

# ORANGE COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY GENERAL RELIEF REGULATIONS MANUAL

## SECTION 10: INTRODUCTION

EFFECTIVE: November 2024

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### **.1 LEGAL BASIS FOR THE GENERAL RELIEF PROGRAM**

The California Welfare and Institutions (W & I) Code, Division 9, Part 5, Sections 17000 through 17410 is the general authority for the administration of General Relief (GR) Assistance. The definition of the GR Program is delegated to the County Boards of Supervisors by state law. Each county is required to establish standards of assistance which shall be available to the general public.

GR in Orange County is based upon formal actions of the Board of Supervisors. However, the Director of the Social Services Agency (SSA) is delegated authority to interpret the GR Regulations Manual and to amend, alter or modify the regulations contained therein if necessary, to assure consistency with law. Any such changes will be filed with the Clerk of the Board with copies to the County Executive Office (CEO) and the Board of Supervisors. In addition, routine, non-policy changes in the Manual may be made by the Director.

Upon adoption by the Board of Supervisors, this GR Regulations Manual provides the legal basis for the program in Orange County. Any questions of interpretation should be directed to the GR Program Manager.

### **.2 Deleted effective 01-01-2014**

### **.3 PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL RELIEF PROGRAM**

The GR program is by nature a residual relief program for those persons who are ineligible for aid under any federal or state program which is designed to meet all of the client's needs, such as CalWORKs or Supplement Security Income/State Supplement (SSI/SSP); not included are such programs as Unemployment Insurance Benefits (UIB) or Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (RSDI). It is in large part an emergency assistance program to be used when other resources are not available or cannot be developed to meet the needs of the applicant(s).

The Eligibility Technician is responsible for securing, verifying and evaluating information and evidence to determine amount of need and eligibility, and for explaining the client's rights and requirements under the program. Respect for the integrity and self-esteem of the client is essential in promoting and encouraging self-reliance and independence.

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### **.3 PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL RELIEF PROGRAM (cont'd)**

During the determination of initial and continuing eligibility, each client shall assume as much responsibility as possible within their physical, emotional, educational, or other limitations. Client responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- .a** Completing or participating in the completion of all documents required in the application process or in the determination of continuing eligibility.
- .b** Making available to the County all documents that are in their possession or available to them which are needed to determine eligibility and amount of grant.
- .c** Reporting all facts which they believe to be material to their eligibility or which the County has identified to them as affecting eligibility.
- .d** Reporting any change in any of these facts within ten (10) calendar days of the occurrence.

At the discretion of the Director, GR may utilize county funds as available to supplement assistance for persons who have special needs which cannot be met by the program for which they are eligible.

Persons who are ineligible for State or Federal cash programs for reasons such as receipt of lump sum payments, disposal of property, adjustment of overpayment, sanctions for non-cooperation, or exclusion based on program rules are not eligible to receive GR.

### **.4 CIVIL RIGHTS AND AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)**

Pursuant to State and Federal laws, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP), Division 21, and the Civil Rights Annual Plan guidelines, counties are required to ensure that the administration of public assistance and social services programs is non-discriminatory and accommodations for individuals with disabilities are provided and expedited as referenced in the County of Orange SSA Civil Rights Plan, Civil Rights and Non-Discrimination SSA Policy D19, and Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II (ADA II) SSA Policy D31. This includes but is not limited to:

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### **.4 CIVIL RIGHTS AND AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) (cont'd)**

- .a** Procedures to identify an applicant's/recipient's disability (physical or mental impairment, which could limit access or participation).
- .b** Procedures for offering free interpreter services and auxiliary aids, addressing all languages spoken by applicants/recipients, including American Sign Language.
- .c** Procedures to identify an applicant's/recipient's need for services due to their disability, limited-English proficiency or inability to read or write and provide the opportunity for them to request auxiliary aids, services, translated forms, or assignment to a bilingual worker or other interpreters. Describe services and accommodations provided, e.g., interpretation by paid interpreters or other county employees, Braille materials, etc.
- .d** Procedures to ensure that services or benefits are not unduly delayed due to an applicant's disability, limited English proficiency, or inability to read or write.
- .e** Procedures to ensure that case files identify non-English-speaking and limited-English speaking or disabled applicants/recipients so that when transferred from one case worker to another within the program or one program to another program, services can be provided appropriately.
- .f** Section 21-116 requires the County to document in applicant's/recipient's case files certain information or actions taken including but not limited to:
  - (1)** Information that identifies the applicant/recipient as disabled.
  - (2)** Applicant's/recipient's requests for auxiliary aids, services or interpreter services and how those services were provided.

