

Curriculum for Surviving Homelessness

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This document will give guidance on

1. Living in cars
2. Applying for Public Assistance
3. Couch Surfing

There are 6,600 cars being used as homes in the county of Los Angeles, California. On January 7, 2017 new laws went into effect making this a crime.

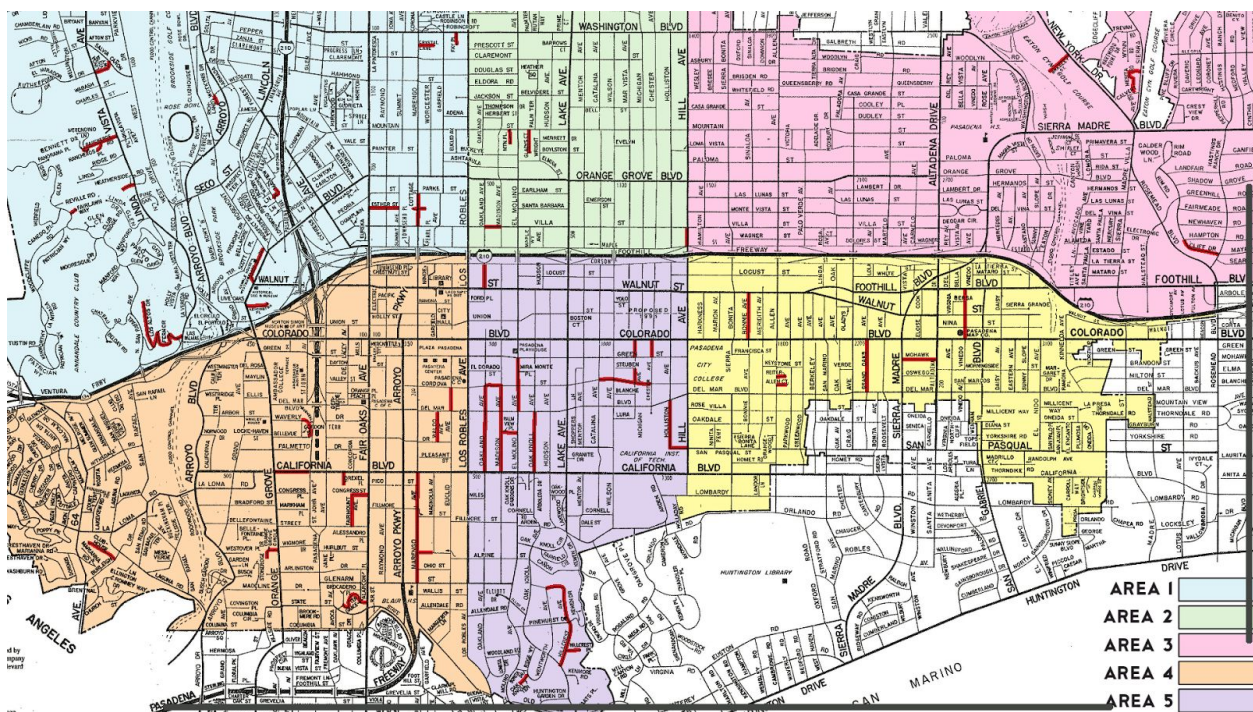
The new version of 85.02 prohibits living in a car or RV within one block (500 feet) of licensed schools, pre-schools, daycare facilities, or parks. It also prohibits living in a vehicle at night on any residential street. The new rule is a test. It is scheduled to expire on July 1, 2018, at which time it will be reviewed by the City Council and a more long-term decision made.

This chapter will help you survive.

How to Sleep in Your Car

If you need to “Urban Camp” or sleep in your car, follow these general rules.

1. **Know the parking zones.** Recently Los Angeles changed the areas where they are allowing overnight parking without permits. Use the internet to find streets and always read the street signs. Some neighborhoods require permits.



2. **Don't look suspicious.**
 - a. Change your spot every couple of days
 - b. In a residential neighborhood, try to park at a property line so you are not directly in front of someone's home. People tend to notice when someone is parked on “their part of the street”.
 - c. Keep your car clean and in good running condition.

3. **Crack a window** So fog doesn't condense. Do not count on dew blocking the view into your car. In the summer time be prepared for Mosquitos. [Amazon sells special screens.](https://www.amazon.com/s/?ie=UTF8&keywords=mosquito+net+for+car+window&tag=googhydr-20&index=aps&hvadid=190482526748&hvpos=1t1&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=7736905134520551412&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvmmt=e&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9030933&hvtargid=kwd-314068258299&ref=pd_sl_nl2hvq3uv_e)

https://www.amazon.com/s/?ie=UTF8&keywords=mosquito+net+for+car+window&tag=googhydr-20&index=aps&hvadid=190482526748&hvpos=1t1&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=7736905134520551412&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvmmt=e&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9030933&hvtargid=kwd-314068258299&ref=pd_sl_nl2hvq3uv_e

