

November 7, 2023

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 23-94

The purpose of this All County Letter is to provide County Welfare Departments with guidance regarding the implementation of Assembly Bill 135 (Chapter 85, Statutes of 2021), which authorizes cash aid and child care services for California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids families participating in family reunification.



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November 07, 2023

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 23-94

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY CHILD WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CALWORKS PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
ALL WELFARE-TO-WORK COORDINATORS
ALL COUNTY LINKAGES COORDINATORS
ALL COUNTY CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS
ALL COUNTY CAL-LEARN PROGRAM COORDINATORS

SUBJECT: CALIFORNIA WORK OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO KIDS (CALWORKS): CHANGES TO FAMILY REUNIFICATION PURSUANT TO ASSEMBLY BILL 135 (CHAPTER 85, STATUTES OF 2021)

REFERENCE: [ASSEMBLY BILL \(AB\) 135 \(CHAPTER 85, STATUTES OF 2021\)](#), [AB 236 \(CHAPTER 545, STATUTES OF 2017\)](#), AND [AB 429 \(CHAPTER 111, STATUTES OF 2001\)](#); [WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE \(WIC\) SECTION 361.5](#), [WIC SECTION 10370](#), [WIC SECTION 11203](#), [WIC SECTION 11265.45\(d\)](#), AND [WIC SECTION 11450](#); [DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES \(DHCS\) ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER \(ACWDL\) 04-29](#); [ALL COUNTY LETTER \(ACL\) NO. 02-36](#), [ACL NO. 03-52](#), [ACL NO. 11-04](#), [ACL 18-71](#), [ACL NO. 21-101](#), AND [ACL NO. 21-121](#); [ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE \(ACIN\) NO. I-64-15](#), [ACIN NO. I-49-04](#), AND [ACIN NO. I-25-23](#); [MANUAL OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES \(MPP\) SECTION 22-072.2\(f\)](#), [MPP SECTION 31-082](#), [MPP SECTION 31-084](#), [MPP SECTION 31-088](#), [MPP SECTION 31-215](#), [MPP SECTION 31-225](#), [MPP SECTION 31-325](#), [MPP SECTION 31-340](#), [MPP SECTION 42-708](#), [MPP SECTION 42-711](#), [MPP SECTION 42-713](#), [MPP SECTION 44-316](#), [MPP SECTION 80-301\(r\)\(3\) to \(6\)](#), [MPP SECTION 82-812](#) AND [MPP SECTION 82-832](#)

The purpose of this All County Letter (ACL) is to provide guidance to County Welfare Departments (CWDs) regarding implementation of [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 135 \(Chapter 85,](#)

[Statutes of 2021](#)), which authorizes the provision of cash aid and child care services to families participating in CalWORKs Family Reunification (FR) as part of their reunification plan for up to six months. AB 135 also increased the temporary absence period for FR from up to 180 calendar days to up to six full months.

AB 135 creates two distinct CalWORKs FR processes: one for reunification cases that include the provision of both cash aid and reunification services, and one for reunification cases that include the provision of reunification services only. This letter provides guidance on the treatment of reunification cases when cash aid is approved, as well as the treatment of reunification cases upon the expiration of the six-month period of cash aid.

Guidance on the provision of child care for reunification cases will be released via Child Care Bulletin (CCB).

The process for the provision of reunification services only (no cash aid) was not impacted by AB 135 and remains unchanged; for guidance on reunification services in FR, please refer to ACL No. [02-36](#) and ACINs No. [I-64-15](#) and [I-49-04](#).

