



COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

Board of Supervisors

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June 6, 2025

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

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

The Honorable Scott Wiener, Chair
Senate Committee on Budget & Fiscal Review
1020 N Street, Room 502
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): Rightsize County
Administrative Funding for the CalWORKs Program**

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

The County of Mendocino respectfully requests your support for a long-overdue investment in the CalWORKs Single Allocation to ensure counties can continue to provide essential services to families experiencing poverty. Specifically, we request:

- 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.

The CalWORKs program is one of the most powerful tools our state has to not only stabilize families, but to reduce poverty, and prevent generational harm. More than just a safety-net, the CalWORKs program helps parents build pathways to stability by offering employment and educational services, training, and support services. County human services agencies, like Mendocino County Department of Social Services, are on the frontlines of this important work, serving 800 families on behalf of the state.

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 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.

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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.

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 Mendocino County, we believe fully funding counties for eligibility administration would allow us to hire and train five eligibility staff to process accurate and timely benefits to vulnerable families.

This would also allow us to protect and maximize employment services funding, including hiring two employment and training workers as well as increasing the supportive service contracts for job readiness skills to more effectively move families from poverty to self-sufficiency.

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.

For these reasons, Mendocino County urges your support for a long-overdue investment in the CalWORKs Single Allocation, enabling counties to continue delivering vital services to families experiencing poverty.

Sincerely,



John Haschak, Chair
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

CC: The Honorable Mike McGuire, Member of the California State Senate
The Honorable Chris Rogers, Member of the California State Assembly
California State Association of Counties (CSAC)
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
County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA)