



## CalWORKs PROGRAM FACT SHEET January 2024



### Program Purpose

The purpose of the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program is to:

- Promote and encourage work to enable families to become self-sufficient.
- Provide financial aid for children who lack financial support and care.
- Protect and preserve the family unit.
- Provide the opportunity for rehabilitation of the family whenever possible.
- Make available to children who cannot live in their own homes the kind of care and treatment best suited to their needs.

### Eligibility Factors

Basic eligibility factors for a child(ren) and a needy parent(s) or caretaker relative include deprivation, age, property, and residency. An annual interview is required to determine if eligibility continues past twelve months.

#### Deprivation

The aided child must be deprived of parental support or care because at least one parent is:

- Deceased; or
- Either physically or mentally incapacitated; or
- The applicant parent is not working or is working less than 100 hours per month; or
- Continually absent from the home.

#### Age

Children may be eligible for CalWORKs until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday or are 18 years old and in high school or vocational school full time and are expected to complete either program before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday or they are disabled and attends school full-time.

#### Property

The property of a child and the parent(s) must be under the following limits:

- Families without elderly or disabled members may have \$11,634 combined personal and real property per family.
- Families with elderly (those who are 60 years of age or older) or disabled members may have \$17,452 combined personal and real property per family.
- Furniture, clothing and appliances are exempt.
- The family home is exempt provided the family lives in the home.
- Automobiles may be exempt for specific uses and/or up to \$32,045.

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### Residency

There are no durational residency requirements for the CalWORKs program. Families who make their residence in California and who intend to continue to live in California may be eligible. Family members must be legal residents of the United States.

### Applying For Aid

The application for CalWORKs includes completion of eligibility questions that will include forms and an interview with a case manager. Aid cannot begin until all conditions of eligibility have been verified. These conditions include, but are not limited to:

- For most families, cooperating with the District Attorney for establishing paternity and securing child support if a parent is absent from the home.
- Applying for a Social Security number.
- Verifying citizenship or showing proof of legal immigration status.
- Verifying income and property.
- Applying for potentially available income such as Unemployment Benefits.

Immediate need payments may be made for families with emergencies while the CalWORKs application is being processed. The maximum immediate need payment is \$200.

### Office Locations

An application for CalWORKs may be made at any of the offices listed below:

Locations	
<u>Galt Bureau</u> 210 North Lincoln Way Galt, CA 95632	<u>South Area Multi-Program Bureau</u> 2450 Florin Road Sacramento, CA 95822
<u>Fulton Ave Bureau</u> 2700 Fulton Avenue Sacramento, CA 95821	<u>Research Drive Bureau</u> 3960 Research Drive Sacramento, CA 95838
<u>North Highlands Bureau</u> 5747 Watt Avenue North Highlands, CA 95660	
Office and Phone hours are 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM General Number: (800) 560-0976	

### Online Application

Applications for CalWORKs in Sacramento County can also be taken online at: <http://www.benefitscal.com>.

### Income Limits for Applicants

CalWORKs regulations provide for a gross income limit which is determined by subtracting \$450 from the earned income of each employed person, then adding all remaining earned and unearned income to determine the gross income for the family. That amount is then

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compared to the MBSAC (Minimum Basic Standard of Adequate Care) level for the family size. If the family's total gross income after the \$450 deduction exceeds the MBSAC level for the family size, the family is not eligible.

### **MBSAC (Minimum Basic Standard of Adequate Care)**

The following chart reflects the current (7/1/2023) MBSAC levels:

# of Persons	MBSAC Amount
1	\$818
2	\$1,343
3	\$1,664
4	\$1,978
5	\$2,262
6	\$2,540
7	\$2,783
8	\$3,040
9	\$3,285
10	\$3,576
11 & up	+ \$34 per person

### **Customer Responsibility**

Once cash is granted, the CalWORKs family must report changes in their income, household composition and property to the county at certain times depending on the circumstances of their case.

- Every six months on their Semi-Annual Eligibility/Status Report (SAR 7) or at their annual redetermination for those CalWORKs families that includes an aided adult).
- Every twelve months for those CalWORKs families where only the children are aided (no adults are being aided).

Some other things must be reported within 10 days of occurrence are any of the following:

- A member of the household becomes a fleeing felon or violates a condition of parole/probation.
- The combined earned and unearned income of the household exceeds the Income Reporting Threshold (IRT) for their household size,
- In some cases, anyone moves into or out of the home.

### **MAP (Maximum Aid Payment)**

The MAP (Maximum Aid Payment) level is established by the California State Legislature based on family size. Families who do not have any income other than CalWORKs receive MAP.

MAP levels vary based on whether or not the adults in the household are able to work.

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The MAP level for households with adult caretakers who are able to work is called the **Non Exempt MAP Level**. It is lower than the MAP level for households with adult caretakers who are not able to work.

When the adults in the household are not able to work because of a temporary or permanent incapacity, the family receives a higher MAP. Child only cases in which the adults are non-needy caretakers (not being aided) also receive the higher MAP level. This is called the **Exempt MAP Level**.

