

Connecting Clients to Mainstream Benefits

July 28, 2022



Introductions

Shelby Ferguson, H3

Attendees will...

1

Have and awareness of mainstream benefits available to people experiencing homelessness.

2

Understand the basic requirements of each benefit, eligibility requirements, application process and documentation needed.

3

Understand where to go for additional information or questions when needing to connect people experiencing homelessness to Mainstream Benefits.



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

EMPLOYMENT & HUMAN SERVICES

CalFRESH

Nanci Powers and Rosalyn Guillory

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

EMPLOYMENT & HUMAN SERVICES

CalFresh: Description

- Formerly known as *Food Stamps* and federally known as the *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program* (SNAP)
- Issues monthly electronic benefits that help improve the health and well-being of qualified households and individuals by providing them a means to meet their nutritional needs.

CalFresh: Eligibility

- Based on gross and net income levels for CalFresh household size and household composition.
- Must apply with others that they purchase and prepare meals with.

CalFresh: Expedited Services

- In certain circumstances applicants can have their eligibility determined and benefits issued within 3 days if found eligible to CalFresh. (Expedited Services)
- If not eligible to Expedited Services, the customer's CalFresh application approved or denied within 30 days from date of application.

CalFresh: Documentation Needed

- Proof of identity
- Proof of earned and unearned income
- Social Security Number
- Must be a resident of county where applied (customer's statement is proof unless questionable)
- Citizenship (customer's statement unless questionable)
- In some cases proof of certain expenses might be required to allow deductions in income.



Check your
Knowledge!

*CalFresh is formerly
known as (pick one):*

- a) *Stamping Out Hunger*
- b) *Food Stamps*
- c) *WIC*
- d) *General Assistance*



Questions about CalFRESH



CaIWORKS

Nanci Powers and Rosalyn
Guillory

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

EMPLOYMENT & HUMAN SERVICES

CalWORKs: Description

- Program to promote and encourage work to enable families to:
 - become self-sufficient;
 - provide financial aid for children who lack financial support and care;
 - protect and preserve the family unit;
 - provide the opportunity for rehabilitation of the family whenever possible; and
 - make available to children who cannot live in their own homes the kind of care and treatment best suited to their needs.

CalWORKs: Eligibility

Deprivation: the aided child must be deprived of parental support or care because at least one parent is:

- deceased; or
- either physically or mentally incapacitated; or
- the applicant parent is not working or working less than 100 hours per month; or continually absent from the home.

Age: children may be eligible for CalWORKs until their 18th birthday or are 18 years old and in high school or vocational school full time and are expected to complete either program before their 19th birthday.

Property: The property of a child and the parent(s) must be under the following limits:

- Families without elderly members may have \$10,211 combined personal and real property per family.
- Families with elderly members (those who are 60 years of age or older) may have \$15,317

CalWORKs: Application

- The application for CalWORKs includes completion of eligibility forms and an interview with an Eligibility Worker. Aid cannot begin until all conditions of eligibility have been verified. These conditions include, but are not limited to:
 - Applying for a Social Security number.
 - Verifying citizenship, or showing proof of legal immigration status
 - Verifying income and property.
 - Applying for potentially available income such as Unemployment Insurance Benefits.
 - Cooperating with the District Attorney and securing child support from the absent parent.

CalWORKs: Documentation Needed

Depending on the applicant's situation the following items may be required when applying for CalWORKs:

- Identification such as Driver's License or Identification Card for each parent or caretaker in the home
- Social Security cards for every family member for whom aid is requested
- Birth certificates for every family member in the home
- Immunization records for every child under the age of six years for whom aid is requested
- Registrations for each car owned, co-owned or being bought or leased
- Ownership papers for land and/or buildings owned, co-owned or being bought
- Receipts or bills of sale for any recreational vehicles such as boats, trailers, motor homes, etc.

Welfare-to-Work: Description

- Program for work eligible CalWORKs adults which supports underemployed and unemployed parents develop work skills and/or education to assist the family in becoming self-sufficient.
- Additionally, barrier-removal services are available for the family, such as domestic violence services, mental health, substance misuse services, English-as-a-Second-Language courses, learning needs evaluations, etc.
- Supportive Services are available to provide support to the eligible adult, such as transportation to/from his/her activity, ancillary support, payment for books/supplies when in an approved educational activity, and child-care, when eligible.



Check your
Knowledge!

*Can a parent apply for
CalWORKs assistance for
their child only?*

a) Yes

b) No

Questions about CalWorks



MediCal

Nanci Powers and Rosalyn
Guillory

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

EMPLOYMENT & HUMAN SERVICES

Medi-Cal: Description

- Medi-Cal is California's Medicaid health care program. This program pays for a variety of medical services for children and adults with limited income and resources. Medi-Cal is supported by federal and state taxes.

