



**County of Los Angeles
Department of Public Social Services**

**GENERAL RELIEF OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORK PROGRAM
FACT SHEET**

BACKGROUND

The General Relief Opportunities for Work (GROW) Program was implemented in February 1999, as approved by the Board of Supervisors under Section 17000.6 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. On August 21, 1998, a change in the law extended the eligibility time limit for General Relief (GR) to nine months in any 12-month period and made participation in a Welfare-to-Work Program mandatory for employable GR recipients.

In July 2006, GROW implemented a redesign that enhanced its services, provided more flexibility to GROW Case Managers in assigning activities based on an individual's employment goals, and eliminated the gaps between activities. Participants can be referred to Interactive Case Management (ICM) while they wait for the start date of a new activity to keep them continuously engaged in work-related activities.

As a result of the GROW Redesign, participation in the GROW Program meets the CalFresh education/training and work requirements. Therefore, GR participants who are actively and continuously participating in a GROW activity are no longer required to complete Workfare Project assignments.

GROW PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The goal of GROW is to transition GROW participants into the labor market. Participation is mandatory for all employable GR recipients. Following an Orientation, the Case Manager evaluates participants for job readiness with the Job Skills Assessment and assigns them to ongoing activities based on the outcome of the assessment and the participants' goals, skills, and interests. These activities prepare the participants for employment and job retention. Supportive services, such as money for bus fare or clothing, are provided as needed.

GROW ENROLLMENT

Individuals are given information on the GROW program when they apply for GR. On the same day, applicants without documented physical or mental disabilities that preclude employment, are referred to GROW. They are scheduled for an Orientation and an appointment with their GROW Case Manager. Both activities are usually on the same day.

Individuals who report a physical or mental health disability that prevents participation in GROW are referred for medical and/or mental health assessments to determine their employability status. Those who are determined unemployable are exempt from mandatory participation in GROW, but may enroll in the program if they wish to do so. The unemployable participants are referred to appropriate programs to seek approval for Supplemental Security Income and other assistance as needed. Unemployable participants may voluntarily participate in GROW. Time limits or financial sanctions are not applied and they may opt to stop participation at any time.

GROW ACTIVITIES

- A. Orientation** - This is the first activity in GROW. It consists of a two-hour presentation to provide participants with an overview of the GROW Program, its services, participation requirements, and benefits of employment. Attending GROW Orientation is a condition of GR eligibility for employable participants.
- B. Literacy (LIT)** - This is a voluntary activity that to assist participants with literacy barriers with basic reading and writing skills prior to participation in other GROW activities. Participants take a literacy assessment during Orientation. Participants who fail the literacy test are offered enrollment in English as a Second Language (ESL) or Adult Basic Education classes, as part of their GROW activities.
- C. General Education Diploma (GED)** - This is a voluntary activity that is designed to provide participants without a high school diploma an opportunity to earn a GED. Participants are allowed to enroll in a GED preparation course as a primary or concurrent GROW activity.
- D. Job Readiness Training (JRT)** - A three-week activity consisting of a one-week job skills workshop and two weeks of directed, intensive job search activities to help participants acquire the skills needed to find and obtain employment.
- E. Job Readiness Training for Youth (JRY)** - A customized three-week activity consisting of a one-week job skills workshop and two weeks of directed and intense job search activities designed for Transition Age Youth (TAY) participants, aged 18-24 years, to help them acquire the skills needed to find and obtain employment. The JRY workshops teach youth leadership, responsibility, self-confidence, conflict resolution, financial planning, and other work readiness and job retention skills.
- F. Career Opportunities Resources and Employment (CORE)** - A four-week activity designed to increase a participant's job readiness and career motivation by reducing potential barriers to employment. CORE specifically targets participants with more challenging barriers to employment including those who are chronically homeless, those who have previously been in GROW, and those age 50 and older.

