

July 21, 2023

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER**

This All County Welfare Directors Letter provides guidance to County Welfare Departments on the treatment of income received through the California Department of Social Services Guaranteed Income Pilot Program when determining eligibility and benefit levels for other assistance programs.



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DIRECTOR

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July 21, 2023

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

FROM: JULIANNA VIGNALATS, ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT DIVISION

SUBJECT: **TREATMENT OF PAYMENTS RECEIVED FROM THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES (CDSS) STATE-FUNDED GUARANTEED INCOME (GI) PILOT PROGRAM ON INCOME ELIGIBILITY AND BENEFIT LEVELS FOR FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

REFERENCE: [WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE SECTION 18997](#)

The purpose of this All County Welfare Directors Letter (ACWDL) is to remind County Welfare Departments (CWDs) that direct payments to participants issued under the State-funded Guaranteed Income (GI) Pilot Program are exempt from income and resource determinations under state and local benefit and assistance programs pursuant to [Welfare and Institutions Code \(WIC\) Section 18997](#). This ACWDL provides a non-exhaustive list of state and local benefit and assistance programs that **cannot** consider GI Pilot Program payments as income or resources as part of eligibility or benefit award determinations. In addition, this ACWDL provides guidance on the consideration of the GI Pilot Program payments during eligibility and benefit award determinations for certain federal programs.

**The CDSS GI Pilot Program participants are anticipated to begin receiving GI direct payments as soon as September 2023, which may impact eligibility for other public benefits.**

Programs mentioned in this letter do not account for all programs which may be required to exempt GI payments from income or resource determinations. Please note that other state or local departments and agencies may issue guidance regarding whether GI payments will be counted or exempted during eligibility determinations for their respective benefit and assistance programs. As the Department becomes aware of any guidance, it will be posted to the [CDSS GI Pilot Program webpage](#). The

guidance included on the webpage may not be comprehensive of all programs that are potentially impacted.

The guidance in this letter only refers to GI payments received through the CDSS GI Pilot Program authorized by [WIC Section 18997](#). This guidance does not apply to other GI programs operating within the state. For more information on income exemptions for other GI pilots operating within the state, visit the [Income Exemption Request webpage](#).

## **GI PILOT PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The CDSS GI Pilot Program began development in State Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-23 and will end in FY 2025-26. The seven pilot sites will support former foster youth and/or pregnant people. Beginning as early as September 2023, participants will receive payments ranging from \$600-\$1,200 per month. These payments will last 12-18 months, depending on the pilot site.

The pilot sites will operate in the following counties:

- Expecting Justice: Alameda, Contra Costa, Los Angeles, and Riverside Counties
- iFoster: statewide, except for Alameda, Napa, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Francisco, and Ventura Counties
- Inland Southern California United Way: Riverside and San Bernardino Counties
- Los Angeles Section National Council of Jewish Women: Los Angeles County
- McKinleyville Community Collaborative: Humboldt County
- San Francisco Human Services Agency: San Francisco County
- Ventura County Human Services Agency: Ventura County

Under [WIC Section 18997\(c\)\(1\)](#), “guaranteed income payments received by an individual from a pilot program or project funded pursuant to this chapter shall not be considered income or resources for purposes of determining the individual’s, or any member of their household’s, eligibility for benefits or assistance, or the amount or extent of benefits or assistance, under any state or local benefit or assistance program.” In addition, state departments or agencies that administer a federal benefit or assistance program must approve an exemption or waiver to exclude GI Pilot Program payments from consideration as income or resources for purposes of the federal program, or, if the department or agency does not have that authority, request a federal waiver or exemption pursuant to [WIC Section 18997\(c\)\(2\)](#).

## **TREATMENT OF PAYMENTS FOR FEDERALLY DETERMINED PROGRAMS**

In accordance with [WIC Section 18997\(c\)\(2\)](#), the CDSS identified federal programs which may be impacted by the GI Pilot Program payments. Where applicable, the CDSS also requested income exemptions from affected programs.

The following federal programs provided waivers, exemptions, or guidance on how GI Pilot Program payments would impact income and resource determinations. Additional federal programs may be required to exempt GI Pilot Program payments.

### **CalFresh (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program):**

Per [All County Letter \(ACL\) 23-60](#), GI Pilot Program payments will not count as income for CalFresh, but may count as resources. All pilots will attest that the source of direct payments for CalFresh households includes some amount of non-governmental funding, as required for the exemption.