Medi-Cal: Eligibility

- Adults who are 65 years of age or older
- Adults who are parents or caretaker relatives that have any children under 21 years of age living in the home
- Adults who are legally blind or disabled
- Children birth through age 20
- Individuals under age 26 and age 50 and older are eligible for full-scope Medi-Cal regardless of immigration status.

Medicare: Description

- A health insurance program for people 65 years of age or older, some people with disabilities under age 65, and people with end-stage renal disease.

Medicare: Eligibility

- Individual or their spouse:
 - worked for at least 10 years in Medicare-covered employment
 - they are 65 years old
 - a citizen or permanent residents of the US
- The individual is under 65 and has received SSDI for two years or longer
- The individual has end stage renal disease

Applying for CalFresh, CalWORKS, or Medi-Cal Benefits

- Applications can be completed online at <https://www.mybenefitscalwin.org/>
- Customers can request a paper application be mailed to them or can download an application for CalFresh at www.ehsd.org. Applications can then be dropped off at a local office, faxed or mailed into an EHSO office. An Eligibility Worker will contact the customer to complete the application process.



Check your
Knowledge!

*A property evaluation is
required for a Non-MAGI
Medi-Cal eligibility
determination.*

- a) True
- b) False

Questions about MediCal

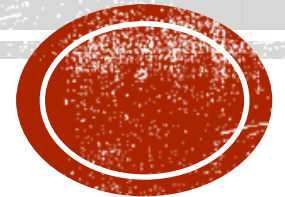


General Assistance (GA)

Magdalene Gabel



**GENERAL
ASSISTANCE (GA)
PROGRAM**



GENERAL ASSISTANCE (GA) BASICS

- Every county in California is required to provide relief and support to all residents who are not supported by their own means, by friends or relatives, by other public funds, or by other assistance programs. In Contra Costa County, General Assistance is the program that provides temporary assistance to individuals who are not eligible for federal or state-funded cash assistance.
- Each county's program is established by its own Board of Supervisors. Its policies and regulations are subject to change by the Board of Supervisors depending upon the funds available to the program.



MORE GA BASICS

- Is a short-term, employment-focused program, for persons unable to sustain gainful employment and have no other means of support.
- GA provides payments to eligible residents who don't qualify for other public assistance programs.
- GA Applicants are typically, single, unemployed adults with no dependents, and are often disabled.
- GA is technically a loan and must be repaid. Repayment is typically done thru the SSI recoupment process once SSI is approved.
- GA provides continued aid for individuals unable to sustain gainful employment while they are applying for and securing a continuing source of support, such as Supplemental Security Income/State Supplemental Payment (SSI/SSP).



GA ELIGIBILITY FACTORS

- Any resident of Contra Costa County may be eligible for General Assistance providing they meet the minimum eligibility qualifications which are comprised of the following components:
 - Employment earnings and unearned income,
 - Income,
 - Property and resources,
 - Residency –Be a County resident for at least 15 days,
 - Citizenship status -Be a legal permanent resident or US Citizen,
 - A full financial eligibility determination is made at the time of application and throughout the period of assistance.
- Employment Earnings include the following:
 - Any income receive by applicant or his/her spouse will be considered as income,
 - Wages from self employment,
 - Self Employment,
 - Recycling,
- Unearned Income includes the following:
 - Monetary gifts, loans, tax refunds,
 - Unemployment benefits,
 - Retirement, Tax refunds,
 - Government benefits such as SSI/SSP, workers compensation, and State Disability.



CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY FACTORS:

Earned income includes the following:

- Any income for retirement, unemployment and disability income, etc.,
- Income including any monetary gifts are considered income,
- Less than \$50 in the bank or on their person.

- **Property and Resources include the following:**
 - A car that is valued at or below \$4500;
 - GA applicants may own a home that she/he lives in as this is considered excluded property.

- **QR7 – Quarterly Reporting :**
 - This is the Quarterly Income Report form for GA that needs to be completed every quarter.
 - An estimated QR7 is done at intake to indicate any actual or anticipated income.

- **RRR- Annual Redetermination or Recertification:**
 - GA recipients must complete their RRR paperwork every 12 months.
 - A face to face meeting is required for all homeless individuals who are unable to sustain gainful employment.
 - A face to face interview may be required if factors affecting eligibility or the grant amount cannot be determined with out a face to face meeting. This meeting may take place at the district office or with a home visit if the recipient is unable to come to the office.
 - All eligibility factors will be reviewed to ensure continuing eligibility.



ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

- GA staff process applications for Medical and Cal fresh benefits as well as General Assistance benefits.
- Provide emergency food services.
- Provide job interview clothing, tools needed for employment, and other resources to assist individuals in securing gainful employment.
- Bus Passes and Bus Tickets.
- Homeless Services are provided such as;
 - Assistance to obtain placement in a county shelter
 - hygiene kits,
 - Sleeping bags,
 - Clothing and shoes as needed.



APPLYING FOR GA

- There are a few ways Individuals can apply for GA/GR:
 - By coming in person to any of our Employment & Human Services Department locations and request a GA application.
 - Individuals who want to apply for General Assistance can go to www.MyBenefitsCalWIN.org to submit an application.
 - Individuals may also apply for General Assistance by calling [\(925\) 957-5647](tel:9259575647) or [\(925\) 957-5648](tel:9259575648) (en español). Staff will conduct a phone interview to determine eligibility for GA.
 - This call will trigger a GA appointment to be scheduled and notification to be mailed to the mailing address provided with the appointment date and time.
 - Para ayuda con Asistencia General, llame [\(925\) 957-5648](tel:9259575648)
- Office Locations:
 - 1305 Macdonald Ave in Richmond
 - 400 Ellinwood Way in Pleasant Hill
 - 4545 Delta Fair Blvd in Antioch
- Once the individual applies for GA in-person or otherwise, he/she will be given a GA Intake appointment. This appointment will take place over the phone, unless the applicant expressly states they want to be seen in person.
- The Intake appointment will cover completing all required forms, providing all necessary verifications.



WHAT TO BRING OR HAVE AVAILABLE TO PROVIDE AT INTAKE

- Individuals applying for GA should be prepared to provide information regarding:
 - Medical verification of disability,
 - Current Identification,
 - Current verification of legal permanent residency status,
 - Verification of the following types of property and income:
 - Ownership of their vehicle,
 - Any taxes filed the amount and documents related to the tax return,
 - Bank accounts that are closed (you may be asked to provide verification that these accounts are actually closed prior to determining eligibility)
 - Bank accounts open and the balance in the account.
 - Any other additional verification of income and/or property, this includes Venmo, cash app accounts, and other accounts of this nature.

ARE YOU
ELIGIBLE?



INTAKE

- During the Intake appointment GA applicants can expect the following:
 - Listen and agree to the GA rights and responsibilities as an GA benefit recipient.
 - GA forms reviewed and explained.
 - Meet with their assigned GA Intake Worker to complete the intake interview either in person or by phone.
 - Complete a Substance Abuse Evaluation to be referred to the GA Alcohol & Drug Diversion Services,
 - Referred and assigned to an SSI Advocacy Worker if unable to work longer than 12 months.
 - Request any homeless assistance resources, accept an offer of an available shelter bed and address any other shelter needs.
 - Assess any other barriers to sustaining gainful employment.



CATEGORIES RECEIVING GA

LEVEL 1 = INDIVIDUALS ABLE TO SUSTAIN GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT

- These individuals have no verifiable physical or mental disability which precludes any employment. They are eligible for aid for 90 days in a 12 month timeframe.
- Individuals who apply for GA and at intake do not indicate or provide verification of disability are considered able to sustain gainful employment.
- While receiving GA benefits, these individuals are required to look for three (3) jobs.
- These Individuals are considered able to sustain gainful employment and are thus only eligible to receive the General Assistance payments for a maximum of 90-days in a twelve-month period.



CATEGORIES RECEIVING GA(CONT.)

LEVEL 2 = INDIVIDUALS CONSIDERED TO HAVE TEMPORARY BARRIERS TO SUSTAINING GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT

- ❑ These individuals must have at least one of the following conditions:
 1. Have a verifiable physical or mental disability which precludes the ability to maintain sustained gainful employment. The disability is expected to last less than twelve months.
 - These individuals should have their medical provider complete the GA 341 which states they have a mental or physical disability that precludes their ability to maintain gainful employment.
 - Or
 2. Have completed a Substance Abuse Counseling (SAC) appointment with a positive referral to General Assistance Drug Diversion Services (GAADDS).
- ❑ Individuals with temporary barriers to sustain gainful employment may receive GA for up to 12 months.



CATEGORIES RECEIVING GA (CONT.)



LEVEL 3 =

UNABLE TO SUSTAIN GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT

- These individuals are either:
 - Age 65 or over, or
 - legally blind, or
 - Have a verifiable physical or mental disability which precludes any ability to sustain gainful employment, and which has lasted or is expected to last twelve months or longer.
- Individuals who may have a mental or physical disability and have medical verification can receive GA continuously while they are disabled.
- These individuals should have their medical provider complete the GA 341 which states they have a mental or physical disability that precludes their ability to maintain gainful employment.
- These individuals will also be referred to advocacy for assistance in applying for Supplemental Security Income (SSI).



APPEAL RIGHTS

- **Notice of Action (NOA)**
 - A NOA is written notification that is sent to the GA recipient any time a negative action is taken on a individual's case that affects their GA benefits.
 - The NOA will have the appeal rights, instructions on how to file an appeal, the time frame required to file an appeal. In addition, there is other helpful information partially listed below:
 - Good Cause Information
 - ADA assistance
 - Free Legal Advice by contacting BALA
 - Other information



REQUESTING AN APPEAL TO ANY GA NEGATIVE ACTION

- You have the right to a Conference with your General Assistance (GA) worker to talk about this intended action. At such a conference, you may speak for yourself or be represented by a lawyer, a friend, or other person. If you want a conference with your worker or a supervisor's review of this proposed action, contact your GA worker prior to the date that this action will take place.
- If this notice proposes a denial, discontinuance, aid reduction, or a period of ineligibility for failure to meet program requirements, you are entitled to a Hearing at which the Employment and Human Services Department (EHSD) you must prove your failure to comply and you will be given the opportunity to show that the failure is excused for good cause.
This is a list of good cause reasons. (Verification may be required).
- The failure has occurred due to your physical or mental disability
- You have obtained employment
- You had a scheduled job interview or job testing the day of your GA appointment
- You had a mandatory Court appearance the day of your GA appointment
- You were in jail or prison the day that you had your GA appointment
- There was a death in your family
- You had a breakdown of your transportation arrangements
- The failure to comply was insubstantial (such as failure to date a form)
- The Employment and Human Services Department (EHSD) made an error or other valid reason approved by EHSD.
- Regardless of whether you request a Conference or not, you also have the right to request a Hearing and a decision. Your request for a Hearing must be in writing and it **must be mailed or delivered to the Employment and Human Services Department within 30 days of the date of this notice, including the date of the notice.**
If you need assistance or Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations to assist you in filing an appeal, call your GA worker and let him/her know that you need assistance to file an appeal
- If you ask for a Hearing within 30 days of the date of this notice, and if this notice proposes a reduction or termination of a GA grant that you are now receiving, your aid will continue until a Hearing decision has been reached. If the decision is that you were not entitled to the aid that you were paid, the overpayment may be recovered from you by reducing your General Assistance grant after the decision, or through other legal means. At a Hearing you have the right to be represented by an attorney or any other person of your choice. If you need an interpreter we will provide one for you. You may obtain free legal advice and services by contacting the nearest legal services office at:

You have the right to request that the GA worker, or any staff member who has actual knowledge regarding the issue under appeal, be present at the Hearing as a witness. Regulations governing Hearings are available at this office of the county welfare department.

- Please include one copy of this notice with your hearing request and keep a copy for your records. If you wish to have your worker or other staff person present at the Hearing, please indicate that on your Hearing request.
REMEMBER THAT YOUR REQUEST FOR HEARING MUST BE MAILED OR DELIVERED TO THE EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT WITHIN 30 DAYS FROM THE DATE OF THIS NOTICE.

NOA BACKER

BAY AREA LEGAL AID

Central & East County:

(925) 219-3325

West County: (510) 250-5270

Legal Advice Line: (800) 551-5554

IF YOU WISH TO REQUEST A HEARING, WRITE TO:

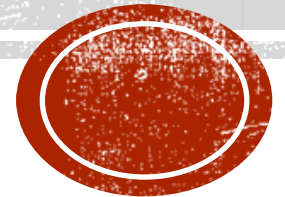
Office of the Appeals Coordinator

**400 Ellinwood Way,
Pleasant Hill CA 94523**



THANK YOU

"The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little."
— Franklin D. Roosevelt, 32nd President of the United States





Check your
Knowledge!

