
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 2510 (Arambula) - CalWORKs

Version: June 15, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 3, 2026

Policy Vote: HUMAN S. 4 - 0

Mandate: Yes

Consultant: Agnes Lee

Bill Summary: AB 2510 would make changes to the CalWORKs program related to family reunification cases.

Fiscal Impact:

- The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) estimates an initial General Fund cost of \$2 million and annual ongoing General Fund costs of \$1.6 million for CalWORKs grants that will be maintained for families even after placing the child with child welfare services and for removing penalties related to immunization requirements. These costs also include a one-time automation cost of \$805,000 for the California Statewide Automated Welfare System (CalSAWS).
- Unknown costs to counties for administration. Costs to counties would be potentially reimbursable by the state, subject to a determination by the Commission on State Mandates.

Background: The CalWORKs program 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 participate in welfare-to-work activities and are provided education and employment and training services designed to help remove barriers to work and promote self-sufficiency. Adults who are required to participate in welfare-to-work activities must obtain a welfare-to-work plan. Counties are responsible for administering the program at the local level.

CalWORKs and Child Welfare Services Family Reunification. Under current law, when a child has been removed from the home through the child welfare system, the parent is considered to be living with the child for a period of up to six months, or for a time period as determined by CDSS, of the child's absence from the CalWORKs family assistance unit. The parent is eligible for CalWORKs aid, child care and other services, if all of the following conditions are met:

- The child has been removed from the parent or parents and placed in out-of-home care.
- When the child was removed from the parent or parents, the family was receiving CalWORKs aid.

- The county has determined that the provision of CalWORKs aid or services is necessary for reunification.

Immunization Policy. Current law requires CalWORKs applicants to provide documentation that all children in the assistance unit not required to be enrolled in school have received all age appropriate immunizations, unless it has been medically determined that an immunization for a child is not appropriate or the applicant or recipient has filed with the county welfare department an affidavit that the immunizations are contrary to the applicant's or recipient's beliefs. If the documentation is not provided within the required time period, as specified, the family will be sanctioned whereby the needs of all parents or caretaker relatives in the assistance unit will not be considered in determining the grant amount to the assistance unit until the required documentation is provided.

Proposed Law: Specific provisions of the bill would:

- Require that, for a family receiving CalWORKs, a needy child or children must be considered living with their parent(s) for a period of up to six months, or for a longer time period as determined by the CDSS, of the needy child's or children's absence from the family assistance unit, and the parent(s) must be eligible to receive aid and other services, as otherwise eligible as if the child was living with the parent or parents, if all of the following conditions are met:
 - The child has been removed from the parent or parents and placed in out-of-home care; and provide that this does not require that all children be removed from the parent or parents or that some, but not all, of the children removed from the parent or parents have been reunified.
 - When the child was removed from the parent or parents, the family was receiving CalWORKs aid.
 - The county has determined that the provision of CalWORKs aid or services is necessary for reunification; and provide that if a family is cooperating in the development of, or participating in, a reunification case plan developed by a county child welfare agency, the county must deem aid and services as necessary for reunification.
 - If a child or children have been removed from a CalWORKs assistance unit and placed with an adult who, prior to the removal, was a noncustodial parent, and both of the following conditions are met:
 - The family remains eligible for CalWORKs family reunification cash aid, if otherwise eligible, as specified.
 - The parent is otherwise eligible for aid.
- Require that a family cooperating in the development of, or participating in, a reunification case plan developed by a county child welfare agency and receiving aid must be exempt from the immunization requirements, as specified.

- Require that a family receiving state-funded CalWORKs reunification cash aid whose grant was lowered as a sanction for not cooperating with child support enforcement must have the sanction end upon the removal of the child from the assistance unit and their placement into out-of-home care.
- Require that if the foster care placement for a child for whom CalWORKs assistance is currently being paid is with the formerly noncustodial parent of the removed child, the county cannot discontinue aid to the original assistance unit if it is otherwise eligible for CalWORKs reunification cash aid; and require that the parent with whom child welfare services places the child must also receive CalWORKs aid, if the parent applies and is otherwise eligible.
- Provide that an individual receiving aid or services who is cooperating in the development of, or participating in, a CalWORKs family reunification plan is not required to participate in welfare-to-work activities.
- Require that for an individual receiving CalWORKs family reunification services, either of the following must apply:
 - A case plan that includes the need for CalWORKs family reunification cash aid or child care services may serve as a CalWORKs family reunification plan, as defined, which must satisfy the requirement to have a welfare-to-work plan.
 - A jointly developed child welfare services and CalWORKs welfare-to-work plan may serve as the CalWORKs family reunification plan, which must satisfy the requirement to have a welfare-to-work plan.

Related Legislation: AB 1074 (Patel, 2025) was similar to this bill. AB 1074 was vetoed by the Governor.

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