4. **Pick a good location.**

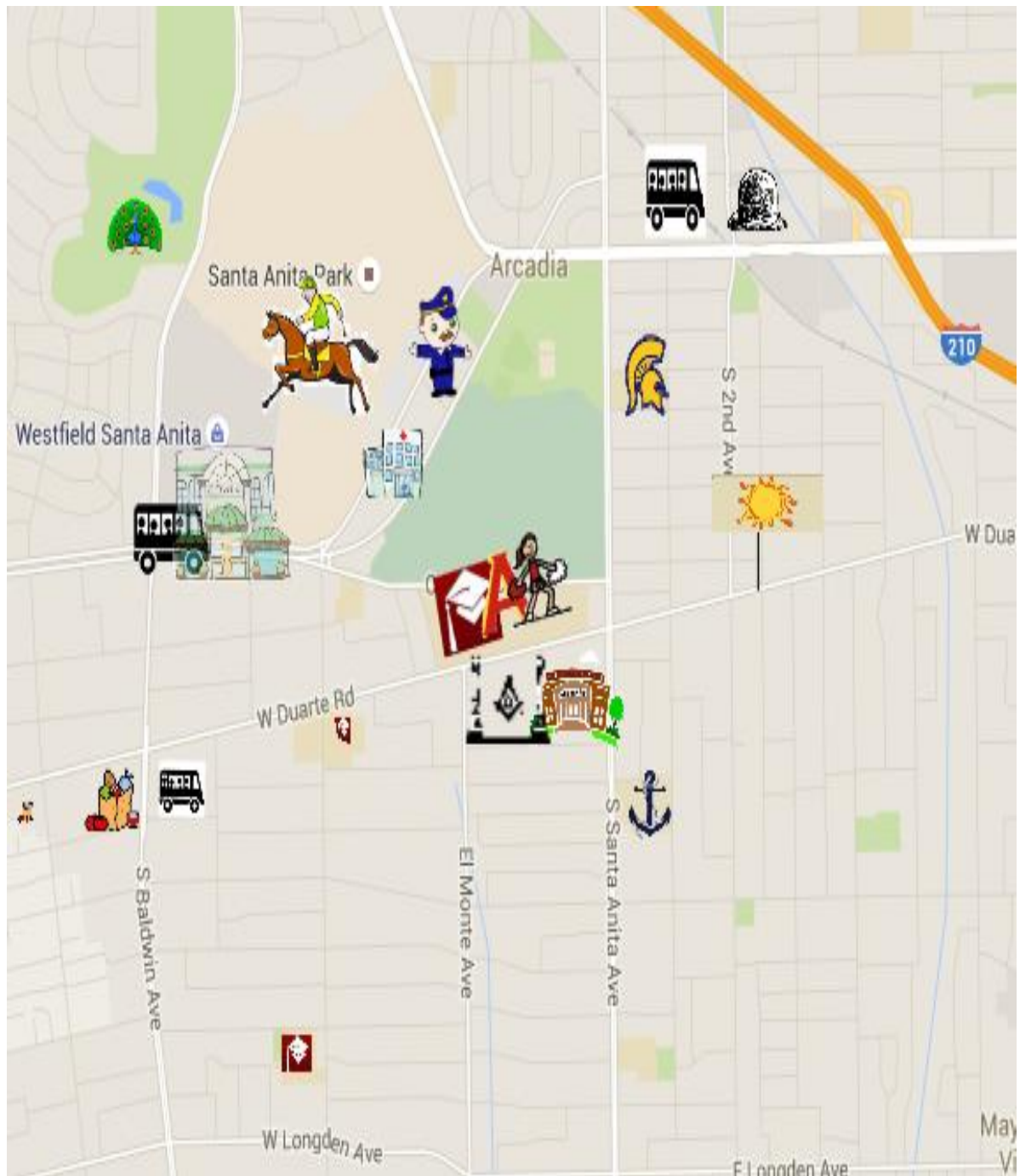
- a. Look at motels, 24 hour gyms and Walmarts as alternative locations for parking..
- b. Look for security guard activity and avoid locations where the guards are on regular patrol.
- c. Do, however, consider parking in a street or lot near the guarded location because those are safer locations due to someone being awake and nearby to deter vandals.

5. **Park near a restroom with access to the public.** Jack in the Box is open 24 hours, some gas stations have restrooms that don't require a key - or be prepared to buy fries so you can be a "customer" and use the toilet.

6. **Know where you can shower.** Some parks have outdoor showers. Hansen Dam in Lake View Terrace is one such place. MEND in Pacoima has a shower program. The PITS (Public Toilets and Showers) on San Pedro St in Los Angeles is run by LAMP and this program has low cost showers and towel rentals. Call "211" and ask for a location near to you and any rules associated.

