

# The People's Guide

Information about opportunities to help you get through hard times



# to Welfare Health & other Services

LOS ANGELES  
COALITION TO  HUNGER &  
HOMELESSNESS

32nd Edition **2008**  
Los Angeles County

# Introduction

The People's Guide gives practical information about how to get food, money, housing, health care and other help from government programs and community services if you live in Los Angeles County and need the help in hard times. You do not have to read the entire book, just find the topic you need in the table of contents. However, remember that people who are eligible for one kind of help often qualify for other programs as well.

The People's Guide also gives advice on what to do if you are treated unfairly or do not receive what you are entitled to by law.

Lately, massive government budget cuts have meant less help for low income families, seniors, and homeless people: fewer workers at some agencies, clinics and hospitals closing, tighter eligibility rules, reduced benefits, and in some programs, waiting lists for help.

There are other problems with the safety net: rumors and false information that discourage eligible people from even trying to get help their family desperately needs, people not knowing what the application steps are, language barriers, people being made to feel embarrassed for asking for needed help.

The People's Guide is dedicated to helping all people overcome barriers when they try to get help. Every person has the right to enough food, housing, and health care. You help when you share this information with other people who need help.

There is another important way to help. In Sacramento, Washington DC and in County and local governments, the programs and services described in the People's Guide are always being debated. There is a huge conflict about the money for these services.

Your voices are needed in those debates. Tell politicians how the programs help or don't help and what your problems are. Government officials need to be reminded of the tragic crises, and pain that happen in people's lives when they can't get food, housing, or health care.

To get names and addresses of your local, state and federal lawmakers, (800) 481-8683, County Registrar. <http://regrec.co.la.ca.us/voter/roster.htm>

Politicians often want to use money for other things than health, welfare and social services. But when the rich get too much richer and the poor get too much poorer, the gap has very bad effects on the whole society.

You can help close that gap. You don't have to be an expert. Simply let those in authority know how a budget cut affects you or your neighbors.

**The Los Angeles Coalition to End Hunger & Homelessness** and our members struggle for legislation and procedures that save and improve the safety net. To find out the latest in public policy changes affecting the programs in this book, (213) 251 0041 or visit [www.lacehh.org](http://www.lacehh.org).

Other advocacy information sources:

**Bus Riders Union**  
(213) 387-2800

**California Food Policy Advocates**  
(213) 482-8200

**California Partnership**  
(213) 385-8010

**Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles**  
(213)353-1333.

**Community Coalition**  
(323) 750-9087

**Community Health Councils**  
(323) 295-9372

**Hunger Action LA**  
(213) 388-8228

**L.A. Alliance for a New Economy**  
(213) 486-9880

**L.A. Community Action Network**  
(213) 228-0024

**Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles**  
(800) 399-4LAW

**Maternal & Child Health Access Project**  
(213) 749-4261

**Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles**  
(800) 433-6251.

**Strategic Actions for a Just Economy**  
(213) 745-9961

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**211 LA County**

**On the internet: [www.healthycity.org](http://www.healthycity.org)**

211 is a 24 hour per day, 7 day a week telephone information and referral service. Operators are available in many languages. They can help you find emergency food and shelter, legal and financial assistance, counseling and many other resources. 211 is very busy, but each caller receives good service. Be prepared to wait for someone to answer; let the phone ring and ring. Just dial 211 or one of the numbers below:

**General Number**(800) 339-6993  
**Los Angeles** (323) 686-0950  
**San Fernando Valley** (818) 501-4447  
**West Los Angeles** (310) 551-2929

**L.A. Airport area** (310) 671-7464  
**San Gabriel Valley** (626) 350-6833  
**Burbank/Glendale** (818) 956-1100  
**Long Beach/South Bay**(562) 603 8962

# CalWORKs

CalWORKs is California's welfare program for people who have children under 19 years old. CalWORKs provides money for children and the relatives caring for them. Work and training are required of most adults. Most adults can only get CalWORKs cash aid for sixty months in a lifetime. If you qualify for cash aid, you are also entitled to Medi-Cal for health care and food stamps. In LA, the welfare agency is called DPSS.

## WHO CAN GET CASH AID?

### 1. Families with Children

- Children and
- the adult relatives who care for them can get cash aid.

If you are convicted of a drug-related felony after December 31, 1997, you cannot get CalWORKs aid or child care or other GAIN supportive services (such as substance abuse recovery services) for yourself. Your children can still qualify for cash aid,

Both one parent and two-parent families can get cash aid. In two-parent families, one of the parents must be disabled or have worked less than 100 hours in the last four weeks before applying for cash aid.

Children must live with a related adult and be 18 years old or under. 18 year olds can get cash aid until their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday IF:

- They are likely to graduate from high school or vocational school on or before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday OR
- They are disabled and the disability resulted in them not being able to graduate on or before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday

### 2. Income Limits

Applicants for cash aid (people who are not yet on aid) can not have "too much" income. You are over the limit if your total family income per month from all sources before payroll taxes and other deductions, minus \$90 for each person who has a job, is more than the "Gross Income Limit" in the chart at the bottom of this page. (the gross limit is also called "MBSAC").

People who are already getting cash aid must meet another income limit. Their **countable income** must be below the Maximum Aid Payment ("MAP") in the

chart on the next page. "Countable income" means what's left after deductions.

Social Security checks (but not SSI), pensions, and unemployment insurance will be counted as income. Some money does **NOT** count as income for cash aid. For example:

- SSI payments
- Loans, even from friends, as long as you agree to repay
- Most student loans and grants
- Your child's income if the child is a full time student under age 19
- Tax refunds and Earned Income Tax Credit
- Free food, clothing, and housing if they are from a nonprofit agency
- Gifts of food, clothing or housing paid by someone else for you to a store, or landlord or other person, as long as you pay part of the cost
- Certain income received by a child subject to the MFG (Maximum Family Grants, pg 5.)

There is a special rule to count money you earn from your own business or self-employment. You can either count 60% of the gross revenue of your business as earned income, or you can deduct actual proven business expenses from the gross revenue. What is left is your earned income.

CalWORKs Income Limits 2008	
# of people	Gross Income Limit
1	\$487
2	\$798
3	\$989
4	\$1,175
5	\$1,341
6	\$1,507
7	\$1,656
8	\$1,804
9	\$1,956
10	\$2,123

### 3. Limits on Property and Resources

The property limit ("resource limit") for the family is \$2,000. But if someone in the family on aid is 60 years or older, the limit is \$3,000.

#### What is counted?

- Cash on hand
- Savings
- Stocks, bonds
- Some cars (see next page)
- Other property

#### What is not counted?

- A home, if you live in it
- Personal items like furniture, a computer and appliances
- Tools of your trade
- Government relocation or disaster benefits
- While on cash aid, you can have a special restricted savings account of up to \$5000 for education, training, starting a business or buying a house, and it will not count (but DPSS must agree)
- Your share of property owned with someone else, if you are unable to sell your share
- Certain pension/retirement accounts, including 401(k), 403(b) and SEPs. Most IRAs and Keoghs are counted.
- Some cars (see below)

#### "Transfer of Assets."

If you give away or sell a property or resource for less than its fair market value while you are on cash aid, you might lose cash aid for one or more months. If you and the DPSS disagree about this, you need to consult with an attorney or legal services office. (pg 64 Good Advice).

### 4. Rules about Cars

There are special rules that determine whether or not cars and other vehicles are counted against the \$2000 resource limit (or \$3000 limit if a family member on aid is 60 or older.)

#### THESE VEHICLES DON'T COUNT:

- A car that you live in
- A car that is worth less than \$1500 after you subtract what is owed on it, damages, and necessary repairs
- A car used most of the time to make money (like a gardener's truck)
- A car used to transport a physically disabled person in your home (Be sure to explain to the eligibility worker

what this car is used for. Often a car equipped for a disabled person is more expensive, and the worker should not disqualify you for owning it.)

The following rules apply to cars other than those already described:

- For one car, count only the "fair market value" over \$4,650
  - For additional cars, if you can show that they are used to get someone you live with to and from work or training, count only the fair market value over \$4650
  - For any other car not already described, you must count either the fair market value over \$4650 or the difference between the fair market value and what you still owe on the car, whichever amount is higher
- If you have a car, but no other counted resources, you may apply the maximum countable resource limit to the vehicle (so if you had no money you could apply the \$2,000 resource limit to your car and actually have a car worth \$6,650.)

## WHAT CAN I GET?

The chart below shows the "Maximum Aid Payment." This maximum grant is cut dollar for dollar by any "unearned" income you have, such as social security survivor's benefits, interest (like on a bank account), or unemployment money. Earned income, wages from work, or income based on a disability is not counted dollar for dollar.

# of people	Maximum Aid Payments 2008	
	"Nonexempt" Grant	"Exempt" Grant
1	\$359	\$398
2	\$584	\$653
3	\$723	\$808
4	\$862	\$961
5	\$980	\$1,094
6	\$1,101	\$1,229
7	\$1,210	\$1,350
8	\$1,318	\$1,473
9	\$1,424	\$1,591
10	\$1,530	\$1,709

### 1. Think About Time Limits Before You Take Cash Aid

You may not want to get cash aid if you have other income. Any month you get cash aid counts against the 60-month time limit, even if you are entitled only to a few dollars a month. You can get Medi-Cal, Food Stamps and child care money even when you do not get cash aid. Is the cash aid you will get worth "using up" a month of eligibility? Should you "save" the month in case you need it more at a later time in your life? Call legal services to discuss your options.

### 2. Maximum Family Grants ("MFG")

Even though bigger families generally get more cash aid, you will **not** get more cash aid for children born while your family is getting CalWORKs, unless you fit in one or more of the following categories:

- You have been on cash aid less than 10 months before the child's birth
- The entire family did not get cash aid for two or more consecutive months during the ten months before the birth
- You show that the new child was conceived because of rape, incest, or failed sterilization, IUD, or Norplant

- The child was born before September 1, 1997
  - The child was conceived while either parent was a non-needy caretaker relative
  - The child is not living with either parent
  - The child's family did not receive notice of this Maximum Family Grant rule
- A teenager's child who wasn't aided can get aid when the teen parent turns 18 and gets cash aid for herself and her children.

Also, if the MFG child was conceived while you were living with an abusive spouse or partner, the MFG child might be able to get cash aid through a domestic violence "waiver". Call legal aid for help.

Some money received for MFG children will not count as income for the family, including child support paid directly to the family for the child. Social Security retirement or disability benefits for the child from the absent parent also don't count. Although the family does not get cash aid for the MFG child, the child is considered a CalWORKs recipient for all other purposes. The MFG child can get Medi-Cal, special needs money, food stamps, child care and other welfare-related benefits.

### 3. What Else Is Available?

- **Medi-Cal** to pay for health care (pg. 40 Medi-Cal)
- **Food Stamps** in most cases (pg 33 Food Stamps) including **emergency food stamps** by the next working day after you apply if you need them and **transitional food stamps** for five months after you leave CalWORKs
- **Immediate Needs:** an advance of up to \$200 at the time you apply, or your whole check within 3 days if you have an eviction notice (See pg 6 "Immediate Need.")
- **Homeless and Housing Assistance** including eviction prevention, temporary shelter, move-in costs, rent subsidy, and help with cost of moving (see pg. 15)
- **Non-Recurring Special Needs:** You can get up to \$600 each time if you have to replace clothing, household items, and appliances because of a fire, disaster, theft or other event beyond your control. You can also get this money for shelter if your home is so damaged or unlivable you can't stay there and you are not eligible for the Homeless Assistance program (see pg. 15). You must

have less than \$100 to get this money. If you get it, you do not have to repay it.

- **Special Needs:** You can get an extra \$9 to \$15 if you have special needs such as higher food costs because of a necessary special diet, or higher transportation or utility costs due to a medical condition. Breast-feeding mothers can add \$15 to their grant to help with their dietary needs. Tell your worker if you have these special needs.

- **Welfare To Work** services such as counseling, job training, help finding work educational assistance, money for tools, uniforms, childcare, transportation, and housing relocation. (See pg 10 Work Requirements)

- **Money For Pregnant Women:** After 6 months of pregnancy if you have no other children on CalWORKs, you may get a grant for one person (\$359 for a non-exempt family) plus an additional \$47 (bringing your total grant to \$406 per month). You get this money from the time your pregnancy is verified until the baby is born. Here are some other rules for the \$47:

- Pregnant teens with no other children can get cash aid from the date of application with proof of pregnancy, but must go to Cal Learn.

- If you are pregnant and have other children on CalWORKs, you can get the special need payment of \$47 from the date of pregnancy verification until the baby is born. You can get Medi-Cal health insurance immediately. You must get a doctor's statement that you are pregnant.

- If there are no other children, the father cannot get CalWORKs until the child is born, but he can get General Relief for himself, if eligible.

- If you are undocumented, or receive SSI, and have no other children on CalWORKs, you must wait until the child is born to get benefits for the baby. Bring in proof of the baby's birth such as a hospital certificate or a wristband.

- **Child Support:** You can get \$50 extra each month if the other parent pays at least \$50 of child support to the County's Department of Child Support Services on time. The Department should give you a list that shows when the other parent paid (an "accounting"). Check it to make sure you got \$50 extra cash aid for every month the other parent paid on time. To get an accounting call (323 890 9800).

► **4. Diversion Payments**

Instead of going on to cash aid you can apply for a large amount of money called a "diversion payment" to help you get or keep a job. To get it, you must be apparently eligible for CalWORKs, have a job or immediate job opportunity, and have an unexpected one-time need. For example, you could pay for car repairs or insurance, work tools or clothing, rent or utilities, license fees, or childcare expenses. If you get a diversion payment you may also get Medi-Cal, Food Stamps and supportive services. (see page 10 "Services To Help You.")

The usual payment is up to the grant amount for your size family for three months or \$2,000, whichever is larger. For a "compelling need," you can get up to \$4,000. The diversion payment counts as months of cash against the 60 month life-time limit (amount of payment divided by monthly grant=months used up) After you get a diversion payment, you can still get cash aid if you need it.

Diversion payments must be paid to you within 5 days after the application, or 1 day in an emergency. Starting work the next day is an example of an emergency.

► **5. Immediate Need**

You can get cash aid of \$200 or your whole check in an emergency. You must have less than \$100 and "immediate needs" when you apply or before you are approved. Be sure to tell the worker all of your needs, including money for diapers, medicine, transportation, laundry, or a utility shutoff notice.

If you have an eviction notice or 3-day notice to pay rent, you can get your full cash aid for the month within 3 working days. Bring the eviction or 3-day notice.

If you are referred to an agency instead of being given money, DPSS must make sure that the agency really can meet your need. DPSS must also give you a written referral to the agency. Don't leave DPSS if you haven't gotten cash aid—talk to a supervisor. If denied, call a Legal Aid at (800) 399-4529 in the Central and Southern parts of the County or (800) 433-6251 in the Northern and Valley parts of the County

DPSS will ask if you expect to receive income or other cash aid during the

month. The answer is "no" if the income is uncertain or might not come until next month.

The immediate need advance can be \$200 or the amount of the grant for that month (whichever amount is less) and must be given to you by the next working day. Even if you are also getting "homeless assistance," you are still entitled to this money if you have another emergency in addition to housing.

If you apply for immediate need, you will still have to go through the regular application and verification procedure, but you should get the first aid check within 15 working days, or 3 days if you are being evicted.

You must be given this money even if you do not have an identification document or other documents that prove you are eligible. But you must have:

- Pregnancy verification with a due date, if you have no eligible children
  - Proof of eligible immigration status
- A social security number, or agree to promptly apply for one if you do not have one.

► **6. Foster Care (Someone Else's Children)**

If you are caring for someone else's children, the child or children may qualify for Foster Care payments even if you are related to the children. Foster Care payments are higher than CalWORKs cash aid. (see page 24 Foster Care.) If a relative's children live with you but do not get foster care, you should be able to get cash aid for them.

## HOW DO I APPLY?

You apply for CalWORKs at the nearest DPSS (Department of Public Social Services) office. (see page 66 Welfare Offices.) When you apply, you have a right to be treated with courtesy and without discrimination for any reason. The DPSS workers must try to get you all the cash aid, food stamps and other benefits for which you are eligible. Often, eligible people who urgently need the aid don't get correct information, or don't understand or get discouraged. If that is happening to you, be strong, insist on talking to a supervisor, or the supervisor's manager, seek out the help of someone who will advocate for you, or insist on speaking to someone fluent in your language (DPSS must provide a free interpreter) or call a Legal Aid office. (see page 62 Hearings and Complaints.)

### ► 1. Domestic Violence

If you are a victim of domestic violence, or suffering effects of past domestic violence tell the worker right away, because there are specially trained workers available to assist you with the problems you or your children may have. Also, you may be excused from GAIN or have other eligibility rules waived such as the Maximum Family Grant rule.

If you need emergency or homeless assistance, DPSS staff must act quickly to help you.

### ► 2. Special Help for the Disabled

If you have a physical or mental disability that makes it hard for you to go through the regular application process, DPSS must give you special help. This might include: taking an application at your home, helping you fill out forms, reading all forms to you. Ask your worker for this help. If they won't give it to you, call Legal Services for help.

### ► 3. Application

You have the right to turn in a written application on the day you go in. You will only get benefits as of the date you turn in the application. If someone tells you to come back without submitting the application, you may insist on filing an application.

Fill out the application as completely as you can, circling the numbers of the lines where you cannot answer or need help. Turn the application in and wait to be seen or make an appointment to see an eligibility worker. If you are not seen in a half-hour, report in to the reception desk regularly until you are seen.

### ► 4. Interview

You may bring someone along to help you. You will go over the form you filled out and will be asked for additional information. You should be given a list of documents that you will need to complete the application process. You may be given a "return appointment" to turn in papers.

If you do not have all the necessary documents, you or someone you know may sign a statement explaining why not. You may be able to receive benefits while you continue to gather the required information. The eligibility worker should help you get some of your missing papers. The worker will give you a form to take to your children's school regarding the attendance of your children. Sometimes workers insist you bring your children to DPSS and show them. You do not need to do this.

### ► 5. Fingerprints

All adults (age 18 and over) and teen parents must be fingerprinted in order to apply for and get CalWORKs. If you refuse to be fingerprinted, your cash aid will be cut, but your children can get their cash aid. If you are scheduled for fingerprinting at a day that will not work for you, ask to reschedule.

### ► 6. Next Steps

Keep in touch with your DPSS eligibility worker and write down his or her name, phone number, and phone hours. If you are asked to mail additional papers to the welfare office, ask the worker for a stamped envelope addressed to him or her.

If you take in papers, get a receipt. Keep your own copy of all the paperwork. If you need help and your worker is not available, the duty worker or supervisor must help you. You can also call the Help Line for your DPSS office. (see page 66.)

Within 45 days of when you turn in your application, you must either receive your first check, or a notice that you have been denied aid. If the DPSS denies your aid, they must send you a letter explaining the reason. Do not sign a "withdrawal" of your application unless you understand and agree with the written reason you are given.

### ► 7. Home Visits

A "home visit" is conducted when people apply for aid. DPSS should do this within 5 days of your return appointment. If you do not agree to the home visit, your application for CalWORKs will be denied.

DPSS will not tell you the day or exact time they are coming. They should give you the option of selecting the morning or afternoon if you tell them you may not be home during a certain time of day. The home visit should not interfere with your job or training and education activities. The home visit worker should not identify himself or herself to anyone other than you.

The worker will walk through every room in your home, unless the room belongs to someone who is not part of the family applying for aid, such as a roommate. If you feel like you have been mistreated during a home visit, you should call a legal aid office.

You are not required to have a home visit if you have one of the following good reasons:

- You are residing or will be residing in a domestic violence shelter, or in substance abuse or sober living facilities. Verbal or written verification from the facility is required.
- You are homeless. The DPSS will require you to sign an affidavit.
- You are employed 32 or more hours Monday through Friday, 8AM to 5PM, or based on travel time to and from work, cannot be home during those hours. Written verification of work hours from the employer is required.
- You are living with a non-relative who refuses to allow the home visit. DPSS will require an affidavit from the non-relative indicating that they won't allow the home visit. In this instance, DPSS will refer you to fraud investigation.
- You have good cause for not being at home during a home visit if you were at work, sick or had an emergency situation. Good cause is determined on a

case-by-case basis, and you should provide documentation, such as a doctor's note.

DPSS will try three times to visit your home. But you must call the home visit worker after each missed visit to let DPSS know that you want them to try again. After three visit attempts your aid will be denied.

### ▶ 8. Electronic Benefits "EBT"

DPSS will give you an EBT "electronic benefits card" (Golden State ADVANTAGE) to use at banks, ATM machines and stores.

For CalWORKs, if the last digit of your case number is 1 to 3, the money goes on your card the first day of the month; 4 to 7, the second day of the month; and 8 to 0, the third day of the month. There is no charge for the first four "swipes" of the card each month, then an 85¢ charge for each use. Some ATM machines will charge a \$1 or \$2 fee to use the card.

Ask your worker for a list of banks and ATMs near you that will not charge you a fee.

Call (877) 328-9677 right away if the card is stolen, lost, or destroyed. You will not be charged for stolen aid after reporting the loss.

### ▶ 9. Getting Benefits by Check

If you have a bank account, you can choose to have your cash aid direct deposited automatically. Otherwise, you must use an EBT card.

If you are disabled or have a hardship that will keep you from participating in EBT, you can ask that DPSS mail you the check.

You may sign an affidavit at DPSS to get a replacement check if your check was stolen, lost or destroyed.

## HOW DO I KEEP GETTING CASH AID?

### 1. Report on a "QR-7"

Every quarter (every three months) you must report changes in income, property or the number of people in your household. DPSS will mail you a QR-7 report form for you to do this. The QR 7 will also ask you to report any changes, including changes you expect in the next three months.

You must turn in the QR-7 even if there is no change to report. If you don't get the QR-7 in the mail go to DPSS to get another form and fill it out.

When you fill out your information, you list what happened in the *middle* of the quarter (2nd month) you are reporting about. This is called the "**data month**." For example, if you are reporting on the quarter from January to March, your **data month** is February.

List on the QR-7 what happened in February. You turn this report in during March. March is your **report month**. The completed, signed form is due back to DPSS on the fifth day of the third (or last) month of the quarter.

Some things need to be reported to the county **before** your next income report is due. This is called "**mid-quarter reporting**."

You must report these things **within 10 days**: Address changes, fleeing felons, drug convictions, parole or probation violations, and if your income goes over the "**income reporting threshold ("IRT")**." The IRT is the amount of income that would make your household ineligible for aid. DPSS will give you a form telling you your IRT limit. DPSS counts the family's *earned and unearned* income to see if you are at this limit. For example a family of three has an IRT of \$1,861.00 per month. The family doesn't have to report any change in income until the next QR7 is due, unless it adds up to more than \$1,861.00 .

It is safest to drop your QR-7 off at the DPSS, and get a dated receipt to prove that you turned it in on time. But you can mail it in the postage-paid envelope.

Be sure to attach copies of pay stubs, bills and receipts to prove your information. It is wise to keep a copy of every piece of paper you give to DPSS. If the QR-7 you turn in is incomplete, DPSS treats it as if it was not turned in at all.

If you do not turn in a quarterly report by the eleventh day of the reporting month, you will get a notice that your cash aid will stop. DPSS must also try to phone you to let you know they don't have the QR-7.

If you get a notice that you are being terminated (your aid stopped) for not filling out a QR-7, call your worker, go to the DPSS immediately, and fill out a new QR-7 (or take in your receipt if you already submitted the QR-7). If you file a report after the 11th but before the end of the first working day of the next month your aid should continue (but it could be late).

If you do not file a report on or before the first working day of the next month, you will be cut off aid (and will have to reapply) unless you had a good reason (good cause).

If you can show "good cause" you can get back on aid without reapplying. Good cause for turning the QR-7 in late includes: errors by DPSS, a physical or mental condition that prevented you from being on time, or not being able to provide all the necessary information. If you haven't been able to work it out or haven't heard from your worker, be sure to file for a fair hearing before the date your check is supposed to stop. This way you will not lose your cash aid.

When you first apply, the amount of cash aid you get depends on how much your other income is at that time.. What you report on your application will be used to determine what you get the next few months until your first QR-7 is turned in. If your income goes down, report it right away, so your cash aid will go up. You can do this by calling your worker. DPSS may ask you for proof that it has dropped.

You won't get aid if you're in jail or out of the state for 30 days, but you should still report it, or they will charge you with an overpayment.

**2. Report All Your Income And Gifts**

You should be careful to report all income you get or changes in your family. The welfare department will check bank, employer, and tax records to check your income, and accepts tips of suspected "welfare fraud" from the public.

There are serious penalties for individuals who either are convicted of fraud in court or found to have committed fraud at an administrative hearing. You may have to pay penalties and be disqualified from CalWORKs for six months or even a lifetime, depending on the seriousness of the fraud. You can also be arrested and face jail time.

**3. Participate in Welfare to Work Programs**

Unless excused, all CalWORKs participants must be working, looking for work, or going to training or school. You will have to participate in a program called GAIN. Some refugees and U visa/ U visa Interim Relief participants will participate in alternate "GAIN" programs called REP (Refugee Employment Program) instead. (See Page 10 Work Requirements.)

**4. Cooperate with Child Support Collection**

Unless it could put you or your children in danger to do so, parents on cash aid must help ("cooperate with") the Child Support Agency ("CSA") to collect child support from any absent parent. You must provide information you have about the other parent such as name, an address or social security number, or place of employment.

The County keeps most of the child support it collects, up to the amount of the family's cash aid. You will get your CalWORKs grant plus an extra \$50 per month for every month the other parent pays on time. Every quarter the CSA should give you an accounting of the child support they collected. Call (323) 890-9800 to ask for this information. Parents will lose their share of cash aid if they refuse to sign over the child support to the county.

If you sign over your child support, but the Child Support Agency says you are not cooperating with them, your family's aid can be cut 25%.

Many people have good cause for not cooperating. Good cause includes:

- You don't know where the absent parent is, or have no other information about the other parent
- You are afraid of the absent parent, you or your children may be in danger, or you are a victim of domestic violence.
- Rape or incest has occurred
- You are planning to place the child for adoption.

If your worker at DPSS agrees that you have good cause, you will not have your cash aid cut. If you get a notice in writing that you are "not cooperating" and you think you have a good reason not to, and cannot resolve the issue by talking with your worker, ask for a fair hearing. (See Page 62 Hearings And Complaints.)

**5. Get Immunizations ("Shots") For Your Children**

When you apply for CalWORKs or at your annual redetermination, you must show proof that your children under age 6 have had their shots. You have 30 days from the approval of your Medi-Cal application (done at the same

time as your CalWORKs application) or 45 days from your redetermination to submit the immunization record or doctor's statement.

If you do not prove your children are immunized and do not have good cause (either lack of access or a sworn statement that immunization is against your religious or other beliefs), all cash aid to adults will be cut off until you provide the proof. The DPSS will extend the time period by 30 days if you have not been able to find shots for free. You can call the County Health Department at (800) 427-8700 to find free shots.

**6. Keep School-Age Children in School**

If your child is under 16 and not attending school regularly without good cause, the adult's cash aid will be cut off. If your child is over 16 and not attending school, or welfare to work activities, without good cause, only that child's aid will be cut. In either case, the cash grant will be restored when you prove to DPSS that the child is in school or has good cause.

**WHAT SHOULD I BRING WHEN I APPLY FOR BENEFITS?**

When applying for CalWORKs, bring the following documents with you. If you lack some of them, go ahead and apply, and get a list of documents to be brought in later. Ask the worker to help you obtain missing documents.

- Identification with your name and current address on it. This can be a birth certificate, driver's license, California ID card
- Social Security Number or Card (or proof of application for the cards)
- Proof of income (like check stubs, a W2, or copy of your tax return)
- Proof that you live in the county (a document that has your name and an address on it) for each person on the application
- If you lack ID, you can also fill out a form called "PA 853" and swear that you are who you say you are)
- Proof of citizenship, alien or immigration status for each person on the application that has it
- Proof of your housing situation (rent receipts, lease agreement, etc.)
- Auto payment papers and registration
- Letters from a doctor if anyone in the household is pregnant, disabled, has a special medical need or needs a special diet
- Any papers having to do with marriage, divorce, child support, or other circumstances that apply to your family .

## WORK REQUIREMENTS

You will be required to participate in “welfare to work activities” in order to stay on cash aid, unless you are excused (called an “exemption” or “good cause”). DPSS will send you to GAIN soon after you get cash aid.

The welfare to work programs in Los Angeles County are called GAIN and REP. “**GAIN**” (“Greater Avenues to Independence”) is the main program for speakers of English and Spanish. If your primary language is not English or Spanish your welfare to work case will be handled by a program case manager.

If you have been in the U.S. less than 5 years and have legal immigrant status as a refugee or granted asylum, you are assigned to a special refugee employment program titled “**REP**”. REP is also run by DPSS, but handled by private agencies.

### ▶ 1. Weekly Participation Hours

If you are a single parent, you have to work or participate in “welfare to work” activities 32 hours a week, unless you are excused.

If there are two parents in the family the participation requirement is usually 35 hours a week unless someone is excused. This time may be shared by both parents, but one parent must do at least 20 hours or more.

If you need Mental Health, Substance Abuse or Domestic Violence Services they can count towards the 32 hours (or you can be excused or do fewer hours).

### ▶ 2. Getting Excused from GAIN (“Exempt” or “Good Cause”)

DPSS must give you an **exemption** from GAIN or REP if you are:

- Caring for a first child under 12 months old, or any later child under 6 months old
- Pregnant, and have medical verification that the participation or work will harm your pregnancy
- Under 16 years old
- Attending high school full time, regardless of age
- Disabled for 30 days or more – can

- mean physically or mentally unfit for participation or work as verified by a doctor
- 60 years or age or older
- Taking care of children related to you but not your own, if DPSS agrees that this harms your ability to participate or work
- Taking care of an ill or disabled household member, if DPSS agrees that this harms your ability to participate or work

Any months exempted for these reasons do not count against your 60-month time limit.

If you do not qualify for an exemption, you may have **good cause** that excuses you from doing something GAIN asks you to do. The 60-month time limit is not stopped by good cause (except see below on domestic violence).

Good cause includes:

- Not getting supportive services you need (such as child care and transportation) to work or go to a GAIN or REP activity
- Child sick at home from school
- No transportation (for example your car broke down)
- You are homeless

#### **Domestic Violence Waiver:**

DPSS can waive some of the CalWORKs rules for victims of domestic violence, such as stop the 60 month time clock, not participate in GAIN, stop child support collections, or waive the maximum family grant rule. The violence can be something that happened in the past or in the present.

#### **Exempt people can volunteer and get help:**

You do not have to participate in GAIN or REP if you are excused or exempt. But you may volunteer to participate. As an exempt volunteer, you do not have to do the full 32 hours each week, but you are subject to other requirements of GAIN participants. You can do as many or few hours as you are able. DPSS must also pay you for services, like child care and money for transportation, tools, and books.

### ▶ 3. Learning Disabilities

All GAIN participants must be offered a learning disability (LD) screening. You can say you do not want the LD screening, but if you change your mind, you can ask for LD screening and evaluation anytime.

If the evaluation shows you have a learning disability, your welfare-to-work

plan must have activities that help you deal with your learning disability, such as tutoring or extra study time. DPSS must decide whether job search will be useful for you, or if your time limits should be extended.

If you have already been to assessment, went through GAIN or REP and failed to make satisfactory progress, you may have the clock stopped on your time limits and changes must be made in your plan with special help offered that will help you.

## SERVICES TO HELP YOU

Separate from cash aid (CalWORKs checks), CalWORKs can help you pay for work-related and training-related costs both before and after the 60-month limit. It is sometimes wise to volunteer to participate in GAIN or REP after being excused in order to receive this money.

At present the services include:

**Child care** (see pg. 22)

**Transportation Money:** bus fare, mileage payment, or funds to fix a car to allow you to get to work or welfare to work activity. Usually GAIN and REP will give you money to buy a monthly bus pass. But, if it takes you more than one hour each way by bus or train, including walking time, to get to child care and work (or other welfare to work activity.) DPSS must pay you mileage. The current rate is 45¢ a mile for the first 500 miles/month, and 15¢ for additional miles. You can also get paid for parking.

**Money for tools, books, school fees, and uniforms** if needed for work or training. Tuition is not paid for.

**Domestic Violence Counseling and Protection:** Survivors of domestic violence, even though excused from welfare to work requirements, can get special help through programs including emergency housing and safety planning, counseling, parenting classes, and legal services that provide help with restraining orders and divorces. You do not need a police report or other documents. Your sworn statement is enough proof. Everything you tell the DPSS eligibility worker or GAIN worker will be kept secret to the extent of the law.

**Taxi Vouchers:** anyone in a domestic violence situation receiving CalWORKs should be able to get taxi vouchers from the program assisting them if it will help keep them or their children safe.

**Mental Health Services:** You should receive a mental health screening during orientation. Also, a DPSS worker can suggest to you that you go to a mental health evaluation if they think you have a mental health barrier to finding or keeping a job. You can also ask for mental health evaluation anytime by calling your eligibility worker or GAIN worker.

After the evaluation, you can be referred to a mental health provider for treatment. The GAIN worker must develop your welfare-to-work plan based on what your treatment provider recommends.

You have the right to refuse any mental health treatment, but if you do, you can't use mental health problems as a reason to not work or not participate in GAIN or REP.

**Substance Abuse Services:** You can ask for help with substance abuse treatment at anytime by calling your eligibility worker or GAIN worker. If you find it difficult to obtain or keep a job because of problems with alcohol or drugs, the DPSS worker can refer you to a substance abuse clinical assessment. You may receive help through residential or day treatment: individual, group or family counseling; rehabilitation services; and health care information and referrals. You can continue getting these services as part of your Welfare-to-Work requirements while receiving cash aid.

You can go to a substance abuse treatment program as the welfare to work activity. You have the right to refuse any substance abuse treatment program as the welfare-to-work activity; however, if you do not go to a treatment program, you cannot use substance abuse as a reason to not work or not participate in GAIN or REP.

**Up to \$1500 for Housing Relocation:** If you are working or have a job offer for 20 hours or more a week you can apply for Housing Relocation assistance to move closer to your job, your child care, or your transportation. This benefit is available only once in a lifetime.

You must show that you either have a commute of one hour or more each way to work or to child-care or a combination of the two; or that there is no public transportation available at the time your work shift starts and ends. You must also show that you have located a place to live.