*Is someone on parole
potentially eligible for
General Assistance?*

a) Yes

b) No

Questions about GA



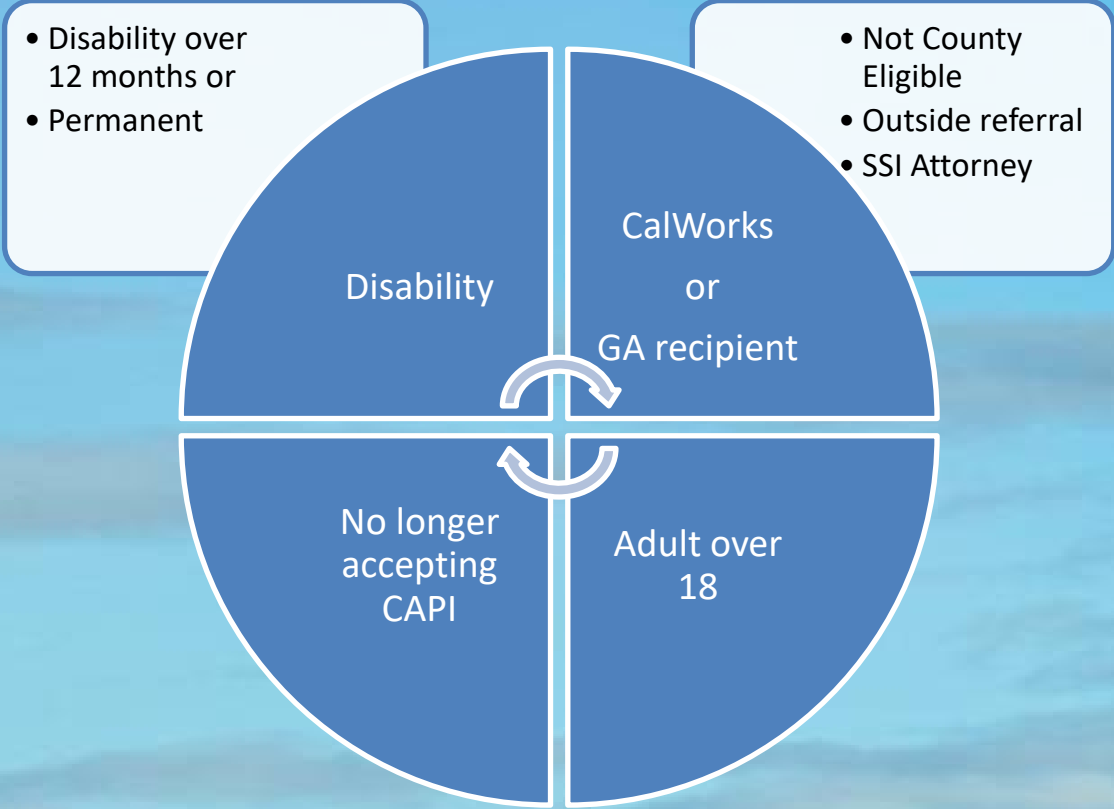
SSI/SSDI

Renata Pierce

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

EMPLOYMENT & HUMAN SERVICES

Eligibility



Social Security



SSI/RSDI (Retirement, Survivor,
Disability Insurance)

