

**County of Orange Social Services Agency
Family Self-Sufficiency**

Program/Area: CalWORKs/Welfare-To-Work

Title: Homeless Assistance

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Approved:

PURPOSE To provide instructions for issuing Temporary and Permanent Homeless Assistance on CalWORKs/Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) cases.

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

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.

Temporary Homeless Assistance (THA) - The AU can get THA for shelter costs if the AU has no place to stay while looking for a permanent place to live.

Permanent Homeless Assistance (PHA) - There are two types of PHA.

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 a “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.

NOTE:

- The initial issuance of THA and/or PHA is considered the once-in-a-lifetime homeless assistance benefit regardless of the reason for the homelessness.
- The homeless assistance issuances are non-repayable and cannot be collected even if the participant’s situation changes and no longer has a need for further issuances. Once the first homeless assistance payment (THA and/or PHA) is issued, the once-in-a-lifetime homeless assistance is exhausted.
- The AU is not eligible for HA if the AU already receives assistance from other source (i.e. the American Red Cross) for the same situation.

**ONCE IN A
LIFETIME
EXCEPTIONS**

There are exceptions to the once-in-a-lifetime homeless assistance.
**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 THA and one payment of PHA 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 THA and one payment of PHA 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 THA and one payment of PHA in any 12 month period.

State or Federally Declared Natural Disaster:

Homeless assistance is available whenever a state or federal declared natural disaster is the direct and primary cause of homelessness and there is no other available resource, i.e. American Red Cross.

- Issuance under this exception is unlimited.

**ADDITIONAL
HOMELESS
ASSISTANCE**

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:

EXCEPTIONS

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/RCA must complete a separate application for homeless assistance (CW 42) ([Attachment I](#)) to apply for THA and/or PHA, including PHA for the payment of rent arrearages.

Staff must 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 (i.e. the AU reapplies for THA on the 6th day, the AU is eligible for the remaining 10 days of THA)

**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 fleeing felons, ineligible non-citizens, sanctioned and/or timed-out individuals are excluded.

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

**TEMPORARY
HOUSING
ASSISTANCE (THA)
ELIGIBILITY
REQUIREMENTS**

To initially receive THA, the AU must meet all the following criteria:

1. Be CalWORKs/RCA 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, ***and***
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/RCA grant is not included in this determination, ***and***
3. Be seeking permanent shelter by completing the Permanent Housing Search form F0912-30-145 ([Attachment IV](#)).

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 for CalWORKs/RCA; therefore, ineligible for HA.

**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 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.

2. Second Issuance:

- 7 days

3. 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 CW2.1 Agreement to Cooperate must be signed.

**PERMANENT
HOMELESS
ASSISTANCE (PHA)**

Permanent homeless assistance is available to assist the homeless CalWORKs/RCA **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 THA has been issued. An AU may receive THA, after PHA 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 PHA 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

To receive PHA, the AU must meet all the following criteria:

**HOMELESS
ASSISTANCE (PHA)
ELIGIBILITY
REQUIREMENTS**

1. Be CalWORKs/RCA eligible on the first of the month. If a notice of action to discontinue CalWORKs/RCA at the end of the PHA application month has been issued, PHA can be issued through the end of the month, and
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/RCA grant is not included in this determination, and
3. Be seeking permanent shelter or assistance to prevent eviction.

**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. Have found permanent housing that:
 - Rent does not exceed 80% of the AU's total monthly household income (TMHI) 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 TMHI.

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 TMHI.
- Utility deposits are considered 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 F063-30-132 ([Attachment VI](#)) must be completed.
3. Proof of amount paid for permanent shelter must be provided within 30 days of PHA payment.

TOTAL MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME (TMHI)

When determining the TMHI, 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, fleeing felon, or timed-out status.

Include the CalWORKs/RCA 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 arrearage 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 TMHI.
- Payments are for rent only, unless utilities are included

as part of the rent.

Required verifications:

To receive PHA 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:

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

PERMANENT HOUSING ASSISTANCE ISSUANCE PROCESSING REQUIREMENT

The determination of eligibility for PHA 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 F063-30-121B ([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/RCA 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/RCA and applies for HA in a second county, the first county is responsible for approving the CalWORKs/RCA application and initiating an Inter-County Transfer (ICT). The second county is responsible for issuing the HA payment.
- Follows normal registration process for issuance of

Homeless Assistance.

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

Refer to the [Two - Party Check Issuance Resource Guide](#) for step-by-step instructions on how to update the split payment screens in CalWIN.

CALWIN ENTRIES Refer to: [Homeless Assistance – Temporary](#)
Refer to: [Homeless Assistance – Permanent](#)
Refer to: [Two - Party Check Issuance Resource Guide](#)

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](#)

OCSSSA