

GAIN: THE BRIDGE TO INDEPENDENCE

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1910 OVERVIEW

CalWORKs/GAIN participants identified as homeless are to be expedited into the GAIN program to receive intensive GAIN services in conjunction with intensive homeless case management services by CalWORKs. The designated Homeless Supportive Services (HSS) GAIN Services Worker (GSW) will be part of the Specialized Supportive Services unit and will coordinate the expedited appointment into GAIN, assess the participant's ability to participate in GAIN, open the Homeless component and issue GAIN services identified by the CalWORKs Homeless Case Managers (HCM).

The HSS GSW will provide intensive case management to the participants until his/her housing situation is stable. This will include referrals to Welfare-to-Work (WtW) activities, including Specialized Supportive Services, if appropriate. In conjunction, the HCM will assist the participants by providing intensive homeless case management activities with the focus to assist the families in finding stable and permanent housing.

1911 KEY POINTS

- GAIN expedites all CalWORKs participants designated as homeless or “at-risk” of being homeless and needing GAIN registration.
- A designated HSS GSW serves those who are homeless or “at-risk” of being homeless.
- The Homeless Component (HFP) consists of various session types pertaining to housing barriers, such as housing locator, housing search, life skills, and money management.
- The Homeless indicator, along with automatic ALERTS in the GEARS Maintain Case Phone and Address (MCAP) screen reflects the current homeless status and automatically terminates open non-compliances and closes/denies any pending sanctions.
- Good cause is granted for three months to participants whose emergency housing situation is unstable. Once the good cause expires, participants shall receive an appointment to discuss the current housing situation and the ability participate in WtW activities.

1912 POLICY

.1 Definitions

.11 Homeless

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A family is considered homeless when it:

- .111 Lacks a fixed and regular nighttime residence;
- .112 Shares a residence with family or friends on a temporary basis;
- .113 Has a primary nighttime residence which consists of a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations;
- .114 Resides in a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- .115 Has a need for housing in a commercial establishment, shelter, publicly funded transitional housing or from a person in the business of renting properties; and
- .116 Received an eviction notice or notice to pay rent or quit.

.12 Homeless Supportive Services (HSS) GSW

A HSS GSW is a designated GSW who expeditiously serves the needs of the homeless or those “at-risk” of being homeless. The HSS GSW specializes in assisting homeless participants with referrals to GAIN activities, including Specialized Supportive Services, which will enable the participant to remove barriers, increase skills and find employment which will help them sustain stable housing.

.13 Homeless Component

The Homeless Component provides a means to identify, track and provide transportation, child care, and ancillary services to participants in homeless activities. Participants can be referred to housing locator services, housing search, life skills and money management under this component. The homeless component code in GEARS is HFP.

.14 Housing Locator

The housing locators consist of two contracting agencies, Del Richardson & Associates and Weingart Center Access, who assist families in finding and obtaining permanent affordable housing. Additionally, the Chief Administrative Offices (CAO) contracts with Beyond Shelter to provide housing locator services to families

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residing in the Skid Row area of Los Angeles County. Only HCMs assigned to Skid Row can refer families to Beyond Shelter.

The housing locator contractors provide the following services:

- .141 Assist with locating and obtaining affordable permanent housing;
- .142 Transport and accompany families to potential rental housing;
- .143 Assist with: the completion of credit reports, rental agreements and/or applications for affordable permanent housing; clearing bad credit; and establishing credit and/or helping clear eviction history. Services are continued to families for up to six months after they are placed in permanent housing;
- .144 Provide information and training to families on tenant rights and responsibilities, and advocate on behalf of the families when their rights have been violated; and
- .145 Maintain ongoing communication with the HCM to discuss progress/barriers/resolutions for families in obtaining permanent housing.