### **.5 REPAYABILITY**

The W & I Code permits counties to require repayment of GR assistance payments made from county funds. Each application for GR shall include the applicant's agreement to repay assistance issued under the program. The County shall also pursue recovery from the legal sponsor of a non-citizen for

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### **.5**    **REPAYABILITY (cont'd)**

aid paid to the non-citizen during the time in which the sponsor has agreed, in writing, to provide for the non-citizen pursuant to W & I Code 17001.6. See Section 110.4. SSA Accounting/Collections is responsible for evaluating feasibility of repayment and determining the level of collection activity. Taking into consideration factors such as:

- .a**    Whether the debt has been discharged in bankruptcy
- .b**    Whether the debtor is deceased or the debtor whereabouts are unknown
- .c**    Whether the cost of collection activities will exceed the amount of the debt owed by the debtor

### **.6**    **TERMS**

The following list of definitions includes the terms as used in this manual of regulations:

#### **.a**    **AGENCY**

The terms Agency, Social Services Agency or SSA shall refer to the Orange County SSA and all federal, state, county, city and private agencies with which the Agency has written or implied contracts for services and support. This includes but is not limited to, the Auditor-Controller, Community Services Agency, County Veterans Services, District Attorney, State Vocational Rehabilitation Services, CalFresh Employment & Training (CFET)/General Relief Work Program (GRWP) work sites and County Counsel.

#### **.b**    **AID PAID PENDING**

Aid paid pending an appeal when the request for appeal is filed within thirty (30) days of the date of the notice of adverse action to reduce or discontinue aid and before the effective date of the Notice of Action (NOA). However, aid paid pending shall not be paid in certain specified circumstances. See Section 110.3.

#### **.c**    **APPEAL**

A written request by an applicant or recipient for a hearing on an action

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### **.6**    **TERMS (cont'd)**

relative to their application or continuing aid. See Section 110.2.

### **.d**    **Deleted effective 05-01-2020**

### **.e**    **CASH AID PAYMENT**

A repayable payment in Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)/Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), cash or by check drawn on the County of Orange.

### **.f**    **COMMUNITY AGENCY**

A private agency with the stated purpose of helping to meet financial, social, or other types of requests from needy segments of the community.

### **.g**    **CONDITIONALLY EMPLOYABLE (CE)**

Persons shall be considered CE when it has been established that due to a combination of barriers, they have limited ability to participate in the CFET/GRWP. See Section 30.6.

### **.h**    **Deleted effective 05-01-2020**

### **.i**    **COUNTY**

As used in this manual of regulations, the term County shall refer to the County of Orange, California.

### **.j**    **ECONOMIC UNIT (EU)**

Persons who live together and are legally and/or economically dependent on each other will be considered one GR Economic Unit (GR-EU) in determining eligibility and the amount of the GR grant. An unborn is not considered a person in the GR program. See Section 20.4.

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### **.6** TERMS (cont'd)

#### **.k** **EMPLOYABLES**

Persons who are determined to be physically and mentally able to participate in the CFET/GRWP. See Section 30.7.

#### **.l** **EXCESS COMPONENT VALUE (ECV)**

The difference between the value assigned to a component of the GR grant (housing/utilities) and the actual cost to the General Relief Economic Unit (GR-EU) when the actual cost is less than the component value. See Section 80.3.

#### **.m** **GENERAL RELIEF WORK PROGRAM (GRWP)**

The GRWP oversees the work requirements for Employable and Conditionally Employable General Relief participants. GRWP is a mandatory work program that is funded by the County of Orange.

#### **n.** **CalFresh Employment & Training (CFET)**

CFET is a voluntary program offered to Conditionally Employable and Employable GR participants that helps participants obtain employment by reducing employment barriers and improving employability by providing participants with resources and opportunities to build work experience. GR participants may choose to participate in CFET as an alternative to participating in GRWP; GRWP participation is still required if participants choose not to participate in the CFET program. CFET is funded by the US Department of Food & Agriculture and the County of Orange.

