

**County of Orange Social Services Agency
Family Self-Sufficiency/Foster Care Program**

Program/Area: Foster Care

Title: **Approved Relative Caregiver (ARC) Program**

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the eligibility determination of the Approved Relative Caregiver (ARC) Program.

POLICY

The ARC Program allows an approved relative caregiver with whom a non-federally eligible child is placed to receive a payment equal to the basic foster care rate.

BACKGROUND

Federal and State laws require that when a child is removed from the custody of a parent, a relative placement shall be given consideration and is the preferred placement; however, the funding associated with that placement depends upon whether the child is eligible to receive federal foster care payments.

While an approved relative may receive foster care payments on behalf of a federally eligible foster child, an approved relative caring for a non-federally eligible child is ineligible for foster care payments.

Prior to the ARC Program, an approved relative with whom a non-federally eligible foster child is placed was not eligible for foster care funding and may apply for California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) on behalf of the child in foster care. However, CalWORKs grants are not a per-child payment, but are based on the size of the family as a whole and are less than the AFDC-FC rate. To address the disparity in the payment amount between relatives caring for a federally eligible child and relatives caring for a non-federally eligible child, California enacted the ARC Program.

DEFINITION OF A RELATIVE

A “relative” is an adult who is related to the child by blood, adoption, or affinity within the fifth degree of kinship, including stepparents, stepsiblings, and all relatives whose status is preceded by the words “great,” “great-great,” or “grand,” or the spouse of any of these persons, even if the marriage was terminated by death or dissolution.

To verify the relationship status between the child and a caretaker, refer to the Statement of Relationship (F063-30-146)

Note: For the purposes of ARC Program eligibility, when parental rights have been terminated, the relative is no longer considered as a relative but now considered as a Nonrelative Extended Family Member (NREFM), and therefore, is no longer eligible to ARC. For procedures related to parental rights termination, refer to the Approved Relative Caregiver (ARC) Processing Guide.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible for the ARC Program, an ARC 1 must be completed for each child and the following criteria must be met:

Relative

- The relative caregiver must reside in California
- The relative caregiver's home must be RFA approved. The [RFA Certificate of Approval \(F063-25-774\)](#) can be used to verify the home is approved
- The relative caregiver must receive the [ARC Caregiver Rights & Responsibilities \(ARC 1A\)](#)

Child

- The child must reside in California
- The child must be a dependent or ward of the California juvenile court. This includes the following:
 - Non-Minor Dependent (NMD) who is currently participating in the ARC program is eligible to receive funding up to the age of 21
 - A child who has been removed from his or her home as the result of a voluntary placement agreement
 - A child who has been voluntarily placed by his or her parent or guardian with the county child welfare department or the county probation department having responsibility for placement and care can participate in the ARC Program under a [Voluntary Placement Agreement \(SOC 155\)](#) or 180 days (six months). After that, the child may continue in the ARC Program if the county files the appropriate petition on behalf of the child, making the child a dependent or ward of the juvenile court. If the case changes from voluntary to dependency, a new ARC 1 must be completed
- The child must be placed with an approved relative caregiver and was ineligible to Federal Foster Care funding
- A nonfederal child under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court who is placed in a TAH of a relative

Ineligible for the ARC Program

- An NMD who is receiving Extended Foster Care (EFC) benefits
- A child who is placed with an approved relative caregiver and was eligible to Federal Foster Care funding
- A child who is placed with an approved relative caregiver Out of State
- A child who is placed with a Nonrelative Extended Family Member (NREFM)

INCOME AND PROPERTY ELIGIBILITY

The combined income and property limit for the ARC Program is \$10,000. Income and property are to be evaluated using the AFDC-FC requirements.

The total ARC payment is comprised of the CalWORKs (if applicable) and ARC portions:

- When the combined income and property total is under \$10,000, the payment for the case will be a combination of the CalWORKs and ARC portions (aid codes 2S, 2T, or 2U)
- When the combined income and property exceeds \$10,000, the payment for the case will consist of ARC funding only (aid codes 2P and 2R)

Note: When determining eligibility for the CalWORKs portion of the ARC payment, only the child's combined income and property are considered, and all CalWORKs requirements do not apply to an approved relative caregiver applying for the ARC Program on behalf of an eligible child.

BEGINNING DATE OF AID (BDOA)

The beginning date of aid for the ARC program is the date the approved relative caregiver signs the [ARC 1](#), or the date the relative is approved, whichever is later. Until the relative caregiver is approved, the case is not eligible for ARC, regardless of the date the [ARC 1](#) was signed.

ARC benefits are calculated for the number of days a dependent child is actually in placement and paid to the caregiver in arrears via warrant or direct deposit, similar to the Foster Care program.

SUPPLEMENTAL ALLOWANCES

ARC caregivers may be eligible to the following supplemental allowances if they meet the eligibility requirements:

- Dual Agency

- Educational Travel Reimbursement (ETR)
- Infant Supplement (approved relative caretakers of teen parents receiving ARC benefits, including NMDs living with their children)
 - Enhanced Parental Support Plan (if applicable)
- Specialized Care Increment (SCI)
 - Paid with County funds
- Clothing Allowance
 - Must be court-ordered
 - Paid with County funds

Note: ARC supplemental allowances such as ETR, SCI, and Clothing Allowance must be submitted via Non-System Determined Issuance (NSDI).

