

**County of Orange Social Services Agency
Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services Division**

Program/Area: CalWORKS/Eligibility
Title: Expanded Temporary Homeless Assistance For Victims of Domestic Abuse
Number: 100-H2-C **Status:** Approved
Effective Date: 8/27/2018 **Revision Date:** 11/19/2024
Approved: Signature on file

PURPOSE This policy provides guidelines to Eligibility Workers (EW) for evaluating and issuing Expanded Temporary Homeless Assistance (ETHA) for CalWORKs (CW) families to assist domestic violence victims who are fleeing their abusers.

DEFINITIONS **Apparently Eligible CalWORKs Applicant:** Information provided in the Initial Application for CalFresh, Cash Aid and/or Medi-Cal/Health Care Programs (SAWS1) and information otherwise available to the County, indicates that the applicant would be eligible to CalWORKs if the information was verified.

Assistance Unit (AU): A group of related persons living in the same home who have been determined eligible for CalWORKs and for whom cash aid has been authorized.

Eligibility Workers (EW): CalWORKs Eligibility Technicians (ET) and Intake/Continuing Employment Eligibility Specialists (EES).

Expanded Temporary Homeless Assistance (ETHA): Homeless assistance payments up to two periods of no more than 16 cumulative days for each period (up to 32 days total lifetime) for CalWORKs applicants fleeing domestic abuse who are eligible or apparently eligible for aid.

Homeless Assistance (HA): Assists CalWORKs families to meet the costs of securing temporary or permanent housing. The CalWORKs HA program serves apparently eligible CalWORKs applicants or eligible CalWORKs recipients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. HA is generally available once every 12 months, unless an exception applies.

Once Every 12-Month Period for HA Payments: HA benefits are limited to once every 12 months, exceptions apply. The 12-month period of HA benefits begins on the date the first payment of Temporary Homeless Assistance or Permanent Homeless Assistance is made.

Temporary Homeless Assistance (THA): Provides the AU with up to 16 days for temporary shelter costs if the AU has no place to stay while looking for a permanent place to live.

POLICY

An Apparently Eligible CalWORKs Applicant may be eligible to receive two periods of no more than 16 cumulative days for each period (up to 32 days total lifetime) when experiencing homelessness as a result of domestic abuse regardless of the applicant becoming a recipient during the first 16-day period. ETHA benefits are separate from regular THA and THA exceptions, including the exception due to domestic abuse. ETHA does not count against the once every 12 months HA exceptions, including exceptions based on domestic abuse. For more information, reference Policy 100 H2-B Homeless Assistance.

A family applying for HA shall provide the sworn statement that the family is experiencing homelessness through the CalWORKs Statement of Facts – Homeless Assistance (CW 42) form. Upon receipt of a complete CW 42 form including the sworn statement, the County may no longer seek additional verification, obtain consent from the family to release information to verify homelessness, or obtain a copy of the pay or quit notice for purposes of verification of homelessness. CW ETHA applicants are exempt from providing proof of their search for permanent housing.

An Apparently Eligible CalWORKs Applicant who provides a sworn statement of past or present domestic abuse and is fleeing their abuser shall be deemed homeless and eligible to receive ETHA benefits prior to their CW application being approved disregarding any income or assets attributable to the alleged abuser.

INFORMING REQUIREMENTS

CW applicants must be informed that CW ETHA benefits are available when they self-disclose that they are fleeing their abuser. CW applicants must be informed verbally and in writing of the availability of Domestic Abuse Services. Refer to Policy 402 - Domestic Abuse Services for additional information. Eligibility Workers must document in CalSAWS Journal this information was provided to the client.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

CW applicant(s) must complete the following:

- Initial Application for CalFresh, Cash Aid and/or Medi-cal/Health Care Programs (SAWS1) and/or Application for CalFresh, Cash Aid, and/or Medi-Cal/Health Care Programs (SAWS 2 PLUS). To be eligible to receive CW ETHA, the CW applicant must complete a SAWS1 or the SAWS 2 PLUS and be interviewed by the Intake Worker. Refer to Policy 100-I6 CalWORKs Application.
- Statement of Facts - Homeless Assistance Application (CW 42) available in CalSAWS. A sworn statement of domestic abuse listed in the CW 42 shall be sufficient to establish verification of past or present abuse.

