SSA Intranet

Homeless Assistance Number: 100-H2

Approved: ***Signature on File*** Date: 1/1/96 (R 5/10)

PURPOSE

To provide instructions for issuing Temporary and Permanent Homeless Assistance.

POLICY

Temporary and/or Permanent Homeless Assistance (HA) is available to a homeless family seeking shelter when the family is eligible to CalWORKs. HA for temporary shelter is also available to homeless families who are apparently eligible for CalWORKs.

DEFINITION OF HOMELESS

An Assistance Unit (AU) is considered **Homeless** when it:

• Lacks a fixed or regular nighttime residence; ***or***

• Is staying in a shelter that provides temporary housing (even if there is no cost); ***or***

• Is residing in a public or private place not designed nor ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation of human beings, like a garage or car; ***or***

• Has a need for housing in a commercial establishment, shelter, publicly-funded transitional housing, or from a person in the business of renting properties; ***or***

• Receives a pay rent or quit (eviction) notice.

TYPES OF HOMELESS ASSISTANCE

There are two basic types of Homeless Assistance – Temporary and Permanent. The AU can get Temporary HA for shelter costs if the AU has no place to stay while looking for a permanent place to live.

There are two types of Permanent HA.

1. To help pay for costs of securing a new permanent residence if the AU has no fixed or regular nighttime residence.
2. To prevent eviction when the AU is given a pay rent or quit notice for non-payment of rent due to a financial hardship situation resulting from circumstances beyond their control.

INFORMING REQUIREMENTS

Applicants for HA must be informed that HA is limited to an “once-in-a-lifetime” payment

• Temporary Homeless Assistance (THA) is only available for a 16 consecutive day period and is exhausted at the end of this period even if payments for all 16 days are not authorized.

• Permanent Homeless Assistance (PHA) is available to pay for last month rent and security deposits to secure a residence ***or*** up to two months of rent arrearages when a reasonable condition of preventing eviction exists.

• After the once-in-a-lifetime payment has been received, if an AU meets one of the exceptions, the AU may be entitled to additional payments, with restrictions.

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ONCE IN A LIFETIME EXCEPTIONS

Domestic Violence:
• Homelessness that is the direct result of domestic violence by a spouse, partner or roommate.
• Verified by a third party governmental or private health and human services agency or
• May be verified by a sworn statement by the victim for up to two periods of temporary shelter and two payments for permanent housing assistance.
• If verifying with a sworn statement, immediately inform client of the availability of domestic violence counseling services, and refer to services upon request.
• Limited to one period of up to 16 consecutive calendar days of temporary shelter and one payment of permanent housing assistance in any 12 month period.

Physical or Mental Illness
• Homelessness resulting from a medically verified physical or mental illness, excluding alcoholism, drug addiction or psychological stress.
• Medical verification sources include the treating physician, state certified nurse, nurse practitioner, physician's assistant, therapist, psychologist, licensed counselor, and medical or clinical personnel with access to the patient's records.
• Limited to one period of up to 16 consecutive calendar days of temporary shelter and one payment of permanent housing assistance in any 12 month period.

Uninhabitability of the Residence:
• Inability to inhabit former residence caused by sudden and unusual circumstances beyond the control of the family, including, but not limited to, natural catastrophe, fire, or condemnation.
• Verification includes written statements or copies of reports from police departments, fire departments, the Red Cross, health department or any other agencies authorized to verify inability to inhabit a former residence.
• Limited to one period of up to 16 consecutive calendar days of temporary shelter and one payment of permanent housing assistance in any 12 month period.

State or Federally Declared Natural Disaster:
• Homeless assistance is available whenever a state or federally declared natural disaster is the direct and primary cause of homelessness.
• Issuance under this exception is unlimited.

ADDITIONAL HOMELESS ASSISTANCE EXCEPTIONS

An AU that has received a homeless assistance payment at any time on behalf of an eligible child, shall not be eligible for further homeless assistance payments except in the following situation:

1. There is a new caretaker relative who has not previously received temporary and permanent homeless assistance on behalf of or as part of another AU, and who was not living with the AU at the time the original homeless assistance payment was issued ***and***
2. The caretaker relative who received the homeless assistance payment is no longer living in the home with the AU.

