

Date of Hearing: March 17, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Mike Fong, Chair

AB 1829 (Fong) – As Introduced February 11, 2026

[Note: This bill is double referred to the Assembly Committee on Human Services, where the Committee will hear it as it relates to issues under its jurisdiction.]

SUBJECT: Community colleges: CalWORKs Recipients Education Program: services

SUMMARY: Permits California Community Colleges (CCC) to use existing California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Education (CalWORKs) funds, to provide community college students, who receive CalWORKs, with direct aid for basic needs supports and permits CCC to waive employer contribution for workstudy if the number of workstudy positions do not decrease. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Clarifies the recipients of CalWORKs special services provided by the CC will be participants in the CalWORKs program and the services provided will assist the recipients achieve economic mobility.
- 2) Expands the special services, the CCC are authorized to use the CalWORKs funding to provide, to include direct aid to meet the ongoing basic needs services and supports of CalWORKs recipients. The basic needs services and supports include housing, food, clothing, feminine hygiene, diapers, technology, childcare services and resources, and mental health services and resources.
- 3) Authorizes a CCC, who provides a workstudy program with CalWORKs funding, to waive the requirement that an employer pays for 25% of the wages provided to the workstudy participant. Stipulates the waiver for the employer not to pay the 25% wage coverage is only permitted if the number of workstudy positions offered does not decrease.
- 4) Makes various clarifying and technical changes.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes within the CCC system the CalWORKs Recipients Education Program (CalWORKs education program) (Education Code (EDC) Section 79200).
- 2) States it is the intent of the Legislature that the services provided by CalWORKs education program are to assist CalWORKs recipients prepare for employment (EDC Section 79201).
- 3) Authorizes, pursuant to budget allocation, for 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 Section 79202).
- 4) 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 (ESL) courses into vocational courses;
 - d) To expand the use of telecommunications within CalWORKs courses (EDC Section 79203).
- 5) In addition to the funds provided to CCC for CalWORKs curriculum, additional funds may be provided to the CCC to provide special services to CalWORKs recipients. If funding is provided, services are to be provided to either existing CalWORKs recipients or those who have received CalWORKs. Past recipients of CalWORKs are only eligible for the special services for two years past their eligibility and only if there is funding after existing CalWORKs recipients are provided services. Funds provided for special services may only be used to supplement and not supplant others services provided for CalWORKs recipients attending the CCC. Authorizes the Chancellor of the CCC to develop an equitable method based on the number of CalWORKs recipients in each district for the allocation of funds to each CCC and authorizes the funds to be used for the following purposes: job placement, coordination with county welfare offices, child care and workstudy, instruction, postemployment skills training and related skills training, campus-based case management, counseling, and academic supports (EDC Section 79204).
- 6) A CCC may utilize the funding for CalWORKs special services to provide a CalWORKs recipient childcare services but only through campus-based centers or through parental choice vouchers, as defined. The childcare provided 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 program, and up to three months thereafter, or until the end of the academic year, whichever is a longer time period (EDC Section 79205 subdivision a and b).
- 7) Permits the funds allocated to a CCC to be used for workstudy, specifically to provide payments to employers that are currently participating in campus-based workstudy programs

or are providing work experience that is directly related to the educational programs and work participation requirements affiliated with CalWORKs. The payments shall not exceed 75% of the wage for the workstudy position and if the employers receive funds from the CCC, they are required to pay at least 25% of the wage for the workstudy position. The funds used for workstudy may only be expended if the CalWORKs recipient's total hours of education, employment, and workstudy meet the CalWORKs requirements as defined (EDC Section 79205, subdivision (c)).

- 8) Permits the funds allocated to CCC for special services for CalWORKs recipients to be used for additional credit or noncredit courses for CalWORKs recipients if it is determined by the Chancellor of the CCC that additional instructional services are necessary to meet the enrollment demands of CalWORKs recipients. Provides a method for determining if additional instructional courses are required and requires the Chancellor of the CCC to provide a report to the Legislature and Department of Finance each year by February 15 if the funds are used for additional noncredit coursework (EDC Section 79206).
- 9) Establishes a reporting requirement for CCC who receive and expend CalWORKs funds for special services for CalWORKs recipients. The CCC must report to the Chancellor of the CCC by the fourth week following the end of the winter semester or quarter. The report will also be submitted by the Chancellor of CCC to the Legislature, Governor, the Legislative Analyst, the Department of Finance, and the State Department of Social Services (CDSS). The report must include the following information:
 - a) How the moneys received were used by the CCC;
 - b) The number of hours of childcare provided;
 - c) The average monthly enrollment of CalWORKs recipient dependents served in childcare;
 - d) The number of workstudy hours provided;
 - e) The hourly salaries and type of jobs in which CalWORKs recipients were placed;
 - f) The number of students receiving case management;
 - g) The student participation rates, and other outcome data (EDC Section 79207).
- 10) Stipulates the first priority of funds provided to the CCC for special services to CalWORKs recipients must be expended for current recipients. If additional money remains, the Chancellor of the CCC shall consult with CDSS and expend the remaining funds on providing postemployment services to former CalWORKs recipients. Prior to using the funds for postemployment services, the Chancellor of the CCC will secure approval from the Department of Finance, provide a rationale for the allocation of funds for post-employment services, and complete a cumulative report on the outcomes, activities, and cost effectiveness of the program no later than February 15 of each year. Funds which are permitted to be used for postemployment services are to be used for former CalWORKs recipients who have been off cash assistance for less than two years to help them in upgrading skills and career advancement. The postemployment services provided will be the following: direct instruction that cannot be funded by any other means, childcare to support attendance to class, job

