

SENATE THIRD READING  
SB 1083 (Skinner)  
As Amended August 25, 2022  
Majority vote

## SUMMARY

Makes various changes to the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) homeless assistance (HA) program, including extending CalWORKs HA to families facing eviction, expanding the definition of perpetrator of domestic violence for the purposes of HA to include a roommate, and allowing a family who is receiving CalWORKs HA benefits to remain eligible for HA following termination of CalWORKs participation due income ineligibility.

### Major Provisions

- 1) Deletes the provision that CalWORKs aid be paid to a pregnant person who is 18 years of age or younger only when the Cal-Learn program is operative.
- 2) Requires a county human services agency to refer all recipients of CalWORKs aid who are pregnant to perinatal home visiting services administered by the county public health department, county human services agency, or applicable county home visiting provider.
- 3) Provides, starting July 1, 2024, that a family is considered homeless if they receive any notice that could lead to an eviction, as specified.
- 4) Specifies that a roommate is included amongst individuals with whom a participant was living who was the perpetrator of domestic violence.
- 5) Provides that a family receiving CalWORKs HA shall remain eligible for CalWORKs HA following termination of their participation in the CalWORKs program due to reporting income that makes the family ineligible for aid, provided that they would otherwise, if not for being determined over-income, be eligible for the assistance and are working with the county housing navigator caseworker to secure permanent housing.
- 6) Authorizes a county, starting October 1, 2023, to require the participation in a homelessness avoidance case plan if the county has also provided a housing navigation caseworkers who can assist with securing permanent housing and housing case management services.
- 7) Specifies that payments to providers for temporary shelter and permanent housing and utilities should be made on behalf of families requesting these payments except when an alternative payment methodology is deemed by the county human services agency to be more appropriate or more easily expedited.
- 8) Add provisions from AB 2230 (Gipson) of the current legislative session to avoid chaptering out conflicts.
- 9) Make technical and conforming changes.

**COMMENTS**

*CalWORKs Homeless Assistance Program:* During one night in 2019 there were over 8,000 homeless families and over 13,000 homeless children in California. The short- and long-term effects of homelessness on children are well-documented. Studies have shown that housing instability and experiencing homelessness can contribute to physical, cognitive, and developmental issues; higher rates of mental, emotional, and behavioral impairments; lowered academic achievement; increases in stress and depression; and, overall poor mental health. For families, homelessness is a pervasive, multifaceted problem that can be a barrier to self-sufficiency and affect health and economic opportunities.

There is no statewide data available on homeless CalWORKs families; however, in fiscal year 2019-20, 52,258 families received temporary homeless assistance and 5,961 families received permanent homeless assistance, for a total of 58,219 families served through CalWORKs Homeless Assistance. The Homeless Assistance Programs was established to help CalWORKs families meet the reasonable costs of securing housing. The program serves eligible CalWORKs recipients or apparently eligible CalWORKs applicants, who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. A CalWORKs family is considered homeless for purposes of receiving homeless assistance if the family:

- 1) Lacks a fixed and regular nighttime residence;
- 2) Has a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations;
- 3) Is residing in a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; or,
- 4) Has received a notice to pay rent or quit. The family is required to demonstrate that the eviction is the result of a verified financial hardship as a result of extraordinary circumstances beyond their control, and not other lease or rental violations, and that the family is experiencing a financial crisis that may result in homelessness if preventive assistance is not provided.

The CalWORKs Homeless Assistance Program offers two types of assistance: temporary shelter assistance and permanent housing assistance. Both temporary and permanent homeless assistance payments are limited to once every 12 months with the exceptions of homelessness due to domestic violence, uninhabitability of the former residence caused by sudden or unusual circumstances, or a medically verified physical or mental illness.

Temporary shelter assistance helps families pay the costs of temporary shelter and is available to families for up to 16 calendar days within a 12-month period. Temporary shelter assistance for a family of up to four people is set at \$85 per day, plus \$15 a day for each additional family member. The maximum amount of temporary shelter assistance any family can receive is \$145 per day. Temporary homeless benefits are granted or denied the same day as a family's application for homeless assistance and, if granted, the benefits are made available for up to three working days. After homelessness has been verified, the three-day limit can be extended, in one-week increments, up to a total of 16 calendar days of assistance. The extension(s) are based on documentation of a housing search.

