

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING

AB 1829 (Fong)

As Amended April 6, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Permits California Community Colleges (CCC) to use existing California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Education (CalWORKs) funds, to provide community college students, who receive CalWORKs, with direct aid for basic needs supports and permits CCC to waive employer's wage contributions for workstudy if the number of workstudy positions on – and off – campus remains the same.

Major Provisions

- 1) Clarifies the recipients of CalWORKs special services provided by the CCC will either be participants in the CalWORKs program or students transitioning off of CalWORKs and the services provided will assist the recipients in achieving long-term self-sufficiency and economic mobility.
- 2) Expands the special services, the CCC are authorized to use the CalWORKs funding to provide, to include direct aid to meet the ongoing basic needs services and supports of CalWORKs recipients. The basic needs services and supports include housing, food, clothing, feminine hygiene, diapers, technology, childcare services and resources, and mental health services and resources.
- 3) Authorizes a CCC, who provides a workstudy program with CalWORKs funding, to waive the requirement that an employer pays for 25% of the wages provided to the workstudy participant. Stipulates the waiver for the employer not to pay the 25% wage coverage is only permitted if the number of workstudy positions offered on – and off – campus does not decrease.

COMMENTS

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Every year as part of the annual Federal Budget Act, the Federal Government provides a fixed block grant to states, territories, and Washington, DC for the purposes of funding the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. TANF was established in 1996 and was part of a larger welfare reform effort proposed by President Bill Clinton. In 2024, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families Office of Family Assistance, reported \$16.9 billion in funds had been allocated to states and territories for the purpose of fostering economic security and providing stability for families with children who are considered low income. Each state is provided funds in the form of a block grant and is then authorized to provide monthly cash assistance to qualifying families with children. To qualify for the federal funding the State must also provide state funding for services that align with the federal program's overarching goals:

- 1) Provide stability for children to remain in their nuclear family "home" by providing assistance to the family unit;
- 2) Promote job attainment, work attainment, and marriage in order to end the dependence upon government benefits;

- 3) Reduce the incidences of out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and,
- 4) Encourage the formation and strengthen the continuation of two-parent families.

California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs). In California, the TANF program is known as CalWORKs. CalWORKs was created in 1997 to provide California with the ability to administer the newly created TANF program. Just like CalFresh, CalWORKs is administered by county welfare agencies and is overseen by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). According to the Legislative Analyst Office, California receives \$3.7 billion in TANF funds of which over \$2 billion is given to CalWORKs. In order to remain eligible to receive TANF funds, the State must provide additional state funding for services for CalWORKs recipients, which is known as the Maintenance-of-Effort (MOE). Including the MOE, the state spends roughly \$7.1 billion to provide services for CalWORKs recipients.

To qualify for CalWORKs, a person must meet specific age, income, and citizenship requirements. Technically, both adult caretakers (parents or guardians) and a child may be eligible for CalWORKs if either or both meet the criteria. Even if a person meets the age, income, and citizenship requirements, a person may still be deemed ineligible for CalWORKs. The most common cases for ineligibility are as follows: 1) exceeding the time limit for aid for adults, currently five years of cash assistance; 2) being sanctioned for not meeting some of the program's requirements after receiving cash assistance; and, 3) receiving Supplemental Social Security Income benefits.

CalWORKs Recipients Education Program. The CCC is an equal access higher education institution and accepts 100% of all applicants regardless of previous academic experience. In their ongoing effort to help all students achieve their educational and career goals, the CCC offers a myriad of support services and programs to assist students matriculate to a degree or certificate. One of these programs is the CalWORKs Recipients Education Program (CalWORKs Education Program).

Established in 1997 as part of the nation's "welfare reform" efforts, CalWORKs Education Program enables CCC to provide additional services to CalWORKs recipients who are also enrolled in CCC coursework. The CalWORKs Education Program provides funding to the CCC for two purposes: 1) to help CalWORKs recipients with vital services to assist them find employment, and 2) to develop curriculum specifically to help CalWORKs recipients obtain the skills necessary for job attainment. Services include workstudy, childcare, job development and placement, and case management and counseling. In the 2025-2026 budget year, the CCC received \$8 million in TANF funds and \$56.922 million in Proposition 98 funds for services provided as part of the CalWORKs Education Program. In 2023-2024, the CCC provided support services to 22,979 CalWORKs students and provided the following services:

- 1) 69 received childcare through on-campus services;
- 2) 1,197 received childcare through off-campus services; and,
- 3) 1,222 participated in workstudy.

According to the Legislative Analyst Office, the CalWORKs student services program has received a cost-of-living adjustment every year since 2020-2021 in the annual State Budget Act; whereas, Student Basic Needs Centers have only received a cost-of-living adjustment once. In a

time of fiscal uncertainty at both the State and Federal level, it is imperative for California to look at existing programs and expand, where possible, the use of the funds to best serve and support students. This measure is a reasonable as it expands an existing program to include basic needs services to those students who are most in need. The measure would also provide a cost-break to employers who wish to provide students with work experience without incurring the cost of providing a wage to the student for services rendered through the CalWORKs workstudy.

According to the Author

As stated by 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. AB 1829 provides community colleges with greater flexibility to support CalWORKs REP students financially, academically, and professionally."

Arguments in Support

As the sponsors of the measure, the Chancellor's Office of the CCC supports the measure as, "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, AB 1829 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.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations, no new state costs. According to the Chancellor's Office of the CCC, CalWORKs REPs at CCCs throughout the state have accumulated significant funds due to restrictions under current law, in the low tens of millions statewide, and this bill allows CalWORKs REPs to use these existing Proposition 98 funds on existing CalWORKs REP students.

VOTES

ASM HIGHER EDUCATION: 8-1-1

YES: Fong, Boerner, Jeff Gonzalez, Jackson, Kalra, Patel, Sharp-Collins, Tangipa

NO: DeMaio

ABS, ABST OR NV: Muratsuchi

ASM HUMAN SERVICES: 7-0-0

YES: Lee, Castillo, Calderon, Elhawary, Jackson, Solache, Tangipa

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 14-0-1

YES: Wicks, Hoover, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

ABS, ABST OR NV: Muratsuchi

UPDATED

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