

July 19, 2021

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS AND FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBAL
GOVERNMENTS IN CALIFORNIA LETTER**

The purpose of this letter is to notify counties and tribes that the Budget Act of 2021 ([Senate Bill 129, Chapter 69, Statutes of 2021](#)) appropriated a historic and significant total of \$795.0 million for the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to provide grant funds to counties and tribes to establish, continue, and expand housing and homelessness assistance through the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Housing Support Program (HSP), Bringing Families Home (BFH) Program, Housing and Disability Advocacy Program (HDAP), Home Safe Program, and Project Roomkey (PRK) and Rehousing Strategy.



KIM JOHNSON
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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
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GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

July 19, 2021

LETTER TO ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS AND FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED
TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS IN CALIFORNIA

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS IN
CALIFORNIA

FROM: CORRIN BUCHANAN, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HOUSING
AND HOMELESSNESS

SUBJECT: FUNDING FOR CONTINUATION OF CALWORKS HOUSING
SUPPORT PROGRAM, BRINGING FAMILIES HOME PROGRAM,
HOUSING AND DISABILITY ADVOCACY PROGRAM, HOME
SAFE PROGRAM, AND PROJECT ROOMKEY AND REHOUSING
INITIATIVE

REFERENCE: [SENATE BILL \(SB\) 129, SB 80, SB 89, SB 855; ASSEMBLY BILL \(AB\) 135, AB 1603, AB 1811, AB 1603; WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE \(WIC\) SECTIONS 8255, 8256, 11330, 11330.5, 10618.8, 15770, 15771, 16523, 16523.1, 18999, 18999.1, 18999.2, 18999.4, 18999.6; ALL COUNTY LETTER \(ACL\) 19-104; ACL 19-114; ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER \(ACWDL\) DATED OCTOBER 22, 2018, ACWDL DATED SEPTEMBER 5, 2019, ACWDL DATED AUGUST 10, 2020, ACWDL DATED NOVEMBER 18, 2020, ACWDL DATED MAY 13, 2021; COUNTY FISCAL LETTER \(CFL\) NO. 16/17-08, CFL NO. 17/18-79, CFL NO. 18/19-47, CFL NO. 18/19-25, CFL 19/20-67.](#)

The purpose of this letter is to notify County Welfare Directors and Federally Recognized Tribal Governments in California that the Budget Act of 2021 ([Senate Bill 129, Chapter 69, Statutes of 2021](#)) appropriated a historic and significant total of \$795.0 million for the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to provide grant funds to counties and tribes to establish, continue, and expand housing and homelessness assistance through the CalWORKs Housing Support Program (HSP), Bringing Families Home (BFH) Program, Housing and Disability Advocacy Program (HDAP), Home Safe Program, and Project Roomkey (PRK) and Rehousing Strategy. Funds will also be set

aside for CDSS to implement and administer the programs. CDSS will be releasing additional information, including the amount of funding available for counties and tribes to implement new programs or to continue or expand current programs, as well as comprehensive program specific guidance to support evidence-based program implementation and operation across the state. These materials will be forthcoming and provided under separate cover.

Counties and tribes currently operating an HSP, BFH, HDAP, Home Safe, or PRK program are strongly encouraged to continue program operations to ensure families and individuals served through these programs continue to maintain housing stability and avoid a return to homelessness. Counties and tribes with existing HSP, BFH, HDAP, Home Safe, and PRK programs funded by CDSS may continue to claim eligible expenses, per current fiscal claiming guidance, until individual grantee allocation amounts for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22 are announced later this fiscal year.

Summary of Statewide Program Funds and Expenditure Period

Program Name	Appropriation Amount	Appropriation Type	Expenditure Period	Match
CalWORKs Housing Support Program	\$95,000,000	Ongoing, annual	7/1/21 – 6/30/23	No
CalWORKs Housing Support Program	\$190,000,000	One-time	7/1/21 – 6/30/24	No
Bringing Families Home Program	\$92,500,000	One-time	7/1/21 – 6/30/24	Exempt
Housing and Disability Advocacy Program	\$150,000,000	One-time	7/1/21 – 6/30/24	Exempt
Housing and Disability Advocacy Program	\$25,000,000	Ongoing, annual	7/1/21 – 6/30/23	Yes
Home Safe	\$92,500,000	One-time	7/1/21 – 6/30/24	Exempt
Project Roomkey and Rehousing Strategy	\$150,000,000	One-time	7/1/21 – 6/30/22	No
Total Investment	\$795,000,000			

Additional funds for HSP, BFH, HDAP, and Home Safe are also anticipated to be available in the FY 2022-23 budget.

