

General Relief Program



dpss County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

General Relief Overview

- The **Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 17000** requires counties to operate a General Assistance/General Relief program to support indigent individuals who are unable to provide for themselves.
- In Los Angeles County, this program is known as **General Relief (GR)**.
- The GR Program is a 100% County-funded program that provides temporary cash assistance and supportive services to indigent adults who are ineligible for state or federal cash aid programs.

General Relief Overview

- GR participants may receive a maximum monthly grant of \$221 for one person or \$375 for two persons, for up to nine months within a 12-month period.
- Most GR households consist of one person with no income or property.
- GR participants receive these benefits through an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card or Direct Deposit.

How to Apply for GR?

Individuals can apply for GR:

- In-person at any of the 14 District Offices;
- The GR application can be completed and dropped off at any District Office.
- By telephone through our Intake Call Center (ICC);
- Online through the BenefitsCal online portal; or
- By U.S. mail/eFax – Dedicated mail-in address and eFax number.

Eligibility Requirements

Who's Eligible for GR?

To be eligible for GR, an individual must be 18 years or older, an emancipated youth, a resident of Los Angeles County and meet the following GR eligibility requirements:

Identification:

- Provide a photo ID during the application process to verify identity, unless previously provided, and a copy is on file.

Eligibility Requirements (Cont.)

Social Security Number (SSN)

- Provide a SSN as part of the application process. A copy of the card is not mandatory.

Citizenship/Immigration Status:

- Applicants must declare their citizenship or immigration status* and provide verification, unless previously provided, and a copy is on file.

*Some individuals may be eligible for GR benefits after exhausting other benefits, such as Refugee Cash Assistance.

Eligibility Requirements (Cont.)

Income:

- Monthly net income is lower than the maximum GR grant of \$221 for one person.
- Cash on hand or in a bank account is valued at \$100 or less at application, or \$1,500 or less after approval.

Eligibility Requirements (Cont.)

Property:

- Personal property has a combined value of \$2,000 or less per adult.
- Motor vehicle is valued at \$11,500 or less for individuals using it as a residence. All other motor vehicles not used as a residence must be valued at \$4,500 or less. Only one motor vehicle may be retained.
- Real Property (home) has an assessed value of \$34,000 or less and signs a lien, allowing the County to recover GR payments received under certain circumstances.

Processing GR Applications

During the interview process, the Eligibility Worker (EW) will:

- Determine the individual's Employability Status.
- Identify any need for additional support like:
 - Mandatory Substance Use Disorder Recovery Program (MSUDRP)
 - Physical or Mental Health Assessments
 - Housing Assistance through the Housing Subsidy Program

Processing GR Applications

Employability Determination

- The EW will conduct an Employability Determination based on what is reported on the application and self-declared during the interview.
- Individuals are determined to be “Employable” if they are between 18 to 59 years old, have no minor children in their custody, and do not self-declare to have physical or mental disabilities.

Processing GR Applications

Employability Determination

- If the EW determines that the individual is Employable, then they will refer the individual to the Skills and Training to Achieve Readiness for Tomorrow (START) Program.
- The EW will assign the START Orientation, which will trigger the start of the nine-month time limit.

Processing GR Applications

MSUDRP Assessment:

- GR applicants are referred for a mandatory MSUDRP assessment if there is reasonable suspicion that there is an alcohol and/or drug dependency.
- If the assessment reveals an alcohol and/or drug dependency, treatment is required in order to receive GR.

Processing GR Applications

MSUDRP Assessment (cont.):

- Assessments and treatment are provided through the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health's Substance Abuse Prevention and Control Section.
- Treatment is provided to GR participants for up to six consecutive months, plus one three-month extension without regard to employability status or time remaining on GR.

Processing GR Applications

Physical Health Assessment (PHA):

- GR applicants who declare that they are not able to work because of a physical health condition may need a PHA referral.
- The PHA is an assessment done by a medical health care provider to determine whether the individual's physical health condition prevents them from working or participating in employment related activities.

