



In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)

Philosophy

In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), by design, is a consumer directed program. This means that consumers make decisions about their own lives. Consumer services are assessed and authorized by a county social worker. Consumers, acting on their own behalf as the employer, decide whom they hire or fire, when they receive the services, and provide training to caregivers on how they want the authorized services performed. Consumers play an active role in their own care plans, and are responsible for providing annual updates to their social workers regarding changes in health and service needs. This approach offers consumers decision-making responsibilities, which fosters independence.

The philosophy of consumer direction is based on a social model rather than a medical model. The program is designed to rely on the social workers' assessment of activities of daily functioning, rather than the consumer's medical issues. The social model, unlike the medical model, allows consumers to make decisions about their care, rather than being advised who will provide care to them and when care will be provided.

An ethical, professional caregiver supports consumer direction by:

- Recognizing consumers as individuals
- Promoting consumers' autonomy (independence)
- Providing mindful caregiving, and
- Conducting oneself in a professional manner

Mission

The main goal of the In-Home Supportive Services program is to foster the independence of elderly and disabled persons, so that they are able to remain in their own homes safely.



Eligibility for IHSS Services

Anyone who recognizes that a person is in need of in-home assistance may refer a prospective consumer to IHSS. Once a referral is received, an IHSS social worker assigned to the case conducts an initial assessment to determine the applicant's need for IHSS services. The determination will take into consideration the applicant's medical condition, living arrangement, and resources that may already be available.

Once eligibility has been established, IHSS can assist a consumer with locating a caregiver. A friend or relative may serve as a caregiver, or a referral list may be obtained through the IHSS Public Authority Caregiver Registry.

Once a caregiver is selected, the consumer becomes the supervisor and is responsible for interviewing, training, supervision and signing time sheets. The caregiver will receive payment through IHSS. In some circumstances, the IHSS consumer is responsible to pay a share of cost for IHSS services.

Working together, IHSS, the IHSS Public Authority, and the caregiver ensure that each consumer is able to remain in familiar surroundings – safely, comfortably, and with as much independence as possible.

Eligibility Requirements

Who is eligible for IHSS?

Individuals who are:

- Disabled
- Blind
- 65 years of age and disabled
- Unable to live safely at home without help
- Qualify based on financial resources



How is eligibility assessed?

- Social workers determine eligibility through initial “needs assessments” and re-assessments.
- Social workers determine types and the amount of services to authorize (eligibility criteria are based on state law). A Notice of Action (NOA) is sent to the consumer indicating how many total monthly hours have been assessed and how much time is authorized for each task.

Authorized services may include:

- Personal care (dressing, bathing, feeding, toileting)
- Paramedical services (help with injections, colostomy, or catheter care under the direction of licensed medical professional)
- Housecleaning
- Cooking
- Shopping
- Laundry
- Accompaniment to medical appointments or alternative resources

How to Apply for IHSS

Steps to Apply for IHSS

- The prospective consumer, family member, or friend calls the In-Home Supportive Services program at (916) 874-9471.
- An IHSS social worker will conduct a telephone screening that requires approximately 15 to 20 minutes.
- The social worker will ask questions regarding the potential consumer's needs and income level.
- The enrollment process may take several weeks before services begin, unless there is a need for hospice (care for someone who is terminally ill) or the consumer is in the hospital.
- After the telephone screening, a social worker will make a home visit to determine the authorized services and the amount of hours needed for a prospective consumer.
- The social worker sends the consumer a determination of eligibility and a Notice of Action detailing authorized services.



Authorized Service Description

The following section describes the services that can be authorized by the IHSS social worker. The social worker will authorize services based on each consumer's level of functioning and their needs to remain safely at home. During the IHSS assessment with the consumer, the social worker will evaluate and specify in the Notice of Action (NOA) services that are needed for each consumer. The NOA is an individualized care plan for the consumer that lists the types of services and the number of hours authorized by the social worker.

Domestic Services:

- Sweeping, vacuuming, mopping floors
- Washing kitchen counters and sinks
- Cleaning bathroom (sink, tub/shower, toilet, floor)
- Grocery shopping
- Taking out garbage
- Dusting furniture
- Cleaning stove and oven
- Cleaning refrigerator
- Changing bed linen and making the bed



Note: The consumer is responsible for providing all of the cleaning solutions and equipment. If these items are not available, discuss the needs with the consumer.

Personal Care Services:

- Bowel and bladder care
 - Emptying and cleaning of commode
 - Assistance with emptying catheter or colostomy bag
 - Assistance with bed pan
 - Diaper use
 - Changing of rubber sheets
 - Assisting with getting on and off the toilet or bedside commode
- Consumption of food
 - Feeding or assisting feeding a consumer who is unable to feed him or herself
- Routine bed baths
- Dressing
- Routine menstrual care
 - Limited to application and removal of sanitary napkins and external cleaning
- Transferring into and out of a bed or chair
- Tub bathing
- Oral hygiene
 - Brushing teeth or dentures
- Grooming
 - Brushing/combing hair
 - Shaving – only with electric razor
 - Fingernail and toe nail clipping (caregivers should not clip the nails of someone with diabetes)



NOTE: If you are uncomfortable assisting with a personal care function, or need training, please contact the IHSS Education Line at (916) 876-5173 to hear about educational opportunities.

Medications/Medical Services:

- Caregivers may administer medication, apply ointments, or provide medical services, including paramedical services, only under the direct supervision of the consumer's health care professional, doctor, nurse or health practitioner. This is for the protection of both the caregiver and the consumer.
- You may fill Medi-sets (pill organizers).
- You may remind a consumer to take medications.
- You may hand the container to the consumer, and assist in opening it.

Shopping:



- Usually authorized for only one time a week
- Ask consumer to prepare a shopping list (you may assist with this).
- Make sure you understand exactly what the consumer wants (brands, sizes).
- You should not substitute items unless the consumer has given you permission to do so.
- Shop at the nearest supermarket, if possible.
- If consumer gives you a check, fill it in for the amount of the purchase only. Give the receipt to the consumer when you return.
- Always put the groceries away.



Laundry:

- Usually authorized once a week.
- If the consumer does not have laundry facilities, use the nearest Laundromat.
- Laundry service includes washing, drying, folding clothes and putting them away. Mending and ironing up to 15 minutes per week may be allowed. You should not wash cleaning cloths with the consumer's clothes.

