



Lending

A HELPING HAND

How a new Sacramento County housing program is providing homeless families a path to self-sufficiency

SACRAMENTO
COUNTY

A BRIDGE TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY

by
**Mike
Blount**

Housing Support Program offers families a second chance

For families who are homeless, getting a second chance at stability can be the difference between becoming permanently self-sufficient or remaining on the streets. Having a secure and safe environment allows families to concentrate on finding employment and address barriers that may have prevented them from having stability in the past. An innovative new program will give 300 to 400 homeless families in Sacramento County a second chance by helping them find housing, paying their deposits and first month's rent and providing additional financial assistance for up to eight months after they move into a residence.

"When you don't know where you or your kids are going to sleep at night, it's hard to concentrate on finding employment or your job training program."

Frank Mecca
Executive Director of the
County Welfare Directors
Association of California

Approved in 2014 by the California Legislature, Senate Bill 855 allotted \$20 million for housing support to homeless families throughout the state. Out of 42 counties that applied for the Housing Support Program, Sacramento County was one of only 20 accepted, receiving \$1.3 million to help homeless or housing-insecure families who participate in the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program. CalWORKs is California's version of the Federal Temporary

Assistance to Needy Families (TANF).

The need for stable housing for these families is great. Frank Mecca, Executive Director of the County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA), says homelessness has become a crisis in the state.

"Since the start of the Great Recession, counties have been experiencing a significant increase of homeless families enrolled in CalWORKs," Mecca says. "Three factors together have contributed: the economic slump, stagnant wages and skyrocketing rent costs. CalWORKs families want to work, but when you don't know where you or your kids are going to sleep at night, it's hard to concentrate on finding employment or your job training program."

While shelters provide a temporary place for families to stay, there are often long waiting lists to get into them. Even then, families have a limited amount of time they can stay. The rapid re-housing model gives families a stable environment to work toward becoming self-sufficient, according to Ann Edwards, Director of the Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance.

"The Housing Support Program is a great addition to the array of services CalWORKs already has," Edwards says. "Research shows that when someone is stably housed, they can shift their focus from survival to finding employment. We can help them with job readiness skills, vocational training, we offer subsidized employment — but the ultimate goal is for them to find employment so they don't need our assistance anymore. This program allows us to do that."

Housing California, an organization that works directly with California decision-makers on housing and homeless policy,



Sacramento County resident Davon Wells (left) and his kids are now safely housed thanks to Sacramento County's Housing Support Program.
PHOTO BY TONY NGUYEN

played a lead role in getting the Housing Support Program off the ground. For Policy Director John Bauters, the program offers a chance to reduce costs across all sectors of the state economy.

"Permanent housing is the only solution for homelessness," Bauters says. "Some people need substance abuse help, others need education or mental health treatment, but all people need housing. All of those outcomes are limited by a lack of affordable homes. If we remove that barrier, we improve the social outcomes in our state."

Keep reading to find out how Sacramento County's Housing Support Program helps house homeless families.



Frank Mecca is the Executive Director of the County Welfare Directors Association of California.



Ann Edwards is the Director of the Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance.

By the Numbers

The Housing Support Program will help homeless families in Sacramento County find housing and provide additional wraparound services and financial assistance. In order for families to be eligible, they need to be homeless, enrolled in CalWORKs and have a child under the age of 18. Here are some additional facts about homelessness in Sacramento County:

\$1.3 million

was awarded to Sacramento County for the Housing Support Program.

300-400 families

will be helped through the program.

5.3%

of the population in Sacramento County received CalWORKs from 2013-2014, compared to 3.5% statewide.

1,993 families

received homeless assistance special needs services from CalWORKs during the 2013-2014 fiscal year, according to California Department of Social Services.

A monthly average of **67 CalWORKs families** stayed in **emergency homeless** shelters during the same period.

The 2013 Homeless Count Report by Sacramento Steps Forward states a **32.6% increase** in homeless families since 2011 and a **47.5% increase** since 2009.

