

County Executive
David Villanueva

Governmental Relations and
Legislative Officer
Elisia De Bord



County of Sacramento

Board of Supervisors
Phillip R. Serna, District 1
Patrick Kennedy, District 2
Rich Desmond, District 3
Rosario Rodriguez, District 4
Patrick Hume, District 5

May 30, 2025

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel, Chair
Assembly Committee on Budget
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Scott Wiener, Chair
Senate Committee on Budget & Fiscal
Review
1020 N Street, Room 502
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Dr. Corey Jackson, Chair
Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2
1021 O Street, Room 6120
Sacramento, CA 95814

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

Re: California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs):
Rightsized County Administrative Funding for the CalWORKs Program

Dear Chairs Gabriel, Wiener, Jackson, and Weber Pierson:

On behalf of the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, I respectfully request your support for a CalWORKs Single Allocation state-wide investment to continue services to families experiencing poverty. Specifically:

- A one-time investment of \$245 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 to address immediate funding shortfalls, and
- An updated, sustainable administrative budget methodology starting FY 2026-27 that reflects the true cost of delivering services.

Why This Matters

Sacramento County serves 22,675 CalWORKs families on behalf of the state. The CalWORKs program is one of California's most powerful tools to stabilize families, reduce poverty, and prevent generational harm. More than just a safety-net, this program helps parents build pathways to stability by offering employment and educational services, training, and support services.

The Challenge: Chronic Underfunding

The CalWORKs Single Allocation, largely comprised of two major components: 1) the Eligibility component, which supports processing of CalWORKs applications, redetermine eligibility, and case maintenance including urgent benefits like homeless

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assistance; and 2) the Employment Services component which provide services and supports to clients in Welfare-to-Work activities, case management, and job-related supports, is woefully 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. Early data suggests we are on track to overspend again in FY 2024-25.

The last update to the funding methodology was in FY 2018-2019, but since then the eligibility component has remained chronically underfunded. It does not reflect the actual costs associated with helping our CalWORKs applicants and recipients. In fact, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) findings confirmed a substantial funding shortfall (approximately \$239.5 million total funds in FY 2025-26) just to keep up with actual workload and staffing needs.

Real Impacts on Families

Counties continue to do this intensive and complex work trying to meet federal and state mandates despite resource constraints, but inadequate funding puts timely delivery of basic needs at risk for families living in deep poverty. When counties are underfunded, families pay the price through delays in accessing benefits or reductions in employment support. In our county, we believe fully funding counties for eligibility administration is essential to ensure that families receive timely benefits that meet their basic needs. This would allow us to fill 73 vacant positions, hire additional workers, and expedite services for eligible recipients.

This would also allow us to protect and maximize our employment services funding, enhance employment services capacity and expand the array of employment services offered, including job training, placement assistance, job retention and career counseling, ensuring that families have the resources they need to secure stable employment and achieve long-term self-sufficiency. Maximizing employment services funding will improve the overall efficiency of our services and help bridge the gap between families and meaningful employment opportunities, employment retention and ultimately promote economic stability and upward mobility for those in need.

This funding supports employment services and vital wraparound programs like Family Stabilization, which offers housing assistance, counseling, and crisis support for families experiencing domestic violence or homelessness. These services are essential for creating a safe and stable foundation from which individuals can pursue economic self-sufficiency.

Continued funding enables the delivery of critical support services that facilitate the transition from welfare to workforce readiness. Services such as childcare assistance, transportation aid, and job certification help remove common barriers that prevent individuals from securing and sustaining employment. This holistic approach is crucial

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in breaking the cycle of poverty and creating a pathway to self-sufficiency for vulnerable families.

A Call for Support

We recognize California's current fiscal challenges and remain committed to working collaboratively with the Administration and Legislature to find balanced, responsible solutions. Even incremental investments would make a meaningful difference in preventing further erosion of services.

By approving a one-time bridge investment and updating the eligibility funding methodology, the state can ensure counties have the tools needed to deliver timely, family-centered services that lift families out of poverty and set them on a path toward lasting stability.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me at (916) 874-4627 or deborde@saccounty.gov.

Sincerely,



Elisia De Bord

Governmental Relations and Legislative Officer

cc: Members and Staff of the Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3
 Members and Staff of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2
 Staff of Senate Committee on Budget & Fiscal Review
 Staff of Assembly Committee on Budget
 Sacramento County Delegation
 Sacramento County Board of Supervisors
 Audrey Ratajczak, Cruz Strategies
 County Welfare Directors' Association