CalWORKs Homeless Assistance (HA) Program

FACT SHEET

The CalWORKs Homeless Assistance (HA) Program was established to help CalWORKs families meet the costs of securing permanent housing. HA includes 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 prevent eviction. CalWORKs families experiencing homelessness may receive either temporary or permanent HA, or both, once in a 12-month period, with certain exceptions.

Program Overview

- The CalWORKs Homeless Assistance Program serves eligible CalWORKs applicants or recipients who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

- Types of CalWORKs Homeless Assistance
  - Temporary Homeless Assistance provides a payment of $85 per day for a family of four or fewer, and an additional $15 for each additional family member, not to exceed $145 per day. Temporary HA is provided for up to 16 calendar days once in a 12-month period.

  - Permanent Homeless Assistance helps families secure housing by providing security deposit costs, including last month’s rent, or helps families maintain housing by providing up to two months of rent arrears. A permanent HA payment may not exceed two times the total rent amount and the monthly rent cannot exceed 80 percent of the total monthly household income.

- CalWORKs applicants and recipients must have less than $100 in liquid resources (cash on hand) and must be homeless or at risk of homelessness to qualify for HA benefits.

- Exceptions
  - If the family meets the criteria for an exception, a family may receive a second HA payment within the 12-month period.

  - Exceptions include:
    - cases of domestic violence
    - medically verified physical or mental illness
    - a fire or other natural catastrophe beyond the family’s control

  - Exceptions are limited to one payment of temporary HA, permanent HA, or both in the 12-month period.
Recent Homeless Assistance Legislative Changes

- SB 80 (Chapter 27, Statutes of 2019) removed the 16 consecutive day rule for temporary HA. (See All County Letter (ACL) 19-118 for more.)

- AB 960 (Chapter 444, Statutes of 2019) removed the requirement that in order to receive HA, the provider of housing must be “in the business of renting” and expanded allowable providers to include any person or establishment with whom the family has executed a valid lease, sublease, or shared housing agreement. (See ACL 19-118 for more.)

- SB 1811 (Chapter 35, Statutes of 2018) increased the daily rate for Temporary HA to $85 per night for a family of four, up from $65. (See ACL 18-106 and All County Information Notice (ACIN) 1-64-19 for more.)

- AB 607 (Chapter 501, Statutes of 2017) created the Disaster CalFresh program and made certain changes to CalWORKs HA rules for families that are the victims of a state or federally declared disaster. (See ACL 18-17 and ACL 19-77 for more.)

- AB 236 (Chapter 545, Statutes of 2017) provides Temporary HA benefits to CalWORKs parents engaged in family reunification. (See ACL 18-71, ACL 19-77, ACIN 1-61-19, and ACL 19-112 for more.)

- AB 557 (Chapter 691, Statutes of 2017) expanded HA eligibility to CalWORKs applicants who are victims fleeing domestic abuse, without regard to the income or assets of the abuser. (See ACL 18-34, ACL 18-78, ACIN 1-61-19, and ACL 19-77 for more.)

- AB 1603 (Chapter 25, Statutes of 2016) increased HA eligibility to once in a 12-month period, from once in a lifetime. (See ACL 16-98 for more.)

CalWORKs HA FY18-19 statistical information and reports can be viewed on the CDSS website.

The CDSS Housing and Homelessness Branch can be contacted at 916.651.5155 or housing@dss.ca.gov.

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