BACKGROUND

The [Manual of Policies and Procedures \(MPP\) Sections 80-301\(r\)\(3\) through \(6\)](#) provide the following definitions pertaining to FR:

- "Reunification Parent(s)" means a parent(s) who are is eligible to continue to receive CalWORKs services on the basis that their child(ren) is considered temporarily absent when all of the following conditions are met: (1) the child(ren) has been removed and placed in out-of-home care by the county Child Welfare Services (CWS) agency; (2) when the child(ren) was removed, the family was receiving CalWORKs assistance; and (3) CWS or a court has determined that provision of CalWORKs services is necessary for reunification.
- "Reunification Cases" means those CalWORKs cases in which all children have been removed and placed in out-of-home care by CWS and are considered temporarily absent from the Assistance Unit (AU) while their parent(s) is receiving reunification services.
- "Reunification Plan" means the case plan that is developed by CWS for the provision of services to the reunification parent(s) and given effect through order of the court or pursuant to a voluntary placement agreement executed in accordance with CWS regulations.
- "Reunification Services" means those CalWORKs services that CWS determines to be necessary for a reunification parent(s) to reunite with their child(ren) and are specified in the reunification plan.

Pursuant to existing FR policy, CalWORKs services and Temporary Homeless Assistance (THA) benefits are available to the parent(s) of a child(ren) removed from

the home and temporarily placed in out-of-home care if the county has determined those services necessary for reunification and a reunification plan is in effect. CalWORKs services are available for up to 180 consecutive days and include Welfare to Work (WTW) services such as mental health and substance abuse services, but not cash aid or child care services.

FAMILY REUNIFICATION ELIGIBILITY

Effective the date that automation in the Statewide Automated Welfare System (SAWS) is complete, all individuals who were members of the CalWORKs AU when the eligible child(ren) was removed from the home will be eligible for the CalWORKs cash grant, child care, and reunification services for up to six full months when all of the following conditions apply:

1. **All** CalWORKs-eligible children were removed from the home and temporarily placed in out-of-home care by the county CWS agency.
2. The AU was receiving CalWORKs cash aid when the child(ren) was removed.
 - At least one parent or needy caretaker relative must have been aided at the time of the child(ren)'s removal to be eligible for CalWORKs reunification services, child care, and cash aid.
 - Unaided parents/caretaker relatives, such as SSI recipients, undocumented noncitizens, non-needy caretaker relatives, or timed-out parents who do not qualify for an extender are not eligible to receive FR cash aid or reunification services for themselves or their child(ren) because they are not eligible for cash aid.
 - WTW-sanctioned parents may participate in reunification services (if CWS or a court has determined that such services are necessary for family reunification), but are not eligible for cash aid under FR.
3. The CWS or court has determined that the provision of cash aid, child care, and/or reunification services is necessary for reunification and a reunification plan is in effect ([MPP Section 82-812.671](#)).

Upon notification that CWS or a court recommends FR and the reunification plan includes a recommendation for the provision of cash aid as necessary to support reunification, the CalWORKs worker must start FR in accordance with the reunification plan and continue the CalWORKs cash grant for a maximum of six months if the family is otherwise eligible. A court order is not necessary to initiate FR. Existing reunification plans that do not already include a recommendation for the provision of cash aid must be amended prior to cash aid approval.

All individuals who were members of the CalWORKs AU when all eligible children were removed from the home will remain members of the AU and will continue to be aided when the reunification plan recommends the provision of cash aid. This includes any eligible child(ren) who was removed and any eligible parent(s). If no parent was aided at the time of the child(ren)'s removal from the home, the family is not eligible for any reunification services or cash aid. The only exception to this is when the parent(s) is WTW-sanctioned; in this case the reunification parent(s) may be eligible for reunification

services only, if CWS or a court has determined that such services are necessary for reunification. If both parents are sanctioned, they are not eligible for cash aid in FR until their sanction is cured. In a two-parent AU, if one parent is WTW-sanctioned and the other is not, the non-sanctioned parent and the child(ren) who was removed would be eligible for cash aid and reunification services, if CWS or a court has determined they are necessary for reunification.