Your new rent must be less than 60% of your income. You can also get up to \$405 for a refrigerator or stove if you need one because of the move, so the total can be \$1,905.

**Teen Passport to Success:** Youths aged 12 to 18, who are not pregnant or parenting and whose parents are CalWORKs participants, can volunteer (or be volunteered by a parent) for a series of 5 Saturdaysessions of GAIN-type activities. There are no sanctions or penalties in this voluntary program.

## GAIN AND REP ACTIVITIES

### 1. Orientation and Appraisal

Soon after you apply for cash aid, you will receive an appointment letter to go to Orientation and Appraisal. This will most likely take all day. At Orientation, GAIN will give you information on the CalWORKs program and its rules; education, training and service that you can have; and exemptions and sanctions. Orientation is done in a group setting.

After Orientation, you will meet with your GAIN or REP worker in a one-on-one meeting called Appraisal. You will talk to your worker about your work and educational history, what kind of services you need, and anything else that will help you get the services you need in welfare-to-work. If you have problems due to mental health, substance abuse, or domestic violence, you can self-declare to your worker at this time so that you can get services immediately. Your worker is also supposed to screen you for service needs in these areas.

If you are already enrolled in an education or training that may qualify as a Self-Initiated Program (see page 12), you need to tell your worker at Appraisal. This will let you do the education and training as your welfare-to-work activity instead of going through Job Club (see next column) and the rest of the GAIN process.

### 2. Job Club & Search

Unless you are already in school or working, Orientation/Job Club/Vocational (JCO) will be your first GAIN activity. JCO is a four week activity. During the first week of JCO you will participate in group orientation. JCO is offered in several languages. The GAIN worker can shorten the job search requirement if they agree that it will not help you find a job.

You don't have to do job search if:

- It would interfere with a full time job you already have
- You are enrolled in a Self-Initiated Program of college or vocational training
- You are in the Cal-LEARN program
- Doing a job search would not help you (example-you need basic English or literacy training first)
- You need other help with domestic violence, mental health, or substance abuse.

### 3. Assessment

If you don't find a job in the first three weeks of job club, at the end of that week, you will have a "vocational assessment" to determine your next GAIN, or REP activities. The assessment is a meeting with a vocational expert to go over your work history, skills, education, need for supportive services. They will also consider any physical or mental conditions that affects your ability to work (including substance abuse or domestic violence). They will give you tests of your skill levels and to help plan your job goals.

- If you can't read, write, or speak English, or do basic math, DPSS should assign you to education if you want to go.
- If a mental or learning disability or a medical problem is a barrier for you to get a job, DPSS must refer you to an evaluation of that problem and for help.

You will meet with the assessor, the Job Club facilitator, and a GAIN job developer to discuss your activities and develop a welfare-to-work plan. The plan should be based on your desires/goals and should be individualized. If you don't like the plan ask for a "third party assessment."

If the activity in your welfare to work plan is not immediately available (for example, if you have to wait for the next quarter or month to start a vocational class), ask for a new assessment, or you will be assigned to job search until the activity is available. You should ask DPSS about which bridge activities, other than job search, you can do until the activity in your welfare to work plan is available.

**Stand Alone Assessment:** Stand Alone Assessment is for participants who, during their appraisal interview or after Job Club are:

- employed full or part time: or
- are in a Self Initiated Program (SIP)
- in need of a clinical assessment: or
- Post Employment Career Assessment for participants who find a full-time job of 32/35 hours or more per week and request Post-Employment Services.

#### ▶ **4. Your Welfare to Work Plan and Activities**

After the assessment you will meet with your Worker, to make and sign a “welfare to work” plan in which you agree to go to welfare to work activities.

Don’t sign the welfare to work plan unless you understand and agree with it. Also, make sure that you get a copy. The plan must be based on the assessment of your needs and skills. Your plan can include counseling, education and training at adult schools or community colleges, ESL classes, or other work activities. Ask for a hearing or a third party assessment if the plan is not what you want. You can also call Legal Aid for help.

#### ▶ **5. Make Job Training Part of Your Welfare to Work Plan**

Job skills training from DPSS (or a private or public school) will help you get a living wage job. Some job skills programs even pay you a wage. Those programs include:

- On the job training that pays you a wage while you learn how to do a job, includes:
- Transitional Subsidized Employment; and
  - County Apprenticeship Training in union jobs with Parks and Rec (ground-keeper, maintenance) and DPSS (clerical).

DPSS, the community colleges, and adult schools may offer special job training programs for people who speak a language other than English or don’t speak English well. These classes teach job skills and English language instruction needed to learn the job.

Make sure that you talk to the assessor about including this kind of training in your plan. You have 60 months to get GAIN’s help—use the time to get a good job.

#### ▶ **6. "Core" and "Non-Core" Activities**

You must do 20 hours of your weekly participation hours in “core” welfare to work activities. SIPs, people in domestic violence situations, and family reunification recipients do NOT have to meet the requirements of “core” activities. “Core” activities include:

- A job
- On the job training - the government pays (subsidizes) a portion of your wages to your employer. This may also be transitional subsidized employment.
- County apprenticeships – on the job training with a paycheck from the county. These are usually grounds and maintenance work.
- Work-study
- Unpaid work experience
- Community service
- Job search or job readiness assistance
- Self-employment
- Up to 12 months of vocational education or training (may include vocational ESL) at community colleges, adult schools, and regional occupations centers

If you have 20 hours of core activities, the rest of the time can be in “core” or “non-core.” “Non-core” activities include:

- Studying for a GED, if you don’t have a high school diploma
- Adult basic education, including ESL and vocational ESL
- Mental health counseling and substance abuse treatment
- Domestic violence services
- Vocational education after 12 months
- Other education or job skills training that can lead to finding work
- Other activities you may need to help you find work

Some “non-core” activities can count as “core.” If you need mental health, sub-

stance abuse, or domestic violence services for more than 12/15 hours a week, then the additional hours can count as “core.” If you are in classes, internships or labs for education or job skills training that takes more than 12/15 hours a week, the additional hours can count as “core.”

#### ▶ **7. Appealing a Welfare-to-Work Plan**

If you and the assessor can’t agree on the plan, you can request an independent “third party assessment” by another agency. DPSS must let you know about the third party assessor when you disagree and must help you with the request. You and DPSS will be bound by what this independent assessor decides, although you can request a state hearing if you still disagree. If you still think your welfare to work plan will not work for you, you have these options:

- Ask for a change (you must do this within the first three days from the date you signed the plan)
- Refuse to sign the plan and ask for a fair hearing.
- Ask for a change of activity within the first 30 days After you have begun an activity, you have 30 days to request a change to another activity. Your worker must grant your request if the other activity is consistent with your plan and likely to lead to employment. You can do this only once.

#### ▶ **8. SIPs (Self Initiated Programs For Students)**

If on the date of your GAIN appraisal you are already in school or training, or have enrolled to start school, your education or training can count as your GAIN activity. This is called a SIP (“Self Initiated Program”) because you chose it yourself. It could be a college or vocational program. If you already have a 4-year college degree, you cannot do a SIP unless it is for a teaching credential.

To continue in a SIP you must be making satisfactory progress toward a degree or certificate that leads to employment.

If your approved SIP is interrupted because of a good reason, such as illness, you can go back to that program later, so long as you were in good standing when you left.

If your self initiated program takes less than the required 32 hours a week, you must also participate in other welfare to work activities to get to the total required 32 weekly hours.

If you are a SIP, you will have not have to follow the core/non-core activities requirement. Also, because there is no more 18-24 months limit on welfare-to-work activities, you can pursue education and training for the entire 60 months life-time limit on CalWORKs.

## 9. Help To Keep The Job—Post Employment Services

Once you have found a job, the GAIN program can help you with money for transportation, training, tools, uniforms, and similar costs. After you stop getting CalWORKs because you found a job, GAIN can still help you for a limited time. Also you may be able to get two years of child care payments. You must ask for this money to get it.

**Medi-Cal:** You continue to get Medi-Cal when you leave CalWORKs. When your income increases, you can continue to get Transitional Medi-Cal for up to 24 months for parents and 12 months for children under 19 years old. Turn in your QR-7 form saying that you got a job, and how much you are making, and tell your worker you still want Medi-Cal. (See page 40 “Medi-Cal.”)

**Transitional Food Stamps:** You can continue getting food stamps for five months after you leave CalWORKs. DPSS should send you a notice explaining how this works.

### TIME-LIMIT RULES AFTER 60 MONTHS OF BENEFITS

Most adults can only receive 60 months (5 years) of cash aid from CalWORKs for their whole life. This does not have to be 60 months in a row. After the adult has been aided 60 months, their part of the grant is cut, but their children can still get aid. There is no 60-month limit if all adult parents or caretaker relatives in the home of the aided child meet any of these tests:

- 60 years or older

- Disabled, receiving State Disability Insurance, Temporary Workers’ Compensation, In-Home Supportive Services or SSI, and unable to work or go to GAIN

- Not able to go to GAIN or employment because of an “impairment,” for example a learning disability or chronic mental illness. You must have a history of “full cooperation” in GAIN for a sustained period. Full cooperation means no sanctions and satisfactory attendance

However, even with a sanction this exemption can be granted if you were ever in GAIN for 6 months straight, or if you were in GAIN for two periods within a two year period that are equal to six or more months

- There are no local jobs that accommodate your disabilities
- A non-parent relative taking care of a child “at risk of foster care placement” and that responsibility restricts your ability to go to GAIN or employment. Example, if you are a grandparent under age 60 who cannot both be regularly employed and care for the child, DPSS can continue your CalWORKs aid rather than having the child enter foster care.
- A domestic abuse survivor who cannot participate in CalWORKs because of the abuse. You do not have to currently be in a domestic abuse situation. You will also qualify if you are suffering from the effects of past abuse and the effects limit your ability to go to GAIN or work.

You only need to tell your worker (“self-declare”) to qualify; no other proof, not even a police report, is required. Your time will be extended for as long as you continue to suffer from the effects of the abuse or are in danger of more violence.

### Clock Stoppers or Exemptions

Apply for an exemption to “stop the clock” for any months which should not have been counted in your 60-month limit. Your request should be in writing, but can be verbal.

DPSS has to send you a written decision within 15 days of the request (unless something happens that is beyond the DPSS’s control). If you disagree with the decision you may request a state fair hearing. DPSS is required to research your available case records before asking you to provide infor-

mation or documentation which they already have in the files.

Clock stoppers include:

- **Sanctioned or No Check**—Any month you do not get a CalWORKs aid payment for yourself even if you receive various services like child-care or job training or counseling. No payment is issued for you if you are sanctioned that month, the payment would have been less than \$10, or you are caring for an aided child but not aided yourself.

- **Disabled**—Any month you are sick, disabled, or injured for over 30 days and it interferes with going to work or GAIN. You may be required to provide a doctor’s report. This includes mental and physical illness.

- **Caring For a Sick Family Member**—Any month you are caring for an ill or disabled person living in the home and that caretaking interfered with regular employment or participation in GAIN activities.

- **Foster Child Placement or Risk of Placement**—Any month you are a non-parent relative taking care of a child who is a dependent ward of the court or “at risk of foster care placement” and that responsibility interfered with regular employment or participation in GAIN activities. This can exempt, for example, a grandparent under age 60 who could not both be regularly employed and care for the child.

- **Domestic Violence**—Any month you cannot participate in CalWORKs as a result of domestic abuse. You do not have to currently be in a domestic abuse situation. You also qualify if you are suffering from the effects of past abuse. You only need to tell your worker [“self-declare”] to qualify; no other proof, not even a police report, is required.

- **Over 60**—Any month the parent or caretaker relative is 60 years or older.

- **Child Support Repaid**—All child support paid to the County by an absent parent takes time off your clock. Ask the County Child Support Division (800) 615-8858 to provide you with an accounting of the amount of child support they have collected on your behalf during the 60-month period. Then ask your GAIN worker or fill out and submit an exemption form to find out how many months of credit you get for the child support that was paid.

- **Teen Parent**—Any month you are a teen parent or pregnant, under age 19, do not yet have a GED or high school diploma, and either participate in or are

excused from Cal Learn or another teen parent program approved by the DPSS. You can be excused from Cal Learn in any month in which you can show the DPSS you do not have necessary childcare or transportation, you are sick, disabled, or expelled and an alternative school program is not available. You can't use Cal Learn as a clock-stopper after you get the GED or diploma. See pg. 14 for more about Cal-Learn.

- **Native American**—You are a Native American who lives in “Indian Country,” or on a reservation if 50% or more of the adults there are unemployed.

In a family with two aided parents, both adults must meet one of the above clock stoppers for the month not to count.

## WHAT PENALTIES DO I FACE?

If you don't follow the GAIN or REP requirements and don't have a good reason (“good cause,”) DPSS will cut your cash aid. Your children's cash aid will not be cut. In some cases both parents can have their cash aid cut. DPSS can cut your part of the grant if they can show that you have:

- Failed or refused to participate in your assigned activity
- Failed to make good progress in your assigned activity
- Failed or refused to accept a job
- Failed or refused to keep a job
- Failed to keep the same amount of earnings

DPSS must try to contact you and give you a chance to comply. If you fail to comply, DPSS will send you a “Notice of Action” no sooner than 30 days before the cut in aid will take place. They will give you an appointment within 20 days to discuss the problem with your worker. It is very important for you to go to this meeting or call your worker to explain. You also have the right to ask for a fair hearing if you can't work it out with your worker.

Your part of the grant will be cut until DPSS agrees that you are complying with the rules.

Your cash aid cannot be cut if you have good cause for refusing to comply.

“Good cause” includes:

- You are homeless
- You are a victim of domestic violence
- You were ill, or caring for a sick member of the family

- Your mental illness prevented you from doing what was asked of you
  - You need child care for a child 12 years or younger and none is available
  - Transportation is not available to your job or GAIN activity
  - There was discrimination at the job or training offered in terms of age, sex, race, religion, national origin, or physical or mental disability
  - The job or job offer exceeded the daily or weekly hours of work customary for that job
  - The round trip travel time to the job or activity is over two hours using public transportation, not counting time you need to take your children to school or child care
  - You can only get to the activity by walking and you have to walk more than two miles round trip, not counting the distance needed to take children to school or child care
  - The job or activity violates health and safety standards or does not provide worker's compensation
  - Accepting the job or work activity would interrupt an approved job or training program that you have in progress
  - The job or community service would result in regular employees being fired, laid off, or having their hours or pay cut.
  - Any other good reason.
- During a sanction you continue to get childcare for the hours that you work. Your Medi-Cal must also continue.

## TEEN PARENTS

If you are a teenager under 18 who is pregnant or who already has a child, has never been married, and you apply for CalWORKs, you must live with your own parent or parents, a guardian, another adult relative, or in an adult-supervised arrangement in order to qualify.

There are exceptions, if:

- You have no living parent or guardian, or their whereabouts are unknown
- Your parents will not allow you to live with them,
- You lived apart from your parents for at least 12 months before your child was born, or before you applied for CalWORKs
- You believe your child's or your physical or emotional health or safety would be in danger if you lived with these adults. In this situation DPSS should refer your case to the Minor Parent Program of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

A DCFS social worker will visit your current home and decide if it is appropriate for you and your child.

If you live at home, your parents' income will be counted against you and your child when you apply.

If you are a teen parent, or pregnant, and don't have a high school diploma or GED, you have to be in a program called CAL-LEARN. You won't have to be in CAL-LEARN if you have been expelled from school and no alternative school is available; if you are sick; or if you have good cause that keeps you from being in the program and is approved by the DPSS.

When you are in school full-time to get your diploma or GED, you can get a \$100 bonus payment up to four times each school year if you make a grade C average or better. When you graduate, you get a \$500 bonus. This money counts against your \$2,000 resource limit but doesn't count against your food stamps or Medi-Cal.

A \$100 penalty will be taken from your check, at \$50 a month, each time you get a report card with an average less than D, up to four times a year. If you think you have a good reason why your grades were bad, ask your case manager for a “good cause” review of your case. If your case manager still won't lift the penalty, you can ask for a state hearing.

If you have a baby while you are getting CalWORKs on your mother's case or another adult's case, DPSS may tell you that you cannot get cash aid for the new baby because of the “MFG” (Maximum Family Grant) rule. In many cases, this is wrong. Ask for a hearing and call legal aid.

When you turn 18, are pregnant or parenting, and aided in your parent's or caretaker's case, you have a choice.

You can open your own case with you as the adult. Apply within 60 days before your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday so there is no break in cash aid. Or if you meet the educational requirement, you can remain on your parent's case. If you open your own case:

- You can also get aid for your child who was previously not aided because of the “MFG” (Maximum Family Grant.)
- In most cases your cash aid will increase and your parent's cash aid will decrease or stop
- You do not have to move out of the parent's home.

The 60 month clock will not start to run until you leave Cal Learn.

## DPSS HOMELESS SERVICES

If your family is homeless, or has received a notice to pay or quit, the DPSS can give you money for temporary shelter and to help with move-in costs to a permanent home. The money is in addition to your CalWORKs cash aid and does not have to be paid back. To apply you must be homeless or have received a notice to pay or quit: be eligible for CalWORKs: and have less than \$100. You are "homeless" if you have no regular, permanent place to live for any reason. You do not have to stay in a shelter to prove that you are homeless. You may be asked to prove that you are homeless, but money cannot be denied or delayed if you do not have proof. It is against the law for any government agency to take children away from parents for being homeless unless there is evidence of abuse or neglect. Homelessness by itself is not child abuse or neglect.

Usually you can get this homeless assistance aid only once in a lifetime. However, a family can get help more than once if the cause is:

- Domestic violence by a spouse, partner, or roommate
- A physical or mental illness (but not including drug addiction or alcoholism) and you have a written doctor's note.
- A fire or natural disaster or your home was condemned, or some other unusual circumstance beyond your control.

### ► 1. Temporary Shelter Money

You can get money for up to 16 days to stay in a hotel or shelter if they charge rent. You cannot use this money to pay to stay with a friend. You will get \$65 to \$125 per day to pay for shelter, depending on your family size. If you find some place for less money than they give you, you can keep the extra money.

Show receipts to prove that you have paid something for shelter. (If you cannot show receipts, you can still get homeless aid money but it will be paid directly to the hotel or shelter). You will also have to fill out a form showing that you have looked for a permanent place to live for each day that you received the shelter.

If eligible, DPSS should help you the same day you apply, either by giving

you a referral to a specific shelter with room for you or by giving you cash that day. If they refer you to a shelter, they must give you temporary shelter money by the next day.

Even if you decide not to go to the shelter ask for money for as many nights as needed during a single 16-day period. (For example, you cannot get a week now and another week two months from now.) If you needed but did not receive all 16 days of temporary homeless assistance, request a hearing to collect it retroactively. After the 16 days are over, make sure to provide your worker with a mailing address (even if only temporary) within 10 days.

**Getting an Extra 14 Days:** You can get 14 additional days of assistance (unless the County runs out of funds for the program.) You can be eligible if you enroll and comply with the rules in the Homeless CalWORKs Families Project and one or more of the following applies:

- you are receiving CalWORKs:
- you are timed out from CalWORKs:
- you are working in GAIN, REP, or post time limit services or:
- you are exempt from GAIN, or REP
- or, only the children in the case are aided,
- or you are a domestic violence victim

### ► 2. Money to Get and Keep Permanent Housing

You can also get money to cover the actual cost of security deposits, "last month's rent" deposit, and gas, electricity, and water deposits. The DPSS will not pay for the first month's rent, though, or old overdue utility bills because you must pay that from your CalWORKs cash aid.

DPSS will not pay unless you find a place where your share of the monthly rent is less than 80% of the monthly family income.

If you plan to share your housing, the landlord must agree to the rent-share plan. DPSS will question the housing unless your name is on the lease. If you are a CalWORKs participant now you must be given this permanent housing assistance within one working day of showing that you have found a place. If you are not yet receiving CalWORKs benefits, you must first bring in the documents you need to prove you are eligible for CalWORKs, and proof that you have found a place (like a note

from the landlord or a proposed rental agreement).

When you pay your landlord, get a receipt to give to your worker within 30 days. If you later move, the landlord and/or the utility companies should return the security deposits to you, not to the County, to use at your next residence.

You can also get Permanent Housing Assistance to receive up to 2 months of back rent to prevent eviction. Each month of this back rent cannot be more than 80% of the family income. Call legal aid for details.

### ► 3. Emergency Assistance to Prevent Eviction (EAPE)

If you are at risk of losing your home because you didn't pay the rent due to a financial hardship (not for any other lease or contract violation), EAPE can give you money to pay back rent or utilities up to two months behind so that you can continue living there. To be eligible for EAPE you must be eligible to CalWORKs, receiving CalWORKs, or timed off CalWORKs, AND show that you are going through financial hardship that could result in homelessness if help is not given. Once the worker verifies you are eligible you can get up to \$2,000 to pay rent or utilities for up to two months. You must agree to pay part of the past due rent and/or utilities. EAPE money does not pay for the present month rent and utilities---unless you have received a pay or quit notice for the current month's rent.

### ► 4. Moving Assistance Program (MA)

MA can give you money to help you secure a permanent place to live. To qualify you must be approved for CalWORKs or timed out from CalWORKs, AND:

- be homeless or
- be at risk of being homeless (you already got an eviction notice or 3-day notice), or
- you can show that you have a financial hardship that will result in your being homeless if you don't get help. If you are already homeless, you must have used up all other assistance such as Homeless Assistance to get MA. Once the worker verifies you are eligible you can get up to \$2,000 as a once in a lifetime payment for move-in costs like deposits, last month's rent, truck rental, and a stove and/or refrigerator

if the new place doesn't have one. Like Homeless Assistance, you must find a place where your family's share of the rent is not more than 80% of your Maximum Aid Payment. Timed-out families can also get two months of the adult portion of the reduced grant (included within the \$2,000).

If you are not receiving CalWORKs, but are homeless and leaving a shelter, transitional house, or similar agency, you may be eligible to Moving Assistance if you meet the CalWORKs income and property limits and agree to be finger imaged.

The shelter or similar place where you are staying must initiate a referral or your Eligibility Worker or Homeless Case Manager may initiate the referral for you. You must apply within 30 calendar days from the date of the referral.

► **5. Short Term Rental Subsidies (RA)**

If you just found a permanent place to live with the help of Homeless Assistance or Moving Assistance, RA can help you get up to \$300 per month (based on family size) for four months to help pay your rent. RA is for families who cannot get Section 8 vouchers. The payments are made out to the landlord. RA also gives you help on how to budget your aid to keep your new home and not become homeless again. To qualify you must be eligible for Permanent Move-In Money from Homeless Assistance and/or Moving Assistance and have a signed rental agreement securing non-subsidized permanent housing within the past 30 days of the time you request RA: or you found non-subsidized permanent housing and have requested Permanent Housing/ Moving Assistance.

► **6. 12 Month Rental Subsidy for CalWORKs and Non CalWORKs Families**

If you are receiving CalWORKs and moving out of a shelter, transitional housing, or similar temporary group living agency and into non-subsidized permanent housing, the shelter may refer you to DPSS to receive the 12-month rental subsidy. You may get up to \$500 per month depending on the size of your family or up to the total monthly

**Work Sheet—How To figure Your CalWORKs Cash Aid Amount**

If your family has "earned income," use Part A.  
 If your family has "disability based income," use Part B.  
 If your family has both "earned income" and "disability based income," use Part C.

**Part A: IF YOU GET EARNED INCOME**

1. Subtract \$225 from your gross earned income (income from wages, salary, sick pay, and commissions before all payroll deductions)
2. Half the remaining earned income counts and is subtracted from the maximum aid payment for your family size.

**Example:** A family of three earns \$550 working.  
 $\$550 \text{ minus } \$225 = \$325.$   
 $\text{One half of } \$325 = \$163. \text{ (Round up to nearest dollar)}$

The **maximum cash aid payment** for this non-exempt family of three is \$723. (see p. 5 chart)  
 $\$723 \text{ minus } \$163 = \$560. \text{ The family receives cash aid of } \$560 \text{ for the month from CalWORKs.}$

**Part B: IF YOU GET DISABILITY-BASED INCOME**

Examples of disability-based income include non-government disability insurance, State Disability Insurance (SDI), Temporary Worker's Comp, and Social Security Disability Income (SSDI). However, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is NOT counted as income for CalWORKs.

1. Subtract \$225 from the disability-based income (other than SSI)
2. The remaining amount is subtracted from the maximum cash aid payment.

**Example:** A family of three receives \$550 in State Disability Insurance (SDI). \$550 minus \$225 = \$325.

The **maximum cash aid** payment for this exempt family is \$808 (see p. 5 chart)  
 They get the exempt grant level because they have disability income.  
 $\$808 \text{ minus } \$325 = \$483 \text{ The family receives cash aid of } \$483 \text{ for the month from CalWORKs.}$

**Part C : IF YOU GET BOTH EARNED INCOME AND DISABILITY BASED INCOME**

1. Subtract \$225 one time from the disability income
2. If any of the \$225 remains, subtract it from earned income.
3. Then subtract half of the remaining earned income.
4. Subtract the remaining earned income from the Maximum Cash Aid Payment.

**Example:** A family of 3 receives \$200 in SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance) and \$325 in earnings. They have \$525 in income for the month.  
 $\$200 \text{ (the disability income) minus } \$225 = \text{negative } \$25.$   
 $\$325 \text{ (the earned income) minus the negative } \$25 = \$300$   
 $\text{One half of } \$300 \text{ (remaining earned income) } = \$150.$

The **maximum cash aid** payment for this family is \$808 (see page 5 chart Use the "exempt" figures because this family has disability income).  
 $\$808 \text{ minus } \$150 = \$658.$

*The family receives cash aid of \$658 for the month from CalWORKs.*

rent or share of the rent, whichever is less. Your Eligibility Worker or Homeless Case Manager may also refer you to this program. You must apply within 30 days from the date of the referral.

If you are not receiving CalWORKs but meet the income and property

limits and agree to be photo and finger imaged, you can also be referred to the program. You may get up to \$300 per month depending on the size of your family. Your case manager at the shelter or similar agency must refer you to this program. You must apply within 30 calendar days from the date of the referral.



# Job and Career Training

## TRAINING FOR JOBS

If you receive CalWORKs or General Relief, LA LINK can help you increase your income. LA LINK is a network of professionals who are ready to help you find a career that matches you. To learn more about LA LINK, go to:

[www.ladpss.org/dpss/lalink/default.htm](http://www.ladpss.org/dpss/lalink/default.htm)

Hundreds of organizations in LA County offer help in job training. Beware of private employment agencies that charge you fees for finding a job. Many give low quality training at high tuition, and encourage you to pay the tuition with expensive student loans that can ruin your credit. Use free or low cost services instead.

### ▶ 1. Workforce Investment Boards

Workforce Investment Board (WIB) offices use government money to help you with job training and placement. Local WIB offices, also called One-Stop WorkSource Centers, are located at different places across the city and provide computers, faxes, copiers, and job listings to help you look for work.

The law requires that they also provide you with career counseling, money for transportation and childcare, as well as possibly paying for quality job training that leads to a job. Call Legal Aid (see "Good Advice", pg. 64) if you have any troubles getting these services.

City-wide: (800) 367-2562. [www.lacity.org](http://www.lacity.org)

County-wide: (213) 738-2598 [www.worksource.california.com](http://www.worksource.california.com)

### ▶ 2. Community Colleges

**East LA** (323) 265-8650 [www.elac.cc.ca.us](http://www.elac.cc.ca.us)

**Harbor** (310) 533-4000 [www.lahc.cc.ca.us](http://www.lahc.cc.ca.us)

**L.A. City** (323) 953-4000 [www.lacity.edu](http://www.lacity.edu)

**L.A. Mission** (818) 364-7600 [www.lamission.edu](http://www.lamission.edu)

**L.A. Pierce** (818) 347-0551 [www.pierce.college.edu](http://www.pierce.college.edu)

**L.A. Southwest** (323) 241-5225 [www.lasc.cc.ca.us](http://www.lasc.cc.ca.us)

**L.A. TradeTech** (213) 744-9500  
**Valley** (818) 781-1200 [www.lavc.edu](http://www.lavc.edu)  
**West L.A.** (310) 287-4200 [www.wlac.edu](http://www.wlac.edu)

**Antelope Valley (Lancaster)**  
(661) 722-6300 [www.avc.edu](http://www.avc.edu)

**Cerritos (Norwalk)** (562) 860-2451  
[www.cerritos.edu](http://www.cerritos.edu)

**Citrus (Glendora)** (626) 963-0323  
[www.citruscollege.edu](http://www.citruscollege.edu)

**College of the Canyons (Santa Clarita)**  
(661) 259-7800 [www.canyons.edu](http://www.canyons.edu)

**Compton** (310) 900-1600 [www.compton.edu](http://www.compton.edu)

**El Camino (Torrance)** (310) 532-3670  
[www.elcamino.edu](http://www.elcamino.edu)

**Glendale** (818) 240-1000  
[www.glendale.edu](http://www.glendale.edu)

**Long Beach City** (562) 938-4111  
[www.lbc.edu](http://www.lbc.edu)

**Moorpark** (805) 378-1400  
[www.moorparkcollege.edu](http://www.moorparkcollege.edu)

**Mount San Antonio (Walnut)**  
(909) 594-5611 [www.mtsac.edu](http://www.mtsac.edu)

**Pasadena** (626) 585-7123  
[www.pasadena.edu](http://www.pasadena.edu)

**Rio Hondo** (562) 692-0921  
[www.riohondo.edu](http://www.riohondo.edu)

**Santa Monica** (310) 434-4000  
[www.smc.edu](http://www.smc.edu)

### ▶ 3. Adult Schools

Adult schools can help you get your high school diploma or GED, learn English as a second language (ESL), provide you with computer training and job readiness classes, and many other certificate courses. For information:

- **L.A. Unified School District** (213) 62-LEARN (213-625-3276),
- **L.A. County Office of Education** (562) 922-6111
- The public school nearest you

### ▶ 4. Other Job Training:

• **AmeriCorps** (800) 942-2677 (California AmeriCorps info) [www.americorps.org](http://www.americorps.org)

• **Job Corps** (ages 16 to 24) (213) 741-5376

### ▶ 5. If You Are Homeless or Have Just Come Out of Prison

If you are homeless or have just come out of prison, **Chrysalis** can help you find temporary and permanent work opportunities. Los Angeles (213) 895-7777

or Santa Monica (310) 392-4117. The bottom of page 65 lists other resources for persons who have just come out of prison.

### ▶ 6. Department of Rehabilitation

The state Department of Rehabilitation provides a wide range of services for people with physical, mental, or emotional disabilities (including substance abuse problems) who want to become more independent and/or self-supporting. Many services are free for those who qualify.

Services available include vocational counseling and training; job placement; medical treatment; money for tuition and books; necessary tools; car modifications; money for transportation; reader and interpreter services; and services for family members (such as driving lessons or counseling.)

**Antelope Valley** : (661) 945-3502  
(661) 942-6694 (TTY)

**Van Nuys / Foothill**: (818) 901-5024  
(818) 901-5086 (TTY)

**Glendale**: (818) 551-2141

**Santa Clarita**: (661) 799-1020  
(661) 799-1024 (TTY)

**West Valley** : (818) 596-4302  
**El Monte** : (626) 572-2336

(626) 572-2481 (TTY)

**Pasadena** : (626) 304-8300  
(626) 304-8324 (TTY)

**West Covina**: (626) 813-7662  
(626) 939-9122 (TTY)

**Greater Los Angeles** : (213) 736-3904  
(213) 736-3960 (TTY)

**Bell** : (323) 771-0866

**Crenshaw-West Adams**  
(323) 766-2534

(323) 766-2581 (TTY)

**Culver City** (310) 559-6140

**Westchester** (310) 348-0965  
(310) 641-3214 (TTY)

**South Bay** (562) 422-8325  
(562) 422-9276 (TTY)

**Bay Cities** : (310) 793-1157

(310) 793-8610 (TTY)

**Compton Branch**: (310) 637-1151

(310) 637-6526 (TTY)

**Long Beach Branch**: (562) 422-8325  
(562) 422-9276 (TTY)

**Pacific Gateway**: (310) 217-6955

**City of Commerce**: (323) 720-4073  
(323) 721-5142 (TTY)

**East Los Angeles**: (323) 223-2315  
(323) 224-6068 (TDD)

**Norwalk**: (562) 864-8521

# Worker's Rights and Unemployment

This chapter tells you where to get assistance if you lose your job: how to get help if you have problems on the job: and where to get aid if you are temporarily disabled and cannot work.

## CAN YOU GET UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS?

### 1. How to Apply

When you are unemployed, or working less than full time, and are ready, willing, and able to work, you may be eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits. If you are attending an approved training course you are not required to look for work, be available for work or accept work while in training. You can apply on line at: <https://eapply4ui.edd.ca.gov>

Or call: **(800) 300-5616** for unemployment insurance services in English. There are separate telephone numbers for Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese speaking customers or teletypewriter for deaf or hard of hearing people. At that number there is recorded general unemployment insurance benefit information twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, including holidays. You can file claims at the same number Monday through Friday: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., but not state holidays.

An individual who files for unemployment insurance benefits must meet specific eligibility requirements before benefits can be paid. Individuals must:

- Have received enough wages during the base period to establish a claim
- Be totally or partially unemployed
- Be unemployed through no fault of their own (Laid off, not fired for "misconduct" or having quit without a good reason)
- Be physically able to work
- Be available for work which means to be ready and willing to immediately accept work
- Be actively looking for work
- Meet eligibility requirements each week benefits are claimed
- Be approved for training before training benefits can be paid

The minimum weekly benefit amount is **\$40** and the maximum weekly benefit amount is **\$450**. The normal maximum benefit period is **26 weeks**.

Employers report wages to the state for each employee. The state uses this information to decide if you earned enough wages in a base period to establish a UI claim, and how much will be paid.

A base period is a specific 12-month period. For example, if you file a claim which begins in April, May or June, the claim is calculated based on wages paid between January 1 and December 31 of the prior year. The minimum is **\$1300** in the highest quarter of the base period, or **\$900** in the highest quarter and certain spread-out earnings in other quarters.

After the initial application, payments are made using a Continued Claim Certification, DE 4581. You complete this form and mail it to EDD every two weeks. (Note: If you appeal you must keep filing your forms with EDD every week!) If you meet the eligibility requirements, a check is mailed to you.

