

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

Recurring Special Needs

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44-200.A

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Revision Date:

February 1, 2021

Background:

Per state regulations (EAS 44-211.3) special need allowances are available for certain goods or services which are essential for the Assistance Unit's (AU) support. A special need is a need for goods or services not common to a majority of recipients.

Purpose:

The purpose of this revision is to complete the sunset review and to reformat this section to current standards. Information from CalWORKs Program Guide (CPG) 44-200.a Special Needs and CPG 44-200.B Recurring Special Needs have been combined to form this section. CPG 44-200.B is now Non-Recurring Special Needs. Additional clarification has been added for the acceptable verification types needed to issue special need payments.

Policy:

Recurring Special Needs Overview

A recurring need is the result of a circumstance which results in an added cost to the family and which is expected to occur during two or more months in a calendar year. The Human Services Specialist (HSS) is required to verify that the special need occurs for reasons not common to a majority of customers and is essential for their support.

The person for whom the special need is authorized must be a member of the AU. Excluded and sanctioned household members are not eligible to special need payments. An eligible person may receive one or more special need payments at the same time.

The maximum total allowance available to an AU per month for **all** recurring special needs is not to exceed the amount resulting from multiplying \$10 by the number of aided persons in the AU. For example, an AU of one is eligible to a maximum of \$10 per month. An AU of 2 is eligible to a maximum of \$20 per month. The allowance for a recurring special need cannot exceed the actual increase in costs to the family as a result of the special need. The actual cost of the special need can be issued (no more than the maximum) with verification of the actual amount. The HSS can authorize payment at the standard rates indicated below without verification of actual cost.

Therapeutic Diets

Special need payments for therapeutic diets can only be authorized when recommended by a physician. Therapeutic diets may be prescribed to exclude foods due to allergies/food intolerance, to accommodate a full liquid diet or to correct nutritional status compromised by excessive exposure to harmful chemicals such as lead.

Customers are entitled to establish actual expenses if it is to their benefit to do so. However, the HSS may pay the monthly amount listed below without verification of actual costs:

- Up to \$15 can be allowed for the following diets:
 - Diabetic, 2200 calories or more
 - High calorie/high protein (including special formula for infant)
 - Lactation diets (while breast feeding)

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- \$9 can be allowed for the following diets:
 - Diabetic, under 2200 calories
 - Bland
 - Low Fat - cholesterol
 - Low Salt - sodium under three grams

Special Transportation

Customers may be eligible to a special transportation allowance when verified that it is essential for support. This may include situations where the customer must travel an unusual distance or travel daily to receive required medical treatments.

The transportation payment is not to exceed the actual cost of the least expensive mode of the transportation reasonably available to the customer (including public transportation fares). The customer's health should also be considered. In addition, if the customer uses their own car, the HSS can compute the costs according to the number of miles traveled at the rate of \$0.12 a mile without further documentation if the need for special transportation is verified.

Other Recurring Special Needs

Special Laundry

A customer may be eligible to an allowance for a special laundry need. For example, if a customer is required to change and clean bedding or clothing more than usual due to a medical condition.

- The customer may be eligible to \$3.00 per month without verification of actual costs
- The customer may be eligible for the actual cost (up to the maximum recurring monthly amount) with verification of the actual cost

Employing someone to do housekeeping services including cooking, washing, ironing, household cleaning, and similar services when the HSS verifies that no AU member is able to perform any of these functions. The actual cost may be issued up to the maximum for the AU size

Household Assistance

Employing someone to do housekeeping services including cooking, washing, ironing, household cleaning, and similar services when verified that no AU member is able to perform any of these functions may be an eligible need. The actual cost may be issued up to the maximum for the AU size.

Special Telephone Services

A customer may be eligible to the actual cost of special telephone services or equipment when a member of the AU has an auditory impairment

Excessive Use of Utilities

A customer may be eligible to a special need payment for excessive utility use due to medical equipment when a medical need is verified

- The actual cost may be used if the cost is in excess of the in-kind value for the AU size and the cost is verified
- The HSS can allow \$5.00 per month without verification of actual cost

Note: The total allowance available to each AU per month for all recurring special needs is not to exceed the amount resulting from multiplying \$10 by the number of persons in the AU.

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Verification

Before a recurring special need allowance will be paid, evidence is required to establish:

- The total cost of the need and the payment plan
- The portion of the expense that is to be paid by the customer if the need is shared by others in the family not included in the AU
- The period over which the need will continue

The customer will be provided with examples of the different types of proof (e.g. utility bill, receipts, medical documentation) that are acceptable, or assisted in obtaining verification. When applicable, the HSS may request a release of information such as a CW 60 (Release of Information -Financial Institution), CW 61 (Authorization to Release Medical Information), or a release of information. Refer to CalWORKs Program Guide 19-111.A Confidentiality of Records and Release of Information for instruction on requesting third party information.

If, after all attempts have been made and the HSS determines that the customer has made a good faith effort to obtain verification but is still unable to provide, a sworn statement is sufficient to verify the existence of a special need. The sworn statement must include all dot points listed above to be considered acceptable.

Reporting

A mid-period report of a special need request is a voluntary report. Customers may report having a special need at any time during the payment period. Recurring special needs that have been verified and approved will begin the first of the month in which the need was reported or the verification is received, whichever is later. The special need payment will continue until the end of the Semi-Annual Reporting (SAR) or Annual Reporting/Child Only (AR/CO) period in which the special need is expected to end.

Actual costs must be verified every six months on the SAR 7 or redetermination for SAR reporting households except in situations where the special need rates that do not require verification are utilized. The special need itself must be verified at onset and at least annually at renewal. For AR/CO households the special need must be verified at the redetermination.

Impacts:

None

Procedure:

How-To 273 Maintain Special Needs

References:

WIC 14450

EAS 44-211

ACIN No. I-72-20

Sunset Date:

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by January 31, 2024.

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Approval for Release:

Rick Wanne, 2-10-21

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Eligibility Operations