Consistent with existing FR policy, if at least one CalWORKs eligible child remains in the home, and the parent(s) remains financially eligible for a cash grant, the parent is not a reunification parent and the family is not a reunification family ([MPP Section 82-812.673](#)). The child(ren) that was placed in out-of-home care must be removed from the AU once the child(ren) is no longer considered only temporarily absent, and the remaining eligible AU members will continue to receive their CalWORKs grant and services and will continue to be subject to all CalWORKs eligibility and WTW requirements.

Also consistent with existing policy, if at least one CalWORKs eligible child remains in the home, but the remaining AU members become ineligible for a cash grant following the removal of one or more children, the parents and children remaining in the home may also become an FR family, when a reunification plan is authorized for the child(ren) who was removed. Establishing a reunification plan may be necessary in this situation in order to provide reunification services when the remaining AU members would be otherwise ineligible for CalWORKs. ([ACL No. 02-36](#)).

If all children are removed and CWS or a court does not recommend reunification, the family is not eligible for any reunification services or cash aid and the case must be discontinued at the end of the 30-day temporary absence period.

TEMPORARY ABSENCE AND FAMILY REUNIFICATION TIME LIMITS

Per existing policy, a member of the AU may be considered temporarily absent if they will be absent from the home for one full calendar month or less (MPP Section 82-812.5). One full calendar month is defined as the first of the month through the last day of the month; however, if an AU member has been absent for the entire month of February, but less than 30 days, the calendar month will not be deemed completed until the individual has been absent for 30 days ([MPP Section 82-812](#)). This policy is applicable to all CalWORKs AUs with absent eligible members and not exclusive to reunification families.

When a child(ren) is temporarily absent due to having been removed from the home, FR is an exception to the one full calendar month time limit. Pursuant to AB 135, a child(ren) who has been removed from the home and placed in out-of-home care may be considered temporarily absent for up to six months. Consistent with [MPP Section 82-812.679](#), CWS may grant a good cause extension to the six-month temporary absence, for reunification cases only, if either of the following applies:

- An extension is needed for the number of days between the date of the child(ren)'s removal and the date the court orders a reunification plan; or
- CWS determines additional time is needed to complete the reunification plan. This extension can be in effect until termination of the reunification plan.

Upon notification from CWS that the eligible child(ren) has been removed from the home, the CalWORKs worker must not immediately discontinue the case, but instead consider the child(ren) to be temporarily absent for a period of up to a full calendar month, even though a reunification plan has not yet been established. During this time, CWS should determine whether the continuation of a CalWORKs cash grant and services to the AU is necessary for the family to reunify, develop a reunification plan, and immediately notify the CalWORKs worker when a reunification plan has been established.

If all eligible children are placed in out-of-home care and the temporary absence period of one full calendar month ends without the CalWORKs worker receiving notification from the CWS about the necessity of FR, the case must be discontinued with timely and adequate notice. Please note, per [MPP Section 22-072.2\(f\)](#), timely notice is not required if a child(ren) is removed from the home as a result of a judicial determination, or is voluntarily placed in foster care by their parent(s) or legal guardian(s), though adequate notice must be sent no later than the effective date of the discontinuance. An overpayment must not be established for the month of temporary absence.

A reunification case may only receive reunification services when a reunification plan is in effect ([MPP Section 82-812.671](#)). These services may continue through the entire FR temporary absence period, which means CalWORKs services may continue beyond six months when a good cause extension to the six-month temporary absence period has been granted. However, cash aid for FR is limited to a maximum of six months from the time it is granted and may not be extended. Existing reunification cases must have their reunification plans amended to include the provision of cash aid before cash aid in FR may be approved, and these cases may reach the end of their six-month temporary absence period prior to receiving six full months of cash aid. In these cases, CWS may grant a good cause extension to allow the family to receive a full six months of FR cash aid if specified by the reunification plan, and if the family is otherwise eligible for CalWORKs cash aid.

