

Date of Hearing: April 8, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Alex Lee, Chair

AB 363 (Bryan) – As Amended March 20, 2025

SUBJECT: Community colleges: CalWORKs Recipients Education Program: eligibility and services

SUMMARY: Expands eligibility and services for the California Community Colleges CalWORKs Recipients Education Program (CalWORKs Education Program) and updates the required employer payment for work study employees. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Permits California Community Colleges (CCCs) to expand the pool of eligible students who can receive services from the CalWORKs Education Program to include those who have exceeded the 60-month limit on California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) cash aid or any successor program, and have one or more dependents that receive benefits from CalWORKs.
- 2) Requires special services for CalWORKs to assist program participants in achieving economic mobility, and strikes current law requiring special services to assist CalWORKs recipient students in achieving long-term self-sufficiency.
- 3) Adds direct aid for basic needs services to the list of services which can be provided by the CalWORKs Education Program to qualifying students.
- 4) Removes existing law that stipulates campus child care will only be provided to CalWORKs recipients if they are engaged in welfare-to-work activities through the completion of their initial education and training plan and for up to three months thereafter or until the end of the academic year, whichever period of time is greater.
- 5) Removes existing law that allows funds to be expended on behalf of a CalWORKs recipient only if the recipient's total hours of education, employment, and work study meet the recipient's obligations.
- 6) Authorizes the CCCs to use funding from the CalWORKs Education to provide up to 100 % of the wage for work study for a student receiving services from the CalWORKs Education Program, provided that the number of work study participants does not decrease.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes in state law the CalWORKs program to provide cash assistance and other social services for low-income families through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Under CalWORKs, each county provides assistance through a combination of state, county and federal TANF funds. (Welfare and Institutions Code [WIC] §§ 11120 *et seq.*)
- 2) Requires all individuals over 16 years of age, unless they are otherwise exempt, to participate in welfare-to-work activities as a condition of eligibility for CalWORKs. (WIC §11320.3)

- 3) Enumerates the sequence of welfare-to-work activities that CalWORKs recipients must accomplish to continue receiving aid unless exempt. (WIC § 11320.1)
- 4) Establishes qualifying welfare-to-work activities to include employment, on-the-job training, community service, adult basic education, and other specified activities, and requires a specified number of weekly hours of welfare-to-work participation to remain eligible for aid. (WIC §11322.6)
- 5) Provides that a recipient of CalWORKs must participate in welfare-to-work activities for the following weekly time requirements:
 - a) 20 hours per week if the recipient has a child under six years of age and is a single adult or is part of a two adult household where one is disabled;
 - b) 20 hours per week if the recipient is a single, pregnant person;
 - c) 30 hours per week if the recipient does not have a child under six years of age and is a single adult or is part of a two adult household where one is disabled; or,
 - d) 35 hours per week if the adult recipient is an unemployed person and both parents in a two adult household may contribute to the 35 hours. (WIC §11322.8)
- 6) Establishes the CalWORKs Education Program in the CCC under which community college districts are required to provide educational services and special services to recipients of aid under CalWORKs who are attending a community college. (Education Code [EDC] § 79200)
- 7) Declares legislative intent that services provided by the CalWORKs Education Program are to assist CalWORKs recipients prepare for employment. (EDC §79201).
- 8) Authorizes, pursuant to budget allocation, a community college to receive funding in order to provide educational services to CalWORKs recipients. The college will receive funding based on the number of CalWORKs recipients who are enrolled at the college and based on the scope and number of programs offered to assist the CalWORKs recipients gain employment. Prior to receiving funding, a college is required to submit to the Chancellor of the CCC an application which will contain a plan for curriculum development and redesign. There are codified criteria for the plan including, but not limited to:
 - a) Evidence the curriculum development or redesign will help students secure employment;
 - b) Participation from the county welfare department in the curriculum development or redesign;
 - c) Evidence of collaboration with regional workforce representatives;
 - d) Procedures to monitor the outcomes of CalWORKs recipients who participate in the programs developed by the new curricula; and,
 - e) Description of new courses for CalWORKs recipients that are designed to aid in job-related advancement (EDC § 79302).

- 9) Permits funding provided for curriculum development and design to also be used by the college for the following purposes:
 - a) Develop or redesign vocational curricula into short-term intensive programs for CalWORKs recipients;
 - b) To establish internships and work experience opportunities linked to CalWORKs courses in order foster job placement;
 - c) To redesign and integrate basic education and English as a Second Language courses into vocational courses;
 - d) To expand the use of telecommunications within CalWORKs courses (EDC § 79203).
- 10) Permits the Chancellor of the CCC to authorize the funds provided for child care to be used for other special services for CalWORKs recipients. Funds allocated for special services shall be budgeted to meet the state's TANF maintenance of effort requirement, as defined, and may not be expended in a manner that would cause their disqualification as a federally allowable maintenance of effort expenditure (EDC § 79209).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown, this bill has not been analyzed by a fiscal committee.

