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**WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE - WIC**

**DIVISION 9. PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES [10000 - 18999.98]** ( *Division 9 added by Stats. 1965, Ch. 1784.* )

**PART 6. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS [18000 - 18999.98]** ( *Part 6 added by Stats. 1965, Ch. 1784.* )

**CHAPTER 17. Housing and Disability Income Advocacy Program [18999 - 18999.6]** ( *Chapter 17 added by Stats. 2016, Ch. 25, Sec. 32.* )

**18999.** In enacting this chapter, it is the intent of the Legislature to establish the Housing and Disability Income Advocacy Program under which counties, tribes, or combinations of counties or tribes assist Californians with disabilities who may be experiencing homelessness, to increase participation among individuals who may be eligible for disability benefits programs, including, but not limited to, the Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Program for the Aged, Blind, and Disabled (SSI/SSP), the federal Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program, the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants, and veterans benefits provided under federal law, including disability compensation.

(Amended by Stats. 2019, Ch. 27, Sec. 126. (SB 80) Effective June 27, 2019.)

**18999.1.** (a) Subject to an appropriation of funds for this purpose in the annual Budget Act, the State Department of Social Services shall administer the Housing and Disability Income Advocacy Program to provide state funds to participating counties, tribes, or combinations of counties or tribes for the provision of outreach, case management, and advocacy services to individuals as described in Section 18999. Housing assistance shall also be offered to individuals described in subdivision (b) of Section 18999.2.

(b) Funds appropriated for this chapter shall be awarded to grantees by the department according to criteria developed by the department, in consultation with the County Welfare Directors Association of California, tribes, and advocates for clients, subject to the following restrictions:

(1) State funds appropriated for this chapter shall be used only for the purposes specified in this chapter.

(2) The annual ongoing appropriation of funds for this chapter, subject to an appropriation made by the Legislature, is defined as a twenty-five million dollar (\$25,000,000) General Fund appropriation.

(3) A grantee shall, at a minimum, maintain a level of funding for the outreach, active case management, advocacy, and housing assistance services described in this chapter that is at least equal to the total of the amounts expended by the grantee for those services in the 2015–16 fiscal year.

(4) As part of its application to receive state funds under this chapter, a prospective grantee shall identify how it will collaborate locally among, at a minimum, the county departments and tribal entities, as may be appropriate, that are responsible for health, including behavioral health, and human or social services in carrying out the activities required by this chapter. This collaboration shall include, but is not limited to, the sharing of information among these departments or other entities as necessary to carry out the activities required by this chapter.

(c) For purposes of this chapter, “grantee” means a participating county, tribe, or combination of counties or tribes receiving state funds pursuant to this chapter.

(d) (1) Notwithstanding the rulemaking provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act (Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code), the department may implement and administer the changes made to this section, as amended by Section 3 and added by Section 4 of the act that added subdivision (e), by means of all-county letters or similar instructions from the department that shall have the same force and effect as regulations until regulations are adopted.

(2) The department shall adopt regulations implementing this chapter no later than July 1, 2024.

(e) This section shall become operative on July 1, 2024.

**18999.2.** (a) (1) A grantee shall provide, or contract for, outreach, active case management, and advocacy services related to all of the following programs, as appropriate:

- (A) The Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Program for the Aged, Blind, and Disabled (SSI/SSP).
- (B) The federal Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program.
- (C) The Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants.
- (D) Veterans benefits provided under federal law, including, but not limited to, disability compensation.
- (E) Any disability benefits that are not identified in subparagraphs (A) to (D), inclusive, that an individual may be eligible to receive.

(2) The outreach and case management services required by this subdivision shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

- (A) Receiving referrals.
- (B) Conducting outreach, training, and technical assistance.
- (C) Providing assessment and screening.
- (D) Coordinating record retrieval and other necessary means of documenting disability.
- (E) Coordinating the provision of health care, including behavioral health care, for clients, as appropriate.

(3) The advocacy services required by this subdivision, which may be provided through legal representation, shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- (A) Developing and filing competently prepared benefit applications, appeals, reconsiderations, reinstatements, and recertifications.
- (B) Coordinating with federal and state offices regarding pending benefit applications, appeals, reconsiderations, reinstatements, and recertifications and advocating on behalf of the client.

(b) A grantee shall use screening tools to identify populations of individuals who are likely to be eligible for the programs listed in subdivision (a), in accordance with the following:

(1) The grantee shall give highest priority to either individuals who are chronically homeless or individuals who are homeless and rely most heavily on government-funded services.

