

The Little Book of House Rules

A friendly guide to how public assistance works

Welcome

This system can feel confusing.

You're not doing anything wrong if it does.

This little book isn't about rules to trip you up.

It's about how the process works, so there are fewer surprises.

Think of it as a map — not a test.

Rule 1

Asking for help is allowed

You don't need to know the right words.

You don't need to know which form does what.

That's our job.

Your job is to tell us what's going on.

Rule 2

The process happens in stages

Most cases move through a few common steps:

Getting started

Sharing information

Waiting while we review

Receiving benefits

Checking in again later

You don't have to memorize this.

It just helps to know that waiting is part of the process, not a mistake.

Rule 3

Paperwork is about clarity, not suspicion

When we ask for documents, it's usually because:

The rules require proof, or

Something changed and we need to understand it

It's not a judgment.

It's how the system keeps things fair.

If something is hard to get, tell us.

Rule 4

Life changes – and that's expected

People move.

Jobs change.

Households change.

That's normal.

What helps most is letting us know when something changes, even if you're unsure whether it matters.

You won't break anything by asking.

Rule 5

Deadlines exist, but help still does too

Some steps have time limits.

Missing one can cause delays or pauses.

If that happens:

Reach out anyway

Ask what your options are

Don't assume it's over

Many problems are easier to fix sooner —
but they're often still fixable later.

Rule 6

You don't need to understand every rule

You don't need to know:

Every eligibility detail

Every exception

Every form name

You do need to:

Share accurate information

Ask questions when something doesn't make sense

Understanding grows as you go.

Rule 7

The system moves slower than real life

We know emergencies don't wait.

The system sometimes does.

If something urgent is happening:

Say so

Ask about faster options

Let us know what you're worried about

We can't always speed things up — but we can explain what's possible.

Rule 8

Confusion is not failure

If you feel lost, overwhelmed, or unsure
— that's not on you.

This system was built over many years,
by many people, for many situations.

Needing things explained again is
normal.

Rule 9

You are allowed to check in

It's okay to ask:

“What’s the status?”

“Did you receive this?”

“What happens next?”

Checking in doesn’t slow things down.

Silence doesn’t help either.

Rule 10

We are on the same side of the table

Our role is to:

Help you understand the process

Apply the rules correctly

Support you through each step

Your role is to:

Share what's going on

Let us know when things change

Ask when something doesn't make sense

That's how this works best.

One last thing

You don't need to get everything right on the first try.

This is a process – not a personality test.

If you're here, you're already doing the right thing.

Need help or have a question?

Address:

1111 San Felipe Rd 206

Hollister, CA 95023

Phone: (831) 636-4180

Office hours: Mon-Fri 8:00AM - 5:00PM

What to bring if you can: _____
