

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

CSA1 Bill Id:AB 607 Author:(Celeste Rodriguez)

As Amended Ver:August 29, 2025

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Extends the allowable duration of the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Home Visiting Program (HVP).

Senate Amendments

- 1) Remove the requirement for the program to provide specified services for 24 months or until the child's second birthday, and instead, specify that the services provided shall not exceed the duration of the applicable home visiting model.
- 2) Revert the participation requirement for pregnant individuals or those who are a parent or caretaker relative of a child from less than 36 months of age, back to 24 months, at the time the individual enrolls in the program, to become participants.
- 3) Clarify that counties may serve parents or caretaker relatives of children younger than 36 months of age at the time of enrollment.
- 4) Strike the provision authorizing 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 HVP or for up to an additional 12 months, whichever is longer.
- 5) Make technical changes.

COMMENTS

What is a Home Visiting Program? Home Visiting is a preventative approach or strategy designed to provide support to low-income pregnant persons and new parents in their homes by pairing them with a support person to connect families to services as they go through the early stages of raising a family. This strategy is aimed at improving outcomes in infant and child health, education, school readiness, and preventing entry into the child welfare system. This nationwide strategy is voluntary in each state. Home visitors are typically trained nurses, child development specialists, and/or social workers and they connect parents to prenatal care, coach parents to develop healthy attachments with their infants, and advise on how best to aid in their child's development. In California, there are two modes of home visiting: 1) California Department of Public Health's (CDPH) California Home Visiting Program, administered through local health jurisdictions, and 2) CDSS' CalWORKs HVP administered through county welfare departments. Each has different eligibility requirements including the duration and population served. CDPH's program does serve more than CalWORKs clients and participants are eligible until five years of age.

This bill will extend the eligibility timeframe for CalWORKs HVP to allow families to participate for the full duration of the evidence-based models currently used in counties, instead limiting participation to a duration of 24 months or until the child's second birthday, whichever is later.

Brief History of the CalWORKs Home Visiting Program. In 2018, AB 1811 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 35, Statutes of 2018, established the Home Visiting Initiative, contingent upon appropriation, as a voluntary program for the purpose of supporting positive health, development, and well-being outcomes for eligible pregnant and parenting women, families, and infants born into poverty. The target demographic was first-year parents. AB 1811 made participation in the program optional for counties and required a county that applies for funds under the program to agree to the terms of the program. In the first year of implementation (2019), 44 counties opted in. According to CDSS, 41 counties participated in fiscal year 2023-24.

SB 80 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 27, Statutes of 2019, expanded the Home Visiting Initiative to become the now-known HVP and made the program permanent. SB 80 expanded eligibility to include parents beyond a first-time parent and pregnant individuals, and permitted noncustodial parents to benefit from services.

HVP supports and resources include: 1) prenatal, infant, and toddler care; 2) infant and child nutrition; 3) child developmental screening and assessments; 4) parent education, and training in parent/child interaction; 5) child development and child care referral; 6) job readiness and barrier removal; 7) domestic violence and sexual assault services; and, 8) mental health and substance abuse treatment and support. Each county may deliver services using the following models:

- 1) Early Head Start – Home Based Option (EHS-HBO) is available for low-income pregnant women and families with children birth to age three. EHS- HBO provides early, continuous intensive and comprehensive child development, and family support services in accordance with Head Start Performance Standards.
- 2) Healthy Families America works with pregnant and parenting families of children prenatally up to age five. Services are offered for a minimum of three years and up to five years.
- 3) Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) services are provided until the child exits kindergarten. The HIPPY program provides parents with a curriculum that lasts for 30 weeks. Home visits take place once per week.
- 4) Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) requires families to initiate services prenatally by the 28th week of pregnancy. Families can participate in the NFP program for two-and-a-half years. Home visits take place based on a family's level of need and a child's age. Services are provided until the child's second birthday.
- 5) Parent as Teachers (PAT) allows enrollment anytime between pregnancy and kindergarten. Services are designed to deliver services for at least two years. Home visits take place based on each family's experiences and stressors.
- 6) Promoting First Relationships-Home Visiting Intervention Model (PFR-HVIM) can be delivered to a family with a child between the ages of birth and five years of age and provides weekly, hour-long visits for 10 to 14 weeks; however, the duration can be extended based on a family's needs.