COMMENTS:

Background: *CalWORKs* is the state's primary cash assistance program. CalWORKs implements the federal TANF program and provides eligible low-income families with cash grants and supportive services aimed at helping them to secure education, training, and employment. Among others, the supportive services include mental health counseling, substance use disorder treatment, or domestic violence services; job skills training; attendance in a secondary school or in a course leading to certificate of general educational development.

Unless deemed exempt or otherwise not required to participate per CalWORKs rules, parents are required to develop and participate in a welfare-to-work plan. CalWORKs-approved welfare-to-work activities can include public or private sector subsidized or unsubsidized employment; on-the-job training; community service; secondary school, adult basic education and vocational education and training when the education is needed for the recipient to become employed; specific mental health, substance use disorders, or domestic violence services if they are necessary to obtain or retain employment; and a number of other activities necessary to assist a recipient in obtaining unsubsidized employment.

As of October 2024, the maximum monthly grant for a family of three on CalWORKs (one parent and two children), if the family has no other income and lives in a high cost-of-living county, is \$1,039. In 2024-25, the administration estimates the average CalWORKs grant amount to be \$1,001 per month across all family sizes and income levels. CalWORKs recipients are often also eligible to receive supportive services and resources, such as subsidized child care, employment training, mental health counseling, and housing assistance.

California Community Colleges CalWORKs Recipients Education Program provides education, training, support services, and job opportunities to individuals receiving CalWORKs services from the county. CalWORKs program funds are required to assist CalWORKs recipient students

and those students transitioning off CalWORKs in achieving long-term self-sufficiency through coordinated student services offered at a community college. Program services include:

- Job placement;
- Coordination with county welfare offices and other local agencies, such as local workforce investment boards;
- Instruction;
- Postemployment skills training and related skills training;
- Campus-based case management, limited to on-campus assistance and services not provided by county caseworkers that do not supplant other counseling and academic support services funded through existing California Community Colleges categorical programs; and,
- Childcare and work study.

This bill would add direct aid designed to meet ongoing basic needs services and resources to this list of services.

Work Study assists students with on-campus employment, providing opportunities to develop marketable job skills related to their current education and training goals. Work study placements allow CalWORKs students to meet their welfare-to-work participation requirements as required by state and federal law. Every year, the Chancellor's Office of the CCCs is required to provide a report on the services and benefits of the CalWORKs Education Program. The 2022-23 CalWORKs Recipients Education Program legislative report showed that students in work study jobs are benefiting from an array of jobs in different sector.

Job Type	2022-2023
Office Tech / Computer Applications	614
Customer Service	503
Business and Commerce, General	170
Child Development/Early Care & Education	107
Education, General	122
General Work Experience	56
Human Services	148
Culinary Arts	28
Educational Aid (Teacher Assistant)	37
Library Technician/Aide	29
Information Technology, General	11
Biology, General	8
Other	286

Author’s Statement: According to the Author, “The CalWORKs Recipient Education Program (Cal WORKs REP) helps community college students enrolled in CalWORKs to prepare for employment by providing vital services such as work-study, job placement, childcare, skills training, and case management support. In 2022-23, there were about 17,000 CalWORKs REP students statewide. [This bill] will increase access to critical educational support for CalWORKs students in need, strengthen the direct financial aid provided, and remove program barriers for students to access more off-campus opportunities for work-study placements.”

Equity Implications: Education serves as a path forward to help individuals escape generational poverty; however, low-income students face unique challenges to finishing school. While many peers are able to focus on school alone, CalWORKs recipients do not have the luxury because in order to keep their eligibility, they must participate in welfare-to-work activities. *This bill* seeks to increase access and reduce barriers for participation in the CalWORKs Program.

Double referral: Should this bill pass out of this committee, it will be referred to the Assembly Committee on Higher Education.

RELATED AND PRIOR LEGISLATION:

SB 860 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review), Chapter 34, Statutes of 2014, codified the CalWORKs Education Program.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Community Colleges, Chancellor's Office (Sponsor)
 Allan Hancock College
 Alliance for Children's Rights
 Barstow Community College District
 Butte College
 California Community College CalWORKs Association
 California Competes: Higher Education for A Strong Economy
 Chief Executive Officers of The California Community Colleges Board
 City College of San Francisco CalWORKs Program
 Community Action Partnership of Orange County
 Foothill-DE Anza Community College District
 Fresno City College
 Grace Institute - End Child Poverty in Ca
 MiraCosta Community College District
 Mt. San Antonio College
 Norco College
 North Orange County Community College District
 Pasadena City College CalWORKs Program
 Rio Hondo College
 Riverside City College
 Riverside Community College District
 San Bernardino Valley College
 Santa Clarita Community College District - College of The Canyons

Student Senate for California Community Colleges
Victor Valley College
West Kern Community College District
West Los Angeles College
Western Center on Law & Poverty
Woodland Community College CalWORKs Program

Opposition

None on file.

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