development and placement services, and career counseling and assessment activities that cannot be funded through other means (EDC Section 79208).

- 11) Permits the Chancellor of the CCC to authorize the funds provided for childcare to be used for other special services for CalWORKs recipients. Funds allocated for special services shall be budgeted to meet the state's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (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 Section 79209).
- 12) A recipient of CalWORKs is required to participate in welfare-to-work activities for a specified allotted time each week. The time requirements are as follows:
 - a) 20 hours per week if the recipient has a child under the age of six 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 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 if both parents in a two adult household may contribute 35 hours (Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 11322.8).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown.

COMMENTS: *Author's Statement.* As stated by the author, "many student parents are forced to choose between meeting their family basic needs and pursuing their academic goals. Often, these students face significant barriers, including the rising cost of necessities, childcare responsibilities, and limited employment opportunities. AB 1829 provides community colleges with greater flexibility to support CalWORKs REP students financially, academically, and professionally."

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Every year as part of the annual Federal Budget Act, the Federal Government provides a fixed block grant to states, territories, and Washington, DC for the purposes of funding the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. TANF was established in 1996 and was part of a larger welfare reform effort proposed by President Bill Clinton. In 2024, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families Office of Family Assistance, reported \$16.9 billion in funds had been allocated to states and territories for the purpose of fostering economic security and providing stability for families with children who are considered low income.¹ Each state is provided funds in the form of a block grant and is then authorized to provide monthly cash assistance to qualifying families with children. To qualify for the federal funding the State must also provide state funding for services that align with the federal program's overarching goals:

¹ <https://acf.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ofa/fy-2024-tanf-moe-financial-data.xlsx>

- 1) Provide stability for children to remain in their nuclear family “home” by providing assistance to the family unit;
- 2) Promote job attainment, work attainment, and marriage in order to end the dependence upon government benefits;
- 3) Reduce the incidences of out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and,
- 4) Encourage the formation and strengthen the continuation of two-parent families.¹

California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs). In California, the TANF program is known as CalWORKs. CalWORKs was created in 1997 to provide California with the ability to administer the newly created TANF program. Just like CalFresh, CalWORKs is administered by county welfare departments and overseen by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). According to the Legislative Analyst Office, California receives \$3.7 billion in TANF funds of which over \$2 billion is given to CalWORKs.² In order to remain eligible to receive TANF funds, the State must provide additional state funding for services for CalWORKs recipients; which is known as the Maintenance-of-Effort (MOE).² Including the MOE, the state spends roughly \$7.1 billion to provide services for CalWORKs recipients.

To qualify for CalWORKs, a person must meet the age, income, and citizenship requirements. Technically, both adult caretakers (parents or guardians) and a child may be eligible for CalWORKs if either or both meet the criteria.

Age	Income	Citizenship
Adult – must have or take care of a child who is 18 years or under.	Family total income must not exceed the minimum basic standard of care. Some examples of income eligibility include: Family of 2: \$1,343 per month; Family of 3 \$1,664 per month; Family of 4 1,343 per month. The income requirement is updated each year. ³	U.S Citizens
Adult – if they do not currently have a child, they must be pregnant.		Qualified Immigrants, including: Refugees, Asylees, certain Afghan and Ukrainian nationals, survivors of trafficking, domestic violence, and survivors of certain crimes may be eligible.
Child Under 18 – pregnant OR have a parent who is unemployed, disabled, absent, or deceased; if the child is school-aged they must be attending school.		If an immigrant is known to the U.S. Immigration authorities and is considered a “Permanently Residing Under Color of Law” and therefore at lower risk of deportation, they may be eligible.
Child Under 6 – must have all standard immunizations. ⁴		Children, born in the U.S., to a non-citizen parents qualify. ⁴

² <https://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/5086/2>

³ <https://ha.saccounty.gov/benefits/CalWORKs/Documents/CalWORKs%20Fact%20Sheet%20Jan%202024.pdf>

