



CDSS

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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July 2, 2015

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

FROM: TODD R. BLAND
Deputy Director
Welfare-to-Work Division

SUBJECT: CALIFORNIA WORK OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO KIDS
(CalWORKs) HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAM

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- ☐ State Law Change
- ☐ Federal Law or Regulation Change
- ☐ Court Order
- ☐ Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- ☒ Initiated by CDSS

Senate Bill (SB) 855 (Chapter 29, Statutes of 2014) created the CalWORKs Housing Support Program (HSP) in Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-15. The Governor's approved 2014-15 Budget allocated \$20 million for the CalWORKs HSP. Twenty counties were allocated HSP funds in September 2014 to be used through June 30, 2015. The Governor's approved Budget for 2015-16 allocates \$35 million for the CalWORKs HSP to continue through FY 2015-16.

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is now seeking proposals from County Welfare Departments (CWDs) interested in implementing a new HSP or continuing an existing HSP in their county through FY 2015-16.

The objective of the CalWORKs HSP is to foster housing stability for families in the CalWORKs program. The HSP funding shall be used to support projects that use evidence-based models including those reflected in the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program at the county level. In an effort to promote collaboration amongst human services providers, CDSS requires that CWDs applying for HSP funding consult with their local Continuum of Care provider. CWDs are also strongly encouraged explore joining the continuum as a member and to partner with other local community-based organizations that are experienced in providing housing services. Data collection, progress monitoring and outcome recording continue to be essential elements of the CalWORKs HSP. Training will be offered to provide technical assistance related to housing support.

The HSP eligibility criteria and application guidelines for FY 2015-16 are attached for reference (attachment three). The guidelines have been updated from FY 2014-15 to include the CDSS definition of homeless. All references to serving families at risk of homelessness have been removed. Other non-substantive changes were also made. General rapid rehousing program resources and best practice recommendations related to program operation costs and administrative expenses are provided within attachment four.

The CalWORKs Housing Support Program is an ongoing program enacted by the Legislature. However, program funding is contingent upon annual appropriation in the Budget Act. Funding shall be allocated annually.

Families must be literally homeless, as defined by the CDSS (refer to attachment three) to be eligible for HSP. However, counties may continue to provide housing supports after CalWORKs discontinuance, if the discontinuance is due to no longer meeting the income eligibility requirements.

Application requirements will vary depending on the CWD's HSP funding status during FY 2014-15 and are outlined below.

Process for HSP Funded Counties to Request Continued Funding

Counties requesting continued funding shall submit the *Updated Program Scope Certification and Request for Continued Funding* document (attachment one) by July 17, 2015. Requests for additional funding should be included in this certification.

Initial allocation letters will be issued by the CDSS to currently funded counties by the end of July. If the CWD is requesting *additional* funding (greater than the CWD's allocation amount for 2014-15) a second allocation letter will be issued by the CDSS in early October, as applicable.

Process for New HSP Funding Requests

Counties requesting new funding shall submit the *Program Scope Certification and Request for New Funding* document (attachment two) by August 14, 2015. Counties that submitted a proposal in 2014-15 have the option of submitting an entirely new proposal, if they wish to do so. If the CWD did not submit a proposal in 2014-15, a full proposal that meets the application criteria (attachment three) must also be submitted. Allocation letters will be issued by the CDSS and sent electronically to the CWD in early October.

CWDs should note the following timelines:

- Program scope for current HSP CWDs due: July 17, 2015
- First allocation letter for current HSP CWDs: End of July

- Program scope and proposal for new HSP CWDs due: August 14, 2015
- Allocation letters for new HSP CWDs or funding increase: Early October

Funding requests for FY 2015-16 shall be sent electronically to Julie McQuitty at julianne.mcquitty@dss.ca.gov no later than 5:00 p.m. on the due date indicated above. Late applications will not be accepted. HSP funding is an augmentation to the county allocation. This is not a grant.

If you have any questions regarding the CalWORKs Housing Support Program or the application process, please contact the CalWORKs Eligibility Bureau at (916) 654-1322.

Attachments

ATTACHMENT ONE

CalWORKs Housing Support Program Program Scope Certification and Request for Continued Funding (2015-16)

This form is to be completed by CWDs in receipt of CalWORKs HSP funding for 2014-15 and who are requesting HSP funding to continue for 2015-16.

County Name: _____

Indicate the primary CWD contact regarding the HSP request for continued funding.

