

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 6, 2020

TO: All Social Services Agency Customers and Community Partners

FROM: Lori A. Cox, Agency Director

RE: Alameda County Social Services Agency Temporarily Closes Office Lobbies to Protect the Community Against the Spread of COVID-19

This communication is to inform you that the Alameda County Social Services Agency (ACSSA) has temporarily restricted public access of its office lobbies until further notice as part of regionwide efforts to protect the health and safety of its customers, workforce, and community at large, and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in public spaces. **However, the Agency continues to deliver services and keep customers connected with their benefits.**

Physical distancing is necessary, at this time, but this is no time to distance our community from the benefits that promote nutrition, medical care, and other services vital to people's health. I want to assure our community that **ACSSA is still open for business and ready to serve you.**

The Agency continues to provide essential services—Adult and Aging Programs, In-Home Supportive Services, Children and Family Services, CalFresh, CalWORKs, General Assistance, Refugee Cash Assistance, Cash Assistance Programs for Immigrants (CAPI) and Medi-Cal. The use of telephone, mail, and online services is encouraged for customers and those needing to apply for benefits and services.

ACSSA staff will remain onsite during regular business hours, Monday-Friday from 8:30AM to 5:00PM, to provide limited services:

- Adult and Aging Protection Services
- Children and Family Services
- Emergency Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards and Medi-Cal Benefits Identification Cards (BIC)
- Assistance checks and homeless mail pick-up
- Application packets for all programs are available for pick-up
- Application and document drop-off
- Application interviews or mental health assessments for clients who do not have access to a telephone will be scheduled for in-person meetings

State and federal government partner agencies have waived some reporting requirements to ensure that clients will continue to receive benefits. The following information is a brief overview of the updated changes:

CalFresh, CalWORKs, General Assistance (GA), or CAPI:

- Semi-Annual Reports (SAR-7s) and renewals have been waived for the months of March, April, and May 2020.
- Recipients do not need to submit a SAR-7 or a recertification/renewal packet.

- Clients do not need to call our office as your benefits will continue without interruption.
- Clients recertification/renewal will be due six (6) months from your original due date.
- Clients will receive a notification letter informing you when your next recertification/renewal is due. For example, if your recertification/renewal packet was due in April 2020, it will not be due until October 2020.
- Individuals should resume submitting the SAR-7s and renewals beginning June 2020.
- If your income goes down at any time, your benefit amount may go up. You may report changes via mail to P.O. Box 12941, Oakland, CA 94604; Fax to 510-670-5095; online through the Customer Automated Response System (CARS) at <https://public.alamedasocialservices.org/CARS>; LaterDocs at www.GetCalFresh.org/docs; or at 1-888-999-4772 or 510-263-2420, Monday through Friday, from 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM.
- CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work, Refugee Cash Assistance, and CalFresh Employment and Training program participation requirements have been waived until further notice. Employment Services staff are continuing to provide case management services over the phone, including connecting clients to online employment and training resources and supportive services.

For benefit applicants:

- Applications can be submitted for all programs via fax, mail, or drop-off.
- CalWORKs and CalFresh applications can be submitted online at www.mybenefitscalwin.org and CalFresh applications at www.GetCalFresh.org or via telephone at 1-888-999-4772 or 510-263-2420, Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- Application forms for all programs can be found at https://alamedasocialservices.org/public/contact_us/Covid19.cfm
- CalFresh intake interviews have been waived when the applicant submits all mandatory verifications.
- CalWORKs, GA, Refugee Cash Assistance, and the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI) application interviews are now being offered over the phone and the face-to-face requirement has been waived.
- GA mental health assessments and Social Worker meetings are now being conducted over the phone.
- All GA applicants and recipients that claim to have a temporary or permanent/persistent condition that prevents them from working will be given an extension of 90 days from March 16, 2020 to be able to provide the required documentation.
- Clients may apply for CalWORKs Homeless Assistance over the phone and CalWORKs Homeless Assistance payments are now issued via Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT).

Medi-Cal:

- Benefits will continue for March, April, and May 2020.
- Recipients will still need to comply with the renewal reporting requirement for Medi-Cal or your benefits may terminate after 90-days. If you have received a renewal packet, you can mail, fax, or submit at www.mybenefitscalwin.org.

CalFresh Emergency Allotments:

- California has been approved to provide emergency allotments to eligible households for two months, March and April 2020. Emergency allotments will raise each household's regular monthly CalFresh allotment to the maximum allowable allotment based on household size.
- The March increase allotment will be distributed mid-April 2020 and April increase allotment will be distributed in May 2020.

Adult Protection Services

- Recipients can expect more phone contact with ACSSA staff to minimize face-to-face visit time.
- We will continue to respond to reports of elder abuse on the APS Hotline. You may report older adult abuse or neglect at reporttoaps.org or call (510) 577-3500.

In-Home Supportive Services:

- Reassessments have been suspended for 90 days.
- Social workers will contact IHSS recipients to conduct assessments via telephone and perform wellness checks.
- Face-to-face interviews are still required for new applications, however, applicants can expect more phone contact with ACSSA staff to minimize face-to-face visit time. You may apply for IHSS over the phone at (510) 577-1800; by fax, download application from <https://alamedasocialservices.org>, and fax to (510) 577-1803; or by mail, send application to 6955 Foothill Blvd, Suite 300, Oakland, CA 94605.
- IHSS Providers and IHSS Recipients may look up payroll or case information online at <https://alamedasocialservices.org>; for Health Benefits information, call (510) 577-3551; for Public Authority Training Services information, call (510) 577-3554; and for IHSS Public Authority Registry Services requests, call (510) 577-1980.

Children and Family Services

- Child abuse investigations are essential government functions and continue to be prioritized to protect the safety and well-being of children and families. The CPS Hotline (510) 259-1800 remains active and calls are answered 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.
- Overnight visits with parents and relatives will be continued. However, all other in person visitation is suspended. In those instances, parents will be provided phone and/or video chat calls.
- Monthly visits may be accomplished through video conference when it is determined that a child's safety is not at risk. If the family does not have the means for a video contact, a phone conversation will be sufficient.
- Non-minor dependent monthly visits are still required. Visits may be conducted through video conferencing, telephone contact, courtesy supervision by a tribal representative or other Title IV-E agencies.
- Non-minor dependents who are displaced from their dorms due to school closures will continue to receive their Supervised Independent Living Program (SILP) payments until a new or temporary residence is attained.
- Services interrupted or discontinued for parents or guardians of children in Foster Care will not impact the assessment of whether they are in compliance with their court ordered reunification services.

Appreciation for all you do

In closing, I want to say THANK YOU to all of our essential workers—healthcare providers, first responders, service employees, ACSSA staff, and all disaster services workers—who are working hard to provide critical and essential safety-net services to our most vulnerable residents and diverse communities in Alameda County.

Stay safe, practice physical distancing, and take good care.

In partnership,

Lori