REQUEST FOR HOMELESS ASSISTANCE

Applicants/recipients of CalWORKs must complete a separate application for homeless assistance (CA 42) (Attachment I) to apply for temporary shelter payments and/or permanent housing assistance, including permanent homeless assistance for the payment of rent arrearages.
Review MEDS and confirm any previous issuances of homeless assistance payments and/or exception criteria using the IEVS HAPI screen. (Attachment II)

TEMPORARY HOMELESS ASSISTANCE (THA)

Temporary homeless assistance is:

• Granted for a continuous period of homelessness caused by the same specific circumstances.

• Limited to a maximum of one period of up to 16 consecutive calendar days.

Additional THA payments will not be issued during the 16 consecutive calendar period if there is a break in homelessness and the AU then becomes homeless again for another reason.

Example A:

After the initial issuance of 3 days of THA an AU finds permanent housing. After 5 days the AU is evicted from this permanent residence. Under these circumstances this AU is no longer eligible for the remaining calendar days of THA.

Temporary shelter benefits are exhausted at the end of the 16 consecutive day period even if payments for all 16 days are not authorized.

Example B:

After the initial issuance of 3 days of THA an AU does not appear for their second issuance of 4 days of THA. The AU is still homeless for the initial reason therefore the AU is eligible for the remainder of the 16 days of THA if they reapply within the 16-day period.

TEMPORARY HOUSING ASSISTANCE (THA) RATE

The total daily rate for THA is $65 per day for a family of four or fewer and $15 per day for each additional family member up to a maximum of $125 daily. The rate applies only to eligible or apparently eligible AU members. Family members such as drug felons, ineligible non-citizens and/or timed-out individuals are excluded.

Note: If the actual daily rate charged to the AU is less that the THA daily payments, the AU must receive the difference. This includes payments made to vendors.

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TEMPORARY HOUSING ASSISTANCE (THA) ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To initially receive THA the AU must:

1. Be CalWORKs eligible or *apparently* eligible when information presented by the applicant or otherwise available to the CWD along with the information provided on the application documents indicate that there would be eligibility for aid.
2. Have resources (cash, bank accounts and savings bonds) of no more than $100 available to the AU (a one time determination during an incident of homelessness). The CalWORKs grant is not included in this determination.
3. Be seeking permanent shelter.

Note: A noncitizen applicant who does not provide proof of eligible alien status or a woman without eligible children who does not provide medical verification of pregnancy is not apparently eligible.

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TEMPORARY SHELTER REQUIREMENTS

Temporary shelter must:

1. Have a cost.
2. Be paid to a commercial establishment, a shelter, or to a person in the business of renting property.
3. Not be the most recent former residence in which the AU lived just prior to being determined homeless, except for unusual circumstances beyond the control of the AU.

Required Verifications

Homelessness must be verified within three working days with any of the following:

- A statement of eviction/pay rent or quit notice.
- Contact with landlord or shelter operator.
- Client's sworn statement on the Statement of Homelessness Form F0912-30-144 (Attachment III) if no other method is available.

After initial and subsequent payments of THA:

- Verify temporary shelter expense (i.e. receipts).
- Collect Housing Search form from the client to determine that one shelter contact per day was completed, unless good cause such as illness or lack of transportation exists. Use CalWIN generated form CA 74 or the Permanent Housing Search Form F0912-30-145 (Attachment IV).

TEMPORARY HOUSING ASSISTANCE (THA) ISSUANCE

Payment for temporary homeless assistance must be:

- Issued or denied within the same working day in which the AU requests homeless assistance.
- Issued no later than the close of business on the working day following the request, when SSA arranges for shelter in the interim.