BACK ON TRACK

*Formerly homeless family
on path to self-sufficiency
thanks to housing program*

by Matthew Craggs

When Leialoha Green's car was repossessed, one thing led to another until Green found herself in the middle of a crisis. Without transportation to her job as an in-home caregiver, she was let go by her employer, lost her home and found herself moving between hotels with her long-time partner and two youngest children. When her relationship with her partner became unhealthy, Green gathered her kids and packed her bags, but realized she had no place to go.

"I went down to the welfare office, seeking assistance," Green says. "All I knew was I wasn't going to return to the hotel room because it wasn't a healthy environment for my kids. I got an appointment with a homeless intake worker and she told me about [the Housing Support Program]."

The program, CalWORKs Housing Support Program, is a new, innovative program available to anyone eligible for CalWORKs — regardless of income, assets or whether they've previously received housing assistance. The program offers families assistance finding and securing stable housing. Families can receive credit repair services and financial assistance with rent, utilities, move-in costs and legal fees.

At the time, Green, 37, was temporarily living with her mom and working part time as an in-home caregiver. But on her low income, she was having trouble saving the first and last months' rent and deposits required to move in to her own place. Because she had lost her previous housing, Green also had trouble getting landlords to fully trust her. Credit checks did nothing to help convince landlords that Green was a good prospective tenant.

Then, Green's caseworker stepped in. Green was approved through the Housing Support Program for

an apartment renting for up to \$800 per month. Green's first month's rent, past-due utilities and deposits were covered through the program. Green moved into her new apartment in February.

"I view [the Housing Support Program] as a stepping stone," Green says. "It helped me keep my head above water, helped me when I really needed the help. Times are rough sometimes, you just have to stay strong and get through it."

An important aspect of the CalWORKs Housing Support Program is that it gives counties flexibility to do what is best for families in their communities and consider local housing market conditions. In Sacramento County, that means offering financial assistance for up to eight months after move-in. The program pays 100 percent of the rent for the first four months. Then, rent is covered at a decreasing rate each month — the program pays 80 percent of rent the fifth month, 60 percent the sixth month and so on. The gradual decrease in benefit has helped Green and her family steadily but surely work toward self-sufficiency.

"Slowly weaning off the program is giving me more money to buy furniture or dishes," she says. "Saving money to me is a big thing because I've never been able to do that."

With the extra money she was able to save, Green bought a car, returned to work and did a little something special for her children.

"I was able to take all my kids, even my stepkids, to the movies," Green says. "My kids haven't had that in a long time. That felt really good."



Leialoha Green and her family went from homeless to stable, housed and employed thanks to help from Sacramento County's CalWORKs Housing Support Program.
PHOTO BY LAURA ANTHONY

"I view [the Housing Support Program] as a stepping stone. It helped me keep my head above water, helped me when I really needed the help."

Leialoha Green
Housing Support Program participant

**Working
together to
help local families**



Gladys Deloney is the Deputy Director of the Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance.

Dear Neighbors,

Sacramento County, Department of Human Assistance has enjoyed a long and effective collaboration with the Continuum of Care in Sacramento County. We depend on our partners in the Continuum of Care for the success of the program and rapidly moving families into housing.

Our efforts with Sacramento Steps Forward, the lead agency in the Continuum of Care, has led to a working relationship that allows for cross-communication between the two agencies. The Family

Emergency Shelters are a valuable part of the success of the program as they act as the connection between those families in the shelter and the referral to our program.

We have recently been able to locate a CalWORKs staff person at Maryhouse (Loaves and Fishes) one day a week to take new applications for the Housing Support Program.

The department also participates in monthly meetings with Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, City of Sacramento, and Sacramento Steps Forward to best strategize our collaborative efforts

to serve the homeless population of the Sacramento area.

The Housing Support Program was built on the collective efforts of all of our partners in the Continuum of Care. Special thanks to Victor Contreras, Human Services Program Planner, for his work on this project and making countless contacts to assist homeless families in need.

