

Date of Hearing: April 14, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Alex Lee, Chair

AB 1829 (Fong) – As Amended April 6, 2026

SUBJECT: Community colleges: CalWORKs Recipients Education Program: services

SUMMARY: Adds to the goal of the CalWORKs Recipients Education Program at California Community Colleges (CCCs) to achieve economic mobility; adds to the list of special services for the CalWORKs Recipients Education Program to also include direct aid for basic needs supports; and, permits CCCs to waive employer contributions for work study if the number of work study positions does not decrease. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Clarifies that special services for California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) recipients must assist students and those students transitioning off of CalWORKs in achieving economic mobility.
- 2) Expands the special services that the CCC Chancellor is required to allocate CalWORKs funding to include direct aid to meet the ongoing basic needs services and supports.
- 3) Authorizes a CCC, who provides a work study program with CalWORKs funding, to waive the requirement that an employer pays for 25% of the wages provided to the work study participant. Stipulates the waiver for the employer not to pay the 25% wage coverage is only permitted if the number of on-campus and off-campus work study positions offered does not decrease.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes in state law the CalWORKs program to provide cash assistance and other social services for low-income families through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Under CalWORKs, each county provides assistance through a combination of state, county and federal TANF funds. (Welfare and Institutions Code [WIC] §§ 11200 *et seq.*)
- 2) Requires all individuals over 16 years of age, unless they are otherwise exempt, to participate in welfare-to-work activities as a condition of eligibility for CalWORKs. (WIC §11320.3)
- 3) Enumerates the sequence of welfare-to-work activities that CalWORKs recipients must accomplish to continue receiving aid unless exempt. (WIC § 11320.1)
- 4) Establishes qualifying welfare-to-work activities to include employment, on-the-job training, community service, adult basic education, and other specified activities, and requires a specified number of weekly hours of welfare-to-work participation to remain eligible for aid. (WIC §11322.6)
- 5) Provides that a recipient of CalWORKs must participate in welfare-to-work activities for the following weekly time requirements:
 - a) 20 hours per week if the recipient has a child under six years of age and is a single adult or is part of a two adult household where one is disabled;

- b) 20 hours per week if the recipient is a single, pregnant person;
 - c) 30 hours per week if the recipient does not have a child under six years of age and is a single adult or is part of a two adult household where one is disabled; or,
 - d) 35 hours per week if the adult recipient is an unemployed person and both parents in a two adult household may contribute to the 35 hours. (WIC §11322.8)
- 6) Establishes within the CCC system, the CalWORKs Recipients Education Program. (Education Code (EDC) § 79200)
- 7) States it is the intent of the Legislature that the services provided by CalWORKs education program are to assist CalWORKs recipients prepare for employment. (EDC § 79201)
- 8) Defines “basic needs services and resources” to include but not be limited to housing, food, clothing, feminine hygiene, diapers, technology, childcare services and resources, and mental health services and resources. (EDC § 66023.5(a)(1))
- 9) Requires, to the extent funding is provided in the budget, for a community college to receive funding for educational services provided to CalWORKs recipients based on the number of CalWORKs recipients who are enrolled at the college and based on the scope and number of programs offered to assist the CalWORKs recipients gain employment. Requires, prior to receiving funding, a college to submit to the CCC Chancellor an application which will contain a plan for curriculum development and redesign. There are codified criteria for the plan including, but not limited to:
- a) Evidence the curriculum development or redesign will help students secure employment;
 - b) Participation from the county welfare department in the curriculum development or redesign;
 - c) Evidence of collaboration with regional workforce representatives;
 - d) Procedures to monitor the outcomes of CalWORKs recipients who participate in the programs developed by the new curricula; and,
 - e) Description of new courses for CalWORKs recipients that are designed to aid in job-related advancement. (EDC § 79202)
- 10) Requires the CCC Chancellor to develop an equitable method for allocating special services for CalWORKs recipients funds to all community college districts based on the relative number of CalWORKs recipients in attendance in each district, and is required to allocate funds for the following purposes:
- a) Job placement;
 - b) Coordination with county welfare offices and other local agencies such local workforce investment boards;
 - c) Child care and work study;

d) Instruction;

e) Postemployment skills training and related skills training; and,

f) Campus-based case management, limited to-campus assistance and services not provided by county caseworkers that do not supplant other counseling and academic support services funded through existing CCC categorical programs. (EDC § 79204)

11) Permits the CCC Chancellor to authorize the funds provided for childcare to be used for other special services for CalWORKs recipients. Funds allocated for special services shall be budgeted to meet the state's TANF maintenance of effort requirement, as defined and may not be expended in a manner that would cause their disqualification as a federally allowable maintenance of effort expenditure. (EDC § 79209)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown, this bill has not been analyzed by a fiscal committee.

