
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 607
Author: Celeste Rodriguez (D)
Amended: 8/29/25 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE: 5-0, 7/7/25
AYES: Arreguín, Ochoa Bogh, Becker, Durazo, Limón

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 79-0, 6/2/25 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: CalWORKs: Home Visiting Program

SOURCE: Children Now (Co-Sponsor)
County Welfare Directors Association of California (Co-Sponsor)

DIGEST: This bill makes changes to the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKS) Home Visiting Program by clarifying that tribal families are intended to be eligible, extending the program length to not more than the duration of the applicable home visiting program model, and allowing parents of children up to 24 months old to participate.

ANALYSIS:

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 (USC) section 601 et seq.)
- 2) 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) section 11200 et seq.)

- 3) 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 sections 11150, 11160, 11450 et seq.)
- 4) Generally requires a recipient of CalWORKs benefits to participate in welfare-to-work activities as a condition of eligibility for aid. (WIC section 11320 et seq.)
- 5) Establishes the CalWORKs Home Visiting Program as a voluntary program for the purpose of supporting positive health, development, and well-being outcomes for pregnant and parenting people, families, and infants born into poverty, expanding their future educational, economic, and financial capability opportunities, and improving the likelihood that they will exit poverty. (WIC section 11330.6 (a)(1))
- 6) Requires the program to provide high-quality, evidence-based, culturally competent services to pregnant people, parents or caretaker relatives, and children for 24 months or until the child's second birthday, whichever is later, that meet the needs of at-risk assistance units, including those in underserved, rural, tribal, impoverished, and other communities. (WIC section 11330.6 (a)(2))
- 7) Requires CDSS, subject to an appropriation in the annual Budget Act, to award funds to participating counties for the purposes of the CalWORKs Home Visiting Program, in order to provide voluntary evidence-based home visiting services to any assistance unit. Specifies that services authorized are not entitlement services and participating counties may limit the number of families participating in the program to ensure that the costs do not exceed the amount of funds awarded to the county for this purpose. (WIC section 11330.6 (b))
- 8) Provides that participation in the CalWORKs Home Visiting Program is optional for counties, and counties that apply for, and are awarded, funds shall agree to the terms of state law. (WIC section 11330.6 (c)(1))
- 9) Requires a voluntary participant of the CalWORKs Home Visiting Program to meet both of the following criteria:
 - a) The individual is one of the following:
 - i) A member of a CalWORKs assistance unit.
 - ii) The parent or caretaker relative for a child-only case.

iii) An individual who is apparently eligible for CalWORKs aid

- b) The individual is pregnant or the individual is a parent or caretaker relative of a child less than 24 months of age at the time the individual enrolls in the program. Provides that a county may serve additional individuals that are not a member of the CalWORKs assistance unit with departmental approval. (WIC section 11330.6 (c)(2)(A-B))

This Bill:

- 1) Extends the time the CalWORKs Home Visiting Program can provide services to clients from until the child's second birthday to not to exceed the duration of the applicable home visiting program model.
- 2) Allows, in order to promote continuity of services, a voluntary participant whose participation would otherwise be terminated because the participant no longer meets CalWORKs income, eligibility, or need criteria to continue through the duration of the home visiting program or for up to an additional 12 months, whichever is sooner, notwithstanding any other provision of the law.

Comments

According to the author, "The CalWORKs Home Visiting Program (HVP) was created in the 2018-19 Budget to provide two-generation support to children and families in poverty by providing them with the necessary tools to expand their educational, economic, and financial capabilities. Not only does the program establish a pillar for a child's early development, but it also increases the likelihood of these children and families exiting poverty.

"According to research, the first five years of a child's life are the most important for their development. Difficult circumstances at an early age often result in negative consequences for a child's long-term physical, social, and behavioral health while also affecting their educational and economic well-being. Voluntary evidence-based home visiting programs are backed by decades of research and proven to increase families' economic self-sufficiency, foster healthy child development, promote school readiness, and reduce child maltreatment negating those negative consequences.