As an effort to promote continuity of services, *this bill* also allows a participant whose participation would otherwise be terminated because they no longer meet CalWORKs income,

eligibility, or need criteria to continue through the duration of the HVP or for up to an additional 12 months, whichever is longer.

Effectiveness of the CalWORKs HVP. AB 1811 also required an independent, research-based institution to provide an evaluation report. The University of California San Francisco, School of Nursing conducted a program evaluation that was published on January 7, 2022, which found that HVP is successful. The evaluation found, "Clients, home visitors and HVP staff consistently reported a high level of satisfaction with the program activities and services. The interviews and focus groups provided many specific examples of how vital HVP was in helping clients meet basic needs and strengthened client and child health and development." (Rienks et al. 2022) The evaluation contained several key program implementation improvement recommendations, which include:

- 1) Explore with models and counties how to offer flexibility to home visitors to implement HVP program models while maintaining model fidelity, with attention to supporting home visitors to build rapport and trusting relationship with HVP clients who are often in a state of crisis.
- 2) Explore opportunities to strengthen collaboration with CalWORKs as the key referral source for HVP clients.
- 3) Explore ways to address workforce challenges, including recruitment and retention of home visitors as well as ongoing training and support needs.
- 4) Explore opportunities to support the program and staff learning collaboratives to promote sharing of best practices and up-to-date information, with special interest groups by county size, region or specific program model(s).

Equity Implications: Research shows HVPs are overall effective and successful tools for prevention into the child welfare system and aid in child development; however, there is not enough research evaluating the efforts on closing racial disparities. According to James J. Heckman, a Nobel Memorial Prize winner in economics and an expert in the economics of human development, it is important to "...provide developmental resources to children AND their families. Direct investment in the child's early development is complemented by investment in parents and family environments. Quality early childhood education from birth to age five, coupled with parent-coaching, such as home visitation programs for parents and teen mothers, has proven to be effective and warrants more investment." *This bill* increases the time period someone is eligible to receive services from the HVP and thus may increase the positive impact of the program.

According to the Author

"To support the healthy development and stability of families, the CalWORKs Home Visiting Program (HVP) provides voluntary home visiting services. These programs are administered by counties, are backed by decades of research, and are proven to increase families' economic self-sufficiency, foster healthy child development, promote school readiness and reduce child maltreatment. [This bill] aims to ensure families can receive the maximum benefits of these programs by extending the enrollment period to families with children up to 36 months, as well as allowing families to participate for the full duration of the applicable HVP model."

Arguments in Support

Children Now and the County Welfare Directors Association, co-sponsors of this measure, state, "This bill will make statutory changes to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), CalWORKs Home Visiting Program (HVP) that will ensure that participants in a voluntary evidence-based home visiting program receive the full array of benefits by being able to participate through the HVP model's intended duration. The bill does not cost any additional money as participating counties retain their ability to limit participation in the program and existing law states that the services are not entitlement services. Rather, the bill clarifies the population eligible for the funding provided in the annual state budget process."

Arguments in Opposition

No opposition on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee on August 29, 2025:

- 1) 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.
- 2) Unknown potential General Fund cost pressures to the extent that services are provided for more than 24 months.
- 3) No fiscal impact to state operations.

VOTES:**ASM HUMAN SERVICES: 7-0-0**

YES: Lee, Castillo, Calderon, Elhawary, Essayli, Jackson, Celeste Rodriguez

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 14-0-1

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

ABS, ABST OR NV: Sanchez

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 79-0-0

YES: 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

UPDATED

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