 - 11330.5](#) and updated program guidance for the additional HSP expansion funds pursuant to [AB 135 \(Chapter 85, Statutes of 2021\)](#). Additional support for scaling the program will be provided, including technical assistance and training opportunities.

#### **A. Expansion of Eligibility**

##### WIC Section 11330.5(a): Expansion to families at-risk of homelessness

The eligibility for HSP was expanded to include families in CalWORKs who are at-risk of homelessness including recipients who have not yet received an eviction notice, and for whom housing instability would be a barrier to self-sufficiency or child well-being.

Consistent with homeless assistance best practice, programs should evaluate funding and program capacity to prioritize serving people with the highest service needs and vulnerabilities. See Attachment Two for more on homelessness prevention targeting and prioritization.

## **B. Other State-level Statutory Changes**

### Section 113350.5(i): Deadline for regulations

CDSS must adopt HSP regulations by July 1, 2024. Until regulations are adopted, all-county letters and similar instruction will have the same force and effect of regulations. CDSS looks forward to working with counties and stakeholders to develop and adopt program regulations.

### Section 10618.8(a-c): Use of funds for contracts

CDSS may use program expansion funds for formal evaluation, data collection, and technical assistance contracts. These activities will be contracted and conducted at the state level and in coordination with the legislature, stakeholders, and client advocates. CDSS must report on these contracts and efforts annually to the legislature.

Contact the CDSS Housing and Homelessness Branch at 916-651-5155 or [housing@dss.ca.gov](mailto:housing@dss.ca.gov) with questions regarding this letter or HSP.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By

JULIE MCQUITTY, Acting Branch Chief  
Housing and Homelessness Branch

### Attachments:

- Attachment One: Program Eligibility and Core Service Components
- Attachment Two: Guidelines on Homelessness Prevention Expansion
- Attachment Three: Fiscal and Budget Considerations
- Attachment Four: FY 2021-22 HSP Allocation Amounts
- Attachment Five: FY 2021-22 HSP Director's Certification, Instructions and Funding Conditions
- Attachment Six: Information on Establishing Regional Programs

## ATTACHMENT ONE: PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

This attachment provides an overview of HSP and the core service components of the program. Counties interested in establishing a new program are encouraged to review this information and guidance throughout this attachment to understand the scope of the program.

Aside from the items outlined in the 'FY 2021-22 Budget Updates' and 'Eligibility and Expansion of Homelessness Prevention', the guidance below is consistent with previously issued guidance. Attachment Two provides more on the expansion of eligibility to include families **at-risk of homelessness**. Contact [housing@dss.ca.gov](mailto:housing@dss.ca.gov) with questions or to request technical assistance.

### I. PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

The CalWORKs Housing Support Program (HSP), established by [Senate Bill \(SB\) 855 \(Chapter 29, Statutes of 2014\)](#), is intended to foster housing stability for families experiencing or at-risk of homelessness in the CalWORKs program.

The HSP eligibility is broadly defined by [WIC Section 11330.5](#) and includes CalWORKs recipients who are experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness, including recipients who have not yet received an eviction notice, and for whom housing instability would be a barrier to self-sufficiency or child well-being.

#### A. Eligible CalWORKs Recipients

As further defined below, counties may now serve eligible families at-risk of homelessness. Refer to Attachment Two for best practices on homelessness prevention. Consistent with homeless assistance best practice, programs should evaluate funding and program capacity to prioritize serving people with the highest needs and vulnerabilities. Every effort should be made to serve all families in the CalWORKs program experiencing homelessness given expanded program funds.

The HSP identifies and targets the whole population of families in the CalWORKs Program experiencing homelessness regardless of housing and income barriers. Consistent with Housing First, programs should not create additional criteria for eligibility or exclude any population from being served. All CalWORKs recipient families are eligible to be served through HSP, including the following types of assistance units:

- **Welfare-to-Work (WTW)** | An assistance unit [AU] type that includes Single-Parent and Two-Parent households with an aided adult who is not exempt from work activities and not sanctioned.
- **Exempt** | An exemption excuses a CalWORKs participant from Welfare to Work requirements.
- **Child Only** | Cases in which only the children in an AU are aided due to the exclusion or ineligibility for cash aid of the AU parent(s).

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- **Safety Net** | Cases in which only the children in an AU are aided due to the parent(s) being discontinued from cash aid because they reached their 48-month lifetime assistance limit.
- **Sanctioned** | The process by which adult(s) are removed from CalWORKs support because at least one failed to comply with WTW program requirements without good cause, and County staff compliance efforts failed. Eligible children in an AU continue to receive funding. This includes long-term sanctioned cases.
- **CalWORKs Family Reunification (AB 429)** | The continuation of CalWORKs services when a child has been removed from the home and is receiving out-of-home care.
- **CalLearn** | Statewide program for pregnant and parenting teens in the CalWORKs program. It is designed to encourage pregnant and parenting teens to graduate from high school or its equivalent, become independent, and form healthy families.

**Note:** Per [WIC 11330.5\(h\)](#), counties may continue to provide housing supports to a CalWORKs recipient who is discontinued because they no longer meet the income eligibility requirements of Section 11450.12.

### B. Definition of Homelessness

The CalWORKs HSP funding must be used to assist families in the CalWORKs program who are experiencing homelessness pursuant to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition in [24 CFR section 91.5 under “Homeless” Sections \(1\)-\(4\)](#) and in [Attachment Two: Definition of Homelessness, Prioritization and HSP 14 of All County Welfare Directors Letter \(ACWDL\) dated May 13, 2021](#).

### C. Definition of At-Risk of Homelessness

For the purposes of HSP, a person is defined as “at-risk of homelessness” when they:

- are experiencing housing instability, including recipients who have not yet received an eviction notice, and for whom housing instability would be a barrier to self-sufficiency or child well-being;
- have no subsequent permanent residence secured; and
- lack resources or support networks needed to stabilize their unique housing situation and secure subsequent permanent housing.

This definition of “at-risk of homelessness” is inclusive of, but not limited to the HUD definition of “at-risk of homelessness” under [24 Code of Federal Regulations section 91.5](#). This means participants who meet the HUD definition of “at-risk of homelessness” shall be deemed “at-risk of homelessness” under the definition set out in this section.

Consistent with homeless assistance best practice, programs should evaluate funding and program capacity to prioritize serving people with the highest needs and vulnerabilities. See Attachment Two for more on homelessness prevention targeting and prioritization.

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### At-Risk Self-Attestation

**Families shall be allowed to self-attest that they meet the definition of “at-risk of homelessness” in this section.** No additional verification or documentation demonstrating that a family meets the definition of “at-risk of homelessness” is needed; counties shall not require further evidence for the purposes of HSP enrollment. This self-determination assumes that families in the CalWORKs program who are at-risk of homelessness are already more vulnerable to homelessness than the general population.

Once a family has met the “at-risk of homelessness” definition in this section, counties may assess for other criteria indicative of vulnerability related to risk of homelessness for further prioritization.

### **D. Definitions and Examples of Homeless vs Prevention Assistance**

Grantees will be asked to report on their use of funds for prevention. See the table below, which provides definitions and examples to help clarify whether assistance should be tracked and reported as “homeless assistance” vs. “homelessness prevention assistance”. Additional information regarding tracking and reporting is outlined in Attachment Two.

