SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
Senator Becker, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 1755		
Author:	Sharp-Collins		
Version:	June 3, 2026	**Hearing Date:**	June 15, 2026
Urgency:	No	**Fiscal:**	Yes
Consultant:	Naima Ford Antal		

Subject: CalWORKS

SUMMARY

This bill deletes the rule that families with parents who work over 100 hours in a month are ineligible for assistance from the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program.

ABSTRACT

Existing Law:

1) Establishes the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, which permits states to implement the program under a state plan. *(42 United States Code [U.S.C.] 601 et seq.)*

2) Permits TANF financial assistance to any child that has been deprived of parental support or care by reason of the fact that his or her parent who is the principal earner is employed less than 100 hours a month; or exceeds that standard for a particular month if his or her work is intermittent and the excess is of a temporary nature as evidenced by the fact that he or she was under the 100-hour standard for two prior months and is expected to be under the standard during the next month. *(45 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 233.100)*

3) Establishes the CalWORKs program to provide cash assistance and other social services for low-income families through the federal TANF program. Under CalWORKs, each county provides assistance through a combination of state, county, and federal TANF funds. *(Welfare and Institutions Code [WIC] 11200 et seq.)*

4) Establishes income, asset, and real property limits used to determine eligibility for the CalWORKs program and grant amounts based on family size and county of residence. *(WIC 11150-11160; WIC 11450 et seq.)*

5) Requires all individuals in the household who are 16 years of age or older, unless they are otherwise exempt, to participate in welfare-to-work activities as a condition of eligibility

for CalWORKs. *(WIC 11320.3 and 11322.6)*

6) Establishes asset limits to determine eligibility for CalWORKs aid. Prohibits a CalWORKs applicant or recipient from receiving aid if they have countable resources over $10,000, or more than $15,000 if one member of the household is age 60 or older or has a disability, or if they have a vehicle valued over $25,000. Requires asset limits to be increased every year based on the California Necessities Index. *(WIC 11155)*

7) Establishes that a child is considered deprived of parental support for the purposes of receiving CalWORKs benefits due to the unemployment of their parent or parents when a parent has worked less than 100 hours in the preceding four weeks and meets specified federal definitions of an unemployed parent. (*WIC 11201(b))*

8) Establishes that a family receiving CalWORKs benefits with a child who is considered to be deprived of parental support due to unemployment may continue to receive assistance regardless of the number of hours their parent works, provided the family does not exceed the applicable gross or net income limits and is otherwise eligible for assistance. (*WIC 11201(c))*

This Bill:

1) Deletes the requirement that a parent must not work more than 100 hours in the preceding four weeks in order to for their child to be considered deprived of parental support due to unemployment of the parent.

2) Deletes the provision that allows a family receiving CalWORKs benefits with a child who is considered to be deprived of parental support due to unemployment to continue to receive assistance regardless of the number of hours their parent works, provided the family does not exceed income limits and is otherwise eligible for assistance.

3) Allows a child to be considered to be deprived of parental support or care due to the unemployment of their parent, and therefore qualify for CalWORKs benefits, as long as the family's income does not exceed the applicable CalWORKs gross or net income limits and is otherwise eligible for assistance.

FISCAL IMPACT

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee:

This bill will likely result in ongoing state costs in the low millions of dollars annually for increased benefit amounts and administration and one-time costs for automation changes. These costs are estimated as follows:

1) CDSS estimates ongoing General Fund costs of approximately $1.3 million in the first year and $2.5 million ongoing thereafter for additional benefits due to increased eligibility resulting from the elimination of the 100-hour rule. This estimate is based on a monthly grant cost of $992, ongoing monthly employment services costs of $558 per

family, ongoing monthly childcare costs of $980 per family, and 2025 data indicating approximately 121 families in the first year and 146 families ongoing will be newly eligible for CalWORKs benefits under this bill. Actual costs may vary and will depend on uptake of the caseload.

California's annual $3.7 billion federal TANF block grant may be used flexibly within the CalWORKs program. It is fully allocated within the existing and proposed state budgets. Therefore, this analysis assumes any new costs for CalWORKs will be funded by the GF. State GF costs may be mitigated to the extent TANF funding is not fully expended in any particular year, or if one of the CalWORKs subaccounts has sufficient revenue available to support grant costs.

2) CDSS estimates one-time GF automation costs of approximately $218,500 for system updates to the California Statewide Automated Welfare System (CalSAWS) to remove the 100-hour rule limitation.

3) Administrative costs to county social workers for increased workload due to expanded eligibility are unknown, but potentially reimbursable by the state, subject to a determination by the Commission on State Mandates.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Purpose of the Bill:

According to the author, “California’s safety net should support families working to make ends meet, not penalize them for working additional hours. The current 100-hour rule in CalWORKs is an outdated policy that denies assistance to otherwise income-eligible families solely because a parent exceeds a monthly work-hour threshold. AB 1755 modernizes the program by eliminating this obsolete barrier and ensuring eligibility is based on income and need rather than arbitrary hour limits. By removing a policy that discourages work, the bill promotes family stability, advances economic equity, reduces administrative burdens, and strengthens California’s commitment to reducing child poverty and supporting working families.”

