

Date of Hearing: June 16, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
Alex Lee, Chair
SB 1030 (Smallwood-Cuevas) – As Amended May 14, 2026

SENATE VOTE: 38-0

SUBJECT: CalWORKs: unrelated adult male

SUMMARY: Repeals the statute that requires an unrelated adult male (UAM) who lives in a household that is receiving aid from the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids program (CalWORKs) to contribute financially to the family.

EXISTING LAW:

State law:

- 1) Establishes the CalWORKs program to provide cash assistance and other social services for low-income families through the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. 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) Defines a “needy child” to be a person under 18 years old who has been deprived of parental support or care due to: (a) the death, physical or mental incapacity, or incarceration of a parent, (b) the unemployment of a parent or parents, or (c) continued absence of a parent from the home due to divorce, separation, desertion, or any other reason. (WIC § 11202)
- 3) Establishes the income, asset, and real property limits used to determine eligibility for the CalWORKs program, and CalWORKs grant amounts, based on family size and county of residence. (WIC § 11150 to § 11160; § 11450 et seq.)
- 4) Requires every CalWORKs beneficiary to participate in welfare-to-work activities in order to be eligible for CalWORKs aid, unless they are exempt, as specified. (WIC § 11320.3)
- 5) Establishes the number of weekly hours of welfare-to-work participation necessary to remain eligible for aid, including requirements for an unemployed parent in a two-parent assistance unit, as specified. (WIC § 11322.8)
- 6) Requires an UAM who lives with a family that is receiving aid from CalWORKs to contribute financially at least as much as it would cost him to provide for himself in an independent living arrangement. Counties are required to determine the minimum financial contribution to the family using regulations set by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). Those regulations should include requirements that the mother of the children and unrelated male provide all information about household expenses and create an agreement about shared expenses. The agreement must be signed by the mother of the children and unrelated male under penalty of perjury. If either the mother or unrelated male willfully and knowingly violate the agreement the family may lose CalWORKs aid. (WIC § 11351.5)

Federal law:

- 7) Establishes the TANF program, which provides block grants to states to develop and implement their own state welfare-to-work programs which provide cash assistance and other support and services to low-income families. (42 United States Code [U.S.C.] 601 et seq.)
- 8) Finds that the increase in the number of children receiving public assistance is closely related to the increase in births to unmarried women and that the increase in out-of-wedlock pregnancies is a national crisis, and states therefore it is the sense of Congress that prevention of out-of-wedlock pregnancy and reduction in out-of-wedlock birth are very important government interests and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 is meant to address that crisis. (42 U.S.C. 601(a))
- 9) Describes the criteria to determine whether a child has been deprived of parental support thereby qualifying them for aid. Prohibits states from finding ineligibility solely based on the presence of a “substitute parent” or “man-in-the-house”. (45 Code of Federal Regulations 233.90(a))

FISCAL EFFECT: According to the Senate Committee on Appropriations :

- The California Department of Social Services estimates the following costs:
 - Ongoing General Fund costs of \$934,000 based on data assumptions that 48 families would be newly eligible for CalWORKs benefits. This includes estimated costs for related increases in employment and child care services.
 - One-time automation costs of \$75,000 to update the California Statewide Automated Welfare System (CalSAWS). The costs would be absorbable using CalSAWS Maintenance and Enhancements funding.
- Costs to counties for administration would be potentially reimbursable by the state, subject to a determination by the Commission on State Mandates.

COMMENTS:

Background: *California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids Eligibility and Program Requirements.* CalWORKs is the state’s primary cash assistance program. More specifically, CalWORKs implements the federal TANF program, which is a federal block grant with the objective of providing income and support to families with children. CalWORKs provides eligible low-income families with cash grants and supportive services and resources, such as subsidized child care, employment training, mental health counseling, and housing assistance.

CalWORKs is administered at the county level; it is funded largely through the federal TANF block grant and state maintenance-of-effort contributions. The federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 (Public Law 104-193) adopted the TANF program. TANF provides block grants (to be supplemented by state maintenance-of-effort funds) to states to design their own welfare programs that meet federal requirements, including the establishment of work requirements and imposition of a lifetime limit of no more than five years on receipt of TANF benefits. Among many other provisions, PRWORA authorized states to create individual responsibility plans for program participants, whereby

states could opt to establish a number of obligations related to receipt of TANF benefits, including requiring school attendance, immunizations, and work requirements.

To qualify for CalWORKs, families generally must earn less than about 80% of the federal poverty level. In 2025-26, the administration estimates that the average CalWORKs grant will be \$999 per month across all family sizes and income levels.