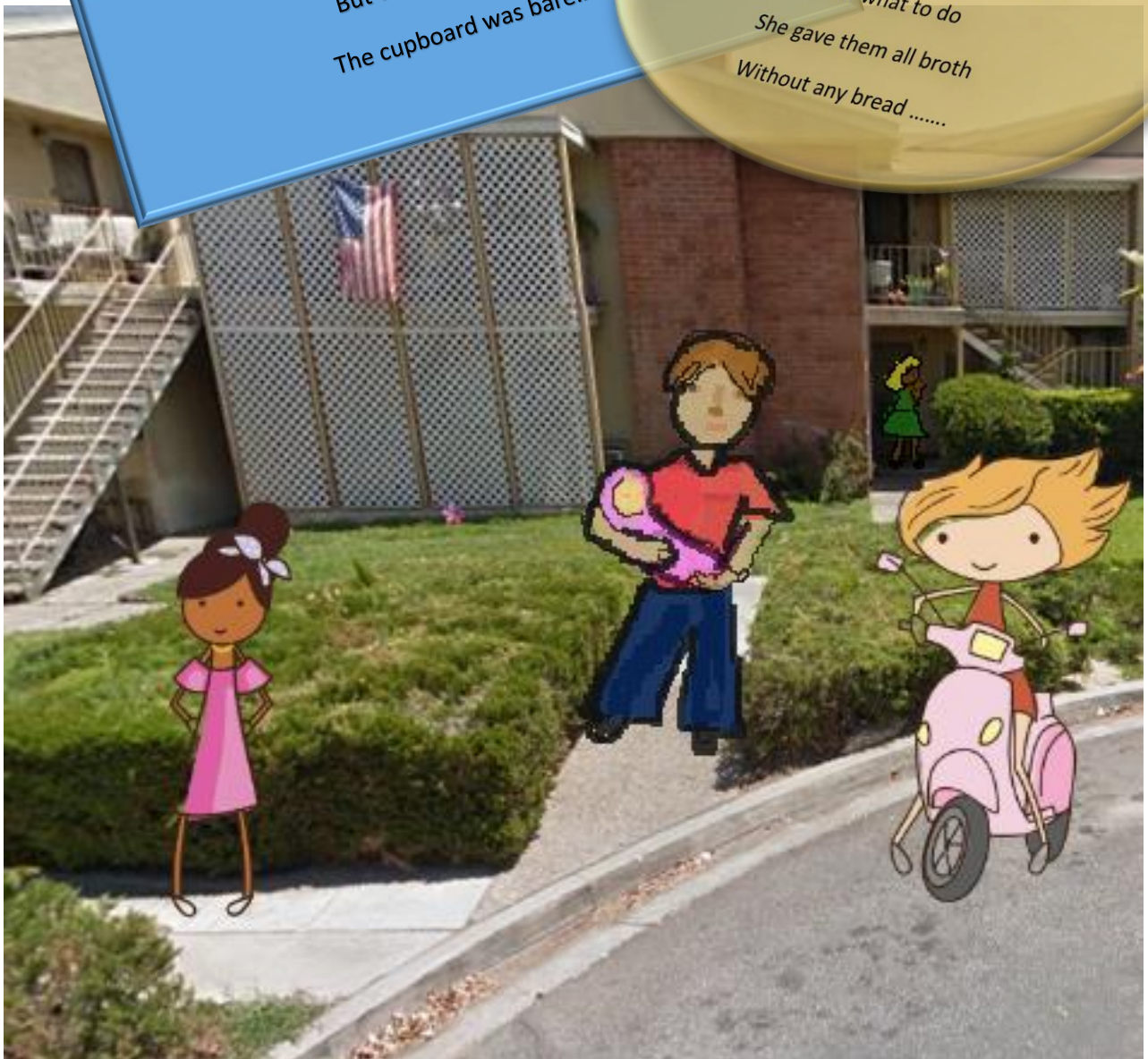
7. **Use your car space wisely.** Keep your clothing in the trunk and your bedding there too during the day. Maintain the inside of your car in a neat manner. Your bank account may have low value, but your personal value remains the same; treat yourself accordingly.

A Simple Guide to Understanding, Finding, and Using Local Safety Net Programs in Arcadia.



Old Mother Hubbard
Went to her cupboard
To fetch her poor doggy
A bone
But when she got there
The cupboard was bare.....

There was an old woman
Who lived in a shoe :
She had so many children she didn't
Know what to do
She gave them all broth
Without any bread




Children sing songs about being without money or food. We don't have any songs or stories about what to do when we become one of the hungry people in the story. None of the children who lived in a shoe should have to go without eating dinner because there was no food to feed them. There should be a way to give food to that family. Old Mother Hubbard should have had a way to keep food in her cupboards.


There are programs available in Arcadia that meet these needs. Old Mother Hubbard and the Shoe Family are not real, however about 9.6% of Arcadia residents fall into the same economic crisis that they do.

We are raised with the knowledge that it is impolite to talk about religion, politics or money. Talking about the lack of money is especially discouraged. Finding help is hard because the government Safety Net Programs of CalFresh, MediCal, and Cash Aid are difficult to find and harder to understand. People who qualify for this help often don't apply because they are afraid of asking the government for help and feel ashamed that they need assistance. Fear and shame, however, won't put food on the shelves.

This guide is available to the public as a simple explanation of the programs, where to find them and how to use them.



