

Date of Hearing: April 15, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1746 (Davies) – As Amended March 26, 2026

Policy Committee: Human Services

Vote: 7 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill expands the requirement that a CalWORKs applicant or recipient be provided a written notice regarding the availability of paid childcare to include the applicant or recipient also be verbally informed and provided a CalWORKs childcare request form. The bill also requires a county to take action on a CalWORKs childcare request form within 10 working days of receipt.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Requires CalWORKs applicants and recipients be provided a written notice and be verbally informed of the availability of paid childcare at the time of application, approval, and when signing an original or amended welfare-to-work plan, annual certificate of eligibility or semiannual report form.
- 2) Requires the written notice to additionally include rules regarding retroactive payments and specifies that “written notice” includes a CalWORKs childcare request form.
- 3) Clarifies written notice need not be provided to an applicant or recipient already approved for childcare.
- 4) Extends from January 1, 2021, to January 1, 2028, contingent upon the readiness of the Statewide Automated Welfare System, the date by which the written notice must additionally be provided to a CalWORKs recipient at the time of orientation and when they are assigned to a program activity, among other program events.
- 5) Requires a county, within 10 working days of receipt of a CalWORKs childcare request form, to approve, deny, or request outstanding information needed to approve or deny the request for childcare.

FISCAL EFFECT:

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) estimates one-time General Fund (GF) costs of approximately \$893,000 for automation updates to the California Statewide Automated Welfare System (CalSAWS) and BenefitsCal. These costs include printing, postage, updates for forms and in multiple languages, and updates to notify CalWORKs applicants and recipients of childcare availability during the additional touch points throughout their time on aid, among other things.

CDSS also anticipates ongoing GF costs to counties of \$234,000 for printing additional childcare availability notices and forms.

The Legislative Analyst's Office recently warned of General Fund structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year and ongoing.

COMMENTS:

1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

For many California families, the lack of accessible childcare is the single greatest barrier to maintaining stable employment and achieving self-sufficiency. [This bill] simplifies the path for CalWORKs recipients by replacing outdated notices with a streamlined, mandatory childcare request form that requires a response within ten working days. By ensuring parents are informed of their options at every step, from application to annual renewal, we are removing the bureaucratic hurdles that far too often leave families in limbo.

2) **Background.** Under existing law CalWORKs recipients may be eligible for paid childcare if they are working or participating in an approved county welfare-to-work activity, which includes county-approved CalWORKs activities or employment listed in the recipients' welfare-to-work plan. Pursuant to existing law, county eligibility workers give CalWORKs applicants written notice at both the time of application and during welfare-to-work planning informing them they may be eligible for paid childcare. Existing law requires a CalWORKs applicant or recipient to sign a copy of the written notice acknowledging receipt.

This bill instead requires CalWORKs applicants and recipients be provided written notice, including a childcare request form, and be verbally informed of the availability of paid childcare at multiple points throughout the program.

Advocates assert many CalWORKs participants are unaware of the full scope of childcare benefits or the steps necessary to request and secure services. Advocates contend that requiring counties to provide the CalWORKs childcare request form and additional notice of the availability of childcare at key points during the program will better help families access the childcare support they need.

CalSAWS is the case management system for county eligibility staff that provides CalWORKs, CalFresh, Medi-Cal, Foster Care, and other assistance to children, families, and individuals in all 58 California counties. It encompasses eligibility determination, benefits calculation, benefits issuance, and information management. BenefitsCal is the public portal where Californians can apply for and manage public benefits online.

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