Type	Definition	Example	Homeless vs Prevention Assistance
Literally Homeless*	Updated in <a href="#">ACWDL dated May 13, 2021</a> , HSP follows the HUD definition of homeless in <a href="#">24 CFR section 91.5</a> .	<b>Example 1:</b> Family living in a car for any amount of time.  <b>Example 2:</b> Family residing in/exiting Project Roomkey or other shelter setting.	Homeless Assistance.  Participants within this definition of homelessness <b>do not</b> contribute toward spending on homelessness prevention.
At Imminent Risk of Homelessness	Updated in <a href="#">ACWDL dated May 13, 2021</a> , HSP follows the HUD definition of homeless in <a href="#">24 CFR section 91.5</a> , which includes families who will <b><u>imminently lose housing within 14 days as homeless</u></b> : An individual or family who will imminently lose their	<b>Example 1:</b> Family is couch surfing with a friend but has been asked to leave in a week and has no other support or resources.	Homeless Assistance.  Participants within this definition of homelessness <b>do not</b> contribute

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Type	Definition	Example	Homeless vs Prevention Assistance
	<p>primary nighttime residence, provided that:</p> <p>(i) The primary nighttime residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;</p> <p>(ii) No subsequent residence has been identified; and</p> <p>(iii) The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks needed to obtain other permanent housing;</p>	<p><b>Example 2:</b> Family with a 3-day pay or quit notice in hand and has no other support or resources.</p>	<p>toward spending on homelessness prevention.</p>
At-Risk of Homelessness**	<p>A client is “at-risk of homelessness” when they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are experiencing housing instability, including recipients who have not yet received an eviction notice, and for whom housing instability would be a barrier to self-sufficiency or child well-being;</li> <li>• have no subsequent permanent residence secured; and</li> <li>• lack resources or support networks needed to stabilize their unique housing situation and secure subsequent permanent housing.</li> </ul> <p>Participants shall be allowed to self-attest that they meet this definition.</p>	<p><b>Example 1:</b> Family has been couch surfing for months, but identifies concern about the stability of their current situation since they will likely need to leave within the next month and has no other support or resources.</p>	<p>Homelessness Prevention Assistance.</p> <p>Participants within this definition of at-risk of homelessness <b>are</b> counted towards spending on homelessness prevention.</p>

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Type	Definition	Example	Homeless vs Prevention Assistance
	This definition of “at-risk of homelessness” is inclusive of, but not limited to, the HUD definition of “at-risk of homelessness” under <a href="#">24 CFR section 91.5</a> . This means participants who meet the HUD definition of “at-risk of homelessness” shall be deemed “at-risk-of homelessness” under the definition set out in this section.		

\*Effective May 13, 2021, the HSP definition of homelessness was updated to the [HUD definition in 24 CFR section 91.5 under “Homeless” Sections \(1\)-\(4\)](#).

\*\*Effective as of the date of this letter.

## II. PROGRAM SERVICES, PRIORITIZATION, AND ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

### A. Program Service Types

Per [Welfare and Institutions Code \(WIC\) Section 11330.5\(c\)](#), HSP funding must be used to support projects that utilize evidence-based housing interventions, including [homelessness prevention services](#) and/or the [core components of rapid rehousing](#).

#### 1. Rapid Rehousing Core Components

Rapid rehousing program standards are detailed below for each of the three core components. While a household that is rapidly rehoused is not required to utilize all [three core components](#), counties operating HSPs **must offer** program participants all three core components of rapid rehousing, utilizing a Housing First approach:

**Housing identification:** Activities under this core component include, but are not limited to, recruiting landlords with units in the communities and neighborhoods where program participants want to live and negotiating with landlords to help program participants access housing.

**Rent and move-in assistance:** Activities under this core component include, but are not limited to, paying for security deposits, move-in expenses, rent, and utilities. Rent and move-in assistance should be flexible and tailored to the varying and changing needs of a household while providing the assistance necessary for households to transition immediately out of homelessness and to stabilize in permanent housing.

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**Case management and services:** The goals of rapid re-housing case management are to help participants obtain and move into permanent housing, support participants with housing stability, and connect them to community and mainstream services and supports if needed. Housing-related case management should begin at entry into the program and continue throughout until a family is stably housed. Housing-related case plans should be developed in close coordination with the CalWORKs and any other (e.g., child welfare) case plans in addressing a family's needs. **Housing-related case management should complement, but not replace or supplant traditional CalWORKs case management.**

The [core components of rapid rehousing](#) can be provided by a single agency or in partnership with other agencies. The core components of rapid rehousing were developed in collaboration with, and endorsed by, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

### 2. Homelessness Prevention Assistance

Preventative services and assistance are varied and can include any preventative measure that will save a tenancy, help families regain stability in their current housing, or move and achieve stability in a new housing location. **This may include rental or utility arrears, late fee payments, first month's rent and/or security deposits, landlord mediation, repairs, connection to housing stabilization services, habitability/accessibility improvements, and housing navigation.** Refer to Attachment Two for more information expanding HSP programming to serving families at-risk of homelessness.

### **B. Program Prioritization**

To ensure that funding remains prioritized for those with the highest vulnerabilities, CDSS expects that counties use the majority of funds to support people experiencing homelessness. **Counties are encouraged to limit overall spending on homelessness prevention assistance for families at-risk of homelessness to no more than 30 percent of the FY 2021-22 allocation, refer to the table above for definitions and examples of homeless assistance versus prevention Assistance.**

Counties unable to serve all eligible families in the CalWORKs program who are experiencing or at-risk of homelessness should use a prioritization framework and assessment to determine assistance and may not allow individual case managers to determine prioritization on a case by case basis. It is critical that prioritization criteria are consistent and not subject to the bias of an individual case manager or staff. Counties should include their prioritization framework in written program policies to ensure consistent application across the program and to assist CDSS in understanding best practices across the state. Refer to Section Four of Attachment Two for more information on homelessness prevention resources.

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It is important to note that families in the CalWORKs Program are likely already more vulnerable to homelessness than the general population. Given that HSP serves CalWORKs families, HSP by design is targeting services to those at increased risk of homelessness. Prioritization or assessment processes should incorporate the following principles, regardless of the tool used:

- **Be applied consistently** across the program and should not rely on the social worker's individual determination of who to serve.
- Incorporate factors that are evidence-based or promising best practices, such as targeting services to those most at-risk of homelessness.
- Delivered and framed in **an easy-to-understand and trauma-informed** manner that centers the client's needs, including the timing of the assessment components or conducting the assessment in multiple stages if the client is in crisis and/or hesitant to engage. Counties are strongly encouraged to use data that may already have been collected to inform the assessment process and to avoid repetitive or traumatic questions.
- Adopt a **racial equity lens and framework**. The [Centre for Social Data Analytics](#) and the [Government Alliance for Race and Equity](#) recommends testing assessment process against questions such as: Is the assessment tool equally predictive and useful for all racial groups? When applying the tools, what will this mean for a person? Who will gain and who will be burdened? What information has already been gathered about how the tool impacts people of color?
- Reduce barriers to entry and participation to the degree possible, versus being a tool to primarily screen people out.
- Be used to assist families in obtaining housing that prioritizes client choice, considering the family's needs and preferences.
- Offers and provides [reasonable accommodations](#) to people with disabilities.

### C. Housing First

The HSPs must be operated in accordance with Housing First principles. [WIC Section 8256](#) requires that all state-funded housing programs operate in accordance with the core components of Housing First as enumerated in [WIC Section 8255](#) and further outlined in [ACL 19-114](#).

Housing First means that families should be connected to housing or housing supports immediately without preconditions, services shall be voluntary, client choice shall be respected, and applicants shall not be rejected on the basis of income, past evictions, substance use, or any other behaviors that may indicate a lack of "housing readiness."