CalFresh  is a program which allows users to purchase food using a plastic card which functions like a debit type card at grocery stores and some convenience stores and farmer's markets. CalFresh benefits are to subsidize the food budget for the people who receive the funds.

Medi-Cal  is the California version of Medicaid. It is health insurance for low income individuals.

TANF / Welfare / General Relief  are financial programs available to subsidize the cost of living. This is to say that the people receiving

these funds are expected to have another source of income too because there is not enough in the grant to live on.



The “Basic 8” pieces of useful information when applying for assistance.

Public Assistance Programs are designed to help people who are financially needy. You will be asked to share information about the money you have and your important expenses. This information is used to measure the benefits you may be eligible for.

Different Programs will ask you for different sets of documents and proof of identity and financial status. These eight items are the most commonly required pieces of information you will be expected to share.

List of items to have with you when completing an application for public assistance :

1. photo I.D. for everyone listed on the application.
2. Social Security cards for these people too
3. copies of your bank statements
4. copies of you current and last 3 months paystub
5. your rental agreement,
mortgage payment bill, or proof of housing cost
6. information bout any
property (land, houses, cars, etc) that you own
7. immunization records
8. school information and schedules

What to expect when you go to the DPSS Office

When you enter the building you will be asked to walk through a metal detector and place everything from your pockets into a bin.

A security guard will look at your items and inside any bag you bring. You will be asked to leave scissors, knitting needles, knives, firearms, nail clippers, and similar objects outside or in your car.

There will be an **Information Desk** and a **Reception Window**. The staff in these areas are trained to answer your basic questions, officially check you in, and notify a case worker that you are waiting to be seen. If you have an appointment letter, show it to the reception room staff.





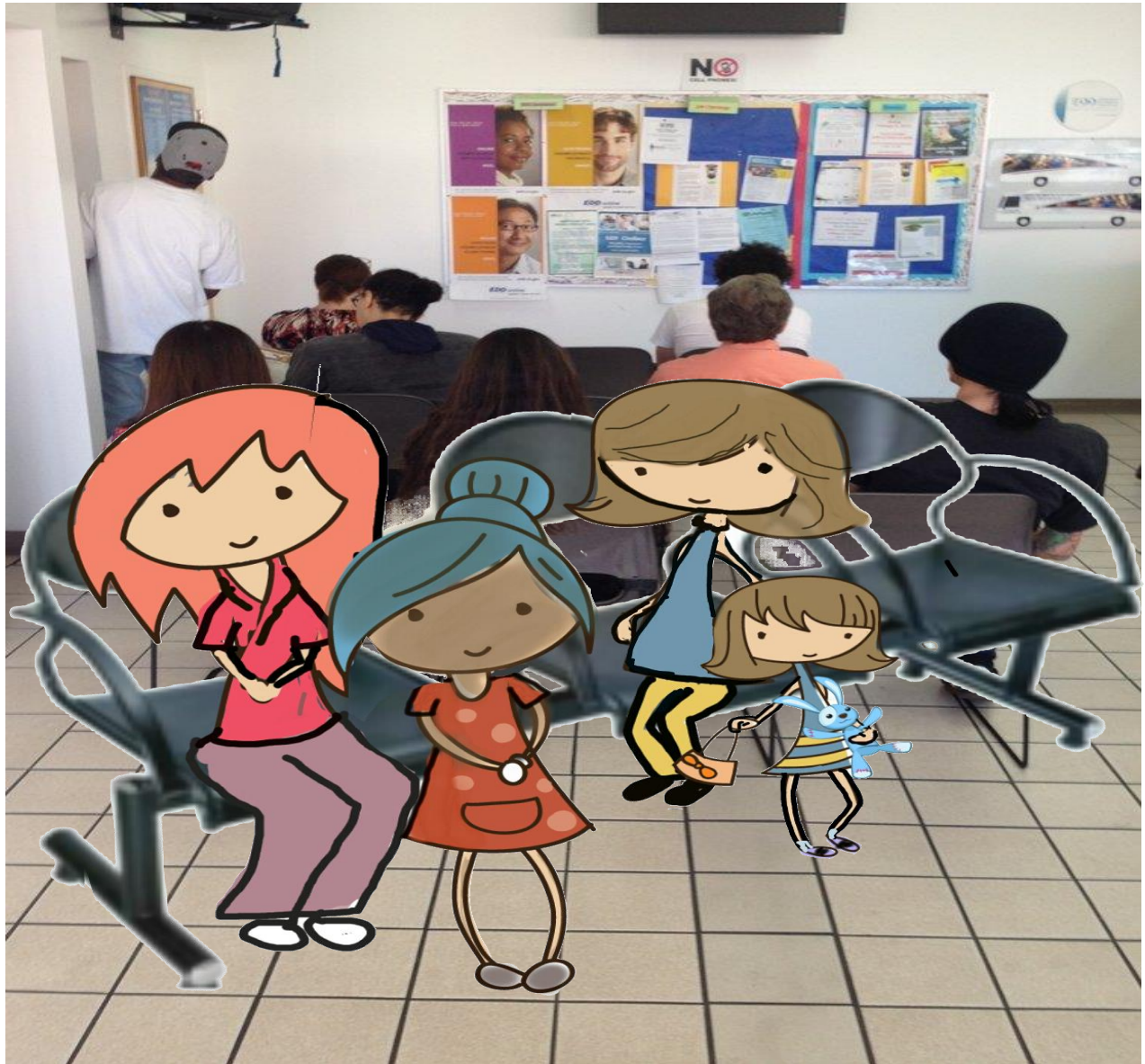
The application process may last anywhere between 20 minutes to about 4 hours. Plan your day with this in mind and make sure that you can be in the office for that long.