Title 16/ Title 2 or Income vs Work
Quarters



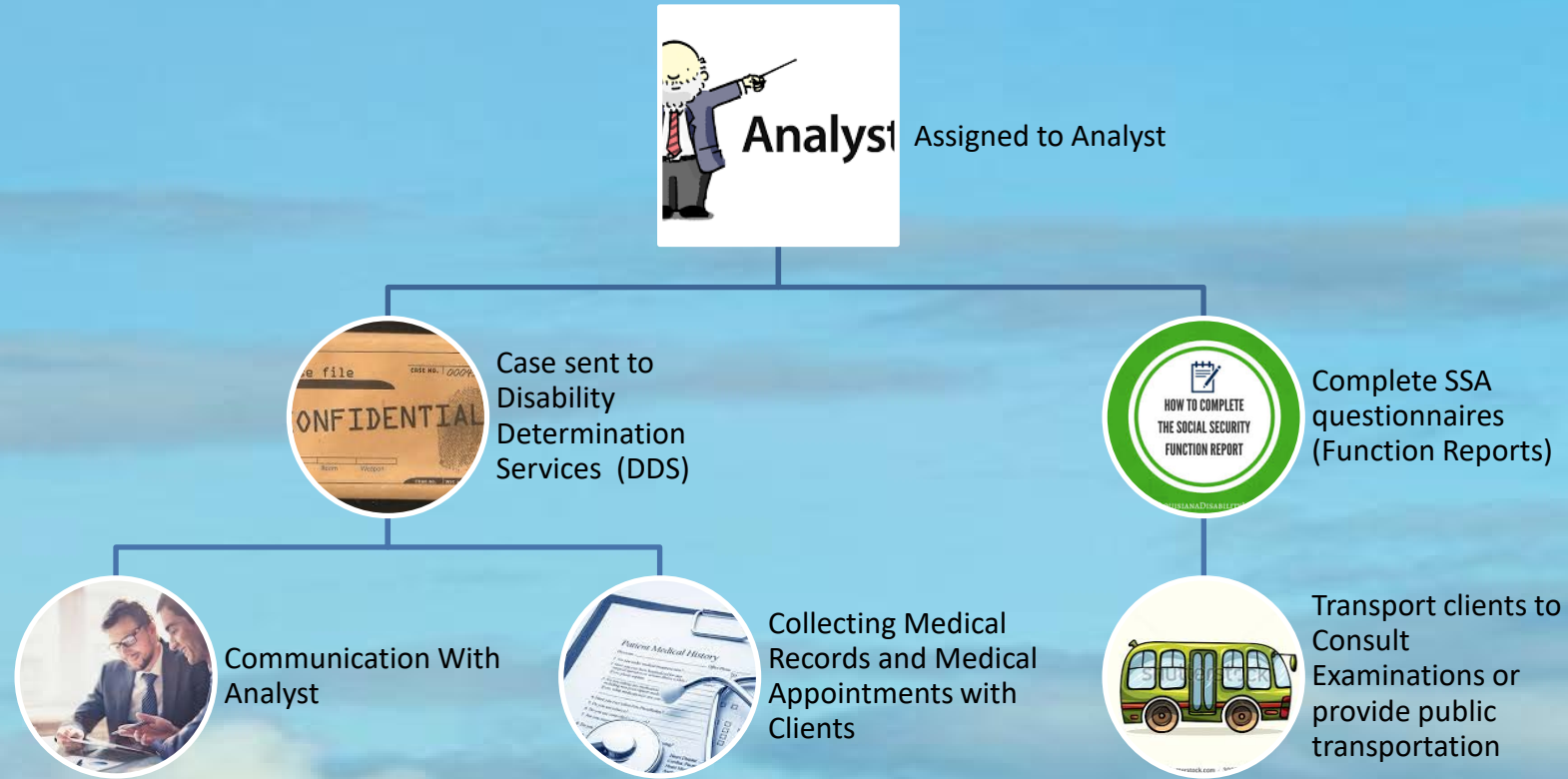
SSI application – SSA 8000 (paper only)

- CCP Pilot Application
- Requires disability income eligible
- Application process time approximately 2 hours

Time Line of Application



Review Process



Denied Applications

60 Days to file an Appeal (+5 mailing days)

- On-line/Office Visit/Paper
- If appeal deadline is missed ~ Can file a Good Cause Appeal

Types of Appeals

- Reconsideration Appeal
- Hearing Appeal
 - Attorney referral
- Appeals Council



Granted Claims

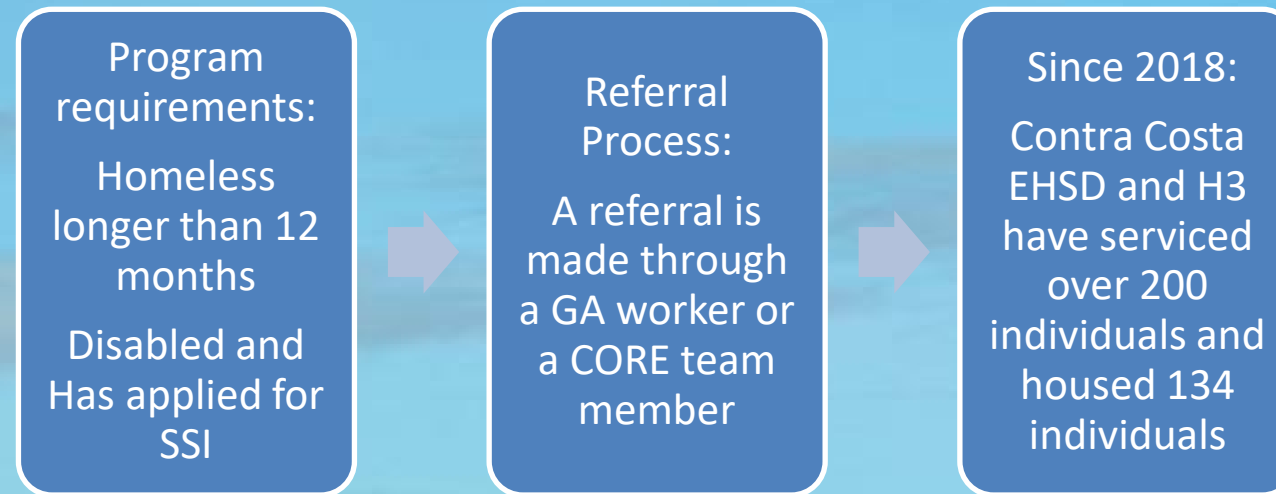
Receive Letter in Mail

Attend Financial/Perk Appointment	Common Problems (Based on hard to serve population)	Get off County Aid
Has 30 days to follow up, then One Year (if not must start all over with Application)	Client Does not want one	
Representative Payee	No friends or family Limited payee options Not connected to Mental Health	