COMMENTS: This analysis only discusses policy issues germane to the jurisdiction of the Assembly Committee on Human Services.

Background: *CalWORKs Overview.* CalWORKs is the state's primary cash assistance program. More specifically, CalWORKs implements the federal TANF program, which is a federal flexible block grant with the objective of providing income and support to families with children. CalWORKs provides eligible low-income families with cash grants and education, employment and training programs, and supportive services to give families opportunities to build resilience and achieve critical economic mobility.

In Fiscal Year 2024-25, 358,942 families received assistance, and the Administration projects a 1.3% increase to 363,766 families. As of October 2025, the maximum monthly grant for a family of three on CalWORKs (one parent and two children), if the family has no other income and lives in a high-cost-of-living county, is \$1,175, which is 53% of the 2025 Federal Poverty Level (FPL). The average grant amount in FY 25-26 was \$999.

CalWORKs Eligibility. CalWORKs is administered by each county, where each county determines eligibility through an application and an interview. Applicants must display eligibility of deprivation, age, property, residency, and income.

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

- Deceased;
- Either physically or mentally incapacitated;
- 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 18th birthday, or are 18 years of age and in high school or vocational school full-time, and are expected to complete either program before their 19th birthday, or they are disabled and attend 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 \$12,137 combined personal and real property per family.
- Families with elderly (those who are 60 years of age or older) or disabled members may have \$18,206 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 \$33,499.

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.

Income Limits: A new CalWORKs Income Reporting Threshold (IRT) is released every year for the new Federal Fiscal Year, which runs from October 1 to September 30. If a family’s gross monthly income exceeds the IRT, the family must report their income, which requires the county to re-evaluate the family’s case. Because the IRT is determined annually, the California Department of Social Services issues a new chart each fall to reflect changes. According to All County Letter No. 25-61 and effective October 1, 2025, to financially qualify, applicants must qualify using either Tier One or Tier Two in the IRT. The CalWORKs IRT amount for each family is the lower of the tiers below.

- Tier One IRT: \$1,222 (55% of the 2025 FPL for a family of three) plus the amount of income last used to calculate the family’s FPL monthly benefits; or,
- Tier Two IRT: The amount of income which may render the family ineligible for CalFresh, or 130% of the 2025 FPL, as shown in the chart.

CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Requirement. Unless deemed exempt, an adult in a one-parent assistance unit is required to participate in welfare-to-work activities for an average of 30 hours per week or, in the case of someone who is pregnant or parenting a child under six years of age, an average of 20 hours per week, monthly. In a two-parent assistance unit, one or both adults must participate in welfare-to-work activities for a combined average of 35 hours per week. Welfare-to-work activities include participation in subsidized and unsubsidized employment, community service, adult basic

| 2026 CalWORKs Income Reporting Threshold | |
|---|---------------------|
| Assistance Unit/Family Size | Tier Two IRT |
| 0 | \$1,696 |
| 1 | \$1,696 |
| 2 | \$2,292 |
| 3 | \$2,888 |
| 4 | \$3,483 |
| 5 | \$4,079 |
| 6 | \$4,675 |
| 7 | \$5,271 |
| 8 | \$5,867 |
| Each additional member | Add \$596 |

education, community college, job skills, training, mental health counseling, substance use disorder treatment, domestic abuse services, or other activities necessary to assist recipients in obtaining employment.

If a CalWORKs recipient who is not exempt from participation does not meet the welfare-to-work requirements, the recipient may be sanctioned, and that recipient's portion of the family's grant may be subtracted from the amount provided to the family.

