

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES

MAY 18, 2021

GENERAL RELIEF POLICY HANDBOOK LETTER #7358

CHAPTER A – General Policy/Provisions Board of Supervisors

Overview

The General Relief (GR) Policy Handbook (GRPHB) Chapter A has been updated, following approval by the Board of Supervisors on 5/18/2021. This handbook letter includes minor formatting changes and the following policy updates effective 6/1/2021:

- Increase to the maximum grant amount
 - Removal of the following:
 - Needs-based budgeting
 - Room and Board payment
 - Treatment of Income In-Kind (IIK)
 - Vendor payments
 - Evaluation of a vehicle when used as primary residency
-

Action time frame

High Level – Share with staff immediately.

Affected cases

All GR cases

Change summary

The following changes are effective upon release of this handbook letter and supersede any previous policy.

Old Policy	New Policy
Grant amounts were based on needs based methodology. Only verified items of need were allowed when calculating a grant amount.	A full grant is based on the number of Assistance Unit (AU) members, and is not subject to needs-based eligibility. A grant amount will be reduced if additional income is reported.
IIK and vendor payments reduced the grant payment by excluding certain needs, and may be treated as unearned income.	IIK and vendor payments not paid directly to a customer, are no longer considered when determining the GR grant. Payments given to a customer (even if the money is intended for a specific expense) is treated as unearned income.
Cars were not evaluated as Real Property when used as a primary residence.	Cars are evaluated as Real Property when used as a primary residence.

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GENERAL RELIEF POLICY HANDBOOK LETTER #7358,

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Pages: A-1 through A-4, and A-7 through A-12

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GRPHB

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GENERAL RELIEF POLICY HANDBOOK

CHAPTER A

General Policy/Provisions

Board of Supervisors

Table of Contents

Authority and Administration	A-1
Eligibility Criteria Overview	A-2
Grant Levels	A-7
Special Need Items	A-8
Emergency Grocery Assistance.....	A-10
Calculating the Amount of the Grocery Assistance	A-11

Authority and Administration

Reference	California Welfare and Institutions (W&I) Code, Division 9, Part 5, Sections 17000 through 17410.
Authority	The W&I Code mandates each county will establish and maintain a relief program, setting up their own program criteria and policies, and utilizing the W&I as a guideline.
Administration	<p>The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors has established a General Relief (GR) Program and has delegated administration of the program to the Transitional Assistance Department (TAD).</p> <p>All revisions to Chapter A of the General Relief Policy Handbook (GRPHB) must be approved by the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors.</p> <p>All other Chapters of the GRPHB are considered administrative in nature and may be developed and updated as necessary, upon the approval of the Director of TAD.</p>
Repayment	All General Relief (GR) benefits received by or paid on behalf of an individual or family are loans and as such must be repaid to the County.

Eligibility Criteria Overview

Introduction

For complete policy and procedures, see the appropriate section of this handbook.

GR Applicants/Recipients

GR Applicants/Recipients (A/R) are individuals and their families who are not supported or relieved by:

- Their own means.
- Friends or relatives.
- Any other sources.
- State hospitals.
- Other state or private institutions or treatment facilities.

The A/R who is ineligible for or receives a reduced aid benefit from another assistance program due to his/her lack of cooperation, partial or total ineligibility of his/her Assistance Unit (AU), an overpayment, etc. is not eligible to General Relief (GR) for his/her AU.

GR will not be utilized to subsidize any other cash assistance program benefit or indigent assistance program. The one exception is Emergency Grocery Assistance.

Residence

All GR A/Rs must be San Bernardino County residents. This is determined by physical presence and intent to remain unless there is evidence to the contrary.

Exception: When the Service Plan is to return the A/R to a former place of residence or to assist the A/R in reaching their non-San Bernardino County destination.

Citizenship/Alienage

Each A/R must be a U.S. Citizen or an alien who can establish legal permanent residence in the U.S.

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Eligibility Criteria Overview, Continued

Income

The A/R must apply for and accept any potentially available income. All income in the AU must be taken into consideration when determining the:

- GR grant amount, and
- AU need for receipt of a GR payment.

The following income chart indicates treatment of specific income.

Income	Description
Earned Income	The first \$10.00 and 20% of the balance is exempt for each AU.
Cash unearned income, loans and cash contributions	There are no exemptions or deductions allowed.
Grants, scholarships, etc.	The portion of this income used to pay for tuition, books, required supplies, and transportation to and from school (utilizing the local transportation special need allowance amount as a guideline) is deducted and the balance counted as unearned income.
Income from property	Net income from any kind of property is counted as unearned income.
• Rental of rooms	10% of the gross is considered the net income and counted.
• Other real estate income	Actual taxes, upkeep, and interest on encumbrances (not principal payment) is deducted from the gross income. The balance is net income and is counted.
• Personal property income	Counted as unearned income, no exemptions.
Lump sum	Not counted in the month of receipt. Any lump sum income remaining in subsequent months is counted toward the Personal Property/Resource Limit.

