

CALWORKS FACT SHEET

WHAT IS CALWORKS?

The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program offers temporary cash aid, employment services and health insurance to eligible California families who have children under age 19.

CALWORKS BENEFITS

CalWORKs provides several benefits to families, including:

- Temporary cash aid (EBT card or direct deposit)
- Welfare-to-Work services to help families become self-sufficient, including:
 - Child care
 - Substance abuse and mental health services
 - Transportation reimbursement
 - Job training
 - Educational assistance
 - Diapers
- Medi-Cal health insurance
- CalFresh (formerly Food Stamps), if eligible

WELFARE-TO-WORK (WTW) REQUIREMENTS

CalWORKs recipients are required to work or participate in work-related activities for 20-35 hours per week.

If the CalWORKs recipient is a single parent with a child under 6, the individual is required to work or participate for a total of 20 hours per week. Single parents of older children are required to work or participate for 30 hours per week.

In a two-parent family, adult CalWORKs recipients are required to work or participate for a minimum of 35 hours per week. The 35-hour requirement is a combined hourly requirement for both parents.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The application for CalWORKs includes completion of forms and an interview with a Benefits Representative. Aid cannot begin until all conditions of eligibility have been verified. As an applicant, you must:

- Provide a picture identification and social security number
- Verify citizenship, or show proof of legal immigration status
- Verify income and property
- Apply for potentially available income, such as unemployment benefits
- Sign an agreement to cooperate with Child Support Services, to locate absent parents, establish paternity and obtain child support
- Agree to participate in the Welfare-to-Work (WTW) Program, if required

Immediate Need payments may be made for families with emergency situations while the CalWORKs application is being processed (maximum of \$200).

CALWORKS PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

After you submit your application, you will be given an appointment to meet with a Benefits Representative. If you are in a two-parent household, both parents must be present at the appointment and sign the application. Basic eligibility factors for children and needy parents or caretaker relatives include:

Deprivation: Children who will be aided must be deprived of parental support or care because at least one parent is:

- Deceased, or
- Physically or mentally incapacitated, or
- Continually absent from the home, or
- For two-parent families, if the parent who earned the most in the past 24 months is not working, or working less than 100 hours per month

Age: Children may be eligible for CalWORKs until their 18th birthday, or are 18 years old and in high school full-time and expected to graduate before age 19.

Property: The property of a child and parent(s) must be under the limits:

- Family members may have \$2,250 combined personal and real property per family. Families with elderly members (those who are 60 years of age or older) may have \$3,500 combined personal and real property per family.

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- Furniture, clothing, and appliances are exempt.
- The family home is exempt, providing that the family lives in it.
- The family vehicle may be exempt.

Residency: There are no durational residency requirements. Families must live in California and intend to continue living here to be eligible. CalWORKs-eligible family members must be legal residents of the United States.

INCOME LIMITS FOR APPLICANTS

CalWORKs regulations provide for a gross income limit, which is determined by subtracting \$90 from the earned income of each employed person, then adding all remaining earned and unearned income to determine the gross income for the family. That amount is then compared to the Minimum Basic Standards of Adequate Care (MBSAC) level for the family size. MBSAC is a tool used by California's Department of Social Services to determine CalWORKs eligibility. If the family's total gross monthly income after the \$90 deduction exceeds the MBSAC level for the family size, the family is not eligible. The following chart reflects the current MBSAC levels:

| Household Size | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|----------------|-------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| \$ Limit | \$686 | \$1,125 | \$1,395 | \$1,655 | \$1,889 | \$2,125 | \$2,335 | \$2,541 |

AMOUNT OF CALWORKS CASH ASSISTANCE YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR

With CalWORKs, you may receive temporary cash aid for up to 48 months total in your lifetime.

Effective 1/1/13, a new client-focused WTW 24-Month Time Clock was introduced that gives participants more activity options. The new clock does not change the 48-month CalWORKs limit, or the cash aid amount, but does change the WTW rules to stay on aid.

The size of your household and your monthly income determine how much you receive each month. This chart reflects the maximum aid before earned and unearned income, and any applicable deductions, are applied.

| Household Size | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Maximum Aid Amount | \$391 | \$635 | \$785 | \$937 | \$1065 | \$1196 | \$1315 | \$1431 |

HOW TO ACCESS YOUR CALWORKS BENEFITS

Recipients of CalWORKs are issued a plastic card called an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Card that they can use at ATM machines to withdraw cash. Purchases can also be made at stores that have POS (point of sale) machines, through which recipients will swipe their EBT cards. CalWORKs recipients may also request that their cash aid be automatically deposited into their personal bank account.

YOUR RIGHTS

Whether you are eligible or not, you have the right to be treated with dignity, respect, and courtesy when you apply for CalWORKs. The Human Services Department will not discriminate against anyone because of race, color, national origin, political affiliation, religion, age, sex, sexual or gender orientation, marital status, pregnancy, or physical or mental disability. If you believe that you have not been treated equally, contact the Human Services Department Civil Rights Coordinator at (831) 454-4117.

HOW TO APPLY FOR CALWORKS

Apply online: <http://www.mybenefitscalwin.org>

Or visit us at the Human Services Department's Customer Service Centers located at:

- 1020 Emeline Avenue, Santa Cruz CA 95060
- 18 W. Beach Street, Watsonville CA 95076
- Customer Service Centers are open Monday–Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- TTY for Hearing Impaired (831) 454-4763

Or call the Phone Service Center Monday – Friday 7:30 AM – 5:30 PM toll-free at 1 (888) 421-8080 to have an application mailed to you.

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This Fact Sheet is not a substitute for State CalWORKs regulations. The County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department has copies of the state regulations you may review.