HDAP

Homeless Disabled Advocacy Program



Advocacy Unit Members and Contact information

Renata Pierce - Social Work Supervisor
Antioch, Pleasant Hill and Richmond
925-608-6029

Fulvia Whitehead – Social Worker
Pleasant Hill
925-655-1037

Rahsaan Robinson – Social Worker
Antioch and Pleasant Hill
925-608- 6027 or 925- 655-1038

Maria Sepulveda – Social Worker
Antioch
925 – 608-6028

Denica Watley – Unit Support
Antioch
925-608-6020

Leenetta Bailes – Social Worker
Richmond
510-942-3632

Scott Sanders – Social Worker
Richmond
510-942-3633





Check your
Knowledge!

Which statement is true?

- a) SSI cannot be discontinued
- b) SSDI is for injuries that are expected to last less than 12 months, example broken leg, pregnancy
- c) SSDI is long term

Questions about SSI/SSDI



SOAR Training

Lisa Thomas



Coordinated Outreach, Referral & Engagement

SOAR Online Training Course

This course trains caseworkers to assist adults (age 18+) who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have:

- serious mental illness
- medical impairment and/or a
- co-occurring substance use disorder

to apply for the:

- Social Security Administration's (SSA) disability programs
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and
- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)



SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Online Course: Adult Curriculum

<https://soarworks.samhsa.gov/course/soar-online-course-adult-curriculum>



Check your
Knowledge!

The SOAR training trains case workers to help people apply for which programs?

- a) SSI, SSDI, SSA disability programs
- b) SSI, VA veteran programs, SSDI
- c) SSI, GA, SSDI

Mainstream
Benefits

What if an
application is
denied?

Abby Khodayari

Senior Staff Attorney

Bay Area Legal Aid

akhodayari@baylegal.org

Appealing Negative Actions – What to Appeal

- Denied Application
 - Includes verbal denials and failure to timely process applications
- Approved Application
 - Benefit start date
 - Calculation of the grant
- Overpayment
- Reduction of Benefits
- Denial of Services
 - Auxiliary benefits
 - Access to doctors, coverage of prescriptions
- Termination

Appealing Negative Actions – Social Security

- Level 1: Request for Reconsideration
 - Can be submitted online for most appeals
 - Informal conference: discuss appeal with SSA staff before decision is made
- Level 2: Hearing Request
 - Long delays (1 year+ before the pandemic)
- Level 3: Appeals Council Review
 - Very low success rate
- Deadlines
 - 60 days from receipt of notice
 - Assume notice was received 5 days after date on notice
 - Continuing benefits deadline 10 days after receipt of notice

Appealing Negative Actions – EHSD Benefits

- First, talk to your worker
 - Could be a simple mistake and easily corrected
- Ombudsperson: Julie Peck
 - (925) 788-1722
 - advocacyandresolution@gmail.com
- Request a hearing
 - If you cannot resolve the issue with your worker, file an appeal
 - Can be done online:
<https://acms.dss.ca.gov/acms/page.request.do?page=public.intakeForm>
- Deadlines
 - 90 days from date on notice, up to 180 days with good cause
 - Aid Paid Pending: Before the effective date of action for most programs

Appealing Negative Actions – General Assistance

- First, talk to your worker
 - Could be a simple mistake and easily corrected

- Submit your hearing request in writing:

Office of the Appeals Coordinator

400 Ellinwood Way

Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

- If needed, can call (925) 521-5053 to make request
- 30-day deadline to request a hearing – day 1 is the date on the notice!

Other Deadlines Issues

- May need to appeal right away (within 10 days) to receive “Aid Paid Pending” or “Benefits Continuation”
- Sometimes can argue good cause for a late filing of an appeal

What are the rights of someone receiving public benefits?

- To be treated without discrimination
- To language access
- To disability accommodations
- To confidentiality
- To adequate notice
- To file an administrative appeal to challenge action or inaction

BayLegal Services



- Advice on all Public Benefits
- Representation for many if terminated or denied benefits; limited representation for overpayments/over-issuances; denial of SSI/SSDI varies by county
- Alameda County: SSI/SSDI project, Youth JJC
- Youth regional project
- SF: Legal Barriers to Employment Project (LBEP)
- Contra Costa, Alameda and Santa Clara re-entry
- Health Consumer Center

Need Help?