Contact Name and Title: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

I. PROGRAM SCOPE

Attach a description of your Housing Support Program (in two pages or less) that includes the following:

- a. Existing scope of services and partnerships
- b. Any changes you plan to implement for your FY 2015-16 HSP that differ from the proposal submitted for FY 2014-15
- c. Indicate that you have consulted with your local Continuum of Care, if your county has one

II. BUDGET DETAIL

- a. Indicate the **total** amount of funding the county is requesting: _____
- b. Number of families the CWD will place in permanent housing: _____
- c. Attach a detailed program budget for FY 2015-16.

III. DIRECTOR'S CERTIFICATION

I certify that the CWD will administer the CalWORKs Housing Support Program pursuant to the conditions set forth by the California Department of Social Services. I certify that the information completed above and attached is true and correct.

Director's Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

ATTACHMENT TWO

CalWORKs Housing Support Program Program Scope Certification and Request for New Funding (2015-16)

This form is to be completed by CWDs not currently operating a HSP, but who are requesting HSP funding for 2015-16.

County Name: _____

Indicate the primary CWD contact regarding the HSP request for new funding.

Contact Name and Title: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

I. PROPOSAL OR PROGRAM SCOPE UPDATE

Attach your CWD's HSP proposal for FY 2015-16. Proposals must meet the criteria outlined within the attached application guidelines (attachment three). CWDs have the option of submitting the Program Scope Update in lieu of a new proposal if a proposal was already submitted in 2014-15.

Program Scope Update (Complete only if proposal is not attached)

Attach a description of your proposed Housing Support Program (in two pages or less) that includes the following:

- a. Proposed scope of services and existing partnerships
- b. Any changes you plan to implement in FY 2015-16 HSP that differ from the proposal submitted for FY 2014-15
- c. Indicate that you have consulted with your local Continuum of Care, if your county has one

II. BUDGET DETAIL

- a. Indicate the amount of funding the county is requesting: _____
- b. Number of families the county will place in permanent housing: _____
- c. Attach a detailed program budget for FY 2015-16.

III. DIRECTOR'S CERTIFICATION

I certify that the County will administer the CalWORKs Housing Support Program pursuant to the conditions set forth by the California Department of Social Services. I certify that the information completed above and attached is true and correct.

Director's Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

ATTACHMENT THREE

2015-16 APPLICATION GUIDELINES: NEW PROGRAM REQUESTS CalWORKs HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAM

A. PURPOSE

The California Department of Social Services is seeking counties to implement programs to address homelessness for families in the CalWORKs program. The program will be funded with monies appropriated in the California state budget. The goal of the program is to address the housing crisis of CalWORKs families who are experiencing homelessness through the use of evidence-based models, including, but not limited to, those established as part of HUD's Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program.

B. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

The nature of this application is a competitive process. It is possible that counties may not receive funding or may not receive the full amount of their request. In evaluating county requests, the CDSS will give priority to those counties that:

1. Thoroughly and completely provide required response elements listed;
2. Demonstrate local need, including the extent to which families in their CalWORKs program experience homelessness;
3. Demonstrate the capacity to quickly implement a program impactful to community needs including an ability to collaboratively engage local county program partners or stakeholders, including the local Continuum of Care if your county has one;
4. Prioritize assisting families who are currently homeless including but not limited to those already implementing a progressive engagement model of rapid rehousing or other evidence-based approach that is cost effective and impactful to the need;
5. Maximize the use of funds for direct services and minimize administration;
6. Demonstrate the ability to maintain records, collect data, and track both qualitative and quantitative outcomes.

C. REQUIRED ELEMENTS

To be considered for funding, please thoroughly respond to the items below.

1. Describe the problem of homelessness in your CalWORKs program.
2. Identify target population(s) for your Housing Support Program. Describe your selection criteria and how participants will be identified.
3. Describe how your county will structure its program:
 - A. Will your county's Housing Support Program contract with any already existing programs or services? For each major component indicate if its function will be in-house or contracted out. For in-house functions, describe your staff's ability and background knowledge to be successful in completing these functions. For contracted functions, indicated (1) the entity with which your county will contract, and (2) include documentation of the entity's interest, if possible.
 - B. What is your county's strategy for implementing housing identification services?
 - (i) How do you propose to manage landlord recruitment and engagement?
 - (ii) With whom will you work to identify potential housing units and ensure participants are accessing housing that meets habitability and safety standards?
 - C. With respect to service array, please describe: (1) what services will be delivered, (2) how services will be delivered, and (3) the anticipated duration of each service.
 - D. How will you assess a family's housing needs and barriers? Indicate the name of the assessment tool you plan to use. If you plan to use a tool created by the county, include a copy of the tool with your proposal. How will you ensure that housing barriers are assessed in order to help the families address them successfully and not to screen them out of assistance?
 - E. With respect to financial assistance, describe (1) the anticipated maximum and average amount of subsidies to households, (2) the anticipated maximum and average duration of rental assistance, and (3) any criteria you will employ to evaluate continued participation in, or renewal of, financial assistance.
 - F. Describe your existing capacity to collect data and track progress and outcomes related housing stability, including your ability to complete and submit the HSP 14 report timely and accurately.
 - G. Describe strategies you will use to maximize direct services and minimize administrative expenses.

