

**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
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Approved: Signature on file

PURPOSE This policy provides guidelines to Eligibility Workers for evaluating and issuing Expanded Temporary Homeless Assistance (ETHA) to CalWORKs (CW) families who are fleeing domestic abuse and experiencing homelessness.

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 Worker (EW): CalWORKs Eligibility Technician (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 to CalWORKs.

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 a HA 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 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. 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. After a CW applicant is approved and becomes a recipient, they can still receive the remaining ETHA benefits. An existing CW recipient, who did not receive ETHA when they were a CW applicant is not eligible to ETHA.

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.

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 also be informed verbally and in writing of the availability of Domestic Abuse Services. Acceptance or participation in Domestic Abuse Services is not a requirement to receive ETHA benefits. Refer to Policy 402 - Domestic Abuse Services for additional information.

Note: 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).
Note: The CW applicant must be interviewed by the Intake Worker. During the intake interview, the Eligibility Worker must first determine the applicant is deemed eligible or apparently eligible to CW before issuing ETHA benefits. Refer to Policy 100-I6 CalWORKs Application.
- Statement of Facts - Homeless Assistance Application (CW42). A sworn statement of domestic abuse shall be sufficient to establish verification of past or present abuse.

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

A family applying for HA must 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. 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 the Electronic Signature Processing Guide 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 client meets the ETHA eligibility criteria for these benefits. Follow JA Homeless Assistance - Process and Issue 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 via a two-party check. Refer to the Policy 100 - B8 Money Management Payment Issuance for instructions.

Note: CW ETHA applicants are exempt from providing proof of their search for permanent housing.

Reminders:

- Issue timely and adequate Notices of Actions (NOAs)
- Enter CalSAWS Case Flag: AB557 Case
- Enter CalSAWS Journal entry on actions taken
- 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: ETHA issued as a CW Applicant

On February 1, a mother applies for CW and ETHA and states she is fleeing domestic abuse. The Eligibility Worker determines the client is an apparently eligible CW applicant and immediately issues 16 days of ETHA. On February 17, the client comes back to the office and requests the remaining 16 days of ETHA. The EW issues the remaining 16 days of ETHA. The client received the 32-days lifetime limit for ETHA and is no longer eligible to receive ETHA again. The EW approved the CW case on March 7.

Example 2: ETHA issued as a CW Recipient

On February 1, a mother applies for CW and ETHA and states she is fleeing domestic abuse. The Eligibility Worker determines the client is an apparently eligible CW applicant and immediately issues 16 days of ETHA. On February 10, the EW approves the CW case. On February 17, the client comes back to the office as a recipient and requests the remaining 16 days of ETHA. The EW issues the remaining 16 days of ETHA. The client received the 32-days lifetime limit for ETHA and is no longer eligible to receive ETHA again.

Example 3: First ETHA issuance used only

On February 1, a mother applies for CW and ETHA and states she is fleeing domestic abuse. The Eligibility Worker determines the client is an apparently eligible CW applicant and immediately issues 16 days of ETHA. On February 10, the EW approves the CW case. The client resolved their homelessness issue and does not request the remaining 16 days of ETHA. The remaining 16 days of ETHA can be used months or years later.

Example 4: ETHA issued before CW denial

On February 1, a mother applies for CW and ETHA and states she is fleeing domestic abuse. On February 1, she is issued her first 16 days of ETHA. On February 13, 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. 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 5: ETHA issued with change in household

On February 1, a mother applies for CW and ETHA and states she is fleeing domestic abuse. The Eligibility Worker determines the client is an apparently eligible CW applicant and immediately issues 16 days of ETHA. On February 18, she moves back in with her abuser. On February 25, the client leaves her abuser and comes back to the county office, at which time she is an apparently

eligible CW applicant 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 6: ETHA issued at two different application periods

On February 1, a mother applies for CW and ETHA and states she is fleeing domestic abuse. The Eligibility Worker determines the client is an apparently eligible CW applicant and immediately issues 16 days of ETHA. On March 1, the EW approves the CW case. On April 1, the client moves back in with her abuser and requests to close the CW case. On December 1, the mother applies for CW and ETHA and states she is fleeing domestic abuse again. The Eligibility Worker determines the client is an apparently eligible CW applicant and immediately issues the remaining 16 days of ETHA. The client received the 32-days lifetime limit for ETHA and is no longer eligible to receive ETHA again.

Example 7: ETHA/THA/THA Exception issued within a 12-month period

On February 1, a mother applies for CW and ETHA and states she is fleeing domestic abuse. The Eligibility Worker determines the client is an apparently eligible CW applicant and immediately issues 16 days of ETHA. The CW case is approved on February 25. On April 1, the client requests THA. The client stated they are homeless due to domestic abuse. The EW determines the household has met all eligibility criteria for THA and issues three separate payments for a total of 16 days. On June 1, the client comes back to the office and requests for the remaining 16 days of ETHA stating that she is fleeing domestic abuse again. The EW issues the remaining 16 days of ETHA. On October 1, the client requests THA again due to domestic abuse. The EW determines the household has met all eligibility criteria for the THA domestic abuse exception and issues three separate payments for a total of 16 days.

In this case scenario, the client received 32 days of ETHA, 16 days of regular THA, and 16 days of the THA domestic abuse exception within the same 12-month period. The client has exhausted ETHA lifetime benefits. The client is not eligible to another HA domestic abuse exception within this 12-month period. The client is eligible to the other HA exceptions if applicable.

REFERENCES

All County Letter (ACL) 18-34; 18-78; 19-118, 21-121
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
Policy 100 B8 Money Management Payment Issuance
Policy 100 C1 Property
Policy 402 Domestic Abuse Services
Policy 100 H2-A Housing Support Program
Policy 100 H2-B Homeless Assistance
Policy 100- I6 CalWORKs Application

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
Electronic Signature Processing Guide
JA Homeless Assistance - Process and Issue Benefits
M44-211B - Approval - AB557 Expanded Temporary Homeless Assistance
M44-211D - Denial - AB557 Expanded Temporary Homeless Assistance
Statement of Facts - Homeless Assistance Application CW 42
