SENATE THIRD READING
SB 1030 (Smallwood-Cuevas)
As Amended August 13, 2026
Majority vote

SUMMARY

Effective July 1, 2027, or the date that the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has notified the Legislature that the Statewide Automated Welfare System can perform the necessary automation to implement the repeal, 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. Permits CDSS to implement this bill via an all counties letter.

Major Provisions

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 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (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.

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."

Arguments in Support
The Reimagine CalWORKs Coalition writes, 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.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee on August 13, 2026:

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) estimates the following costs:

1) Upon completion of necessary automation, ongoing, Ongoing General Fund (GF) costs of $935,000 based on data assumptions that 48 families would be newly eligible for CalWORKs benefits. This includes estimated costs for related increases in employment and childcare services.

   California's annual $3.7 billion federal TANF block grant can be used flexibly within the CalWORKs program. It is fully allocated within the existing and proposed state budgets. Therefore, this analysis assumes any new costs for the CalWORKs program will be funded by the GF. State GF costs may be mitigated to the extent TANF funding is not fully expended in any particular year, or if one of the CalWORKs subaccounts has sufficient revenue available to support grant costs.

2) One-time absorbable GF automation costs of $116,000 to update the California Statewide Automated Welfare System.

3) Ongoing likely cost savings to counties due to reduced administrative burden on county workers who would no longer be required to determine single-parent families' financial arrangements with unrelated adult males.

VOTES

SENATE FLOOR: 38-0-2
YES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener
ABS, ABST OR NV: Becker, Grove

ASM HUMAN SERVICES: 6-0-1
YES: Lee, Calderon, Alanis, Elhawary, Jackson, Celeste Rodriguez
ABS, ABST OR NV: Tangipa

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-0-4
YES: Wicks, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache
ABS, ABST OR NV: Hoover, Dixon, Ta, Tangipa

UPDATED

VERSION: August 13, 2026

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