



## CalWORKs including Welfare-to-Work

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### What is CalWORKs?

The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program is the name of California's Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program (TANF). It is cash assistance paired with work supports to help a family move toward self-sufficiency. CalWORKs participants also receive Medi-Cal (health care coverage).

### Who can receive CalWORKs?

The CalWORKs program is for low income families with minor children in the home or pregnant women.

- There are restrictive income limits at time of initial application. Once a person becomes a recipient, the income rules change to allow families to build up to self-sufficiency.
- Both one and two parent families can apply.
- A caretaker relative can apply for children in their care, for example, a grandmother can apply for the grandchild they are caring for in their home. The caretaker can be "needy," requesting cash assistance for themselves as well as the child, or "non-needy," requesting support solely for the child in the home.

### The Process

Families can apply in person, online at [BenefitsCal.com](http://BenefitsCal.com), or by mail or fax using specific forms. The application forms are available at DHHS offices, some community partner offices or on the State website. All applicants are scheduled for a three to four hour in-person intake interview.

- The interview covers household composition, recent and current income and resources, work history, and barriers to work and self-sufficiency.
- All parents in the home must attend the interview.
- Coming to the appointment without children is encouraged as the interview is long and touches on subjects parents may not want to discuss in front of their child.

Applications are determined within 45 days. Once eligibility is determined a notice of action (NOA) is mailed to the family showing whether the application is approved or denied. The approval NOA outlines the benefit amount and how to access benefits. The denial NOA explains why the application was denied and how to appeal the decision.

What about CalFresh (nutrition assistance) and Medi-Cal? Many families who apply for CalWORKs may already be receiving these benefits. If not, the worker will ensure that the intake interview covers access to these programs.

### What is Welfare-to-Work?

Welfare-to-Work (WTW) is the CalWORKs program that provides intensive, robust supports for a parent to work toward self-sufficiency. CalWORKs cash assistance is intended to be temporary. The goal is for the parent to get a job that provides financial and personal rewards. The purpose of WTW is to help the family become self-sufficient so that the family can enjoy security and a better way of life. WTW can provide assistance with child care, transportation (bus tickets or money for gas), and help with work or training-related needs (text books or uniforms, for example) while the individual is participating in WTW.

## What is the basic Welfare-to-Work requirement?

CalWORKs families must participate in WTW unless they are exempt.

- One parent with a child under 6 must participate 20 hours per week or more
- One parent must participate 30 hours per week or more
- Two parents in the home must participate a combined 35 hours per week or more

## Is Work Possible?

Case workers work with parents to remove obstacles that prevent them from working. For some, barriers to work may seem daunting, while the benefits of work seem far off. The case worker works with each individual parent or caretaker. Everyone is different.

## Work Experience Placements and Opportunities

There are additional resources and information available to organizations that would like to host a CalWORKs customer as a Work Experience Trainee. The organization commits to supervision and support to help the individual thrive in the workplace. Interested parties should call 707-268-3400.

## Behavioral Health Barriers

Sometimes a person has been out of the workforce due to drug or alcohol issues, domestic abuse, mental health issues, or other issues that affect behavioral health. Getting treatment and working on a plan to address those issues may be a parent's WTW activities. Parents need to be physically and mentally well to find employment. WTW can link and work with Behavioral Health providers to address behavioral health issues while participating in WTW.

## Additional Services

CalWORKs has special programs available in addition to Welfare-to-Work.

Cal-Learn helps pregnant and parenting teens who receive CalWORKs complete high school, become independent, and form healthy families.

Family Stabilization (FS) provides intensive case management and services to families to ensure a basic level of stability within a family prior to, or concurrently with, participation in WTW. CalWORKs families are eligible to participate in FS when the family is experiencing an identified situation and/or crisis that is destabilizing.

Linkages provides coordination of services for CalWORKs families with open Child Welfare Services (CWS) cases, if a parent is participating in WTW. CWS Social Workers and CalWORKs staff work closely together to ensure that CWS and CW plans for the family align to resolve issues of neglect or abuse.

The Housing Support Program (HSP) addresses one of Humboldt's greatest challenges for families: finding and keeping a home. HSP works with CalWORKs families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to get into and remain in safe, affordable housing.

## The Home Visiting Program (HVP)

Supports positive health, development and well-being outcomes for pregnant and parenting women, families and infants through connection with Nurse-Family Partnership home visiting program services.