



State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Care Services



GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

September 17, 2020

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS Letter No.: 20-16
ALL COUNTY WELFARE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
ALL COUNTY MEDI-CAL PROGRAM SPECIALISTS/LIAISONS
ALL COUNTY HEALTH EXECUTIVES
ALL COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY MEDS LIAISONS

SUBJECT: Information Regarding the Lost Wages Assistance Program

Purpose

The purpose of this All County Welfare Directors Letter (ACWDL) is to provide instruction to counties regarding treatment of supplemental payments for lost wages under the Lost Wages Assistance (LWA) Program.

Background

On August 8, 2020, the President issued a memorandum, *Authorizing the Other Needs Assistance Program for Major Disaster Declarations Related to Coronavirus Disease 2019* (Presidential Memo), instructing the Secretary of Homeland Security, acting through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), to make available Other needs assistance (ONA) for lost wages in accordance with Section 408(e)(2) of the Stafford Act (42 U.S.C. 5174(e)(2)).

LWA will be administered by states and territories through a grant agreement with FEMA. FEMA will not administer benefits directly to individuals. The states and territories will distribute the funds through their Unemployment Insurance Benefits (UIB) system, as a supplemental payment. Not all individuals receiving UIB will receive LWA.

California was approved for the LWA grant on August 22, 2020, and the Employment Development Department (EDD) began processing the LWA supplemental payments on September 7, 2020. In California, eligible individuals will receive an LWA supplemental payment of \$300 per week, for a minimum of three weeks, in addition to their weekly UIB amount.

LWA supplemental payments are available with weeks of unemployment beginning on or after July 26, 2020, through weeks of unemployment ending no later than December 27, 2020. In order to receive these payments, individuals must meet the following criteria:

- Must be eligible to receive a UIB award amount of at least \$100 per week and;
- Must provide, or have provided, a one-time certification to EDD, indicating that the individual is unemployed or partially unemployed due to COVID-19.

Note: Both regular Unemployment Insurance and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance qualify an individual to receive LWA supplemental payments.

Some UIB recipients will receive LWA supplemental payments automatically. Other UIB recipients will need to submit to EDD a Lost Wages Assistance Self-Certification. For more information, participants can visit <https://www.edd.ca.gov/> or call EDD at:

English: 1-800-300-5616

Spanish: 1-800-326-8937

Cantonese: 1-800-547-3506

Mandarin: 1-866-303-0706

Vietnamese: 1-800-547-2058

California Relay Service (711): Provide the UI number (1-800-300-5616) to the operator

TTY: 1-800-815-9387

See: https://www.edd.ca.gov/About_EDD/Contact_EDD.htm.

Policy

According to Title 22 California Code of Regulations § 50535.5, Disaster and Emergency assistance payments received from federal, state, and local government agencies, or disaster assistance organizations are exempt for both MAGI and all Non-MAGI Medi-Cal programs. LWA supplemental payments are disaster and emergency payments received from a state agency. Therefore, the \$300 weekly LWA supplemental payment shall be disregarded and will not be counted in the income eligibility determination for both MAGI and all Non-MAGI programs. Additionally, for all Non-MAGI Medi-Cal eligibility determinations, the \$300 LWA supplemental payment is exempt as property, if retained after the month of receipt. For Covered California programs, the payments will count as taxable income for APTC/state subsidies in the eligibility determination.

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Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE), counties are reminded to delay processing any changes-in-circumstance for beneficiaries, as outlined in Medi-Cal Eligibility Division Information Letter (MEDIL) [I 20-08](#). When verifying LWA supplemental payments for applicants, counties shall follow existing processes for verifying income during a PHE or a state or federal declared natural disaster, as outlined in [ACWDL 19-01](#), including utilizing electronic sources, ex-parte review, and accepting self-attestation when the applicant is directly impacted by COVID-19 or the California wildfires. If counties are unable to verify information using these processes, the county shall request verification from the applicant which shall include use of a written or telephonic sworn statement.

Information regarding State Automated Welfare System (SAWS) and California Healthcare Eligibility, Enrollment, and Retention System (CalHEERS) functionality for LWA supplemental payments will be released through their respective, established communication processes.

As additional information or updates to this policy become available, DHCS will provide additional guidance in a future COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document.

If you have any questions or if we can provide further information, please contact Sara McDonald at (916) 345-8061 or by email at Sara.McDonald@dhcs.ca.gov.

Original Signed By

Sandra Williams, Chief
Medi-Cal Eligibility Division