The following chart reflects the current (10/01/2023) Non Exempt MAP and Exempt MAP levels:

# Persons on Aid	Non Exempt MAP	Exempt MAP
1	\$693	\$768
2	\$881	\$984
3	\$1112	\$1244
4	\$1342	\$1494
5	\$1573	\$1753
6	\$1803	\$2012
7	\$2033	\$2267
8	\$2264	\$2529
9	\$2494	\$2783
10 or more	\$2723	\$3045

### Work Disregards

When a cash aid recipient is employed or receives disability based income, CalWORKs regulations allow the following deductions from the gross income:

- For disability based income up to \$600 can be disregarded (known as \$600 DI)
- If any amount of the \$600 DI remains, that amount will not be included as earned income when cash aid is calculated
- 50% of the earnings remaining after the above disregards are also deducted.

Any income remaining after the deductions are subtracted from the gross earned income is then subtracted from the MAP amount to determine the amount of the CalWORKs grant.

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### **VAPP (Voluntary Alternative Payee Payment)**

CalWORKs recipients may request that their rent or mortgage payment be paid directly to their landlord or mortgage holder. The rent or mortgage amount is deducted from the cash aid payment made to the recipient.

### **Direct Deposit**

CalWORKs recipients may request that their cash aid be automatically deposited into their personal bank account. Applications with instructions for this program are available at each bureau.

### **Homeless Assistance**

Families who are eligible for CalWORKs and who are homeless can apply for a special need payment to meet their costs for temporary and permanent housing. The maximum Homeless assistance payment is based on the number of persons eligible in the CalWORKs family.

CalWORKs families may be eligible to apply for Homeless Assistance benefits to assist with the payment of rent arrearages.

### **Diversion**

The Diversion program was implemented in California to offer an alternative (diversion) from CalWORKs, and divert the CalWORKs applicant from cash aid and avoid the need for extended assistance if provided access to the Diversion program.

The benefits for successfully diverting a CalWORKs applicant are the positive impact to the CalWORKs time clock and the applicant keeps their current/needed employment.

Diversion is only offered when there is CalWORKs eligibility as an alternative to a CalWORKs monthly payment.

### **Time Clocks**

There is a limit to the number of months an adult can receive CalWORKs in California.

- From 1/1/98 through 6/30/2011, the time limit was 60 months.
- From 7/1/2011 through 4/30/22, the CalWORKs time limit changed to 48 months.
- Effective 5/1/22, the CalWORKs time limit reverted back to 60 months. In addition, there is no longer a 24-month WTW time clock. This allows CalWORKs participants to engage in WTW program activities and have access to a full array of supportive services during their time on cash aid.

There are times when the CalWORKs 60 month clock can be stopped or extended beyond the 60-month limit.

### **Cal-Learn**

Cal-Learn is a statewide program for pregnant and parenting teens. The goal of the program is to help teens graduate from high school, become independent and form healthy families.

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If you are a pregnant or parenting teen receiving CalWORKs/TANF, you must participate in the Cal-Learn program if you have not yet graduated from high school.

Components of the Cal-Learn program include:

- Teens must attend school and submit their report card to their Cal-Learn case manager.
- Teens are paid a bonus for satisfactory school progress or high school graduations.
- Teens who do not attend school or fail to maintain adequate school progress receive a financial sanction and are not paid a bonus.

## **Welfare-to-Work**

The purpose of the Welfare-to-Work (WTW) program is to help participants prepare for work and find a job. In addition, supportive services are available to help participants while they work or participate in WTW activities. CalWORKs recipients are required to participate in the WTW program unless they are exempt, excused or have good cause for not participating. WTW participants must meet their family's CalWORKs Hourly Participation requirement as follows:

- 20 hours per week for single parents with a child under six years old.
- 30 hours per week for single parents with no child under six years old.
- 35 hours per week for two-parent families (combined between two parents).
- 30 hours per week for two-parent families (one parent is ineligible or disabled).

Individuals who are not required to participate, may still participate in all available activities and get services in the WTW program. They are considered a “volunteer” participant.

## **Child Care**

Subsidized Stage One child care services may be authorized full-time or part-time for up to 12 months or until transferred to Stage Two for eligible CalWORKs aided adults if it is a barrier to WTW participation. Your child care provider may be a licensed child care center, a licensed family child care home, before and/or after school program, or a friend or family member who is at least 18-years of age (license exempt). If both parents are receiving CalWORKs, you must both be working or participating in Welfare-to-Work activities to receive child care as a supportive service. Child care services can be requested at any time. A separate application is not required.

## **Medi-Cal**

Family members who receive CalWORKs would generally be eligible to receive Medi-Cal benefits at no share of cost. A separate application is not required.

## **CalFresh – Formerly Known as Food Stamps**

If a family is found to be eligible for CalWORKs, the family may also be eligible to participate in the CalFresh Program. A separate application is not required.