

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

**Program/Area:** Adult Services/In-Home Supportive Services  
**Title:** Own Home  
**Number:** 1044  
**Effective Date:** 4/27/2020  
**Approved:** Signature on File

**Status:** Final  
**Revision Date:** 4/8/2021

---

**POLICY**

IHSS Program rules and purpose of IHSS remain unchanged. Once eligible, IHSS recipients are expected to comply with program requirements, and provide the required documentation to determine continued eligibility and need for services.

Social Workers are required to conduct home visits in an individual's ["own home"](#) to assess the applicant's/recipient's needs in order to authorize IHSS hours.

Recipients or Authorized Representatives remain responsible for notifying the County whenever there is a substantive change in living arrangements which would necessitate a reassessment of authorized IHSS hours and/or services.

**Alternative Living Situations**

Social Workers will evaluate each alternative living arrangement to ensure the applicant/recipient can be assessed and have his/her authorized services delivered in a safe manner.

**A recreational vehicle (RV)** may meet the definition of the applicant's/recipient's ["own home"](#) when utilities needed to provide authorized IHSS in a safe manner are available and the RV can be situated in a single location for a ["specified period of time"](#).

Utilities may include running water, electricity, gas (if needed), restrooms, and appliances for the safe storage and preparation of food (for meals). The RV should be situated in a single location for a ["specified period of time"](#), or a length of time sufficient for the Social Worker should use their best judgement to assess the individual's needs, authorize IHSS services, and for the provider to deliver IHSS services to the recipient.

RV locations can include a campground, RV park, or other private property where the RV has been authorized to remain for a ["specified period of time"](#). A single location is necessary as it would be impossible for the County to conduct assessments, reassessments, and unannounced home visits required by IHSS rules if the RV was mobile and parked in different locations each day.

---

IHSS recipients living in **remote or rural areas, including Native American tribal lands**, would be eligible for IHSS even if they do not have access to local utilities since they may have access to alternate resources such as well water,

wood burning stove, and diesel-powered generators. Such resources would allow them to receive their services in a safe manner. Social Workers should evaluate the specific circumstances of the recipients dwelling when performing an assessment.

---

**A homeless shelter** could be considered an alternative living arrangement and meet the definition of the applicant or recipient's "[own home](#)" if the management of the homeless shelter allows the IHSS recipient to remain there for a "[specified period of time](#)" and allows the Social Worker to enter the facility to perform an IHSS assessment and the IHSS provider to be present in the shelter to provide services.

Social Workers will need to complete an assessment of the living arrangement as there may be services offered by the shelter which would qualify as an alternate resource (such as meal prep or other domestic and related services) and could require an adjustment to already authorized services, if any.

---

An IHSS recipient who moves into the **residence of a family member or friend** could be considered to be living in their "[own home](#)" if the family member or friend allows the recipient to remain in the home for a "[specified period of time](#)." Recipients who alternate between homes of various family members or friends can continue to receive IHSS, although the Social Worker will need to assess and adjust the hours after each change of residency as authorized IHSS may be assessed differently based on their living arrangement.

---

### **Emergency Extraordinary Circumstances**

Counties must be aware that certain extraordinary circumstances may arise in which an IHSS recipient may not have access to his/her home, but the IHSS recipient can continue to receive services while living in a temporary living arrangement (example fires or disasters causing the recipient to be displaced). If they are moved from a shelter to temporary housing, the Social Worker must conduct an assessment on the new living arrangement as well.

Social Workers should perform a reassessment at the emergency shelter to determine if a temporary adjustment in the authorized hours of a recipient is necessary based on the needs and living arrangement. Social Workers should document in the case notes any adjustments needed to accommodate any need that arises due to the unexpected extraordinary circumstance.

---

### **Whereabouts Unknown**

If a recipient, for whatever reason, cannot be located, Social Workers should make a good faith effort to communicate with the recipient. This includes making telephone calls to all known recipient numbers (including both landlines and cell phone), direct mail, email, in-home visits, and contact with known family or friends of the recipient. All such attempts to contact the recipient should be documented. Copies of returned mail should be maintained in the recipient's case file.

After the Social Worker has attempted to contact the recipient using the various methods outlined above, the Social Worker may terminate the case and send a Notice of Action to that effect to the recipient's last known address ten days prior to the termination date of the case.