Note: During the intake interview, the Eligibility Worker must determine the applicant(s) to be eligible or apparently eligible to CW to be eligible for ETHA benefits.

The expansion of HA eligibility for CW applicants fleeing domestic abuse, does not change the basic CW eligibility rules for these applicants. For example, while the income and assets that belong to the abuser are disregarded for the purpose of ETHA benefits, Eligibility Workers must determine whether the income and assets of the alleged abuser are unavailable to the applicant and whether they should be considered separate property based on CW regulations. Refer to Policy 100 - C1 Property for additional information.

Note: Not all applicants will be eligible for CW benefits; however, if they are determined apparently eligible for CW ETHA benefits, the CW ETHA payment will not be considered an overpayment.

PROCEDURE

The CW 42 may be submitted in person by the CalWORKs family, or an EW may complete the CW 42 over the phone on the behalf of the CalWORKs family. Electronic/telephonic signatures on the CW 42 are acceptable. Follow WT 72 – Voice Attestation and Telephonic Signature and JA Worklists- Task Management for further instructions.

ETHA benefits are issued in two 16-day increments. ETHA payments are issued no more than 16 cumulative days for each period (up to 32 days total lifetime). The two issuances of 16-days do not need to be used consecutively. The second issuance of 16 days could be for a different instance of homelessness, months or years later, as long as the applicant meets the eligibility criteria for these benefits, including being an Apparently Eligible CalWORKs Applicant who is fleeing domestic abuse. Follow JA Homeless Assistance- Process and Issue Benefits to issue ETHA benefits.

The applicant must verify that the money received for the first 16 days of ETHA was spent on temporary shelter. When the client requests the second ETHA 16 day-issuance, the County will need receipts showing payment received for the first 16 nights was used on housing. If the applicant does not provide verification that the money was spent on shelter, the second 16-day issuance shall be issued by a two-party check. Refer to the Policy 100 - B8 Money Management Payment Issuance for instructions.

Reminders:

- Issue timely and adequate Notices of Actions (NOAs)
- Enter CalSAWS Case Flag: **AB557 Case**
- Enter CalSAWS Journal Entry on actions taken
- CW ETHA applicants are exempt from providing proof of their search for permanent housing
- Do not issue more than 16 calendar days at one time. Adjust payments as needed to allow for Social Services Agency (SSA) office closures, holidays and weekends.

NOTICES OF ACTION

The following NOAs will be utilized for ETHA:

- M44-211B – Expanded Temporary HA for Applicants Fleeing DV, Approve
- M44-211D – Temporary Shelter and/or Permanent Housing, Denial

EXAMPLES of ETHA Requests:

Example 1: On February 15th, a mother applies for CW and HA and states she is fleeing domestic abuse. She provides a Social Security Number (SSN) for herself and her two children. She has a joint bank account with her husband but is unable to access the money. She signs a sworn statement stating that she is fleeing domestic abuse. The Eligibility Worker determines the client is apparently eligible for CW and immediately issues 16 days of ETHA. On March 2nd, she comes back to the office, shows the Eligibility Worker her motel receipts and is issued the remaining 16 days of ETHA. On or after March 3rd (after the final 16 days of ETHA are issued), the Eligibility Worker determines that the income and assets of her abuser are not available to meet her family's needs, so her CW application is approved.