CDSS has developed and previously requested that counties complete a Housing First Self-Assessment to support counties in assessing their adherence to and adoption of Housing First, and identify areas for development. CDSS reserves the right to request that counties complete a Housing First Self-Assessment throughout the technical assistance process. For example, this may be requested from counties establishing new programs or when a Housing First practice requires improvement or refinement. This Housing First Self-Assessment is an important tool for HSP counties to use

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through their continuous quality improvement practices and can be found in the [ACWDL dated August 2, 2018](#) and was developed using the:

- Housing First core components in [WIC Section 8255](#);
- [U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness \(USICH\) Housing First Checklist](#)
- [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\) Housing First Assessment Tool](#)
- [Corporation for Supportive Housing \(CSH\) Checklist](#)

### **D. Collaboration and Integration in the Homelessness Response System**

Counties operating HSP are required to coordinate with their homelessness response system, including participation in the local homelessness Continuum of Care (CoC), Coordinated Entry System (CES), and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to understand and meet the needs of the local community as well as to understand and address racial disproportionality for people experiencing homelessness.

Counties are also strongly encouraged to collaborate with other partners, such as local child welfare, behavioral health and emergency response systems, local [Medi-Cal managed care plans](#), Public Housing Authorities (PHAs), educational and family resource networks, domestic violence agencies, legal aid organizations, and other relevant networks to maximize available funding and connect participants to additional resources and supportive services. Information on these collaborations will be requested in future program updates. Counties may use HSP funds to establish specific positions to support the coordination of these systems.

### **E. Racial Equity**

CDSS requires counties to commit to addressing racial disproportionality for people experiencing homelessness and ensuring equitable provision of services for Black and Indigenous people and other people of color. Black and Indigenous people experience homelessness at significantly higher rates than whites, largely due to long-standing historical and structural racism. In California, Black people account for seven percent of the general population, but represent more than 31 percent of people experiencing homelessness. The disproportionality in homelessness is a by-product of systemic inequity – racism continues to perpetuate disparities in critical areas that impact rates of homelessness, including poverty, segregation/rental housing discrimination, incarceration, and access to health care.

Additionally, per [Government Code Section 8899.50](#), each county must also operate its HSP in a manner that affirmatively furthers fair housing. This means that HSP must be operated in a way that takes “meaningful actions, in addition to combating discrimination, that overcome patterns of segregation and foster inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity based on protected characteristics.”

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Counties should review demographic data of HSP and CalWORKs participants to understand how program demographics compare to the racial and ethnic makeup of low income and unhoused families. This information can provide initial insight on racial inequity within programming and should inform strategies for addressing racial equity. Counties should review the reports and resources below for examples of how housing and homelessness programs have incorporated racial equity into programming. Counties are encouraged to seek meaningful input and participation from current and former CalWORKs recipients, including recipients of color that to go beyond identifying disparities to try to identify causes of such disparities from individuals with lived experiences. Additionally, CDSS will provide technical assistance opportunities to help counties address racial equity within HSP programming. The HSP funds can be used to support efforts such as a racial equity analysis or plans for HSP.

Counties are encouraged to review the following reports and resources:

### Reports

- [Racial Inequalities in Homelessness, by the Numbers](#)
- [Supporting Partnerships for Anti-Racist Communities \(SPARC\) Phase One Study Findings](#)
- [A Brief Timeline of Race and Homelessness in America](#)
- [Report and Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness](#)

### Resources

- [Equity-Based Decision-Making Framework](#)
- [Framework for an Equitable COVID-19 Homelessness Response](#)
- [Advancing Racial Equity through Assessments and Prioritization \(HUD\)](#)
- CA Housing and Community Development's [Guidance on Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing](#).
- CA Business Consumer Services and Housing Agency's [data portal](#).

## **III. PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY**

### **A. Technical Assistance (TA)**

Training and technical assistance (TA) will be provided to support counties in establishing, developing, and improving their HSP and to facilitate statewide information-sharing. The TA opportunities include one-on-one calls and email correspondence as well as in-person or virtual learning collaboratives focused on identifying and meeting the needs of HSPs throughout the state. CDSS may designate specific TA or training as mandatory, including for specific staff, such as program leads.

The TA and training topics may include strategies for strengthening outreach, case management, advocacy, housing navigation, homelessness prevention services, as well as local workforce development, streamlining administrative efficiencies, advancing equity on a systems level, and improving collaboration with the local homelessness

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response system. The TA and training may be conducted by CDSS or a CDSS designated contractor. Additionally, programs may utilize HSP funds to provide program-specific training in areas identified by the county or CDSS to support continuous quality improvement.

Based on feedback from current counties, CDSS plans to establish cross-program opportunities for TA engagement. CDSS has started hosting joint office hours to address questions across various CDSS-funded programs, rather than holding separate program-specific sessions. **Counties are encouraged to provide recommendations and feedback on CDSS efforts to address the needs of counties and service providers operating the programs. Please send feedback to [housing@dss.ca.gov](mailto:housing@dss.ca.gov).**

### B. Data Reporting and Integration

Data collection, progress monitoring, and outcome reporting are essential and mandatory elements of the HSP. Data needs should be considered when deciding on staffing, training, and program design. Successful data integration goes beyond completing program data reports and requires building relationships with HMIS administrators, service providers, and other entities that are part of the data integration process.

#### 1. HSP-14/Monthly Reporting

Counties are required to provide aggregate level-data on a monthly basis via the HSP-14 report which is to be submitted via the ([admReportHSP14@dss.ca.gov](mailto:admReportHSP14@dss.ca.gov)). Applicants may request additional information about HSP data reporting requirements by emailing [housing@dss.ca.gov](mailto:housing@dss.ca.gov).

#### *Interim HSP-14 Reporting Update*

With adoption of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of Homelessness in [24 CFR section 91.5 under “Homeless” Sections \(1\)-\(4\)](#) and definition of at-risk of homelessness within this letter, CDSS is providing interim reporting guidance on select elements of the HSP-14 to accommodate the expansion of program eligibility. **To further implement this change, additional instructions and updates regarding reporting in the HSP-14 will be provided under separate cover.** In the interim, for reporting families under **Item 9** in the HSP-14, the family’s residence status at time of approved request/referral:

- For anyone who meets homeless definitions 24 CFR section 91.5 under “Homeless” (1)(ii) and (1)(iii) should be reported in Item 9.a.1. “Family has a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised publicly or privately-operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations” (cell 24).
- For anyone who meets homeless definitions 24 CFR section 91.5 under “Homeless” (1)(i) should be reported in Item 9.a.2. “Family resides in a public or

## ATTACHMENT ONE: PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings” (cell 25).

- For anyone who meets homeless definitions 24 CFR section 91.5 under “Homeless” (2), (3), and (4) or the definition of at-risk of homelessness as defined under Attachment One: Program Eligibility above should be reported in Item 9.b. “Family is in receipt of judgement for eviction, as ordered by the court” (cell 26).

**Note:** HSP eligibility **is not** contingent on receipt of judgement for eviction. Refer to Program Eligibility section above for expanded eligibility for HSP.

### 2. Homeless Management Information System

[Effective July 1, 2020](#), counties (or their contracted partners) operating an HSP are required to enter all HSP participants into the local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to better align HSP with the broader homelessness response system. The HMIS is a critical part of an effective Coordinated Entry System and system-wide approach to homelessness and can help communities better match people with resources and interventions; understand their community need, populations served, interventions needed, and outcomes; as well as identify intersections and gaps in services.