Further details pertaining to each of these programs, including current program guidance and claiming instructions, as well as recent statutory changes enacted through [AB 135](#) are outlined below in greater detail.

CalWORKs Housing Support Program

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 homelessness in the CalWORKs program. Per [Welfare and Institutions Code \(WIC\) Section 11330.5\(c\)](#), HSP funding must be used to support projects that follow evidence-based housing interventions, including the core components of [rapid rehousing](#). Further, [WIC Section 8256](#) requires that all state-funded housing programs, including CalWORKs HSP, operate in accordance with the core components of Housing First as enumerated in [WIC Section 8255](#) and further outlined in [ACL 19-114](#). Refer to [All County Welfare Directors Letter \(ACWDL\) dated May 13, 2021](#) for current HSP guidance or the [HSP website](#) for additional resources.

The Budget Act of 2021 appropriated \$285.0 million for HSP, including the annual, ongoing appropriation of \$95.0 million available for encumbrance or expenditure July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023, as well as a one-time appropriation of \$190.0 million available for encumbrance or expenditure July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2024. Counties currently operating an HSP are strongly encouraged to continue current HSP programming pursuant to [ACWDL dated May 13, 2021](#) and in accordance with the county's signed Directors Certification on file with CDSS. Counties may continue to claim expenses for eligible activities completed beginning July 1, 2021 until final allocations are released via a County Fiscal Letter (CFL), consistent with the claiming instructions outlined in [CFL No. 16/17-08, dated July 27, 2016](#). Note: CDSS anticipates release of FY 2021-22 base allocations for continuing counties described in [ACWDL dated May 13, 2021](#) via CFL in July 2021. Additionally, funds allocated to counties via [CFL 20/21-34](#) in FY 2020-21 remain available for expenditure through June 30, 2022. Announcement of additional funding availability beyond the \$95.0 million annual appropriation for both new and continuing grantees will be provided under separate cover.

Summary of 2021 Statutory Updates

[AB 135](#) made the following changes to the program:

- WIC Section 11330.5(a) was amended to expand eligibility to families at risk of homelessness, including families that have not yet received an eviction notice.
- WIC Section 11330.5(i) was amended to require that HSP regulations be adopted by July 1, 2024. Until regulations are adopted, all-county letters or similar instruction will have the same force and effect as regulations.

- WIC Section 10618.8 was added to allow CDSS to use HSP funds for a formal evaluation, data collection, and technical assistance contracts, in coordination with legislature, stakeholders, and client advocates. CDSS must report on these contracts and efforts annually to the legislature.

Additional information related to these recent statutory updates, including guidance on how programs should incorporate changes in eligibility, will be provided under separate cover. Counties operating an HSP should continue following guidance provided in [ACWDL dated May 13, 2021](#) until further guidance is released.

Bringing Families Home Program

The Bringing Families Home Program (BFH), established by [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 1603 \(Chapter 25, Statutes of 2016\)](#) and amended pursuant to [SB 80 \(Chapter 29, Statutes 2019\)](#), aims to provide housing-related supports to families receiving child welfare services, increase family reunification, and prevent foster care placement. Per [WIC Section 16523.1\(c\)](#), BFH programs must use evidence-based housing models and practices, such as [rapid re-housing](#), [supportive housing](#), and/or subsidies to make rental housing affordable. Further, [WIC Section 8256](#) requires that all state-funded housing programs, including BFH, operate in accordance with the core components of Housing First as enumerated in [WIC Section 8255](#) and further outlined in [ACL 19-114](#). Refer to [ACWDL dated September 5, 2019](#) for current BFH program guidance or visit the [BFH website](#) for additional resources.

The Budget Act of 2021 appropriated \$92.5 million one-time General Fund (GF) for BFH available for encumbrance or expenditure July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2024. Announcement of funding availability for new and continuing grantees will be provided under separate cover.

BFH funds appropriated in the Budget Act of 2019 and allocated to grantees via [CFL 19/20-67, dated March 9, 2020](#), remain available for encumbrance or expenditure through June 30, 2022. Counties and tribes currently operating BFH should continue current BFH programming pursuant to [ACWDL dated September 5, 2019](#) and in accordance with the grantee's signed Directors Certification on file with CDSS. Current grantees may continue to claim expenses for eligible activities completed beginning July 1, 2021 pursuant to [CFL 19/20-67](#), consistent with [CFL No. 17/18-79, dated June 28, 2018](#) and [CFL No. 18/19-25, dated September 28, 2018](#). Note: Current BFH grantees who were awarded funds from the Budget Act of 2019, as reflected in [CFL 19/20-67](#), are required to match these funds on a dollar-for-dollar basis.