The staff speak multiple languages and have paperwork in several languages so that as many people as possible can be given assistance in a language they understand. If you need an interpreter, you will be provided with one. You can bring your own interpreter, but be aware that you will be discussing private and personal information. You might not want your friend or family member to know about your private matters. Children are not great interpreters because of the complex and personal questions the county worker will be asking.



You may be given basic paperwork to complete while you wait. While you are waiting your worker is reviewing your information, preparing forms and possibly waiting for an interview room to become available. This stay is often the longest part of a visit to the DPSS.

Please try to be patient.



If you are disabled and need assistance, request accommodation. This means, you can ask for help getting through the lines, reading forms and completing the paperwork. If you are deaf, ask for a sign language interpreter.





You can avoid the long wait in the Department of Social Services office by applying for assistance through the internet.

Go to

<https://www.dpssbenefits.lacounty.gov>

to start your application. You will need to have your **basic 8** bits of information.

Tips for the YBN

You can apply for Foodstamps, MediCal and Cash Aid all on the internet.

1. Before you start the web based application scan each of your Basic 8 documents into individual computer image files. Give them names you will understand such as "MomBirthCert", "SonSocialSecurity", "Rentreceipt", "LightBill", ect...
2. The application takes an average person 45 minutes to complete. Give yourself time without interruptions to do this.
3. Do not go backwards and review a previous internet page or you will lose your work.
4. Once you start uploading documents, do not stop, go back, or reload the page or you will lose the work



Tips for the YBN

1. Before you start the web based application scan each of your Basic 8 documents into individual computer image files.
2. The application takes an

5. Answer every question as well as you can. Be truthful and make a note of anything you don't understand.

6. Expect a phone call in the next 2 business days to schedule an appointment to meet with a worker or complete the process over the phone.

How to Use your EBT Card



Your EBT card can be used at ATMs and stores.

The EBT card looks and works like a debit card attached to 2 possible accounts; Food Stamps and Cash Assistance.

FOOD STAMPS

The EBT Food Stamp balance is also called CalFresh and SNAP.

Whatever you call it, it means the ability to buy food and seeds to grow your own food.



The County will mail you a “Golden State Advantage” EBT card and a PIN number. These come in separate envelopes so be sure to open all of the mail sent to your home, even if it looks like junk mail.

Use your card at a store cash register. Swipe your card and select the “CalFresh” option then type your PIN number. Any item you purchase that is not food will show as a remaining balance for you to use your Cash benefits or other form of payment.



You may not use your Food Stamps to buy anything that is not food for humans. This means that clothes, toothbrushes, cat food, flowers, and alcohol are examples of items Food Stamps won't pay for. You will not be able to buy some kinds of cooked foods or hot coffee.

Find stores that accept EBT by reading the signs on the door or visiting the web page <https://www.snapfresh.org> .

You can choose an authorized representative to purchase food for you. Do not use your CalFresh benefits to pay personal debts.

Restaurant Meals Program

The **Restaurant Meals Program** is meant to give hot food to people who may not have a kitchen or the ability to cook and make a hot meal.

If you are homeless, elderly, or disabled, let your County worker know. You may be able to use your Food Stamps to buy hot meals as part of the “**Restaurant Meals Program**”. You can read a list of participating restaurants here:

<http://www.ladpss.org/apps/files/download.cfm?file=2402&folder=249>

.

It is important to tell the clerk at the participating store that you wish to use your Food Stamps to buy hot food. Not all staff will be trained to help you.

Subway 160 East Duarte Road, Unit D Arcadia, 91006 (626) 446-5375
Subway 411 East Huntington Drive Arcadia, 91006 (626) 821-9865
Pizza Hut 161 East Live Oak Avenue Arcadia, 91006 (626) 445-5599
Subway 288 East Live Oak Avenue, #B Arcadia, 91006 (626) 446-5464
Pizza Hut 121 East Foothill Boulevard Arcadia, 91006 (626) 303-5888
Subway 733 North Naomi Avenue, Unit G Arcadia, 91007 (626) 446-3120



About 50% of people who qualify
for Food Stamps won't apply for
the help.

Who Qualifies for Food Stamps – otherwise known as CalFresh?