.2 Identification of Homeless

Participants can be identified as homeless participants through two different approaches:

.21 Eligibility Worker (EW) Identifies Participant as Homeless

The EW identifies most participants who are homeless when the participant self-declares homelessness at the time of the CalWORKs (CW) application, CW redetermination, or at any time or when the participant requests any type of homeless assistance. It is the responsibility of the EW to update LEADER to identify the case as homeless by changing the home address to the District's address, update the Homeless Assistance Summary screen on Data Collection, make a referral to the Homeless Case Manager and update the case summary special indicator known as the "HBCM Intake Completed" on LEADER.

Once the homeless indicator is updated on LEADER, it will transmit the information to GEARS. The GSW will receive an alert identifying

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the participant as homeless.

.22 GSW Identifies Participant as Homeless

In instances where the case-carrying GSW discovers the participant is homeless, the GSW will update the homeless flag indicator on GEARS. The homeless indicator flag will pass the information to LEADER and eligibility staff will then take appropriate actions pertaining to benefits referrals to the HCM.

.3 Automated Homeless Indicators

The homeless flag field on the MCAP screen on GEARS will automatically display a “Yes” when LEADER passes over information that the participant is homeless and revert it back to “No” if and when LEADER passes over information that the participant is no longer homeless.

Once the homeless indicator is updated on LEADER, it will send the information to GEARS. In these instances, the GSW will receive an alert identifying the participant as homeless.

.31 The Indicator Flag Is on “Yes”

When the indicator flag is on “Yes,” the following automated actions occur:

- .311 Open non-compliance is terminated and an alert is generated to the GSW;
- .312 Pending recommended and future sanctions are closed/denied and an alert is generated to the GSW;
- .313 Sanctions are automatically ended and a GEARS alert is generated to the last GSW of record. In addition, a weekly report will be generated to the respective GAIN Region, broken out by GSW file number; and
- .314 The initiation of non-compliance, both automatically by GEARS and manually by case management staff, will be blocked for three months from the date the indicator was updated to indicate homelessness. Once the three months have ended, it will allow non-compliance to be initiated. However, non-compliance will only be initiated if the participant fails to attend, without good cause, the scheduled appointment.

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.32 The Indicator Flag Is on “No”

When the indicator flag reverts to a “No,” it indicates that GEARS has recognized that either LEADER has updated a new current address or the GSW updated the Maintain Case Phone and Address (MCAP) screen and the participant is no longer homeless.

.4 Homeless Referral Process

.41 Referrals from the HCM for Participants Not Registered in GAIN

The regional HSS GSW is contacted via e-mail or telephone by the HCM to request a GAIN expedited appointment for the homeless participants not registered in GAIN.

An appointment date and time for the Appraisal appointment is arranged by the HSS GSW, in conjunction with the HCM and the participant. Subsequently, an Appraisal appointment for the participant with the HSS GSW is scheduled by the scheduling clerk.

.42 Referrals from the HCM for Participants Already in GAIN

GAIN participants receiving homeless services are referred to the HSS GSW by the HCM via email or telephone. The HSS GSW takes actions as needed to ensure the case is transferred from the current GSW and needed services are provided.

.43 Referrals from GSWs

Participants, who are identified as homeless by the GSW, are provided information on the availability of homeless services. The participant's homeless status is provided to the Housing Resource Eligibility Supervisor for needed actions. GEARS is updated to reflect the change.

If the participant is able to continue participating in his/her GAIN activity and intensive case management is not needed, the case will remain with the case-carrying GSW.

If the participant is not able to continue in his/her GAIN activity and needs intensive case management and/or needs to be given good cause for not participating, the case is to be transferred to the HSS GSW following the standard regional case transfer procedures.

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.5 Homeless Assignment

.51 Prior to the Appointment

The participant's housing needs and any other barriers disclosed by the participant to the HCM are shared with the HSS GSW prior to the Appraisal/activity assignment appointment.

The New Housing Plan section under the Permanent Housing Assistance Services (PHASE) Client Information Screen is accessible by the HSS GSW to view details updated by the HCM, such as the specific needs of the family, summary of transportation already issued, and other useful information needed to provide unduplicated services.