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Eligibility Criteria Overview, Continued

Property/ Resource Limits

The GR A/R is required to apply his/her own property and resources to his/her own support. The following table describes the property limits each A/R or GR AU must meet.

Property	Description
Real Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The combined assessed value must be \$32,000 or less, with no encumbrances deducted. All real property is subject to lien for recovery of all GR aid paid. Any vehicle used as a principal residence is counted in the Real Property limit, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trailers Houseboats Campers/Recreational Vehicles (RVs) Vans Cars <p>Note: Vehicles that cannot be used as shelter are not considered a principal residence, this includes motorcycles, motorized scooters, regular boats, etc.</p>
Personal Property and Other Resources	The total limit for all non-exempt property and resources is \$500.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liquid Assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Such as cash, bank accounts, stocks and bonds, etc., shall not exceed \$50 per person or per GR AU. Counted in the \$500 Personal Property/Resource limit.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tools of Trade 	<p>Includes items such as mechanic, carpentry, cosmetology, yard tools, etc. used for A/R's regular field of employment. Exempt when the A/R is/has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employable and actively seeking work in his/her regular field of employment, OR Reasonably expected to overcome his/her incapacity and be able to return to work in his/her regular field of employment, OR Training for a new regular field of employment as part of a TAD approved rehabilitation plan.

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Grant Levels

Maximum Basic Grant Levels

The following grant levels are established as guidelines for GR aid payments effective 6/1/21. Payments are:

- Prorated whenever eligibility exists for only a portion of the month.
- Not be paid to or for any Applicant/Recipient (A/R) who is a resident of a treatment program or treatment facility. Treatment programs and treatment facilities include, but are not limited to, those which are:
 - Licensed or unlicensed
 - Funded or Non-Funded
 - Private or Public

Grant levels based on Assistance Unit (AU) size are outlined below:

MAXIMUM GRANT LEVELS	
AU size	Total
1	\$332
2	\$445
3	\$558
4	\$672
5 or more	\$785

Special Need Items

Introduction

Special Need items are items essential to the Applicant/Recipient's (A/R) subsistence.

The special need allowance is provided only to those A/Rs for whom an added cost is expected to occur but cannot be met through other resources, community agencies, etc.

The sum of the following must not exceed the CalWORKs Maximum Aid Payment (MAP) for the same size Assistance Unit (AU):

- Total General Relief (GR) cash grant, plus
- Transportation Special Need, plus
- Food Special Need.

Special Need item – Transportation

The following table describes the types of Transportation Special Need items authorized under GR.

Type	Description
Local transportation	<p>Authorized when needed to meet medical appointments, work registration, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the form of bus tickets or gas cards. • A monthly transportation allowance may be authorized if transportation is needed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Obtain medical treatment or medical tests at least three times per week on a continuing basis throughout the month. – Participate in a Transitional Assistance Department (TAD) approved rehabilitation plan where a transportation allowance is not available. – Meet all of the linkage criteria for employables on a continuing basis. <p>Note: The authorized amount may not exceed the existing San Bernardino OmniTrans rate for a monthly bus pass.</p>
Out-of-county or out-of-state transportation	<p>Authorized by TAD staff when needed by A/R to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to a former place of residence. • Reach a non-San Bernardino County destination. <p>Note: The court dependent child and his/her parents transportation needs are not met with GR funds.</p>
Full-time employment offer	<p>Authorized only to enable A/R to accept verified full-time employment offer and to enable him/her to become independent of aid. The criteria to be met includes, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There must be an actual offer of employment and it must be verified. • The method least expensive to the County will be utilized. • GR eligibility criteria must be met.
Meals with out-of-county or out-of-state transportation	<p>TAD staff will evaluate this need. Payment will be authorized using the following guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two meals per day per person. • At a rate of \$3.50 to \$5.00 per person per meal.

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Special Need Items, Continued

Special Need items – Other

The maximum annual payment for **Other Special Need items** is \$100 per AU. The method least expensive to the County will be utilized to meet the need.

The following table describes Potential other **Special Need items** authorized under GR.

Type	Description
Household Items	<p>Items such as blankets, dishes, linens, hot plate, etc.</p> <p>Note: As a general rule items such as refrigerators, stoves, furniture, etc. are not allowed. Unless extenuating circumstances exist such as loss due to disaster such as fire, flood, etc. The maximum for these items is \$100 each, total of \$200 per AU.</p>
Clothing & Shoes	The maximum annual payment is \$50 per A/R .
Food	<p>Allowed when GR AU is denied CalFresh solely due to counting the income and/or property of a person other than parent, including grandparents, child, sibling or other relative who is required to be included in the CalFresh household.</p> <p>To calculate the GR Special Need for food allowance, the GR cash grant for the AU plus the Transportation Special Need plus Food Special Need shall not exceed the maximum aid payment for the same size CalWORKS AU.</p>

Special Need items – Medical

The following table describes Medical Special Need items authorized under GR.