Sincerely,

Gladys Deloney,
Deputy Director of the Sacramento County
Department of Human Assistance

BREAKING THROUGH Barriers

Paulette Brown and her son were formerly homeless, but now have stable housing and a bright future due in part to the wraparound support services from Sacramento County's Family Stabilization program.
PHOTO BY TONY NGUYEN

*Family Stabilization
services give families the
tools to succeed*

by Ali Brimball

Services for Success

The Sacramento County Housing Support Program and Family Stabilization offer additional, extended services, or wraparound services, to housing support recipients who need assistance in achieving long-term stability.

INTENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT

Frequent meetings with a social worker to outline goals, track progress and address needs or changes in the family's living situation. The recipients receive close attention that includes assistance with making appointments, transportation issues and more.

PERSONALIZED TREATMENT

Family members are given referrals and connected with local sources of support and treatment for mental illness, domestic violence, substance abuse and other barriers to a stable home.

ACCESS TO LOCAL RESOURCES

Recipients are provided with access to community resources as appropriate to their needs, including food banks, shelters, clinics and Social Security services.

A safe place to sleep at night. A stable environment for raising a family. Somewhere that you can call "home." These are things many of us take for granted each day, but Paulette Brown doesn't. When Brown left a job in Grass Valley to regain custody of her 15-year-old son in Sacramento, she found herself without work and without a place to live. She was facing the frightening prospect of homelessness while raising a teenager.

Luckily, there was help available when Brown and her family needed it. Brown met with a CalWORKs social worker who helped her to establish housing and referred her to the Sacramento County Family Stabilization program, which helps families in crisis find and retain housing. A family experiencing chronic homelessness or domestic violence may qualify for Family Stabilization services. The program identifies and addresses obstacles that could prevent long-term housing stability and connects recipients to services in the community, with the social worker acting as a liaison to track their progress.

"The social worker is the recipients' advocate, not just [addressing] their homelessness, but their needs as a whole," says Human Services Division Manager Deborah Burch.

A unique plan of action is created for each case, an agreement between the recipients and the social worker

that is created and updated as needed. Brown's plan of action included a six-week job club where she could receive help with applications, résumés and other work-related issues. The program also provides recipients with clothing for interviews and transportation to appointments if needed. The resources provided through the program help families with temporary crises that could threaten their housing stability, with the ultimate goal of helping families achieve self-sufficiency.

After completing the program, Brown found a job in Folsom and is looking for work in her field as a pharmacy technician. She credits the support of her CalWORKs and housing caseworkers with helping her through a difficult situation.

"[The workers] were there for me every day to guide me through the program," says Brown. "They want you to do well and give you hope that things will get better."

While a history of barriers that could prevent the family from retaining long-term housing can be challenging, it can also be overcome. Many factors contribute

to a housing success story, from a social worker's diligent advocacy to the family's commitment to achieving the goals in their plan of action. For many of the homeless families being helped by the Housing Support Program, wraparound services such as those provided by Family Stabilization may mean the difference between having a temporary roof over their heads and having a home in which to build their future.

*"They want you to do
well and give you hope
that things will get
better."*

Paulette Brown
*Family Stabilization
program participant*

GIVING FAMILIES A SECOND CHANCE

*Landlord offers affordable
housing to families in need*

*by Amanda
Caraway*

Randal Thomas Neal, manager of Magnolia Court Apartments, feels good about offering housing to families in need. He also enjoys the peace of mind that tenants participating in the Housing Support Program are thoroughly screened and well supported to be successful renters.

PHOTO BY TONY NGUYEN

**“Landlords should give
this program a shot.”**

Randal Thomas Neal
*Resident manager,
Magnolia Court Apartments*

When Randal Thomas Neal, resident manager at the Magnolia Court Apartments in Sacramento, was first contacted by CalWORKs about participating in the Housing Support Program, he was a bit hesitant. Neal had experienced mixed results with other housing programs. But he soon learned that this program was different.

“This is a lot more hands-on than the other programs I have worked with in the past,” Neal says. “They will step in and mediate if need be and they do a great job of screening tenants.”