(2) Other populations to be targeted by the program include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (A) General assistance or general relief applicants or recipients with disabilities or who are likely to have disabilities and who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, which may include individuals who have not yet received an eviction notice.
- (B) Parents who receive CalWORKs or tribal Temporary Aid to Needy Families (tribal TANF) assistance, parents whose children receive CalWORKs or tribal TANF assistance, or children who are recipients of CalWORKs or tribal TANF assistance in families where one or more members has a disability or is likely to have a disability and that are homeless or at risk of homelessness, which may include individuals who have not yet received an eviction notice.
- (C) Low-income individuals with disabilities or who are likely to have disabilities who can be diverted from, or who are being discharged from, jails or prisons and who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, which may include individuals who have not yet received an eviction notice.
- (D) Low-income veterans with disabilities or who are likely to have disabilities who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, which may include individuals who have not yet received an eviction notice.

(E) Low-income individuals with disabilities or who are likely to have disabilities who are being discharged from hospitals, long-term care facilities, or rehabilitation facilities and who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, which may include individuals who have not yet received an eviction notice.

(c) (1) A grantee, as may be appropriate, may refer an individual to workforce development programs who is not likely to be eligible for the programs listed in subdivision (a) and who may benefit from workforce development programs.

(2) In consultation with an individual who has been served by the Housing and Disability Income Advocacy Program and considering the circumstances of the individual's disabilities, a grantee may, upon approval or final denial of disability benefits, refer an individual who may benefit from workforce development programs to those programs.

(3) An individual's participation in a workforce development program pursuant to this subdivision is voluntary.

*(Amended by Stats. 2021, Ch. 85, Sec. 89. (AB 135) Effective July 16, 2021.)*

**18999.4.** (a) (1) Pursuant to Section 18999.1, a grantee shall offer housing assistance to individuals described in subdivision (b) of Section 18999.2 and shall use funds received under this program to establish or expand programs that provide housing assistance, including interim housing, recuperative care, rental subsidies, or, only when necessary, shelters, for clients receiving services under Section 18999.2 during the clients' application periods for disability benefits programs described in that section. The grantee shall make a reasonable effort to place a client who receives subsidies in housing that the client can sustain without a subsidy upon approval of disability benefits, or consider providing limited housing assistance until an alternative subsidy, affordable housing voucher, or other sustainable housing option is secured. Upon approval or denial of disability benefits, where needed, case management staff shall assist in developing a transition plan for housing support.

(2) A client's participation in housing assistance programs or services is voluntary.

(b) To the extent authorized under federal law, a grantee, with the assistance of the department, shall seek reimbursement of funds used for housing assistance, general assistance, or general relief from the federal Commissioner of Social Security pursuant to an interim assistance reimbursement agreement authorized by Section 1631(g) of the federal Social Security Act, and shall expend funds received as reimbursement for housing assistance only on additional housing assistance for clients receiving services under this chapter.

(c) Beginning on July 1, 2025, the requirement to seek reimbursement of funds pursuant to subdivision (b) is waived.

*(Amended by Stats. 2025, Ch. 79, Sec. 35. (SB 119) Effective July 29, 2025.)*

**18999.6.** (a) A grantee shall report at least annually to the department on its funding of advocacy and outreach programs in the prior year and its use of state funding provided under this chapter, including, to the extent that data is available, all of the following:

(1) The number of clients served in each of the targeted populations described in subdivision (b) of Section 18999.2 and any other populations the grantee chose to target.

(2) The demographics of the clients served, including race or ethnicity, age, and gender.

(3) The number of applications for benefits, and type of benefits, filed with the assistance of the grantee.

(4) The number of applications approved initially, the number approved after reconsideration, the number approved after appeal, and the number not approved, including the average processing time from submission of applications while in the Housing and Disability Income Advocacy Program to final determination.

(5) For applications that were denied, the reason or reasons for denial.

(6) The number of clients who received subsidized housing during their enrollment in the Housing and Disability Advocacy Program.

(7) A description of how housing impacted the clients and the rates of completed applications or approval.

(8) The number of clients who received subsidized housing who maintained that housing during the disability benefits application period.

(9) The percentage of clients approved for disability benefits who retain permanent housing 6 and 12 months after the approval of disability benefits.

(10) The number of individuals eligible to be served by this program but who have not yet received services.

(11) Any additional data requirements established by the department after consultation with the County Welfare Directors Association of California, tribes, and advocates for clients.

(b) The department shall annually inform the Legislature of the implementation progress of the program and make related data available on its internet website. Beginning in 2020, the department shall also submit an annual report, by February 1, to the Legislature, in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code, regarding the implementation of the program, including the information reported by participating grantees pursuant to this section.

*(Amended by Stats. 2021, Ch. 85, Sec. 91. (AB 135) Effective July 16, 2021.)*