Once the client is a CW recipient, if still homeless, she is potentially eligible for regular once in a 12-month period HA and HA based on the domestic abuse exception, as well as additional housing support through the Housing Support Program (HSP). Refer to Policy H2-A Housing Support Program for more information. The Eligibility Worker is to offer domestic abuse counseling and services to the recipient and submit a referral, as appropriate.

Example 2: On February 15th, a mother who is fleeing her abuser applies for CW and ETHA. She signs a sworn statement that she is fleeing her abuser and is issued 16 days of ETHA. On March 3rd, her CW application is ready for approval. Prior to approval, the Eligibility Worker reaches out to the applicant to determine if she is still homeless and wants to use the second issuance of ETHA. The applicant declines the use of the final 16 days. The second ETHA issuance of 16 days may be used for a different instance of homelessness, months or even years later. Once CW is approved, the second 16 days of ETHA are not issued due to the client no longer requesting the assistance. She is issued the pro-rated February CW grant and her full March grant. The client is potentially eligible for regular THA/PHA beginning March 3rd. If the client accepts THA, she is now required to show proof of her daily permanent housing search or request good cause if unable to provide. The Eligibility Worker should evaluate for HSP and submit a referral and offer domestic abuse counseling and services as appropriate.

Example 3: On February 15th, an apparently eligible mother applies for CW and HA and signs a sworn statement that she is fleeing domestic abuse. On February 15th, she is issued her first 16 days of ETHA payment. On March 1st, the county denies her CW application due to her verified income being over the CW limit. As she is no longer an apparently eligible applicant, she is not eligible

for the second 16 days of ETHA; however, the IEES should ensure she is connected to all other available resources in the community (e.g., Domestic Abuse Services Safety Plan Brochure F063-41-169, Family Resource Centers, etc.). Additionally, since the client was apparently eligible for the first 16 days of ETHA benefits when she received them, those benefits would not be considered an overpayment.

Example 4: On March 1st, a mother applies for CW and HA and signs a sworn statement that she is fleeing domestic abuse. On March 1st, she is issued her first 16 days of ETHA payment. On March 5th, she moves back in with her abuser. On March 23rd, the client leaves her abuser and comes back to the county office, at which time she is apparently eligible to and was issued her last 16 days of ETHA payment. Despite the household movement during this time, as long as the client was eligible at the time that she received the benefits, no overpayment will be assessed.

Example 5: On March 1st, a mother applies for CW and HA and signs a sworn statement that she is fleeing domestic abuse. On March 1st, she is issued her first 16 days of ETHA payment. On March 16th, she moves back in with her abuser before receiving the second issuance of the 16 days. On July 1st, the client comes back to the county office to reapply for benefits and is fleeing her abuser again. She is apparently eligible to CW and to the second issuance of 16 days of ETHA. Once she has utilized all 32 days of benefits, she will have exhausted her once-in-a-lifetime benefit for ETHA for applicants that are fleeing domestic abuse.

REFERENCES

Assembly Bill 557 (Chapter 557, Statutes of 2017)
Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) 40-129.534(b); 42-205.3; 42-213.11; 44-211.5
All County Letter (ACL) 18-34; 18-78; 19-118, 21-121
Policy 100 C1 Property
Policy 100 B8 Money Management Payment Issuance
Policy 100 H2-A Housing Support Program
Policy 100 H2-B Homeless Assistance
Policy 100- I6 CalWORKs Application
Policy 402 Domestic Abuse Services

ATTACHMENTS

Application for CalFresh, Cash Aid, and/or Medi-Cal/Health Care Programs (SAWS2 PLUS) Initial Application for CalFresh, Cash Aid and/or Medi-Cal/Health Care Programs (SAWS1)
Domestic Abuse Services Safety Plan Brochure F063-41-169
M44-211B - Approval - AB557 Expanded Temporary Homeless Assistance
M44-211D - Denial - AB557 Expanded Temporary Homeless Assistance
Statement of Facts - Homeless Assistance Application CW 42
Worker Tool 72 Voice Attestation & Telephonic Signature