Attached to the check is a form for the next two weeks. If the state thinks you did not meet eligibility requirements, they will schedule a telephone interview. Then they can reduce or deny the check. If you disagree you may ask for a hearing. Also the past employer sometimes has a right to disagree with whether you are eligible and to ask for a hearing to oppose you getting a check.

At the hearing, an impartial administrative law judge will listen to the evidence and decide whether you should get a check. About half of the people who go to a hearing win in the hearing.

### 2. Appeal Your Denial

Just because you are fired, even for a good reason, does not mean that you should not get UI benefits. If EDD says that you were fired for misconduct or that you quit without a good reason, you can appeal it. To show that your actions were not misconduct, you can argue that you made a mistake, simply could not do the job, or that the action was an isolated occurrence. Also if you can show you had a good reason to quit a job you can get UIB. Call legal services for help. If you appeal keep filing your forms with EDD every week!

**Besides unemployment benefits**, the EDD (State Employment Development Department) offers the following:

**California Training Benefits (CTB)** allows qualified persons to receive unemployment benefits while in approved training. You can receive training through the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) agencies. (see page 17 Workforce Investment Boards)

**Certain federal benefits** if workers and their industry demonstrate damage because of imports and trade agreements.

## ARE YOU EMPLOYED ?

### Dealing with Problems

If you have a problem at work and are a member of a union, contact your union representative. He or she can advise you about dealing with your employer or about contacting the right government office. To find out about unions, or to get in touch with an organizer, call the L.A. County Federation of Labor (AFL-CIO) (213) 381-5611. [www.launionaflcio.org](http://www.launionaflcio.org)

**Wage Claims:** You can file a wage claim with the Labor Commissioner for any amount (or in Small Claims Court for up to \$5,000) if your employer does any of the following:

- Pays less than the minimum wage, which is \$7.50 per hour. There are exceptions, including minors
- Does not pay overtime. Overtime means time-and-a-half if you work more than 40 hours in a week OR more than 8 hours a day OR on the 7th day in a row. Overtime means double-time if you work more than 12 hours in a day OR more than 8 hours, the 7th day of a work in a row.
- Takes improper deductions from your pay
- Does not give you your last paycheck immediately upon discharge or within 72 hours if you quit and don't give 3 days notice.
- After you lose your job, does not pay vacation time you were promised and have earned.
- Does not pay wages owed or pays you with a check that bounces
- Does not give you at least 10 minutes rest break for every 4 hours work and/or a meal break of at least a half hour, which can be unpaid, if you work at least a 5 hour shift. You can get penalty money if you don't get the breaks.

The law also gives you **waiting time penalties**. These penalties can be up to 30 days' pay for each day after termination you have to wait to receive all wages owed to you. Wages include regular pay, overtime, vacation pay, and penalties for not getting rest or meal breaks.

Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (213) 640-3954 and Neighborhood Legal Services (800) 433-6251 both offer free Wage Claim Clinics.

To reach the Labor Commissioner's office, contact the **State Industrial Relations Department, Labor Standards Enforcement**, 320 W. 4<sup>TH</sup> Street, Suite 450 Los Angeles, 90012. (213) 620-6330. Or in Van Nuys, 6150 Van Nuys Blvd., Suite 206, Van Nuys, 91401. (818) 901-5315.

The federal **Department of Labor** has an office that also helps people with similar problems. Its services are more limited. However, you can file an anonymous complaint with them to avoid retaliation by your employer.

Contact the **Department of Labor**, 915 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 960, Los Angeles, CA 90017: phone 1-866-487-9243.

It is illegal to discriminate against workers because of their race, sex, religion, national origin, citizenship, age, disability, political affiliation, or sexual orientation. It is also illegal to require sexual favors from an employee (sexual harassment). If you believe you have been discriminated against, you can file a complaint at the **Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission** 255 E. Temple, Fourth Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90012. (213) 894-1000.

They will investigate your complaint and may be able to help solve your problem. If your case requires court action, you will be given a letter authorizing you to file a lawsuit.

You can also call the **California Fair Employment and Housing Department** (800) 884-1684 for discrimination and sexual harassment claims.

Employers are required to provide safe, healthy work areas. If you are asked to work under unsafe or unhealthy conditions, a state agency will investigate your complaint, and your employer may be fined for violating the law. Contact the **California Occupational Health and Safety Administration (Cal/OSHA)** office nearest your work. The offices are listed in the state government section in the front of the phone book white pages or at [www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/DistrictOffices.htm](http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/DistrictOffices.htm).

## ARE YOU DISABLED?

### 1. State Disability Insurance

If you cannot work for a temporary period because of an illness or injury that is not work related, or pregnancy, you may be able to get state disability insurance benefits (SDI). These benefits range from **\$50 to \$882** per week depending on your earnings in a prior quarter, and can last up to one year. (39 weeks for employers and self-employed people who elected SDI coverage)

You must be unable to do your regular or customary work for at least eight consecutive days. You must have lost wages because of your disability or, if unemployed, have been actively looking for work. You must have earned at least

**\$300** from which SDI deductions were withheld during a previous period. You must be under the care and treatment of a doctor during the first eight days of your disability. (The beginning date of a claim can be adjusted to meet this requirement.) You must remain under care and treatment to continue receiving benefits.

You must complete and mail a "Claim Statement of Employee" within 49 days of the date you became disabled or you may lose benefits. You do not need to apply in person to receive benefits. If your disability prevents you from completing the claim form, or you are filing for benefits on behalf of a disabled or dead claimant, call (800) 480-3287 for required forms and instructions.

You must also ask your doctor to complete and sign the "Doctor's Certificate." If your doctor will mail your completed claim to SDI, provide him/her with an envelope addressed to the SDI office listed below. Mail your claim no earlier than 9 days - but no later than 49 days - after the first day you became disabled. Mail the completed, signed "Claim Statement of Employee" together with the completed, signed "Doctor's Certificate" to:

**State Disability Insurance**

P.O. Box 10402  
Van Nuys, CA 91410-0402  
or

**State Disability Insurance**

P. O. Box 513096  
Los Angeles, CA 90051-1096

You may not be eligible for SDI benefits if you:

- Are claiming or receiving Unemployment Insurance.
- Became disabled while committing a crime resulting in a felony conviction.
- Are receiving workers' compensation benefits at a weekly rate equal to or greater than the SDI rate.
- Are in jail, prison, or recovery home because you were convicted of a crime.
- Fail to have an independent medical examination when requested to do so.

If you do not have sufficient base period wages and you remain disabled, you may be able to establish a valid claim by using a later beginning date.

If you do not have enough base period wages and you were actively seeking work for 60 days or more in any quarter of the base period, you may be able to substitute wages paid in prior quarters.

Additionally, you may be entitled to substitute wages paid in prior quarters either to make your claim valid or to increase your benefit amount if during your base period you were in the military service, received workers' compensation benefits, or did not work because of a labor dispute.

You have the right to appeal any disqualification, overpayment, or penalty. Specific instructions on how to appeal will be provided on the state forms you receive. If you file an appeal and you remain disabled, you must continue to complete and return continued claim certifications.

For residents in a state-approved alcoholic recovery home or drug-free residential facility, the maximum payable period is 90 days. (However, disabilities related to or caused by acute or chronic alcoholism or drug abuse which are being medically treated do not have this limitation).

When your claim is received, the SDI office will notify you of your weekly benefit amount and request any additional information needed to determine your eligibility. If you meet all requirements, a check will be mailed to you from a central payment center. Most claims are processed and payments issued within 14 days of receipt of both the claimant's and the doctor's portions of the claim. The first seven days of your claim is a waiting period for which no benefits are paid.

If you are eligible for further benefits, either additional payments will be sent automatically or a continued claim certification form for the next two weeks will be sent with the check. You must report income you receive, even though sometimes it does not reduce your SDI check.

### Coordination with Worker's Comp

If you also have a worker comp. claim and the insurance carrier delays or refuses payments, SDI may pay you benefits while your case is pending. However, SDI will pay benefits only for the period you are disabled and will file a lien to recover benefits paid.

SDI and Workers' Compensation are two separate programs. You cannot legally be paid full benefits from both programs for the same period.

However, if your workers' comp benefit rate is less than your SDI rate, SDI may pay you the difference between the two rates.

**Long-term or Permanent Disability:** If you expect your disability to be long-term or permanent, apply for SSDI from Social Security well before your year of SDI is over. (see page 25 Social Security:).

## 2. Workers' Compensation

If you are disabled because of a work injury or as a result of unhealthy, unsafe, or stressful conditions at work, you should apply for workers' compensation. Workers' compensation is a no-fault system, meaning that injured employees need not prove the injury was someone else's fault. There are **six basic types of workers' compensation benefits:**

**1. Medical Benefits:** The employer pays for the medical care resulting from the work-related injury. This can include physician services, hospitalization, prescriptions, and other necessary and reasonable care. You may be treated by the employer's physician of choice, or by your own doctor if you have previously notified your employer in writing, or by your own doctor after 30 days of receiving treatment by the employer's physician of choice.

**1. Temporary Disability Benefits:** These are paid every two weeks if you are unable to return to work within three days, or are hospitalized overnight. The benefits are intended to partially replace two-thirds of the wages lost as a result of the injury, up to a maximum of **\$840** per week. They are paid until you are able to return to work or until the disability becomes permanent and stationary. For most injuries, payment will not last more than 104 weeks.

**2. Permanent Total Disability:** If you have a permanent total disability you receive up to **\$840** per week for life.

**3. Permanent Partial Disability:** The percentage of disability is based on a medical evaluation of your limitations, and takes your age, occupation, and

lost earning capacity into account. You receive weekly benefits for a period that increases with the percentage of disability, from 4 weeks for a 1% permanent disability up to 694 weeks for a 99% disability. Those with a permanent partial disability of 70% or more also receive a small life pension - a maximum of \$250 per week - following the final payment of permanent partial disability benefits.

**4. Vocational rehabilitation services:** These services are for when you are unable to return to your former type of work after the job injury. You are entitled to these services if they can reasonably be expected to return you to suitable gainful employment. This includes the development of a plan, the cost of any training, and a maintenance allowance while participating in rehabilitation. You can receive up to \$246 per week—less than Temporary Disability Benefits.

**5. Death benefits:** If a worker is fatally injured, the employer pays burial expenses up to \$5,000 and support payments for dependents.

**Filing a workers' comp claim:** If you need help filing a claim or if your employer does not have this insurance, contact: Industrial Accidents Division, 107 S. Broadway Los Angeles, CA 90012-4578, (213) 897-1446, 1-800-736-7401. For problems with worker comp claims, The Division Office in Los Angeles is at 320 W. 4th St., 9th floor, 90013 (213) 576-7335. There are several other offices in the County. [www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/dwc\\_home\\_page](http://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/dwc_home_page)

You may also want to hire a private attorney to help you with your claim. Many lawyers will handle this type of case even if you cannot afford to pay in advance because their fees for workers' compensation cases are set by law and are paid by the insurance company. If you are permanently disabled and do not expect to return to work, you may also qualify for Social Security or SSI.



# Tax Credits

## WHAT ARE TAX CREDITS?

Tax credits are benefits you can get only by filling out state and federal income tax forms. They can be received in a check, or can be used to reduce the amount of tax you owe. You should file federal and state taxes even if your income is so low that you do not owe taxes, because that is the only way you can get these credits.

The federal tax credits require that you file the "long form." You can get help by calling (800) TAX-1040 or (800) 829-1040.

### ▶ 1. Earned Income Credit (EIC)

"The Earned Income Credit" (EIC) is a check that low-income working people can get from the government by filing a federal income tax return or filling out a W-5 form during the year, even if your income is so low that you do not owe federal taxes. You need a valid social security number to get this money.

You qualify for earned income credit if your yearly income from 2007 is below the level in the chart below:

Family Size	Income Limit	Maximum Amount You Can Get
<b>2 or more children</b>	\$37,783	\$4,716
<b>1 child</b>	\$33,241	\$2,853
<b>Workers (aged 25 - 64) without children</b>	\$12,590	\$428

\*Amounts you made in 2007. These numbers will be adjusted for next year.

If you are receiving CalWORKs, the welfare office cannot count this payment as part of your income if you spend the money in the month received or the month after. For the General Relief program, this money does count as income.

You can also file for "retroactive" payments from the past three years. If you do not owe taxes, there is no penalty for filing for the credit late (after April 15th).

You can claim EIC on the tax form (1040 or 1040A) or you can fill out just the first side of "Schedule EIC" instead and the IRS will figure it out for you. However, you may not use the 1040EZ form (the shortest form) to claim your EIC.

For help getting the credit you can call the EIC hotline at 1-800-601-5552. To get a 1040 or 1040A form for this year and past years, and to receive free tax assistance call the IRS at (800) 829-3676 and ask for VITA-Volunteer Income Tax Assistance. Forms are also available in libraries, post offices and other public places.

If you choose, you can receive this payment spread out during the year in lower payroll tax deductions instead of getting it all at once at the end of the year. To do this, ask your employer to fill out a W-5 form.

### ▶ 2. Economic Stimulus Money

This summer 2008 the federal government sent extra money (the "stimulus payment") to people filing a tax return. If you didn't earn enough to file a tax return, but you have at least \$3,000 in qualified income for the year, you can still get the stimulus payment. The payment is \$300 for singles; \$600 for married couples and \$300 for each eligible child under age 17.

To qualify, individuals or families must have at least \$3,000 in qualifying income, which can be income from or in combination with Social Security benefits, Veterans Affairs benefits, Railroad Retirement benefits and earned income. (SSI doesn't count, though.) You must have a valid Social Security Number. You cannot be claimed as dependents or eligible to be claimed as dependents on another's tax return. You must file a 2007 tax form, i.e. Form 1040A.

The IRS cannot issue any economic stimulus payment checks or Direct Deposits after Dec. 31, 2008. File your tax return as soon as you can to give the IRS time to process it so you can get money before the end of the year.

For help with getting this money, call Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program 1(800)906-9887, or if you are age 60 or over call 1(888)227-7669

### ▶ 3. Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit

Families who pay for child or dependent care in order to work or look for work may be eligible for money or reduced taxes from both the federal and state governments. The dependent can be a child under the age of 13 or a dependent of any age who is unable to care for him or herself, including a disabled spouse.

The benefits are up to \$1,050 from the state and \$2,100 from the federal government for families with two or more children or dependents. Families with one child or dependent may qualify for up to \$525 from the state and up to \$1,050 from the federal government. The amount you get is generally higher if your expenses are higher.

For both the federal and state credits, you must have a social security number or an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN). You must have income from work and must provide the social security number of the child or dependent that is receiving care, and the name, address, taxpayer identification or social security number for the person or agency providing the care.

The state credit is limited to families with under \$100,000 income per year. There is no income limit for the federal credit.

### ▶ 4. Renter's Tax Credit

The Renter's Tax Credit is not a payment that you can receive, but a deduction that renters can make on their state income tax forms. Renters who owe no tax will get no benefit. Single renters with incomes up to \$29,955 are eligible for \$60 renters' tax credit and families with incomes up to \$59,100 are eligible for \$120 renters' tax credit.

# Child Care and Education

Every child in California has the right to a free public education, whether they are citizens, legal residents, have no documents, or are homeless. There is government money available to pay for childcare when kids are not at school, for families who are in CalWORKs or working.

## EDUCATION

Children between the ages of 6 and 18 are required by California law to attend school .

The L.A. County Office of Education offers numerous programs for all family members, including:

- Literacy programs to help students and parents learn to read, and to train parents to help their children learn
- Computer training and job readiness for parents
- Early Advantage programs for children under age 3
- Head Start and State Preschool programs for children

Call your local school district or call (562) 922-6111 County-wide to find out about preschool programs and family literacy programs.

### 1. After School Enrichment

Especially if you are in CalWORKs, call your local elementary school to see if it has an after-school enrichment program. This program provides supervised after-school fun, growth, snacks, and learning for children from first through sixth grade. Children must be attending the school where the program is offered.

If your children attend school in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), call (866) 4YS-CARE for information on enrollment in afterschool programs. If your children attend school in a different school district, call the local district.

### 2. Homeless Children's Rights

Homeless children:

- Do not need a permanent address to enroll in school
- May remain at the same school they attended before becoming homeless, or enroll at the school serving the place they are living temporarily
- Cannot be denied enrollment just because any documents are not immediately available
- Have the right to participate in

school meals, special education, Title I and any other federal, state or local programs for which they are eligible

- Must be provided transportation if other children get transportation
  - Cannot be isolated or separated from the main school environment just because they are homeless.
- These special rights under federal McKinney-Vento law apply to all children and teens without a fixed, regular adequate residence **including** if you are staying with friends or relatives because you lost your housing, you are waiting for foster placement, or you are living in any kind of shelter, car, motel, campground, abandoned building, garage, or similar place.

## CHILD CARE

CalWORKs will pay for child care for children who are 10 years old or younger, up to age 12 if the county has funds available, and up to age 21 if the child is disabled and needs special care. You may be eligible for child care even if you are under a CalWORKs sanction, and after you leave CalWORKs for up to two years. If you are low income, working, but do not ever get CalWORKs cash aid, you may still qualify for subsidized child care: for information call (800) 543-7793.

If you or someone you know would like to **provide** child care, call (323)-981-3350 or a Child Care Agency for licensing, training and other information.

### 1. How Do I Get Child Care?

To get money for child care, you will have to talk to a child care "agency." These agencies are called Resource and Referral (R&R) or Alternative Payment Programs (APP). They will

- Help any family find child care;
- Provide information to parents on how to choose good child care;
- Make child care payments

You can get information about how to apply for CalWORKs child care over the phone (877-244-5399) or in person. You can file your application for child care at the DPSS, or at the agency. Your child care will be approved in 2 steps:

**First**, the agency will see if your family is eligible for child care within 4 days of your filing your child care application.

**Second**, you must find a child care provider. The provider will be approved within 2 days of your giving the agency all the necessary information about the provider.

Call the child care hotline (877) 244-5399 or Legal Aid for help if it takes a long time to get your child care approved. You will get written notice telling you whether you and your provider have been approved or denied. If you disagree with the decision you can ask for a fair hearing.

### 2. How Payment is Made

A Provider Payment Request will be mailed each month to you and to your child care provider. Both you and the child care provider must sign the request and mail it to the child care agency at the address on the form. Payments are then made directly to your child care provider. If the payment is missing or incorrect contact the agency.

### 3. Choosing Quality Child Care

It is your right as a parent to choose the child care you think is best for your child. The agency will give you referrals and information on what to look for when choosing a provider. If you decide the referrals are not good choices, ask for more referrals. Choose the child care that's best for you:

- Child care centers, preschools, or family child care are licensed.
- License-exempt child care can be provided by friends, relatives, or neighbors. If you use license-exempt care, you will need to file a statement that your provider meets minimal health and safety requirements. The child care agency will not pay for child care provided to you by someone on your CalWORKs case.
- If the provider is caring for children from more than one family (besides their own) they may need a license. Most providers will have to be fingerprinted and go through a criminal background check. Your relatives may not have to go through this process.

▶ **4. CalWORKs Child Care**

There are three “stages” of child care. You should not have any problems as you move from one “stage” to another. You will generally receive child care while you are participating in an approved welfare to work activity (work, school, training, appointments with GAIN, or any welfare to work activity including supportive services like domestic violence counseling or mental health or substance abuse treatment appointments).

**Stage One**

The child care agency will pay for any qualified child care that you choose for up to six months or until your welfare to work activity and child care are both stable. Teen parents will also get Stage One child care, as long as they are in Cal-Learn. You may be eligible to receive child care payments for up to 30 days prior to the date of your child care application: call Legal Aid for more information.

**Stage Two**

After both your welfare to work activity and child care are stable, the child care agency will move you to Stage Two. You will stay in Stage Two while you are receiving CalWORKs and are in an approved welfare to work activity. You can keep getting Stage Two child care paid for 24 months after you are earning too much money to be eligible for CalWORKs.

**Stage Three**

“Stage Three” is subject to budget cuts in Sacramento and there are waiting lists. It is available for low income working parents who do not receive CalWORKs. You qualify for Stage Three child care if your income is below the levels in the following chart:

Family Size	Monthly Income Limit
1 or 2	\$3,386
3	\$3,628
4	\$4,031
5	\$4,676
6	\$5,321
7	\$5,442
8	\$5,563
9	\$5,684
10	\$5,805

(Chart for 2007)

If your income is over these limits, you may still qualify for low cost child care. Call the R&R or APP agencies.

**WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?**

▶ **1. Lack of Child Care**

You can be temporarily excused from participating in work requirements of CalWORKs if child care is not reasonably available. The case manager will evaluate each case individually and periodically. Child care is not reasonably available if:

- You are not satisfied with the child care
- There is no child care close enough
- You have no transportation to the child care
- There are no providers operating during the hours you need child care
- The provider’s license is under investigation
- The provider cannot commit to providing care for your child
- The child care is not appropriate for your child’s needs.

▶ **2. Complaints about Providers**

You should complain about your child care if there bad conditions, or you suspect abuse or mistreatment. You can complain at the following places:

- The DPSS child care coordinator
- The R&R or APP Agency
- Child Care Hotline (877) 244-5399, Monday through Friday, 8 am to 5 pm
- Community Care Licensing (310) 665-1940
- Legal Aid

▶ **3. Brokers**

If you are applying for Child Care, you do not need to pay anyone to help you with the application (these people are often called “brokers”). The child care agency must provide you with a worker who speaks your language to help you complete your application. You can also get help from community organizations who will not charge to help you apply.

If you use a broker, be very careful about signing a “representative payee” form, which gives the broker direct control of your child care payments. If you have any problems with brokers, complain to the agencies listed in the section above.

▶ **4. Hearings**

You have a right to a fair hearing if you disagree with decisions made by DPSS or the child care agency. You can ask for a hearing by using the back of any child care “Notice of Action” forms. You should file within 14 days or before the action/termination happens.

**WHERE CAN I GO TO FIND CHILD CARE?**

These agencies help in finding child care providers and provide childcare payments.

- **San Fernando Valley & Antelope Valley:** Child Care Resource Center (818) 717-1000 or (661) 949-0615
- **Pasadena, Monrovia, La Cañada:** Child Care Information Service (626) 449-8221
- **Pomona Area:** Pomona Unified School District Development Program (800) 822-5777 or (909) 397-4740
- **Hollywood, Downtown, Silver Lake:** Child & Family Services (213) 427-2700
- **Santa Monica, Beach Cities, Culver City :** Connections for Children (310) 452-3325
- **East L.A., Monterey Park, Bell, Santa Fe Springs, Montebello:** Mexican-American Opportunity Found. (323) 890-9600
- **Boyle Heights:** International Institute (323) 224-3800
- **South Los Angeles, Inglewood, Hawthorne, Gardena, Watts:** Crystal Stairs, Inc. (323) 299-8998
- **South San Gabriel Valley (Baldwin Park, El Monte, Whittier):** Options (626) 856-5900
- **Compton, Carson, Downey, Harbor City, Lomita, Lynwood, Paramount, South Gate, Torrance:** Center for Community and Family Services (888) 421-4247 toll free.
- **Gardena:** Drew CalWORKs (310) 638-8108
- **Long Beach, San Pedro, Bellflower, Cerritos, Norwalk:** Children’s Home Society of CA (562) 256-7400

A Child Care Information & Resources Directory for L.A. County listing hundreds of licensed providers is available at [http://www.ladpss.org/dpss/child\\_care/default.cfm](http://www.ladpss.org/dpss/child_care/default.cfm)

# Foster Care

Children who are abused or neglected, or whose families are unable or unwilling to care for them, may become the responsibility of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in Los Angeles County. (Report child abuse at (800) 540-4000 /TDD (800) 272-6699.)

DCFS may file a petition with the Dependency Court to have the child removed from the parent(s)' custody and placed with a relative or in a licensed foster home. If the child was already taken from the parents, the petition must be filed within 48 hours. The court will usually approve or deny the petition the same day it is filed. If approved, the DCFS worker should immediately prepare an application for foster care benefits. Ask the worker if this was done.

If you are caring for a child in your home who is **not** related to you, and was placed with you by DCFS or by a licensed Foster Family Agency, the child may be eligible for **foster care benefits**. You must either 1) be the child's legal guardian or 2) your home is a state licensed foster home.

If you are caring for a **related** child (grandchild, cousin, niece, etc.) it can be difficult to get foster care benefits. The government calls these "Youakim" cases. The relative's home must meet the same standards as for licensing. The child is eligible if:

- The child was removed from the parent(s) and placed with you by an order of the Dependency Court. Usually, this happens because DCFS asked for the order, because of abuse, neglect or the danger of abuse/neglect.
- DCFS is responsible for the child's placement and care.
- The child received or was eligible to receive CalWORKs in the month that DCFS asked the court to remove the child from the parent(s) or within the six months prior to that.

## ▶ 1. What Are The Benefits?

Foster care benefits are only for the child (not the adults). The child also gets one **clothing allowance** when placed and one yearly while in school.

Age of child	Basic Monthly Cash Aid in L.A. County
0-4	\$446
5-8	\$485
9-11	\$519
12-14	\$573
15 & older	\$627

In Los Angeles County, there is a higher "**specialized rate**" for children with severe medical and/or psychological needs. If you think your foster child qualifies for this, ask the social worker to arrange an evaluation.

All children in foster care receive **Medi-Cal**. They are also eligible for **Food Stamps**, but the foster care income may make the family ineligible. In that case, you can exclude the foster child from the Food Stamps household.

If you are related to the foster child, and poor enough, you can get CalWORKs and Medi-Cal just for yourself. Ask your worker to explain other services available to foster children.

## ▶ 2. What Are My Rights?

Call (800) 697-4444 if you have trouble with foster care eligibility or payment, to report a change of address, or for general questions.

If you think you should be getting any of these benefits and are not, you can ask for a state hearing, even if you did not get a notice denying benefits. Call Legal Aid for help. Every child in dependency has an attorney. Know who the attorney is and call the attorney with any questions or concerns about the child's needs. Ask the worker or the attorney to let you know when a court hearing is scheduled. Foster parents can go to all court hearings but cannot speak unless the judge says you can.

## OTHER OPTIONS

### ▶ 1. Legal Guardianship

If you are an **unrelated legal guardian**, you may get State Foster Care benefits. The child does not have to be a dependent of the court. As soon as you get your temporary guardianship papers, call (800) 540-4000 and ask

for a "Permanency Planning Worker." A worker should visit your home within 5 days. Have a copy of your guardianship papers to give the worker. Benefits begin as of the date of your call - at the same rate as federal foster care.

### ▶ 2. Kin-Gap

A relative does not **have to** become the legal guardian. If he or she does so, the Dependency Court case is usually closed, and foster care benefits stop. If DCFS recommends that you become the legal guardian, ask how this will affect the benefits, and ask about Kin-GAP. Children who have lived with a relative for at least 12 consecutive months may be eligible for Kin-Gap. To get Kin Gap, the relative must become the child's legal guardian. The Dependency Court case is then closed and DCFS is no longer involved. The relative can choose to go into Kin-GAP or not. Kin-GAP currently pays the basic foster care rate, but will soon include clothing allowances and specialized care rates.

### ▶ 3. Adoption Assistance

The Adoption Assistance Program provides benefits to help families adopt children who are less likely to be adopted without this assistance, like sibling groups, children with disabilities, mixed ethnic backgrounds, or older children.

The benefits can be up to the foster care amount, including higher "specialized rates". Benefits must be renegotiated at least every two years. You may also get help with the costs of the adoption process. The adoptive family becomes legally responsible for the child's support.

### ▶ 4. Long Term Foster Care

If you are a relative and do not wish to adopt the child, or become the child's legal guardian, you cannot be required to do so, and DCFS should not threaten to remove the child from you if you choose not to adopt. The child's permanent plan can be long-term foster care with you, but you will need to argue this with DCFS and the Dependency Court.

### ▶ 5. County Foster Care

L.A. County also has its own foster care program, primarily for undocumented children who are dependents of the court. They may be placed with relatives.



# Social Security

Social Security is a federal insurance program which provides benefits for eligible workers and their families regardless of income.

Social Security covers both employees and the self-employed, if the worker has earned enough quarters of credit. A quarter is credited to your account for each \$920 earned. You cannot earn more than 4 quarters in a year.

The amount you get depends on how much money you have earned and how many years you worked in a job covered by Social Security.

Covered workers pay for Social Security (FICA) by being taxed on the money they earn, and employers must match this amount. In 2008, the rate of this tax is 6.2% on the first \$90,000 you earn, plus an extra 1.45% for Medicare.

Social Security provides four main kinds of benefits: retirement, disability, survivor, and health (called Medicare). (see page 53 Medicare). There are no resource limits to these programs.

The total benefits for all family members drawing on one worker's account cannot be more than one and a half times the worker's benefit rate.

Persons over 65 receiving retirement benefits, and persons who have received disability-based benefits (such as disability, disabled widow, or disabled adult child) for 24 months also get Medicare benefits.

Present law prevents Social Security benefits going to any non-citizen who is not "lawfully present" in the U.S. (see page 58 Guide for Non-Citizens).

To get full retirement benefits you must be at least 65 years old. (This will gradually increase to age 67 by the year 2022). To receive reduced benefits, you must be at least 62.

Monthly payments are made to workers and their eligible dependents, which include:

- children under 18
- children age 18 to 19 who are full time students
- children age 18 or over with a disability which began before age 22

- spouses and unremarried ex-spouses who are 62 or over
- spouses and unmarried ex spouses caring for the worker's children who are under 16, or for children who are disabled and entitled to benefits on the worker's account.

You will receive a percentage of what you earned as a worker and what you contributed to Social Security. There are still minimum benefits for people who had low earnings and were already getting minimum benefits before 1982. You can earn money and still get retirement benefits. If you are over 65, there is no earnings limit. If you are between 62 and 65, the limit is \$12,000 per year or \$1,000 monthly. The limit increases every year. If your earnings are over the limit, your retirement benefits are reduced (by \$1 for every \$2 earned above the limit). These limits apply only to what you earn, not to money you get from investments, pensions, and other "unearned income."

## DISABILITY BENEFITS

Monthly Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) payments are made to you and to eligible family members (such as a spouse, unmarried ex-spouse, child, or adult disabled child) if you are a covered employee who is unable to work because of severe, medically-certified illness or other disability that has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months or to end in death.

Benefits are available to family members on the same terms as for Retirement benefits.

For these additional family members, the amount is in addition to the worker's benefit and there is a maximum amount that can be paid to any one family. Although you may be entitled to State Disability Insurance [see pg. 19, Workers Rights and Unemployment under "Are You Disabled" ] you should also apply immediately for disability benefits under Social Security.

You may also want to apply for SSI (page 26 "SSI and CAPI"). SSDI does not require low family income, but SSI does. Also, SSDI provides Medicare eligibility, while SSI provides Medi-Cal. SSDI requires that the applicant have a record of at least some wages earned during each of 20 quarters (three-month periods) of covered employment in the last 10 years before becoming disabled

SSI has no work history requirement. Because both SSI and SSDI can take several months from application to approval, while waiting you can also apply for "Medi-Cal Only" at the welfare office. It is important not to wait until your state disability benefits have run out before applying for federal disability benefits. If you have not yet received your SSI or SSDI and your state disability benefits have run out, you should apply for General Relief (see pg. 29).

## SURVIVOR BENEFITS

When a covered worker dies, monthly payments are made to eligible family:

- A spouse over age 60 or disabled over age 50 or caring for the worker's child who is under 16 or disabled
  - The spouse above can be divorced from the worker only if the marriage lasted at least a decade
  - A disabled adult unmarried child
- A parent of the worker over age 62 if at least 50% dependent on the worker.

# SSI and CAPI

SSI (“Supplemental Security Income”) is a cash benefit program for low-income persons 65 and over and for blind and disabled persons of any age, including infants and children. CAPI (Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants) is a similar program for some non-citizens who cannot get SSI. (See pg. 58 Guide for Non-Citizens.)

SSI is provided by the Federal Social Security Administration which provides a good description of the program at <http://www.ssa.gov/notices/supplemental-security-income/index.htm>

SSI may be your entire income, or it may add to other income you already get so long as your total income is not more than \$20 over the SSI maximum benefit. You must be a U.S. citizen or a qualified immigrant living in the country legally to get SSI.

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE ?

To get SSI, at least one of the following must apply:

- You are age 65 or older
- You are blind; the vision in your best eye is no better than 20/200 with glasses or your tunnel vision is 20% or less
- You are a disabled adult by SSI standards; your medical records and/or examination by a doctor chosen by the state confirms that your physical or mental impairments can be expected to keep you, or have kept you, from working for 12 continuous months or can be expected to result in death
- You are a child under 18 who has a medically proven “marked and severe” physical or mental disability that would keep you from working if you were an adult or significantly interfere with your daily activities.

You can’t get SSI if the disability is based on alcohol or drug dependency. If you are alcohol or drug dependent you can qualify for SSI only on some other basis, such as age or another disability (for example, liver or kidney or mental problems.)

You cannot get SSI any month in which you are in prison or jail, in violation of parole or probation, or a fugitive from a felony.

## 1. Income

Your “countable income” may not be above the maximum benefit level. Subtract the following from your “gross” (total) income to get your countable income:

- \$20 per month of your total income
- \$65 per month of any earned income and half of your remaining earned income
- All work expenses if you are blind
- Any impairment-related work expenses
- All tax refunds
- Any portion of scholarships or grants for tuition, fees, and school expenses
- Federal undergraduate grants and loans (totally exempt)
- Foster care payments
- A third of all child support payments from an absentee parent if you are caring for a child
- Food stamps (which you won’t get after you are approved for SSI)
- Any income, if you are blind or disabled, that has been set aside as part of a “PASS” (Plan to Achieve Self-Support) approved by the social security office
- Federal housing and relocation assistance payments
- Earnings of a blind or disabled student under age 22 up to \$1,620 a month, maximum \$5,200 a year
- Payments from FEMA, Red Cross and other agencies for disaster-related losses
- Money you receive to pay for a lost or stolen belonging
- Reverse annuity mortgage payments made to the recipient (counts as a resource, but not as income.)

## 2. Resources or Assets

Your countable resources may not be more than \$2000 for one person and \$3000 for a couple, (even if only one member of the couple is eligible.) Some resources are **not** counted:

- The home you live in
- One car if you use it for work or

medical treatment at least four times a year or if it is specially-equipped for a disabled person

- Payments from agencies for disaster-related losses
- Property used for self-support including farm land, equipment, store building, inventory, business bank accounts
- Retirement accounts (IRAs, tax deferred annuities) belonging to the spouse or parent of an SSI beneficiary or applicant. However, the “cashed-in” value of retirement accounts owned by the SSI beneficiary or applicant will count.
- Up to \$2000 equity value for household goods and personal belongings
- Up to \$1500 per person for life insurance or burial expenses.