Utilize Homeless Assistance Temporary Shelter Worksheet Form F063-30-121A (Attachment V) to process the following issuances:

1. Initial Issuance:

- If homelessness is not verified, issue for 3 working days. Including weekends and holidays will allow for more than a 3-day issuance.
- If homelessness is verified, issue for 7 calendar days.

1. Second Issuance:

7 days

1. Third Issuance:

Remaining balance of the 16 consecutive day period.

Note: Do not issue for more than 7 days and adjust payments as needed to allow for Social Service Agency (SSA) office closures, holidays and weekends.

TEMPORARY HOUSING ASSISTANCE (THA) PROCESSING REQUIREMENTS

Issue appropriate CalWIN Notice of Action (NOA) to immediately approve or deny THA application:

- M44-211A - Approve - Temporary Homeless Eligibility
- M44-211D - Deny - Temporary Homeless Ineligibility

Note: Child Support Services (CSS) cooperation determination is not required prior to THA issuance however the CA2.1 Agreement to Cooperate must be signed.

PERMANENT HOMELESS ASSISTANCE (PHA)

Permanent homeless assistance is available to assist the homeless CalWORKs ***recipient*** AU in obtaining ***or*** retaining permanent housing. Receipt of either of these two permanent assistance payment types constitutes an AU's once in a lifetime payment. However, if an AU meets one of the exceptions, the AU may be entitled to additional payments, with restrictions.

PHA may be granted whether or not a payment for temporary housing assistance has been issued. An AU may receive temporary housing assistance, after permanent housing assistance has been granted, when the need for temporary shelter exists prior to assuming occupancy of the permanent housing, providing that the 16 consecutive day limit for temporary assistance has not expired.

Example:

An AU applies for temporary housing assistance on 1/21 and is issued 7 days of THA. The AU returns on 1/28 and receives permanent housing assistance to secure an apartment. They are not able to move in until 2/1. An additional 4 days of THA will be issued as they remain homeless through 1/31 and the 16 consecutive day limit for temporary assistance has not expired.

PERMANENT HOMELESS ASSISTANCE (PHA) ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To receive PHA the AU must:

1. Be CalWORKs eligible on the first of the month. If a notice of action to discontinue at the end of the PHA application month has been issued, PHA can be issued through the end of the month.
2. Have resources (cash, bank accounts and savings bonds) of no more than $100 available to the AU (a one time determination during incident of homelessness). CalWORKs grant is not included in this determination.
3. Be seeking permanent shelter ***or*** assistance to prevent eviction.

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PERMANENT SHELTER REQUIREMENTS TO SECURE PERMANENT HOUSING

To receive permanent housing assistance to ***secure permanent housing*** an AU:

1. Must meet the definition of homeless.
2. Will have found permanent housing that:

• Does not rent for more than 80% of the AU's total monthly household income or

• If the AU is sharing housing or receiving subsidized housing assistance, the AU's share of the rent does not exceed 80% of the AU's total monthly household income.

Permanent housing move in costs are available to pay for the reasonable costs of security deposits when the deposits are a condition of securing a permanent residence.

• The total amount cannot exceed two months of the AU's rent or share of the rent.

• In subsidized housing cost situations, the total amount cannot exceed two months of the rent amount that the AU is obligated to pay (the full amount prior to housing assistance).

• The reasonable cost of security deposits includes the last month's rent and any legal payment, fee, deposit or charge that is required by the landlord as a condition of assuming occupancy.

• The portion of the security deposit payment that is for last month's rent cannot exceed 80 % of the AU's total monthly household income.

• Utility deposits are considered a part of the permanent housing benefits, although issued separately and usually at a later date.

• The AU must pay the permanent housing assistance payment to a commercial establishment or a person in the business of renting property.

• The cost of first month's rent is not allowed.

Required Verifications

1. Move in cost must be verified prior to payment.
2. Permanent Housing Verification Form F0912-30-132 (Attachment VI) must be completed.
3. Proof of amount paid for permanent shelter must be provided within 30 days.

TOTAL MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME (TMHI)

When determining the total monthly household income use the current amount of income available to the AU that they list on the CW 42 form at the time of application for homeless assistance.

