

Placer County Human Services

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| EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/14/2015 | REVISION DATE: 7/1/2017 | TITLE: Housing Support Program | PROGRAM: ES |
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| Background | <p>With Senate Bill (SB) 855 (Chapter 29, Statutes of 2014), the California Legislature recognized that stable housing is necessary for families working towards self-sufficiency and expanded homeless and housing support in the CalWORKs program providing for the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to launch the CalWORKs Housing Support Program (HSP). Placer County's CalWORKs program, recognizing that homelessness and housing instability are challenging problems that negatively impact families, making it difficult for parents to engage in employment and provide for their children's well-being, sought and received funding beginning fiscal year 2015-2016 and began an HSP in partnership with Advocates for Mentally Ill Housing, Inc. (AMIH), a local community-based organization experienced in providing housing services and a member of the Continuum of Care (CoC).</p> |
| References | <p>Senate Bill (SB) 855 All County Letter (July 2, 2015) ACWDL July 18, 2015 All County Letter (July 18, 2014) CalWORKs Housing Support Program Resources</p> |
| Eligibility | <p>In order to be eligible to Placer County's Housing Support Program, CalWORKs eligible families must meet all of the following eligibility conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One or more adult household members must be eligible to and receiving CalWORKs cash assistance. • All eligible adults must be either participating in Employment Services, and be in good standing, or willing to gain good standing, or willing and eligible to volunteer to participate, or be willing to increase their income by applying for disability income, or be likely to continue to afford their own housing by applying for subsidized housing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Eligible adults need not immediately meet all employment services requirements while homeless; good cause may be granted for not meeting. ○ Eligible adults are expected begin meeting their employment services obligations once housed; this will provide the most likely path for employment or sustainable income to ensure housing can be retained. • Be considered homeless based on one of the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lacking a fixed and regular nighttime residence ○ Having a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations ○ Residing in a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In receipt of a judgment for eviction, as ordered by a court <p>Because of the temporary nature of this program’s housing subsidy, the county must assess the likelihood the family will be able to sustain the monthly rental amount on its own once the housing subsidy ends. Employment by one or more of the parents is the factor that will most positively affect the family’s ability to maintain housing post-subsidy. Therefore one or more of the parents must be work eligible, and working with (or willing and able to work with) their Employment Services Counselor with a goal of employment.</p> <p>HSP eligibility and the subsidy may extend past the family’s CalWORKs eligibility through post aid services so long as the family maintains housing and remains compliant with HSP program. In the case that the family does not find housing prior to going off of aid, post-aid services will be granted for one additional month following discontinuance to allow for the family to obtain housing.</p> <p>HSP is a voluntary program and receiving HSP will not change the family’s CalWORKs grant. The family does not have to use or be eligible for Homeless Assistance in order to receive HSP.</p> |
| Selection Criteria | <p>Housing Support (HSP) is available to assist an AU that has had a continuous period of homelessness in obtaining permanent housing. HSP is available to pay for the reasonable costs of security deposits when the deposits are a condition of securing a permanent residence. The HSP payment may include the actual costs of utility deposits in addition to the amount allowed for security deposits.</p> <p>CalWORKs recipients that apply for and are eligible to (or would be eligible to had they not previously used) the once-per-year CalWORKs Housing Assistance benefit, and that are eligible to Employment Services will be referred to their Employment Services counselors to determine eligibility and referral to AMIH for the CalWORKs Housing Support Program.</p> |
| HSP Services | <p><u>Intensive Case Management:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of housing barriers • Development of Housing Plan • Financial literacy/coaching • Help resolving legal issues • Referrals to resources as needed • Tenant Responsibilities (How to be a good renter) <p><u>Housing Navigation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlord recruitment and retention • Help finding and securing permanent housing for clients |

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| | <p><u>Financial Assistance:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridge housing • Move-in costs (deposits, moving expenses, utility) • Rental subsidy <p>HSP is offered in addition to the following program and/or services available to CalWORKs applicants/recipients, if they are otherwise eligible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary/Permanent Homeless Assistance • Family Stabilization, Homelessness Prevention Services |
| Housing Support Program Arrearage Payments (HSPAP) | <p>Housing Support Assistance is also available to pay up to two months of back rent to prevent eviction. In order for an AU to be eligible for Housing Support Program Arrearage Payments (HSPAP), payment of the back rent must be a reasonable condition of preventing eviction. A family who applies for arrearage payments due to receipt of a notice to pay rent or quit, must demonstrate that the eviction is the result of a verified financial hardship that resulted from extraordinary circumstances beyond their control, and not due to other lease or rental violations. The family must be experiencing a financial crisis that could result in homelessness if preventative assistance is not provided.</p> <p>Example: Financial hardship includes, but is not limited to, losing jobs, delay on UIB payments, or unexpected medical bills. The AU must provide verification of the hardship.</p> |
| Return to Former Residence | <p>Permanent housing assistance is NOT available to assist recipients to return to their most recent former residence, unless there are unusual circumstances beyond the recipient's control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The most recent former residence is defined as the house or same unit in a duplex or apartment complex in which the recipient lived just prior to being determined homeless. •The ESC must carefully document the case record if this should occur and deny the request for permanent housing. <p>Example: A family left a residence in Roseville in order to take advantage of a job offer in Sacramento. When they arrived in Sacramento, they found that the job was no longer available, so they returned to the Roseville area, and were homeless. Their former residence became available and was less expensive than anything else they could locate, so they requested permanent housing to move into their former residence.</p> |