- G. Coordinating Access and Resources for Employment (CARE)** - A four-week activity customized for TAY participants, ages 18-24 years old. This activity is designed to promote life skills development, work-readiness, financial planning, job retention, critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- H. Jumpstart Your Career (JYC)** - A four-week program to serve ex-offenders and individuals released from jail due to AB 109. The curriculum includes life skills classes, employment preparation classes, and resolving barriers.
- I. Computer Application Class (CAC)** - A 12-week open-entry/open-exit computer training class for TAY participants. The class is designed to provide TAY with knowledge and understanding of industry-standard software used by current employers. Participation in this program enhances their ability to reach self-sufficiency.
- J. Self-Initiated Program (SIP)** - Attendance at education or training programs may be approved in lieu of assignment to JRT or JRY, if the participant was enrolled prior to Orientation and it:
- Involves a minimum of 20 hours activity per week;
 - Is likely to lead to employment in a demand occupation; and
 - Can be completed within the remaining time on aid.
- K. Vocational Assessment (VOC)** - This is an optional activity. The Employment Development Team (EDT) and the Case Manager determine whether it will be more advantageous to refer the participant to Vocational Assessment or directly to other activities geared towards the participant's employment goals.
- L. Interactive Case Management (ICM)** - This activity consists of intensive job searching activities under the guidance of the job developer and/or Case Manager. ICM services are provided as follows:
- During any down-time in-between activities.
 - Concurrently with any other activities which combined add up to 20 hours per week.
 - Once all other required activities have been completed and until time limits expire.
- M. Short-Term Training (STT)** - Participants receive referrals to training programs that can be completed within 60 days. There is no requirement for Vocational Assessment in order to participate in this activity. This activity includes, but is not limited to, courses such as Office Occupations (OPS) and Security Officer Training (SOT).
- OPS is an open entry, open exit course designed for participants who express an interest in working in an office environment. During this course, participants acquire hands-on experience with computers and use of office-related software programs.

- SOT is a comprehensive training that includes 60 hours of industry-related instruction and 15 hours of soft skills, including job preparation workshops. The training provides a series of workshops that prepare participants to obtain jobs in this field.
- N. Education/Training (EDU)** - Additional education or training provided by local/community schools and training programs. Under the recommendation of the EDT, and if needed, a Vocational Assessment employment plan, participants make a selection from a wide inventory of programs that help them fulfill their employment plan.
- O. One-Stop/WorkSource (OST)** - This activity is available to participants who may benefit from services provided by the WorkSource centers. Activities include occupational training with institution/classroom programs, delivered by public and private schools, and work-based programs, including customized training, on-the job training (OJT), and subsidized employment programs. Collaborations have been established with various WorkSource Centers which offer case management, training, and other job-readiness activities, along with employment opportunities to our GROW participants.
- P. Day Reporting Center (DRC)** - This activity is managed by the Probation Department. Participation is mandatory for individuals who are referred by the judge as part of their probation requirements. This project has been incorporated as a GROW activity. Participants receive job-related services through participation in this activity.
- Q. Youth (YTH)** - This activity is designed to provide services for participants, ages 18-24 years old, preparing them to successfully enter the workforce by offering a variety of employment, education, and vocational training programs that are geared to their age group. Youth activity services are provided by the Workforce Investment Act WorkSource Centers located throughout Los Angeles County.
- R. GROW Youth Employment Program (GYEP)** - This a three-month subsidized employment program offered to job-ready participants at the Lancaster, South Special, Metro, Pomona, and Humboldt Special GROW sites, provided to 90 participants each fiscal year. This project is a collaborative effort between the Department of Public Social Services and the Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services.
- S. GROW Transition-Age Youth (TAY) Employment Program (GTEP)** - This a six-month subsidized employment program that provides Paid Work Experience (PWE) to participants, ages 18 to 24 years old. The goal of this project is to provide participants with valuable work experience that may lead to permanent employment and self-sufficiency.

- T. Post-Employment Services (PES)** - This activity offers job retention services, continued education development, rapid re-employment, and supportive services provided by the Case Manager. Participants may get assistance with transportation for up to thirty days after securing employment, as long as their GR case remains active.
- U. Supportive Services** - Participants are screened for potential substance use, domestic violence, and mental health needs at application, Orientation, and Vocational Assessment. Case Managers may also make referrals at any time a participant expresses the need for such assistance. Other supportive services include Homeless Court and Expungement, which assist eligible participants clear criminal backgrounds that may affect their ability to find employment.
- V. Ancillary Expenses** - Issuances to cover ancillary expenses are provided to participants while participating in GROW, as needed, for transportation and other employment related needs, including, but not limited to uniforms, shoes, tools, etc. Ancillary expenses are also provided for education and training costs such as books, fees, and supplies.

NONCOMPLIANCE

Participation is tracked throughout the program. Aid for employable participants who fail to comply with any required activity, without “Good Cause”, is terminated and sanctions are imposed. The GR benefits will not be discontinued for any period of time within three months of receiving GR benefits within a 12-month period. Any willful or negligent noncompliance(s) accumulated without “Good Cause” during the three months, will not result in benefits termination or sanction until immediately after that period ends. For the first occurrence, the participant receives a warning, but may reapply without a penalty. On the second occurrence, a 30-day period of ineligibility is imposed. Subsequent occurrences result in a 60-day period of ineligibility.

Participants have the opportunity to have the sanction lifted if they can prove “Good Cause” during a noncompliance review or scheduled hearing to discuss the issues that prevented their participation in the program.

For detailed information, visit the DPSS website at <http://dpss.lacounty.gov>