



# Consumer Handbook

## IHSS PROGRAM INTRODUCTION





# PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

Dear Consumers;

The IHSS Public Authority Advisory Board welcomes all new IHSS consumers, all current IHSS consumers, and all consumer family members and friends to the IHSS Program. We understand how complicated the IHSS system can be and are hopeful that this Consumer Handbook, along with the Consumer Training Materials offered by the IHSS Public Authority, will answer many of your questions and concerns.

The Public Authority Advisory Board feels strongly that a knowledgeable consumer can advocate for themselves, or with the help of family and friends, to effectively utilize the IHSS system to stay safely and comfortably in their own homes. This Consumer Handbook has the goal of helping you understand the IHSS system, and how you can assist in making it work for you.

The Public Authority Advisory Board makes recommendations to the Public Authority Governing Body, (the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors), on all issues relating to IHSS and personal care / home care assistance. We are in essence the voice of the consumer and take our role as consumer advocates very seriously. We welcome your comments, suggestions and input regarding the IHSS system in Santa Clara County.

Enjoy the Consumer Handbook and we look forward to meeting your training needs in various ways throughout the year.

Sincerely

Janie Whiteford  
Advisory Board Member



# What is IHSS?

In-Home-Supportive Services or IHSS is an alternative to out of home care/institutional placement. IHSS is a program designed to assist elderly, blind or disabled people to remain in their own homes when they are no longer able to fully care for themselves or handle routine household tasks. The program pays for a wide variety of services from household chores to personal care, enabling the individual to live safely at home while encouraging independence.



IHSS allows you to remain in control of your situation and your care needs by providing hourly wages to in-home care providers of your choosing. With the IHSS Program you, the consumer, are the person responsible for hiring a care provider to work for you, training them in the way you want tasks to be completed, supervising the care provider’s work, and firing the care provider if the services are not performed according to your expectations. You also have the option to designate an authorized representative to speak for you and help you make decisions regarding your care provider.

The IHSS Public Authority was created by local ordinance in 1996 by the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors. In Santa Clara County, services are provided through an effective partnership between the County and [Sourcewise](#). To clarify this unique model of service administration, the IHSS Public Authority in Santa Clara County was rebranded as Public Authority Services by Sourcewise. This partnership enables consumers and providers of IHSS to experience enhanced services beginning in 1999 when Public Authority Services was founded.

**Benefits of allowing IHSS to assist you are:**

- It allows you more independence and freedom
- You are able to actively pursue your goals and interests
- In many cases you will experience an improvement in your overall quality of life.



## IHSS Available Services

### Domestic Services:

Typical household chores: vacuuming, cleaning, etc. Related services would include meal preparation/clean-up, grocery shopping, errands, and laundry.

### Non-Medical Personal Care:

Bathing, feeding, dressing, bowel and bladder care, etc.

### Other:

Under certain circumstances, various other services may be authorized. These would include paramedical services, transportation accompaniment, non-medical protective supervision, heavy cleaning, etc.

- For a full list of services and their descriptions please click the following link or copy and paste it into your browser's search bar:  
[www.cdss.ca.gov/cdssweb/entres/forms/English/NADescriptionOfServices.pdf](http://www.cdss.ca.gov/cdssweb/entres/forms/English/NADescriptionOfServices.pdf)



# Structure of IHSS: How It Affects You

The following organizations have responsibilities for the IHSS Program in Santa Clara County.

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In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)  
Santa Clara County Social Services Agency  
(408) 792-1600  
[www.sccgov.org](http://www.sccgov.org)

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## Responsibilities include:

- Determining if an individual is eligible to receive services through the IHSS Program.
- Initial intake and eligibility assessment. Contact IHSS for further information on eligibility criteria.
- Determining number of authorized hours and types of services included annual reassessment (See Consumer Handbook on Assessment, Re-assessment, and the Appeal Process).
- Authorizing or denying requests for overtime exceptions.
- Assisting with payroll issues for independent providers (IP's).

