

# CALIFORNIA WORK OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO KIDS (CalWORKs) PROGRAM

-FACTSHEET-

CalWORKs is a public assistance program that gives cash aid and services to eligible families. If a family has little or no cash and needs housing, food, utilities, clothing, or medical care, they may be eligible to receive immediate short-term help. Families that apply and qualify for ongoing assistance receive money each month to help pay for housing, food, and other necessary expenses.

The amount of a family's monthly assistance payment depends on a number of factors, including the number of people who are eligible and the special needs of any of those family members. The income of the family is considered in calculating the amount of cash aid the family receives.

## **For Whom**

Specific eligibility requirements take into account an applicant's citizenship or immigration status, age, income, resources, assets, and other factors. Services are available to:

- Single parent families that have a child(ren) in the home who is deprived of parental support or care because of the absence, disability, or death of either parent;
- Two-parent families with a child when the principal wage earner is unemployed or has not worked for more than 100 hours in the four weeks preceding the date of the application;
- Caretaker relatives (non-parent) caring for a child who is related within the 5<sup>th</sup> degree. This may include a child who is receiving any financial assistance, such as:
  - Supplemental Security Income/State Supplemental Program;
  - Foster Care payments, such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Foster Care;
  - Approved Relative Caregiver; or
  - Kin-GAP.
- A pregnant person regardless of the trimester.

## **Application Process**

DPSS will set up an interview with a CalWORKs Eligibility Worker that the applicant must complete. During the interview, the CalWORKs Eligibility Worker will:

- Get any needed facts to prove the applicant's eligibility to the CalWORKs Program.
- Discuss with the applicant and explain the rules and responsibilities.
- Ask that the applicant completes the required application forms and gives proof of income and property; citizenship; age; social security; residence; shelter cost; if anyone in the family works or goes to school; and other information for each person in the family.

## **Income Limits**

The family's income must meet the gross income limit. Gross income may include income from employment, disability-based income, child/spousal support payments, Social Security benefits, etc.

For new applications, the gross income must be under the Minimum Basic Standard of Adequate Care (MBSAC) for the family.

If income is below MBSAC, a Recipient Test is applied where disregards/deductions are applied, \$600 disregard for certain disability-based income and earnings and a 50 percent additional disregard for the remaining earnings. The net countable income must be less than the Maximum Aid Payment (MAP) level for the family size.

For approved ongoing cases, the gross income after applicable disregards must be less than the MAP level for the family size. Families whose countable income exceeds the MAP, but whose income remains below the new Tier 2 Income Reporting Threshold (130 percent of the FPL), will be considered a Zero Basic Grant (ZBG) case who will continue to be eligible to supportive services through Welfare-to-Work (WTW), homeless benefits, and recurring and nonrecurring special needs payments.

## **Property/Resource Limits**

The family's property/resources must be at or below the property/resource limits:

- \$12,137 (cash on hand, savings, stocks, etc.), and \$18,206 if a member of the family is disabled, or age 60 or over.
- Applicants/Participants may retain non-exempt vehicles that have an equity value of \$33,499 or less. Equity is the amount of the Fair Market Value of the vehicle less encumbrances (amount owed on vehicle, if any). Any equity value in excess \$33,499 will be counted towards the property/resource limit.

Property/Resources that may be exempt from consideration may include:

- The home the applicant/participant resides in.
- Personal/Household items (furniture, appliances, etc.).
- Participants may hold special restricted savings accounts to be used for education/training, business, secure housing, or to purchase a home.
- CalABLE accounts - a tax-advantaged savings account that allows individuals with disabilities to save for disability-related expenses without losing eligibility to CalWORKs.
- CalKIDS account – is a college savings program for California children born on or after July 1, 2022, and low-income eligible students.

## **Other Requirements**

Applicant/Participant families must also:

- Have a Social Security Number or have applied for one for each person requesting aid with some exceptions.
- Cooperate with Child Support requirements, with some exceptions.

- Provide immunizations for all children under the age of six who are not enrolled in school.
- Meet Welfare-to-Work requirements or meet an exemption.
- Meet Semi-Annual or Annual reporting requirements.

### **Time Limits**

An aided adult (parent or caretaker relative) can only receive 60 months (5 years) of CalWORKs assistance with exceptions.

- The 60-month count includes months in which aid was received from other states (after 1/1/98). The months do not need to be consecutive.
- Months in which aid was received prior to January 1, 1998, are not counted.

### **Additional Benefits**

- A special need allowance may be allowed for diets, transportation, etc.
- A special non-recurring allowance may be given to replace clothing and household equipment if the loss was due to a sudden and unusual circumstance (fire, flood, earthquake, etc.).
- A variety of Homeless Assistance Programs are available.
- A Diversion payment may be available for applicants who need help to meet a one-time-only expense that prevents current employment or who are likely to find employment in a short period.
- Child Care and other supportive services are available for Welfare-to-Work participants.

### **CalWORKs Payment Standards**

CalWORKs MAP levels effective October 1, 2024

Family Size	Current MAP (Exempt)*	Current MAP (Non-Exempt)
1	\$809	\$734
2	\$1,039	\$930
3	\$1,314	\$1,175
4	\$1,579	\$1,416
5	\$1,850	\$1,659
6	\$2,123	\$1,902
7	\$2,395	\$2,145
8	\$2,669	\$2,389
9	\$2,939	\$2,631
10 or more	\$3,215	\$2,876

*\* To receive the MAP (higher) exemption the family must have an eligible child and each adult relative caretaker must receive one of the following benefits: Supplemental Security Income, In-Home Supportive Services, Security Disability Insurance, Temporary Workers' Compensation, Temporary Disability, or is a non-needy/non-parent caretaker relative.*

## **How to Apply for CalWORKs Benefits**

An application may be submitted via:

- Online - BenefitsCal website at <https://benefitscal.com/>;
- Phone – Call (866) 613-3777; or
- In Person – Visit the [DPSS website](#) to find the nearest office. You may speak to an Eligibility Worker or place your application in the drop box.

**For detailed information, visit the DPSS website at <https://dps.lacounty.gov>**