Prior to the appointment, the GAIN case is reviewed by the HSS GSW for current/past GAIN activity.

.52 Appointment

Issues such as the participant's housing situation, ability to participate in GAIN activities, exemptions, good cause, WtW activities, Specialized Supportive Services, supportive services and sanctions are discussed with the participant, the HCM and the HSS GSW.

The HSS GSW, the HCM, and the participant decide if the housing situation is stable enough for participation in WtW activities. Participation in any WtW activities, for any number of hours, enabling the participant the removal of barriers and an increase in his/her income is encouraged for homeless participants. The participant's work history is discussed and the regional Business Service Specialist (BSS) is contacted for job leads. The BSS personally meets with the participant if available/needed.

.6 Homeless Component

All participants who are receiving assistance in locating housing are assigned in GEARS within one workday by the HSS GSW to the Homeless Component with the appropriate session type indicated by the HCM. This includes participants who can only participate in housing search activities and not GAIN activities. The homeless component shall be opened in GEARS within one workday.

Supportive and ancillary services, such as the authorization of transportation, child care and credit checks as requested by landlords to

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secure a rental property, can be authorized under this component for housing search activities.

.61 Participant Is Unable to Participate

If the participant is unable to participate in GAIN activities, he/she may be granted good cause from participation. Good cause for non-participation in a GAIN activity may be granted in GEARS for up to three months if the emergency needs are not yet resolved. After the third month, the GSW needs to schedule the participant for an appointment.

Additional good cause after the third month must be reviewed and approved by the GAIN Services Supervisor (GSS). Participants granted good cause continue to work with the HCM and the Housing Locator Contractor to resolve housing barriers.

.62 Participant Is Able to Participate

The appropriate activity(ies) are determined by the HSS GSW, HCM and the participant based on the participant's previous GAIN participation and the current situation.

Newly registered GAIN participants attend an appraisal appointment with the HSS GSW. If the participant is unable to attend the GAIN Orientation, the information normally provided at Orientation is provide by the HSS GSW. This includes literacy and Specialized Supportive Services screenings.

.621 Referral to Vocational Assessment

If the participant is not actively participating in a WtW activity and has not attended Vocational Assessment within the year and/or does not need to attend Clinical Assessment, Orientation and/or Job Club, the participant is to be referred to Vocational Assessment.

The assessor is provided information on the homeless status of the participant as well as the housing search activities by the HSS GSW when the appointment is made. Taking into consideration the housing search activities, an educational employment plan is then developed by the Assessor.

The GSW, when deemed appropriate and on an exception basis, may refer the participant for reassessment. The reassessment needs to be completed by the assessor who

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completed the original assessment.

If the original Assessor is unable to conduct the reassessment, the GSW must mail a copy of the original results to the Assessor seven days prior to the appointment date.

After receiving the employment plan, a WtW Plan is developed with the assignment of an appropriate activity by the HSS GSW. The amount of hours a participant is to be engaged in WtW activity(ies) is based on the housing situation/search.

The homeless participant is to be encouraged to participate in the PWE/SWE component, which has the potential of increasing his/her income. First-hand knowledge of basic skills, workplace behaviors, self-confidence, work history, paycheck and assistance with job placement are the results of the PWE/SWE activity that leads to the unsubsidized employment.

.7 Permanent Housing

Once permanent housing is established, the homeless indicator in GEARS is updated by the HSS GSW. The case is then transferred back to the original case-carrying GSW following existing regional procedures.

.8 Increase in Participation Hours

If the participant has been in WtW activities for less than 32/35 hours a week, an appointment letter to discuss the need to increase the hours of participation is sent to the participant by the GSW. Standard procedures in assigning the participant to additional WTW activities are to be followed by the GSW.

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1913 DECISION CHART

.1 Homeless Decision Chart