ARC AID CODES

There are five (5) aid codes assigned to the ARC Program:

- 2S – ARC Funding Option + federal CalWORKs
- 2T – ARC Funding Option + state CalWORKs
- 2U – ARC Funding Option + state CalWORKs (for NMDs)
- 2P – ARC Funding only
- 2R – ARC Funding only (for NMDs)

ARC-ONLY FUNDING AID CODES 2P/2R

Aid codes 2P ARC only and 2R – ARC only (NMDs) are to be used for funding for the following reasons:

- The child has combined income and property resources of \$10,000 or above
- The child is Permanently Residing Under Color of Law (PRUCOL) and has met all ARC requirements. (Refer to Policy 711 Citizenship Non-Citizen PRUCOL).
- The child is receiving Social Security Income (SSI)
- The child's Retirement, Survivor's, and Disability Insurance (RSDI) causes the combined income and resource level to exceed \$10,000; the case will then be paid either solely by ARC only funding or County funds depending on if the RSDI equals or exceeds the ARC payment. (Refer to Policy 704 SSI if the child is receiving SSI or RSDI).

REDETERMINATION

Dependent children under the ARC Program must have their eligibility for benefits redetermined by the county of jurisdiction annually. This redetermination is also accepted by the Department of Health Care Services as the required annual redetermination of Medi-Cal eligibility.

The [ARC Redetermination \(ARC 2\)](#) includes the criteria relevant to redetermining ARC eligibility.

The Child Support - Good Cause Claim For Noncooperation (CW 51) form is required at every annual redetermination.

MEDI-CAL

A child is eligible for no-share-of-cost, full scope Medi-Cal benefits under the ARC program.

CALFRESH

Recipients of the ARC Program may also be eligible for CalFresh benefits. If the recipient of the ARC Program would like to apply for CalFresh benefits refer to the FSS No Wrong Door Processing Guide.

CHILD SUPPORT

Child support assignment and recoupment for the ARC payment follows CalWORKs child support recoupment processes.

The [Notice and Agreement for Child \(CW 2.1 NA\)](#), Spousal and Medical Support and the [Child Support Questionnaire \(CW 2.1Q\)](#) are required- when making a referral to Child Support Agency.

A child support referral is not needed if it is determined cooperation is not in the best interests of the child, including an increased risk of harm to the child or when cooperation would pose a barrier to family reunification efforts.

The [Child Support - Good Cause Claim for Noncooperation \(CW 51\)](#) form is required at initial case approval and at every annual redetermination.

INTER-COUNTY TRANSFER (ICT)

The county of court jurisdiction (the county with placement and care responsibility over the child or the NMD) will make the ARC payment to the approved relative caregiver or NMD (NMDs receive payments directly) even if the child is placed out of county, as long as the child is placed in California.

If court jurisdiction is reassigned to another county, the child's ARC case must be transferred to the new county of jurisdiction. Refer to Policy 718 Inter-County Transfer (ICT).

OVERPAYMENTS

An overpayment can occur when an approved relative caregiver participating in the ARC Program receives a payment for an amount or a time period for which the child was ineligible due to unreported income or resources/property of the child.

Below are some examples of scenarios that establish an OP in the ARC Program:

- Child begins to receive SSI/SSP, SSA, or other income (earned or unearned), and the approved relative caregiver does not report it.
- Child's combined monthly income and resources/property total more than \$10,000 and the approved relative caregiver does not report it.
- Child has been absent from the placement for 15 or more cumulative days in any given month and the approved relative caregiver does not report it. However, the hospitalization of a child for any length of time will not establish an overpayment.

Overpayment collection for the ARC Program follows Foster Care OP recoupment processes for approved home of a relative.

NOTICE OF ACTIONS (NOAs)

The following ARC notices are available and are auto generated in CalWIN:

- [ARC Program, Overpayment \(NA 1277\)](#)
- [Approve ARC Payment \(NA 1278\)](#)
- [Deny ARC Payment \(NA 1279\)](#)
- [Discontinue ARC Payment \(NA 1280\)](#)
- [Change ARC Payment \(NA 1281\)](#)
- [Information for Approved Caregivers \(PUB 468\)](#)

PROCEDURE

The Approved Relative Caregiver (ARC) Processing Guide provides general operational procedures related to the processing of ARC applications, redeterminations, and termination of paternal rights.

REFERENCES

ACL 17-112, 17-26, 16-92, 16-45, 15-96, 15-83, 15-54, 15-20E, 15-20, 14-89, 14-58, 14-44
ACIN I-42-14
Approved Relative Caregiver (ARC) Processing Guide
FSS No Wrong Door Processing Guide
Policy 704 SSI
Policy 711 Citizenship Non-Citizen PRUCOL
Policy 718 Inter-County Transfer (ICT)

ATTACHMENTS

Dependency Order
[Voluntary Placement Agreement \(SOC 155\)](#)
[Statement of Facts Supporting Eligibility for The Approved Relative Caregiver \(ARC\) Funding Option Program \(ARC 1\)](#)

ARC Caregiver Rights and Responsibilities (ARC 1A)

[ARC Redetermination \(ARC 2\)](#)

[Child Support - Good Cause Claim for Noncooperation \(CW 51\)](#)

[RFA Certificate of Approval \(F063-25-774\)](#)

Statement of Relationship (F063-30-146)

NSDI

[Child Support - Good Cause Claim for Noncooperation \(CW 51\)](#)

[Child Support Questionnaire \(CW 2.1Q\)](#)

[Notice and Agreement for Child \(CW 2.1 NA\)](#)

OCCSSA