Summary of 2021 Statutory Updates

[AB 135](#) made the following changes to the program:

- WIC Section 16523(c) was amended to clarify that eligible families include families where the living situation cannot accommodate the child or multiple children in the home, and that families at risk of homelessness may include families that have not yet received an eviction notice.
- WIC Section 16523(d) includes technical re-numbering to the definition of homelessness for BFH to better align with the department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of homelessness.
- WIC Section 16523.1(d) was amended to exempt counties and tribes from the dollar-for-dollar match requirements for the one-time funds awarded to grantees between July 1, 2021 and through June 30, 2024, consisting of the \$92.5 million one-time funds appropriated by the Budget Act of 2021. *Note: Grantees are required to continue matching the funds previously allocated in FY 19-20 via [CFL 19/20-67](#).*
- WIC Section 16523.2 was added to require that BFH regulations be adopted by July 1, 2024. Until regulations are adopted, all-county letters or similar instructions will have the same force and effect as regulations.
- WIC Section 10618.8 was added to allow CDSS to use BFH funds for a formal evaluation, data collection, and technical assistance contracts, in coordination with legislature, stakeholders and client advocates. CDSS must report on these contracts and efforts annually to the legislature.

Additional information related to these recent statutory updates, including guidance on how programs should incorporate changes in eligibility, will be provided under separate cover. Counties and tribes operating a BFH should continue following guidance provided in [ACWDL dated September 5, 2019](#) until further guidance is released.

Housing and Disability Advocacy Program

The Housing and Disability Advocacy Program (HDAP) was established by [AB 1603 \(Chapter 25, Statutes of 2016\)](#) and amended pursuant to [SB 80 \(Chapter 27, Statutes 2019\)](#). HDAP is a locally administered program, operated by counties, tribes, or groups of counties and tribes, that provides housing and disability benefits application assistance to people likely eligible for disability benefits. Grantees must offer the four core components of HDAP: outreach, case management, disability benefits advocacy, and housing assistance. Program requirements are outlined in [WIC Sections 18999 - 18999.6](#) and additional information, including a summary of statutory changes made in 2019 and best practices, is outlined in [ACL 19-104](#). Further, [WIC Section 8256](#) requires that all state-funded housing programs, including HDAP, operate in accordance with the core components of Housing First as enumerated in [WIC Section 8255](#) and further outlined in [ACL 19-114](#). Refer to [ACWDL dated August 10, 2020](#) and [ACL 19-104](#) for current HDAP program guidance or visit the [HDAP website](#) for more information.

The Budget Act of 2021 appropriated \$175.0 million total for HDAP, including the annual ongoing appropriation of \$25.0 million which is available for expenditure July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023, and \$150.0 million in one-time state GF appropriation available for encumbrance or expenditure July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2024. Counties and tribes currently operating HDAP are strongly encouraged to continue current HDAP programming pursuant to [ACWDL dated August 10, 2020](#), [ACL19-104](#), and in accordance with signed Directors Certification on file with CDSS. Current grantees may continue to claim expenses for eligible activities completed beginning July 1, 2021 until final allocations are released via a CFL, consistent with [CFL No. 17/18-79](#) and [CFL No. 18/19-25](#) or submit invoices for reimbursement pursuant to MOUs on file. Announcement of funding availability for new and continuing grantees will be provided under separate cover.

Summary of 2021 Statutory Updates

[AB 135](#) made the following changes to the program:

- WIC Section 18999.1(b) was amended to exempt counties and tribes from the dollar-for-dollar match requirements for one-time funds awarded to grantees between July 1, 2021 and through June 30, 2024. *Note: Grantees will continue to be required to match the statewide annual, ongoing \$25.0 million competitive funding appropriation on a dollar-for-dollar basis.*
- WIC Section 18999.2(b) was amended to clarify that individuals at risk of homelessness include individuals who have not yet received an eviction notice.
- WIC Section 18999.4(c) was added to waive the interim assistance reimbursement (IAR) requirement through June 30, 2024.
- WIC Section 18999.6(a) amended the data reporting requirements to better reflect the disability benefits approval process and align with the client's enrollment timeline in HDAP, to the extent possible.
- WIC Section 18999.1(d) was added to require that HDAP regulations be adopted by July 1, 2024. Until regulations are adopted, all-county letters or similar instruction, will have the same force and effect of regulations.
- WIC Section 10618.8 was added to allow CDSS to use HDAP funds for a formal evaluation, data collection, and technical assistance contracts, in coordination with legislature, stakeholders, and client advocates. CDSS must report annually on these contracts and efforts to the legislature.