If you have too many resources, you can spend them down to meet the limits. You could buy things you need (as long as whatever you buy does not make you go over another limit), or pay off debts. If you give away resources or sell them below a fair price, you can be ineligible for SSI for up to 36 months.

If a child eligible for SSI lives with a parent (or parents) not eligible for SSI, a portion of the parent’s income and resources may be used to figure the child’s SSI cash aid. If a person eligible for SSI lives with a spouse not eligible for SSI, a portion of the spouse’s income and resources may be used to figure the SSI cash aid. The Social Security Office can explain the complicated deeming rules and figure the benefit .

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

### ▶ Maximum Aid

Type of Person	Max. Benefit
Single person 65 or older	\$870
Disabled person 18 or over	\$870
Single blind person any age	\$935
Couple, both disabled or aged	\$1,524
Couple, both blind	\$1,751
Disabled person under 18	\$756
One person living in a licensed Board & Care facility (\$121 for that person's private use)	\$1,049

Effective until Sept. 30, 2008

**Food:** If you get SSI in California, you cannot get food stamps. However, if you live where meals cannot be prepared you can get an **additional \$90 to \$100 per month** (ask for the Restaurant Meals Allowance.)

**Health Care:** If you receive SSI, you automatically qualify for Medi-Cal without a share of cost. You may also be eligible for In-Home Supportive Services. (See page 52)

**Special Telephone Equipment:** If your disability makes it difficult to use the phone you may qualify for special equipment to help. Call (800) 806-1191 (voice) or (800) 806-4474 (TTY line.)

**Rent and Household Expenses:** Benefits will be **lower** if you live with someone else and do not pay your full share of household expenses. Homeless people receive the same cash aid as persons with homes, except that you can only get SSI 6 months out of 9 if living in a "public shelter". If you were getting free room and board when you applied for SSI and later begin paying your share for room and board, tell your worker so your benefits will increase.

A single person can get a \$649 board & care rate called "Nonmedical Out of Home Care," if you do not receive In Home Supportive Services, are not staying in your own home, and a relative who does not get SSI is providing you room, food, and personal care. The county must certify the private residence.

You may be able to get a \$400 immediate payment from the Social Security office if either your SSI or your Social Security check is late and you need money right away.

## HOW DO I APPLY ?

See page 28 Social Security Offices. Come in, or (800) 772-1213 to make an appointment. Even if the process from application to first check takes months, when you are approved the benefits will be paid beginning with when you started the application. Do not accept a verbal denial. Insist on filing at least a partial application. If you do not have all the necessary information, you can give additional or corrected information later.

If you have difficulty with English or with hearing, the Social Security Office will provide you with an interpreter without cost. You may have help from a friend, family member or advocate at any appointment. If your condition makes getting to the office difficult, you may ask for a telephone interview.

If you want to sign a form allowing someone else to serve as your representative, ask by phone for form SSA-1696 to be mailed to you. Parents or guardians can apply for a child under age 18 who is blind or who has a disability.

It's helpful to have the following information with you when applying:

- Social Security card or record of number
- birth certificate or other proof of age
- information about the home of residence, such as mortgage or lease and landlord's name
- payroll slips, bank books, insurance policies, car registration, burial fund records and other information about income and resources
- names, addresses and telephone numbers of doctors
- hospitals and clinics that have treated them (if applying for SSI because of disability or blindness)

• proof of U.S. citizenship or eligible noncitizen status. You should apply even if they don't have all the things listed. The Social Security Office can help them get whatever is needed.

Your case will be sent to a state agency under contract with SSA to obtain your medical records and decide whether you meet the medical requirements for eligibility to benefits. In general, people who are blind or have very obvious disabilities are approved more quickly than those who must have their disabilities more extensively verified.

## WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

Current and existing medical records need to be obtained in all cases. In many cases, you will be given an appointment for a doctor chosen by the state to examine you. If the state decides that you are not disabled enough to get SSI, you can appeal.

Those who appeal a decision that they are "not disabled enough" often win and are able to receive benefits. (see page 64 Hearings and Complaints)

If necessary, you can apply for General Relief while you wait for SSI approval. If you ask, the county will help you get SSI while you are on General Relief. If you get a notice that you have been overpaid, and you believe it is not your fault, insist on immediately submitting a "Request for Waiver of Overpayment."

If you believe that your SSI check or any notice that you get is wrong, insist on immediately submitting a "Request for Reconsideration." Legal aid and advocacy organizations can help you best after you insist on these forms to protect your rights.

Also, some Congressional district offices have free experts at Social Security Casework. Call yours and ask for help with a hearing or complaint.

## CAN I GET CAPI?

Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants ("CAPI") is a cash benefit program for low-income people who are aged 65 and older, are blind, or who have a disability that meet the general eligibility requirements for SSI but are not eligible for SSI because of their immigration status. (See pg. 59 "Which Immigrants can get SSI and CAPI?")

CAPI benefit amounts are similar to SSI (\$10 less for one person, \$20 less for a couple). Like SSI, benefits are lower if you share housing or don't pay your full share of household expenses.

If you are eligible for CAPI you may also be eligible for Medi-Cal, Food Stamps and In Home Supportive Services (IHSS) (see page 52) but you will have to apply for these benefits separately. See pg. 60-61 "Sponsors" for important information about "deeming."

### ► 1. How to Apply

To apply for CAPI, go to the Wilshire Special DPSS Office or any office that handles GR (see page 66) or call (877) 481-1044 to file an application over the phone. The steps are similar to those for SSI.

You must apply for SSI as a requirement of CAPI eligibility. You will have to show proof that you have applied for SSI and your SSI application is on a pending status OR has been denied due to your immigration status. You may apply for SSI on your own or you may choose to allow an expert County worker help you with this process. To apply for SSI go to your local Social Security Administration office or call (800) 772-1213 to file an application over the phone (see list of offices on this page.)

To apply for SSI with help from an expert County worker, ask your CAPI Eligibility Worker.

Your benefits will begin the month after you apply for, or try to apply for CAPI, so you should apply as soon as possible. Be sure to get a written receipt with a date showing that you applied or tried to apply for SSI. At the time you apply for CAPI, you will choose between two methods of receiving your monthly benefits, Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) or direct deposit.

## WHERE TO APPLY FOR SOCIAL SECURITY OR SSI

For SSI, Medicare and Social Security benefits, it is best to apply in person at one of the Social Security offices listed below (L.A. area). For appointments and information about Social Security, Medicare or SSI, call toll-free: (800) 772-1213, from 7 A.M. to 7 P.M. during the week. The TTY Number for hearing impaired is (800) 325-0778. When you call the 800 number you are talking to someone in a national call center, not someone in your local office.

If you are dealing with a specific representative in an office, be sure to get and keep that person's direct phone number so you can reach them again .

Alhambra, 200 S. Garfield, Ste. 102  
 Arcadia, 301 E. Foothill, Ste. 101  
 Burbank, 2025 N. Glenoaks  
 Chatsworth, 9168 De Soto Blvd.  
 Compton, 171 E. Compton Blvd.  
 Crenshaw, 3657 Crenshaw Blvd.  
 Culver City, 3750 S. Robertson Blvd.  
 Downey, 8847 E. Imperial Hwy.  
 East L.A. 240 N. Breed St.  
 El Monte, 3380 Flair Dr.  
 El Sereno, 5411 W. Valley Blvd.  
 Glendale, 710 S. Central Ave. Ste. 320  
 Glendora, 903 E. Alostia Ave.  
 Hollywood, 6730 Sunset Blvd.  
 Huntington Park, 6303 Rugby Ave.  
 Industry, 17595 Almahurst  
 Inglewood, 230 E. Spruce Ave.  
 Lakewood, 5220 Clark Ave., Ste. 220

Lancaster, 701 W. Avenue K, Ste. 109  
 Long Beach, 120 W. Broadway, Ste. 100  
 Central Los Angeles, 2600 Wilshire Blvd.  
 Central Los Angeles 3836 Wilshire Blvd.  
 Marina/Venice, 4656 Admiralty Way  
 Miracle Mile, 641 S. La Brea Ave.  
 Montebello, 2216 W. Beverly Blvd.  
 North Hollywood, 11631 Victory Blvd.  
 Norwalk, 10917 E. Firestone Blvd.  
 Pasadena, 104 N. Mentor  
 Pomona, 436 W. Fourth St.  
 San Fernando, 456 San Fernando Mission Blvd.  
 San Pedro, 336 N. Gaffey  
 Santa Clarita, 27225 Camp Plenty Rd.,  
 Torrance, 1321 Post Ave.  
 Tujunga/Verdugo Hills, 6401 Foothill  
 University Village, 2021 S. Flower  
 Van Nuys, 6501 Van Nuys Blvd.  
 Watts, 10345 S. Central Ave.  
 West Covina, 100 N. Citrus, Ste 506  
 Westwood, 11000 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 10203

### ► 2. Watch out for Brokers

If you are applying for CAPI you do not need to pay anyone to help you fill out the application and turn it in to the county (these individuals are often called "brokers"). DPSS workers will help you fill out your application, and provide you with a county worker who speaks your language to help you fill out the papers.

You can also get help from a non-profit community organization, which will not charge you to help you apply. If you do use a broker, you should be very careful about signing a "representative payee" form; signing such a form for a broker allows that person to have direct control of your CAPI payments.



# General Relief

General Relief (“GR”) is a Los Angeles County program that helps people who have almost no money. GR is a very limited program with many requirements. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (“DPSS”) administers the GR program.

## AM I ELIGIBLE?

### ► 1. Residence

To qualify for GR, you must reside in L.A. County for at least 15 days and intend to remain here.

If you are stranded here from another state or county, and want to return, ask for aid to return to your legal residence when you apply. Someone, such as a relative, must confirm that you reside in the county or state to which you want to return. If you are eligible, DPSS will give you emergency housing and meal vouchers until transportation is arranged. DPSS will also provide you a food allowance for your trip home. Traveler’s Aid Society (310) 646-2270.

### ► 2. Cash and Resource Limits

You cannot have more than \$50 in cash or in a bank account when you apply. However, you can own the following resources:

- One car worth less than \$4,500
- Necessary household furnishings
- The house you live in if the market value is assessed at no more than \$34,000.

If you live with your spouse, his or her income will be counted in deciding if you are eligible, unless your spouse receives SSI.

### ► 3. Time Limits

If you are able to work, DPSS will classify you as “employable.” If you are “employable,” you can only receive GR for 9 months in any 12 month period (3 of the months only if you fully cooperate in the GROW program.) The 9 month time period begins with your first scheduled orientation date for GROW, or the date your aid is approved, whichever is first.

If you are unable to work, DPSS will classify you as “unemployable” and you will not be subjected to a time limit. If you have questions about time limits, (877)-481-1044.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

### ► 1. Basic Benefits

The basic monthly cash aid is **\$221**. This amount is normally reduced when you share housing. You may still get the full cash aid if you are not living with relatives, sleep in a separate room, and purchase and prepare your meals separately from others in the house.

**In addition to the cash aid**, you can get:

- Bus tokens to all required appointments, and scheduled medical appointments
- A personal care kit (DPSS will deduct \$5 from your GR benefit)
- Sanitary napkins
- Housing repairs if there is a lien on your house
- Supplements for medically required diets
- Free health care from any county hospital or clinic (800)-427-8700
- A referral to a county-paid drug or alcohol recovery program

### ► 2. Emergency Benefits

When you apply for GR, you may be eligible to receive the following **emergency benefits**:

- **Emergency Housing** If you are homeless, tell the eligibility worker who interviews you at the DPSS office. If you are eligible for GR and homeless, DPSS will issue you hotel vouchers until you receive your first GR benefit. However, \$4.53 will be deducted from your first GR benefit for each night DPSS issues you a hotel voucher. If you accept the vouchers but do not use

them, DPSS will still deduct the money. You can request that DPSS change the location of your voucher. You can also refuse to accept a hotel voucher. You can complain about conditions at the hotels (800) 255-0905.

- **Emergency Food** You may be entitled to food stamps or food vouchers the day you apply (see page 33 Food Stamps.) If you do not receive food stamps, and no voucher restaurant is open or in your area, you should get cash (\$2.17 per meal). Ask for as many meals (up to 3 a day) as you will need. Remember, any meal vouchers or cash issued to you will be deducted from your first GR benefit.

- **Aid to Prevent Eviction** You can receive up to \$272 if you can prove, with a letter from the landlord, that you failed to pay last month’s and this month’s rent and the money prevents your eviction.

### ► 3. Earned Income Disregard

Once approved, you can earn up to \$200 per month with no loss of benefits. If you earn between \$201 and \$620, the amount of your cash aid will be proportionally cut. You will also be able to save up to \$1,500 once your case is approved. Report your earned income to your worker, and tell him or her that you know about the Earned Income Disregard.

## HOW DO I APPLY?

### ► 1. Regular Application

Go to the DPSS (Department of Public Social Services) office to apply for GR. Not all DPSS offices take GR applications. (see page 66 Welfare Offices).

Be prepared for a long day, but remember that you have the right to apply. Tell the worker at DPSS that you need GR. You will have to fill out a “screening” sheet and an application. Bring with you identification and papers that prove your income and resources.

Every GR applicant has a right to request “expedited food stamps” (see page 34 Emergency Food Stamps). If you are eligible, DPSS can issue you food stamps the same day you apply. At the latest, DPSS must issue you food stamps within three days of your application if you are eligible to receive

expedited food stamps.

You will be fingerprinted and photographed when you apply. If your fingerprints match those of any other welfare recipient in the state, you will be denied GR pending investigation. You can appeal this decision.

Your fingerprints cannot be shared with any other agency; but if a law-enforcement agency requests information about someone wanted on an arrest warrant, DPSS must give them their name, address, and description. Also, DPSS may inform law-enforcement officials of your presence in the DPSS office if you are a fleeing felon.

If you don't have identification when you apply, you may be aided on GR and given 60 days to get the needed identification.

Make sure that your worker has a good address for you; otherwise, you may miss important notices from DPSS. Your home address and mailing address do not have to be the same. If you are homeless, you can use the DPSS address to pick up your mail, but if you do, you must check for your mail once a week. Some community organizations and shelters provide free mail service.

You must be helped if you are in the office before it closes. If you really need help immediately, you should receive it. If anyone does not let you apply or tells you to come back the next day, insist on speaking to a worker, and then a supervisor, and then the deputy director, if necessary.

The county has 30 calendar days to approve your case and issue you GR benefits. Your benefits will be issued to you on an Electronic Benefits Transfer ("EBT") card. When your EBT card is issued to you, you will also be given a personal identification number ("PIN"). Using your EBT card and your PIN, you can access your benefits through any ATM. Your DPSS worker should provide you with a list of ATMs in the area. This list will let you know which ATMs are free and which ones charge a fee.

## ▶ 2. If You Think You Are Unable to Work

If you are disabled you may want to apply for SSI first. (see page 26 SSI). You may apply for GR while you wait on SSI. You can ask the county to help you apply for SSI .

If you are disabled, apply for GR as "unemployable". You will be given an appointment for an "employability screening". Be sure to tell the medical provider everything about your disability. Bring any medications, prescriptions, private doctor's statement, or other proof about your disability.

If the medical provider decides that you are able to work, you can appeal to the medical provider at the time of the screening that you disagree with your employability screening. You will then be considered "temporarily unemployable" for 15 days until you receive the results of your appeal.

Make sure you go to your employability screening because you may be denied GR if you don't.

County or VA doctors can verify your disability. Ask the doctor to fill out an "ABP 1676P" to verify the disability. A statement from a private doctor does not replace the employability screening.

## ▶ 3. If You Need Special Assistance

DPSS must help if you need it. If you cannot read or write, they must help you with their forms. If you have a mental disability, they must refer you to a mental health worker for evaluation. The evaluation can establish you as a Needs Special Assistance ("NSA") recipient. NSA recipients are approved for GR promptly. In addition, "NSA" participants are protected from some sanctions, work and other program requirements, and denials of aid. If you request an evaluation by a mental health worker, but do not get one, you may demand that you be classified as "medically unemployable" for 30 days. You will be exempt from GROW and other requirements until you get a mental health evaluation.

# WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS?

## ▶ 1. If You Are Able to Work

If you are employable, you will be required to:

- Complete 6 job searches at application
- Register with the Employment Development Department ("EDD"). You will have to apply for unemployment benefits if you appear eligible for these benefits.
- Participate in the GROW program
- Spend 20 hours per week in activities leading to a job
- Perform workfare for up to 21 hours a month to keep getting food stamps, if your GROW activities do not fulfill the food stamp work requirements(see pg. 36 "Food Stamps").

The County will send you a notice to come to a GROW Orientation or give you a notice at application. Your GR will not be approved and a penalty may be levied against you if you do not go to the GROW orientation. GROW provides job search activity, job-related training, counseling, and work experience.

In GROW, if needed, you may also get assistance with transportation, books, supplies, uniforms and tools. GROW can also provide domestic violence or mental health services.

If you are 60 years old or older, you will not have to participate in GROW, and you will not have a time limit. If you have questions about the GROW program, call (877)481-1044 for help.

## ▶ 2. If You Are Classified "Unemployable"

If the medical provider says you are disabled, you are exempt from many GR requirements. You do not have to participate in GROW, complete job searches, or register with the EDD, and cannot be penalized for not working. You will only be classified as "unemployable" for a certain amount of time. When your disability period expires, you will be sent a notice to comply with GROW requirements. If you still cannot work, call your worker right away and have them schedule an appointment for you with the medical provider.

### ▶ 3. Drug and Alcohol Program

When you apply for GR your DPSS worker will screen you for drug or alcohol dependency. If you tell your DPSS worker that you have a drug or alcohol problem, or if your worker believes you have such a problem, you must have a professional assessment from Department of Health Services.

If you are assessed to be chemically dependent you must enroll in a treatment program in order to receive GR. If all the programs are filled you can get GR while you wait to enter a program.

If you fail to keep an appointment with a program or provider, you may get a penalty even prior to approval of your GR case. You are entitled to a "good cause evaluation" when you reapply and the penalty will be removed if you had "good cause" for missing the appointment.

If you are employable and in a residential treatment program you won't have to participate in GROW, but you will still be subject to the 9 month limit, unless you are judged "unable to work" for reasons other than substance abuse.

### ▶ 4. Quarterly Reports

You must fill out a QR-7 form every three months. **THIS IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT!** On the QR-7, you will be asked to report your income, property and household composition. You will also be required to report any changes in your income, property or household composition that you anticipate in the next three months. Your eligibility and benefits for the next three months will be based on the information you provide on your QR-7. Under certain circumstances, you must report changes before your required reporting month. You will be assigned to a Quarterly Reporting cycle based on the last digit of your case number. Your DPSS worker should let you know the months you are required to submit a QR-7.

If you get the form in the mail, you must fill it out and return it to the DPSS office by the fifth day of your "submit" month. You should receive your QR-7 on the first of your "submit" month. If you don't get it in the mail, you must go to the DPSS office to complete the form.

Make sure to get a receipt showing the time and date you submitted the form. If your QR-7 gets lost, or you do not turn it in, your case will be terminated at the end of the "submit" month. You have until the 3rd Thursday of the following month to turn it in without losing any cash aid, if your reported changes do not cause a reduction in benefits or ineligibility (you may lose some food stamps).

## WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

### ▶ 1. Good Cause

Unless you have "Good Cause," you will be penalized for not participating in GROW, quitting a job, not accepting a job paying at least minimum wage (\$7 an hour), not complying with substance abuse requirements, or getting fired for misconduct. "Good Cause" can be any illness, accident, difficulty reading or understanding instructions, conflicting appointments, confusion, transportation problems, or any physical or mental disability, which affects your ability to work. "Good Cause" covers anything short of willfully not complying with program requirements. If you are not able to comply with GR program requirement, and you have "Good Cause," you should contact your DPSS worker immediately and explain your situation.

### ▶ 2. "Extended Suspend"

If DPSS says you have not complied with your GR requirements your benefits will be stopped. If you comply with your GR requirements by the third Thursday of the following month, your benefits should be started again. The DPSS calls this "Extended Suspend." Make sure you show them you have complied with the rules.

### ▶ 3. Hearings

If your case is going to be terminated or your benefits are reduced, you have a right to a GR hearing. The county must mail you a "Notice of Action" nine days before a hearing. The date and time of the hearing will appear on the notice. If you have "Good Cause" you have a good chance of winning the hearing. Your benefits cannot be cut off or reduced without a hearing unless you do not go to the hearing. (see Page 62 "Hearings and Complaints".)

### ▶ 4. Penalties

If you do not go to your GR hearing, or you lose your GR hearing, your case will be terminated (with or without a sanction) or your benefits will be reduced. If you receive a sanction and you have not been sanctioned in the past 365 days you can re-apply at once. If this is the second sanction in a year, you can re-apply in 30 days. After the third penalty in a year, you have to wait 60 days to re-apply.

The restrictions on food stamps are greater than those on GR. If you are penalized for missing a work project without "good cause," you will lose food stamps for at least thirty days even if you can reapply for GR right away.

## ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

### ▶ 1. Health Care

If your worker or someone at a clinic says that you have to go to a special "GR" clinic and you want to go somewhere else call (800) 427-8700 to find out where else you can go, and request an alternate.

### ▶ 2. If You Begin to Get SSI

DPSS workers emphasize that GR is a "loan." If you begin to receive SSI, the amount you received on GR will be automatically deducted from your first SSI check.

### ▶ 3. GR Time Limits

If your General Relief is stopped due to the 6 or 9 month time limits:

- You can continue to get food stamps, but you will have to do a workfare project of three days a month for them.
- You continue to receive free and low cost health care from the county.
- You can reapply for GR in three months.

If you become "unemployable" while you are timed off of GR, reapply for GR and let your worker know that you are "unemployable." If they find you are unemployable after screening you, you will be eligible to once again receive GR and you will not be subject to time limits.

# Transportation

## BUS PASSES AND TAXI VOUCHERS

All Los Angeles County transit operators, including MTA, DASH, Foothill, Antelope Valley, and all the city bus lines, honor a "disabled identification card".

### 1. How to Apply

Call (213)680-0054. There are over 20 transit offices where the ID card applications may be obtained. The completed application must be returned in person to any of these offices. All applicants must pay a non-refundable \$2 application fee and bring a current 1" by 1 1/4" full face photo (no hats, sunglasses or bandannas.)

To qualify you must show any one of the following:

- Medicare ID card (NOT Medi-Cal)
- California DMV disabled or disabled veteran placard certificate with a current "valid through" date
- Proof of receiving either SSI or SSDI from the Social Security Administration
- A certification on school letterhead signed by a Special Education teacher that the applicant is a Special Education student in any LA County school
- Part III of the application form, which is a one-page certification signed by a health care professional.

Replacement of lost or stolen cards requires a \$5.00 fee and another photo. ID cards will be mailed within 10 business days after verification.

### 2. Other Transportation Help

**Transportation assistance for CalWORKS participants** (see page 10)  
**Department of Rehabilitation**  
 (for disabled persons: see page 17 Jobs)

#### Bus Tokens:

Community Service (323) 758-4506  
 East LA Service Center (323) 260-2808  
 People Coordinated Services (323) 735-1231  
 Salvation Army (323) 665-9947  
 West Angeles (323) 733-8300  
 Weingart Center (213) 627-9000

#### Help for Stranded or Runaways to Get Home:

Home Free Program (800) 621-4000  
 St. Vincent (323) 224-6280  
 Traveler's Aid (323) 644-2283

#### Air Travel Assistance for Patients Needing Medical Aid:

Angel's Flight (888) 426-2643  
 Delta Skywish (800) 892-2757

### 3. CityRide and paratransit

Most cities in LA County offer subsidized transportation for seniors or people with disabilities.

**Los Angeles CityRide:** (213) or (323) or (818) or (310)808-RIDE (808-7433)  
 For seniors 65+ or disabled. CityRide provides a book of coupons worth \$72, every three months. The cost is \$15 (\$6 if you are receiving Medi-Cal or SSI). The script can be used to buy bus pass, taxi rides, or to partly pay for dial-a-ride service for medical appointments.

**ACCESS** (800) 827-0829 Shared ride service offering disabled persons curb-to-curb rides within 3/4 mile of most LA County bus or rail routes, using buses, mini-vans and taxis. Fares are distance-based and range from \$1.80 to \$2.70 for each one-way trip. Call to apply.

**Dial-a-Ride** (800) 439-0439 Shared rides for seniors 60+ and disabled in certain parts of the county. Costs vary but as low as 25 or 50 cents in some areas. Call to apply.

## HELP FOR DRIVERS

### 1. Low Cost Car Insurance

Low income drivers in Los Angeles County can purchase special auto insurance for **\$350** a year. Call (800) 622-0954 to find the agent nearest you from the California Automobile Assigned Risk Plan (CAARP.) You must verify your income with tax returns and also show a valid driver's license, current vehicle registration, and proof of ownership of vehicle.

To be eligible you must live in LA County; you must be at least 19 years old and have been driving for at least

3 years without losing your license; the car insured must be worth less than \$20,000; and your household must have a yearly income below :

# in household	Annual Income
1	\$26,000
2	\$35,000
3	\$44,000
4	\$53,000
5	\$62,000
6	\$71,000
7	\$80,000
8	\$89,000

Also, in the last 3 years you cannot have:

- Been responsible for an accident involving bodily injury or death
- Had more than one property damage accident in which you were at fault
- More than one point for a moving violation

You also cannot be a college student claimed as a dependent on someone else's taxes.

Per household only two low cost policies are allowed. A "household" includes all related persons living under one roof. Unrelated individuals living in the same house are each considered to be their own household.

The liability limits are \$10,000 bodily injury or death per person, \$20,000 bodily injury for each accident and \$3,000 property damage for each accident.

You can add \$1,000 Medical Payments for your Injuries for \$37 a year and/or \$10,000 per person/\$20,000 per accident to protect you and your passengers from bodily injury by an Uninsured Motorist for \$67 a year. There is no physical damage or theft coverage for your car.

### 2. Help With Smog Check

The State's Consumer Assistance Program (CAP) provides financial assistance for low income consumers whose vehicles don't pass smog check. If you qualify they can help pay for repairs that will allow your car to pass. You must pay a copayment. The program is limited to available funds. Call Department of Consumer Affairs (800) 952-5210 for information and to apply. Don't do any repairs until you are notified that you've been approved.



# Food Stamps

Food stamps is a government program that gives you benefits so that you and your family will not go hungry. You get an Electronic Benefit card (Golden State Advantage) that you can swipe at the grocery store counter or certain other places to pay for your food.

Many people who qualify for food stamps do not get them because they don't think they qualify, are embarrassed, or do not know how to apply. If you need food, you should apply; everyone deserves to have enough to eat.

## WHERE CAN I USE FOOD STAMPS?

- Almost every food store
- Many certified Farmer's Markets
- Some meals-on-wheels programs
- Certain restaurants can accept food stamps from homeless, disabled or elderly participants
- Some shelters are authorized to take food stamps as payment from clients

## What Can I Buy with My Food Stamp Card?

- Any food item except hot foods that are meant to be eaten immediately (except at certain restaurants)
- Seeds to grow your own food.
- Food stamps cannot be used for non-food products such as soap or diapers.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Each month you get help to buy food. The highest (maximum) amount your household can get is listed on the chart in the next column. Most people do not get the maximum amount.

# in Household	Maximum Amount
1	\$162
2	\$298
3	\$426
4	\$542
5	\$643
6	\$772
7	\$853
8	\$975
For each additional person, add \$122(Accurate until Sept. 30, 2008)	

## 1. General Eligibility

To get food stamps, you must be a U.S. citizen or a legally immigrated non-citizen (see page 58 Guide for Non-Citizens" )You must also meet the limits on your income and resources. You don't have to have a home or a place to cook to get food stamps.

Some persons do not qualify:

- **SSI recipients** in California cannot get food stamps because a food allowance is included in the SSI grant.
- If you are convicted of a **drug related felony for sales or manufacture** occurring after August 22, 1996, you will be permanently ineligible for food stamps. If your felony was for possession or use of drugs, you can get food stamps if you show that you are in a drug recovery program, OR have completed one OR are on a waiting list for one, OR sign an affidavit that you are no longer using drugs.
- You can be permanently disqualified from the program if caught selling food stamps worth over \$500.
- Strikers and their families are usually kept out of the program, unless they meet the income limits one day before the strike. Employees who honor a picket line of another union, who are laid off as a result of the strike, or who are locked out are not considered strikers and may be more likely to qualify.

## 2. Special Rules for Students

Some full time students can't get food stamps. Students between the ages of 18 and 49 who are enrolled at least half-time in a program of higher education can get food stamps if they are doing any one of the following:

- Enrolled in CalWORKs
- Working and getting paid at least 20 hours per week
- Receiving a work-study grant
- Responsible for the care of a dependent child under age 12 if a full-time student

## 3. If You Get Free Meals

If you do not pay for any of your meals, you may not be able to get food stamps. Even if you don't prepare your meals, however, you may be able to get food stamps, if you live in a non-profit shelter for domestic violence or homeless people, a drug or alcohol treatment facility, federally-funded housing for the elderly, or a group home for the disabled or blind. Some facilities can collect your food stamps from you if they use them to feed you.

## 4. "Households"

The term "household" has special meaning in this program. It does not mean you have a house. A household can be one person who lives alone, or it can be a group of persons, related or unrelated, who live in the same place. There is no limit to the number of "households" that can be in the same home. If each "household" buys and prepares their own food separately from the other households, they are a "separate household."

Some relatives who live together must be included in the same household, even if they do prepare their meals separately. These are:

- Your immediate family—you, your spouse, your children age 21 and under
- Your parents and you (unless you are over 21)
- Those who are acting as parents for a child under 18, unless the child is in foster care.

Relatives who can be considered separate households even if they live in the same place include:

- Parents living with their adult children (over 21)
- Adult brothers and sisters.

Teen parents who reach the age of 19 and are taken out of their own parents' CalWORKs case are still eligible for food stamps. The parents' income must be counted, but the food stamps should not just be cut automatically— call Legal Aid if this happens.

**5. Income Limits**

**Income test one:** You can have income and also get food stamps if the household's "gross" or "total" monthly income is below the following limits. If you are disabled or age 60 or over this limit does not apply to you.

**# in Household GROSS Income Limit**

1	\$1107
2	\$1484
3	\$1861
4	\$2238
5	\$2615
6	\$2992
7	\$3369
8	\$3746

For each additional person, add \$ 377 (Accurate until Sept. 30,2008)

**Income test two:** Some income does not count for the second test. It is "deducted" from your "gross" income. (See page 37 "How Many Food Stamps Do I Get.") The result or "net" income after the deductions must be below the following limits. This limit applies to everyone, including aged and disabled people.

**# in Household NET Income Limit**

1	\$851
2	\$1141
3	\$1431
4	\$1721
5	\$2011
6	\$2301
7	\$2591
8	\$2881

For each additional person, add \$290 (Accurate until Sept. 30, 2008)

Income that doesn't count ("deductions") includes:

- Money for someone who is not in your food stamp household
- Money earned by children 17 and under who go to school at least half-time
- Reimbursements or advances
- Money paid for you to a third party by someone who is not legally obligated to pay you, (for example if your grandparent pays your rent directly to the landlord)
- All loans, including most educational loans
- Federal payments to help you pay energy bills or for emergency heating and cooling installations

- "Earned Income Tax Credit" for one full year after you get it
- CalWORKs homeless assistance money
- Foster care payments (when the foster children are not part of the food stamp household)
- Agent Orange Settlement Fund payments.

**6. Resource and Property Limits**

In addition to meeting the income limits, your household may not have certain resources ("assets") worth more than \$2000. If a member of the household is age 60 or over, or disabled, this limit is \$3000.

**THESE RESOURCES COUNT:**

- Cash-on-hand as well as money in bank accounts, money from inheritances, some pension funds, lump-sum back payments from insurance, CalWORKs, and Social Security

- Land you own that you do not live on or rent out
- Tax refunds (but not the Earned Income Tax Credit.)

**THESE RESOURCES DON'T COUNT:**

- The house you live in and the attached land
- Vehicles
- All resources excluded under CalWORKs or SSI rules
- Earned Income Tax Credit
- Life insurance and some pension funds
- Things needed to produce income such as tools, rental property, and farm land
- Burial plots.

**7. Rules about Cars**

For food stamps, it doesn't matter if you own a vehicle. However, cars may still be counted against you if you are applying for cash aid. The worker can ask if you have a vehicle on your cash aid application, but not for your food stamps.

**HOW DO I APPLY?**

Call (877) 597-4777 for information on the food stamp program and the nearest location to apply. (see map on pg 66). You normally apply at a DPSS office but you can apply at some other locations approved by the county (call Hunger Action LA 877 486-4378).

**1. Emergency Food Stamps**

You may be eligible to get food stamps the same day or at least within 3 days if one of the following applies:

- You can't pay your rent, mortgage payment or utilities because your monthly income and cash-on-hand is too little
- Your gross income is less than \$150 per month and the money you have on hand or in the bank is less than \$100

To apply for emergency food stamps, you only need to sign and date the application and statement of facts. The worker will ask for your proof of identity, residence, income, and resources, but you cannot be denied for not having these documents with you.

There are many ways to prove your identity, including your driver's license, a sworn statement, a phone call to someone who knows you, a library card, or a letter addressed to you.

If your case is approved, an EBT card and PIN number will be issued no later than the third calendar day after you apply so you can access your food stamp benefits. If the third day falls on a weekend or holiday, you have the right to receive your food stamps on that Friday, or the last workday before a holiday. If you apply after the 15th you will get the stamps for that month and your next month's stamps.

**2. Non Emergency**

**Application:** You have the right to apply in your own language and to turn in a written application on the day you go in. You will only get benefits as of the date you turn in the application. If someone tells you to come back without submitting the application, you may insist on filing an application.

Fill out the application form as completely as you can, circling the numbers of the lines where you cannot answer or

need help. Turn the application in and wait to be seen or make an appointment to see an eligibility worker. If you are not seen in a half-hour, go to the reception desk and ask for the Customer Services Representative.