Caseworkers not only screen applicants on a financial and legal level, they also screen them on a personal level. This helps determine the applicant’s long-term goals so they can find housing that is a good fit financially and socially. It also ensures they move into a place they can actually afford.

“This helps us avoid signing someone who looks good on paper, but who won’t make a good tenant,” Neal says.

A great example of the Housing Support Program’s solid screening process is the family of six currently living in Neal’s apartment complex. The family fell on hard times when the father could no longer work due to a back injury.

“Before they moved here they were in a rough neighborhood,” Neal says. “Despite

their struggles they shouldn’t have to live in rundown, unsafe apartments. The Housing Support Program helped them find a better environment where their kids can play outside.”

Program staff helped the family re-evaluate their financial situation and find a safe place they could afford. Now they live in a family-friendly community where there are a lot of other children to play with.

Neal says the program is not only good for renters, it’s also a great program for apartment managers and landlords.

The extensive screening process makes things easier for landlords and helps reduce

their workload. Neal says he knows that by participating in the Housing Support program, he will end up with desirable tenants. He also appreciates that the caseworker regularly calls to check in on how the family is doing. And since the program offers four months of fully paid rent, another four months of supported rent payments, and pays security deposits, landlords can rest assured that families have every chance of being successful, long-term residents.

“Landlords should give this program a shot,” Neal says. “You have guaranteed rent

for at least four months, and if something goes wrong, the Housing Support Program will step in and help.”

Neal believes the Housing Support Program is the best program to get families back on track. The caseworkers help renters become more self-sufficient by teaching them to budget and set long-term goals. The process has been so smooth that Neal is working with CalWORKs to move in two more families.

“It’s a great second-chance program,” he says. “The Housing Support Program is for families who want to better themselves. Some people just need a little assistance and the tools to get back on their feet.”

Calling All **Landlords**

The Housing Support Program wants YOU!

The CalWORKs Housing Support Program is designed to help homeless or housing-unstable families find a permanent place to live.

“When a family has a stable home where they are safe and out of the elements, the kids can attend school and lead a normal life,” says Laurie Carriker, Program Manager with the Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance. “A program like the Housing Support

Program is good for everyone. It helps support the families’ efforts to become self-sufficient and decreases the number of homeless families in Sacramento.”

The Housing Support Program pays the deposit and rent for the first four months once a family finds a suitable rental. After that point, a portion of the rent is paid for an additional four months, with the tenant taking over full responsibility for rent in the ninth month.

The program is looking for landlords to participate in the program. Landlords can feel good about helping families in need, while resting assured that tenants are thoroughly screened and provided financial and wraparound support to be responsible, successful residents.

Interested rental property managers and landlords should call CalWORKs at 916-875-3339 for more information about the benefits of participating.

YOUR GUIDE TO HOUSING HELP

by Brittany Wesely

The new Housing Support Program through California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) is offering help to more families than were ever eligible before. Could you be one of them?

Start
Here

AM I ELIGIBLE?

You might qualify for Housing Support Program assistance if you meet all these criteria:

- You are a Sacramento County resident
- You or someone in your household receives CalWORKs benefits
- You have a court-ordered eviction notice or are currently homeless

FIND A HOME

APPLY

Call or visit a CalWORKs office to find out more information about the Housing Support Program for families and to complete an enrollment form.

GET STARTED

Once you are determined eligible, you'll be assigned to a social worker who will tell you what your rental limit is and will direct you to resources that can help you find housing.

WANT TO ENROLL IN CalWORKs?

You might be eligible for short-term CalWORKs assistance if you meet all these criteria:

- Are a United States citizen or lawful immigrant
- Reside in California and intend to stay
- Have an eligible child under age 18 or are pregnant and:
 - One or both parents are absent from the home, deceased or disabled; or
 - Both parents are in the home, but the main wage earner is either unemployed or working less than 100 hours per month
- Have a net monthly income less than the maximum aid payment for your family size
- Have less than \$2,250 in cash, bank accounts or other resources
- Participate in Welfare-to-Work programs

CALL or **VISIT** a CalWORKs office to get started. For a list of locations and phone numbers, see the back page.

