

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

Program/Area: CalWORKS/Welfare-To-Work
Title: Housing Support Program
Number: 100-H2-A
Effective Date: 11/1/2014
Approved: Signature on file

Status: Approved
Revision Date: 12/1/2025

PURPOSE The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to CalWORKs (CW) staff on the Housing Support Program (HSP).

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DEFINITIONS

3-Day Pay or Quit Eviction Notice: A legal document that a landlord serves to a tenant who is behind on rent and provides the tenant three (3) days to pay the rental arrears and associated late fees or vacate the residence.

Eligibility Worker (EW): CalWORKs Eligibility Technician (ET) and Intake/Continuing Employment Eligibility Specialist (EES).

Housing Navigation: Individualized and hands-on HSP service designed to help an HSP family identify and secure appropriate housing options with the goal to shorten the time an HSP family spends without stable housing.

HSP Homeless Assistance (HSP HA): Financial assistance for housing expenses including hotel/motel Assistance, rental arrears and/or rental assistance.

HSP HA 12-Month Waiting Period: 12-month period when a family is not eligible to receive HSP HA due to exhausting a specific HSP HA benefit.

Literally Homeless Housing Status: Families determined to be residing on the street or in their car.

Permanent Housing: Private, unsubsidized housing; subsidized housing; permanent supportive housing; or housing shared with friends or family in a sustainable living situation (one that should not be categorized as “temporary” or “transitional”).

Prevent Eviction Housing Status: Families who have received a 3-day pay-or-quit eviction notice with rental arrears due, within thirty (30) days from the HSP referral date.

Rental Arrears: Amount of money owed on unpaid overdue rent.

Transitional Housing: Temporary housing for families experiencing homelessness, with the goal of interim stability and support to successfully move to and maintain permanent housing. Transitional housing is limited, and includes hotels, motels, and shelters.

POLICY

HSP assists CalWORKs families experiencing or at risk of homelessness, in securing and/or maintaining permanent housing, through utilization of evidence-based models and approaches. HSP offers financial assistance and wraparound services to support permanent housing retention for eligible families.

Financial assistance includes, but is not limited to:

- Hotel/Motel assistance
- Rental arrears
- Rental assistance
- Move-in costs
- Utilities payments
- Credit Repair
- Furniture

Wraparound services include but are not limited to:

- Case management services
- Housing navigation
- Legal services

Eligibility Criteria:

CalWORKs families must meet the following requirements to be referred to HSP:

- Have an active CalWORKs case in the County of Orange (including Family Reunification. Refer to Policy 403-A - CalWORKs Family Reunification Program).
- Have a housing status category of either:
 - **Literally Homeless** - Families determined to be residing on the street or in their car.

Note: Families who are staying temporarily in a motel or shelter, couch surfing, or staying in a residence **will not** be considered literally homeless.

- **Prevent Eviction** - Families who have received a **3-day pay-or-quit** eviction notice with rental arrears due within thirty (30) days from the HSP referral date and have not been evicted yet.

Note: A family will not be eligible to HSP when the eviction notice:

- Was received over thirty (30) days from the HSP referral date, even if the family has not been evicted.
- Has no option to prevent the eviction (e.g., landlord needs to vacate the unit because they sold the property).
- Was issued for reasons other than rental arrears (e.g., landlord evicting the family due to misuse or damage of property).

Verification of the 3-day pay or quit eviction notice is not required.

Please refer to HSP Referral User Guide for eligible and ineligible housing status examples.

Note: If a family's housing status does not fall under either housing category, the family is ineligible to HSP services, and the referral will be returned to the worker. Eligibility Workers (EW) should utilize Worker Tool (WT) 57- CalWORKs Housing Resources to evaluate for other available housing resources and refer the family as appropriate.