- H. Describe the detailed anticipated timetable for implementing the program. Include when you anticipate your Board will approve program implementation and what contracts shall be executed with contractors, if applicable, prior to program implementation.

D. ELIGIBLE POPULATION

The CalWORKs HSP funding may be used to assist families who are literally homeless. For the purposes of the CalWORKs HSP, the CDSS defines “homeless” as follows:

1. Lacking a fixed or regular nighttime residence; and either
 - a. Having a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised publically or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations; or
 - b. Residing in a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; or
2. In receipt of a judgment for eviction, as ordered by the court.

ATTACHMENT FOUR

GENERAL RAPID REHOUSING PROGRAM INFORMATION

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is seeking counties to continue to implement programs to prevent and resolve homelessness. Senate Bill 855 (Chapter 29, Statutes of 2014) established the CalWORKs Housing Support program. It states, in part, that “it is the intent of the Legislature that housing supports provided pursuant to this article utilize evidence-based models, including those established in the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program” (HPRP). More information and additional applicant resources can be located online:

- HUD’s Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program:
<http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/recovery/programs/homelessness>
- National Alliance to End Homelessness:
<http://www.endhomelessness.org/pages/rapidrehousing1>
- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF): <http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/index.asp>, and
http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/docs/SSVF/SSVF_Practice_Standards_April_2013.pdf.
- CalWORKs Housing Support Program Resources:
<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/calworks/PG3658.htm>

Housing Support Program Overview

Rapid Rehousing and targeted homelessness prevention programs have been implemented nationwide as cost effective strategies to help families exit or avoid homelessness and retain permanent housing. The program’s goal is to assist families in quickly obtaining permanent housing and provide wrap-around supports to families to foster housing retention.

The core components of a successful Rapid Rehousing Program include comprehensive and coordinated entry with community partners along a continuum of care, housing identification, rent and moving assistance, focused case management, and services based on individual participant needs. Services could include, but are not limited to, landlord outreach and engagement, housing search and placement, housing barrier assessment, legal services, and credit repair.

The National Alliance to End Homeless, together with the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of Veterans Affairs, describe the core components of Rapid Rehousing as:

Housing Identification

- Landlord recruitment and engagement.
- Addressing potential barriers to landlord participation.
- Assisting households to find and secure appropriate rental housing.

Rent and Moving Assistance

- Provision of financial assistance to cover move-in costs, deposits, and the rental and/or utility assistance necessary to allow individuals and families to move immediately into permanent housing. These costs can also include, as appropriate, lot rent for an RV or manufactured home; application fees; credit check fees; legal fees and fines.

Case Management and Services

- Helping families address issues that may impede access to housing.
- Helping families negotiate manageable and appropriate lease agreements with landlords.
- Making appropriate and time-limited services and supports available to families to allow them to quickly stabilize in permanent housing.
- Ensuring that services provided are client-directed, respectful of individuals' right to self-determination, and voluntary.

Rapid Rehousing and targeted prevention programs are structured to flexibly provide only the financial assistance and service support necessary to secure housing for those without it or to retain housing for those at imminent risk of losing it ("progressive engagement"). Regular reassessments of household stability are a best practice to ensure households are neither over-nor under-assisted.

Program operations include both the services and financial assistance provided to participating families and the housing location and support services. In addition to the activities described above, program operations also include costs specifically attributed to outreach workers and housing locators, case managers, and other direct service personnel, as well as the cost of administering rental assistance and conducting inspections. It includes activities for the arrangement, coordination, monitoring, and delivery of services related to meeting the housing needs of families and helping them to obtain housing stability. Best practices allow for roughly 80 percent of funding to be allocated to program operations, with approximately 70 percent of the total funding allocated to rent and moving assistance and ten percent of the total funding allocated to case management and services.

Administrative costs, as well as data collection and reporting comprise the two remaining cost categories. Administrative costs are defined as those costs that include program managers, directors, IT, and accounting; benefits; facilities costs; office supplies; and equipment (this list is not exhaustive). Best practices allow for approximately 15 percent of funding to this category. Data collection and tracking includes staff and time dedicated to these activities, as well as necessary supplies and equipment; best practices allocate roughly five percent of funding for this purpose.