GET HELP

After you identify a home that you are interested in, a social worker will help complete the rental application and obtain credit history, identification and other necessary documents.

RENTAL ASSISTANCE

- Once housing is secured, the program will pay the rental deposit and 100 percent of the rent for the first four months.
- Assistance is also available for utilities. If you have overdue bills that would prevent services from being turned on at the new home, the program will pay the past-due bill. Utility deposits will also be paid by the program.
- The amount of financial assistance provided will decrease by 20 percent each month for the next four months, until you are able to sustain the housing without financial assistance.

OTHER SERVICES

- Social workers will also offer ongoing supportive services to help you become stable and self-sustaining. Other services provided include:
 - Support for interactions with landlords and neighbors
 - Creating a household budget and plans to reduce expenses
 - Ongoing assistance with goal-setting and practical living habits
 - Referrals to employment and free or reduced-cost goods and services

NOT ELIGIBLE FOR CalWORKs?

Perhaps you don't qualify for CalWORKs support, but you might still be eligible for assistance that can help get you through a tough time. To find other programs that are available, call 211 Sacramento by dialing 2-1-1.

Get a little help getting back on your feet. Call or visit a CalWORKs office today to get started!

MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR THOSE IN NEED

by Brittany Wesely

*Housing Support Program gives
homeless families a head start*

Walk into any CalWORKs office and you'll likely be greeted with smiling faces and kind words of sympathetic staff, people who truly care about helping others.

CalWORKs Division Manager Colleene Grady Miller says that CalWORKs staff know that people who receive services are just like anyone else, just regular people who've come across extraordinarily difficult times.

"The people we serve are just like us," Grady Miller says. "I illustrate that with a true story, my story."

When Grady Miller was 19 years old and seven months pregnant with her first child, her husband was working as a roofer and suffered a major injury from a high fall. Because he was paid under the table, the family didn't have any medical insurance and didn't qualify for unemployment or disability to help get them through his recovery.

"We had nothing all at once. We had to go and apply for assistance and it was the hardest day I ever had in my life," Grady Miller says. "I felt like I was two inches tall."

Grady Miller and her family went to a Sacramento County office to see what sort of

assistance they'd qualify for. While they were hopeful for help, Grady Miller says she felt very ashamed.

She now understands that there's nothing wrong with getting the temporary help you need, when you need it. Years of experience working at CalWORKs have taught her that the people they serve represent the whole community — anyone can fall on hard times.

But back then, she saw things differently. She was about to have a baby and, by asking for help, she felt like she couldn't take care of her child. Grady Miller says she felt like she did something wrong. She felt helpless, but the staff at the Sacramento County office gave her hope.

"I still remember the first person I saw. She smiled at me and talked to me softly," Grady Miller says. "She treated me like a real person and I never forgot that."

Walking out of the office that day, Grady Miller recalls feeling much better than she did when she walked in. She felt reassured, at ease and ready to care for her growing family.

This personal experience inspired Grady Miller to work for the department she once benefited so greatly from.

"People need to have a safe place to live. If you don't have a place to live, that can impact your ability to get a job because you're so worried about meeting the basic need of shelter."

Jasmin Perrigo
Human Services Supervisor

"For the people who come into our office, this is not their best day," Grady Miller says. "This is one of the hardest days they've tried to get through. We can make a difference to whether when they walk out they feel like a person or not."

Having relied on public assistance in the past, CalWORKs Division Manager Colleene Grady Miller knows that anyone can find themselves struggling through tough times.
PHOTO TONY NGUYEN



"I'm giving back what was given to me and I feel great about that."

Colleene Grady Miller
CalWORKs Division Manager

One of the big ways CalWORKs is helping needy families in the Sacramento area is through the Housing Support Program, a new effort that is designed to get homeless families into stable housing. The program offers financial and supportive services to help get CalWORKs families into homes and ensure that they are set up for success.

