All About In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)

2026

Disability Rights California

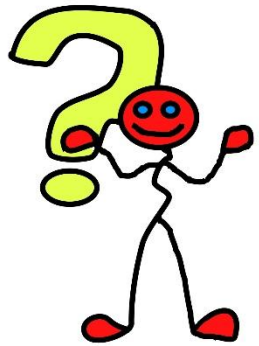
Disclaimer

The following presentation is meant for education only and does not constitute legal advice nor counsel. Your situation may be unique and require careful attention.

Keep in mind that the information in these slides could become out of date, as the laws and local practices relating to these matters are constantly developing.

Overview:

- **In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Program**
  - What is IHSS?
  - Who is eligible?
  - What kinds of services does IHSS provide?
  - How does one apply for IHSS?
  - Appeals (generally)



What is IHSS?

- Medi-Cal program for people, including children, with disabilities to remain safely in their own homes.
  - Alternative to out-of-home placement.
- Provides basic services to individuals who cannot safely perform the tasks themselves or need prompting.
- Administered by each County under the direction of the California Department of Social Services (CDSS).

Who Is Eligible for IHSS?

Any California resident is eligible for IHSS if they:

- Are blind, disabled (including children with disabilities), or 65 years of age or older;
- Are SSI/SSP or Medi-Cal eligible;
- Are living in a home or apartment (not including a hospital, nursing home, assisted living, or licensed care facility);
- Cannot live safely at home without assistance

What is a “Home”?



Alternative living situations are allowed. (**Resource #1.**)

<u>Examples</u>:

-Recreational Vehicles (RVs)
-Shelters
-Emergency extraordinary circumstances

What Kinds of Services Does IHSS Pay For?

Service Categories:

- Domestic Services
- Related Services
- Personal Care Services
- Accompaniment
- Paramedical Services
- Time-Limited Services
- Protective Supervision

IHSS Notice of Action lists services. (**Resource #2.**)

Domestic Services:

- Sweeping
- Vacuuming
- Washing and waxing of floor surfaces
- Washing kitchen counters and sinks
- Cleaning the bathroom
- Storing food and supplies
- Taking out garbage
- Dusting and picking up
- Cleaning oven and stove
- Cleaning and defrosting refrigerator
- Bringing in fuel for heating or cooking purposes from a fuel bin in the yard
- Changing bed linen



Related Services:

- Meal preparation/clean-up
- Laundry
- Grocery shopping
- Other shopping/errands
  - Examples: Picking up prescriptions, buying clothes or toiletries, etc.



Personal Care Services:

- **Feeding**
- **Bathing**
- **Oral hygiene**
- **Grooming**
- **Bowel and bladder care**
- **Dressing**
- **Transfer**
  - Getting in/out of bed, on/off seats, etc.
- **Ambulation**
  - Help with walking, getting in/out of cars, etc.
- **Help with prosthesis**
  - Leg braces, visual/hearing aids, artificial limbs
- **Help with medications**



Time-Limited Services:

- **Heavy cleaning**
- **Removing yard hazards (weeds or high grass)**
- **Shoveling ice or snow**
- **Teaching and Demonstration**
  - Not all services are eligible! Limited to:
    - Housework
    - Meal prep/clean-up
    - Laundry
    - Bathing, feeding, dressing
    - Yard work
  - <u>3 month maximum</u>



Protective Supervision:

For people who:

- Have a mental illness or mental impairment; *and*
- Are non-self-directing; *and*
- Require 24-hour supervision to safeguard against self-injury, hazard, or accident.

- For children (under 18 years of age), include additional criteria: needs more supervision than child of same age without disability.

Types of Behaviors That May Warrant a Need For Protective Supervision:

- Wandering from home and getting lost;
- Eating non-food items;
- Wandering into the street without checking for cars;
- Attempting tasks beyond his/her physical and/or mental capability (and not understanding the risk of injury);
  - Trying to move furniture or heavy objects
  - Climbing onto the counter
- Turning on stove and forgetting to turn it off;
- Self-injurious behaviors;
- Lack of stranger-danger awareness.



Form SOC 821 can be used to support need for Protective Supervision. (**Resource #3**.)

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When Is Protective Supervision NOT Available?