Permanent housing assistance helps families secure or maintain permanent housing and helps families avoid eviction. Permanent housing assistance can be received once every 12 months and can be used to pay security deposits and last month's rent or two months arrearages to prevent eviction.

A family is eligible for temporary and permanent homeless assistance if the homelessness is a direct result of domestic violence by a spouse, partner, or roommate. The homelessness assistance payments based on these circumstances are limited to two periods of up to 16 cumulative calendar days of temporary assistance and two payments of permanent assistance. A CalWORKS applicant who is fleeing their abuser is deemed to be homeless and eligible for temporary homeless assistance; benefits granted under these circumstances are made available in increments of 16 days.

*Need for this bill:* Increasing cost of living and the need to streamline administrative processes for the homeless assistance program have prompted changes to the Homeless Assistance Program in recent years. This bill modifies several requirements for obtaining and extending homeless assistance in order to make program assistance more attainable to low-income families facing homelessness including: extending CalWORKs HA to families facing eviction and allowing a family who is receiving HA benefits to remain eligible for HA even if they are no longer eligible for CalWORKs due to exceeding income limits.

#### **According to the Author**

"Among California's large unhoused population, there is an alarming and rising number of families with children. While state funding to expand permanent housing for our unhoused has greatly increased, the transition to a new permanent home can take many months.

"By expediting access to temporary hotel vouchers for unhoused families and pregnant people and lengthening the time period a hotel voucher can be used, [this bill] will help children stay in school, help parents maintain employment and prevent unhoused families from falling through the cracks."

#### **Arguments in Support**

A supporter of a previous version of this bill, Children Now, state that, "[This bill] seeks to ensure that county human services agencies are making prompt referrals for individuals eligible for home visiting programs whether they are administered by themselves, their county public health agency or applicable county home visiting provider. Timely referrals will assist with growing the program to return to and exceeding pre-pandemic numbers in addition to the added benefits provided by the program to participating CalWORKs recipients."

#### **Arguments in Opposition**

None on file

### **FISCAL COMMENTS**

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee on August 11, 2022, this bill has:

- 1) Estimated ongoing General Fund (GF) costs of approximately \$97 million annually for increased HA program assistance for pregnant persons. These additional costs are not provided for in the state budget.

- 2) Estimated one-time costs of \$500,000 (GF) for automation changes to the California Statewide Automated Welfare Systems (CalSAWS).
- 3) Estimated ongoing costs to counties of an unknown, but potentially significant, amount to accommodate administrative workload due to the HA program expansions and associated caseload increases. These costs are potentially reimbursable by the state subject to a determination by the Commission on State Mandates.

## VOTES

### SENATE FLOOR: 39-0-1

**YES:** Allen, Archuleta, Atkins, Bates, Becker, Borgeas, Bradford, Caballero, Cortese, Dahle, Dodd, Durazo, Eggman, Glazer, Gonzalez, Grove, Hueso, Hurtado, Jones, Kamlager, Laird, Leyva, Limón, McGuire, Melendez, Min, Newman, Nielsen, Ochoa Bogh, Pan, Portantino, Roth, Rubio, Skinner, Stern, Umberg, Wieckowski, Wiener, Wilk

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Hertzberg

### ASM HUMAN SERVICES: 7-0-1

**YES:** Calderon, Davies, Arambula, Mia Bonta, Bryan, Stone, Villapudua

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Waldron

### ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 12-0-4

**YES:** Holden, Bryan, Calderon, Arambula, Mike Fong, Gabriel, Eduardo Garcia, Levine, Quirk, Robert Rivas, Akilah Weber, McCarty

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Bigelow, Megan Dahle, Davies, Fong

## UPDATED

VERSION: August 25, 2022

CONSULTANT: Emmalynn Mathis / HUM. S. / (916) 319-2089

FN: 0004291