CONCURRENT HOUSING SERVICES

The EW must evaluate for all available housing resources, including Temporary Homeless Assistance (THA), Permanent Homeless Assistance (PHA), and Family Stabilization (FS), when a family reports they are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. Refer to WT 57 - CalWORKs Housing Resources for available housing resources.

If a family is receiving other housing services at the time of HSP referral request, the family's housing services will need to expire before submitting an HSP referral to avoid duplication of services.

Note: An HSP referral can be submitted on the **same day** the family is being evaluated for other services **if** their status at the time of the referral is Literally Homeless.

E.g., On 9/1/2025, a family reports they are currently residing in their car. The eligibility worker evaluates the family for THA and HSP. The family is determined to be eligible to both programs. An HSP referral is submitted on 9/1/2025 and also approved for THA on 9/1/2025.

Note: An HSP referral **cannot** be submitted after 9/1/2025 until THA fully expires.

For additional information on Temporary, Permanent, or Expanded Temporary Homeless Assistance, refer to Policy 100-H2-B Homeless Assistance and Policy 100-H2-C Expanded Temporary Homeless Assistance.

CALWORKS STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Eligibility Workers (EW) have the primary responsibility of initiating and monitoring the HSP process. EWs include CalWORKs Eligibility Technicians and Intake/Continuing Employment & Eligibility Specialists. Other Social Services Agency (SSA) staff, such as Case Managers (CMs) or Senior Social Workers (SSWs), cannot send HSP referrals on behalf of the client but can contact the contracted service provider via phone or email to request updates regarding the families' housing situation and HSP services.

Evaluation:

The EW will evaluate the family for HSP referral eligibility in the following situations:

- CW Approval
- Temporary or Permanent Homeless Assistance Requests
- Expanded Temporary Homeless Assistance Requests
- Requests for HSP evaluation received from CMs and SSWs
- Semi-Annual Reporting (SAR)
- Annual Re-Evaluation (RE)
- At any contact with the family where housing needs are identified

If the EW determines a family is eligible for an HSP referral, the EW will offer HSP services to the family and provide the following HSP information:

- HSP is a temporary assistance program designed to assist families seeking permanent housing or with housing retention. The families are expected to pay the total amount of rent to the landlord once the subsidy period ends.
- HSP services are offered by a contracted service provider. Families receiving HSP services are encouraged to:
 - Cooperate with the contracted service provider and provide any requested verifications
 - Participate in case management activities
 - Attend and fully engage in meetings
 - Collaborate in the creation of a plan with the contracted service provider to increase their income to sustain their rent and achieve permanent housing stability
- HSP offers financial assistance and wraparound services to support permanent housing retention:
 - Financial assistance includes, but is not limited to:
 - Hotel/Motel assistance
 - Rental arrears

- Rental assistance
- Move-in costs
- Utilities payments
- Credit Repair
- Furniture
- Wraparound services include, but are not limited to:
 - Case management services
 - Housing navigation
 - Legal services

Financial Assistance Limits:

Financial assistance is only provided when an HSP referral is approved. HSP services can be terminated at any time due to unavailability of HSP funds.

HSP Housing Assistance (HSP HA) includes hotel/motel assistance and rental assistance. An HSP HA 12-Month Waiting Period is implemented when a family exhausts their HSP HA based on OPT guidelines. When the HSP HA is exhausted, the HSP HA 12-Month Waiting Period begins the day after the last date the HSP HA payment was issued and ends 12 months later. During this HSP HA 12-Month Waiting Period, the family is not eligible to receive HSP HA until the HSP HA 12-Month Waiting Period has elapsed.

Note: The HSP HA 12-Month Waiting Period for hotel/motel assistance and rental assistance are separate from each other.

The HSP contracted service provider will track all HSP HA payments, determine when the HSP HA payments are exhausted, and establish the HSP HA 12-Month Waiting Period. Services other than HSP HA are still available during this period, e.g., case management, landlord engagement, housing navigation, credit repair, and furniture assistance.