Type	Description
Unmet medical needs	<p>Items such as glasses, dentures, hearing aids are allowed when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The item cannot be obtained through other resources, and Purchase will result in the A/R becoming employable, and thereby, eventually independent of aid.
Medical Services	<p>Medical and mental health services are covered through a variety of health care programs (including Medi-Cal), with in-county providers available through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrowhead Regional Medical Center (ARMC) Department of Behavioral Health Department of Public Health

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Emergency Grocery Assistance

Introduction

Emergency Grocery Assistance is in the form of an emergency vendor payment to a specific grocery store on behalf of the individual/family.

- Eligibility for this assistance is limited to customers:
 - Receiving the following:
 - ✓ Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP),
 - ✓ CalWORKS only,
 - ✓ CalWORKS and CalFresh,
 - ✓ CalFresh only,
 - ✓ General Relief (GR) and CalFresh, or
 - ✓ GR only; and
 - Whose assistance payments have not arrived from all programs, and
 - With no liquid assets, and
 - With no other income, and
 - Whose need cannot be met by other personal or community resources or programs.
 - This assistance will be issued only for the number of persons and the number of days it is expected to take to get the SSI/SSP, CalWORKS/CalFresh, or GR/CalFresh to the individual family.
 - The payment should rarely exceed 5 days for any program except SSI/SSP.
 - The payment for SSI/SSP will be based on the SSI verification of anticipated delay in receiving payment, or the first of the following month, whichever is sooner.
-

Calculating the Amount of the Grocery Assistance

Introduction

Either the **Eligibility Worker (EW)** will use the following chart to calculate the issuance amount.

Persons Days ↓	→1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10/ more
1	.90	1.80	2.70	3.60	4.50	5.40	6.30	7.20	8.10	9.00
2	1.80	3.60	5.40	7.20	9.00	10.80	12.60	14.40	16.20	18.00
3	2.70	5.40	8.10	10.80	13.50	16.20	18.90	21.60	24.30	27.00
4	3.60	7.20	10.80	14.40	18.00	21.60	25.20	28.80	32.40	36.00
5	4.50	9.00	13.50	18.00	22.50	27.00	31.50	36.00	40.50	45.00
6	5.40	10.80	16.20	21.60	27.00	32.40	37.80	43.20	48.60	54.00
7	6.30	12.60	18.90	25.20	31.50	37.80	44.10	50.40	56.70	63.00
8	7.20	14.40	21.60	28.80	36.00	43.20	50.40	57.60	64.80	72.00
9	8.10	16.20	24.30	32.40	40.50	48.60	56.70	64.80	72.90	81.00
10	9.00	18.00	27.00	36.00	45.00	54.00	63.00	72.00	81.00	90.00
11	9.90	19.80	29.70	39.60	49.50	59.40	69.30	79.20	89.10	99.00
12	10.80	21.60	32.40	43.20	54.00	64.80	75.60	86.40	97.20	108.00
13	11.70	23.40	35.10	46.80	58.50	70.20	81.90	93.60	105.30	117.00
14	12.60	25.20	37.80	50.40	63.00	75.60	88.20	100.80	113.40	126.00
15	13.50	27.00	40.50	54.00	67.50	81.00	94.50	108.00	121.50	135.00
16	14.40	28.80	43.20	57.60	72.00	86.40	100.80	115.20	129.60	144.00
17	15.30	30.60	45.90	61.20	76.50	91.80	107.10	122.40	137.70	153.00
18	16.20	32.40	48.60	64.80	81.00	97.20	113.40	129.60	145.80	162.00
19	17.10	34.20	51.30	68.40	85.50	102.60	119.70	136.80	153.90	171.00
20	18.00	36.00	54.00	72.00	90.00	108.00	126.00	144.00	162.00	180.00
21	18.90	37.80	56.70	75.60	94.50	113.40	132.30	151.20	170.10	189.00
22	19.80	39.60	59.40	79.20	99.00	118.80	138.60	158.40	178.20	198.00
23	20.70	41.40	62.10	82.80	103.50	124.20	144.90	165.60	186.30	207.00
24	21.60	43.20	64.80	86.40	108.00	129.60	151.20	172.80	194.40	216.00
25	22.50	45.00	67.50	90.00	112.50	135.00	157.50	180.00	202.50	225.00
26	23.40	46.80	70.20	93.60	117.00	140.40	163.80	187.20	210.60	234.00
27	24.30	48.60	72.90	97.20	121.50	145.80	170.10	194.40	218.70	243.00
28	25.20	50.40	75.60	100.80	126.00	151.20	176.40	201.60	226.80	252.00
29	26.10	52.20	78.30	104.40	130.50	156.60	182.70	208.80	234.90	261.00
30	27.00	54.00	81.00	108.00	135.00	162.00	189.00	216.00	243.00	270.00