

County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency (HSA) CalWORKs Program Guide

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Background:

Effective January 1, 2014 Assembly Bill (AB) 74 established the Family Stabilization (FS) program, a new CalWORKs (CW) component designed to ensure a basic level of stability within a family prior to, or concurrently with, participation in Welfare-to-Work (WTW) activities.

The FS program provides:

- **In-depth case management** for qualifying WTW participants who are experiencing an emergency and have needs that require to be met immediately to protect their physical, mental and/or emotional safety
- Additional activities and/or barrier removal services necessary to:
 - Prevent recurrent emergencies
 - Ensure satisfactory participation in WTW and achieve self-sufficiency.

Policy

San Diego County implemented the FS program effective May 1, 2014. Based on family needs and available funding, San Diego County may provide the following FS services to eligible WTW participants:

- Homelessness Prevention Services (HPS) [CPG 10-007.B](#)
- Transportation Emergency Assistance (TEA) [CPG 10-007.C](#)
- FS Referral Services [CPG 10-007.D](#).

Qualifying Family Emergencies:

Qualifying circumstances may include:

- Homelessness
- Imminent risk of homelessness
- Lack of physical/mental/emotional safety due to domestic violence or other family emergency
- Untreated or undertreated behavioral needs, including mental health, substance abuse and domestic violence-related needs
- Lack of transportation to and from WTW activities and/or place of employment, when the participant's vehicle is the most cost effective means of transportation ([CPG 10-011.C](#))

FS services may address emergencies affecting not only the eligible WTW participants, but also children in the AU and other eligible family members living in the home.

Eligibility Criteria:

The following individuals may be eligible to FS if the emergency is affecting WTW participation:

- WTW mandatory participants with remaining time on their WTW 24-Month Time Clock
- Additional aided or non-aided family members, as long there is an eligible mandatory participant in the Assistance Unit (AU). The services provided to the additional family members must be related to the crisis preventing the WTW mandatory adult from being able to participate in his/her WTW plan ([ACL 14-12](#), [ACIN I-64-15 Q.#2](#))
- Participants with a child in a CalWORKs AU who is a chronic truant ([CPG 42-100.D](#) [CPG 42-100.F](#), [ACL 15-22](#)), and whose truancy is preventing the parent(s) from participating in WTW activities
- Non-aided parents who are eligible to WTW services while in a Family Reunification plan and are experiencing an emergency affecting participation ([CPG 10-015.C](#), [ACIN I-64-15 Q.#3](#))

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- Participants who are granted a Domestic Violence (DV) waiver ([CPG 40-200.G](#), [ACIN I-64-15 Q.#7](#))
- Non-compliant or sanctioned individuals who agree to sign a WTW Compliance Plan ([CPG 10-025.C](#)), or a Plan to Stop a WTW Sanction ([CPG 10-025.D](#)). Family Stabilization plan can be used to cure WTW sanction in place of a WTW compliance or sanction curing plan ([ACIN I-64-15 Q #4](#))
- CW recipients who are meeting FS eligibility criteria ([CPG 10-007.B](#), [CPG 10-007.C](#), [CPG 10-007.D](#))
- Individuals who are excused ([CPG 10-020.B](#), [CPG 11-001.G](#)), or exempt ([CPG 10-020.A](#)) from WTW participation if:
 - Exemption is expected to end within 60 days from the FS application's submission date
 - Homelessness Prevention Services and/or FS Referral Services are needed to ensure future WTW participation ([ACIN I-64-15 Q #1](#))

See additional HPS and TEA eligibility criteria for excused or exempt individuals in [CPG 10-007.B](#) and [CPG 10-007.C](#).

FS Participation and Compliance:

The length of FS participation varies, depending on the family's circumstances and type of services received.

CalWORKs recipients receiving FS services are not subject to WTW participation requirements ([CPG 10-003.A](#)) for the duration of their participation in the FS program. However, participants **must comply with the requirements of their FS plan and ensure satisfactory progress** to continue receiving FS services.

Each adult in a two-parent family is required to have his/her own FS plan ([ACIN I-64-15 Q #6](#))

Participants who are referred and evaluated for the FS program, but do not agree to participate in the assigned activities, will be referred back to the WTW program ([ACIN I-64-15 Q #15](#)).