### 3. Assembly Bill (AB) 977 Data Reporting Requirements (NEW)

[Assembly Bill 977, Chapter 397, Statutes of 2021](#) includes additional requirements of utilization of HMIS for HSP. Beginning on January 1, 2023, a county or entity operating HSP, as a condition of receiving state funds, shall enter the Universal Data Elements (Items 3.01–3.917) and the Common Data Elements (Items 4.02–4.20 and Item W5 of the Individual Federal Partner Program Elements) drawn from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development [Homeless Management Information System Data Standards](#). The HSP grantees should follow HUD guidance on HMIS project set-up for HSP as an HMIS project and collect the appropriate data elements. Grantees should collaborate with their CoC’s HMIS lead to ensure proper project setup. Any county that does not already collect and enter these data into the local HMIS shall, upon request, receive technical assistance and guidance from staff of the Interagency Council on Homelessness and, as available, from federal partners, including, but not limited to, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. To request technical assistance, counties may either contact the Council directly at [HCFC@BCSH.ca.gov](mailto:HCFC@BCSH.ca.gov) or they may send their request to [Housing@dss.ca.gov](mailto:Housing@dss.ca.gov) and CDSS staff will coordinate the facilitation of any necessary technical assistance between the county and Council staff. Additional guidance regarding AB 977 requirements and implementation will be provided under separate cover.

### C. Program Planning and Update Requirements (NEW)

As described in the main body of this ACWDL, CDSS is providing counties the opportunity to accept FY 2021-22 allocations. As a condition of accepting these funds,

## ATTACHMENT ONE: PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

counties will be required to provide regular program updates and additional data to demonstrate use of program funds consistent with program guidance and requirements. CDSS will request a program update using a state-provided template to be distributed six months after the FY 2021-22 funds are accepted and annually thereafter.

### D. Program Performance and Evaluation (UPDATED)

Counties are expected to regularly measure, monitor, and communicate program impact and performance. Counties should establish and consistently track performance benchmarks, including the [best practice Rapid Rehousing Performance Benchmarks](#) below, and collect data to measure progress and to inform continuous quality improvements:

- **Reduce the length of time program participants spend homeless**  
For a program to meet this performance benchmark, households served by the program should move into permanent housing in an average of 30 days or less.
- **Exit households to permanent housing**  
For a program to meet this performance benchmark, at least 80 percent of households that exit a rapid re-housing program should exit to permanent housing.
- **Limit returns to homelessness within a year of program exit**  
For a program to meet this performance benchmark, at least 85 percent of households that exit a rapid re-housing program to permanent housing should not become homeless again within a year.

Additionally, programs should consider:

- Number of families with increased income at exit
- Number of families exiting CalWORKs due to over-income
  - **Note:** Per [WIC 11330.5\(h\)](#), counties may continue to provide housing supports to a CalWORKs recipient who is discontinued because they no longer meet the income eligibility requirements of Section 11450.12.
- Number of families with improved employment or educational circumstances at exit
- Participant satisfaction metrics
- Equity data including:
  - race and ethnicity of participants,
  - disability status of participants,
  - primary language of participants, and
  - geographic location/distribution where housing is preserved or obtained

There are other indicators that may be helpful in evaluating program performance and impact, such as length of time between referral and enrollment, between enrollment and placement in interim housing, or number of participants housed and unhoused at program enrollment. CDSS will continue to provide further guidance, including through technical assistance, on how to set and monitor program performance indicators.

## ATTACHMENT ONE: PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

CDSS will conduct ongoing monitoring of program performance using program data, claiming information, and updates submitted by counties. Consistent with evidence-based programming, CDSS aims to utilize outcomes data to inform future funding. Therefore, counties are encouraged to use data to conduct their own program management, oversight, and continuous quality improvement.

### Formal Statewide Evaluation (NEW)

Counties must also participate in activities related to any formal HSP evaluation, such as submitting data and logic models, conducting data reviews and cleaning, and/or participating in interviews, surveys and focus groups. Data sharing agreements with HMIS administrators may be required for efforts such as a formal evaluation. Counties may use HSP funds to support requirements related to a formal evaluation.

### **E. Program Compliance**

Should CDSS become aware that a county is not operating the HSP consistent with statutory requirements or formal guidance issued by CDSS, the Department will notify the county that they shall amend their program within a specified timeline in order to come into compliance. CDSS will provide technical assistance to support counties and to ensure that programs are operated consistent with evidence-based practices and may request more regular program updates to reflect program compliance.

Examples of non-compliance may include, but are not limited to, failing to offer housing support and assistance as described in [WIC Section 11330.5](#) and [ACWDL dated May 13, 2021](#), or violating housing first requirements as described in [WIC Section 8255](#) and [8256](#) and further outlined in [ACL 19-114](#).

CDSS acknowledges that program targets and budgets are projections and may be subject to change given the dynamic nature of homeless assistance. CDSS is available to provide technical assistance to help counties meet their targeted number of families to house and maximize direct financial assistance.

### Notice of Program Interruption to CDSS

Counties must notify CDSS in writing at least thirty days in advance of any temporary or permanent interruption to HSP services for any reason, including fully spending their allocation.

### **F. Additional State resources to support HSP participants**

The [FY 2021-22 California State Budget](#) also includes investments in programs across the state that may assist HSP participants. For more information on funding sources to leverage in support of HSP, see the [Homeless Coordination and Financing Council \(HCFC\), effective January 1, 2022 to be California Interagency Council on Homelessness \(Cal-ICH\), website](#) and [Guide to Strategic Use of Key State and Federal Funds](#) document. Counties are encouraged to leverage expanded funding, services

## ATTACHMENT ONE: PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

and staff made available to other programs within the local Department of Social Services, such as [CalWORKs Homeless Assistance \(HA\)](#), [CalWORKs Home Visiting Program \(HVP\)](#), [CalWORKs Family Stabilization, Bringing Families Home \(BFH\)](#), [Project Roomkey](#) and the [Housing and Disability Advocacy Program \(HDAP\)](#). Additional resources made available within the FY 2021-21 budget that may support HSP participants are listed below.

### Additional CDSS Programs and Resources for HSP Service Coordination

- **CalWORKs Homeless Assistance**  
The CalWORKs Homeless Assistance (HA) Program includes both temporary HA, which helps families pay the costs of temporary shelter, and permanent HA, which helps families pay a security deposit for permanent housing or to prevent eviction. Eligible families may receive either temporary or permanent HA, or both, once in a 12-month period, with certain exceptions. The HSP administrators should assess how to best leverage HA in coordination with HSP for eligible families in order to maximize each program effectively.
- **CalWORKs Home Visiting Program**  
The CalWORKs Home Visiting Program (HVP) aims to support positive health development and well-being outcomes for pregnant and parenting people, families, and infants born into poverty, expand their future educational, economic, and financial capability opportunities, and improve the likelihood that they will exit poverty. Coordinating HVP with HSP outreach, enrollment, and services can both target families who may have the highest housing service needs as well as braid together critical wrap around services to meet a spectrum of family needs and housing barriers. The HSP administrators should collaborate with local HVP administrators to ensure programs are complimentary and coordinated in addressing family homelessness or housing instability.
- **CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Family Stabilization Program**  
CalWORKs Family Stabilization (FS) is a component of the CalWORKs program that provides intensive case management and services to participants who are experiencing an identified situation or crisis, which may include homelessness or imminent risk of homelessness and lack of safety due to domestic violence, among other things. The FS is aimed at increasing client success and is designed to ensure a basic level of stability within a family prior to, or concurrently with, participation in Welfare to Work (WTW) activities and can provide supports such as temporary shelter. View [County CalWORKs Family Stabilization plans](#). The HSP administrators should assess how to best leverage FS in coordination with HSP for eligible families in order to maximize each program effectively.
- **AB-429: CalWORKs-Funded Family Reunification Services**  
Assembly Bill (AB) 429, permits continuation of CalWORKs services to parents after removal of their children from the home by the Child Welfare Service Agency (CWSA). These CalWORKs-funded WTW services are part of a Family

## ATTACHMENT ONE: PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

Reunification (FR) plan established by the county CWSA in conjunction with the Court and may continue for up to 180 consecutive days, during which time the children are considered temporarily absent from the home. Families with an FR plan may be at increased risk of housing insecurity and homelessness and should be assessed for HSP services in order to support housing and family reunification plans. The HSP administrators should collaborate with local FR administrators to ensure programs are complimentary and coordinated in addressing family needs.

