

# CalWORKs DIVISION JANUARY 2005 NEWSLETTER

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## ACTION PLAN FOR ENHANCING SERVICES TO HOMELESS CalWORKs FAMILIES

DPSS is implementing a five-point action plan to enhance services for homeless families on Skid Row and throughout Los Angeles County. The action plan includes the following:

Homeless Families Benefits Access Team - To increase access to benefits/services for homeless and families at risk of homelessness, DPSS is outstationing eligibility staff at the Weingart Access Center in Skid Row to screen/process applications for CalWORKs/homeless services. Implementation 1/18/05.

Skid Row Family Outreach Team - To identify homeless families on Skid Row and connect them to available benefits/services, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), Department of Mental Health (DMH), and Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) will create a Skid Row Family Outreach Team. This team will seek out families in Skid Row and link them with appropriate services. With the outstationing of DPSS staff at the Weingart Center, the outreach team will take families to the Center to process applications for CalWORKs homeless services. Implementation 2/1/05

Emergency Housing and Services - To enhance the availability of emergency housing and services for homeless families, DPSS will provide additional funding to LAHSA for eligible CalWORKs families. This additional emergency housing and services will provide temporary emergency shelter to for up to 2,000 families. Implementation 1/18/05

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## LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP

Q: Do caretaker relatives need legal guardianship or custody to receive CalWORKs?

A: No, they only need to have a certain degree of relatedness by blood, marriage or adoption. A list of relatives which can apply/receive aid for an eligible child, as well as a list of documents used to verify relationship is available in the LEADER Handbook, CW Policy Section 82-804.1.

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## CalWORKs POLICY IS NOW AVAILABLE ON THE LEADER HANDBOOK!

Everything you wanted to know about CalWORKs policy is now available on the LEADER Handbook. To access, you must take the following steps:

- Select HELP on the top Menu Bar;
- Select LEADER Handbook from the drop down box;
- Select Help Topics;
- Select Contents; and
- Select CW Policy

**Note:** Procedures for using the new Handbook are contained in the Handbook's "Welcome" page/screen.

Temporary Homeless Assistance Program (THAP)+14 - Currently, families are eligible for up to 16 days of CalWORKs Temporary Homeless Assistance (HA). With certain exceptions, once the participant has exhausted this once-in-a-lifetime benefit, they cannot access the Temporary HA Program again. DPSS will supplement the Temporary HA Program, providing an additional 14-days of Temporary HA. This 14-day supplementation will be available to homeless families currently accessing Temporary HA, as well as to those who have already exhausted the 16-day program. This additional two weeks of assistance will enable families to stay in hotels/motels longer while they continue to seek permanent housing. All other existing Temporary HA rules will remain in effect. It is estimated that approximately 2,700 families will benefit from this extension of the Temporary HA Program. Implementation 1/18/05

Short-Term Rental Subsidies - Currently, there is no rental subsidy in the CalWORKs program. With the County's high rents, homeless families often need rental assistance to remain housed once they have secured permanent housing. To assist homeless families secure/retain permanent housing, DPSS will provide a short-term rental subsidy program.

Families receiving Permanent HA or Moving Assistance could qualify for a rental subsidy of up to \$250 per family (based on family size) for four months. These funds will be issued through two-party checks to the participant and landlord. It is estimated that approximately 1,300 families will benefit from this short-term subsidy. Implementation 1/18/05.

## WORK RELATED SERVICES FOR REFUGEES

Q: What action must the EW take to ensure refugees are referred to the right work-related services?

A: "Refugee" must be selected from the drop down in the "Alien/Citizen Status" field in the **Data Collection** subsystem, **Individual Attributes Summary** screen and the "Date of Entry" must be entered correctly in the **Alien Refugee Information Summary "Detail"** screen.

Selecting the refugee "Alien Type" ONLY in the **Alien Refugee Information Summary "Detail"** screen WILL NOT do the job. The "Alien/Citizen Status" and "Date of Entry" fields go over to GEARS and this information is used to identify the refugee and assign him/her to the right work related services (e.g., REP, RITE).

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**HAPPY NEW YEAR 2005**

**CalWORKs - AB 205, DOMESTIC PARTNER'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT**

As of January 1, 2005, AB 205, The Domestic Partner's Rights and Responsibilities Act of 2003 was changed to expand the rights and responsibilities provided to California registered domestic partners (DP). As a result of this, persons registered with the State as DPs, will be eligible for CalWORKs benefits. However, DP eligibility will not take effect until the State releases final instructions. Any potential cases received in the District offices will be reviewed for retroactive eligibility. Instructions for eligibility staff will be released shortly.

