

County Executive  
David Villanueva

Governmental Relations and  
Legislative Officer  
Elisia De Bord



## County of Sacramento

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April 9, 2025

Honorable Dr. Akilah Weber Pierson, Chair  
Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3  
1021 O Street, Suite 7310  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Dr. Corey A. Jackson  
Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2  
1021 O Street, Suite 6120  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs):  
County Administrative Funding

Chair Dr. Akilah Weber Pierson and Chair Dr. Corey A. Jackson:

The County of Sacramento respectfully requests your support for an investment of one-time \$245 million total funds in Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-2026 and updates to the CalWORKs Single Allocation eligibility administration budget methodology effective FY 2026-27 for county administration of the CalWORKs program to address the underfunded CalWORKs program operations. This funding and the update to the budget methodology are essential to ensure that families receive the support and services through the CalWORKs program. This investment helps families overcome employment barriers, paving the way for long-term stability and well-being.

The CalWORKs program is one of the few tools our state has to stabilize families and prevent generational harm caused by poverty. The CalWORKs program is a national model with an emphasis on supporting families in deep poverty and providing beneficiaries with lasting benefits. County human services agencies, like Sacramento County's Department of Human Assistance, are at the frontline of this work on behalf of the state. Unfortunately, **the state's** Single Allocation, the funding that counties use for eligibility determinations as well as employment services, is underfunded, specifically in the eligibility component. This has forced counties to redirect funding from employment services to backfill eligibility activities each year for the last four years. In the most recent fiscal year, FY 2023-24, counties overspent eligibility funding by \$245 million, which resulted in the redirection of 20-percent of total employment services funding to cover for the overspending in eligibility. Had the eligibility allocation been fully funded, these employment services funds could have been used instead to enhance our employment services case management capacity, increase availability of supportive services, or provide more frequent contacts with our clients with the most complex needs.

The **Administration's** assessment in FY 2023-24, as required by the 2022 Budget Act, exemplified shortcomings in the existing methodology for eligibility funding, which

was last updated in 2018-19. This work revealed an additional \$210 million is needed to fully fund counties for the workload associated with the full volume of applications and to update for more real-time worker costs. This inadequate funding has significant ramifications and hampers **counties' ability to help** families obtain and maintain employment through services (such as job preparation activities), training programs (such as certificate and credential programs), and supportive services (such as childcare and transportation)—services and supports that counties are aiming to maximize, enhance, and scale to lift families and children out of poverty. Ultimately, the underfunding for eligibility administration needs to be addressed so counties have the resources to maximize employment services funding to continue shifting from a punitive, compliance-based program to one that is rooted in a trauma-informed framework for alleviating poverty.

Sacramento County strongly believes that fully funding counties for eligibility administration is essential to ensure families receive timely benefits that meet their basic needs. This funding would allow us to fill vacant positions, hire additional workers, and expedite services for eligible recipients. Updates to the CalWORKs Single Allocation eligibility administration budget methodology is vital for our most vulnerable populations. Adequate funding is necessary for counties to assess family needs, provide supportive services, offer job-related assistance, and manage cases effectively. It also supports our ability to process CalWORKs applications, redetermine eligibility, and maintain cases. This investment will help sustain years of progress in transforming the CalWORKs program from a compliance-driven system to one focused on family support and stabilization—key elements in helping families achieve self-sufficiency. Counties are already underfunded for state and federally mandated eligibility work due to prior budget reductions. If the Single Allocation methodology is not updated, counties will be forced to redirect welfare-to-work funds and other resources, limiting their ability to provide services and re-engage clients under the CalWORKs 2.0 framework. Additionally, this proposed investment will enhance the **state's ability to** continue to participate in the revised Temporary Assistance for Needy Families alternative federal pilot program, should it be selected.

This would also allow the County to maximize our employment services funding, enhancing our capacity to provide a broader range of employment and supportive services to families. With adequate funding, we can expand the array of services offered, including job training, placement assistance, job retention and career counseling, and mental health services, ensuring that families have the resources they need to secure stable employment and achieve long-term self-sufficiency. Moreover, this investment would enable us to provide adequate staffing levels to meet the increasing demand for services. By hiring additional staff, we can ensure that families receive timely and personalized assistance, helping them navigate the employment process and access support systems that are tailored to their individual needs. Maximizing employment services funding will not only improve the overall efficiency of our services and help bridge the gap between families and meaningful employment opportunities, employment retention and promote economic stability and upward mobility for those in need.

This investment would allow us to continue to support and enhance critical ancillary services that support the full transition of clients from dependency on welfare to

April 9, 2025

-3-

economic independence. These services include childcare assistance, transportation support, and help with obtaining job certifications or licenses, all of which are often essential for clients seeking and maintaining employment. By addressing these key barriers, we ensure that clients can actively pursue and maintain stable jobs without worrying about the challenges of balancing family responsibilities, commuting, or lacking the necessary qualifications. Ancillary and transitional services are key to ensuring that families do not just find employment, but can sustain it, helping them achieve long-term stability and move away from welfare dependence. This holistic approach is crucial in breaking the cycle of poverty and creating a pathway to self-sufficiency for vulnerable families.

It is critical to provide counties with a one-time funding patch and adopt an updated Single Allocation eligibility administration methodology so that counties can better **serve families in need of and entitled to CalWORKs without jeopardizing counties'** ability to help families overcome barriers of employment. Counties must effectively continue to cultivate and demonstrate a family-centered CalWORKs program. For these reasons, Sacramento County urges your support.

Sincerely,



Elisia De Bord

Governmental Relations and Legislative Officer

cc: Members, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3  
Members, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2  
Sacramento County Delegation  
Sacramento County Board of Supervisors  
Audrey Ratajczak, Cruz Strategies