

# 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.

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.

## 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, and you might be able to get food stamps if your felony was not for manufacture or sale of drugs.

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

### 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).

# of people	Gross Income Limit
1	\$451
2	\$739
3	\$916
4	\$1,089
5	\$1,242
6	\$1,396
7	\$1,534
8	\$1,671
9	\$1,811
10	\$1,966

## 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 food stamp 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	"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

- 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.

### 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

### 3. What Else Is Available?

- **Medi-Cal** to pay for health care (pg. 41 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 ( 800-615-8858).

#### ► **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. Do not answer "yes" 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, 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 their 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.

## 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 \$1,698.00 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 \$1,698.00 .

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.

### ► 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.

**► 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 immigrants will participate in alternate "GAIN" programs called RITE (Refugee and Immigrant Training and Employment) or REP (Refugee Employment Program) instead. (See Page 10 Work Requirements.)

**► 4. Cooperate with Child Support Collection**

Unless it could hurt you or your children 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 an address or social security number.

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 (800) 615-8858 to ask for this information. A parent 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, RITE, 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 “**RITE**” (“Refugee/ Immigrant Training and Employment.”) 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/RITE/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/ RITE/REP activity
- Child sick at home from school
- No transportation (for example your car broke down)
- You are homeless
- Domestic violence Waiver: Domestic violence can excuse you from almost any rule, such as the 60-month time limit, work or participation requirements, and child support cooperation. 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/RITE/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. 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 transportations, 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, RITE 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, RITE 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, REP and RITE 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 32.5¢ 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 from organizations specializing in this problem, including shelter, family counseling, and free legal help with restraining orders and divorces. You do not need a police report or other “proof.” You can “self-declare” that you are dealing with the effects of abuse.

**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 ask for mental health evaluation anytime.

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, RITE or REP.

**Substance Abuse Services:** A DPSS worker can suggest you go to a substance abuse assessment if they believe you have a drug or alcohol problem that will keep you from finding or keeping a job. You can also identify yourself as needing substance abuse treatment. If the County drug and alcohol program is unable to help, you should ask to be referred to nonprofit agencies for services.

You can go to a substance abuse treatment program as the welfare to work activity. 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, RITE 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, RITE 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/RITE/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, your first GAIN activity will be job club and job search for four weeks, with an additional week if you want it. The job club is offered in several languages. GAIN, RITE or REP helps you look for a job. The DPSS 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, RITE 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.

► **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 (groundskeeper, maintenance) and DPSS (clerical).

DPSS, the community colleges, and adult schools also 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. These programs include:

- Skills training offered by the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles; and
- Skill training with intensive vocational English that teaches you job skills and English together.

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. New Welfare to Work Rules**

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, substance 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 Work Plan That Won’t Help You**

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. No More 24 Month Time Limit on Welfare to Work**

Under the new CalWORKs rules, there is no more 18-24 months time limit to get education or training in welfare to work activities. You can get education and training for all 60 months.

You are no longer required to do community service but you can if you want. If you are in community service, you can ask for a new welfare-to-work plan.

► **9. 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.

## ▶ 10. Help To Keep The Job— Post Employment Services

After you stop getting CalWORKs cash aid because you found a job, CalWORKs can help you with money for transportation , training, tools, uniforms, and similar costs. Also you may be able to get two years of child care payments. You must ask for this money to get it. The one-year clock starts the day your cash aid ends.

**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 41 “ 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. Children will continue to be aided. 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 violent situation. You will also qualify if you are suffering from the effects of abuse in the past and it limits 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 information 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 the violent situation; you also qualify if you are suffering from 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.
- **Native American**—You are a Native American who lives in "Indian Country," on a reservation or in an Alaskan village, 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 ("SANCTIONS") DO I FACE?

If you don't follow the GAIN, RITE 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 reduce your grant if they can show that you have:

- Failed or refused to comply with a GAIN, RITE or REP requirement
- Refused to sign a welfare to work plan
- Failed to comply with an agreed upon compliance plan
- Failed to show proof of satisfactory progress in your activity
- Quit or refused a job without "good cause."

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.

Sanctions get worse each time:

- **The first time:** you will be cut until they agree that you are complying with the rules
- **The second time:** cut for 3 months or until they agree that you are complying, whichever time is longer
- **The third time and after:** cut for at least 6 months or until they agree that you are complying, whichever is longer. 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 and the 18 or 24 month clock will not start to run until you leave Cal Learn.

## HOMELESS AND HOUSING ASSISTANCE

If your family is homeless, 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, 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 you are homeless because of:

- 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 (with a possible extension of 14 more days after that) 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 \$40 to \$80 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.

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 are eligible for CalWORKs, or
- you are receiving CalWORKs or
- you are timed out from CalWORKs,

- you are working in GAIN, RITE, REP, or post time limit services or:
- you are exempt from GAIN, RITE, or REP
- or, only the children in the case are aided,
- or you are a DV victim.

### ▶ 2. Money to move into 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 maximum CalWORKs grant for a family of your size.

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.

### ▶ 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.

**▶ 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).

**▶ 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 \$250 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

**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 minus \$225 = \$325.

One half of \$325 = \$163. (Round up to nearest dollar)

The **maximum cash aid payment** for this non-exempt family of three is \$723.

(see p. 4 chart)

\$723 minus \$163 = \$560

*The family receives cash aid of \$560 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. 4 chart)

They get the exempt grant level because they have disability income.

\$808 minus \$325 = \$483

*The family receives cash aid of \$483 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 (the disability income) minus \$225 = negative \$25.

\$325 (the earned income) minus the negative \$25 = \$300

One half of \$300 (remaining earned income) = \$150.

The **maximum cash aid** payment for this family is \$808

(see page 4 chart Use the "exempt" figures because this family has disability income). \$808 minus \$150 = \$658.

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

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.

