



KIM JOHNSON  
DIRECTOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**  
744 P Street • Sacramento, CA 95814 • [www.cdss.ca.gov](http://www.cdss.ca.gov)



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## California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Homeless Assistance (HA) Program FACT SHEET

### Background

The CalWORKs HA Program was established to help families in the CalWORKs program meet the costs of securing or maintaining permanent housing or obtain emergency shelter when experiencing homelessness. HA includes both temporary HA, which helps families pay the costs of temporary shelter, and permanent HA, which helps families pay a security deposit for permanent housing or up to 2 months of rental arrearages to help avoid eviction. Eligible families may receive either temporary or permanent HA, or both, once in a 12-month period, with certain exceptions. [Senate Bill \(SB\) 1065 \(Hertzberg, Chapter 152, Statutes 2020\)](#) expanded and streamlined the eligibility and administration of HA assistance through a series of policy changes impacting access to HA benefits.

### Overview

The HA Program serves eligible CalWORKs applicants or recipients who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness. A family is considered homeless when the family lacks a fixed and regular nighttime residence or is residing in a shelter or a place that is not designed as a regular sleeping accommodation. A family is considered at risk of homelessness if they received a notice to pay rent, quit, or be evicted.

Types of CalWORKs HA support include the following:

- [Temporary HA](#) provides eligible families a payment of \$85 per day for a family of four or fewer, and an additional \$15 for each additional family member, not to exceed \$145 per day. Temporary HA is provided for up to 16 calendar days in a 12-month period.
- [Permanent HA](#) helps eligible families secure housing by providing security deposit costs, including last month's rent, or maintain housing by providing up to 2 months of rent arrearages. The monthly rent cannot exceed 80 percent of the total monthly household income.
- [Expanded HA for Victims of Domestic Abuse](#) provides up to 32 days of temporary HA to CalWORKs applicants who provide a sworn statement of past or present domestic abuse and who are fleeing their abuser (and therefore shall be deemed to be homeless). Expanded HA for Victims of Domestic Abuse does is not limited to once every 12 months.

Temporary and permanent HA payments are each limited to once every 12 months with the following exceptions: (1) domestic violence, (2) a medically verified physical or mental illness, (3) uninhabitability of the former residence caused by sudden or unusual circumstances, or (4) State or Federal declared disasters that are a direct and primary cause of homelessness (including COVID-19). If the family qualifies under an exception, then the family can receive more than 16 days of homeless assistance benefits. However, these exceptions are also limited to once every 12 months, except for homelessness due to a declared disaster. In that case, it can be issued once per disaster.

## Impact and Accomplishments

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22, 44,550 families received temporary HA and 2,705 received permanent HA – for a total of 47,255 families served through the CalWORKs HA Program. CalWORKs HA statistical information and reports can be accessed on the [CDSS website](#).

The following information summarizes recent CalWORKs HA legislative changes that close gaps in accessing services and resources.

- **[SB 1083 \(Skinner, Chapter 715, Statutes of 2022\)](#)** – Upon implementation, SB 1083 will increase coordination and access to services including, but not limited to:
  - Expanding eligibility for HA to include families in receipt of any notice that could lead to an eviction, regardless of the circumstances cited in the eviction notice.
  - Requiring that any county human services agency opting to require a homelessness avoidance plan as a condition of families receiving HA twice in a 24-month period may only do so if they also offer housing navigation services.
  - Requiring county human services agencies to refer all pregnant CalWORKs recipients to perinatal home visiting services administered by an authorized provider or county agency.
- **[SB 1065 \(Hertzberg, Chapter 152, Statutes of 2020\)](#)** – Per [All County Information Notice No. I-70-22](#), SB 1065 was effective September 1, 2022. SB 1065 streamlined the eligibility and administration of HA including, but not limited to:
  - Requiring Temporary HA to be granted or denied on the same day that the family applies for homeless assistance.
  - Removing the exemption to the nonrecurring special needs benefit \$100 resource limit when determining eligibility.
  - Repealing the hardship standard to prevent eviction.
  - Ensuring that domestic violence victims receive the 32 days of assistance of which they are entitled.
  - Allowing a signed sworn statement to verify homelessness.

**Learn More:** For more information, please visit the [HA program webpage](#).