- **Friendly visiting or social activities**

- **When the need is caused by a medical condition and the form of supervision required is medical**
  - Example: Recipient has diabetes and needs supervision in case they become hypoglycemic

- **In anticipation of a medical emergency**
  - Example: Recipient has congestive heart failure and need for supervision is in anticipation of heart attack

- **To prevent or control anti-social or aggressive behavior**
  - Getting into fights or destroying property

- **To guard against deliberate, self-destructive behavior**
  - When individual knowingly intends to harm himself/herself



(MPP § 30-757.172(a)-(e).) (**Resource #4.**)

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Paramedical Services:

Paramedical services are **(1)** prescribed by a doctor for a person's health and **(2)** require some training and judgment to perform. (**Resource #5**.)

"[In-home] 'supportive services' include those necessary paramedical services that are ordered by a licensed health care professional who is lawfully authorized to do so, which persons could provide for themselves but for their functional limitations." (Welf. & Inst. Code § 12300.1.)

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Paramedical Services:

- The person can't perform the service at all;
- The activity is necessary to maintain the person’s health;
- The service requires training and judgment to perform, such as puncturing skin, inserting a medical device into a body orifice, etc.



Paramedical Services:

- **Services ordered by a licensed medical professional and provided under his/her direction. Examples:**
  - Administering medications or giving injections
  - Range of motion exercises
  - Pressure sore or wound care
  - Catheter insertion
  - Bowel program
  - Enemas, insertion of suppositories
  - Tube feeding
  - Trachea care and suctioning

Form SOC 321 can be used to confirm need for Paramedical Services. (**Resource #6.**)

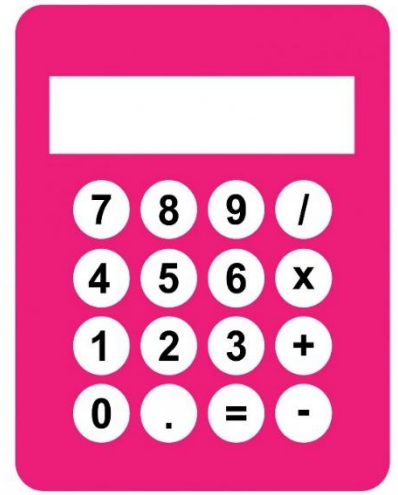
Children's Eligibility:

IHSS takes into account needs that a disabled child may have when they exceed those of a child without disabilities. An eligible child with a disability can receive the following services:

- Personal care services;
- Related services;
- Paramedical services, if prescribed by a doctor;
- Protective Supervision; or
- Assistance with travel to approved places.



How Are Hours Calculated?

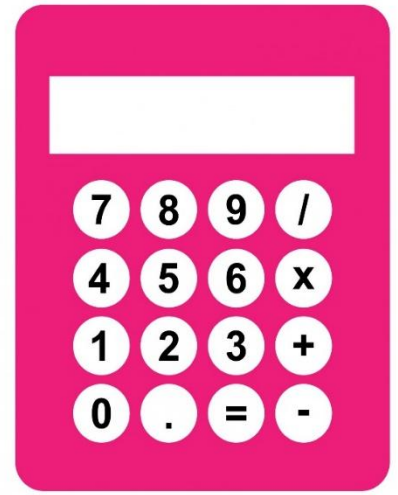


- **Four programs under IHSS:**
  - 1. Community First Choice Option (**CFCO**) Program
  - 2. Personal Care Services Program (**PCSP**)
  - 3. IHSS Plus Option (**IPO**) Program
  - 4. IHSS Residual (**IHSS-R**) Program
- **Proration (including related and domestic services)**
- **Alternative resources**

(Resource #7.)

How Are Hours Calculated?

- "The IHSS Social Worker Field Assessment Handbook" contains some tools to help facilitate uniform assessments: **(1)** Steps to Completing the IHSS Needs Assessment; and **(2)** Hourly Task Guidelines Table. (All County Information Notice (ACIN) I-82-17, Attachment C.) (**Resource #8**)
  - IHSS needs assessment:
    - This includes an in-home visit and interview. The IHSS social worker will provide a Functional Index (FI) ranking between 1-5/6 for some categories.
  - Hourly task guidelines (HTGs):
    - These are guidelines, and not maximum hours that can be received. Exceptions can be made if more time is needed.
  - Functional Index Rankings for Minor Children:
    - Minor children are assessed using the Age Appropriate Guidelines Tool, but extraordinary need should also be considered. (**Resource #9**.)