### **Housing and Urban Development (HUD):**

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development did not provide a waiver that would exempt all GI Pilot Program payments from HUD assistance program income determinations. However, HUD identified several options that regulated entities such as Public Housing Agencies may use to exempt the GI Pilot Program payments. CDSS has posted the [letter from HUD](#) which describes these options to the CDSS GI Pilot Program webpage.

### **Medi-Cal and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP):**

Please see [Medi-Cal Eligibility Division Information Letter I 22-23E](#) for determination regarding payments received from pilots funded by the California GI Pilot Program. The [State Plan Amendment \(SPA\) 22-0072](#) gives federal approval to disregard as resources and as income payments received from pilots funded by the California GI Pilot Program for 12 months for Non-MAGI eligibility purposes. Medi-Cal will no longer count resources in the eligibility determination as of January 1, 2024. Note that former foster youth are eligible for Medi-Cal regardless of income, per [SPA 23-009](#).

### **Refugee Cash Assistance:**

The GI Pilot Program payments will not count as income or resources pursuant to [WIC Section 18997\(c\)\(1\)](#); [CDSS Manual of Policies and Procedures section 69-201.4](#).

### **Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families:**

The Administration of Children and Families may approve a GI exemption for individual tribes through an amendment to a tribe's Tribal Family Assistance Plan. The CWD may coordinate with the pilot site administrators for confirmation of the tribe's income exemption.

**Women, Infants, and Children:**

If the participant is currently enrolled in Medi-Cal, California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs), or CalFresh (categorical eligibility), no income assessment is needed. If the participant is not enrolled in a categorically eligible program, GI could be counted as income and may impact eligibility.

It is advised that, if newly applying to multiple programs, applicants are encouraged to apply for Women, Infants and Children last to attempt to confer adjunctive eligibility for Women, Infants, and Children.

**TREATMENT OF PAYMENTS FOR STATE DETERMINED PROGRAMS**

GI payments received under the State-funded GI Pilot Program “shall not be considered income or resources for purposes of determining the individual’s, or any member of their household’s eligibility for benefits or assistance, or the amount or extent of benefits or assistance, under any state and local benefit or assistance program.”

[WIC Section 18997\(c\)\(1\)](#). Accordingly, the GI payments are exempt from all state benefit or assistance programs. This includes, but is not limited to, the following programs:

- **Assistance Dog Special Allowance**
- **CalWORKs**
- **Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants**
- **Trafficking and Crime Victims Assistance Program**

The following state programs provided additional waivers, exemptions, or guidance on how GI Pilot Program payments would impact income and resource determinations:

**California Food Assistance Program (CFAP):**

Any GI payment exempt for CalFresh purposes will also be exempt for CFAP purposes.

**Child Care and Development Programs:**

GI payments shall not be counted as income for purposes of determining eligibility for the following Child Care and Development programs, pursuant to [WIC 10271.5\(f\)](#) and [Child Care Bulletin No. 22-30](#).

- **California Alternative Payment Programs**
- **Migrant Alternative Payment Programs**
- **CalWORKs Stages Two and Three**

- **General Child Care and Development Programs**
- **Family Child Care Home Education Networks**
- **Migrant Child Care and Developmental Programs**
- **Child Care and Developmental Programs for Children with Disabilities**

The Department has requested that other State agencies or departments that administer or oversee state or local benefit or assistance programs to issue guidance regarding those programs. The Department will post guidance received from other State agencies and departments to the Resources section of the [CDSS Guaranteed Income Pilot Program webpage](#).

#### **TREATMENT OF PAYMENTS FOR LOCALLY ADMINISTERED PROGRAMS**

Guaranteed income payments received under the GI Pilot Program are not considered income or resources for any local benefit or assistance program pursuant to [WIC Section 18997\(c\)\(1\)](#). Local benefit or assistance programs include but are not limited to:

**General Assistance and General Relief (GA/GR):**

GI payments shall not be counted as income or resources for GA/GR.

Pilot sites may work with CWDs or other entities to obtain additional local waivers which are relevant to their participants, such as waivers for HUD programs, as discussed above.

#### **CONTACT**

If you have any questions or need additional guidance regarding the information in this letter, contact the CDSS Office of Family Engagement & Empowerment Initiatives Guaranteed Income team by email at [GIPilot.Info@dss.ca.gov](mailto:GIPilot.Info@dss.ca.gov).