The Employment Case Manager (ECM) will complete an assessment at the conclusion of FS participation, if not already completed prior to FS referral, or if a reassessment is required to develop a new WTW plan ([ACIN I-64-15 Q #8](#))

Impact of FS services on the WTW 24-Month Time Clock:

The FS Plan can be used in place of a WTW plan to start the individual's WTW 24-Month Time Clock. Once a client signs his or her individual FS plan, months will begin counting towards the WTW 24-Month Time Clock, unless a Good Cause determination has been made ([ACIN I-64-15 Q #5](#))

Participation in FS services may stop a participant's WTW 24-Month Time Clock for **up to six months**, depending on severity of circumstances and type of services received. Some type of services may defer WTW participation only for a few days, without requiring additional FS services or referrals (e.g. utility and or transportation emergency assistance). In this case Good Cause may be allowed ([CPG 10-020.B](#), [CPG 10-003.B](#) and [CPG 11-001.B](#)) without impacting the WTW Clock.

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FS Eligibility Determination and Case Management:

Trauma-informed case management is essential to ensure the successful participation in the FS program of individuals with history of trauma.

A FS Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) is assembled as needed to:

- Provide a comprehensive assessment of the family's emergency needs
- Understand the effects of traumatic events on the family
- Develop comprehensive plans to respond to the emergency and to prevent reoccurrences
- Coordinate FS services and communication between service providers and families
- Ensure the most effective use of available resources
- Identify and address service gaps
- Provide in-depth case management to:
 - Monitor participant's progress in assigned FS activities
 - Evaluate the need for additional referrals and supportive services
 - Provide support to ensure successful participation
 - Assist in the transition to WTW activities
 - Make follow-up contacts with the family
- Help team members to resolve difficult cases by sharing expertise, strategies, resources and best practices

Family Stabilization MDT may include Employment Case Manager (ECM), FS Coordinator (FSC), FS Specialist (FSS), and any other parties who may assist the family to address the emergency and prevent similar situations that could negatively affect future participation in WTW activities and employment.

FS Timeframes:

- FS services must be approved, denied, or discontinued, within the timeframes outlined in [CPG 10-007.B](#), [CPG 10-007.C](#)
- Approval, denial, or discontinuance notices must be issued at the time FS services are approved, denied, or discontinued. See [ACIN I-02-14](#) for adequate notice requirements.

FS Payment Limits:

The FS program provides limited financial assistance to address housing/utility/transportation emergencies. In order to help more families, San Diego County has established a 12-month cumulative payment limit, which is specific to the number of family members in the Assistance Unit ([CPG 41.500.A](#), [CPG 41-500.D](#)):

AU size	12-Month Family Limit
1-4	\$3,000
5-8+	\$4,500

The FS 12-month eligibility period begins on the **date the first FS payment is issued to the service provider**. For limits specific to each type of services see:

- **HPS Payment Limits:** [CPG 10-007.B](#)
- **TEA Payment Limits:** [CPG 10-007.C](#)

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FS Payments:

- **The participant is responsible for meeting all requirements and conditions imposed by the FS service providers.**
- FS payments are **issued only to the third party** providing shelter, utility, vehicle repairs and car rental services
- The FS participant is responsible for the payment of services not previously authorized by the County
- FS funds cannot be used to pay for medical/legal expenses, or unauthorized fees
- All required verification must be obtained **before FS payments can be authorized**
- Payments will be issued by the due date established by the FS service provider
- Payments and/or services may be denied if at the time of FS evaluation:
 - The required verification is not provided prior to the payment due date, and “Good Cause” does not exist
 - FS amount requested is over the program limit
 - Verification provided is incomplete, and/or its validity is questionable
 - Service and/or service provider do not meet HPS/TEA requirements ([CPG 10-007.B](#), [CPG 10-007.C](#))
 - CW case is in “discontinued” or “closed” status, and discontinuance or closing action cannot be resolved prior to FS evaluation (e.g. CW annual redetermination is not completed within the required timeframes)
 - The individual is ineligible to cash aid ([CPG 41.500](#)) and no longer will be required to participate in WTW effective the following month (e.g. CW timed-out, WTW sanctioned, no longer in the home, no eligible child in the home)
 - The exempt status is extended for any reason ([CPG 10-020.A](#)), and mandatory participation is no longer expected to begin within 60 days from the date FS application was submitted. See [CPG 10-007.C](#) for TEA exceptions

See [CPG 10-007.B](#) and [CPG 10-007.C](#) for additional requirements specific to each service.

Procedure:

[10-007 Family Stabilization Processing Guides](#)

Impact(s):

None to other programs

Program Affected:

CalWORKs Welfare-To-Work

References:

- [Senate Bill \(SB\) 855](#)
- [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 74](#)
- [Welfare & Institutions Code \(WIC\) section 11325.24](#)
- [Welfare & Institutions Code 15204.2](#)

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- [All County Letter \(ACL\) No.14-12](#)
- [All County Letter \(ACL\) No.14-61](#)
- [All County Information Notice \(ACIN\) I-64-15](#)

Release Date:

October 14, 2015

Sunset Date:

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by October 31, 2018