

# General Relief - Quick Reference

## Guide For Applicants

General Relief (“GR”) is a Los Angeles County program that helps people who are not eligible for other programs and have almost no money. GR is a very limited program with many requirements. ***The maximum monthly cash aid is \$221.*** If you qualify for GR, you are also entitled to Medi-Cal for health care and CalFresh for food.

### Eligibility Rules

- To qualify for GR, you cannot have more than \$50 total in cash or in a bank account when you apply. If you live with your spouse, his or her income will be counted in deciding if you are eligible, unless your spouse receives Supplemental Social Security Income (SSI).
- However, you can own the following resources:
  - One car worth less than \$4,500
  - Necessary household furnishing
- Any earning in the 30 days before your application will reduce how much you get in GR that month.
  - However, once you start receiving GR benefits, you can earn up to \$200 per month with no reduction in benefits.
  - If you earn between \$201 and \$620, the amount of your cash aid will be proportionally reduced.
  - You will also be able to save up to \$1,500 once your case is approved.
- In addition, you must have resided in L.A. County for at least 15 days and must be intending to remain here permanently.
- You are ineligible to GR if:
  - You are a convicted drug felon or an unaided member of a household receiving CalWORKs.
  - You are in violation of your probation or parole. (Simply being on probation is okay.)
  - You are fleeing to avoid prosecution or custody/confinement after a felony conviction. (**Note:** Special rules apply when you have a warrant - please talk to an attorney to verify whether they apply to you.)

### Required Documents

- You do not need many documents for GR, but you will have to prove your identity.
  - Birth certificate or photo IDs are accepted to verify your identity. If you do not have either, DPSS can verify your social security number or apply for your original birth certificate.
  - If you can't provide any of the documents above, you can have a “collateral contact” verify your identity, that is, you can have someone who knows you certify that you are who you claim to be.
- While you may not need all of these documents, if you have any of them, you may want to take them with you to the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) office when you're applying, just in case:
  - Social Security Number
  - Proof of citizenship or immigration status for each person on the application that has status
  - Proof of housing situation (rent receipts, lease agreements, etc.)
  - Letters from doctor (if you are disabled, pregnant, or have a special medical or dietary needs)
  - Other legal documents regarding your resources

***You will be fingerprinted and photographed on the same day you apply for and get GR. If a you refuse to be fingerprinted, you cannot get cash aid.***

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## Participation Limits and Requirements

### Welfare to Work and Employability

- If you are able to work, DPSS will classify you as “employable.” If you are “employable”, you can only receive GR for 9 months in any 12 month period.
  - The 9 month time period begins with your first scheduled orientation date for GROW or on the date your aid is approved, whichever is first.
  - Participation in and compliance with the General Relief Opportunities for Work (GROW), the County’s Welfare-to-Work program, is required if you are deemed “employable.”
- If you are “employable” you will be required to:
  - Complete 6 job searches at application.
  - Register with the Employment Development Department (EDD).
  - Apply for unemployment benefits if you seem to be eligible for those benefits.
  - Participate in the GROW program.
  - Spend 20 hours per week in activities leading to a job.
- The County will send you a notice to come to a GROW orientation or give you a notice at application.
  - If you do not attend to GROW orientation, your application for GR will be denied.
  - If you have “good cause” for not attending your GROW orientation you can have it scheduled for another date and time. Good cause can include things like being sick or in a hospital, not having transportation, being homeless, etc.
- If you are unable to work due to a physical or mental disability, DPSS will refer you to be evaluated by a County doctor.
  - If the doctor determines that you are disabled, DPSS will classify you as “unemployable” and you will not be subjected to a time limit as long as your classification remains “unemployable.”
  - You may be classified as “unemployable” only for a certain amount of time. If you are, you will be sent a notice to comply with GROW requirements when your disability period expires. If you still cannot work, call your worker right away and have them schedule another appointment with the County doctor.
  - You may also be classified as permanently “unemployable” or “Needs Special Assistance” (NSA) if your disability is long-lasting.
- Pregnant women and persons age 59 or older will be considered “administratively unemployable” and are not required to participate in GROW.

### Reporting Requirements

- You must submit a regular report to DPSS detailing whether there have been any changes. These reports are called Quarterly Reports, or QR-7.
- On the QR-7, you will be asked to report your income, property, and who lives with you. You will also be required to report any changes in to those things that you anticipate in the next three months.
  - If you get the form in the mail, you must fill it out and return it to the DPSS office by the fifth day of your “submit” month. A submit month is the month in which you must turn in your QR-7. Your worker should tell you when your first submit month is.
  - If you don’t get the QR-7 in the mail, you must go to the DPSS office to complete the form. Make sure to get a receipt from the DPSS worker to whom you give the form if you do that.
- You must fill out a QR-7 form *every three months* and make sure it’s submitted in time. ***THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT! If you do submit a fully completed QR-7 report in time, your benefits can be cut off!***
  - If your QR-7 gets lost or you do not turn it in, your benefits will be cut off at the end of the submit month.
  - **BUT:** You can still turn in your QR-7 even after the deadline. You have until the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the following month to turn it in without losing any cash aid. This is called the “cure period.”

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### Drug Screening Requirements

- When you apply for GR your DPSS worker will screen you for drug or alcohol dependency. If you tell your DPSS worker that you have a drug or alcohol problem, or if your worker believes you have such a problem, you must have a professional assessment from Department of Health Services.
  - If you are assessed to be chemically dependent on a drug or substance, you must enroll in a treatment program in order to receive GR. If all the programs are filled, you can get GR while you wait to enter a program.
  - If you fail to comply with the Mandatory Substance Abuse Recovery Program requirements, your application will be denied.