- **Bringing Families Home**

The Bringing Families Home (BFH) program is intended to help reduce the number of families in the child welfare system experiencing or at-risk of homelessness, increase family reunification, and prevent foster care placements. The BFH serves homeless families involved with the child welfare system and is designed to offer housing supports for families to successfully reunify. Eligible families can be co-enrolled in HSP and BFH or transition across the programs as is appropriate in order to maximize a full suite of services for families in need. The HSP administrators should collaborate with local BFH administrators to ensure programs are complimentary and coordinated in addressing family homelessness.

- **Project Roomkey**

Project Roomkey was established in March 2020 as part of the state response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of Project Roomkey (PRK) is to provide non-congregate shelter options for people experiencing homelessness, protect human life, and minimize strain on health care system capacity. The PRK can be a resource for HSP families in need of urgent temporary shelter in order to protect against the risk of COVID-19. The HSP administrators should collaborate with local PRK administrators to ensure programs are complimentary and coordinated in addressing family homelessness.

- **Housing and Disability Advocacy Program**

The Housing and Disability Advocacy Program (HDAP) was established to assist people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness who are likely eligible for disability benefits by providing advocacy for disability benefits as well as housing supports. The HDAP offers housing related financial assistance and wrap-around supportive services, including, but not limited to: interim housing, rental assistance, housing navigation, case management, security deposits, utility payments, moving costs, legal services, and credit repair. The HDAP also provides outreach services as well as case management for connections to any additional service needs as applicable. The HSP administrators should collaborate with local HDAP administrators to ensure programs are complimentary and coordinated in addressing family homelessness.

### Additional Resources for Consideration in HSP Planning and Development:

- **California Department of Education: Homeless Education**

## ATTACHMENT ONE: PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AND CORE SERVICE COMPONENTS

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ensures the educational rights and protections of children and youth experiencing homelessness. The McKinney-Vento Act also authorizes the funding for the federal Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program. Children, youth and their families identified by local education agencies (LEAs) may be eligible for HSP. The HSP administrators should outreach to and collaborate with local LEAs to ensure eligible families are identified and offered HSP services and that programs are complimentary and coordinated in addressing family needs. community continuum of behavioral health treatment resources.

- **[Emergency Rental Assistance Program](#)**

The Emergency Rental Assistance program (ERAP) makes funding available to assist households that are unable to pay rent or utilities. Two separate programs have been established under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The funds are provided directly to states, U.S. territories, local governments, and Indian tribes. Counties use the funds to provide assistance to eligible households through existing or newly created rental assistance programs.

- **[Emergency Solutions Grants Program](#)**

The Emergency Solutions Grants Program (ESG) assists in helping people to quickly regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis and/or homelessness. The ESG funds may be used for five program components: street outreach, emergency shelter, homelessness prevention, rapid re-housing assistance, and HMIS; as well as administrative activities.

- **[Homekey](#)**

The Budget includes \$2.75 billion for Homekey to further expand the portfolio of housing by supporting the acquisition and conversion of properties into affordable and supportive housing or interim housing. Counties should collaborate with their CoC to identify local Homekey operators and identify potential areas of collaboration, such as unit set asides for HSP participants. Information regarding [Homekey Notice of Funding Availability](#) is on the Homekey website.

- **[Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention program](#)**

The Budget includes \$2 billion one-time funding administered by the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council (HCFC) to assist counties, Continuums of Care, and large cities with addressing homelessness in their communities.

## ATTACHMENT TWO: GUIDELINES ON HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION EXPANSION

In previous fiscal years, HSP programs primarily served families experiencing literal homelessness. With the FY 2021-22 expansion of eligibility and funding, counties may now expand HSP services to include homelessness prevention for those at-risk of homelessness. Program expectations and requirements for homelessness prevention services are outlined throughout this attachment.

### **I. SECTION ONE: EXPANSION TO SERVE FAMILIES AT-RISK OF HOMELESSNESS AND PREVENTION SERVICES GUIDELINES**

The HSP eligibility has been expanded to include families in the CalWORKs program who are at-risk of homelessness or who are recently homeless. This expansion may significantly impact how counties design and contract the program. Resources on eviction and homelessness prevention are included in Section Two and Four of this attachment.

Counties should begin strategizing how to expand HSP to offer homelessness prevention services. Counties are encouraged to review the homelessness prevention resources provided within this letter. Counties should begin implementing these program changes once familiar with homelessness prevention best practices.

#### **A. Types of Homelessness Prevention Assistance**

Preventative services and assistance are varied and can include any preventative measure that will save a tenancy, help families regain stability in their current housing, or move and achieve stability in a new housing location. **This may include rental or utility arrears, late fee payments, security deposits, rental assistance, landlord mediation, repairs, habitability/accessibility improvements, and housing navigation and relocation.** Refer to Sections Five and Six below for more information.

#### **B. Targeting Homelessness Prevention Assistance**

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) [Prevention Targeting 101](#), while homelessness prevention refers to a broad category of services, research shows that homelessness prevention is more effective when targeted to the people who are most likely to fall into homelessness in the absence of preventative assistance. **Therefore, among families eligible for homelessness prevention assistance due to being at-risk of homelessness, counties should prioritize serving families with the greatest risk factors for homelessness, including households with multiple risk factors as listed below.**

Also, targeting households who are closer to the anticipated loss of housing increases the chances they will actually need financial assistance from the homeless assistance system in order to stay out of shelter. The more time a household has until their housing situation ends, the more likely it is they will find a workable solution for their current situation that does not require assistance. For this reason, households that

## ATTACHMENT TWO: GUIDELINES ON HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION EXPANSION

have come seeking emergency shelter but may still be in their own housing situation are often good candidates for receiving homelessness prevention assistance.

Often, the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) or similar data collection system can provide the data the program needs to further identify and target service needs.

Counties should also consider targeting homelessness prevention assistance to households that have risk factors for housing instability and homelessness. Some risk factors to consider include:

- Single parent households
- Households with children under two
- Disabilities in the household
- Criminal records
- History of conduct notices or other lease violations
- Past evictions
- Pregnancy
- Number of and length of previous homeless episodes
- Immediate crises such as domestic abuse
- Living situation prior to entering the homeless assistance system (doubled up or not being a leaseholder)
- Employment status
- Household size and membership (presence of children, their ages, etc.)

Without using available shelter data in selecting homelessness prevention assistance criteria, communities may run a higher risk of inadvertently serving people who would never have become homeless in the first place, limiting the resources available to households that truly need them. The National Alliance to End Homelessness [Prevention Targeting 101](#) briefing includes factors for consideration for programs without access to shelter data.

### C. Eviction Prevention

Eviction prevention is distinct from homelessness prevention in that it is not narrowly targeted to only those households who are at-risk of homelessness due to a potential eviction. Homelessness prevention efforts often include eviction prevention strategies such as short term or one-time financial assistance payments, including payment of back rent, but may also offer more substantial case management or other supportive services.

Eviction prevention strategies for CDSS programs, including HSP, during COVID-19 are outlined in [ACWDL dated January 14, 2021](#), and information on requirements for HSP to leverage federal and state rent relief resources is outlined in the section below.