Eligibility for CalWORKs is based on family size, income level, and region and tied to the needs of the children in the home. Families must show economic hardship through income and asset tests, and participation in the program is also time-limited. Family size and income are based on CDSS regulations that county eligibility workers use to establish who is living in the home, including adults unrelated to the children, and the income of those adults, and whether enough of that income is available to support those children.

Adults receiving aid 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. However, families can have cash aid temporarily cut through “sanctions” for not complying with certain required elements of CalWORKs or their welfare-to-work plan.

CalWORKs services and requirements are typically outlined in a welfare-to-work plan. Welfare-to-work plans are documents that describe the work activities an adult must participate in for the family to receive aid. The plan also describes the support services they will receive to ensure they can fulfill their work requirements. Work activities can include employment, education, job skills training, and/or vocational education, work study on college campuses, on-the-job training, community service, job retention services, or activities to address or remove barriers like mental health, substance use disorder, and domestic abuse. An adult in a one-parent household must work 30 hours per week each month (or 20 hours per week if they have a child under six years old) in order to remain eligible for aid. In two-parent households, one or both adults must participate for a combined 35 hours per week.

Unrelated Adult Male. An UMA is someone who is over 18 years old, is not the father of any children in the home, and lives with the CalWORKs family. Roommates and boarders are not considered a UMA.

A UAM is required to have income or resources sufficient to make a financial contribution to the CalWORKs family of at least their needs for housing, utilities, and food. The UAM who lives within the home must help pay each month for living expenses. The amount of money they pay must be at least as much as it would cost him to live by himself. Both the CalWORKs mother and the UAM must sign sworn statements explaining his actual financial contribution and his income. This is done through completion of the CW 71 form. If the mother refuses to complete the CW 71 form, aid is denied or discontinued. If the UAM refuses to complete the CW 71 form, or has insufficient income to meet his needs, a referral is made to Welfare Fraud Prevention and Investigation so that the matter can be investigated further for possible misuse of CalWORKs funds.

This bill would remove the statute that requires financial contributions, reporting, and related sanctions for CalWORKs families with an UAM in the home.

Author’s Statement: According to the Author, “The inclusion of the unrelated adult male rule in California’s welfare program reflects a broader legacy of punitive policy design that has

disproportionately harmed families of color. Policies structured around work requirements, time limits, and restrictive household composition rules trace back to stereotypes that cast Black and Brown mothers and caregivers as suspect, irresponsible, or undeserving. These frameworks reinforce stigma rather than address the structural barriers to economic security that communities of color face, including wage inequities, housing instability, and systemic discrimination.

“[This bill] is an important step toward dismantling elements of welfare policy that echo this racist legacy and replacing them with policies grounded in dignity, equity, and evidence. By eliminating harmful and outdated barriers, [This bill] moves California closer to a safety net that truly supports family stability and economic mobility. It represents a commitment to designing a system that supports families equitably and improves economic stability for all children and caregivers.”

RELATED AND PRIOR LEGISLATION:

AB 1324 (Sharp Collins, Lee) of 2025, would have required the CDSS to conduct a feasibility study on expanding the CalWORKs program; update various eligibility requirements for CalWORKs; and, prioritize specified employers to participate in CalWORKs’ employment services placements. *AB 1324 was vetoed by Governor Newsom.*

Arguments in Support: The Reimagine CalWORKs Coalition writes:

“Reimagine CalWORKs Coalition, we are writing as cosponsors of [this bill] which would repeal the CalWORKs Unrelated Adult Male (UAM) rule which is an outdated misogynistic policy that incorporates racist and sexist assumptions about people who receive CalWORKs. This old law was based on the presumption that mothers receiving cash benefits were trying to game the system and fraudulently claim benefits if an unrelated adult male lived in the household, even though a UAM is not required to support the family. It also stemmed from outdated social mores, which disapproved of a couple who cohabitated without being married.

“[This bill] would simplify the CalWORKs program by repealing the “Man-in-the-House” policy of the 1950s and 1960s. These policies were a product of the old Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program whereby states enacted laws which required the unrelated adult male to complete welfare forms under penalty of perjury. If the partner does not complete the form, the CalWORKs benefits will be stopped for the entire family. States implemented these rules to restrict welfare eligibility and enforce morality, often cutting off aid if a mother was dating, even if the man did not support the children. These policies were used to police the households of, particularly, Black women.”

Arguments in Opposition: None on file.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Partnership to End Domestic Violence (Co-Sponsor)
Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organization (Co-Sponsor)
County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA) (Co-Sponsor)
End Child Poverty CA Powered by Grace (Co-Sponsor)
Parent Voices (Co-Sponsor)

Service Employees International Union (SEIU) (Co-Sponsor)

Western Center on Law & Poverty (Co-Sponsor)

California Legislative Women's Caucus

First 5 LA

Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis

Opposition

None on file.

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