For existing reunification cases whose reunification plans do not include the provision of cash aid, CalWORKs workers are encouraged to reach out to CWS to inform them of the availability of cash aid in FR, and to discuss potentially amending the reunification plan to include the provision of cash aid if appropriate.

REPORTING & REDETERMINATION REQUIREMENTS

When reunification cases are approved for cash aid, the following reporting and redetermination requirements apply:

SAR 7

While the family is in FR and receiving a CalWORKs grant, Semi-Annual Reporting (SAR) requirements apply, and the AU's SAR reporting cycle will not change. Cash aid for reunification cases must be discontinued at the end of the six-month temporary absence period, or earlier if the family is found to be financially ineligible based on the information submitted on the SAR 7, or if the reunification plan is terminated. If non-cash reunification services are approved after cash aid discontinuance, a SAR 7 is not required as long as the reunification plan remains in place in accordance with [MPP Section 40-181.223](#).

Mid-Period Reports/Changes

All mandatory and voluntary reports and county-initiated mid-period changes remain in effect when a reunification case receives a cash grant. As a reminder, SAR AUs are not required to report mid-period changes to household composition. Cash aid for reunification cases must be discontinued if the family is found to be financially ineligible based on a mid-period report of income exceeding the income reporting threshold, or if the reunification plan is terminated.

Redetermination

While the family is in FR and receiving a CalWORKs grant, the regular annual redetermination requirements apply, and the AU's existing redetermination cycle will not change. Cash aid for reunification cases must be discontinued at the end of the six-month temporary absence period, or earlier if the family is found to be financially ineligible based on the information submitted at redetermination, or if the reunification plan is terminated.

Reunification cases receiving reunification services only must be subject to a six-month CalWORKs eligibility redetermination based on the criteria in [MPP Section 40-181.2](#) [[MPP Section 40-181.1\(e\)\(4\)](#)]. Further, for reunification cases receiving reunification services only, an eligibility redetermination must be conducted when an AU is reunified per [MPP Section 40-181.1\(e\)\(5\)](#).

Failure to Complete SAR 7 or Redetermination

Failure to submit a SAR 7 or complete redetermination will result in a cash aid and/or reunification services discontinuance for families in FR who are receiving a CalWORKs grant. The CalWORKs worker may grant a good cause exemption for failure to submit a complete SAR 7 or complete redetermination timely if the request is made by the parent/ (MPP Sections [40-181.216](#) and [40-181.23](#)).

When the removal of a child(ren) and the recommendation for reunification services occur in the month following a CalWORKs discontinuance due to not completing a SAR 7 or an annual redetermination, the CalWORKs worker is encouraged to evaluate whether good cause exists to rescind or restore the CalWORKs case. If good cause cannot be applied, the case will remain discontinued, and the family will not be eligible for reunification services.

CASE MANAGEMENT

AU Composition

Once a child(ren) has been removed from the AU, the CalWORKs worker must establish whether there is another CalWORKs-eligible child(ren) in the AU to maintain the case after the full month of temporary absence ends. If an eligible child remains in the home, the CalWORKs worker must implement a mid-period county-initiated action pursuant to [MPP Section 44-316.33](#), reduce the AU size to reflect the child(ren)'s removal, and issue a Change Notice of Action (NOA). The family members who remain in the AU will continue to be aided as long as they remain eligible.

Cash Aid Discontinuance

Upon expiration of the 30-day temporary absence period, if CWS or a court has not recommended cash aid or reunification services, the CalWORKs case must be discontinued with timely and adequate notice. The discontinuance may be rescinded if the child(ren) is returned to the home or CWS or a court recommends cash aid or reunification services within 30 calendar days of the discontinuance date, and aid must be restored for the full month.