#### **.o** **HOMELESS INDIVIDUAL**

An individual is considered homeless if lacking a regular, fixed, stable nighttime residence. This includes the following:

- (1)** The "shelterless" (living on the streets) or those who stay in a place not meant for human habitation such as a garage or car.
- (2)** Shelter dwellers (people staying temporarily in emergency shelters, armories or motels).

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**6     TERMS (cont'd)**

**(A)** Temporary placement for disabled individuals who cannot be placed in an emergency shelter.

**(3)** People staying temporarily with friends or family.

**(4)** Being at an imminent risk of homelessness (no subsequent residence identified).

**(5)** Individuals fleeing domestic violence who have no other residence.

**.p     IMMEDIATE NEED AID PAYMENT (IN)**

A one-time IN payment limited to seven (7) days assistance shall be offered to all applicants who lack shelter, provided all other requirements for IN assistance have been met. See Section 80.2.

**.q     INCAPACITATED**

Adults whose physical, social, emotional and/or mental condition as verified by medical and/or other evidence is such that they cannot be expected to engage in any type of gainful employment. See Section 30.5.

**.r     INTERIM ASSISTANCE (IA)**

GR payments authorized to applicants for SSI/SSP during the time their applications are being processed by the Social Security Administration. See Section 30.4.

**.s     LIEN**

The legal right to or claim upon real or personal property to satisfy an obligation. The lien in GR allows the County to recover the amount of assistance extended in the event of the recipient's death, receipt of a home loan, sale of property, or conclusion of a lawsuit, including Workers' Compensation. See Sections 50.7 and 110.4.

**.t     MAXIMUM AID PAYMENT (MAP)**

The maximum amount which can be paid to an individual or GR-EU during a calendar month.

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### **.6**     TERMS (cont'd)

**.u**     **Deleted effective 02-01-2022**

**.v**     **MINOR**

Any unemancipated or unmarried person under the age of 18 years. If the marriage of a person under age 18 has been annulled, the person reverts to status as a minor. See Section 30.2.

**.w**     **PUBLIC ASSISTANCE**

For purposes of GR, cash aid paid under State Eligibility and Assistance Standards (EAS) Manual Divisions 40 and 69 and SSI/SSP.

**.x**     **REFERRAL**

Directing a client to another available program or service. See Sections 20.6 and 100.

**.y**     **RESOURCES**

Money, property, claims or goods of value which may be utilized to meet a client's needs. See Sections 50 and 60.

**.z**     **RESPONSIBLE RELATIVES**

Responsible relatives are the spouse of the client or the parent of an unemancipated minor. See Section 90.1.

**.aa**    **REVIEW OR CONFERENCE**

An examination of a case by a supervisor to determine the accuracy of an action taken. This may be requested by a client prior to an appeal but does not affect the individual's right to appeal. See Section 110.2.

**.bb**    **SANCTION**

A specific period of ineligibility imposed when a member of the GR-EU fails without good cause to comply with GR regulations, policies and/or procedures or misrepresents material facts to the Agency. See Sections 20.13 and 30.8.



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**.6     TERMS (cont'd)**

**.cc     **SHARED HOUSING****

A standard of general relief for applicants or recipients who share housing with one or more unrelated persons or one or more persons who are not legally responsible for the applicant/recipient. See Section 80.3.

**.dd     **SPONSORED NON-CITIZEN****

A non-citizen who was lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence by relying on an affidavit of support pursuant to the Immigration and Nationality Act. See Section 90.2.

**.ee     **THIRD PARTY CHECKS****

Checks made payable to a vendor or provider of service on behalf of a client.

**.ff     **UNDOCUMENTED NON-CITIZEN****

A non-citizen who has no documentary proof of legal right to reside in the United States. See Section 40.1.

**.gg     **VENDOR ORDER****

An authorization made payable to a merchant, landlord or other provider of goods or services to provide such goods and/or services to the person named. The order provides for a maximum dollar amount and covers a specified period of time. The client may draw on the funds until they are exhausted or until the vendor order expires. At the end of that time, it is returned by the vendor to the County and a check is authorized to pay the amount due. A vendor payment may be issued directly to a vendor for any item of need.

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