## II. SECTION TWO: EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE /CALIFORNIA COVID-19 RENTAL RELIEF FUNDS

Over \$4.6 billion in funding has been made available to California through Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) funding administered through the US Department of the

## ATTACHMENT TWO: GUIDELINES ON HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION EXPANSION

Treasury. The ERA funds, which were made available to states, tribes, and local governments, can assist households that are unable to pay rent or utilities due to COVID-related circumstances. The ERA funds administered by the State of California are referred to as the CA COVID-19 Rent Relief Program.

For eligible families who are behind on rent or utilities due to COVID-related circumstances, county HSP administrators should assist participants with accessing ERA-funded rent relief before using HSP funds to pay arrears. This requirement is not intended to impact *eligibility* for HSP but is rather a requirement to utilize ERA funds for rental assistance **before** HSP funds are used, when available, and help participants in accessing these funds. Additionally, it is vital that county HSP administrators continue to assist clients with applying for ERA-funded rent relief before using HSP funds to mitigate the risk of eviction, as application for ERA-funded rent relief extends critical eviction prevention protections under AB 832. County HSP administrators can enroll eligible families in HSP for case management and other non-arrears assistance while helping families apply for and access ERA-funded rent relief.

However, if rent relief would not prevent a loss of housing and the family is eligible for HSP, then HSP funds can be utilized to keep the family housed, including by covering arrears to prevent a loss of housing.

Situations in which rent relief would not prevent a loss of housing may include, but are not limited to, instances where:

- the temporary AB 832 protections do not apply in the family's particular situation;
- there is a pending eviction for something other than COVID-related arrears;
- receipt of rent relief will not cover the full amount of the family's arrears or,
- the family's rent relief application is denied.

Rent relief under ERA covers up to 100 percent of unpaid back rent as well as future rent and expenses that a tenant is unable to pay due to COVID-19 impacts. This might include loss of job or reduction in hours, loss of transportation to and from jobs, loss of childcare preventing regular work, increased healthcare or other costs, and other impacts to daily life that result in reduced or no income or increased costs. Rental relief applications can be submitted by landlords, renters, or both. However, a renter must participate for relief funds to be received.

The HSP participants may also benefit from more in-depth application assistance offered through the Local Partner Network (LPN). These partners can meet with participants at their home or another site to walk them through the process, assist with documentation and uploads, and add designees to their account to enable a third-party to help them complete the application. **To access an LPN appointment call 833-687-0967.** This phone line is open to the public and can be accessed by participants or case workers. The HSP funds may be used to provide further support to HSP clients in navigating this assistance and it is recommended that case workers help facilitate the process alongside the HSP participant.

## ATTACHMENT TWO: GUIDELINES ON HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION EXPANSION

Reference the following resources to learn more and begin an application:

- Visit the [COVID-19 Rental Relief Program website](#) for more information on the program or to begin an application.
- **Call 833-430-2122** for questions about the program and eligibility
- **Call 833-687-0967** for assistance in a language besides English, or to receive more in-depth assistance in the application process through an LPN.
- For informational brochures on the COVID-19 Rental Relief Program, please visit the [CA COVID-19 Rent Relief Toolkit dropbox](#).

### **III. SECTION THREE: REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION**

Effective prevention programs for families at-risk of homelessness may require a different set of interventions, outreach efforts, processes, contractors, data collection, and community partners than those established for homeless assistance interventions. Counties should consider how the program may need to be adapted to incorporate this new intervention type. Further, counties should develop internal monitoring systems to track overall spending on prevention.

In the required program updates, counties will be asked to report on homelessness prevention services, including how those services are being delivered according to best practices. Counties will also be asked to report on their use of funds for homelessness prevention.

### **IV. SECTION FOUR: HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION RESOURCES**

For more information on implementing equitable homelessness prevention activities, see:

- [Framework for Homelessness Prevention](#) – HUD
  - Overview of types of homelessness prevention programs and strategies, target population, and considerations for COVID-19.
- [Homeless System Response: Prevention to Promote Equity](#) – HUD
  - Guide to ensuring equitable access and culturally responsive homelessness prevention strategies and monitoring outcomes.
- [Homeless System Response: Effective and Efficient Prevention Programs](#) – HUD
  - Summary of strategies utilized in innovative homelessness prevention programs and interventions in multiple states.
- [Homeless System Response: How to Design, Scale, and Fund a Homelessness Prevention Program During COVID-19](#) – HUD
  - Recommended operational steps for planning, developing, implementing, and administering effective homelessness prevention strategies.

## ATTACHMENT TWO: GUIDELINES ON HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION EXPANSION

- [Prevent Homelessness](#) – United States Interagency Council on Homelessness
  - Overview of crisis intervention and mitigation strategies aimed at reducing the risk of homelessness.
- [A New Direction: A Framework for Homelessness Prevention](#) – Canadian Observatory on Homelessness
  - Overview of where homelessness prevention fits into broader housing and homelessness assistance, including how the Canadian housing and homelessness system is designed.
- [Homelessness Prevention: A Review of the Literature](#) – Center for Evidence-based Solutions to Homelessness
  - Overview of research on what types of interventions are most effective in preventing homelessness, key factors in predicting homelessness, and overview of existing screening models.
- [Preventing Homelessness: Evidence-Based Methods to Screen Adults and Families at-risk of Homelessness in Los Angeles](#) – California Policy Lab
  - Recommendations from the California Policy Lab on homelessness prevention targeting tools, including risk factors that may indicate risk of homelessness, modifications to make tools more user-friendly, and modifications that could be made for adults and families.

## ATTACHMENT THREE: FISCAL AND BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

### I. BUDGET GUIDELINES

The HSP counties are expected to provide housing identification, rent and move-in assistance, and case management and services. Counties must minimize administrative costs while maximizing direct services and housing related financial assistance. Counties must budget the program appropriately in order ensure every client has access to adequate case management and housing assistance.

The budget categories are defined as follows:

- **Administrative costs** may include, but are not limited to, program administrative staff (including program supervision and data tracking staff), general administration and costs necessary for the proper administration of the program, data tracking including HMIS licenses, overhead, and program development activities.
- **Direct program service costs** include case management staff, housing navigation staff, and other program staff or operational costs not included within administrative costs.
- **Direct financial assistance to support housing** represents all housing related costs paid out on behalf of the participant. This includes costs associated with rental assistance, application fees, security deposits, first and last months' rent, housing rehabilitation and modification costs, interim shelter assistance, move-in costs, landlord incentives, etc.

Counties will be asked to provide updates on spending for administrative costs, direct program service costs, and direct financial assistance during required program updates. If counties are not maximizing direct financial assistance or minimizing administrative costs, counties will be asked to provide an explanation within their program update template, including plans to increase spending on direct financial assistance. CDSS will offer additional technical assistance to the county to help achieve best or promising practices in these areas.

### II. FLEXIBLE CONTRACTING AND ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCIES

Given that multiple rounds of funding may occur within a fiscal year or the grant period, CDSS strongly encourages counties to make contracts, Memorandums of Understanding, and other agreements with implementing partners as flexible and easy to amend as possible. Agreements may need to be altered to update award amounts, spending timeframes, and eligible activities (such as incorporating homelessness prevention services). Prioritizing flexibility will facilitate continued program operations while awaiting staggered funding, especially when transitioning to a new fiscal year and awaiting the finalization of the statewide program budget.

## ATTACHMENT THREE: FISCAL AND BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Counties are strongly encouraged to consider strategic contracting with community partners, such as contracting with one implementing partner to deliver housing navigation across several programs with similar housing navigation needs. For example, counties may utilize a portion of their HSP allocation in coordination with a portion of their Bringing Families Home, Project Roomkey, or other local, state, or federally funded program awards to provide housing navigation for multiple programs across the community.