Count all earned and unearned income of all AU members and any other persons whose income is currently used in calculating the AU grant, including sanctioned and penalized household members and persons who are excluded by law because of undocumented non-citizen, drug felon, or timed-out status.

Include the CalWORKs grant amount and an MFG child's child support income, but exclude any special needs.

PERMANENT SHELTER REQUIREMENTS TO PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

Permanent homeless assistance payments to ***prevent homelessness*** are available to pay for back rent (arrearages) when the AU is experiencing a financial crisis that could result in homelessness if preventative assistance is not provided.

• Payment of arrearages is available to pay up to two prior months of back rent.

• Payment can cover one month of arrears and the current month's rent if required by the landlord to avoid eviction.

• Note: Once rent for the current month is overdue, it should be considered as an arrearage.

• Each month of rent arrearage payment cannot exceed 80% of the AU's total monthly household income.

• Payments are for rent only, unless utilities are included as part of the rent.

Required verifications:

To receive permanent homeless assistance to prevent homelessness an AU must:

1. Provide a notice to pay rent or quit or other verification of pending eviction.
2. Demonstrate that the eviction is the result of a financial hardship that resulted from extraordinary circumstances beyond their control, and not due to other lease or rental violations.

Additional required verifications:

1. Proof of amount paid toward arrearages must be provided within 30 days.

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PERMANENT HOUSING ASSISTANCE ISSUANCE PROCESSING REQUIREMENT

The determination of eligibility for permanent housing assistance must be made within one working day of the AU providing all required verifications. Take action on the day of request when the office is closed the next working day.

1. Utilize the Homeless Assistance Permanent Payment Worksheet F063-121-B (Attachment VII) to determine program eligibility and computation of payment.
2. Issue appropriate CalWIN Notice of Action (NOA)
M44-211A - Approve - Permanent Homeless Eligibility
M44-211D – Deny - Permanent Homeless Ineligibility

ACTIVE CALWORKS CASE IN ANOTHER COUNTY

The County where the AU resides is responsible for the eligibility determination and issuance of the Homeless Assistance payment from the date of the request. This is the county in which the AU is physically located and intends to reside.

• If an applicant leaves a County prior to authorization of CalWORKs and applies for HA in a second County, the first County is responsible for approving the CalWORKs application and initiating an Inter-County Transfer (ICT). The second County is responsible for issuing the HA payment.

Orange County Policy: A formal ICT is not required when the HA application is made in Orange County and the applicant has a case pending in another county. Coordinate transfer actions with the first county and request that the other County forward only the SAWS1 and missing verification.

VENDOR PAYMENTS/ TWO PARTY CHECKS

HA payments shall be made to the provider in the following circumstances:

• The AU's written request.
• The HA payment was not used for shelter or not used to pay a commercial establishment or a person in the business of renting property.
• The AU fails to provide verification as required.
• The AU is homeless as the result of failure to pay rent unless the failure to pay rent is due to:

A rent increase in excess of 80% of the THMI for the AU.

The reasonable right of a tenant to withhold rent for cause.

Domestic violence.

The restricted HA payments can be issued either:

• To the AU for delivery to the service provider or
• To the service provider

CALWIN ENTRIES

Refer to: Homeless Assistance – Temporary
Refer to: Homeless Assistance – Permanent

REFERENCES:

MPP 44-211.5; ACL 08-56; ACL 08-42; ACL 06-58; ACL 06-25; ACL 01-43; ACL 95-62; ACL 88-120.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment I – CW 42 Statement of Facts – Homeless Assistance
Attachment II - IEVS HAPI screen
Attachment III – Statement of Homelessness F0912-30-144
Attachment IV – Permanent Housing Search F0912-30-145
Attachment V - Homeless Assistance Temporary Shelter Worksheet F063-30-121A
Attachment VI - Permanent Housing Verification F063-30-132
Attachment VII - Homeless Assistance Permanent Payment Worksheet F063-30-121B

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