Bay Area Legal Aid – Richmond Office

1025 Macdonald Avenue

Richmond, CA 94801

(510) 233-9954

Legal Advice Line: (800) 551-5554

Health Consumer Center: (855) 693-7285



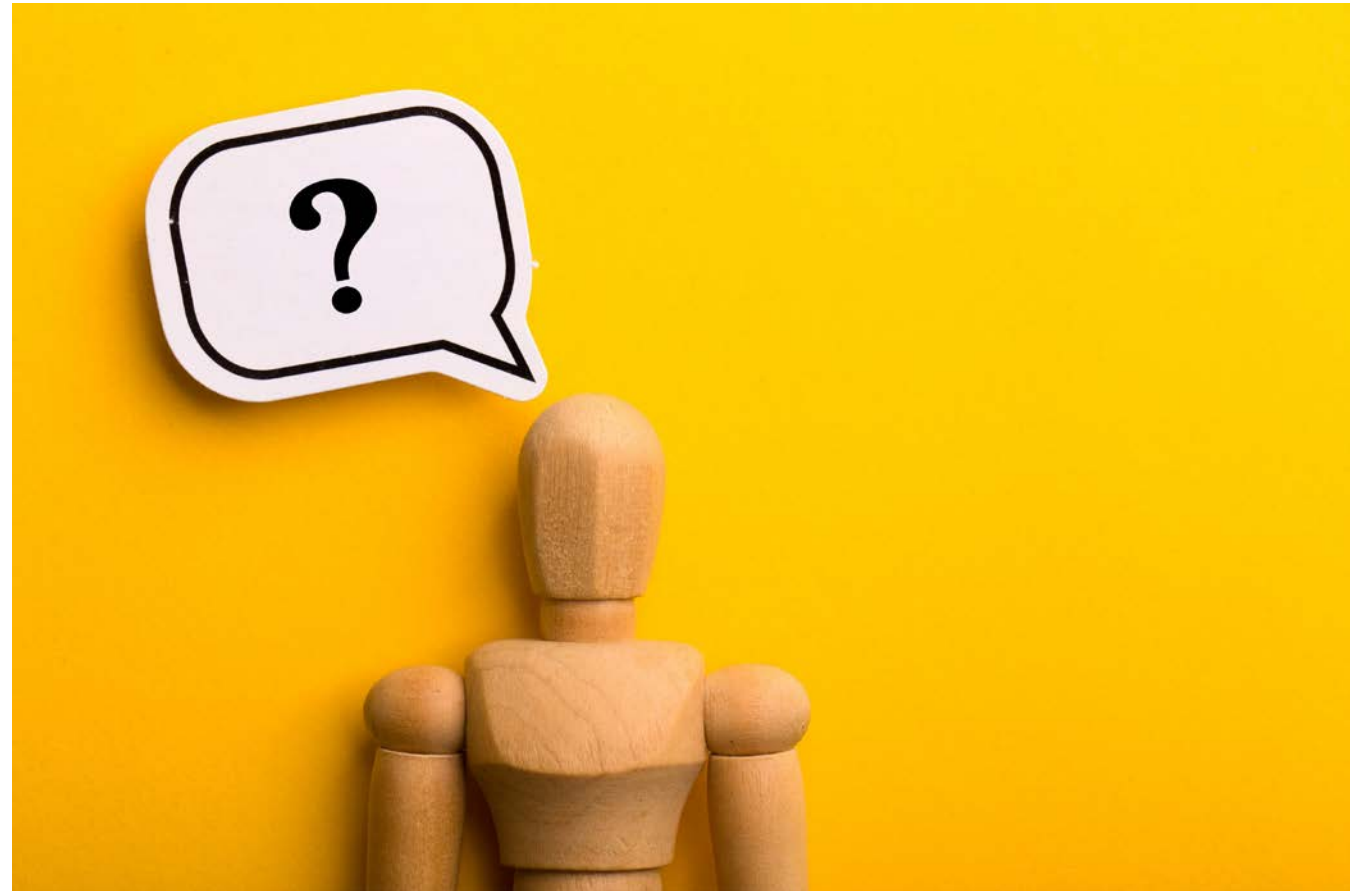
Check your
Knowledge!

What types of issues should you request an appeal on?

- A. Only Social Security decisions
- B. Only denied applications because overpayments cannot be appealed
- C. Anytime a notice is issued
- D.** When in doubt, file an appeal on any negative action or inaction taken on your case, no matter which benefit you are receiving.



Questions about appeals



Q&A



Survey

<https://forms.office.com/g/UbfuQL2Nu4>