Similarly, counties should strongly consider developing a flexible housing subsidy pool, in which dedicated funds from various housing programs are centralized for planning purposes into a single source to meet a common administrative purpose amongst the programs. On a client services level, **costs would be attributable to the specific client and program of which they are a participant and would be claimed accordingly**. Flexible subsidy pools allow for greater economies of scale while reducing cross program competition for housing within a community.

For more information on flexible housing subsidy pools, reference:

- [Flexible Subsidy Housing Pools Fundamentals](#) – U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- [History and Takeaways from Los Angeles County's Flexible Housing Subsidy Pools](#) – The Hilton Foundation

### **III. CLAIMING INSTRUCTIONS**

Allowable expenditures as described in this ACWDL, should be claimed through the County Expense Claim/County Expense Claim Reporting Information System to the appropriate Program Code as outlined in [County Fiscal Letter \(CFL\) No. 16/17-08](#) and [CFL No. 21/22-26](#), which provides updated guidance on the claiming of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) administrative direct costs and reminds counties of the requirements for claiming administrative costs for subrecipients of TANF grants. It also provides specific guidance regarding the addition of TANF administrative cost claiming instructions and new Program Codes and Time Study Codes for HSP.

## ATTACHMENT FOUR: FY 2021-22 ALLOCATION AMOUNTS

The below table contains the FY 2021-21 allocation amounts available for all 58 counties. These allocations are inclusive of Round 1 planning allocations for continuing counties, released via [CFL 21/22-05](#), and Noncompetitive allocations for all 58 counties. More information on the allocation methodology is contained in the “FY 2021-22 Budget Updates” section of the main letter of this ACWDL. To accept the allocations, counties must sign and return the Director’s Certification in Attachment Five by **January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022**.

Counties	FY 2021-22 Allocation
Alameda	\$ 9,129,463
Alpine	\$ 250,000
Amador	\$ 489,488
Butte	\$ 4,169,292
Calaveras	\$ 450,740
Colusa	\$ 351,250
Contra Costa	\$ 5,543,453
Del Norte	\$ 505,039
El Dorado	\$ 1,778,292
Fresno	\$ 7,063,567
Glenn	\$ 1,178,044
Humboldt	\$ 2,121,759
Imperial	\$ 2,787,344
Inyo	\$ 250,000
Kern	\$ 5,538,587
Kings	\$ 1,588,909
Lake	\$ 774,816
Lassen	\$ 461,978
Los Angeles	\$ 71,125,375
Madera	\$ 1,360,127
Marin	\$ 1,876,196
Mariposa	\$ 387,049
Mendocino	\$ 1,065,517
Merced	\$ 4,894,580
Modoc	\$ 325,000
Mono	\$ 250,000
Monterey	\$ 3,340,057
Napa	\$ 646,168
Nevada	\$ 963,880
Orange	\$ 9,396,653
Placer	\$ 1,599,627

Counties	FY 2021-22 Allocation
Plumas	\$ 368,250
Riverside	\$ 10,152,770
Sacramento	\$ 11,871,341
San Benito	\$ 489,475
San Bernardino	\$ 13,930,407
San Diego	\$ 14,436,574
San Francisco	\$ 11,030,770
San Joaquin	\$ 4,546,545
San Luis Obispo	\$ 4,353,565
San Mateo	\$ 3,975,002
Santa Barbara	\$ 2,824,174
Santa Clara	\$ 13,058,092
Santa Cruz	\$ 4,300,112
Shasta	\$ 2,388,873
Sierra	\$ 250,000
Siskiyou	\$ 939,236
Solano	\$ 6,527,261
Sonoma	\$ 3,678,383
Stanislaus	\$ 4,537,978
Sutter	\$ 2,048,000
Tehama	\$ 538,844
Trinity	\$ 250,000
Tulare	\$ 3,279,488
Tuolumne	\$ 602,337
Ventura	\$ 3,476,485
Yolo	\$ 3,276,357
Yuba	\$ 1,957,431
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 270,750,00</b>

## ATTACHMENT FIVE: DIRECTOR'S CERTIFICATION, INSTRUCTIONS AND FUNDING CONDITIONS

County Welfare Directors shall complete and return this Director's Certification to [housing@dss.ca.gov](mailto:housing@dss.ca.gov) by **January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022** Counties interested in establishing regional programs should refer to Attachment Six for additional information.

Counties accepting funds made available to their county as listed in Attachment Four shall complete Section One through Three below. Counties declining all funding for FY 2021-22, including Round 1 planning allocations, shall complete Section One and Four below.

By accepting these funds and signing the certification below, the County Welfare Director agrees to the funding terms and conditions outlined within this letter.

**Reminder:** This certification is for the FY 2021-22 allocations, as listed in Attachment Four, which includes both Round 1 planning allocations and additional Noncompetitive allocations.

### **SECTION ONE: CONTACT INFORMATION**

- a) Name of County: \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Name and title of contact:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c) Contact information (phone and email):  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **SECTION TWO: FUNDING AMOUNT AND PROGRAM TARGETS**

**A. FY 2021-22 Allocation:** A county may accept the full amount identified within Attachment Four or a portion of these funds. For continuing counties, **Attachment Four allocations are inclusive of initial Round 1 planning allocation amounts in [CFL 21/22-05](#).**

Complete the information below to confirm acknowledgment of Attachment Four allocation amounts and select one of the following acceptance options:

The county hereby acknowledges the total FY 2021-22 allocation in Attachment Four is \$\_\_\_\_\_ and acknowledges this is inclusive of Round 1 planning allocations for continuing counties.

The county hereby:

- ☐ Accepts the **total** allocation amount as listed in Attachment Four
- ☐ Accepts the total allocation amount as listed in Attachment Four AND accepts additional funds, if available, beyond current allocation level **with no limit**

## ATTACHMENT FIVE: DIRECTOR'S CERTIFICATION, INSTRUCTIONS AND FUNDING CONDITIONS

- ☐ Accepts the total allocation amount as listed in Attachment Four AND accepts additional funds, if available, beyond current allocation level **up to a limit**
  - Specify the total FY 2021-22 allocation the county is able to accept: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Accepts **only a portion** of the allocation amount as listed in Attachment Four.
  - Specify the total FY 2021-22 allocation accepted: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### B. Expected Participants to Serve

Counties should assess community need, program capacity, and allocation amount accepted under Section One Item A to estimate the total number of unduplicated new and continuing HSP participants expected to be served between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2024.

Complete all of the following (reference the table in Attachment One for definitions and examples of homelessness versus prevention assistance):

- i. Estimated number of families **experiencing homelessness** to receive HSP services: \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. Estimated number of families **at-risk of homelessness** to receive HSP homelessness prevention services: \_\_\_\_\_
- iii. Estimated **TOTAL** number of families to serve in HSP: \_\_\_\_\_

## **SECTION THREE: COLLABORATION AND DIRECTOR'S CERTIFICATION OF FUNDING TERMS**

### **A. Collaboration: counties operating an HSP must inform the local homelessness and family services systems of the following information:**

- Total allocation available to the county
- Total allocation accepted by the county
- HSP program benefits and eligibility (e.g., Attachment One)
- HSP program requirements as it relates to collaboration with the CoC, CES, and HMIS (e.g., Attachment One)

Examples of partner outreach and communications include but are not limited to sharing the information with partners via an email, sharing at advisory or collaborative meetings, and providing roadshows or presentations to partners.

Relevant agencies and organizations may include the Continuum of Care (CoC), Public Housing Authorities (PHA), housing agencies of incorporated cities, educational and family resource networks, Public Housing Authorities (PHA), behavioral health and child welfare agencies, and other partners critical to local outreach and collaboration.