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| | This would be granted due to the unusual circumstances which prompted their return to the Roseville area. |
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| Security Deposits | <p>An amount not to exceed two months of an AU's rent is available to pay for the reasonable costs of security deposits when the deposits are a condition of securing a permanent residence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Security deposits include last month's rent and any legal payment, fee, deposit or charge that is required by a landlord as a condition of assuming occupancy. This would include any fees necessary, such as credit check fees, if required by the landlord. |
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| Utility Deposits | <p>The payment for permanent housing costs may include the actual costs of utility deposits, in addition to the amount allowed for security deposits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The payment shall cover deposits (turn-on-fees) required for gas, electricity and/or water. Do not include deposits for telephone. •The payment shall NOT include the costs of overdue utility bills. <p>Note: Some utility companies do not bill their clients until after the utilities have been hooked up. The ESC can issue the utilities deposit at a date later than the date for the security deposit payment.</p> |
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| Subsidy Amounts | <p>Following standard practices employed by similar Continuum of Care housing programs, AMIH's program requires families pay 30 percent of their income toward rent and utilities. Rental assistance will pay the difference up to the fair market value of the housing unit. The anticipated average and maximum subsidies are below</p> |
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| Average amount of housing subsidies | | | | |
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| Leasing | Deposits | Application, Credit Checks | Furnishings | Total |
| \$8,576 | \$1,000 | \$60 | \$465 | \$10,101 |
| Maximum amount of housing subsidies | | | | |
| Leasing | Deposits | Application, Credit Checks | Furnishings | Total |
| \$19,296 | \$1,500 | \$120 | \$800 | \$21,716 |

As of July 1, 2016, the subsidy budget formula is as follows:

- 1st Month – Rent Paid in Full

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd-3rd Months – Family’s rent is 30% of their gross income 4th-6th Months– Family pays 50% of the rent 7th Month and beyond – Family pays 100% of the rent <p>Depending on the move-in date for the family, the month counted as the first month of subsidy may be the actual month the family moves in, or it may be the following month. If the move-in date is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st-19th – the month counts as the first month 20th-30th /31st – the month does not count as the first month <p>In the latter case, the subsidy would cover the entire prorated rent amount for the move-in month, and the next month would be considered the family’s first in the subsidy formula.</p> <p>The family may ask for an adjustment of their monthly rent should an event beyond their control affect their ability to pay the expected amount. Reasons for an adjustment would include, but would not be limited to, those listed below in the subsidy extensions section. Any adjustment request would be brought to the attention of the Employment Services supervisor and Manager for consideration.</p> |
| Subsidy Extensions | <p>In rare instances, it may be appropriate for a family to receive an extension of the housing subsidy for up to three months if it appears that the family would be able to by the end of the extension, pay the full rent on their own. Appropriate reasons for extending the subsidy include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A medical emergency or temporary disability prevents a family’s income earner from working, but he or she is expected and likely to be able to return to work within the time of the extension and assume payment of the full rent. The family’s income earner is starting a new job, or receiving a promotion or increase in hours within the time of the extension which is expected and likely to allow the family to assume payment of the full rent. A temporary situation has interrupted the family’s ability to pay the rent in full but the situation is expected to be resolved within the time of the extension and expected and likely to allow the family to assume payment of the full rent. <p>In the event that the AMIH or Employment Services Case manager feels an extension is warranted, or if requested by the recipient family, the matter will be brought to the attention of the Employment Services supervisor and Manager for consideration. Final approval or denial will be reported to the recipient family and written notice will be provided or mailed.</p> |

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| | <p>Extensions will not be approved for families that receive and are expected to continue to receive income at a level where rent and utility payments are less than 30% of the family's income</p> |
| Discontinuance | <p>The subsidy will end at the prescribed month and notice will be provided by the County and AMIH. At that time, the family is expected to assume payment of the rent in full.</p> <p>The subsidy or eligibility to the subsidy may be ended early if the family is not compliant with the program rules. Possible reasons Housing Assistance may end <i>or</i> not be issued include, but are not limited to, if the family:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • finds housing outside or moves out of Placer County • moves out of housing after a housing payment has been made • become ineligible for the CalWORKs program • does not find available housing • does not cooperate with the rules of the HSP program • has a participant move to sanction • does not comply with AMIH's program rules • does not comply with Employment Services program rules • is evicted for cause while receiving the subsidy • has income at a level where their rent and utility payments are less than 30% of the family's income. <p>The HSP funding is a separate allocation from the State and is not guaranteed to be funded. Subsidies may end or new subsidies may not begin if funding for HSP services is no longer available.</p> <p>The family may also discontinue from the HSP program prior to successfully finding housing. This may occur when the family's earned income renders them ineligible for CalWORKs due to exceeding the Earned Income Threshold, but barriers to their finding housing remain. HSP eligibility may continue through post-aid services for one additional month following CalWORKs discontinuance to allow for the family to obtain housing. However, should housing not be obtained during that month, HSP eligibility would discontinue regardless. The family would then be referred to AMIH's Housing coordinator for additional assistance.</p> |
| Referral Procedure | <p>Employment Services Counselors are to refer CalWORKs families meeting all eligibility requirements described above to the AMIH contractor by emailing or phoning their designated contact.</p> |