Gross Monthly Income Eligibility

(130% of Poverty Level)

Household Size	Gross Income
1	\$1,265
2	1,705
3	2,144
4	2,584
5	3,024
6	3,464
7	3,904
8	4,344
Each Additional Member	+440

CalFresh help is available to people who earn 130% of the Federal Poverty Level. Gross income is the amount of money in a

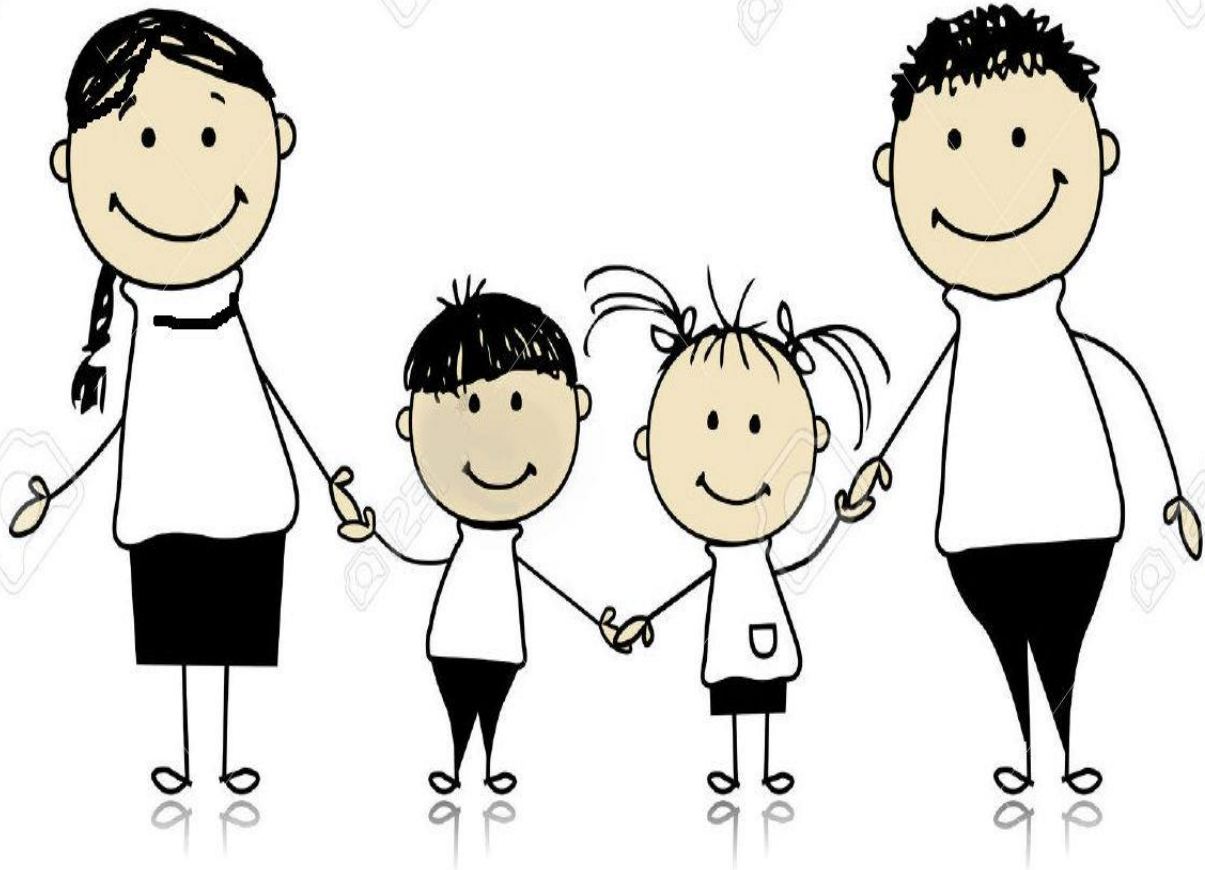
paycheck before items like taxes, health insurance or other benefits are taken out.

Who needs Food Stamps?

82% of Food Stamp households include children, senior citizens, or someone who has a disability

Children

Arcadia has 1213 students in the free lunch program and 488 in the reduced cost lunch program. This is 17.6% of the students in Arcadia Unified School District



Most of the people on Food Stamps are children. During the school year they may be eligible for the School Lunch Program, but this leaves them hungry for breakfast, dinner and school vacations. Children who eat regular, balanced meals are able to focus better at school. Well fed students are better at learning and scoring well on Standardized Tests.

Senior Citizens

An “elderly” person is 60 years old or older. Older people may qualify for Food Stamps. Senior Citizens are often on “fixed incomes” of retirement benefits or social security payments- often qualify for Food Stamps. Some elderly people were unable to work when they were younger, or the jobs they worked did not provide the level of retirement benefits needed to survive. Many people lost their retirement funds when the national economy had troubles.



Disabled People

Disabled workers may find that they are not able to find employment that pays enough money to support themselves. Some types of disability are too severe for the person to work. Other disabilities may require time away

A Disability can happen at any time in life. Some people are born disabled, others have accidents or medical problems that limit their ability to work or perform other daily tasks of living.

SSI will say a person is “Disabled” if a person is unable to do any substantial, gainful activity because of a mental or physical impairment that can be expected to last for a continuous period of at least 12 months or that will result in death. Substantial, gainful activity is work earning more than \$500 a month.