*"IHSS allows me to keep my independence and continue to be a productive member of society."*

- IHSS Consumer



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Public Authority Services by Sourcewise  
Santa Clara County (408) 350-3206

[www.pascc.org](http://www.pascc.org)

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**Responsibilities include:**

- Providing an IHSS Registry to refer pre-screened independent providers to consumers. Recruits and screens potential providers for registry.
- Providing access to training for both consumers and independent providers.
- Administering independent providers' employee benefits and collecting premium contributions for IP's enrolled in the health plans.
  - This contribution is made through payroll deduction.
- Enrolling new IP's into the IHSS Program and facilitating a Department of Justice background check so the IP's can begin receiving pay for providing services to IHSS consumers.
- Maintaining an 11 member IHSS Public Authority Advisory Board
- Acting as "Employer of Record" for collective bargaining / contract negotiations for the IHSS Independent Provider (IP) mode of service.

The current negotiated contract stipulates the IPs' hourly wage, provides for medical, dental, and vision benefits, and provides for a county transit ECO Pass. For specific benefits contact Public Authority Services.

- To view the most recent labor contract please click the following link or copy and paste it into your browser's search bar:  
[www.pascc.org/policyupdates/doc/2014/IHSS%20MOA%206-26-2014.pdf](http://www.pascc.org/policyupdates/doc/2014/IHSS%20MOA%206-26-2014.pdf)

Provides an Urgent Care Registry for consumers who are in urgent need of personal care and whose IP's are not available.



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Public Authority Registry  
Santa Clara County  
(408) 350-3251

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**Responsibilities include:**

- Recruits, interviews, checks references, and conducts basic screening of potential independent care providers.

*"I have found  
some gems."*

-IHSS Registry  
consumer

- Assists with matching eligible IHSS consumers with IP's by supplying consumers with a list of possible candidates.
- Conducts monthly orientation/training sessions for independent providers.
- Offers assistance to consumers having difficulty with the hiring process.

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SEIU Local 2015  
(855) 810-2015

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**Responsibilities:**

- Collects union dues from independent providers.
- Organizes union members.
- Bargains with the Public Authority for labor contracts.

IP's do not have to join the union to be eligible for health, dental, vision, or transportation (VTA Eco Pass) benefits through Public Authority Services. Seiu Local 2015 does offer separate health benefits to its members.





## Appendix A

### For Consumers of In-Home Supportive Services: “Who do I Call?”

Call IHSS (408) 792-1600 / 1 (866) 668-2412 or Fax (408) 792-1601 to:

- Reach a social worker for questions about reassessments of approved hours and services, call your Social Worker’s direct phone number
- Request a Designation of Provider Form (SOC 426A) after hiring a new care provider
- Get general information about the IHSS program
- Change your address, phone number, name, etc.
- Ask Overtime questions: choose option 1 “Consumer”, then option 3 “Overtime”

Call the Public Authority Services by Sourcewise for the following Services or visit our website at [www.pascc.org](http://www.pascc.org).

Call (408) 350-3251 Public Authority Services Registry when:

- You need to request a list of available care providers
- You hire or fire a Registry provider
- You want to speak to the Registry staff
- You change your address, phone number, name, etc.

Call (408) 350-3220 for Public Authority Services Training when:

- You want to join a Call and Connect Session consumer education conference call
- You want to suggest a topic for a Call and Connect Session or Consumer Connection newsletter article

Call (408) 350-3200 for Sourcewise or visit [www.mysourcewise.com](http://www.mysourcewise.com).

- Select option 1 to speak with a Community Resource Specialist who will answer your questions and offer access to solutions.
- Select option 2 to speak with the Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program (HICAP) to help make sense of Medicare. HICAP helps you understand your options and choose what’s best for you and your family.
- Select option 4 to speak with Meals on Wheels, to bring nutritious meals, designed with the senior diet in mind, brought right to your door.
- Select option 5 to speak with Senior Employment Services, if you or a loved one is interested in learning of employment opportunities and the training options available to be successful.