Processing GR Applications

PHA (cont.):

- GR applicants have an option to provide a medical verification from their own medical health care provider, or from a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) if they do not have Medi-Cal or a physician assigned. A designated GR district office representative is responsible for scheduling medical appointments for applicants who are assigned to a Department of Health Services (DHS) hospital/clinic or need to provide a verification form from a FQHC.

Processing GR Applications

Mental Health Assessment (MHA):

- GR applicants who may need Mental Health Services are referred for a MHA.
- MHA is a comprehensive evaluation conducted by a DMH Clinician or other Mental Health Care Provider to determine if the applicant's mental health condition prevents him/her from obtaining or retaining employment.
- Mental health assessments can take place in person, by telephone, or virtually via a computer.

Processing GR Applications

Housing Assistance:

- If the applicant requests information for Housing Assistance programs, the EW will inform them of the Housing Subsidy Program.
- Individuals who have an Employable status and are referred to START, will be able to ask to be referred to the Housing Subsidy worker for an assessment.
- Unemployable individuals who are pursuing Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Veteran pension, or disability benefits may be referred by their EW or their Countywide Benefits Entitlement Services Team (CBEST) advocate.

Processing GR Applications

Application Approval/Denial

- EW will process the application within 30 days.
- Once the application is processed, the system generates a **Notice of Action (NOA)** informing the applicant of the decision.
- The NOA will state whether the application has been approved or denied and provide the reason for the decision.

GR Hearing Process

Cases that are Denied or Discontinued

- If the case is denied or discontinued, the applicant/participant has the right to request a Hearing or a Noncompliance Review.
- This process provides an opportunity for the applicant/participant dispute the county decision.
- The applicant/participant may provide additional verifications to dispute the decision.

After GR Approval

Once the GR application is approved:

- Employable participants referred to the START Program will receive a Case Manager Appointment (CMA) to meet with their START Case Manager (SCM).

After GR Approval

General Relief (GR) Housing Subsidy and Case Management Project:

- DPSS provides housing subsidies to GR participants who are disabled and pursuing Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Veteran pension or disability benefits or who are employable and participating in the START Program.

After GR Approval

General Relief (GR) Housing Subsidy and Case Management Project (cont.):

- The subsidy is up to a maximum of \$475/month for one person and a maximum of \$950 for couple cases. The \$475 subsidy plus a \$100 deduction from the GR grant, a total of \$575 or \$1150 (\$950 plus \$200 deduction) for a couple case, will be paid directly to the landlord the participant finds to receive the subsidy.
- The project also offers a once-in-a-lifetime move-in assistance of up to \$500 to cover the costs associated with moving into permanent housing.

After GR Approval

Employable participants:

- Must comply with START.
- Are subject to the nine-month time limit.

After GR Approval

Unemployable Participants:

- Are not subject to the time limits since the time clock is frozen until the Unemployability status expires.
- Will be notified before their Unemployability status expires so they have time to submit verification to extend their status.
- Will be required to complete an Annual Agreement and SSP 14 to continue receiving their GR benefits.
- Permanent disabled participants are assisted to apply for SSI.

Additional Supportive Service

CBEST:

- Department of Health Services (DHS) provide benefits advocacy services to GR customers with disabilities to apply for SSI and other disability benefits programs.
- Participants referred to CBEST will receive the guidance to navigate the SSI application process which can be extensive and overwhelming to our GR participants.

Additional Supportive Service

CBEST (Cont.):

- The CBEST Advocates also provide additional services to their enrollees including housing assistance and linkage to health, mental health and substance abuse services.
- DHS also contracts with law firms to represent GR participants during the SSI and SSDI appeals processes.

General Relief Program

Questions

For More Information Visit our Website:

dpss.lacounty.gov

Or contact:

Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services

Customer Service Centers

(866) 613-3777