Below are examples of how the HSP HA 12-Month Waiting Period is determined:

Example 1:

A CalWORKs family applied for HSP and was approved on 8/1/2025. The family received HSP HA motel assistance from 9/1/2025 to 11/30/2025. The HSP contracted service provider determined the family exhausted HSP HA hotel/motel assistance. The HSP HA 12-Month Waiting Period for hotel/motel assistance is from 12/1/2025 to 11/30/2026. If the family requests HSP HA hotel/motel assistance again during this period, they will not be eligible to receive until 12/1/2026. Services other than HSP HA hotel/motel assistance are still available during this period, e.g., rental assistance (if not exhausted), case management, landlord engagement, housing navigation, credit repair, and furniture assistance.

Example 2:

A CalWORKs family applied for HSP and was approved on 8/1/2025. The family received HSP HA rental assistance from 9/1/2025 to 2/28/2026. The

HSP contracted service provider determined the family exhausted HSP HA rental assistance. The HSP HA 12-Month Waiting Period for rental assistance is from 3/1/2026 to 2/28/2027. If the family requests HSP HA rental assistance again during this period, they will not be eligible to receive until 3/1/2027. Services other than HSP HA rental assistance are still available during this period, e.g., hotel/motel assistance (if not exhausted), case management, landlord engagement, housing navigation, credit repair, and furniture assistance.

Referral:

If a family meets the eligibility criteria and accepts HSP services, EWs will:

- Complete and submit the CalWORKs Housing Support Program Referral F063-30-951.

Note: HSP referrals are not to be initiated through CalSAWS as that functionality is not available. Eligibility Workers must also not enter or revise entries in the Housing Support page.

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- Review if the family has met the terms of their eviction notice before submitting a Prevent Eviction HSP referral. If the family has met the terms of their eviction, including via PHA, the HSP referral must not be submitted as the family is identified to have resolved their housing issue.
- Refer to the HSP Referral User Guide on how to complete an HSP referral.
- Image the completed HSP referral form into Hyland Perceptive Experience (HPE) **before** clicking the Submit Button.
- Update Journal entries in CalSAWS to capture:
 - Date the referral is submitted
 - Family's current housing status:
 - For Literally Homeless, where the family is residing (e.g., street or car) and what city they are currently residing in
 - For Prevent Eviction, the date of the eviction notice
 - Reason for the HSP referral
 - Any other pertinent details regarding the family's situation

Journal Entry Examples:

- An HSP referral has been submitted on 7/02/2024. The family is currently homeless and sleeping in their car, parked within the city of Anaheim.
- An HSP referral has been submitted on 8/06/2024. The family has received a 3-day pay or quit eviction notice dated 8/5/2024 to pay or exit the premises by 8/08/2024.

OPT will screen all HSP referrals received within 1-2 business days of referral receipt and review HSP eligibility. Referrals meeting HSP eligibility criteria will

be forwarded to the contracted service provider for assessment. OPT will return any referrals determined to be invalid, and the explanation of the invalid reason will be provided. EW **must** update the family when a referral is returned.

Invalid reasons can include, but are not limited to:

- Existing active or pending HSP referral
- CalWORKs case is inactive
- Housing status does not meet HSP eligibility criteria:
 - Does not meet definition of Literally Homeless or Prevent Eviction. Refer to HSP eligibility criteria listed in the Policy section above.
- Duplication of housing services

Note: Staff should not contact the contracted service provider regarding inquiries related to the HSP referral process (i.e. screening, invalid referrals). Inquiries should instead be sent to the HSP inbox.

Once notified by the HSP contracted service provider, the EW will be responsible to update the family with the HSP referral status and disposition.

Communication:

EWs will communicate updates via email and/or phone call with the assigned contracted service provider within three (3) business days. Updates include but not limited to:

- Families' contact information
- Families' housing situation
- EW changes
- CW case status
- Other information that may impact housing services

The contracted service provider may ask case-related questions or request benefit verification letters from the EW as the contracted service provider does not have access to CalSAWS. The EW must answer case-related inquiries and/or provide verification to the contracted service provider within one (1) business day. Late responses can result in delayed services to the family.