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How do you apply for IHSS?

(1) Contact your local IHSS county welfare office to begin the application process. (**Resource #10.**)

(2) Review and complete the application. (**Resource #11.**)

(3) Health Certification Form should be completed by a healthcare professional. (**Resource #12.**)

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How do you apply for IHSS?

(4) Be ready the initial assessment! A self-assessment may help you prepare. (**Resource #13**.)

(5) IHSS social worker will visit the home to conduct an in-home assessment. The IHSS social worker may collect additional information as part of assessment.

(6) The County will issue an IHSS Notice of Action (NOA), which determines eligibility and hours provided.

Appeal:



- Notice of Action (NOA): 90 days to appeal
  - Aid Paid Pending: Appeal before the effective date of the NOA (different than the date of the notice).
- State Hearing Requests (CDSS) (**Resource #14**)
- DRC's Fair Hearing Guides:
  - In-Home and Self-Assessment Guide, Section 11 (**Resource #15**.)
  - How to Prepare for IHSS Terminations or Reductions in Hours (**Resource #16.**)

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RESOURCES

1. CDSS, All County Information Notice (ACIN) I-19-20: https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/Additional-Resources/Letters-and-Notices/ACINs/2020/I-19_20.pdf
2. Template IHSS Notice of Action (NOA) Approval: https://www.cdss.ca.gov/cdssweb/entres/forms/English/NA1250.pdf
3. Form SOC 821, Assessment of Need for Protective Supervision for IHSS Program: https://cdss.ca.gov/cdssweb/entres/forms/English/SOC821.PDF
4. Manual of Policies and Procedures: https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/letters-regulations/legislation-and-regulations/adult-services-regulations
5. DRC, Paramedical Services Through the IHSS Program: https://www.disabilityrightsca.org/publications/paramedical-services-through-the-ihss-program
6. Form SOC 321, Request for Order and Consent – Paramedical Services: https://www.cdss.ca.gov/cdssweb/entres/forms/english/soc321.pdf
7. DRC, Understanding the Maximum Amount of Hours Available & Calculating Hours: https://www.disabilityrightsca.org/publications/understanding-the-maximum-amount-of-hours-available-calculating-hours

RESOURCES

8. CDSS, All County Information Notice (ACIN) I-82-17: https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/ACIN/2017/I-82_17.pdf?ver=2019-06-18-163054-553
9. CDSS, IHSS, Functional Index Ranking for Minor Children in IHSS (Age Appropriate Guidelines Tool): https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/IHSS/ITA/IHSS%20102/AAG.pdf?ver=2019-01-17-104504-257
10. County IHSS Office Directory (State-wide): https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/county-ihss-offices
11. Application for In-Home Supportive Services: https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/FMUForms/Q-T/SOC295.pdf
12. Form SOC 873, Health Care Certification Form: https://www.cdss.ca.gov/cdssweb/entres/forms/English/SOC873.pdf
13. DRC, IHSS In-Home and Self-Assessment Guide: https://www.disabilityrightsca.org/publications/ihss-in-home-and-self-assessment-guide
14. CDSS, Information About State Hearing Requests: https://www.cdss.ca.gov/hearing-requests

RESOURCES

15. DRC, IHSS In-Home and Self-Assessment Guide, Section 11: https://www.disabilityrightsca.org/publications/ihss-in-home-and-self-assessment-guide#11
16. DRC, How to Prepare for IHSS Terminations or Reductions in Hours: https://www.disabilityrightsca.org/publications/ihss-fair-hearings-guide-how-to-prepare-for-ihss-terminations-or-reductions-in-hours
17. DRC IHSS Publications: https://www.disabilityrightsca.org/resources/in-home-supportive-services-ihss
18. Justice in Aging, In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Guide for Advocates: https://justiceinaging.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/IHSS-Advocate-Manual-Updated-2026-final.pdf
19. CDSS, IHSS Training Academy Materials: https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/ihss/training-academy

- **Disability Rights California (DRC):**
  - Intake Line: 1-800-776-5746
  - TTY: 1-800-719-5798
  - Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
  - Online Form: https://www.disabilityrightsca.org/get-help

- **Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy (OCRA) for Regional Center Clients:**
  - Intake Line: 1-800-390-7032