CalWORKs

As California’s version of the federal TANF program, CalWORKs is the state’s largest anti-poverty program. CalWORKs provides temporary cash assistance aimed at moving children out of poverty and helping qualified low-income families meet their basic needs, such as rent, clothing, utility bills, food, and other items needed to ensure children are cared for at home and safely remain with their families. In addition to cash assistance, adult CalWORKs recipients are provided education, employment, and training services designed to help remove barriers to work and promote self-sufficiency. These services are typically outlined in a welfare-to-work plan. CDSS is the designated state agency responsible for program supervision at the state level, and counties are responsible for administering the program at the local level.

CalWORKs is funded through federal, state, county and realignments funds. The federal government gives the state a TANF block grant and CalWORKs receives a majority of that allocation. California and local governments spend a maintenance-of-effort amount as well, as required by federal law. The state also uses General Fund money for state-only programs and provides counties with a single allocation to fund many CalWORKs services. Funds from the 1991 realignment are also used to fund assistance payments and are part of the single allocation.

Eligibility for CalWORKs is based on family size, income level, and region. Families must show economic hardship through income and asset tests and participation in the program is time limited. Adults are only allowed to use CalWORKs for 60 months in their lifetime. Children of adults who receive cash aid can continue to receive benefits until they are 18 years old in California.

Welfare-to-Work

Adults who participate in CalWORKs are also required to participate in welfare-to-work activities, unless exempted, which include employment, education, job skills training, vocational education, work study on college campuses, on-the-job training, community service, and job retention services, or activities to address or remove barriers like mental health, substance use disorder, and domestic abuse. Eligible families can also receive supportive services like child care, transportation, ancillary expenses, mental health services, substance abuse services, and personal counseling.

CalWORKs Deprivation Standard

The state's CalWORKs deprivation standards were originally enacted to comply with federal Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) rules, which required two-parent families to take additional steps to prove deprivation in order to receive aid. The AFDC statute was replaced in 1996 with the TANF program, which emphasized work preparation in conjunction with receipt of the grant. One of the four core purposes of the TANF program is to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

The deprivation test means that, to qualify for CalWORKs, a child in the family must be "deprived of parental support or care" due to the death, physical or mental incapacity, or incarceration of a parent; the unemployment of a parent or parents; or the continued absence of a parent, as defined. Consequently, the only way a two-parent household can meet the deprivation test is if the principal wage earner is unemployed, which is defined as working less than 100 hours a month, regardless of their income. The 100-hour work limit is a remnant of the prior AFDC law, which was based on the assumption that an average of 25 hours per week would put a family above the threshold to receive cash benefits.

Many states have modified or removed special requirements for two-parent units, but California remains one of the few states that has the 100-hour limit in statute. The elimination of this rule would allow county eligibility workers to evaluate applications based only on income limits and allow more families to receive benefits that would otherwise qualify. An evaluation of the Minnesota Family Investment Program found that when "the 100-hour and work history rules were removed, two-parent families were allowed to retain more of their earnings"[1]. Studies of the program have also found that rules like the 100-hour rule discourage employment rather than incentivize it. This bill would remove 100-hour work limit for purposes of determining if a family meets the deprivation standard.

Related/Prior Legislation:

AB 1324 (Sharp-Collins, 2025) would have made several changes to CalWORKs, including deleting the rule that families with unemployed parents who work over 100 hours in a month are ineligible for CalWORKs assistance and made changes to the extended subsidized employment program, including conducting a CalWORKs expansion feasibility study. AB 1324 was vetoed.

SB 996 (Kamlager, 2022) would have repealed the consideration of an individual's or family's assets as a condition of eligibility for CalWORKs and repealed the 100-hour standard described above for purposes of determining a child's deprivation of parental support or care due to the unemployment of their parent. SB 996 was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 371 (Mullin, 2015) would have removed the deprivation standard for purposes of determining eligibility for CalWORKs and would have instead required that aid be granted to a family if the family meets applicable eligibility requirements, without regard to the absence or employment status of the parent, among other changes to CalWORKs requirements. AB 371 was vetoed.

AB 1502 (Mullin, 2014) would have removed the deprivation standard for purposes of determining eligibility for CalWORKs and would have instead required that aid be granted to a family if the family meets applicable eligibility requirements, without regard to the absence or employment status of the parent, among other changes to CalWORKs requirements. AB 1502 was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

COMMENTS

AB 1755 would change the definition of the CalWORKs deprivation standard to better align with modern wages and labor trends. Past assumptions that children whose parents worked more than 100 hours in a month should have sufficient resources does not take into consideration how much cost of living has changed versus wages. Based on minimum wage and current CalWORKs income limits, a parent could work over 100 hours per week and still make less than the income limit based on how many children they have. The purpose of CalWORKs is to provide resources to very low-income families in a way that allows them to stabilize themselves and achieve economic mobility. The 100-hour time limit law makes eligibility more complicated and creates barriers that may not align the goals of the program.

PRIOR VOTES

[1] Paula Roberts and Mark Greenberg. Marriage and the TANF Rules: A Discussion Paper. Center for Law and Social Policy. February 1, 2005

Assembly Floor:	78 - 0
Assembly Appropriations Committee:	15 - 0
Assembly Human Services Committee:	7 - 0

POSITIONS

Support:
Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organization (Sponsor)
California Partnership to End Domestic Violence (Co-Sponsor)
End Child Poverty California Powered by Grace (Co-Sponsor)
Parent Voices CA (Co-Sponsor)
SEIU CA (Co-Sponsor)
Western Center on Law and Poverty
California Association of Food Banks
California Legislative Women's Caucus
County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA)
Los Angeles County

Oppose:
None received

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