California Community Colleges CalWORKs Recipients Education Program provides education, training, support services, and job opportunities to individuals receiving CalWORKs services from the county. CalWORKs program funds are required to assist CalWORKs recipient students and those students transitioning off CalWORKs in achieving long-term self-sufficiency through coordinated student services offered at a community college. Program services include:

- Job placement;
- Coordination with county welfare offices and other local agencies, such as local workforce investment boards; instruction;
- Postemployment skills training and related skills training;
- Campus-based case management, limited to on-campus assistance and services not provided by county caseworkers that do not supplant other counseling and academic support services funded through existing CCCs categorical programs; and,
- Childcare and work study.

This bill would add direct aid designed to meet ongoing basic needs services and resources to this list of services.

Work Study assists students with on-campus employment, providing opportunities to develop marketable job skills related to their current education and training goals. Work study placements allow CalWORKs students to meet their welfare-to-work participation requirements as required by state and federal law. Every year, the Chancellor's Office of the CCCs is required to provide a report on the services and benefits of the CalWORKs Education Program. The 2022-23 CalWORKs Recipients Education Program legislative report showed that students in work study jobs are benefiting from an array of jobs in different sectors.

| Job Type | 2022-2023 |
|--|-----------|
| Office Tech / Computer Applications | 614 |
| Customer Service | 503 |
| Business and Commerce, General | 170 |
| Child Development/Early Care & Education | 107 |
| Education, General | 122 |
| General Work Experience | 56 |
| Human Services | 148 |
| Culinary Arts | 28 |
| Educational Aid (Teacher Assistant) | 37 |
| Library Technician/Aide | 29 |
| Information Technology, General | 11 |
| Biology, General | 8 |
| Other | 286 |

Author’s Statement: According to the Author, “Many student parents are forced to choose between meeting their family basic needs and pursuing their academic goals. Often, these students face significant barriers, including the rising cost of necessities, childcare responsibilities, and limited employment opportunities. [This bill] provides community colleges with greater flexibility to support CalWORKs REP students financially, academically, and professionally.”

Equity Implications: Education serves as a path forward to help individuals escape generational poverty; however, low-income students face unique challenges to finishing school. While many peers are able to focus on school alone, CalWORKs recipients do not have the luxury because in order to keep their eligibility, they must participate in welfare-to-work activities. *This bill* seeks to increase access and reduce barriers for participation in the CalWORKs Program.

Double referral: This bill was previously heard in the Assembly Committee on Higher Education on March 18, 2026, and was approved on an 8 to 1 vote.

RELATED AND PRIOR LEGISLATION:

AB 363 (Bryan) of 2025 was substantially similar to this bill. *AB 363 was held on the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.*

SB 860 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review), Chapter 34, Statutes of 2014, codified the CalWORKs Education Program.

Arguments in support. The CCC Chancellor’s Office writes in support that, “the bill removes outdated restrictions that limit the use of program resources and clarifies that colleges may expand access to program supports and activities that help students succeed academically and enter the workforce. These changes will allow colleges to more effectively provide educational supports, strengthen coordination with county partners, and expand experiential and work-based learning opportunities for CalWORKs participants.

“By modernizing the statutory framework for the CalWORKs Education Program, [this bill] will help colleges direct resources where they are most needed and ensure low-income parenting

students have access to the services and experiences that support college completion and long-term economic mobility.”

Arguments in opposition. None on file.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Community Colleges, Chancellor's Office (Sponsor)
Allan Hancock College
Antelope Valley Community College District
Butte College
California Community College Calworks Association
Chaffey College
Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations
College of Marin CalWORKs Program
College of the Canyons CalWORKs Program
College of the Siskiyous CalWORKs Program
East Los Angeles College CalWORKs
Faculty Association of California Community Colleges
Fresno City College CalWORKs Program
Glendale Community College CalWORKs Program for Parenting Students
Golden West College CalWORKs Program
Irvine Valley College
Rio Hondo College
Riverside City College CalWORKs Program
Riverside Community College District
Saddleback College
San Bernardino Community College District
Santa Barbara City College
San Diego College of Continuing Education
Shasta College CalWORKs
Skyline College
Solano Community College
West Hills College Coalinga
West Los Angeles College
West Valley College
One private citizen

Opposition

None on file.

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