You can call toll-free (877) 597-4777 to have an application mailed to you, fill it out and send it in by mail, or have someone else turn it in for you. You will still have to be interviewed.

**Interview:** You may bring someone along to help you. You may be asked to sign a form making them your "authorized representative." You will go over the application you filled out and will be asked for additional information.

You should be given a list of documents that you will need to complete the application process. You may be given a "return appointment" to turn in the documents. If you do not have all the necessary documents, you or someone you know may sign a statement explaining why not.

You may be able to receive benefits while you continue to gather the required information. The eligibility worker should help you get some of your missing papers.

If everyone in your household is disabled or 65 years of age or over you may request either that an eligibility worker be sent to your home at a time you agree to or that you be interviewed by phone. A worker may also visit or phone you if no adult in your household can go to the office for good reasons such as illness or disability.

**Fingerprints:** To get food stamps, all adults and teens 18 and older, and an adult getting food stamps for children even if not for the adult, must be fingerprinted. If you are scheduled for fingerprinting at a later day that will not work for you, explain and request another time.

**Next steps:** Write down your worker's name, phone number, and phone hours. If you are asked to mail additional papers to the welfare office, ask the worker for a stamped envelope addressed to him or her. If you take in papers, get a receipt. Keep your own copy of all the paperwork. If you need help and your worker is not available, the duty worker or a supervisor must help you.

Within 30 days of your applying, the welfare office must either mail you an EBT card and PIN number and a notice of approval or inform you in writing that you do not qualify and the reason why not.

The notice of approval tells you how long you are eligible (usually a "certification period" is 12 months) and how much the benefit is worth.

If you are denied food stamps, and believe you are eligible, request a hearing or call a legal aid organization. (see page 64 "Good Advice.")

Any time your income, expenses or other circumstances change, report this on the form called "QR 7."

**Nutrition Education:** The University Of CA Cooperative Extension has a free program to help Food Stamp participants purchase foods for a better diet through nutrition education. Call (323) 838-8329. The web site is [www.fsnep.ucdavis.edu](http://www.fsnep.ucdavis.edu).

## WHAT REQUIREMENTS DO I FACE?

### 1. Quarterly Reports

You must fill out a QR-7 form every three months. **THIS IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT!** On the QR-7, you will be asked to report your income, property and household composition. You will also be required to report any changes in your income, property or household composition that you anticipate in the next three months. Your eligibility and benefits for the next three months will be based on the information you provide on your QR-7. Under certain circumstances, you must report changes before your required reporting month.

You will be assigned to a Quarterly Reporting cycle based on the last digit of your case number. Your eligibility worker should let you know the months you are required to submit a QR-7.

If you get the form in the mail, you must fill it out and return it to the DPSS office by the fifth day of your reporting month. You should receive your QR-7 about one month before it is due. If you don't get it in the mail, you must go to the DPSS office to complete the form. Make sure to get a receipt showing the time

and date you submitted the form. If your QR-7 gets lost, or you do not turn it in, your case will be suspended at the end of the month.

### 2. Recertification

Also, you must be reviewed for benefits each year before the end of your certification period or your food stamps will be cut off. You will receive a letter that tells you the application for this review is due. Be sure to complete this on time so you can continue to receive food stamps without a break.

### 3. Food Stamp Work Registration

All Food Stamp household members age 16 through age 59 who are not exempt are required to be registered for work. That means you must agree to:

- Respond to a request of additional information regarding employment status or availability for employment
- Report to a suitable employer if referred
- Accept an offer of suitable employment
- If working more than 30 hours per week, not voluntarily reduce work hours to less than 30 hours per week
- Cooperate with the requirements of any welfare-to-work program you are assigned to: GAIN, GROW, REP, Employment & Training program, or Food Stamp workfare.

In Food Stamp workfare, the number of hours you do is based on the amount of your Food Stamp benefits divided by minimum wage. Workfare is usually doing some kind of work assignment for the county, like cleaning the beach or helping in an office.

You will be exempt from work registration if you are earning at least 30 hours times the federal minimum wage (presently this is \$154.50 weekly), or working at least 30 hours per week, or any one of the following:

- Under age 16 or age 60 or over
- A student in school or training at least half time.
- Caring for a disabled person or child under age 6
- Receiving or applied for unemployment benefits
- Participating in a drug or alcohol treatment and rehabilitation program
- Determined by DPSS to be unemployable
- Participating in GAIN or REP.

## Food Stamps

Under food stamp law, certain kinds of employment are considered “unsuitable,” so you do not have to accept these jobs to qualify or remain eligible for food stamps. A job is unsuitable if one of the following applies:

- It does not pay the minimum wage
- It is harmful to your health, or unsafe
- It is beyond your mental or physical capacity
- The daily commute is over 2 hours
- It forces you to resign from a union or prohibits you from joining a union
- It forces you to break a strike
- Adequate transportation is unavailable

## WHAT ARE THE PENALTIES ?

If you don't comply with a work or work-training requirement, or quit a job without good cause, you can be cut off from food stamps until you correct the problem. The penalties get worse each time:

- **The first time** DPSS says you have not complied, you can be denied food stamps for at least **one month**.
  - **The second time**, you can be denied food stamps for at least **three months**.
  - The **third time** and after, you can be denied food stamps for at least **six months**.
- Only the person breaking the rules will be denied, not the whole household. If you are penalized for any reason, you can get back on the program if you become exempt from having to comply with the requirement for any of the reasons listed above.

### “Good Cause”

“Good cause” for quitting a job or not doing a work project includes events beyond your control, such as:

- Illness of yourself or a household member who needs your care
- Injury
- Transportation problems
- Inability to speak or write English
- A household emergency
- Lack of adequate childcare for a child age 6 to 11.

## WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

### 1. Fair Hearing

You have a right to a “fair hearing” if you feel you were unfairly denied or to correct any mistakes (see pg 62.) If you appeal within 10 days or up to the day the action takes effect (whichever period of time is longer), your usual benefits will continue until the matter is resolved. You have a right to look at your own case file and read a copy of the food

stamp program rules if you have a dispute with the county.

### 2. Lost or Stolen Card

You must report a lost, stolen or demagnetized card immediately to the EBT 24 hour Customer Service Center (1-877-328-9677.) Once reported, the card will be deactivated so that the benefits cannot be used by anyone else using your card. A new card will be issued right away so you will receive it in three business days.

### Food Stamp Calculation Worksheet:

The following worksheet will give you a basic idea of how many food stamps you might be entitled to (it may not be accurate if your circumstances are complicated.)

1. Start with your household's gross monthly income \_\_\_\_\_
2. Subtract 20% of your gross **earned** income \_\_\_\_\_
3. Subtract “the standard deduction”:\$134 for household of less than 5 people, \$153 for 5 people, \$175 for 6 or more \_\_\_\_\_
4. Subtract child care expenses that you pay up to \$175 per child (age 2 or older) or \$200 per child (under 2 years) if the child care allows a household member to work, look for work, or train for work \_\_\_\_\_
5. Subtract medical expenses over \$35 per month that aren't covered by insurance, Medicare or Medi-Cal, for each person in the household who is over age 59 or who gets disability payments. (This includes money spent for prescriptions, dental care, health insurance, glasses, health-related transportation, and attendant care like IHSS). \_\_\_\_\_
6. Subtract child support payments made by you or payments made to children not in the home \_\_\_\_\_
7. Total (income after deductions) \_\_\_\_\_
8. Actual rent or mortgage, hotel costs, or shelter costs (if homeless, enter \$143) \_\_\_\_\_
9. Utilities: Zero if included in the rent. If not included, enter the larger of either your actual expense or \$206 (“the standard utility deduction.”) \_\_\_\_\_
10. Telephone: Zero if you have other utility costs. If you do not have other utility costs, enter the larger of either your actual expense or \$20. \_\_\_\_\_
11. Total of lines 8, 9, and 10 \_\_\_\_\_
12. Divide line 7 in half \_\_\_\_\_
13. Subtract line 12 from line 11 \_\_\_\_\_
14. Excess Shelter Deduction (including rent, mortgage, hotel costs, or shelter costs): If line 13 is larger than \$388, enter \$388. If line 13 is less than \$388, enter the amount on line 13. If a household member is over age 59 or receiving disability payments, enter the amount on line 13 even if it is over \$388. \_\_\_\_\_
15. Subtract line 14 from line 7 \_\_\_\_\_
16. Maximum Food stamp Benefit for household size (see chart pg 33) \_\_\_\_\_
17. Enter 30% of line 15 \_\_\_\_\_
18. Food Stamp Benefits: subtract line 17 from line 16 \_\_\_\_\_

You cannot get more than the maximum benefit amount (line 16).

# Free and Low Cost Food

## FOOD PANTRIES AND FREE MEAL PROGRAMS

Food pantries are places that give food to people in need. Most food pantries are volunteer private organizations that can make their own rules about who can be served. Most of them are limited to serving people in certain areas and for one to four times a month. They may require some kind of identification and proof that you are low income. Generally, food pantries never have as much as is needed. Foods distributed most often include canned foods, rice, beans, bread, cereal, and occasionally produce items.

**Free hot meals** are offered at many private volunteer agencies and churches. The frequency of the meals varies from daily in some places to once a month.

There are over 500 places in LA County that distribute food bags or hot meals for free so we cannot list them all. Here are some food or referral agencies:

**211** (County phone referral line)  
Internet: [www.healthycity.org](http://www.healthycity.org)  
Catholic Charities (213) 251-3400  
Downtown Svc. Center (213) 749-0212  
East LA Svc. Center (323) 260-2801  
Eastmont Center (323) 726-7998  
Pomona: Beta Center(909) 622-7278  
Salvation Army (323) 665-9947  
South Central Center (323) 583-5908  
SOVA (818) 988-7682  
Valley Interfaith (818) 718-6460  
Westside (310) 314-0071

## COMMUNITY GARDENS

You can save money and have nutritious food by growing some of your own vegetables. You can garden in your yard, in containers, in school-yard projects and in community gardens. There are over 85 community gardens in Los Angeles County. To find out where community garden space is available, or to get materials, seeds, and advice on gardening, call

**LACC Green Bank**

(213) 362-9000 x 201.

**Common Ground** (323) 260-3348

## FARMERS' MARKETS

At farmers' markets, you can save up to 30% buying fresh vegetables and fruit directly from family-owned farms. Listed below are markets that accept EBT (Food Stamps) and WIC or Senior Farmers Market Coupons.

**Alhambra** Sun, 9 AM-1 PM  
100 S. Monterey & E. Bay  
**Atwater Village** Sun, 10 AM-2PM  
3250 Glendale Blvd., Wells Fargo lot  
**Burbank** Sat, 8 AM-12: 30 PM  
Olive & Glen Oaks  
**Cerritos** Sat. 8 AM-12 Noon  
Towne Center & Park Plaza  
**East LA** Sat. 9 AM-2 PM, 4801 E 3rd  
**Gardena** Sat, 6:30 AM-12 Noon & Wed,  
2-6 PM, 13000 South Van Ness.  
**Hollywood-** Sun, 8:30 AM-1 PM  
Ivar between Selma & Hollywood  
Wed. 9 AM-1 PM  
Lemon Grove Ave. btwn. Western & 101  
**Huntington Park**, 9:30am-1:30pm  
Salt Lake Park, Bissell/Florence Ave  
**La Puente** Thurs 3-8 pm, Martin Park  
**Long Beach** Thurs 3-6:30pm  
46th St and Atlantic Ave  
Fri, 10 AM- 4 PM Promenade North/4th  
Sun, 9 AM-1 PM E Marina/E 2nd  
**LA-Adams** Wed, 2-5:30 PM 1432 W.  
Adams & Vermont (St. Agnes)  
**LA:La Cienega** Thurs, 3-7 PM  
1801 La Cienega Blvd.  
**LA-Central** Sat, 10 AM -2 PM  
Vernon & McKinley  
**LA-Echo Park** Fri 3-7 PM  
Logan, Lot 663, south of Sunset  
**LA-Leimert Park**  
Sun. 10 AM-2 PM 43rd & Degnan  
**LA-Watts** Sat, 10 AM-2 PM  
103rd/Central  
**Norwalk** Tue 9am-1pm Alondra/Pioneer  
**Pasadena**, Tue, 8:30AM-12:30PM  
E. Villa & Garfield  
Sat, 8:30 AM-12:30 PM  
Sierra Madre & Paloma  
**Pomona** Sat, 7:30-11:30 AM  
Garey Ave. & Pearl  
**Santa Monica** Sat, 8 AM-1 PM  
Cloverfield & Pico  
Sun, 9:30 AM-1 PM Ocean Park & Main  
**Santa Monica-Promenade** Wed, 9  
AM- 2 PM and Sat, 8:30 AM-1 PM  
**Whittier** Fri, 8:30 AM-1 PM  
Greenleaf & Bailey  
**Whittier** Fri, 3-8 PM Mayberry Park

## SENIOR CONGREGATE MEALS

Anyone age 60 and over can participate in congregate meal programs, regardless of income. Spouses of participants can also get meals, no matter what their age.

There are about 200 sites for congregate meals throughout L.A. County. Some programs are able to provide transportation to the meal site or can send meals home for people who are temporarily ill or homebound.

You can get help to locate a program by calling (213) 738-4004 if you live anywhere in the City or County of Los Angeles. Participants cannot be required to pay for meals. However, a contribution to help support the program is often suggested. Some group meal programs are authorized to accept food stamps.

## MEALS FOR HOMEBOUND PERSONS

**Meals on Wheels** groups deliver meals regularly to those who are homebound. Each group sets its own rules about how many meals will be served and about the days and times that meals are available. Most programs require some evidence that participants are unable to cook or shop due to illness, frailty, or disability. Some programs can provide for special diets. You cannot be required to pay for meals if the program is federally funded, but sponsoring groups will ask for a small contribution. Some meals-on-wheels programs are authorized to accept food stamps. To find out about meals-on-wheels anywhere in Los Angeles County, call (213) 738-4004.

**Project Angel Food** is a private agency that delivers free hot meals to homebound people with AIDS and other illnesses. They have same day service in Venice, East Los Angeles, Pasadena, North Hollywood, Silver Lake, and South Central. Call (323) 845-1800 for meals.

**Project Chicken Soup** prepares and delivers free nutritious, kosher meals to people living with HIV/AIDS throughout most of the Los Angeles area. Anyone living outside the service delivery area may come to the kitchen to pick up meals. Call 323-933-5402 for information.

# WIC

WIC, the **W**omen, **I**nfants, and **C**hildren program, is a nutrition program that helps pregnant women, new mothers and children under age 5 eat well and stay healthy. You will never have to pay for any WIC benefits.

You qualify for WIC if your household receives Food Stamps, CalWORKs or full Medi-Cal. Or you qualify if your "gross income" (your income before taxes and deductions) is below the following:

Household Size	Annually	Monthly
1	19,240	1,604
2	25,900	2,159
3	32,560	2,714
4	39,220	3,269
5	45,880	3,824
6	52,540	4,379
7	59,200	4,934
8	65,860	5,489
Each add'l member, add	+6,660	+555

This chart is accurate to June 30, 2009.  
Note: If you are pregnant, add one to the number of people in your household.

If you are pregnant, bring verification when you apply. Also, you or your child must be medically identified as in need of better nutrition. It is helpful, but not required, to bring current medical information when you apply.

If you are treated unfairly in any way you can complain to the supervisor at the WIC site or hand in a short note or letter requesting a hearing. Include the date, your name and address and an explanation of your complaint. Keep a copy of your letter.

## WHAT CAN I GET?

- **Special checks** to buy healthy foods such as milk, juice, eggs, cheese, cereal, dry beans and peas, and peanut butter.
- The WIC program will change soon to offer more fruits and vegetables.
- WIC also provides a limited number of vouchers that can be used at **Farm-er's Markets** for fruits and vegetables.
- Information about nutrition and health to help you and your family eat well and be healthy
- Support and information about breastfeeding your baby
- Help in finding health care and other community services
- Extra vouchers: Women who breastfeed totally receive an extra set of vouchers providing them with additional foods including tuna and fresh carrots. You can also get vouchers for iron-fortified infant formula and cereals for infants.
- Counseling: WIC participants are

regularly scheduled to attend meetings and individual counseling. Some of the topics discussed include car seat safety, tooth decay, food and nutrition, and breastfeeding.

You can share your concerns about breastfeeding and children's eating habits with a counselor and other mothers involved in the program. In some WIC programs, breastfeeding women can come into the WIC clinic any time they have a question, a problem, or need support.

## WHO CAN WIC HELP?

Women and children who need better nutrition and are low to medium income. Working families may qualify.

- Women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or just had a baby
- Children under 5 years old (including foster children and children raised by their father)

(See the income limits in the chart in the left hand column.)

## WHERE CAN I FIND WIC?

WIC has 100 local offices in Los Angeles County located in health clinics, hospitals, and community centers that provide baby and maternity care. Some doctors or clinics may refer you to the program but even if they do not, you should apply, if you meet the requirements and need the benefits.

Call the toll free number below for more information and to find the WIC office location closest to your home.

**(888) WIC-WORKS**  
**(888) 942-9675**

# Child Nutrition

## SCHOOL BREAKFAST AND LUNCH

All low-income children qualify for school meals, regardless of immigration status. Children who eat regular meals learn better and are usually sick less than other children. All public schools and some private and parochial schools offer breakfast and lunch programs.

Some schools in Los Angeles County offer free meals to the entire student body regardless of family income.

Many schools offer breakfasts in the classroom, at recess, or on the bus. Ask your principal. In addition, you and your child can influence the menus served at the school by getting involved.

Your child qualifies for free or reduced-price meals if your gross family income per month (income before taxes or deductions) is below these levels:

Family Size	Free Meals	Reduced Price Meals
1	\$1,127	\$1,604
2	\$1,517	\$2,159
3	\$1,907	\$2,714
4	\$2,297	\$3,269
5	\$2,687	\$3,824
6	\$3,077	\$4,379
7	\$3,467	\$4,934
8	\$3,857	\$5,489

(Accurate to June 30 2009)

You should be given an application for the meal program in your own language at the beginning of the school year or whenever your child transfers. You can also ask for one at any time from the school office, because if your income goes down during the year, your child may become eligible.

If you receive CalWORKs, food stamps, or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, the only information you have to give is your case number, and your child automatically qualifies for free meals.

If you do not receive CalWORKs or food stamps, you will have to list the total income of your household, the names

of household members, and the Social Security number of the adult signing the application. If you do not have a number, just write "none". You are not required to apply for a number or give a reason for not having one.

In some cases, you must give the school some proof of your income (by showing your pay stubs to the school secretary, for example). All information gathered is confidential and cannot be given to other government agencies. If the information you give on the application shows that you qualify, your child can begin receiving free or reduced-price meals immediately.

Foster children are often eligible for free meals, regardless of the foster parents' income.

Reduced-prices are set by the school district, but the law states that breakfast cannot cost more than 30 cents and lunch not more than 40 cents for reduced price meals. The district can charge whatever it wants for full price meals.

**Extra Food for Pregnant Students**  
At many schools, pregnant and breastfeeding students can get extra food at breakfast or lunch, or an extra snack. To be eligible, the student must provide some written verification that she is pregnant or breastfeeding from a doctor, nurse, midwife, clinic, WIC or Cal-Learn program.

## FREE SUMMER LUNCH

All children age 18 and under can eat free, nutritious meals during the summer or any time when school is out for more than 15 days through the Summer Food Program. No application or other kind of paperwork is required. Meals and snacks are served at schools, parks, and recreation centers.

Some parks operate year-round and can feed your children when they are "off-track" from year-round schools.

The Summer Food Program is located in areas where at least half the children qualify for free- or reduced price-meals in school. However, any child under 19

can eat there free regardless of where they live or their family's income. If the child is physically handicapped, the age limit is 21.

Some residential or day camps and homeless shelters offer the program, but you may have to fill out an application.

To find out where your children can eat free when they are not in school, call 211 or go to [www.hungeractionla.org](http://www.hungeractionla.org) and click on Free Summer Lunch 2008. If you want to learn to start free Summer Lunch in your area, call the California Food Policy Advocates at (213) 482-8200.

## CHILD CARE & AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Family day care homes, homeless shelters, after-school programs and child care centers can receive government funds to help pay for meals and snacks for children. Children must be under age 12 in most cases: under age 15 if they are disabled: or under age 18 for after-school programs. Call (800) 952-5609 to learn about starting a program.

## WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

- The law says that children who get free or reduced-price meals cannot be treated differently than those who get full-price meals. No separate lines, different meals or meal tickets, required work, or other types of discrimination are allowed.
- Ask the school, child-care sponsor, or summer recreation program sponsor for a "fair hearing" if you apply and are unfairly denied. Also request the hearing if you receive notice that your benefits will be cut. By doing so within 10 days, your child's benefits will continue until the hearing takes place.

# Medi-Cal

Medi-Cal is California's program to pay for medical care for low-income people, especially families, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. For information on applying for Medi-Cal in Los Angeles, you can phone (877)597-4777.

The state and federal government fund Medi-Cal. There are many Medi-Cal programs with different rules. Depending on which program you qualify for and how much money you make, Medi-Cal may pay for all your medical expenses or you might have to pay a share of the cost when you access health care services in a particular month.

## AM I ELIGIBLE?

### 1. Groups of Eligibility

You can get Medi-Cal if you:

- Meet certain income and resource tests
- Are a California resident (which means that you intend to stay in California. This rule is not about immigration status)
- Fit within one of the eligible groups of people

The major groups who can get Medi-Cal are:

- People getting SSI, CalWORKs, foster care, adoption assistance, or certain immigrants receiving Entrant or Refugee Cash Assistance benefits. These groups get free Medi-Cal with no "Share of Cost."
- Pregnant women
- Children under age 21
- Adults 65 or over
- People of any age who are disabled or blind by SSI guidelines (whether or not you are getting SSI) (see page 26 "SSI")
- Certain families who are needy by CalWORKs guidelines, whether or not you are receiving CalWORKs (see page 4 "CalWORKs.") Briefly, one parent must be absent, deceased, medically documented as disabled or unable to work, unemployed, or under-employed. "Unemployed" means that the parent who has earned the most in the past two years is working less than 100 hours a month. "Underemployed" means that the family's earned income is below the

federal poverty level.

- Caretaker relative of a minor child under 21
- Refugees (as defined by the federal government)
- People living in a long term care facility
- People infected with tuberculosis (unless undocumented)
- Women diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer.

Besides fitting into one of the above categories, you must also meet certain income and resource limits, described on pages 43 and 44.

### 2. Immigration status

If you are a California resident and meet other Medi-Cal requirements, you can apply for a restricted Medi-Cal card, even if you're undocumented. Restricted Medi-Cal means that you can get Medi-Cal to pay for emergency services, pregnancy-related care and long term care services.

Most legal immigrants can get regular (also called full-scope) Medi-Cal to cover all their medically necessary health needs. Many immigrants can get full health coverage, even if they do not have a green card, for example those who are victims of domestic violence, or those in the process of adjusting their legal status (i.e., they are applying for Legal Permanent Residency). (See page 60 Guide for Non-Citizens)

If you are receiving CalWORKs, SSI, foster care, or certain refugee benefits, you get Medi-Cal automatically and do not need to apply separately.

## HOW DO I APPLY?

### 1. Get an application form

You can get one mailed to you by calling the DPSS toll-free number at (877) 597-4777. You can fill the application out and mail it back in. Or you can get one at a DPSS Office. (See page 66 "Welfare Offices.") Or you can get one at many hospitals and clinics, whether they are private or county-run. A few schools in Los Angeles County can have children apply for Medi-Cal at the same time they apply for the Free and Reduced-Cost Lunch program, using the same application.

### 2. How Children Can Get Medi-Cal Faster

If you are applying for Medi-Cal for your children under age 19 you should use the "Joint Medi-Cal and Healthy Families mail-in application." You can get one mailed to you from (877) 597-4777 or (800) 880-5305 (this number may have more staff speaking languages other than Spanish or English). Once you send in your mail-in application and it is screened and it appears that your child qualifies for free Medi-Cal, your child will receive no-cost Medi-Cal temporarily while the county reviews your application for Medi-Cal. If your child qualifies, your child will have all the benefits of Medi-Cal for at least two months, beginning with the first day of the month in which your mail-in application was received.

If your child instead seems to qualify for the Healthy Families program, you will receive a letter from them within 10 days. (see page 48 "Health Care for Children.")

If the LA County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) determines that your child is eligible for Medi-Cal, the no-cost Medi-Cal will continue (beyond the temporary period) until your child is found no longer eligible for Medi-Cal, as long as you turn in your paperwork every year.

If DPSS determines that your child is not eligible for no-cost Medi-Cal, your child's accelerated enrollment will end on the last day of the month in which

The **income limits** to get free Medi-Cal depend on whether you are a family, a child, 65 or older, or disabled. If your income is too high to get free Medi-Cal, you can still qualify, but you will have to pay a share of cost.

Income Limits (accurate until April 2009)				
Number of Persons	Pregnant Women and Children to Age 1 (count pregnant women as 2)	Children age 1 through 5	Children age 6 through 18: Parents and relatives caring for children	Need Level
1	\$1,734	\$1,153	\$867	\$600
2	\$2,334	\$1,552	\$1,167	\$750
2 Adults				\$934
3	\$2,934	\$1,951	\$1,467	\$934
4	\$3,534	\$2,350	\$1,767	\$1,100
5	\$4,134	\$2,749	\$2,067	\$1,259
6	\$4,734	\$3,148	\$2,367	\$1,417
Each additional person:	+ \$600	+ \$399	+\$300	+\$134

DPSS makes that decision. This application has a place to check if adults in the household want Medi-Cal, too. The Medi-Cal worker should call and follow up to help the adult apply.

**CHDP “Gateway”**

Children who receive a CHDP visit are screened for temporary eligibility for Medi-Cal. If a child is eligible, he/she is pre-enrolled in temporary, full-scope Medi-Cal at no cost for up to 60 days (for the month of the visit and the month after). See pg. 49 for a full description.

▶ **3. Deemed Eligibility for Infants**

Infants who were born to a woman on Medi-Cal at the time of birth and who were living with her at the time should receive Medi-Cal ongoing until the age of one, when an annual redetermination form must be filled out.

For questions or problems with this, call MCH Access (213)749-4261 or the Health Consumer Center (800)896-3203.

▶ **4. Fill out and turn in the form**

If you want help, or have a disability, it may be a good idea to get help filling out the form in an interview with an eligibility worker at a Medi-Cal office, or other site but it is not required. The Medi-Cal office is required to provide translation services and to assist you if you have a disability that makes it hard for you to complete the application. A Medi-Cal worker will go over the form you filled out and may be asked for additional information. If more information is needed you will be given a list of what

is needed and a specific date by which the information must be mailed to the Medi-Cal office. A "return appointment" is not necessary.

If you do not have all the necessary documents, you or someone you know may sign a statement explaining why not. You may be able to receive benefits while you continue to gather the required information. The eligibility worker should help you get some of your missing papers. Give DPSS copies, not originals, of any documents.

Make a copy for yourself! Then hand in or mail in the form. Get a receipt if you hand in the form. If you mail the form it is a good idea to send it by certified mail to get back a receipt proving DPSS got it.

▶ **5. Provide needed papers**

- Identification with your name and current address on it. For example, a birth certificate, driver's license, or California ID card. If you lack ID, you can also fill out a form called "PA 853" and swear that you are who you say you are), or documents to verify income or disability status may also serve as proof of identity.
- Social Security Number or Card (or proof of application for the card) only for those requesting "full-scope" benefits.
- Proof of income (like check stubs, a W2, a copy of your tax return, or monthly bank statements if you have a bank account, or a self-affidavit (statement of income if you are paid in case or do not have any other way to prove income)
- Proof that you live in Los Angeles County (a document that has your name and an address on it, school attendance records, pay stubs, etc.)

for each adult on the application. To be eligible, you must be a "resident", which means you must live in the state and intend to stay (even if undocumented)

- Proof of citizenship or acceptable immigration status for each person on the application who has declared acceptable immigration status. If you are a parent applying for children only, you do not need to submit proof of your immigration status.
- Vehicle registration if ownership of more than one vehicle is declared.
- Verification of child or dependent care, educational expenses and/or health insurance premiums or court ordered child support payments can be used as deductions, but are not needed to determine eligibility.

▶ **6. Cooperate with Child Support Services**

If one parent is absent, most people will have to cooperate with DPSS and a county agency called the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS.) You must provide information you have about the other parent such as an address or social security number, to establish who your child's absent father or mother is and whether that parent can provide the child with medical insurance. If you do not cooperate with DCSS you are denied Medi-Cal, but your children do not lose coverage. Cooperation is not required if applying only for the children. Once the children are receiving Medi-Cal they can't be cut off because of a parent's non-cooperation with DCSS. Pregnant women do not have to give information to DCSS until after the birth of the baby.

Under some circumstances you have good cause for not cooperating. Talk to your worker about this. For example:

- You don't know where the absent parent is, or have no other information about the other parent,
- You are afraid of the absent parent, you or your children may be in danger, or you are a victim of domestic violence
- Rape or incest has occurred
- You are planning to place the child for adoption

### ▶ 7. Wait for Approval

Normally, the Medi-Cal office will approve or deny your application within 45 days of receiving it, except for the faster ways for children, described above. If the state must evaluate a disability, the approval or denial can be delayed up to 90 days. Call (877) 597-4777 or a legal aid office for help if you are not contacted within 45 days about your Medi-Cal. If Medi-Cal says that you are not eligible, you can appeal the denial of benefits. (see pg. 62 Hearings and Complaints)

### ▶ 8. The Medi-Cal Card

Once you have been "approved," you may ask your worker for a written verification of your eligibility status from the Medi-Cal Eligibility Data Systems (MEDS) or your medical provider may be able to verify your eligibility status through their Point of Service system.

Your permanent white plastic Medi-Cal card is mailed to your address. It is called a "Benefit Identification Card" or BIC. Each person listed on your application will get one, even if they aren't eligible for Medi-Cal, because if the family must pay a monthly Share of Cost, the medical expenses of every person listed on the application can be used to meet the Share of Cost. If you don't get your plastic card by the end of the month, or if you lose your card, contact your worker.

### ▶ 9. Authorization for service under Fee-for-Service or "Regular" Medi-Cal

When you are not in a health plan, before many medical services can be performed for you the state has to give an authorization for the service. This does NOT apply to emergency care,

office visits, and most drugs. It is the job of the doctor, pharmacist, or other service provider, not the patient, to get this authorization from the state.

However, if the state denies or changes the authorization, the state will notify you and your doctor. You can appeal any unreasonable delay, denial, reduction, or termination of care. (See pg. 62 "Hearings and Complaints") for information about grievances and complaints.

### ▶ 10. If you are pregnant

If a woman is not more than 30 weeks pregnant and has too much income to be eligible for Medi-Cal, she may be eligible for a program called AIM (Access for Infants and Mothers) may help. Call AIM at (800) 433-2611.

Any pregnant woman can be "presumed eligible" at certain clinics and given limited pregnancy-related Medi-Cal immediately, without proving pregnancy or providing information on property, car, or resources. This will help you get early prenatal care, lab tests and medication. You still have to turn in a regular Medi-Cal application and provide proof of income by the end of the next month if you want to continue your Medi-Cal. Even to get full Medi-Cal you have 60 days to provide proof of pregnancy. When you apply for Medi-Cal during pregnancy, you should add your spouse or any other eligible children to your case.

Call your worker to report the name and date as soon as the baby is born to add the new baby to your family case record. Later get a document of the birth to the worker as soon as possible. The baby needs his or her own card by the end of the month after birth. But, you should not have to fill out a new Medi-Cal application for your baby. If you have trouble reaching your worker to tell the worker about the birth of your baby, some WIC offices and clinics have "Newborn Referral Forms" you can mail to DPSS. Or you can get one yourself on the computer at <http://dhs.ca.gov/publications/forms/Medi-Cal/eligibilitybytitle.htm> and download the form called, "Newborn Referral". It is number MC 330.

If you take your baby to a CHDP provider, this can also activate a new case for the baby through the "CHDP Gateway"(see pg. 49)

### ▶ 11. If you are disabled

If you have specific severe physical or mental problems, (such as mental retardation or inability to walk) or if you have AIDS, you may also be able to get Medi-Cal based on disability even before the state determines you are disabled. Bring medical reports that show you are disabled when you apply. Both children and adults can get disability Medi-Cal.

### ▶ 12. If you are a woman with Breast or Cervical Cancer

If you are a woman under 65 without health insurance who has been both screened and diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer, you can get free Medi-Cal immediately, and during the entire time you are receiving cancer treatment, if your monthly income is less than \$1702. There are no resource limits for this program. To get on Medi-Cal right away (called "accelerated eligibility"), you must go to a provider who participates in this program to file an internet application. You should state that you want the internet application to serve as a Medi-Cal application so you will be eligible for the program for a longer period of time.

To find a county health facility that participates in this program or who will screen you for cancer, call the Los Angeles County Office of Women's Health at (800) 793-8090. If you cannot qualify for the above program because of age or immigration status, you may still get time limited Medi-Cal for cancer-related services only under a more limited "state only" program. Under that program, breast cancer treatment is limited to 18 months and cervical cancer to 24 months. Call the above number for more information.

### ▶ 13. Retroactive Benefits

If you had medical, dental or pharmacy services from a Medi-Cal provider in the 3 months before you applied for Medi-Cal, ask your worker for a form to apply for "retroactive benefits." The mail-in application also asks if you want this. If you were eligible for Medi-Cal during those 3 months, Medi-Cal may pay those bills. If you've already paid the bills and Medi-Cal covers the services,

your clinic, doctor, dentist, or pharmacist must provide the refund to you. If you have trouble getting a refund, call The Health Consumer Center at (800) 896-3203.

## INCOME LIMITS

Your **countable income** determines whether or not you can get Medi-Cal for free or whether you have to pay a "Share of Cost." (You only pay a "share of cost" in months when you actually use services.) Certain types of income don't count or can be subtracted. The several different Medi-Cal programs count the income limits differently.

As described below, in some Medi-Cal programs, hundreds of dollars of your gross total income will not be counted. Medi-Cal can only count the income of the family unit being given the Medi-Cal benefit. Don't count the income of your grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, cousins, friends or others who live in the house, but are not part of the application.

As a general rule, families applying for Medi-Cal can deduct from total income:

- \$90 each month for each working adult
- Up to \$175 for child care for each child age two and over
- \$200 for childcare for each child under age two
- Court-ordered child and spousal support paid
- \$50 of child support received
- Educational expenses
- Business expenses of self-employed parents.