Despite meeting the above qualifications, a person may still be deemed ineligible for CalWORKs. The most common cases for ineligibility are as follows: 1) exceeding the time limit for aid for adults, currently five years of cash assistance; 2) being sanctioned for not meeting some of the programs requirements after receiving cash assistance; and, 3) receiving Supplemental Social Security Income benefits.²

CalWORKs Recipients Education Program. The CCC is an equal access institute and accepts 100% of all applicants regardless of previous academic experience. In their ongoing effort to help all students achieve their educational and career goals, the CCC offers a myriad of support services and programs to assist students matriculate to degree. One of these programs is the CalWORKs Recipients Education Program (CalWORKs Education Program).

Established in 1997 as part of the national “welfare reform” efforts, CalWORKs Education Program enables CCC to provide additional services to CalWORKs recipients who are also enrolled in CCC coursework. Every year, the Chancellor’s Office of the CCC is required by law to provide a report on the services and benefits of the CalWORKs Education Program. The most recently available report provides data from 2023-2024. The CalWORKs Education Program provides funding to the CCC for two purposes: 1) to help CalWORKs recipients with vital services to assist them find employment, and 2) to develop curriculum specifically to help CalWORKs recipients obtain the skills necessary for job attainment. Services include workstudy, childcare, job development and placement, and case management and counseling. In the 2025-2026 budget year, the CCC received \$8 million in TANF funds and \$56.922 million in Proposition 98 funds for services provided as part of the CalWORKs Education Program.⁵ The below table from the CCC report on CalWORKs funds demonstrates how the funds were used in 2023-2024:⁶

Table 1. CalWORKs Spending by Category

Category	2023-2024
Coordination	\$40,632,412
Work Study	\$6,701,748
Childcare	\$351,563
Job Development	\$5,679,863
Other Direct Student Support	\$4,718,602
Total	\$58,084,188

In 2023-2024, the CCC provided support services to 22,979 CalWORKs students and provided the following services:

- 69 received childcare through on-campus services;

⁴ <https://www.ilrc.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/CA%20Public%20Benefits%20for%20Noncitizens%20.pdf> and <https://www.calworks.org/eligibility-process>

⁵ <https://ebudget.ca.gov/2025-26/pdf/Enacted/GovernorsBudget/6000/6870.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.cccco.edu/-/media/CCCCO-Website/docs/report/2023-24-calworks-report-all.pdf?la=en&hash=F6394342209162A1F85DDD87E453931E7FE05BD0>

- 1,197 received childcare through off-campus services; and,
- 1,222 participated in workstudy.⁶

AB 1829 (M. Fong) seeks to add to the type of services CCC may offer to CalWORKs students, the provision of monetary aid for basic needs and to remove the requirement that all employers who provide workstudy opportunities are required to fund at least 25% of the wage provided to the student. According to the Legislative Analyst Office, the CalWORKs student services program has received a cost-of-living adjustment every year since 2020-2021 in the annual State Budget Act; whereas, Student Basic Needs Centers have only received a cost-of-living adjustment once.⁷ In a time of fiscal uncertainty at both the State and Federal level, it is imperative for California to look at existing programs and expand, where possible, the use of the funds to best serve and support students. AB 1829 (M. Fong) is a reasonable measure that seeks to expand an existing program to include basic needs services to those students who are most in need. The measure would also provide a cost-break to employers who wish to provide students work experience without incurring the cost providing a wage to the student for services rendered through the CalWORKs workstudy.

Arguments in support. As the sponsors of the measure, the Chancellor's Office of the CCC supports the measure as, "the bill removes outdated restrictions that limit the use of program resources and clarifies that colleges may expand access to program supports and activities that help students succeed academically and enter the workforce. These changes will allow colleges to more effectively provide educational supports, strengthen coordination with county partners, and expand experiential and work-based learning opportunities for CalWORKs participants. By modernizing the statutory framework for the CalWORKs Education Program, AB 1829 will help colleges direct resources where they are most needed and ensure low-income parenting students have access to the services and experiences that support college completion and long-term economic mobility."

Proposed amendments. To provide absolute clarity that the waiving of the existing requirement for the employers contribution to a student's wage does not reduce on-campus workstudy programs, the Committee has suggested and the Author has accepted the following amendment:

1) Adds Education Code Section 79205 subdivision (d) to read as follows:

(d) Programs may waive the 25 percent employer contribution required by subdivision (c) if the number of ~~workstudy~~ on – and – off campus positions will not decrease.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Allan Hancock College
California Community Colleges, Chancellor's Office
College of Marin Eops
Feather River Community College District
Riverside Community College District

⁷ <https://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/5150>

Santa Barbara City College
West Los Angeles College

Opposition

None on file.

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