"The issue, however, is that the current CalWORKs HVP statute funds enrollment only until a child's second birthday, which misses children who are just over 24 months of age. It also limits participation through the child's second birthday or 24

months, whichever is later. This forces families who could benefit from the continuation of this program to exit before full benefits can be achieved. Some of the evidence-based home visiting programs being used in the CalWORKs HVP support children through their fifth birthday or upon entering kindergarten. Unfortunately, the early discontinuation of service hinders achieving the program's full potential and cuts off the crucial services these families and children could continue benefiting from.

“This bill would align the time frame families can enroll and participate in CalWORKs HVP in alignment with the home visiting models recommended duration, which could be until the child’s fifth birthday or entering kindergarten. AB 607 would unlock the full potential of the CalWORKs HVP program and provide the continued support and guidance these families inherently deserve.”

CalWORKs. As the 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 also 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.

CalWORKs Home Visiting Program. The Home Visiting Program was established in 2010 by authority contained in the federal Affordable Care Act and is supervised by CDSS and administered by participating counties. This program provides voluntary, evidence-based home visiting services to pregnant and newly parenting families who are a member of a CalWORKs assistance unit. Counties contract with providers and use a variety of evidence-based models including:

- Early Head Start – Home Based Option
- Healthy Families America
- Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters
- Nurse Family Partnership
- Parents as Teachers
- Promoting First Relationships-Home Visiting Intervention Model

To qualify for the program the individual must be pregnant or the parent or caretaker relative of a child less than 24 months old the time the individual enrolls in the program. CDSS states the goals of the Home Visiting Program are to help young families reach self-sufficiency by improving family well-being; support healthy development of young children; and prepare and help families find employment resources.

The California Department of Public Health also administers a home visiting program, the California Home Visiting Program that uses many of the same models the CalWORKs program uses and does not have the 24 month old participation time limit required by the CalWORKs program. For example the Early Head Start Home Based Option model serves infants and toddlers up to three years old. According to a national evaluation conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. and Columbia University's Center for Children and Families, by the end of the program three year old children performed significantly better on cognitive, language, and social and emotional development measures than a control group. The parents of the children also showed better parenting skills.¹ This bill allows participation in the program for a duration not to exceed the duration of a county's applicable home visiting program model.

1

Related/Prior Legislation

SB 1396 (Alvarado- Gil, 2024) was substantially similar to this bill. SB 1396 was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 1070 (Arambula, 2019) would have stated in the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that would expand eligibility for the CalWORKs Home Visiting Initiative to all parents served through the CalWORKs program and applicants deemed apparently eligible for CalWORKs. This bill was not moved by the author.

AB 992 (Arambula, 2017) would have established the CalWORKs Baby Wellness and Family Support Home Visiting Program in CDSS to offer a voluntary home visiting program to CalWORKs assistance units with a pregnant recipient or a child up to 24 months of age. This bill was held in Senate Human Services Committee.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, Since the program is not an entitlement, there would be no additional costs to fund the program. The Budget Act of 2025 includes \$75.4 million in 2025-26 for the program, which reflects a \$25 million reduction that was imposed as part of the Budget Act of 2024 to help address the state's budget shortfall.

Unknown potential General Fund cost pressures to the extent that services are provided for more than 24 months. No fiscal impact to state operations.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/29/25)

County Welfare Directors Association of California (co-source)

Children Now (co-source)

All for Kids

American Academy of Pediatrics, CA Chapter 3

American Academy of Pediatrics, California

American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists - District IX

Antelope Valley Partners for Health

California Alliance of Caregivers

California Alliance of Child and Family Services

California Family Resource Association

California State Association of Counties

Child Abuse Prevention Center and its Affiliates Safe Kids California, Prevent
 Child Abuse California and the California Family Resource Association; the
 Child Care Resource Center
 County Health Executives Association of California
 County of Fresno
 Everychild Foundation
 First 5 Alameda County
 First 5 Association of California
 First 5 California
 First 5 LA
 First 5 Monterey County
 First 5 Orange County
 First 5 San Benito
 First 5 Santa Clara County
 First 5 Yolo
 Healthy Families America
 Nurse - Family Partnership
 Orange; County of
 Parents As Teachers National Center
 Rural County Representatives of California
 The Children's Partnership
 Urban Counties of California
 Western Center on Law & Poverty

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/29/25)

None received

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 79-0, 6/2/25

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías,
 Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon,
 Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary,
 Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark
 González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra,
 Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen,
 Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva,
 Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca
 Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta,
 Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

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