Additional information related to these recent statutory updates, including guidance on how programs should incorporate changes in eligibility, will be provided under separate cover. Counties and tribes operating an HDAP should continue following guidance provided in [ACWDL dated August 10, 2020](#) and [ACL19-104](#) until further guidance is released.

Home Safe Program

The Home Safe Program, established by [AB 1811 \(Chapter 35, Statutes of 2018\)](#), supports the safety and housing stability of individuals involved in Adult Protective Services (APS) by providing housing-related assistance using evidence-based practices for homeless assistance and prevention. Counties and tribal agencies operating Home Safe programs are expected to implement a range of strategies to support housing stability for APS clients depending on their level of need. Program requirements are outlined in [WIC Sections 15770-15771](#). Services and supports provided may include prevention and diversion services, housing stabilization services, housing navigation, housing related case management, housing related financial assistance including rental subsidies, utility and security deposits, moving assistance, interim housing and referrals to appropriate providers for longer term services to promote housing stability. Further, [WIC Section 8256](#) requires that all state-funded housing programs, including Home Safe, operate in accordance with the core components of Housing First as enumerated in [WIC Section 8255](#) and further outlined in [ACL 19-114](#). Refer to [ACWDL dated October 22, 2018](#) for current Home Safe guidance or visit the [Home Safe Program](#) website for more information.

The Budget Act of 2021 appropriated \$92.5 million in one-time state GF for Home Safe, available for encumbrance or expenditure July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2024. Counties and tribes currently operating Home Safe are strongly encouraged to continue current Home Safe programming pursuant to [ACWDL dated October 22, 2018](#) and in accordance with the grantee's signed Directors Certification on file with CDSS. Current grantees may continue to claim expenses for eligible activities consistent with [CFL No. 18/19-47, dated December 26, 2018](#) beginning July 1, 2021 until allocations are released via a CFL. Announcement of funding availability for new and continuing grantees will be provided under separate cover.

Summary of 2021 Statutory Updates

[AB 135](#) made the following changes to the program:

- WIC Section 15770(c) was amended to clarify that individuals at risk of homelessness include individuals who have not yet received an eviction notice.
- WIC Section 15770(b) was amended to expand eligibility to individuals in the process of APS intake, as well as individuals who may be served through a tribal social services agency who appear to be eligible for adult protective services.
- WIC Section 15771(e) was amended to exempt counties and tribes from the dollar-for-dollar match requirements for one-time funds awarded to grantees between July 1, 2021 and through June 30, 2024. *Note: Grantees are required to continue matching previously allocated funds.*

- WIC Section 10618.8 was added to allow CDSS to use Home Safe funds for a formal evaluation, data collection, and technical assistance contracts, in coordination with legislature, stakeholders, and client advocates. CDSS must report annually on these contracts and efforts to the legislature.

Additional information related to these recent statutory updates, including guidance on how programs should incorporate changes in eligibility, will be provided under separate cover. Counties and tribes operating a Home Safe should continue following guidance provided in [ACWDL dated October 22, 2018](#) until further guidance is released.

Project Roomkey and Rehousing Strategy

In March 2020, communities across California began operating locally driven and state supported Project Roomkey (PRK), a first in the nation initiative, to provide emergency non-congregate shelter (NCS) protective placements (e.g., hotel/motels) for people experiencing homelessness. The CDSS utilized a \$50.0 million state general fund appropriation to provide funds to counties and tribes to secure trailers, motels, and hotels to initiate and operate PRK. CDSS allocated an additional \$59.0 million in one-time state GF in December 2020 to support continued PRK operations while increasing the focus and resources to transition participants to permanent housing. The need for Project Roomkey and Rehousing remains critical to continue to keep people experiencing homelessness and their communities safe during the COVID-19 pandemic while providing housing assistance to ensure that participants do not return to homelessness.

The Budget Act of 2021 appropriated an additional \$150 million in one-time state GF for continuation of the Project Roomkey and Rehousing Strategy. Counties and tribes currently operating a PRK and Rehousing Strategy are strongly encouraged to continue operating programs pursuant to the [ACWDL dated November 18, 2020](#) and [ACWDL dated June 1, 2020](#) and in accordance with the grantee's signed Directors Certification on file with CDSS. Announcement of funding availability for new and continuing grantees will be provided under separate cover.

For any questions regarding the information in this letter, contact the Housing and Homelessness Branch at 916-651-5155 or housing@dss.ca.gov.