## ATTACHMENT FIVE: DIRECTOR'S CERTIFICATION, INSTRUCTIONS AND FUNDING CONDITIONS

☐ A copy of the letter(s) or comparable material sent to relevant partner agencies within the community and list of recipients is attached. The county understands that this is a requirement to accept the FY 2021-22 allocations.

### B. Conditions of Funding

I, County Welfare Director of [insert name of county], certify that I will:

- 1) Operate an HSP consistent with relevant laws, regulations, program guidance, and evidence-based practices, including but not limited to:
  - a) [Welfare and Institutions Code \(WIC\) Sections 11330-11330.5](#)
  - b) All County Letters or similar instruction, including [ACWDL dated May 26, 2016](#): Rapid Rehousing Benchmarks and Program Standards and [ACWDL dated May 13, 2021](#)
  - c) Housing First requirements as enumerated in [WIC Section 8255](#) and further outlined in [ACL 19-114](#)
  - d) [homelessness prevention services](#) and/or the [core components of rapid rehousing](#).
- 2) Actively collaborate with local, state, and federal housing, homelessness and health systems in order to make best use of available funding and link participants to necessary services. I understand that information on these collaborations will be requested within program updates. These collaborating entities may include but are not limited to:
  - a) Continuums of Care and Coordinated Entry Systems
  - b) Behavioral health systems
  - c) Public Housing Authorities (PHA)
  - d) Educational and family resource networks
- 3) Collect, track, report and measure relevant program outcomes and engage in continuous data quality improvement, such as:
  - a) Enter participants into HMIS.
  - b) Submit HSP related program reports, including but not limited to the HSP-14, as specified by CDSS through an ACL or similar instruction.
  - c) Participate in formal evaluation efforts which may include executing data sharing agreements with the HMIS administrator.
  - d) Set program targets and milestones and report to CDSS on progress at least annually or upon request from CDSS.
- 4) Engage in training, technical assistance, and continuous quality improvement, including but not limited to:
  - a) Program leads attend meetings and trainings required by CDSS.
  - b) Respond to requests for program amendments in order to comply with applicable laws and guidance, as determined by CDSS.
  - c) Actively engage with technical assistance providers, including those contracted by CDSS, to support program growth, expansion, and improvement by attending meetings and trainings and contributing to technical assistance efforts, such as process mapping, program design, and case conferencing exercises.

## ATTACHMENT FIVE: DIRECTOR'S CERTIFICATION, INSTRUCTIONS AND FUNDING CONDITIONS

- 5) Respond to requests for program progress reports, updates, expenditure information, including amount spent on homelessness prevention services, administrative costs, direct services and financial assistance, or program assessments as requested by CDSS, including but not limited to:
  - a) For new counties, implementation updates related to program ramp up at least every six months and then annually, after program implementation and until awarded amount is fully spent.
  - b) For existing counties, annual implementation updates in accordance with a schedule as determined by CDSS.
  - c) For new and existing counties, submit more frequent program updates if determined necessary by CDSS due to program performance.
- 6) Maximize spending on direct financial assistance and minimize administrative costs in order to ensure that all HSP participants are provided housing assistance and case management.
- 7) Utilize Emergency Rental Assistance Program/California COVID-19 Rent Relief before HSP to pay for rental backpay, when applicable.
- 8) Notify CDSS in writing at least 30 days in advance of any temporary or permanent interruption or end to HSP services and operations for any reason, including fully spending the given allocation.
- 9) CDSS reserves the right to reallocate HSP funds should a county be out of compliance with applicable laws or guidance issued by CDSS and if CDSS determines it is appropriate or necessary to maximize program impact throughout the state.

I \_\_\_\_\_ certify that \_\_\_\_\_ County will administer the HSP pursuant to the terms outlined above and understand this is a condition of receiving HSP funds. The information completed within the form and attached are true and correct.

\_\_\_\_\_  
County Welfare Director Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### **SECTION FOUR: DECLINING FUNDS (Only complete if the county declines ALL of the FY 2021-22 Allocation outlined in Attachment Four.)**

Counties declining all funding for FY 2021-22 outlined in Attachment Four are asked to notify CDSS by completing and signing the section below and returning it to [housing@dss.ca.gov](mailto:housing@dss.ca.gov) as soon as possible but no later than **January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022**. CDSS will consider the funds declined if no response is provided to CDSS by the county by **January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022**.

To decline the funds, check the box below and complete the name and signature of the County Welfare Director. **Note:** counties accepting funds should not complete this section.

ATTACHMENT FIVE: DIRECTOR'S CERTIFICATION, INSTRUCTIONS AND  
FUNDING CONDITIONS

☐ County declines the entire amount of FY 2021-22 allocation available to county (and acknowledges this is inclusive of Round 1 planning allocations amounts in [CFL 21/22-05](#) for continuing counties).

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County Welfare Director Signature

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Date

## **ATTACHMENT SIX: INFORMATION ON ESTABLISHING REGIONAL PROGRAMS**

Counties have the option to establish a regional HSP program. Counties in rural communities, communities with a regional CoC, or counties with regional HHAP awards may benefit from a regional HSP.

Regional programs rely on a shared administrative structure or program functions which can create more staffing and resource efficiency in communities with smaller caseloads that may not warrant a full-time program case manager, or in areas where hiring is challenging.

### **I. REGIONAL FUNDING AVAILABILITY**

The amount available for regional programs is equal to the sum of the allocation of each participating county (as specified in Attachment Four). In addition to the FY 2021-22 allocation HSP allocation, CDSS will provide an additional \$150,000, to the extent funds are available, to support and encourage regional programming.

### **II. REGIONAL PROGRAM AGREEMENT, ACCEPTANCE OF FUNDS AND REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S CERTIFICATION**

Groups of counties interested in forming a **regional** HSP should contact CDSS at [housing@dss.ca.gov](mailto:housing@dss.ca.gov) as soon as possible. CDSS will set up an initial conversation to discuss and work through potential program design models and ensure that the participating counties agree with the requirements of HSP and the regional partnership. Once an agreement has been made, CDSS will provide the participating counties a Regional Director's Certification, in which participating counties can certify acknowledgement of program funding terms and requirements. Regional Director's Certifications, signed by all participating counties, **must be submitted by January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022.**

### **III. REGIONAL PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS**

When discussing a potential regional structure, counties should consider the following questions:

- What is the combined estimate of HSP-eligible families in these communities? How many will require preventative services and homelessness assistance?
- How might housing or other needs differ in each of the participating communities?
- Will the regional HSP have a lead county?
- What functions, services and assistance will be centralized across the program? Which functions, if any, will remain within each county? (ex: programs have one housing navigator but retain independent outreach mechanisms)
- How will regional programs ensure that participants from each community have equal access to HSP services?

## ATTACHMENT SIX: INFORMATION ON ESTABLISHING REGIONAL PROGRAMS

- What methods of communication will be established to ensure that coordination across counties is streamlined, and that no participants fall through the cracks?
- How can a regional program leverage collaborative partnerships for critical services provided by other county departments or community-based providers, especially for roles with specific professional expertise? Examples include child development, health care, behavioral health care, or legal representation.

### **IV. POSTPONED REGIONAL PROGRAM FORMATION**

If counties are unable to come to agreement prior to the deadline to accept the FY 2021-22 allocation but still wish to establish an HSP (with a possibility of a future regional program) they must submit the Director's Certification (Attachment Five) no later than **January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022**.

If a regional structure is desired later after the Director's Certification deadline, CDSS will work with counties to explore possible options. However, if the county does not submit the Director's Certification by **January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022** to accept the FY 2021-22 allocation, CDSS cannot guarantee funding will be available during FY 2021-22.