Below are prepared responses to questions CalWORKs applicants/participants may have:

***Q. Who can register as a domestic partner with the State?***

A. Gay and lesbian couples, as well as unmarried (opposite sex) couples in which at least one of the partners is 62 or older. This age requirement was designed to accommodate older heterosexual couples who have remained officially single so as not to jeopardize their Social Security benefits.

***Q. Can my domestic partner be added to my CalWORKs case?***

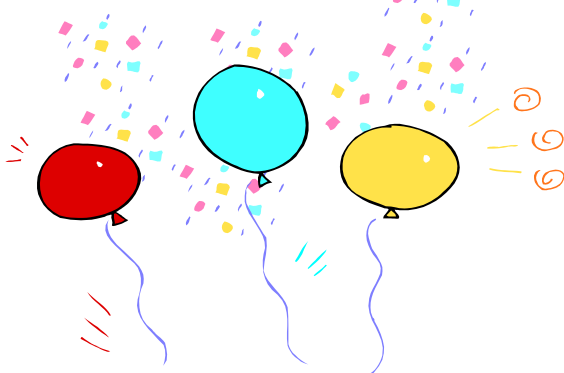
A. No. Until we receive final instructions from the State, your partner cannot be added to your CalWORKs case. However, your case information will be tracked (CalWORKs Domestic Partnership Case Log) for identification and for purposes of determining CalWORKs eligibility for your partner.

***Q. Must I provide verification before I can declare a domestic partner relationship?***

A. No. Until we receive final instructions from the State, a verbal statement of a DP relationship will suffice.

***Q. Can my domestic partner receive benefits/assistance from other programs?***

A. Yes. Until we receive final instructions from the State, your partner can apply for Food Stamps and/or General Relief (GR) benefits. I will refer your DP to a GR Eligibility Worker or provide you with a referral (PA 30, Reference Slip) to the nearest General Relief office.



***Q. How do I register a domestic partnership with the State of California?***

A. If you and your partner are of the same sex, or if you and your partner are of opposite sex and one partner is at least 62 years old, then you may be eligible to register a domestic partnership with the Secretary of State. You may register by completing a Declaration of Domestic Partnership, having both partners' signatures notarized, and submitting it to the Secretary of State's office with the appropriate fee.

***How can I obtain more information about the benefits of domestic partners?***

Additional information can be obtained through the California Secretary of State website ([www.ss.ca.gov/dpregistry/](http://www.ss.ca.gov/dpregistry/)).

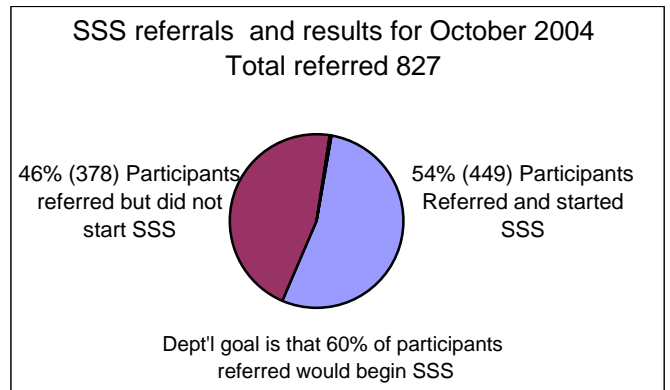
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**DEPARTMENTAL GOAL FOR SPECIALIZED SUPPORTIVE SERVICES**

Our Departmental goal for 10/04 - 9/05 for Specialized Supportive Services (SSS) is to increase engagement in SSS by conducting appropriate follow-up to ensure that at least 60% of participants referred to services commence services.

Here are some tips:

1. Follow-up to remind participants of their upcoming Supportive Services appointment.
2. Ensure that child care and transportation are authorized.
3. Promptly reschedule participants, as needed.



4. Be supportive and sensitive to the needs of participants with supportive services issues.

**Together we can achieve our goal.**

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**Direct Deposit Update**

The Auditor-Controller has reported receiving 8,931 Direct Deposit Authorization Sign-Up Forms, PA 1675, from DPSS participants in 2004. That is approximately 744 applications a month. You have done an excellent job informing our participants about the Direct Deposit Program! **Please continue to keep up the great work!!!!**

As of December 17, 2004, 8,844 CalWORKs and RCA participants were enrolled in direct deposit. This is an increase of 169 more participants than the last report. To continue increasing the number of participants enrolled in direct deposit, please continue to review Direct Deposit Program information with all applicants/participants. A direct deposit update will be provided to you quarterly.