SNAP will say a person is “Disabled” if they meet any of these definitions:

- ✓ Is getting payments from SSI or SSDI under the Social Security Act. These payments include “blindness payments”
- ✓ Is getting payments from the state based on these same Social Security Income rules
- ✓ Is receiving disability retirement payments from a government agency because they have a disability according to the SSI rules
- ✓ Is a veteran who is totally disabled, unable to leave their home or needs regular assistance and someone to help care for them.
- ✓ A surviving child or spouse of a veteran who receives VA benefits and is considered Permanently Disabled.

SNAP will not give Food Stamp benefits to anyone with payments from State Supplementary Payment which is often called SSP. The SSP payment is an amount issued is designed to be used to buy food.



Places you can go to ask for help in person

You can apply for help and ask questions at DPSS Offices and The Pasadena Foothill ETC or the Our Savior Pantry in El Monte

Pasadena Foothill Employment and Training Connection

1207 E Green St

Pasadena, CA 91106

Phone number (626) 796-5627



Take ramp right for Freeway toward Pasadena

At exit 27A, take ramp right for E Maple St toward Hill Ave

Turn left onto N Hill Ave

Turn right onto E Colorado Blvd

Turn left onto S Michigan Ave

Turn left onto E Green St

Arrive at near 1211 E Green St, Pasadena, CA 91106 on the left

The last intersection is S Michigan Ave If you reach S Chester Ave, you've gone too far.



Our Savior Pantry in El Monte

4368 Santa Anita Ave., El Monte 91760

On Thursdays from 10 am until 12 noon

Head east on W Duarte Rd toward Holly Ave

Turn right onto S Santa Anita Ave

Make a U-turn at Tyler Ave

Destination will be on the right



El Monte DPSS Office



El Monte DPSS office

El Monte - 04

3350 Aerojet Ave.

El Monte, CA 91731

(866) 613-3777

Participant Help Line

(626) 569-1399

(310) 258-7400

Open to the Public

Monday thru Friday
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**District Director
Hang Nguyen**

Programs Offered

- [CalWORKs](#)
- [CalFresh](#)
- [Medi-Cal](#)

[Apply On-Line](#)

Turn left onto Baldwin Ave
Take Telstar Ave to Aerojet Ave

Turn right onto Flair Dr

Turn left onto Telstar Ave

Turn right onto Aerojet Ave

Destination will be on the right

Pasadena DPSS Office



Pasadena DPSS Office

Pasadena - 03

955 N. Lake Ave.

Pasadena, CA 91104

(866) 613-3777

Participant Help Line

(866) 613-3777

(626) 569-1399

Open to the Public

Monday thru Friday
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Director
Alec Ramos**

Programs Offered

- [CalWORKs](#)
- [CalFresh](#)
- [General Relief](#)
- [Medi-Cal](#)
- [GROW](#)

[Apply On-Line](#)

Follow I-210 W to E Maple St in Pasadena. Take exit 26B from I-210 W

Drive to N Lake Ave

Use the right lane to merge onto E Maple St

Turn right onto N Lake Ave

Destination will be on the left

Cash Aid aka Welfare or CalWORKs

Money available to needy families is called CalWORKs. This is a time limited program that provides money for families with children – or families who are pregnant and expecting a child.

The Federal Program is called TANF or Welfare and has a 5 year time limit. Here, in California, a parent can only receive these funds for a total of 4 years in their lifetime.

In order to help the parents become financially self sufficient, able to pay their own bills without hardship, the County offers a GAIN program.

For teen parents there is a **Cal Learn** program designed to help parenting teens complete their High school programs.

Some parents are not able to work and earn a living wage, however they do not qualify for SSI. GAIN has programs for addressing Domestic Violence, Mental Health Therapy, Substance Use Treatment, and Homelessness.

Local Resources and Help

ATMS that accept EBT cards for the Cash Aid

http://www.ebtproject.ca.gov/Library/Cash_Access.pdf

EBT Card information

<http://www.ebtproject.ca.gov/>

The Assistance League of Arcadia

http://www.alarcadia.org/Assistance_League_of_Arcadia_Volunteer_Nonprofit_Philanthropic_Organization.html

Helps provide school age children with backpacks, school supplies, school clothes, a book and hygiene kit. Children are referred through their school

211.

Dial “211” from your phone any time of the day or night to contact the County of Los Angeles Information Line.

If you are homeless and have children with you, ask for “**Family Solutions**” by name.

Each call you make to them is free and you will receive at least 2 referrals for the services available that meet your need.

HOMELESS SERVICES

<http://dpss.lacounty.gov/dpss/hcm/>

This is the link to the County DPSS Homeless Services Program explanations.