Once a family qualifies for Medi-Cal, hundreds of dollars of their earnings might not count against their eligibility. For example, they can deduct the first \$240 of income plus half the remaining earned income.

Elderly (65 and older), blind or disabled persons can deduct:

- \$20
- \$65 from earned income
- Half of any remaining earned income
- Any health insurance premiums paid by you.

Some elderly or disabled people, even though not receiving SSI, may get free Medi-Cal if the countable monthly income is less than \$1081 (an individual) or \$1513 (a married couple, both disabled or elderly). This is called the "Aged and Disabled Federal Poverty Level Medi-Cal program. You cannot

get free Medi-Cal if income is even a dollar over these limits. Special income deductions and exemptions apply, so even if you think your income may be too high, you can apply and check with your Health Consumer Center at 800-896-3203 or Legal Aid.

### ► Special low-cost Medi-Cal for working disabled persons:

If you are a disabled working person, you can get lower cost Medi-Cal if your income is less than \$2,128 for an individual or \$2,853 for a married couple, both disabled and working). ("Working" means having any monthly earned income) This is called the "250% Working Disabled Medi-Cal" program. If you qualify, you will have to pay a monthly premium that goes up the more income that you have. These monthly premiums range from \$20 to \$250 for an individual and \$30 to \$375 for a couple (both receiving 250% benefits). Again, special income deductions and exemptions apply, so apply even if you think your income may be too high and check with the Health Consumer Center (800) 896-3203 or Legal Aid.

## SHARE OF COST

Some people must pay, or agree to pay, a "Share of Cost" for each month that they have a medical expense. Medi-Cal will then pay the rest of the bill for covered services that month. You do NOT have to pay a Share of Cost if:

- You are in one of the groups listed above that receive free Medi-Cal (such as those getting CalWORKs, SSI, foster care, adoption assistance, IHSS, 1931(b) Medi-Cal, or the aged and disabled programs)
- Your countable income is below the limit in the chart on page 41.

If you have Medi-Cal with a Share of Cost, your Share of Cost starts over every month. You don't have to pay anything in months that you have no medical expense. You can use your past medical bills and the medical bills of family members listed on your application to meet your Share of Cost, including unpaid bills that they are trying to collect from you. You cannot count the same billed item or service twice, but you can carry the balance of an unpaid bill over to later months if a bill is for more than your Share of Cost.

If your income goes down, tell your worker so that your "Share of Cost" will go down.

### ► 1. Share of Cost for pregnant women

Any pregnant woman applying for Medi-Cal who is told she will have a share of cost should consider the Access for Infants and Mothers (AIM) program (call 800-433-2611.) An increase in income is not counted toward a Share of Cost during pregnancy and up to 60 days after the birth.

### ► 2. Share of Cost for children

Children whose income is too high for free Medi-Cal can get Medi-Cal with a Share of Cost, even if they also have the Healthy Families program [see the chapter Health Care for Children]. This can be helpful because Medi-Cal covers a broader scope of services than Healthy Families. -

An increase in income is not counted toward a share of cost for children up to age 19 who are on no-cost Medi-Cal until their next scheduled annual redetermination. So, even if the child's parents start making more money and the parents have to start immediately paying a Share of Cost as a result, the child still receives Medi-Cal for free for a while.

### ► 3. Share of Cost if you are under 65, not blind, not disabled

To find out your monthly Share of Cost, start with your gross monthly income. Include spouse or parent income, but not other people living in your house. Subtract from this total your monthly child care expenses (up to \$200 for a child under age 2 or up to \$175 for a child age 2 or older) and \$90 for work-related costs and any health insurance premiums paid by you. Then subtract the need level for your family size on the far right side of the chart on the top of page 41. The balance is your monthly Share of Cost.

### ► 4. Share of Cost if you are over 65, blind or disabled

To find out your monthly Share of Cost, start with your unearned income, and subtract \$20. Subtract any health insurance premiums paid by you. Subtract \$65 from your earned income and divide the balance of the earned income in half. Then subtract the need level

amount for your family size in the chart on top of page 42 from that amount.

## RESOURCE LIMITS

The resource limit does not apply to pregnant women for care related to their pregnancy, or to children under 19 in certain Medi-Cal programs. For anyone else, your family's resources must be below the following limits to get Medi-Cal:

# in Family	Resource Limit
1	\$2,000
2	\$3,000
3	\$3,150
4	\$3,300
5	\$3,450
6	\$3,600
7	\$3,750
8	\$3,900
9	\$4,050
10 or more	\$4,200

Some assets do not count. The home you live in, furnishings, personal items, and some non-term life insurance policies don't count. Other real estate with a value under a certain limit is not counted if it is sold or rented. For some Medi-Cal programs one car does not count, and for some programs a car is not counted if its value is under \$4,650.

### Section 1931(b) Medi-Cal

You are probably getting "Section 1931(b)" Medi-Cal if you are caring for a child or children under 19 and you are getting free Medi-Cal which is not based on a disability. For this program, the resource limit for either one or for two persons is \$3000. Otherwise the limits are the same as on the above chart. Like CalWORKs, the first car is not automatically exempt from the resource limit. A vehicle, regardless of its value, does not count that is worth less than \$1500 after deducting what you still owe on it and the cost of repairs and damages. Also, a vehicle worth less than \$4650 does not count. If worth more, the extra amount counts against the \$3000 resource limit. There are exemptions for vehicles used as part of employment and for transporting a family member with a disability.

## STAYING ON MEDI-CAL

### 1. Once a Year Eligibility Form for everyone

People receiving Medi-Cal must have their eligibility rechecked (or "redetermined") every 12 months. You get a form in the mail, must fill it out and send it back. You do not have to send in copies of documents with your redetermination form. Until their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, children only have to report changes in income or who is in the household at this annual eligibility review.

### 2. Mid-Year Status Report for Adults

Medi-Cal law has changed and adults now must fill out a new form – the Mid-Year Status Report (MSR) – in order to keep Medi-Cal. Some groups of people do not have to fill out the MSR: a child under 21; the parent or guardian of a CalWORKs child; pregnant women, or a woman in the Breast or Cervical Cancer Program. The report should come about 5 months after you start getting Medi-Cal and must be returned to the Medi-Cal office by the date on the form.

### 3. Reporting Changes for Adults

Adults must report to DPSS any significant changes that may affect your eligibility within 10 days after the change. You must quickly report to your worker if you move, begin making more money (or less money), someone moves in or out of your house or you are pregnant. Even if you report a change that hurts your eligibility, you have important rights before the DPSS cuts your Medi-Cal.

### 4. Losing welfare does not mean that you lose Medi-Cal

CalWORKs and Medi-Cal have different eligibility rules. While it is true that you automatically get Medi-Cal when you participate in CalWORKs, leaving CalWORKs (for example because of a sanction, time-limit, or failure to comply with GAIN, RITE or REP rules) does not mean that you lose free Medi-Cal. If you lose your Medi-Cal after you leave welfare, contact the Health Consumer Center at (800) 896-3203 or Legal Aid for help and advice.

### 5. Transitional Medi-Cal

You might be eligible for up to 1 year of free (no Share of Cost) Medi-Cal (called transitional Medi-Cal or TMC) if you lost CalWORKs or Section 1931(b) Medi-Cal because you started to work and are earning too much money. To be eligible, you must have received CalWORKs or Section 1931(b) Medi-Cal during at least 3 of the last 6 months, and you lost CalWORKs or Section 1931(b) Medi-Cal because you started making too much money.

During the first six months of TMC if you are eligible, you and your family qualify for free Medi-Cal no matter how much income you have. After that, you remain eligible for TMC if your income is not more than the limits in the chart on the next page.

Adults can get TMC for up to one year and children can receive it for up to 6 months. There is no lifetime limit on TMC. If your income goes down you can qualify again for regular Medi-Cal. If it then goes up again you can return to TMC with new time limits. When children reach the 6 month limit, they are eligible for Healthy Families and should be "bridged" into the Healthy Families Program. (See pg. 48 "Health Care for Children")

There are no "resource" or property limits for TMC. TMC requires regular reports like a QR-7 for cash aid, but on a different form.

#### Income Limit for Transitional Medi-Cal

# in Family	Gross Income Limit
1	\$1,476
2	\$1,978
3	\$2,481
4	\$2,984
5	\$3,486
6	\$3,989
7	\$4,491
8	\$4,994
9	\$5,497

### 6. Four Month Continuing Medi-Cal

If you lose CalWORKs or Section 1931(b) because you start getting more child or spousal support, an adult can get free Continuing Medi-Cal, regardless of your income, but just for 4

months. It is important that you turn in a CW-7 or any other change reporting form explaining why you are leaving CalWORKs or Section 1931(b), to help make sure you get Transitional or Continuing Medi-Cal. The children's free Medi-Cal continues until their next scheduled annual redetermination, perhaps as long as a year, because of "CEC" (Continuous Eligibility for Children.)

► **7. Former Foster Children**

If you were in Foster Care on your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, you are automatically eligible for free Medi-Cal until you turn 21, even if your income goes up. If you lose Medi-Cal, call the Health Consumer Center at (800) 896-3203 for assistance.

► **8. "Bridge" for children from Medi-Cal to Healthy Families**

If Medi-Cal determines that your child is no longer eligible for no-cost Medi-Cal because of a change in family circumstances (e.g. because your family income has increased) DPSS is supposed to continue your child's Medi-Cal for at least one month while the county sends the information (with your permission) to Healthy Families to see if your child qualifies for that program. This is called the "Bridging Program." You should not be required to apply separately for Healthy Families or to provide any information again, unless they need it to find you eligible. If your child's Medi-Cal is terminated instead of "bridged" to Healthy Families, call the Health Consumer Center at (800) 896-3203 for assistance.

► **9. Keep Medi-Cal until DPSS proves you are no longer eligible**

DPSS must send you a written notice of action at least 10 days before it cuts off, denies, delays or reduces your Medi-Cal benefits. The notice explains the action and your right to ask for a fair hearing. (See pg. 64 Hearings and Complaints).

Once you start getting Medi-Cal benefits, you have a special right called redetermination. That means that when a change occurs affecting your Medi-Cal eligibility, DPSS must determine whether you are eligible for any other type of Medi-Cal, before sending you a notice of action cutting off your benefits.

They have to look in your available records, including CalWORKs, Food Stamps and other records for any missing necessary information. DPSS can send you a form that only asks for the information it needs; it cannot ask for information it already has or does not need to determine whether you are still eligible for Medi-Cal.

DPSS must give you at least 20 days to complete the form. If you do not send in a completed form, DPSS will send you a written notice of action that you will lose your Medi-Cal benefits. If your form is incomplete, DPSS must first try to contact you by telephone and writing to get missing information before it cuts your benefits. If you send in your form within 30 days of being cut from Medi-Cal, and that information shows you were still eligible, DPSS must restore Medi-Cal benefits without making you reapply.

► **10. If You Move**

You should have no interruption of service if you move within California. Keep using your Medi-Cal card. If you move to a new county, report if you can to DPSS and also to the welfare office in the new county, and the counties will manage the transferring of your case.

► **11. If You Were Billed Twice**

The doctor or health service provider cannot bill both you and Medi-Cal for the same care. If you think your doctor has billed you unfairly, you should contact the Health Consumer Center at (800) 896-3203 or Legal Aid.

► **12. Lost or Stolen Cards**

Notify your worker and a replacement card will be sent to you. If there is a medical emergency, you may receive a written notice of eligibility at your welfare office.

**HOW DO I CHOOSE MY CARE?**

There are two ways to receive your medical care under Medi-Cal: "Fee for service" (regular Medi-Cal), or HMO ("Health Maintenance Organization.") These are also called "health plans" or "managed care." Most participants must enroll in a HMO.

Medi-Cal recipients who may, but do not have to, enroll in an HMO include:

- People who get Medi-Cal through SSI
- Children in foster care or the Adoption Assistance Program
- Recipients over 65 years old
- Certain pregnant women
- People who get health care from an Indian Health Service Program.

Medi-Cal recipients who cannot enroll in a Medi-Cal HMO

- People who get Medi-Cal only for emergency and pregnancy related services (restricted Medi-Cal)
- Recipients with a Share of Cost or who also have private insurance, CHAMPUS PRIME HMO, or Medicare HMO.

► **1. Fee for Service (Regular Medi-Cal)**

In regular Medi-Cal you can use any doctor, clinic, hospital, pharmacy or other provider willing to accept Medi-Cal. You must tell the doctor or clinic that you have Medi-Cal before you get care. If you don't, the provider can legally bill you for all services that you get. A provider cannot accept your Medi-Cal for some part of your care and then charge you money and refuse to bill Medi-Cal for other parts of your care, unless that provider does not provide that service under Medi-Cal. For example, a doctor cannot accept your Medi-Cal for your prenatal care but then refuse to bill Medi-Cal for your blood tests and try to charge you.

► **2. HMO ("health plans")**

When you join a HMO, you must see the doctors, pharmacists and hospitals that are part of your plan. You must select a HMO and a primary care provider that is in the HMO. Unless you have an emergency, you must get approval for all care from your primary care provider. The HMO will receive money each month for your health care even if you don't get services. The HMO is responsible for providing or making arrangements for you to get all Medi-Cal covered services. Every one is supposed to be seen by a doctor within 4 months of joining the HMO.

After you are in a HMO, you may still use your Benefits Identification Card (BIC) to get family planning, dental, and mental health services outside of the HMO.

### 3. Dental care

Dental care is fee-for-service in Los Angeles unless you choose to join a dental plan. In fee-for-service, you must get all your dental services from a dental provider willing to accept Medi-Cal. If you decide to join a dental plan, you must select a primary care dentist and you must start all dental care with this dentist.

### 4. How to Choose a HMO

When you first enroll in Medi-Cal you will get a packet in the mail from the state. The packet will contain a "Medi-Cal Choice Form" that must be filled out with the doctor and HMO for each person in the family who is required to choose a HMO. You should get a big book with all the doctors, doctor groups and HMO choices. Fill it out the "choice form" and send it back to Health Care Options within 30 days. Keep the pink copy of the form for your records. It's a good idea to send the form by certified mail. If you don't complete the form and return it within 30 days, the state will choose a HMO for you that may not be convenient for you. To get a packet or more information, call Health Care Options at (800) 430-4263 or (800) 430-9009. The TDD line for hearing impaired is (800) 430-7077.

Consult with any health care provider you already have and want to keep seeing before choosing a plan. Also ask if you can keep going to the clinic, pharmacy and hospital you want. You and your other family members may choose to join the same HMO and chose the same doctor, called a "Primary Care Provider" (PCP), or you can choose different HMOs and PCPs.

Once you select a HMO, you will be mailed a plastic HMO membership card to use when you need medical services. Enrollment usually takes 30-45 days. If you or your family need medical care before you receive the HMO card, you may use the regular Medi-Cal card, or if you are already in a HMO and are just switching plans, use your current HMO until you are told you are in the new HMO.

People in the groups that may, but do not have to, enroll in a HMO will now automatically get a packet in the mail even though they do not have to join a plan. You should not be asked to make a choice of a HMO when you apply or at your redetermination. People who are already in an HMO when you apply for Medi-Cal should not get a packet in the mail.

You may be asked to attend a "Health Care Options" talk. You do not have to go. If you go, you do not have to choose a plan that day unless you want to.

You will get a second envelope in the mail about dental managed care. It is optional; you don't have to enroll. You can still use your Medi-Cal card with any dentist who accepts Denti-Cal.

### 5. Medical Exemptions

Most participants must enroll in a HMO; unless you apply for and receive a "medical exemption" in order to keep regular fee-for-service Medi-Cal. You may get an exemption if you have a "complex medical condition" such as pregnancy, kidney disease, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, cancer, asthma, or multiple sclerosis, or if you are in an Adult Day Health Care Program or if you receive skilled nursing services at your home. If one of your doctors or clinics that treat you is not part of any available offered HMO and you would lose them if you joined a HMO, you may qualify. You and your doctor must fill out a form (which is in the packet that you get in the mail) and send it to the state.

You may also call Health Care Options with any questions. If you have trouble getting a Medical Exemption, call the Health Consumer Center at (800) 896-3203 for assistance.

The exemption is good for up to one year, then you will get another packet in the mail to complete, or you must ask for another medical exemption.

### 6. Fees

In both HMOs and regular Medi-Cal, you may have to pay \$1.00 for prescriptions and many services unless you are pregnant, over age 64, or under age 19. Also, there may be a charge of \$5.00 for non-emergency care given in the emergency room. The state may increase these charges next year.

### 7. Hearings, Grievances, and Leaving a HMO

If your HMO denies services or you are not satisfied with the services, you have many options. You can file a grievance with your HMO. Your HMO must tell you how to file a grievance. The HMO must resolve your grievance within 30 days, or less if you have an emergency. If you are still not satisfied complain in writing to the Department of Managed Health Care HMO Help Center, IMR Unit, 980 Ninth Street, Suite 500, Sacramento, CA 95814-2725. Their phone number is (888) HMO-2219, TDD (877) 688-9891. Or you can go to their website at [www.hmohelp.ca.gov](http://www.hmohelp.ca.gov).

Mandatory participants in HMOs can change to a different HMO for any reason. Voluntary participants can change HMOs or can go back to regular Medi-Cal for any reason. To change or leave a HMO, call Health Care Options at (800) 430-4263 and request a "choice form."

If you want help with complaints and grievances call an advocacy group for assistance or call the Health Care Consumer Center at (800) 896-3203 or the Managed Care Ombudsman (888) 452-8609. the Department of Managed Care at (888) HMO-2219 or the Medi-Cal Managed Care Ombudsman at (888) 452-8609. You can also find information online at [www.dmh.ca.gov/gethelp/complaint.asp](http://www.dmh.ca.gov/gethelp/complaint.asp).

You can call (800) 400-0815 if your HMO gives you problems. If your HMO is denying you care because it does not think it is medically necessary, but you disagree, you can ask for an independent medical review. An independent medical review is done by a group of doctors and professionals who do not work or accept money from your HMO.

You have the right to ask for a fair hearing. (see page 62, "Hearings and Complaints.") While waiting for a state hearing, the HMO must continue to provide medical services to you.

### 8. Mental Health Managed Care

Mental Health services for Medi-Cal recipients are also provided through a managed care system operated through "Local Mental Health Plans" in each county. For further discussion of these services (see page 51 "Mental Health.. Services.")

## MEDI-CAL FOR TEENS

If you are between 12 and 21 years old, you can apply for “Minor Consent Services” to get free and confidential medical treatment without parental consent related to:

- Drug or alcohol abuse (except methadone treatment)
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Pregnancy and abortion
- Family planning
- Outpatient mental health (not overnight in a hospital)
- Sexual abuse.

If you are under 21 and living with your parents, or temporarily away such as in school, you may apply for Medi-Cal to cover those specific services without your parents’ consent or knowledge.

Your parents won’t be required to give information about their income or resources or pay toward the medical services, unless you want Medi-Cal for services other than those listed above.

The DPSS won’t tell your parents or send Medi-Cal mailings to your home without your permission. “Minor Consent Services” are available regardless of your immigration status. They provide more services than Medi-Cal that is restricted due to immigration status.

To apply, fill out the regular Medi-Cal application and another short form for Minor Consent Services at DPSS or with a DPSS Worker at the site where you are receiving care. You will have to fill out a new short form each month you need treatment, except for mental health services. For that, you need a letter from a mental health professional explaining that you meet certain conditions for getting mental health services and how long you will need treatment. You will still have to complete the short form each month to update your eligibility.

If you already get Medi-Cal through your parents’ case, you may already have a plastic Medi-Cal card. But don’t use the plastic card for Minor Consent services.



# Health Care for Children

## HEALTHY FAMILIES PROGRAM

Healthy Families is a program that provides low-cost health insurance for many low-income children. With Healthy Families, a family pays a small amount each month to receive health care for their children.

### 1. Am I Eligible?

To be eligible the applicants must be low-income, uninsured California resident children ages 1 to 19, who are not eligible for free Medi-Cal (Medi-Cal without a "Share of Cost") and who have had no other health insurance. The child must be without employer-based or private health insurance for at least three months before the application, with some exceptions. The child can obtain three months of retroactive Medi-Cal prior to becoming eligible for Healthy Families, or can be on "Share of Cost" Medi-Cal. Eighteen-year-olds can apply on their own. The child stays eligible for 12 months continuously once it is decided that he or she is eligible, even if the income changes.

### 2. Income Limits

To be eligible for Healthy Families, the monthly income must be between the amounts in the chart below.

#### Healthy Families Monthly Income Limits: April 2008 to April 2009

Family Size	Birth to Age 1	Age 1-5	Age 6-18
1	\$1,735 - \$2,167	\$1,154 - \$2,167	\$868 - \$2,167
2	\$2,335 - \$2,917	\$1,553 - \$2,917	\$1,168-\$2,917
3	\$2,935 - \$3,667	\$1,952 - \$3,667	\$1,468-\$3,667
4	\$3,535- \$4,417	\$2,351 - \$4,417	\$1,768-\$4,417
5	\$4,135 - \$5,167	\$2,750 - \$5,167	\$2,068-\$5,167
6	\$4,735 - \$5,917	\$3,149 - \$5,917	\$2,368-\$5,917

Each additional member: +\$750 to the number on the right hand side.

The cost of the items you own ("resources") does not count against you.

\$250 per family per year, so keep the receipts.

### 3. Residency Requirements

You must sign a statement that each person who is applying for Healthy Families intends to stay in California with no plans to leave. Immigrant children can be eligible if they are "qualified" immigrants (see page 58 "Guide for Non Citizens.")

### 5. What Are the Benefits?

The program offers health, dental, mental health, and vision services. You can't get the same amount and kind of services from Healthy Families as you can from Medi-Cal, especially for mental health and substance abuse treatment. If your family is eligible for Medi-Cal with a Share of Cost you may have "Share of Cost" Medi-Cal and Healthy Families at the same time.

### 4. What Does It Cost?

Depending on your income and which plan you choose, you will pay a premium of \$4 to \$15 per month for each child and you will never pay for more than 3 children, for a total monthly premium between \$12 and \$45, depending on the income group you are in no matter how many children are covered. If a family falls in the higher income group, they will receive a report in the middle of the year to see if their income has dropped and they can pay less. Also, if a family pays three months of premiums in advance, they will get a fourth month of coverage for free. If a family pays 9 months in advance, they get 12 months of coverage. Except for the first month, you can pay your premiums at Rite Aid stores.

### 6. How Do I Apply?

You may get an application form at any DPSS Office, or call (800) 880-5305 for a packet.

#### Keeping Healthy Families While Your Child Qualifies for Medi-Cal

If your child is found to be ineligible for Healthy Families at the annual re-determination (e.g. because your family income goes down) your child should keep Healthy Families coverage for up to 2 months while the information is sent to the county (with your permission) to determine if your child is eligible for no-cost Medi-Cal. This is called the "Bridging Program." You should not be required to apply separately for Medi-Cal or to provide any information again, unless the county needs more information from you to determine eligibility.

There is also a \$5 co-payment for most outpatient services such as doctor's office visits, but not for preventive services like immunizations and dental check-ups. However, there is a "cap" or upper limit for these co-payments of

**OTHER PROGRAMS**

**▶ 1. Healthy Kids and Kaiser Permanente**

**Healthy Kids** is provided through the LA Care Health Plan for children from birth through age 18 who do not qualify for no-cost Medi-Cal or for Healthy Families. Family income must be below the limits in the chart below. There are low-cost monthly premiums of \$4 or \$6 and small payments at visits. You only pay for two children monthly no matter how many are enrolled. Call (888) 452-5437 for more information.

Healthy Kids Eligibility	
Family Size	Monthly Income
1	\$2,553
2	\$3,423
3	\$4,293
4	\$5,163
5	\$6,033
6	\$6,903

Children under age 19 with no medical coverage who are not eligible for health care coverage that is paid for, in any part, by an employer and who are not eligible for no-cost Medi-Cal or Healthy Families may be eligible for **Kaiser Permanente Cares for Kids** Child Health Plan. There are no immigration requirements. The monthly cost is \$8 or \$15. and there are some copayment costs for visits. Dental, mental health and vision care are included. The number is (800) 255-5053.

**▶ 2. Child Health and Disability Program (CHDP)**

CHDP provides free early and regular health exams for many low-income children up to 19 years of age; Medi-Cal eligible children up to 21 years of age; and Head Start and State preschool children. There are no immigration requirements, however, visits are allowed based on a "periodicity schedule", with some exceptions for physical exams needed for school, for children in foster care and for problems that might occur between screenings. Children in Medi-Cal Managed Care can get more screenings than the state's schedule allows. CHDP offers physical exams, immunizations, vision and hearing testing, lead poisoning testing, nutritional check, teeth and gum check, and some lab tests including sickle cell. For more information call (800) 993-2437.

A new program called the "**CHDP Gateway To Health Insurance**" allows children who go to a CHDP provider for a health exam or well child check-up to pre-enroll in full no-cost Medi-Cal temporarily if they agree to complete a simple confidential (electronic) application at the provider's office. If your child qualifies for no-cost Medi-Cal after completing the simple application, your child will receive no-cost Medi-Cal temporarily, beginning on the first day of the month that the simple application is submitted and ending the last day of the following month. Also, if you request

it on the application, a Joint Medi-Cal/Healthy Families mail-in application will be sent to you automatically. If you apply for Medi-Cal and/or Healthy Families for your child during the Medi-Cal pre-enrollment period, the no cost Medi-Cal coverage will continue until a final Medi-Cal or Healthy Families determination is made.

Infants under one year of age who are born to a mother on Medi-Cal at the time of birth, and who lived with their mother in the month of birth are eligible for "deemed eligibility" to have full-scope Medi-Cal until their first birthday without filling out the additional Joint Medi-Cal/Healthy Families application.

**▶ 3. California Children's Services**

Children's Medical Services (or California Children's Services) case managers and provides health services for children up to age 21 with eligible major medical conditions caused by accidents, diseases, and congenital or developmental disabilities, whether or not the children also have Medi-Cal. Undocumented children may qualify if their parents live in Los Angeles County. For eligibility information, call (800-288-4584). Service providers are all over the county.

Children enrolled in Healthy Families are automatically eligible, but must be referred and screened for acceptance. Family income must be less than \$40,000 a year, or may be greater if their CCS-related medical expenses are expected.

There is no family income limit for children who need services to confirm a CCS eligible medical condition; or were adopted with a known CCS eligible medical condition; or are applying only for services through the Medical Therapy Program; or are Medi-Cal beneficiaries, full scope, no share of cost; or are Healthy Families subscribers.



# Free and Low Cost Health Care

In an emergency, it is a legal and ethical duty for every clinic or hospital emergency room to provide emergency care, regardless of immigration status or ability to pay. Know your rights and ask for the help you need.

## FREE AND LOW COST HOSPITALS AND CLINICS

### ▶ 1. County Hospitals and Clinics

**County Health Dept.**  
(Services, Referrals to Clinics, or Complaints)  
(800) 427-8700  
Internet : [www.ladhs.org](http://www.ladhs.org), click on "clinics" and then click on "Health Services Directory."

**County Hospitals:**  
**Harbor-UCLA**  
1000 W. Carson St., Torrance 90509  
(310) 222-2345  
**High Desert**  
44900 N. 60th St. W., Lancaster 93536  
(661) 948-8581  
**Martin Luther King/Drew**  
12021 S. Wilmington Ave., LA 90059  
(310) 668-2622  
**Los Angeles County/USC**  
1200 N. State St., LA 90033  
(213) 226-2622  
**Olive View**  
14445 Olive View Dr., Sylmar 91342  
(818) 364-1555  
**Rancho Los Amigos**  
7601 E. Imperial Highway, Downey  
90242 (877) 726-2461

**Comprehensive Health Centers:**  
**Mid Valley**  
7515 Van Nuys Blvd. Van Nuys 91405  
(818) 947-4000  
**El Monte**  
10953 Ramona Blvd., El Monte 91731  
(626)579-8463  
**H. Claude Hudson**  
2829 S. Grand Ave., LA 90007  
(213) 744-4716  
**Hubert Humphrey**  
5850 S. Main Street, LA 90003  
(213) 846-4312  
**Long Beach**  
1333 Chestnut, Long Beach 90813  
**Edward R. Roybal**  
245 S. Fetterly Ave., LA 90022  
(323) 780-2373

### ▶ 2. Veterans

(877) 222-8387 Information on a full range of medical benefits available to veterans, regardless of your income and even if the health problem is not related to military service.

### ▶ 3. Metro LA Free/Low Cost Clinics

**Altamed** (323) 725-8751  
**Chintown Service Center**  
(213) 808-1718  
**Clinica Romero** (213) 989-7700  
**East LA Health Clinic** (323) 261-2171  
**Hollywood-Sunset** (323) 660-7959  
**Homeless Health Care** (213) 744-0724  
**LA Free Clinic** (323) 653-8622  
**Safe Harbor Women's Clinic**  
(213) 622-4073

### ▶ 4. Dental, Eye Care, and Hearing

**Harbor-UCLA Dental** (310) 222-3493  
**LA Free Dental Clinic** (323) 653-1990  
**Uninsured Dental** (323) 980-9600  
**Queenscare Echo Park** (213) 380-7298  
(Eye care)  
**St. John's Center** (213) 749-0847  
**Agency on Deafness** (323) 478-8000  
**Hearing Aid HotLine** (800) 521-5247  
**Hear NOW** (800) 648-4327

## GETTING FREE OR LOW-COST CARE

The County provides free or low-cost health services to people who can show proof that they live in L.A. County including low-income people who are not eligible for Medi-Cal or who have medical expenses that Medi-Cal, Medicare, and private insurance will not fully cover.

One payment plan is called the Prepayment/ATP ("Ability To Pay") plan. Another is ORSA (Outpatient Reduced-cost Simplified Application). The county has also contracted with over 100 community clinics called "partners" who have to provide free clinic "outpatient" care for you if your income is very low (see charts in next column.) If you qualify for free care, you should

not be forced to pay any fee by a county clinic or hospital. You should receive the same quality of care as those who pay.

### ▶ 1. Do I Qualify for Free Care, ORSA, or ATP?

You can get **free clinic care** if you get General Relief, or through ORSA, if your monthly take home pay is below the following chart:

# in Family	Net Income
1	\$1,135
2	\$1,521
3	\$1,908
4	\$2,295
5	\$2,681
6	\$3,068

If your income is higher than these amounts and you receive care at a County facility you may have to pay a reduced rate for services, depending upon your income.

For hospital care, you must apply each time you are admitted to a county hospital. Your application may be used for a stay of up to 30 days. If you are hospitalized longer, you must complete another application.

You can get free **hospital care** if you get General Relief, or through ATP if your monthly take home pay is below the following:

# in Family	Net Income
1	\$616
2	\$766
3	\$951
4	\$1,116
5	\$1,276
6	\$1,431

If your monthly income is higher than that shown on the tables, you will have to pay some money for services. The higher your income is, the more you will have to pay.

► **2. How Do I Apply for ORSA, Free Care or ATP?**

**ORSA:** If you just need clinic or “out-patient” care, at a county clinic, it’s best to use ORSA. ORSA won’t pay for “inpatient” services, but it pays for all outpatient care, including medicines, tests and lab work. For ORSA, you must apply annually. The screener will figure out what you must pay, if anything, for each visit.

The application process is only one page asking about family size and income (and in some cases, property and expenses). However, you don’t need to bring documents to show proof of the information; you just sign a form stating that what you say is true.

Later, random patients will be asked to provide documents to prove income and resources. Be sure to save your income and resource documents for at least one year after you apply. ORSA is good for one year, and at the end of one year you will have to apply again. There is a mail-in renewal process (unlike ATP).

**Free Care:** Free care is offered at clinics that are private, but are partnered with the county. You see the screener at that clinic. At those clinics you can sign a simple form called a “Certificate of Indigency” (COI). If you qualify for free care it is good for 6 months.

**ATP:** For hospital care you have to use ATP. ATP pays for both outpatient and hospital services but you have to fill out more paperwork and documentation.

To apply for ATP or ORSA, you must make an appointment for a financial screening at a county hospital or clinic that has an ATP worker. Sometimes you will be able to be seen the same day, but you may have to wait. Be sure to tell the worker if your need for care is urgent. You do not have to wait for your financial screening to get care. If you appear to qualify for Medi-Cal, you will be asked to apply and either get a decision that you are not eligible or are only eligible for restricted benefits before an ORSA or ATP application will be taken.

Be very firm about your right to apply for free care and be sure to ask for ORSA at the county clinics or the COI at private “partner” clinics. If it is your first visit to a county hospital or clinic, they should give you a written notice regard-

ing available plans, including ORSA and ATP, to reduce the cost of your medical care. If you do not receive this notice at your first visit, ask for one.

If the worker or the clinic screener you see tells you that you do not qualify for ORSA, ATP or free care and you do not agree, ask to meet with the worker’s supervisor within 10 working days. If you were found ineligible before, you may reapply. If you are unable to keep your screening appointment, call the worker immediately or you may be billed for the full cost of any treatment you have already received.

Even if you do not qualify for ORSA or ATP, you still have a chance to pay a low-cost fee for the outpatient services within seven days.

► **3. Pre-Payment Plan**

The Pre-Payment Plan covers cost of care but often does not cover your prescriptions (however, you can get emergency prescriptions, public health medicines, and medicines provided in the clinic at no cost).

You do not have to prove your income, family size, or resources if you pay the following standard fees within seven days of treatment. But you do need to show proof that you live in L.A. County. If you do not pay these fees, you will be billed for the much higher full amount cost of care:

- \$50 at all County Comprehensive Care Centers, County Hospital Outpatient Clinics, and Public Health Centers; for pre-natal visits, the first seven cost \$50 and remaining visits are free
- \$65 at County Comprehensive Health Center Urgent Care Centers
- \$100 at County Hospital Emergency Rooms
- \$300 at Hospital Outpatient Surgery Clinics
- Most Community Clinic “Partners” also charge on a sliding scale for those patients who don’t qualify for free care.

► **4. What Else Should I Know?**

- If you have any questions about your care, need referrals, or have a complaint, call the County Health line: (800) 427-8700. You can also call the Health Consumer Hotline: (800) 896-3203.
- If you receive free or low cost medical care, your medicines are free.