Note: No additional Release of Information from the family is required.

EWs will also collaborate with the contracted service provider to determine if HSP services are no longer needed.

When communicating with the contracted service provider, staff must cc the HSP inbox. EWs must enter a CalSAWS Journal entry to document all communication with the contracted service provider.

For any HSP referral related inquiries where the EW is unable to contact the contracted service provider, staff can contact the HSP inbox.

**CONTRACTED
SERVICE PROVIDER
RESPONSIBILITIES**

Receipt of Referral:

Once the contracted service provider receives an HSP referral, they will:

- Assign the referral within two (2) business days.
- Attempt to contact the family within 5 business days to schedule an assessment.
- Contact the EW for updated family contact information after three (3) unsuccessful contact attempts.

Assessment:

Determine families' eligibility to HSP services and assess the families' current housing needs.

Disposition:

Provide a disposition (approval or denial) of a referral using CalWORKs Housing Support Program Referral F063-30-951, to the referring EW.

Approval:

HSP services to be provided by the contracted service provider may include, but are not limited to:

- Housing Navigation
 - Assist the family with placement in transitional housing (e.g., hotel/motel, shelter), if needed
 - Identify available housing units and connect to available housing resources
 - Review the family's housing budget and eliminate potential barriers in securing permanent housing
 - Accompany families when meeting potential landlords
 - Complete housing applications and lease signing
 - Complete a move-in checklist or walkthrough to ensure habitability standards are met.
- Rent and Move-in Assistance
 - Issue financial assistance necessary for families to transition out of homelessness and/or to stabilize in permanent housing includes, but is not limited to paying for:
 - Applications
 - Security deposits
 - Move-in expenses
 - Permanent housing assistance
 - Utilities
- Case Management Services
 - Evaluate the families' housing needs and barriers

- Collaboratively create a plan to attain or maintain permanent housing, including increasing income
- Support families in addressing issues that may impede:
 - Accessing housing
 - Obtaining and/or maintaining permanent housing
 - Housing stability
 - Connecting families to services and supports

Termination of HSP Services:

Prior to terminating services, collaborate with referring EW to determine if services are no longer needed.

Notify the EW when services have been terminated and provide a date and reason for termination of services.

Note: OPT will communicate with the HSP contracted provider to terminate HSP services when the CalWORKs program discontinues.

FAMILY SUPPORT ASSESSMENT

The Family Support Assessment (FSA) utilizes a holistic, supportive approach to assist families identify areas of need, overcome barriers, and promote self-sufficiency. The FSA process includes assessing the family's needs and engaging families in the Family Support Team meetings.

The EW and/or HSP contracted service provider can request a FST meeting for the family when a housing need is identified to assess the family's barriers and determine additional services and/or needs. If an FST meeting is scheduled, the contracted service provider is required to attend and participate.

Note: The EW or FST representative must ensure an HSP referral is submitted and not denied or returned prior to inviting the HSP contracted service provider to a scheduled FST meeting.

Refer to Policy 408 Family Support Assessment for additional information on the FSA process.

REFERENCES

- AB 135 (Chapter 85, Statutes of 2021)
- ACWDL December 13, 2021
- ACWDL July 19, 2021
- ACWDL May 13, 2021
- ACWDL August 2, 2018
- ACWDL May 26, 2016
- ACL 19-114
- Policy 100-H2-B Homeless Assistance
- Policy 100-H2-C Expanded Temporary Homeless Assistance
- Policy 403-A-CalWORKs Family Reunification Program

- Policy 408 Family Support Assessment

ATTACHMENTS

- CalWORKs Housing Support Program Referral F063-30-951
- WT 57 - CalWORKs Housing Resources
- Housing Support Program Referral User Guide