LAHSA

<http://www.lahsa.org/>

LAHSA Hotline: (213) 225-6581

Hours of Operation:

Monday through Friday

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

LAHSA Emergency Response Team offer the following services for people in the City and County of Los Angeles who are homeless or at risk of experiencing homelessness:

1. Direct emergency services and transportation
2. Emergency services and shelter referrals to homeless families and unaccompanied adults and youth
3. Emergency assistance and referrals to social service agencies
4. Outreach services to homeless encampment dwellers



Homeless people are harder to spot than you may think. Some people are homeless and moving between the homes of their friends. This is

called “Couch Surfing”. Some families live in overcrowded conditions so that everyone can have access to a bathroom and shelter. That is called “Doubling Up”. Other people live in the park or in their cars. None of these living conditions are healthy.

Bad Attitudes and Poverty

There are three things we are urged to not talk about in polite company: Religion, Politics, and Money. Social Safety Net programs are designed to help people who are having a crisis with money and cannot afford food, housing, or medical care that they need. These programs are hard to find and difficult to use because they are not explained in clear language.

Poverty is a scary topic. We don’t like to think about not being able to take care of ourselves or buy things we need or want. Some people avoid that scary topic by giving it the label of “Bad” and anyone who falls into that situation are also “Bad”. The popular assumption is that good people also have solid bank account balances and poverty is a personal and shameful failing.

Only Bad People are Poor

Because of the myth that low income people are also bad people, many people who need Social Safety net programs do not use them. These programs are not talked about and they become a scary secret.

A bank account balance is a measure of financial worth – it is not an accurate measure of goodness or personal value.

Only Lazy People are Poor

There are groups of people who cannot earn income: severely disabled, senior citizens and children. These people are prevented from leaving poverty on their own.

82 percent of all SNAP benefits go to vulnerable houses that include a child, elderly person, or disabled person

People on Welfare and Food Stamp Programs are committing fraud.

Most of the fraud in the Food Stamp program happens with small businesses trading benefits for items that are not food. The Fraud Rate is 1.3% for the SNAP program. .

- They misuse their Foodstamps to buy things that are not food: household items, cigarettes, drugs, weapons, clothes, etc.
- They let someone else use the card in exchange for cash payments.
- They trade or sell their EBT card.

Report this activity when you see it : **Central Fraud Reporting Line:** (800) 349-9970 **We Tip Hotline:** (800) 782-7463 .

Foodstamp Fraud convictions happen and the punishment varies from losing the ability to receive CalFresh assistance for 12 months , all the way to prison terms of 20 years.

Cash Aid Fraud is reported to happen at a rate of 2.63%

Social Safety Net Programs are causing the country to go broke and they are a waste of my tax dollars.

Safety net programs: About 11 percent of the federal budget in 2014 to individuals and families facing hardship.

Spending on these safety net programs declined between 2013 and 2014 as the economy continued to improve.

These programs include:

The refundable portions of the **Earned Income Tax Credit** and **Child Tax Credit**, which assist low- and moderate-income working families through the tax code

Supplemental Security Income for the elderly or disabled poor

Unemployment insurance;

SNAP (food stamps)

School meals,

Low-income housing assistance

Child care assistance

Assistance in meeting home energy bills

Programs such as those **that aid abused and neglected children**.

Social Safety Net programs are important to know about. You may never need a service that helps you stay housed, fed or clothed, but you might know someone who does.

Poverty is unpleasant and hopefully not a lifelong condition. Safety Net Programs are designed to help people survive poverty and transition into financial situations where they can pay their own medical, food and housing bills.

How to Couch Surf

“Couch Surfing” is the name for sleeping from house to house as a temporary homeless guest. It can be stressful or rewarding for both parties involved.

1. Make a list of friends who live on their own and not with someone with whom they are dependent. Dependant friends should not be financially dependant on their parents or a romantic partner. People are not able to say “YES” to you if they are not empowered to make the decision.
2. Build a plan.
 - a. Once you have 2 to 5 friends on your potential “host” list who have a couch for you, evaluate what you have to bring to the negotiations. Can you babysit, clean, cook, or be a listening ear. Know how to sell yourself. Evaluate their needs and become a solution so this is a “win-win” for everyone.
 - b. Build a rotation based on geography so you don’t have to drive too far several times a week. This will also be helpful if you work or are looking for work in the neighborhood where you are staying.
 - c. Have a realistic length of stay.
 - i. This will depend on your needs and the needs of the homes you sleep in.
 - ii. Can you stay for months on end or only during weeknights or weekends?
 - iii. Are holidays or vacations coming up where families of your hosts will need the space you are using.
3. Stay neat and clean
 - a. Don’t take up too much floor space with suitcases and shopping bags. Building a “pile” or spreading out your belongings will interrupt the chosen home decor and irritate your hosts. They may be willing to host you, but not your mess.
 - b. Do your laundry off site or when the host is not doing their household chores.
 - c. Return rooms like the kitchen and bath to the clean state (or one even cleaner) it was in before you used it
4. Continue looking for a permanent solution to your situation. It is easy to relax and stop working on your homelessness once you have 4 walls around you but that

would be a mistake. Use this time wisely and be out of the home between 8 and 5 because you are at work or looking for work or new housing.

5. Do not become a burden. Even though the temperature may be over 100 degrees outside, if you are the only person at home, don't run the air conditioner. If you do, offer to help pay the electricity bill.