- Non-citizens with restricted Medi-Cal coverage who live in L.A. County can apply for ORSA or ATP to cover non-emergency care.
- Before using ATP, you must use any other medical benefits you have such as private insurance, or outpatient Medicare. ATP will cover your deductible for private insurance, but will not cover inpatient Medicare deductibles and Medi-Cal “Share of Cost”.
- Foreign visitors with a valid visa can receive emergency services at County hospitals and clinics, but are not entitled to ATP, ORSA, Pre-Pay or PPP benefits for routine medical services.

► **5. Every Woman Counts Breast Cancer Early Detection Program (BCEDP)**

BCEDP provides free mammograms and breast cancer related services for all women age 50 and over (age 40 and over for those at higher risk) if your family income is below 200% of poverty. The services are provided at doctors’ offices, clinics and hospitals all over Los Angeles County. Call Partnered for Progress at (800) 511-2300.

**MENTAL HEALTH**

If you believe you need mental health services, you should call the Local Mental Health Plan’s 24-hour “Access Center,” at (800) 854-7771, which can screen and evaluate your request for mental health services and can refer you to a mental health provider. County Mental Health authorizes and can provide treatment including Medi-Cal “specialty mental health services” for all Medi-Cal recipients.

County Mental Health also authorizes and provides Medi-Cal recipients with other services to help them live and function in the community, including “EPSDT” supplemental services for children on Medi-Cal.

If you do not have Medi-Cal or other health insurance, you can receive mental health services from County Mental Health. You are charged a fee based on a sliding scale, depending on your ability to pay. Therapists can request that the fee be waived if the fee will cause stress and hardship.

## DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

Children and adults who are disabled due to mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, or who have conditions like those of mentally retarded persons, or who are high-risk children up to age 3, may qualify for health care services through regional centers.

California residents who are undocumented may be eligible. To apply call one of the listed regional centers and ask for "Intake." If you are found not eligible for these services, they must explain why.

East L.A.	(626) 299-4700
Harbor (Torrance)	(310) 540-1711
Mid-Wilshire area	(213) 383-1300
Sepulveda	(818) 778-1900
San Gabriel/Pomona	(800) 822-7504
South Central L.A.	(213) 734-1884
Culver City	(310) 258-4000

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT

There are several hundred alcohol and drug treatment programs all over LA County, offering both outpatient and residential treatment. To find the a program close to you, call 1-800-564-6600. You will reach a local Community Assessment Service Center (CASC) for an appointment to find the right treatment program. If this is an emergency, please call 911. Many alcohol and drug treatment programs are full, so you may be put on a waiting list. Program costs vary.

**Homeless Health Care** (213) 744-0724 provides treatment services for homeless persons.

## SERVICES FOR SENIORS AND THE DISABLED

### 1. In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)

The In-Home Supportive Services Program (IHSS) helps pay for services to eligible persons to enable them to stay in their own homes. To be eligible you must be blind, disabled, or over

65, and need these services so you can remain safely in your home. IHSS is an alternative to out-of-home care such as nursing homes or board and care facilities.

Services which can be authorized include personal care, meal preparation, laundry, grocery shopping, housecleaning, transportation to medical appointments and protective supervision for the mentally impaired. Services may sometimes be provided by a spouse or by the parent of a minor, with significant restrictions.

You may qualify for IHSS if you live at home and need the services to remain there, and one of the following applies:

- You receive SSI or CAPI, even if you are working
- You do not receive SSI but meet the SSI medical requirements, except for income or immigration status.
- You do not receive SSI but meet the disability or age requirements of the SSI program.

Someone now in an institution may also qualify if he or she could safely live at home if IHSS services were provided.

You must also have limited income and resources (\$2000 for one person and \$3000 for a couple, not counting your home or an automobile used for work or medical appointments).

If your income is too high to meet the SSI requirements, you may still qualify for IHSS but will have to pay a "Share of Cost". Some IHSS recipients in certain Medi Cal programs will have no Share of Cost even if their income is too high.

If you do not currently receive SSI or Medi-Cal, your application for IHSS will be forwarded to Medi-Cal to make sure that you qualify.

IHSS applications are taken by telephone. You, or someone calling for you, may apply by calling toll free from anywhere in L.A. County at (888) 944-4477. A social worker will make an appointment to come to your home to see if you are eligible and determine what services IHSS can provide you. Within 30 days, you should receive a notice telling you if you qualify and stating the tasks and the number of hours approved. It will take longer if you have to get Medi-Cal approved first. Be sure

to tell the worker about any special problems or personal needs you may have so that you get enough help.

If you are approved for IHSS, you hire someone to perform the services. You are considered that person's employer. You have to hire, train, supervise and if necessary, fire this person (called the IHSS provider).

IHSS providers must receive at least \$9 per hour). The state issues the checks for provider payments. You and your provider must complete, sign, date, and mail in the time sheets that they send you, to verify that the work was done.

Severely impaired persons may be eligible for an advance payment to pay a provider. Ask the worker doing the assessment.

For help with problems or questions, or for information on how to start an appeal about the number of hours approved for the IHSS worker, call the IHSS Ombudsman at (888) 678-4477.

### 2. Long Term Care

If you are caring for someone that a doctor has recommended for 24-hour care by skilled nurses for a long period of time, call the Long Term Care District at (626) 854-4987. They make referrals to board and care homes, skilled nursing facilities, psychiatric hospitals, and other places where people live if they need constant skilled care that they cannot get at home.

The State Central Registry at (800) 451-2273 will give you three referrals to long term care facilities.

[www.californiaregistry.com](http://www.californiaregistry.com)

There is a difference between board and care facilities and nursing facilities. Medi-Cal will pay for long term care in a nursing facility but not in a board and care home.

Before you send someone to any kind of long term care facility, you should visit the places and inspect them thoroughly. If you are not happy with the referrals you can call again for more.



# Medicare

Medicare is a federal health insurance program. There are three parts to the program: "Part A" (hospital insurance), "Part B" (medical insurance), and "Part D" (prescription drug insurance). The general information number is (800) 633 4227.

## AM I ELIGIBLE?

### 1. Part A : Hospital Insurance

You are automatically eligible for Medicare Part A free of charge if you are one of the following:

- You are 65 or older and are eligible for Social Security retiree benefits based on your own or your spouse's employment
- You are a federal employee who retired after 1982 and have enough quarters of coverage
- You have been receiving Social Security Disability Income payments for 24 consecutive months
- You are age 50 or older and are a disabled widow or widower who has received Social Security through your spouse for at least 2 years
- You have end-stage kidney disease, regardless of your age (you still must have worked enough quarters, however, even though you don't need to be 65.)
- You have Lou Gehrig's disease. (You still must have worked enough quarters, even though you don't need to be 65.)

People who are not automatically eligible for Medicare Part A may enroll voluntarily if you meet all of the following three requirements:

- You are 65 or older and
- You are a U.S. citizen, or a legal alien who has resided in the U.S. continuously for at least five years and
- You purchase both Parts A and B of Medicare, or you purchase Part B only. You may not purchase Part A only.

If you meet these three requirements for voluntary Part A, the amount of monthly premiums you will pay will depend upon how many work quarters you have on record with Social Security. If you have between 30 and 39 quarters, your monthly Part A premium in 2008 is \$233. If you have less than 30 quarters, your monthly Part A premium in 2008 is \$423.

### 2. Part B : Medical Insurance

If you meet the eligibility guidelines for Part A, you will be eligible for Part B. The Part B monthly premium is \$96.40 in 2008. The premium is higher if your income is \$80,000 or more for an individual and \$160,000 or more for a married couple.

If you have a low income and low resources, the state may pay for your Medicare premiums under Medi-Cal or the Medicare Savings Program.

## WHAT IS COVERED?

Medicare does not cover all types of health care needs, nor is it free of cost. It does NOT cover custodial care in a nursing home or at home, dental care, eyeglasses, and hearing aids. For the services that are covered by Medicare, you have to pay copayments.

### 1. Part A Coverage

Medicare will pay for hospital care if a doctor has decided that you need inpatient care and the hospital participates in Medicare

In 2008, you will pay a first day hospital deductible of \$1024 if you use days 1 through 60 in a benefit period.

If you remain in the hospital for days 61 to 90, you pay \$256 per day and Medicare pays the balance.

If you need hospital care after the 90th day, you draw on 60 extra "reserve" days which are not renewable and can be used only once. During that period you pay \$512 each day and Medicare pays the balance.

### 2. Skilled Nursing and Hospice Services

After a three day prior hospitalization, Medicare pays for daily (five to seven days per week) skilled nursing and therapy services in a Medicare certified skilled nursing facility. Medicare pays for the first 20 days in full and days 21-100 on a copayment basis of \$128 per day.

Medicare pays for skilled nursing and therapy services in the home if you are homebound and meet other require-

ments. There are no copayments for home health services.

Medicare hospice services are for persons who are terminally ill (patients must be recertified as "terminal" after 210 days of hospice care).

### 5. Part B Coverage

Part B pays 80% of "allowable" charges for a variety of outpatient care, including: doctor services, physical therapy, outpatient hospital services, medical equipment, and ambulance services. You pay the remaining 20%, an annual deductible of \$135 in 2008 and a 15% excess charge if the provider does not take Medicare assignment.

Medicare assignment is an agreement between your health care provider and Medicare. Doctors and other Part B providers who accept Medicare assignment agree to charge no more than the Medicare approved charge. This means that you can be charged only for the 20% copayment and any unpaid portion of the annual Part B deductible. Ask your provider if he or she will accept assignment.

### 6. Part D Coverage

Part D pays for outpatient drug coverage. To obtain Part D coverage, you must enroll into a Medicare Part D drug plan. There are two types of Part D plans: PDPs that only provide Medicare drug coverage and MA-PDs that provide Medicare Part A, B and D benefits. There is a standard Part D benefit package, however, not all Part D plans are the same. Each plan has its own drug formulary, cost sharing requirements and restrictions on coverage.

### 4. Medicare Advantage HMOs

A Medicare Advantage HMO is a health plan that enrolls Medicare beneficiaries who have both Medicare Parts A and B. Medicare HMOs must provide the same benefits as original Medicare. Persons who have Medicare end stage renal disease (kidney failure) cannot enroll into a Medicare HMO.

When you join a Medicare HMO, you must use the HMO for all of your medical care, except for emergencies or urgent care when you are out of the HMO's service area. Medicare pays the HMO a fixed monthly amount for each enrollee.

5. Other Information

Many people receive both Medicare and Medi-Cal. (see page 41 "Medi-Cal.") People who have both programs do not usually have to pay Medicare's monthly premiums, deductibles, or co-payments. If you have both Medicare and Medi-Cal, only see health care providers that take Medicare and Medi-Cal. If possible, show your insurance cards before you receive services.

You should also know the following:

- Always carry your Medicare card with you
- Contact the Social Security office immediately if you lose your card or don't get one

- Appeal any incorrect or unfair decision about your Medi-Cal benefits (see page 62 "Hearings and Complaints") For help with Medicare, you can call the Center for Health Care Rights (800) 824-0780. If you are not in Los Angeles County, you can call (800) 434-0222.

# Utility, Phone and TV

## UTILITY BILL ASSISTANCE

If you are applying for CalWORKs, you may be able to get "immediate need" money to pay for your delinquent utility bills. (See CalWORKs "Immediate Need" pg. 6)

If you are low-income and have overdue gas or electric bills, call:

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) (800) 433-4327 (866) 675-6623  
 PACE Environmental Services: (213) 989-3246  
 Catholic Charities (213) 251-3400  
 Energy HotLine (800) 342-5397  
 Energy Crisis Line (213) 353-1228  
 Labor Community Services (213) 427-9044  
 Legal Aid (utility cutoffs) (213) 640-3881  
 Maravilla (323) 989-3215  
 So Cal Edison Low Income (800) 736-4777  
 Utility Tax Unit (senior discount) (213) 978-3050  
 West Angeles Center (323) 733-8300

If you have a notice of termination from the Department of Water and Power (DWP), call (213) 481-4242 and ask about Project Angel Fund.

If you do not receive your water service from DWP, call your own water district and ask them if they provide any assistance for low-income customers.

## PHONE EQUIPMENT FOR HARD OF HEARING OR DISABLED PERSONS

The California Telephone Assistance Project provides special equipment you can get if you are hard of hearing or have another disability that makes it difficult for you to use a telephone. Call English TTY line (800) 806-4474 or Voice: (800) 806-1191

## DIGITAL TV CHANGE 2009

In February 2009 all TV broadcasts in the US will become digital. If you do not get cable or satellite TV you will be unable to get TV at all.

The government is providing vouchers (\$40 each, 2 per family) that you can use to buy equipment to allow your TV to continue receiving. You must apply before March 2009. Call 1(888)DTV-2009. Deaf or hard of hearing callers may dial 1(877)530-2634



# Housing

This chapter includes information on homeless shelters; low rent housing; renters and homeowners assistance; renter's rights; and utility bill assistance

## IF YOU ARE HOMELESS

**In The Hospital:** It is illegal for the hospital to drop you off in the street after your treatment if you are homeless. The hospital discharge staff must work with you to find a safe place to go.

**Families:** If you are homeless and receive or qualify for CalWORKs, you may be able to get Homeless Assistance Money, money to help prevent eviction, or help with your rent (page 15-16 CalWORKs).

**Singles:** If you are applying for General Relief you can get emergency shelter vouchers or eviction prevention money (page 29 General Relief.)

**Emergency Shelter:** There are over 300 privately run agencies in Los Angeles offering shelter, so we cannot list them all here. The following numbers and website are helpful:

•**Year Round and Winter Shelters :** (800) 548-6047 for shelter locations and pick-up points. These shelters are usually operated by the City and county of Los Angeles from the beginning of November until the end of March. Some of the shelters now operate all year long.

•(211) or call (800) 339-6993

•**Internet:** www.healthycity.org lists shelters and other resources by zip code for all L.A. County.

•Some agencies and shelters are able to offer **hotel or motel vouchers** if there is no other shelter option available, or if the shelter is full for the night.

The conditions at shelters vary widely. They can make their own rules about who can stay and how long they can stay. At the shelters which are funded by the government, such as the Winter Shelters, there has to be a written grievance procedure you can go through if you feel you have been abused or treated unfairly, or that conditions are not safe or healthy there.

## Access Centers

Call or visit one of the following Access Centers in L.A. County. These agencies operate shelters: they can also refer you to shelter or help you find permanent housing.

### Antelope Valley– Lancaster

Access Center (661) 949-1916

### Downtown L.A.: Weingart Center

506 S. Main (213) 689-2114

Women's Drop In Center

325 S. Los Angeles (213) 680-0600

VOA Drop-In

628 S. San Julian (213) 624-4663

### El Monte: ACHIEVE

(213)446-7167

### Hollywood and Mid City: PATH

340 N. Madison Ave (323) 644-2216

### Pomona: Pomona Access to Social Services

502 W. Holt (909)622-3806

### San Pedro: FISH

670 W. 9th St. (310) 831-0603

### San Fernando Valley- N. Hollywood:

LA Family Housing 7843 Lankershim

(818) 982-4091

### Santa Monica and West Side OPCC

1616 7th St. (310) 264-6646

St. Joseph's

373 Rose Ave. (310) 396-6468

### South Central L.A. Watts LCAC

958 E. 108th St. (323) 563-5654

Bridges of Hope

5701 S. San Pedro St. (323) 232-7956

South Central Drop In

5715 S. Broadway (213) 553-1823

### West Covina: One Stop

415 S. Glendora Ave (626) 918-1205

## Other Resources:

**Pasadena:** Union Station Foundation (626) 240-4550

**Long Beach:** New Image

(562) 983-7289

When you go to the Access Center or the shelter, ask if there is anyone who can help you find permanent housing. There are special programs that you can participate in that can help you get a permanent place to live that you can afford .

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

### ► 1. Project Based Section 8

The federal government offers a program called Section 8 which can provide housing that will cost you 30% of your income. There are two kinds of Section 8.

In "project based Section 8", people live in a building where they are charged 30% of their income for rent, even if their income is very low. Sometimes these projects advertise their availability and you can apply directly at the building. Most of the time, the way to get into this kind of housing is to go through special programs offered by community agencies that will help you get into housing when you finish the program.

The programs are available especially if:

- you are disabled
- you have a mental illness
- you have a substance abuse problem and want to get treatment for it
- you have children under 18 with you
- you are over 60 years old
- you have AIDS
- you are a veteran

You do not have to be homeless to get into these programs, but you must be low income. There is not very much low income housing available now, and there are waiting lists at many buildings. It may take you months but if you keep at it, you can get the housing you need. See the list of agencies at the start of this chapter and on the next page "Housing Resource Agencies".

### ► 2. Section 8 Vouchers

Section 8 vouchers are offered by the local government (the Housing Authority.) They allow you to stay in any apartment or house where the landlord will accept them, and you pay a limited amount of money you can afford for rent (usually 30% of your income). Section 8 voucher recipients are also protected by rent control and state laws. An owner also has to give you at least 90 days notice if they want to stop accepting section 8 vouchers. If your unit is protected by rent control, the owner must also comply with those requirements.

## Housing

When you receive a Section 8 voucher you will have a limited time to find a landlord who will accept it, or you will have to return the voucher. At this time not many landlords are accepting the vouchers.

Currently in Los Angeles no new people are being accepted onto the Section 8 waiting list. Ask a caseworker at one of the Access Centers about any special programs such as Shelter Plus Care that can provide you a Section 8 voucher when you complete the program. You can also call the Housing Authority in your city to see if any vouchers have become available.

All section 8 housing can be terminated by the government if you do not comply with the many program requirements. All these programs require you to provide a lot of information regarding family income and composition. It is important to document all your attempts to comply with the program requirements.

**Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA)**  
(323) 260-3300

**Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA)** (800) 555-4501.

**Long Beach Housing Authority:**  
(562) 570-6985

**Cities besides Los Angeles:** Check in the City Government pages at the front of the phone book to call the Housing Authority for your city, if there is one.

### ▶ 3. Housing Resource Agencies

The following groups can help or refer you to help of many kinds, including money to help you move in to a place or pay the rent: vouchers to stay in a motel if homeless: and programs that can lead to permanent housing

**Beyond Shelter** (Rental assistance, help with permanent housing, eviction prevention, motel vouchers)  
Downtown (213) 624-3370

Mid-Wilshire (213) 252-0772  
South Central (323) 357-7415

**AIDS Project Los Angeles**  
(213) 201-1600

**Catholic Charities** (motel vouchers)  
(213) 251-3400

**Hope Again** (323) 661-4004  
**Little Tokyo Service Center**  
(213) 473-1602

**Midnight Mission: Family Housing**  
(310) 677-9616

**St. Vincent dePaul** (323) 224-6280

**West Angeles Center** (323) 733-8300

### ▶ 4. Renter/Homeowner Assistance

Renter and Homeowner Assistance is a once a year payment from the state, based on a portion of the property taxes you pay through rent or mortgage. To qualify, you must be 62 or older, or blind, or disabled; you must have income of \$42,770 or less and you must have paid \$50 or more per month for rent in California in 2007. If you are a renter, the landlord must pay taxes in order for you to be eligible. A married couple is considered one renter; qualified renters who live together may each file a separate claim. Homeowners who lived in their own home as of Dec. 31, 2006, may also qualify for the 2007 claim year.

For 2007 Renter Assistance, you must file a form FTB 9000R, 2007 Renter Assistance Claim. The phone number for help is (800) 868-4171. Claims for 2007 must be filed by October 15, 2008. You may have to wait 15 weeks for your check. Depending on your income, you can receive anywhere from \$15 to \$347 in Renter Assistance or \$19 to \$472 in Homeowner Assistance.

### ▶ 5. Help for Homeowners In Danger of Foreclosure

Many people are in danger of losing their homes due to foreclosure. If you have this problem call 1 (888) 995-HOPE or go to [www.lanhs.org](http://www.lanhs.org) for advice. These numbers are groups that are approved by the government to offer advice. Be careful about signing any papers from groups you are not sure about.

## RENTER'S RIGHTS

### ▶ 1. Groups That Can Help

These groups can help with landlord/tenant problems:

**Coalition for Economic Survival**  
(213) 252-4411

**Eviction Defense Center (L.A.)**  
(800) 675-4332

**Inner City Law Center**  
(213) 891-2880

**Inquilinos Unidos (L.A.)**  
(213) 483-7497

**L.A. Community Action Network**  
(213) 228-0024 (downtown hotels)

**L.A. Housing Law Project**  
(213) 481-0134

**Tenant Action Center (Venice)**

(310) 399-9255

**Neighborhood Legal Services of L.A. County**

(818) 896-5211 (they also sponsor tenant's rights clinics)

**State Dept. of Consumer Affairs**

(800) 952-5210 (Basic booklets on landlord/tenant law)

## 2. Bad Conditions

If you have bad conditions in your unit you should tell your landlord, in writing, to fix the problems. If your landlord does not fix the problems call LAHD code enforcement to make complaint:

(866) 557-RENT

Under a new law all rental units in the City of Los Angeles must be inspected at least once within a three year period. The landlord may add one dollar to your rent to charge for this inspection.

You have the right to live in a place that has no holes in the wall, has working toilets, sinks, electricity, heat, no rats, roaches or other pests, and is clean.

The landlord has to fix things that don't work.

If the landlord will not take care of problems, call:

**County Health Department**  
(323) 881-4015

(problems like vermin, rats, roaches; lack of water, hot water, or heat; illegal utility shutoff, peeling paint or lack of screens)

**Housing Dept. Code Enforcement**

(213) 367-9411 (for Los Angeles; in other cities check the phone book) (for complaints regarding structural, plumbing and electrical)

**County Dept. of Consumer Affairs**  
(213) 974-1452

(withholding rent, repair and deduct, and abandonment remedies)

If your landlord will not fix problems, you should give written notice of the problem (remember to keep copies of everything relating to the problem), wait 30 days, and have proof of the problem.

If you want to repair the problem yourself and deduct the cost from your rent, it must be a problem affecting your health or safety, not just something you want to change in the apartment.

If a landlord has been cited by the Department of Building and Safety, Housing Department or Health Department, and repairs have not been made within 60 days, you can go to Small Claims

Court on your own, with no attorney. The small claims judge can order the landlord to make the repairs. Until the repairs are made, the court should let you withhold your rent. Ask the judge about Civil Code Section 1942.4 in cases like this.

If you are looking to recover money for damaged personal property, for repairs that you made, for bad conditions in your home, you can file a suit in small claims court for up to \$5,000. There's a small claims room at the Superior Court (110 N. Grand/111 N. Hill).

If your landlord will not fix serious problems, and you live in the City of Los Angeles, a program called HEP (Habitability Enforcement Program) may help you. Request forms at the Housing Department, (213) 367-9099, 111 N. Hope St., LA 90012. Hours are 8 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday. If you think conditions in your unit pose an imminent threat to your health or safety, ask the inspector to refer your case to the Urgent Repair Program.

### ▶ 3. Rent Control

If you live in the City of Los Angeles in a rental unit with two or more units on a lot, built on or before October 1, 1978, you are under "rent control" which gives you far greater protections than state law. You can only be evicted for good cause, and your rent can only be increased a set percentage (usually 3-5%). For more information see [www.lacity.org/lahd](http://www.lacity.org/lahd) or call 1-866-557-RENT. If your landlord illegally increases your rent, or reduces a service, you should call the above number and file a complaint.

If you are NOT in a rent control unit, your rent may be increased by any amount, with a 30 day written notice, if you are a month-to-month tenant. But if it is raised more than 10% in a year you must be given a 60 day written notice.

#### **Other Rent Control Information:**

**Santa Monica** (310) 458-8751

**West Hollywood** (323) 848-6450

**Other Cities:** Call your city hall or the information number listed in the city government section of your phone book (at the front of the white pages).

### ▶ 4. Evictions

If you are not in a rent control unit, you can be evicted for no reason, but you must be given a 30 day written notice, or if you have lived in the unit for a year or more, you must be given a 60 day written notice.

#### **Eviction Process:**

**1. Written Notice-** you must receive a notice in writing. Usually a 3 day notice to pay rent or quit, or a 30/60 day notice to vacate.

**2. Summons and Complaint-** This is the lawsuit. You have 5 days to answer it. If you are low income and a U.S. citizen or permanent resident you can call Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles 213 487-7609 for a free answer. If you do not qualify you can get a list of other low-cost resources.

**3. Sheriff's 5 day Notice to Vacate-** If you don't answer a summons and complaint or lose in court you will get a 5 day notice to vacate. If you do not move out you will be locked out by the sheriff sometime after 5 days.

You must be given a written notice in advance of eviction such as three days to pay or quit, or any change in rent, even if you have no written agreement with the landlord. The landlord also may have to give you a good reason before evicting you, and may have to pay you relocation assistance money.

If you are being evicted you can get help with your defense from the Unlawful Detainer Assistance Project of the L.A. Housing Law Project at (213) 613-2760. They are located at the L.A. Municipal Courthouse on 110 N. Grand Avenue. They will prepare a written response for you for free or at low cost, depending on your income. The service is also available in Spanish. Free advice is also available from Inner City Law Center, Eviction Defense Center, Bet Tzedek, and San Fernando Valley Neighborhood Legal Services, but you may have to wait longer.

### ▶ 5. Illegal Lockout

Landlords cannot lock you out without first going to court, even if you are late in paying rent. But, don't withhold rent until you call a lawyer first.

If your landlord locks you out without using the eviction process, you should immediately call LAPD. When the police respond to your call you should show them some proof that you are a tenant (receipts, ID, etc) and ask them to tell your landlord to let you back in. If the police officer does not respond you should call LAPD and ask to speak to the watch commander.

### ▶ 6. 28 Day Shuffle

If you have lived in a residential hotel for over 30 days you are a tenant and can only be evicted through a legal eviction. You should not be asked to move rooms or leave for a few days. If this happens you should file a complaint with the Los Angeles Housing Department (LAHD-(866) 557-RENT). If you are locked out you should call the police and show them your receipts. If you leave voluntarily, for example if you don't have enough money for rent, it is not a shuffle.

### ▶ 7. Housing Discrimination

If you are discriminated against in trying to buy property, rent, or use services provided to other tenants, because of your race, color, religion, sex, nationality, handicap, or because you are married, or you are an unmarried couple, or have children, call the:

#### **Southern California Housing Rights Center**

(800) 477-5977

#### **Department of Fair Employment and Housing**

(800) 884-1684

(TDD line - (800) 700-2320 )

#### **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**

(213) 894-1000.

# Guide for Non-Citizens

Immigrants who aren't citizens can get many kinds of help from the government, even if they don't have a green card.

If you have questions about immigration or welfare for immigrants, or the government has treated you differently just because you don't speak English, or of the way you look or because you are from a particular country, please call one of the agencies listed on page 61 ("Advice for Immigrants").

Certain government programs, are not available to all low income immigrants who are lawfully present in the U.S. . Even if you are undocumented, you can apply for food stamps or CalWORKS for other family members who may be eligible (like for your children born in the U.S.-they are U.S. citizens).

**"Qualified" immigrants** include:

- immigrants who became citizens
- lawful permanent residents (green card holders)
- refugees
- asylees
- persons granted withholding of deportation or removal
- Cuban and Haitian entrants
- persons paroled into the U.S. for at least one year
- conditional entrants
- certain spouses and children who are victims of domestic violence.

**"Not qualified" immigrants include** all other groups such as:

- undocumented immigrants
- immigrants with Temporary Protected Status (TPS)
- immigrants who are Permanently Residing Under Color of Law (PRUCOL) immigrants. PRUCOL means that the immigration authorities know you are here but do not plan to deport you, even if you don't fit into the categories listed above.
- persons in the U.S. on a temporary non-immigrant visa
- applicants for "U" visa/interim relief
- victims of trafficking: although they are called "not qualified" they can actually get any federal benefits that persons classed as "refugees" can get.

## ALL IMMIGRANTS, INCLUDING UNDOCUMENTED PERSONS, MAY QUALIFY FOR THESE OTHER TYPES OF HELP:

- Prenatal Care
- Emergency Medi-Cal
- Minor Consent Medi-Cal
- Regional Centers
- California Children's Service
- CHDP
- Immunizations for kids
- WIC
- School Breakfast & Lunch
- Summer Food
- County Health Care
- Public Education
- Help from Food Pantries
- Help from Shelters
- Services from Many Non-Profit Agencies

These programs don't have immigration requirements and if you are undocumented, you may qualify. If anyone asks you about your immigration status, be careful. You do not need to tell anyone that you or anyone else who lives with you are undocumented. Your workers do not need to ask about your immigration status if you are not getting benefits for yourself. If they do ask you, simply tell them that you are a "not qualified" immigrant ("not qualified" is not the same as undocumented). That is all they need to know.

If a school or child care center requests your social security number on a form, you can write "none" on the form or leave it blank. They may not give the information on that form to a government agency.

## New Benefits for Victims of Trafficking, Domestic Violence, and Other Serious Crimes

A new California law provides eligible non-citizens who are victims of trafficking, domestic violence and other serious crimes access to benefits equal to those available for refugees.

-Victims of trafficking may qualify before they are certified by the federal government as victims.

-Victims of domestic violence and other serious crimes may qualify once they have applied for a U visa/interim relief.

-You do not need a social security number to apply.

Often, eligible people who need the aid don't get correct information or get discouraged. If that is happening to you, be strong, insist on talking to a supervisor, and seek out the help of someone who will advocate for you. Insist on speaking to someone who is fluent in your language or call Legal Aid.

## CAN I GET AN INTERPRETER TO HELP ME?

If you speak limited English and you need to apply for benefits such as CalWORKs, Medi-Cal, GR, CAPI or Food Stamps, you have the right to ask for an interpreter free of charge. The Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), the Department of Health Services (DHS), and the Social Security Administration must provide you with a worker who speaks your language or connect you to a telephone interpreter service, at no cost to you. You may also have the right to have written materials translated for you, or if the materials are in English, you have the right to have the information explained to you in your language.

DPSS now assigns a supervisor in every office to serve as the District Immigrant Liaison. You should call the District Immigrant Liaison if:

- you are denied assistance because you are not a citizen, even though you are eligible
- you do not receive a free interpreter or bilingual caseworker
- there is a delay or any other problem because you speak limited English

Ask for the District Immigrant Liaison at the nearest welfare office, in person or by telephone (see pg. 66-67).

If you speak limited English and you need to apply for SSI, SSDI, or a Social Security number, the Social Security Administration is required to give you an interpreter, no matter what language you speak, whether it is at the Social Security Office or at an appointment to determine a disability.

## WHICH IMMIGRANTS CAN GET BENEFITS?

### 1. Which Immigrants Can Get SSI?

If you are a low-income immigrant in the U.S. who has a disability, is blind, or over 65 years old, you can get SSI if:

- You were already receiving SSI as of August 22, 1996.
- You become a citizen
- You are a refugee, Amerasian immigrant, Cuban or Haitian entrant, asylee, or were granted withholding of deportation/removal, but only during the seven years after getting this status. If it has been more than 7 years and you do not qualify for SSI based on any other grounds, you should apply for CAPI);
- You are a "qualified immigrant" who is a current or veteran U.S. military personnel (or Filipino veteran who served under U.S. command during WWII), or the spouse or dependent child (under 18 if unmarried or under 22 if a student) of one, or the unremarried widow or widower of one;
- You are a lawful permanent resident with credit for 40 quarters (about 10 years) of work in the U.S. You can add your work quarters to any work quarters earned by your spouse or that your parents earned before you were 18. However, if you entered the US on or after August 22, 1996 you cannot use your work quarters until 5 years after the date you became a "qualified" immigrant.
- You are a "qualified" immigrant who was lawfully residing in the US on August 22, 1996 and are blind or disabled. However, unlike those in the above categories you cannot qualify solely on the basis of being over 65 years old.

You must also meet the income limit and other requirements. If you have a sponsor, your sponsor's income and

resources may be added to yours to determine your income eligibility (this is called "deeming"). There are some exceptions to "deeming" rules.

### 2. Which Immigrants Can Get CAPI?

If you are an immigrant who has a disability, is blind or 65 years old or older and you are not eligible for SSI because of your immigration status, you may be able to get CAPI (Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants.) To get CAPI you must be either a "Qualified Immigrant" (see pg. 58.), a victim of trafficking or an applicant for U visa/interim relief, or you must be PRUCOL (Permanently Residing Under Color of Law), meaning that the immigration authorities know you are here and do not plan to deport or remove you from the country. You must also meet the income limit and other requirements. If you are an immigrant with a sponsor, your sponsor's income and resources may be added to yours to determine your income eligibility (this is called "deeming"). See "Can I Get CAPI" pg. 28 for full details on eligibility and where to apply for this program.

### 3. Which Immigrants Can Get Food Stamps?

To get Food Stamps you must be:

- A Qualified Immigrant (see pg. 58) OR
- You, your spouse or parent are a member of a Hmong or Lao tribe that provided assistance to the US during the Vietnam War era **and** you are lawfully present in the US.
- A Victim of Trafficking or an applicant for U visa/interim relief
- Lawful temporary resident (you have a green card but have not yet been here 5 years)

You must also meet the income limit and other requirements. If you have a sponsor, your sponsor's income and resources may be added to yours to determine your income eligibility (this is called "deeming").

See the chapter on Food Stamps pg. 33 for more information on eligibility and where to apply.

### 4. Other Cash Programs

Qualified immigrants, noncitizen victims of trafficking, applicants for U visa/interim relief, and immigrants with PRUCOL status are eligible for **CalWORKs** (aid for families with children under 19 years old, pg. 4) and **General Relief** (aid for individuals with no dependent children, pg. 29). You must also meet the income limit and other requirements. If you have a sponsor, your sponsor's income and resources may be added to yours to determine your eligibility.

Refugees who have been in the country less than 8 months and persons who were granted asylum less than 8 months before, can also be eligible for **Refugee Cash Assistance** (generally this is for able bodied adults without children.) Victims of trafficking may also qualify for Refugee Cash Assistance once they receive certification from ORR. Call the local welfare office listed on page 66.

### 5. What Health Care Programs Are Available for Immigrants?

All LA county residents, including documented and undocumented immigrants, may be able to get health care through county programs. They may also be able to receive services through Emergency Medi-Cal, Pregnancy related Medi-Cal, Minor Consent Services Medi-Cal, county mental health services, CHDP and services provided by many free and community clinics.

To be eligible for all **Medi-Cal** services (also known as full-scope Medi-Cal) you must be PRUCOL or a "Qualified" immigrant. To be eligible for **Healthy Families**, children must be a "Qualified" immigrant. See "Health Care for Children" pg. 48-49 for other programs with no immigration restrictions.