### **Additional Programs and Services**

- GR recipients are usually eligible to receive other aid, such as Medi-Cal for health care and CalFresh to help with food. Make sure to let your worker know that you wish to apply for all eligible programs when filling out the initial application.
  - If you are seriously disabled, your worker may schedule you for an assessment to get Social Security Supplemental Income (SSI). You must make sure to attend the appointment for your SSI assessment; missing it could cause you to lose your GR.
  - If you do get SSI and it is retroactive - that is applicable backward - covering a time period in which you were getting GR, the County can take the money they had given you during that time period from your first check or any retroactive payments.
- In addition to cash aid, by getting GR you can also get:
  - Free health care from any county hospital or clinic
  - Bus Tokens to all required appointments related to keeping benefits, including scheduled medical appointments, lodging, and meal voucher locations
  - A personal care kit (DPSS will deduct \$5 from your GR benefit)
  - Sanitary napkins
  - Housing repairs if there is a lien on your house
  - Supplements for medically required diets
  - A referral to a county-paid drug or alcohol recovery program.
- There are also certain emergency benefits available to specific persons applying for GR.
  - Emergency Housing – If you are eligible for GR and homeless, DPSS can issue you up to two weeks of hotel vouchers. However, \$4.53 will be deducted from your first GR benefit for each night DPSS issues you a hotel voucher.
  - Emergency CalFresh – You may be entitled to CalFresh or food vouchers the day you apply. Any homeless applicant is entitled to request expedited CalFresh, which must be issued by DPSS within 3 days of applying.
  - Aid to prevent eviction – You can receive up to \$272 if you can prove, with a letter from the landlord, that you failed to pay last month's and this month's rent and the money will prevent your eviction. This payment will be issued directly to your landlord.
  - Aid to utilities – You can receive additional aid to restore or prevent your utilities being shut off.
- Finally, if you are stranded in Los Angeles from another state or county and want to return home, you can ask for money to return home when you apply for GR.
  - Someone, such as a relative, must confirm that you reside in the county or state to which you want to return.
  - If you have used this help within the last year you cannot use it again.
  - If you are eligible, DPSS will give you emergency housing and meal vouchers until transportation is arranged. DPSS will also provide you a food allowance for your trip home.

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## Tips and Recommendations

- Applying for any benefits, including CW, can be a long and taxing process, especially if you go to the DPSS office to do so.
  - Be prepared for long wait times in the lobby. Getting to speak to a worker and the process of filling out all the paperwork can take time, so try not to go to the office on a day on which you have other pressing appointments.
  - Do not get discouraged by the wait times or what people tell you, even what the DPSS worker says. If the worker is being rude or does not answer your questions, insist on talking to a supervisor or the supervisor's manager.
  - **Do not sign anything you do not understand.** In particular, do not sign a "withdrawal" of your application unless you understand and agree with the written reason you are given.
- Keep in touch with your DPSS eligibility worker and make sure you know his/her name. Make sure to inform the worker of any significant changes, such as income or family changes.
- Document all contacts and conversations you have with DPSS. You may want to start a journal and write down things like days and times you called, appointments you had, the contents of the conversation with your worker, etc.
- If you are asked to mail additional papers to the DPSS office, ask the worker for a stamped envelope addressed to him or her. If you take in papers, get a receipt.
  - Always keep your original paperwork; give DPSS copies only. If you must submit an original document, make sure to get a copy beforehand.
- If the DPSS denies, changes, or cuts your aid, they must send you a letter explaining the reason. These letters are called "Notice of Action" or NOA.
  - You have the right to "appeal" the denial and request a hearing (or meeting) with someone who did not make the initial decision nor was the supervisor of the person who made the original decision.
  - You must request a hearing within 10 days of receiving the NOA. Each NOA has a form on the back that you can fill out and send to DPSS to request your hearing

*(see next page for office listings)*

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## GR Office Locations

Apply for General Relief online at <https://www.dpssbenefits.lacounty.gov/ybn/Index.html>

or in person at one of the district offices:

**Civic Center (14)\***

813 E. Fourth Place  
Los Angeles, CA 90013

**Florence (17)\***

1740 E. Gage Ave.  
Los Angeles, CA 90001

**Glendale (02)**

4680 San Fernando Rd.  
Glendale, CA 91204  
(818) 546-6100 or  
(818) 546-6200

**Lancaster General(67)\***

337 East Ave K-10  
Lancaster, CA 93535

**Metro East (15)**

2855 E. Olympic Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90023  
(323) 260-3718

**Metro Special (70)\***

2707 S. Grand Ave.  
Los Angeles, CA 90007

**Pasadena (03)\***

955 N. Lake Ave.  
Pasadena, CA 91104

**Pomona (36)\***

2040 W. Holt Ave.  
Pomona, CA 91768

**Rancho Park (60)\***

11110 W. Pico Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90064

**San Fernando Valley (32)\***

9188 Glenoaks Blvd.  
Sun Valley, CA 91342

**San Gabriel Valley (20)\***

3352 Aerojet Ave.  
El Monte, CA 91731

**South Central (27)**

10728 S. Central Ave.  
Los Angeles, CA 90059  
(323) 563-4401

**South Special (07)\***

17600-B Santa Fe Ave.  
Rancho Dominguez,  
CA 90221

**Southwest Special (08)\***

1819 W. 120th St.  
Los Angeles, CA 90047

**Wilshire (10)\***

2415 6th St.  
Los Angeles, CA 90057

\* - offices marked with the asterisk only receive calls through the Customer Service Center.

Regardless of your office, you can also call the Customer Service Center at (866) 613-3777 to find out general as well as case specific information. You will need a 10-digit Customer ID Number and a 6-digit Personal Identification Number (PIN) to get case specific information. If you do not have those numbers, you can request them when speaking with a Customer Service Representative.



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