CalWORKs Human Services Supervisor Jasmin Perrigo has been part of the program since it first started last December. She says the program is essential for Sacramento County families.

"People need to have a safe place to live," Perrigo says. "If you don't have a place to live, that can impact your ability to get a job because you're so worried about meeting the basic need of shelter."

Grady Miller agrees that people are better situated for success in life when they have a residence they can call home.

"Nobody wants to see children sleeping on the sidewalk," Grady Miller says. "It's so much better to be able to give them a good start — not just to house them out of the rain, but to give them a home so that they can have a bright future."

Grady Miller has been proudly working for Sacramento County for 28 years and loves being able to connect people in need to services that can help.

"I consider my job a blessing," Grady Miller says. "I'm giving back what was given to me and I feel great about that."

CalWORKs Human Services Supervisor Jasmin Perrigo knows the importance of treating clients with understanding and compassion.
PHOTO TONY NGUYEN





ON THE PATH TO

*Opening doors for
homeless families*

Self-Sufficiency

Sacramento County's Housing Support Program is empowering families in need to achieve an enriched quality of life. Available to all families who are homeless or experiencing housing instability and are receiving California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) assistance, the program helps families maintain stable housing and unlock their potential for success.

To find out more about the CalWORKs Housing Support Program, call or visit a CalWORKs bureau office today.

RANCHO CORDOVA BUREAU

10013 Folsom Blvd., Suite 1
Sacramento, CA 95827
916-875-8600

RESEARCH DRIVE BUREAU

3960 Research Drive
Sacramento, CA 95838
916-876-4484

FULTON AVENUE BUREAU

2700 Fulton Ave.
Sacramento, CA 95821
916-874-3800

NORTH HIGHLANDS BUREAU

5747 Watt Ave.
North Highlands, CA 95660
916-876-8000

SUSIE GAINES-MITCHELL BUILDING

2450 Florin Road
Sacramento, CA 95822
916-875-8100

BOWLING GREEN BUREAU

4433 Florin Road
Sacramento, CA 95816
916-875-3800

GALT BUREAU

210 North Lincoln Way
Galt, CA 95632
209-744-0499
Toll free: 916-875-5046

**FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
WWW.DHA.SACCOUNTY.NET OR
CALL 916-874-3100.**

SACRAMENTO
COUNTY

Get The **Help You Need**

In addition to the Housing Support Program, there are a variety of other resources available to help homeless and low-income individuals and families in Sacramento County.

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES

Offers transitional housing and permanent supportive housing for individuals, families and youth.
4390 47th Ave.
Sacramento, CA 95824
916-453-2900
www.lssnorcal.org

NEXT MOVE

Provides emergency, transitional and permanent housing. Offers support and workshops to help individuals become self-sufficient.
2925 34th St.
Sacramento, CA 95817
916-454-2120
www.nextmovesacramento.org

SACRAMENTO HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Owns and manages public housing units and administers rental assistance vouchers.
630 I St.
Sacramento, CA 95814
916-440-1390
www.shra.org

SACRAMENTO SELF-HELP HOUSING

Helps people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to find and retain stable and affordable housing.
916-341-0593
www.sacselfhelp.org

SAINT JOHN'S PROGRAM FOR REAL CHANGE

Offers homeless mothers emergency housing, mental health services, education assistance and employment training.
4410 Power Inn Road
Sacramento, CA 95825
916-453-1482
saintjohnsprogram.org

VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA

Helps homeless individuals and families by providing emergency housing, eviction prevention and permanent affordable housing services.
VOA N. California & N. Nevada
3434 Marconi Ave.
Sacramento, CA 95821
916-265-3400
www.voa-ncnn.org

WIND YOUTH SERVICES

Provides short-term shelter and crisis intervention programs for homeless and runaway youth.
1722 J St.
Sacramento, CA 95811
800-399-7177
www.windyouth.org



Landlords!

We need homes for local families.

Interested rental property managers and landlords should call CalWORKs at 916-875-3339 for more information.