"Qualified" immigrants, victims of trafficking, applicants for U visa/interim relief, and PRUCOL immigrants may be eligible for **In-Home Supportive Services**. CAPI (Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants) recipients may also be eligible for In-Home Supportive Services. Sponsor "deeming" may apply (see "Sponsors", pg. 61.)

## 6. Public Housing

Most "qualified" immigrants and victims of trafficking are eligible for housing assistance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) if they meet the program's other rules. HUD is a federal program; different rules apply to state and local housing programs.

You can apply for and receive HUD assistance even if one or more household members are not a citizen or "qualified" immigrant. Assistance may be calculated based on the number of citizens or eligible immigrants in the household.

## SOCIAL SECURITY

### 1. Social Security Benefits

If you have paid into the Social Security system as a worker or had money taken out of your paycheck for this program, you may qualify for Social Security disability, retirement or survivor benefits. [See Social Security, pg. 25] To receive the benefits, you must be either residing in the country lawfully now, or have been receiving benefits based on a claim filed before December 1, 1996. [Also see the next section on "Social Security Numbers"]. You are not eligible for Social Security benefits if you have been deported, except if you have been readmitted as a lawful permanent resident. Your benefits may be suspended if you leave the U.S. for 6 months or more while still a non-citizen.

### 2. Social Security Numbers

To get a Social Security card that allows you to work, you must have papers showing that you are a Lawful Permanent Resident ("green card holder") or that you have an Citizenship and Immigration Services employment authorization document. If you are lawfully in the U.S. but do not have work authorization, you can get a card from a Social Security office that can be used for benefits purposes only (for example, a "non-work number" to use for school or to get Medi-Cal.) It is illegal to use this card for work-related purposes.

## WORKER'S RIGHTS

Regardless of your immigration status, you have the right to receive minimum wage, overtime and safe working conditions. You also have the right to be free from harassment and discrimination. If your rights as a worker are being violated, contact the state Labor Commissioner's Office at (213) 897-4037 to complain. If you have legal work papers, it is illegal for employers to commit on-the-job discrimination, or deny a job because a worker is from another country.

The following groups can help if you are an immigrant worker and your employer owes you wages and has not paid you:

**Asian Pacific American Legal Center** (garment workers)

1145 Wilshire Blvd. (213) 977-7500  
Bet Tzedek Legal Services  
(818) 769-0136

**CHIRLA** (day laborers and domestic workers)

2533 W. 3rd St. # 101 (888) 624-4752

**Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance (KIWA)** (restaurant workers)

3465 W. 8th St. (213) 738-9050

**Legal Aid Foundation Employment Law Unit**

(213) 640-3954 or (800) 399-4529  
**Maintenance Cooperation Trust Fund** (janitorial workers)

1247 W. 7th St. Room 103 (213) 873-2226

**Neighborhood Legal Services**  
(800) 433-6251

**Pilipino Workers Center**

153 Glendale Blvd. (213) 250-4353

The government can deny a green card to people who are likely to become a "public charge" (meaning someone likely to rely on cash welfare or long-term care.) Officials will look at many factors, including your age, your health, your entire family's income and resources (and if you have a sponsor, their income and resources) to determine whether in the future you will be likely to need to rely on cash welfare to live. They will look at "the totality of your circumstances" and no single factor will make you a public charge. Depending on your situation, past use of cash benefits may not count against you, for example if it was several years ago that you received the benefits or if it was only for a short period of time.

You do not have to worry about public charge if you:

- Already have a green card (unless you leave the US for more than 6 months at a time and try to re-enter)
- Are applying for citizenship
- Are a refugee or asylee
- Are applying for a green card based on having lived in the US since before 1972

Victims of domestic violence who file a self-petition under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) are subject to the "public charge" test. However, they can use all benefits, including cash welfare, without affecting this decision.

Here are the guidelines for "public charge":

- If you or anyone in your family used Medi-Cal, Healthy Families, or other health services, it won't affect your immigration status, unless Medi-Cal or other government funds were used to pay for long-term care (nursing home or other institutionalized care)

- The use of non-cash benefits, such as food stamps, WIC, school lunch, or public housing, will not make you a "public charge".

- The use of cash welfare like CalWORKs, SSI, GR or CAPI, by your children or other family members, won't affect your immigration status unless these benefits are your family's only income

- If you have used cash benefits for yourself, such as CalWORKs, SSI, GR, or CAPI, it may affect your application for permanent resident status.

## SCREENINGS OF IMMIGRANTS

### 1. Can Using Government Benefits Affect My Immigration Status?

If you are applying to become a lawful permanent resident (green card holder) and you are using health care programs (such as Medi-Cal, In Home Supportive Services, or Healthy Families) or food stamps, it will not hurt your chances of getting your green card by making you a "public charge". You might have a problem getting your green card if you have used cash welfare or long-term care (like a nursing home) paid for by Medi-Cal or other government funds.

However, you should not automatically be considered a “public charge” just because you received any type of welfare in the past. The law says, what matters is whether you can show the officials that your family can support yourselves in the future.

Whether or not you should seek a benefit depends on how badly you need it and how much family members desire to change their immigration status. It also depends on how much evidence of good jobs or proof of economic independence you will probably be able to show when you or your family members have the interview for more permanent status.

The government should not demand that you repay any welfare you correctly received as a condition of giving you legal status. If this happens, call one of the immigrant advocate agencies.

## ▶ 2. Sponsors

Most new immigrants entering into the US through family members are required to have a sponsor sign an “affidavit of support” form. This form is a promise to the government that the sponsor will help to provide economic support for any sponsored immigrants. Not all immigrants are required to have a sponsor, for example refugees and asylees.

If you are a sponsored immigrant and you want to apply for certain government benefits, your sponsor’s income and resources may be added to yours in determining your eligibility for benefits (this is called “deeming”). This deeming rule makes the income of many immigrants too high to qualify for benefits. There is no deeming if you are applying for health care programs, only for food stamps and cash assistance programs.

Deeming does not apply to some immigrants, including: refugees, asylees, parolees, battered spouses who have filed a “self-petition” for an immigrant visa, or certain other immigrants who are not required to have a sponsor. In addition, there are exceptions to the deeming rule, depending on which program you are applying for and when you entered the US. For example, if you are a victim of domestic violence or would go hungry or homeless without assistance, you may be exempt from deeming. However, you will still have to meet the other eligibility requirements.

If you have a question or problem with “sponsor deeming” contact one of the agencies listed at the end of this page.

## FOR LEGAL REFUGEES

Each “official” or documented refugee who enters the United States is assigned to a Voluntary Resettlement Agency (VOLAG), usually before arrival. In addition to initial resettlement and sponsorship, these offices can provide some employment assistance and social service counseling. VOLAGs can also give referrals to other services and often help refugees arrange for the entry of close family members. These organizations include the following:

**African Community Resource Center & Resettlement Agency**

(213) 637-1450

**Church World Service & Lutheran Immigration Relief Service**

(323) 667-0489

**Jewish Family Services (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society)**

(323) 651-5573

**International Institute (American Council for Nationalities Service)**

(323) 264-6217; (818) 988-1332;

(818) 452-9421

**International Rescue Committee**

(213) 386-6700

**Refugee Resettlement Program, Catholic Charities (U.S. Catholic Conference)**

(213) 251-3460

## IF YOU ARE DETAINED BY IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT

If you are arrested by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), you should

- Remain silent, or tell the ICE agent that you want to remain silent.
- Ask to speak with a lawyer
- Not carry false documents
- Find out the name and phone number of a reliable immigration attorney and keep this information with you at all times.
- Know your "A" number (alien registration number) if you have one, and write it down someplace at home where your family members know where to find it.

- Prepare a form or document that authorizes another adult to care for your minor children.
- Advise family members who do not want to be questioned by ICE to stay away from the place where you are being detained
- Not sign any documents without first speaking with a lawyer.

(From National Immigration Law Center)

## ADVICE FOR IMMIGRANTS

These groups can offer help with questions relating to immigration, an immigrant’s ability to qualify for public benefits, defense against deportation, and other needs.

**APALC (Asian Pacific American Legal Center)** (213) 977-7500

**Center for Human Rights & Constitutional Law** (213) 388-8693

**Carecen (Central American Refugee Center)**

2845 W. 7th St. 90005

(213) 385-7800

**Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law**

256 S. Occidental Blvd., L.A. 90057

(213) 388-8693

**CHIRLA (Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles)**

(213) 353-1333

**EI Rescate**

1340 S. Bonnie Brae St., L.A. 90006

(213) 387-3284

**Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles**

(213) 640-3883

**Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County**

(818) 896 5211

13327 Van Nuys Blvd., Pacoima 91331

**One-Stop Immigration**

3600 Whittier Blvd., L.A. 90023

(323) 268-8472



# Hearings and Complaints

If you have been denied benefits unfairly, you should fight it! Don't be intimidated. Request a fair hearing immediately whenever your rights are threatened.

In a fair hearing, you will have a chance to explain what happened to you, and after hearing your side and the welfare office's side, an impartial referee will decide who wins. Sometimes, just requesting a hearing will resolve your problem. If someone calls you and says that you don't have a case, continue to insist on a hearing until you have received adequate legal advice.

If you are disabled, the law says that the welfare office must help you so that you have an equal chance, so ask for help you need when you request a hearing. For example, you may need help writing because you have arthritis, or may not be able to leave home because of a mental or physical problem. If you are treated unfairly because of a disability or health problem, send a complaint letter to the Civil Rights Division, U.S. Dept. of Justice, P.O. Box 66118, Washington DC 20035-6118.

Seek advice and assistance. Talk to a legal worker or a well-informed friend or community person about your situation. [See *Good Advice*, p. 64]

Keep good records and save all papers that an agency gives or mails to you. Keep a copy of any documents that you send in. Get a receipt for any papers you hand in. Write down the name and time of anyone you speak with in person or over the phone.

You have a right to see your case file and to copy anything you need in it, such as documents you provided to the welfare office to determine your eligibility, notices of action, requests for documents, and anything the welfare office mailed or hand delivered to you.

You have a right to see any regulations or instructions that apply to your situation.

## FOOD STAMPS, MEDI-CAL, CALWORKS, AND IHSS

The county must follow a federally-guaranteed set of rights which applies to any of these programs.

If you are not satisfied with any decision made about your case, complain to your worker's supervisor.

If that does not work, call the district HELPLine for your welfare office (see the list of HELPLines on page 64), or walk up to the HELPLine Information Worker in the lobby of the welfare office and ask for help. You can also call the Central HELPLine at 1-877-481-1044

If this fails, ask to speak to the deputy director and, after that, the director of the welfare office, and after that, file for a fair hearing to challenge an action (see below). If you need help, call an advocate, legal aid, your county supervisor, or a local legislator. If you act fast, and keep at it, you may win.

You must be sent a special notice 10 days before any action is taken that will reduce or stop your benefits. The notice must explain clearly the reasons for the action. If you disagree with this action and you formally request a fair hearing before the date the action takes effect, then under most circumstances your aid will not be cut until the hearing (unless it ends for another reason, like your certification period ended.)

If you do not ask for a fair hearing before the date the action takes place, your aid may be reduced or cut, but you still may fight the action if you ask for the hearing within 90 days of the date the notice was mailed. Save the envelope your notice came in and a copy of your fair hearing request so you will have proof that you met the required deadline.

To request the fair hearing, you may fill out and return the form on the back of the notice or write a letter doing so in your own words. Send your request to: Appeals and State Hearing Section P.O. Box 18890 Los Angeles, CA 90018.

You can also request the hearing by calling a the toll-free number set up for this purpose, (800) 952-5253. You should call early: they open at 7:30 AM. The line is often busy, so keep trying. Remember to take the name of the person you spoke with.

You cannot make a hearing request with your worker or any other County staff. You must either call the 800 number or send the written request to the Appeals and State Hearing section.

The state will send you a notice with the date, time, and place of your hearing. Usually, this happens within 3 or 4 weeks. Currently, in the food stamp program, anytime before the hearing, you can request a delay ("postponement") of the hearing in order to have more time to prepare or to get an attorney or advocate. In other aid programs, or to get a second postponement, you must have a very good reason ("good cause").

You will also receive the name, telephone number and address of the Appeals Hearing Specialist (AHS) assigned to your case. The AHS will be presenting the county's side at the hearing. The AHS will also write up the county's side at least 2 days before the hearing. You have the right to get a copy of the county's position statement. If the AHS does not have it ready for you to see before the hearing, you may request that the hearing be postponed to give you the chance to read the statement. This postponement does not count against you.

If you are disabled, or homebound, hearings can be held by phone, at the welfare office or in your home, but you must ask for this in your hearing request.

You must also be provided with an interpreter for the hearing at no cost if English is not your first language.

After your hearing, call the toll-free number and complain if the state takes longer than 60 days to get a decision about food stamps, or 90 days if the hearing was about CalWORKs or Medi-Cal. These are usually the maximum amounts of time that are permitted to decide such cases (starting on the date of your request for hearing). If your hearing decision takes longer than 90 days and you have never continued it, you must get extra money for the delay, if the decision is granted in your favor.

If you do not win the hearing and you are still convinced you are right, you can request a rehearing, but it is better to contact a lawyer experienced in this area to file a lawsuit. You have one year from the date of the decision to file a case in court.

## SOCIAL SECURITY, MEDICARE, AND SSI

The Social Security Administration must mail you a notice of any changes in your benefits. If you disagree with the proposed action, request a "Reconsideration" immediately by going to the Social Security office and filling out a "Request for Reconsideration" form. Make sure that you get a copy of the form stamped by Social Security with the date it was filed.

The county DPSS will help with reconsiderations and appeals that will help GR recipients get SSI or Social Security.

If you request a Reconsideration within the time period given on the notice (usually 10 days), your benefits can continue unchanged until you receive a decision. If they paid you too much, and they want to take money out of your check, you can request a waiver if it wasn't your fault and if it would be hard for you to pay the money back. Ask Social Security for the waiver form.

In SSDI cases, you must fill out a separate form asking for your aid to continue. If you miss the deadline given in the notice, the aid will be cut or reduced, but you still have 60 days from the date

you received the notice to request a Reconsideration. After 60 days, if you have "Good Cause" for missing the deadline, you may be allowed to file a Reconsideration. If you win the Reconsideration, your lost benefits will be paid back to you.

There are three types of Reconsideration: case review, informal, or formal conference. It is best to ask for an informal conference. However, if your application for SSDI or SSI is denied for medical reasons, you can usually only get a case review.

If your reconsideration or waiver is denied, you may request a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) with the Office of Hearing and Appeals (OHA). At the hearing you may appear in person, submit new evidence, examine the evidence used in making the determination or decision under review, and present and question witnesses. The ALJ who holds the hearing may ask

you questions. He or she will write a decision based on the hearing record. If you waive your right to appear at the hearing, the ALJ will make a decision based on the evidence that is already in the file.

When you are receiving SSI or SSDI and then start working, your benefits could be cut if you are working and earning too much. (This is known as "Substantial Gainful Activity" or "SGA"). 10 days after you get the tentative notice, a notice that your payments will stop will be sent to you. Request a reconsideration immediately. To protect yourself, it is best to make a new application at the same time you request a Reconsideration.

If you are considering going back to work, know your rights. Call Protection and Advocacy Services at (800) 776-5746 and ask for their booklet, "Disability and Work."



# Good Advice

## LEGAL AID

You can get free legal help with problems involving all the programs in this guide or with such issues as divorce, separation, child support, custody, and consumer rights. To qualify for free legal services that are federally-funded, your income must be low (around the level of people who qualify for CalWORKs).

The following are some of the leading legal and casework services programs in our county:

### Legal Aid Foundation of L.A.

?800-399-4LAW [www.lafla.org](http://www.lafla.org)

TDD for deaf callers 310-393 7734

**Central L.A.** (213) 640-3881 1550 W. 8th St. at Union

**East L.A.** (213) 640-3883

5228 Whittier Blvd.

**South L.A.** (213) 640-3884 8601 S.

Broadway

**West L.A.** (323) 801-7989. 1102 S.

Crenshaw

**Santa Monica** (310) 899-6200

1640 5th St #124.

**Long Beach** (562) 435-3501

110 Pine Ave., Ste. 420.

### Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County [www.nls-la.org](http://www.nls-la.org)

(800) 433-6251.

### Health Consumer Center,

800-896-3203

13327 Van Nuys Blvd. Pacoima (Multi-lingual. Covers all of San Fernando Valley, San Gabriel Valley, Pomona, Antelope Valley, Glendale and Burbank.

### American Civil Liberties Union—Southern California

(213) 977-9500 [www.aclu-sc.org](http://www.aclu-sc.org).

Voice mail for intake (213)977-5253

(

**AIDS Project Los Angeles** (213) 201-

1600. [www.apla.org](http://www.apla.org). 611 S. Kingsley Dr.

; 639 N. Fairfax Ave. (Benefits, insurance, counseling, case management, food distribution, home health care, dental clinic, housing, jobs)

### Alliance for Children's Rights (213)

368-6010. [www.kids-alliance.org](http://www.kids-alliance.org) 3333

Wilshire Blvd #550 LA (legal and social services, foster care, adoption, guardianships, health access)

### Asian Pacific American Legal Center

(213) 977-7500 [www.apalc.org](http://www.apalc.org)

1145 Wilshire Blvd., L.A. (multi-lingual services: family law, domestic violence, government benefits, elder law, housing rights, consumer and debtor relief, garment worker rights, anti-discrimination county-wide)

### Bet Tzedek Legal Service L.A.

(323) 939-0506 [www.bettzedek.org](http://www.bettzedek.org)

145 S. Fairfax, #200 L.A. or

(818) 769-0136 12821 Victory Blvd, North Hollywood (multilingual service: seniors, nursing home advocacy, housing conditions, Outreach through senior centers county-wide)

### Center for Health Care Rights [www.healthcarerights.org](http://www.healthcarerights.org)

(213) 383-4519.

520 S. Lafayette Park Place #214, L.A.

(Medicare issues)

### Coalition for Economic Survival

(213) 252-4411. 5114 Shatto Pl.

Ste. 270 (tenants organizing and rights)[www.nkla.sppsr.ucla.edu/ces](http://www.nkla.sppsr.ucla.edu/ces)

### Community Legal Services [www.legal-aid.com](http://www.legal-aid.com)

(800) 834-5001. 725 W.

Rosecrans Ave., Compton and 11834 E. Firestone, Norwalk (Orange County & Southeast L.A. County)

### HALSA—HIV & Aids Legal Services

**Alliance** (213) 201-1640. 3550 Wilshire

#750. (APLA, Public Counsel, County

Bar, AIDS Service Center & LA Gay

& Lesbian Service Center. Public

benefits, discrimination, employment,

housing, immigration, wills, guardianship,

adoption)

### Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law

[www.hbcfl.org](http://www.hbcfl.org) (213) 388-7515. 4262

Wilshire Blvd #201 L.A.

### Inner City Law Center (213) 891-2880

1325 E. 7th St. L.A. (homeless issues,

veterans, housing conditions, GR)

### Maternal and Child Health Access

(213) 749-4261. 1111 W. 6th St. #400

L.A. (Medi-Cal)

### Mental Health Advocacy Services

3255 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles, CA

Ste 902 90010

(213) 389-2077

((SSI, discrimination, access)

### Protection and Advocacy, Inc.

(800) 776-5746 [www.pai-ca.org](http://www.pai-ca.org) TTY

for deaf callers (800) 781-4546

3580 Wilshire Blvd., #. 902 L.A. (Human rights for people with disabilities. institutions and hospitals; abuse and neglect, government benefits)

### Public Counsel [www.publiccounsel.org](http://www.publiccounsel.org)

(213) 385-2977. 601 S. Ardmore Ave.,

L.A. (Child care provider support,

children's rights, adoption of foster chil-

dren, consumer scams, juvenile justice,

homelessness, immigration asylum)

### Western Law Center for Disability

**Rights** [www.wlcdr.org](http://www.wlcdr.org) (213) 736-1031.

919 S. Albany St. L.A. TDD for deaf

callers: 213-736-8310

### Women Helping Women Services

(323) 655-3807 (Counseling, informa-

tion and referral for many problems)

## FINANCIAL HELP

These groups provide services only if they have funds available.

### Beyond Shelter (Rent/Eviction funds)

Downtown: (213) 624-3370

Mid-Wilshire (213) 252-0772

South Central (323) 357-7415

### Catholic Charities (213) 251-3400

### Jewish Free Loan (interest free loans

and flexible payback: serves all people)

(323) 655-6922

### Labor Community Services (one-time

bill payment and financial aid if money

available) (213) 427-9044

## PREGNANCY/ADOPTION

**Adoption HotLine** (800) 789-9881

**Alternative Birthing** (323) 462-6423

**Baby Safe** (Lets parents surrender

babies without abandonment)

(877) 222-9273

**Birth Control Helpline** (800) 942-1054

**El Nido Family Center** (323) 757-0101

**Nurturing Network** (Pregnant women

who need help relocating)

(800) TNN-4MOM

**Pregnancy HotLine** (800) 848-5683

**Project Rachel** (post-abortion)

(213) 251-2621

**Safe Harbor Womens Clinic**

(213) 622-4073

**St. Anne's Maternity** (213) 381-2931

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE

**Treatment Programs** 1(800)564-6600

**Hotline:** (800) RELAPSE

**AA Headquarters.** (323) 936-4343 Self help and meeting info

**Sober Living Network** (800) 799-2084. Finding or starting a group recovery home

## OTHER HELPFUL NUMBERS

**211 LA County.** (referrals for emergency food, shelter, clothing, etc)

**Runaways and Newly Homeless Youth Hotlines:** (800)843-5200. (213) 957-7340

**Covenant House** (800) 999-9999 National line for youth & parents. Message relay, homelessness, drugs, abuse.

**HIV/AIDS Testing** Free and Anonymous (800) 922AIDS

**Alliance For the Mentally Ill.** (213) 413-1622 [www.ca.nami.org](http://www.ca.nami.org) Positive support groups, referrals.

**Suicide Prevention** (310) 391-1253 (24 hour nonprofit free center)

**Travelers Aid** (323)468-2500. Society for stranded, runaway and new-comers needing help.

**CAST—Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking.** (213) 385-5584 [www.castla.org](http://www.castla.org) Client-centered case management for trafficked people.

## ABUSE

### 1. Child and Elder Abuse

**Child Abuse:** (800) 540-4000 (Report abuse or exploitation of a child to the County)

**Elder Abuse:** (800) 992-1660 (Report abuse or exploitation of a disabled adult or elder to the County)

### 2. Domestic Violence and Rape

If you are a victim or a friend of yours is a victim of domestic violence (abuse) or rape you should call to get help. Protect yourself and your children, seek help and deal with violence. Most of the following hotlines are 24 hour and have multi-lingual capability.

(800) 585-6231.

TDD for deaf callers (800) 787-3224

(213) 626-3393 (310) 547-9343.

(310) 545-2111 (310) 392-8381

(323) 751-9245 (323) 655-3807

(562) 402-4888 (562) 597-2002

(626) 793-3385 (818) 793-3385

(818) 886-0453 (909) 626-4357

**Center for the Pacific-Asian Family**

(323) 653-4042 or (800) 399-3940

**“A Safe Way Out”** (800) 978-3600

#### What is Abuse?

Abuse can be anything that hurts you:

- Physical abuse (hitting, punching, shoving, using weapons or threats of physical harm)
- Any kind of forced sexual activity with any adult or child
- Threats of assault or sexual assault
- Yelling at you
- Threatening to kidnap the children
- Keeping you from friends or relatives
- Making you account for all your time
- Denying or neglecting food or medical care
- Controlling the money
- Harassing you at your job
- Following you around wherever you go.

#### Restraining Orders

Legal aid agencies listed on the previous page can help you get a restraining order against the abuser. A restraining order can be obtained at the Superior Courthouse at 111 N. Hill St. in downtown LA or at your local court. If you file at the downtown courthouse, call the Domestic Violence Counseling Project (213) 624-3665. Local police or sheriff officers can issue 3-day emergency restraining orders if called to the scene of a battering incident.

Almost all of the courts in Los Angeles have domestic violence clinics where they will help anyone, regardless of income, to get a temporary restraining order against an abuser.

#### Immigrants

Low income immigrants who are victims of domestic violence may be able to legalize their immigration status without

relying on their abuser, and may be able to get government benefits to help them escape abusive situations. For free help, call the Asian Pacific American Legal Center (213) 977-7500 or Legal Aid, (800) 399-4LAW.

## HATE CRIMES

In California, a hate crime is any criminal act or attempted criminal act against a person or place based on the victim's actual or perceived race, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender, or status as homeless. Hate crimes include threats of violence that look like they can be carried out and any act which results in injury.

If you or someone you know becomes a victim of a hate crime:

- Seek medical attention for any injuries, even if you consider them minor. Keep copies of all medical records.
- Contact the police as soon as possible. Tell them you have been a victim of a hate crime.
- Keep copies of all documents signed or received and write down the name of the police or sheriff's officer who took your report.
- Document the hate crime providing as much detail as possible.
- Take photos of any injuries sustained or damage to property. Contact a legal service agency (see previous page) or

**L.A. County Human Relations Commission** (213) 974-7611  
**Center for Human Rights & Constitutional Law** (213) 388-8693  
**Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles** (888) 624-4752

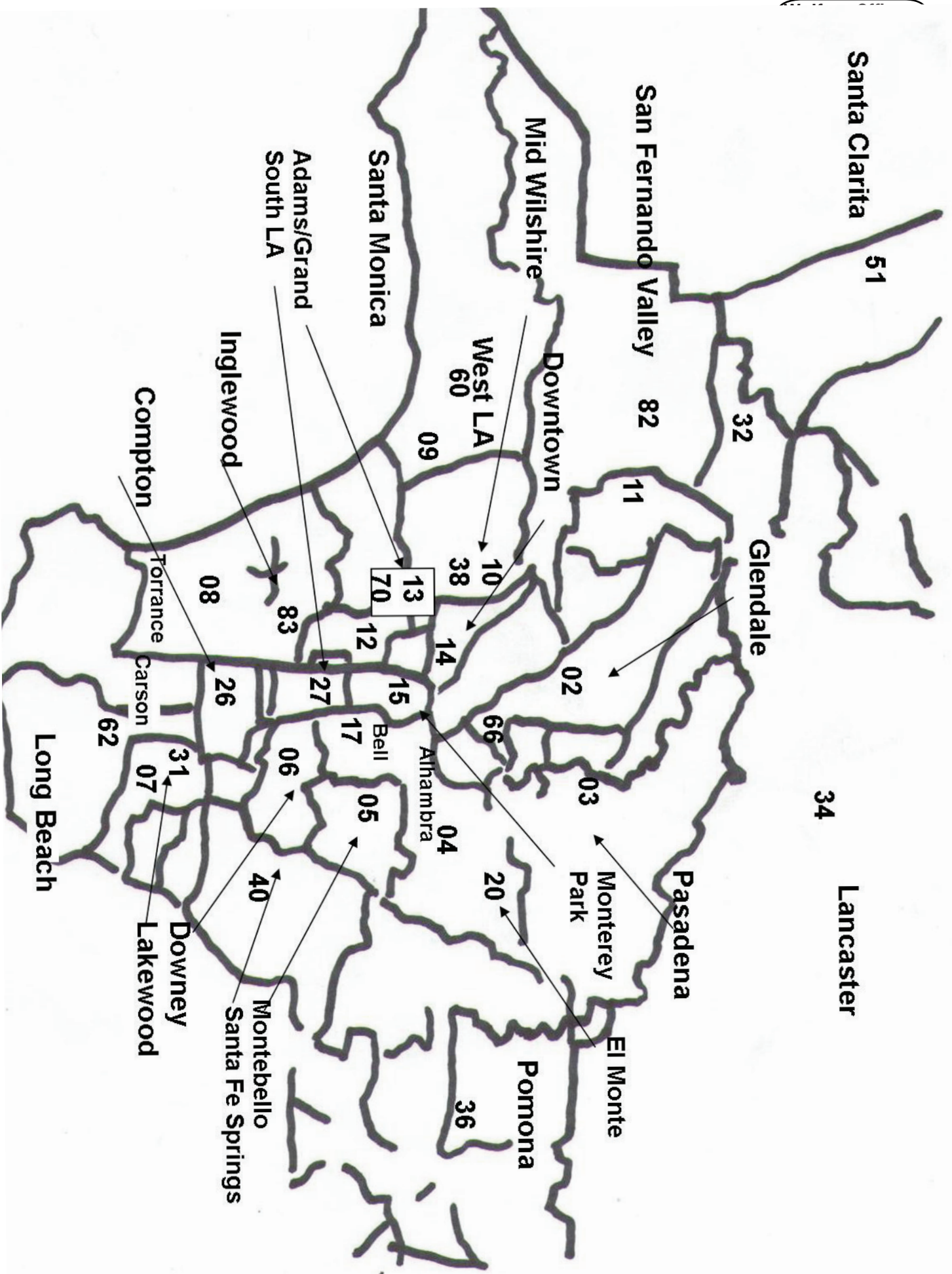
## IF YOU HAVE JUST LEFT PRISON

**Friends Outside.**(323) 249-9683 or (626) 795-7607 Variety of services to families of jail and prison inmates.  
**Mum's the Word** (Attorneys) (323) 759-3011  
**Community Coalition: Ex-Offender Task Force** (323) 750-9087  
**Chrysalis** (for jobs) Los Angeles (213) 895-7777 Santa Monica (310) 392-4117

# Department of Public Social Services

At these Department of Public Social Services offices you can apply for these programs: CW=CalWORKs, FS=Food Stamps, GR=General Relief, MC=Medi-Cal. The phone numbers listed are the Helpline numbers.

- 05 BELVEDERE (CW,FS,MC)**  
5445 Whittier Blvd. LA 90022  
(323) 727-4241
- 14 CIVIC CENTER (GR, FS, MC)**  
813 E. Fourth Place. LA 90013  
(213) 974-0206
- 26 COMPTON (CW, FS, MC)**  
211 E. Alondra Blvd. Compton 90220  
(310) 603-8181
- 06 CUDAHY (CW,FS, MC)**  
8130 S. Atlantic Ave. Cudahy 90201  
(323) 560-5192
- 11 EAST VALLEY (CW,FS, MC)144545**  
Lanark St. Panorama City 91402  
(818) 901-4198
- 04 EL MONTE(CW,FS,MC)**  
3350 Aerojet Ave. El Monte 91731  
(866) 613-3777
- 12 EXPOSITION PARK (CW,FS)**  
3833 S. Vermont Ave. L.A. 90037  
(323) 730-6188
- 17 FLORENCE (CW,FS, MC)**  
1740 E. Gage Ave. L.A. 90001  
(323) 586-7299
- 02 GLENDALE (CW,GR,FS,MC)**  
4680 San Fernando Rd., Glendale  
91204 (818) 546-6100
- 34 LANCASTER (CW,FS,MC)**  
349-B East Ave. K6, Lancaster 93535  
(661) 951-3450
- 34 LANCASTER (GR)**  
337 East Ave K10, Lancaster 93535  
(661) 974-8993
- 66 LINCOLN HEIGHTS**  
**(CW,FS,MC)** 4077 N.  
Mission Rd., L.A. 90032  
(323) 342-8141
- 15 METRO EAST (CW,GR,FS)**  
2855 E. Olympic Blvd., L.A. 90023  
(323) 260-3697
- 13 METRO FAMILY**  
2615 S. Grand Ave. (CW)  
L.A. 90007  
(213) 744-4862
- 70 METRO SPECIAL**  
2707 S. Grand Ave. (GR, FS, MC)  
(213) 744-4860
- 38 METRO NORTH (CW,FS,MC)**  
2601 Wilshire Blvd., L.A. 90057  
(213) 639-5176
- 40 NORWALK (CW,FS,MC)**  
12727 Norwalk Blvd., Norwalk 90650  
(562) 807-7869
- 62 PARAMOUNT (CW,FS,MC)**  
2961 E. Victoria Ave. Rancho Domin-  
quez 90221  
(310) 603-5000
- 03 PASADENA(CW,GR,FS,MC)**  
955 N. Lake Ave., Pasadena 91104  
(626) 791-6730
- 36 POMONA (CW,GR,FS,MC)**  
2040 W. Holt Ave., Pomona 91768  
(909) 868-6499
- 60 RANCHO PARK(GR,FS,MC)**  
11110 W. Pico Blvd. L.A. 90064  
(310) 481-4018
- 32 SAN FERNANDO (GR,FS)**  
9188 Glenoaks Blvd., Sun Valley 91342  
(818) 837-2101
- 20 SAN GABRIEL VALLEY**  
**(CW,GR,FS)**  
3350 Aerojet Ave., El Monte 91731  
(866) 613-3777
- 51 SANTA CLARITA (CW,FS,MC)**  
27233 Camp Plenty Rd, Canyon  
Country 91351  
(661) 298-3431
- 27 SOUTH CENTRAL (CW, GR, FS,**  
**MC)**  
10728 S. Central Ave., L.A. 90059  
(323) 563-4601
- 31 SOUTH FAMILY (CW, FS, MC)**  
17600-A Santa Fe Ave., Rancho  
Dominguez 90221  
(310)761-2191
- 07 SOUTH SPECIAL (GR,FS)**  
17600-B Santa Fe Ave., Rancho  
Dominguez 90221  
(310)761-2041
- 83 SOUTHWEST FAMILY (CW,FS)**  
8300 S. Vermont Ave. LA 90044  
(323) 549-7662
- 08 SOUTHWEST SPECIAL (GR, FS,**  
**MC)**  
1326 W. Imperial Hwy, L.A. 90044  
(323) 418-2650
- 09 WEST L.A. (CW,FS,MC)**  
11390 W. Olympic, L.A., 90064  
(310) 914-0517
- 82 WEST VALLEY (CW,FS,MC)**  
21415 Plummer St., Chatsworth 91311  
(818) 718-5227
- 10 WILSHIRE SPECIAL (GR, FS, MC,**  
**CAPI)**  
2415 6th St. L.A. 90057  
(213) 739-7370



# The People's Guide to Welfare, Health and Other Services in Los Angeles County 2008

Also available on line at [www.peoplesguide.org](http://www.peoplesguide.org)

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Please FAX to (213) 251 2716 or return ASAP to:

ATTN: People's Guide LACEH&H

2500 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 1155, LA CA 90057

For more information: 213-251-0041 ext. 102