Cash aid for reunification cases must be discontinued at the end of the sixth month of receipt. If CWS or a court authorizes a good cause extension to the six-month FR temporary absence period, reunification services may continue, but cash aid must be discontinued if the case has reached six full months of cash aid. If CWS does not authorize an extension to the FR temporary absence period, reunification services must also be discontinued at the end of the sixth month. Additionally, cash aid for reunification cases must be discontinued if the AU becomes financially ineligible, the parent(s) reaches 60 months of aid and does not qualify for an extender, or the reunification plan is revoked by CWS or a court.

If CWS or a court determines the provision of cash aid and reunification services are necessary for reunification after the CalWORKs case has been discontinued, the case may be restored for the entire AU (including the child(ren) who was removed), effective the date FR is approved, if restoration is appropriate pursuant to existing case restoration policy.

WTW PARTICIPATION

CWDs must engage families as soon as possible when CWS or a court determines that FR is necessary and upon notification from CWS that the child(ren) has been removed from the home. Consistent with existing WTW rules, adults are required to participate in WTW activities as a condition of eligibility for cash aid, unless they are exempt ([MPP Section 42-712.1](#)), granted good cause ([MPP Section 42-713.1](#)) or deferred from participation while in Family Stabilization (FS) ([MPP Section 42-711.535](#)).

CalWORKs workers are strongly encouraged to use the CWS-developed reunification plan or Linkages case plan in lieu of a WTW plan whenever possible ([MPP Section 42-](#)

[711.61](#)). When a reunification plan is used in lieu of the WTW plan, no additional WTW activities are required and new WTW sanctions cannot be imposed, pursuant to [MPP Section 42-721.13](#). If the reunification plan is not used in lieu of a WTW plan, all existing rules pertaining to WTW apply to the reunification case, including noncompliance and sanction for failure to fulfill WTW participation requirements outside their family reunification plan.

NOTE: If participation in activities required under the reunification plan temporarily prevents or significantly impairs an individual's ability to comply with the WTW hours of participation requirement, the parent must be granted good cause for not participating in their WTW activities ([MPP Section 42-713.1](#)).

CalWORKs recipients who are exempt from WTW participation, who then become involved with CWS, may voluntarily participate and receive the WTW services necessary to assist them in reunifying ([MPP Section 42-711.61](#) and [MPP Section 42-712](#)).

WTW SANCTIONS, OVERPAYMENTS & PENALTIES

Any sanctions, penalties, or overpayments previously established for a CalWORKs case will remain in effect while the family is participating in FR, unless they are resolved in accordance with existing policy. WTW participants in sanction status may still utilize FR services; however, all existing CalWORKs rules pertaining to sanctions (including curing sanctions), penalties, and overpayments remain unchanged while the family is in FR.

As stated above and in accordance with [MPP Section 42-721.13](#), CalWORKs WTW sanction provisions do not apply to a reunification parent whose CalWORKs FR activities and services are only included in a reunification plan, and a noncompliant individual must remain eligible for those activities and services until the expiration or termination of a voluntary placement agreement or until a court terminates the reunification plan.

CWDs are encouraged to actively engage FR parents who are in sanction status and assist them with curing their sanction(s). This includes screening them for an appropriate exemption and/or good cause.

TIME ON AID

CalWORKs rules and processes pertaining to time on aid remain unchanged. Therefore, a reunification parent(s) receiving a CalWORKs cash grant will continue to have their CalWORKs 60-month time-on-aid (TOA) clock tick while they are receiving cash aid. The CalWORKs TOA clock will not tick once cash aid is terminated. As cash aid for reunification cases is funded by State non-maintenance of effort funds only, the TANF TOA clock will not tick when cash aid is granted.

If the parent(s) reaches their 60-month time limit while in FR and does not meet an extender criterion, the CalWORKs worker must remove the parent(s) from the AU in

accordance with existing processes. Further, parents who reach their 60-month TOA limit while participating in FR will no longer be eligible for any reunification services for themselves or their child(ren). Timed-out parents whose CalWORKs time clocks are adjusted to add additional months of aid may be eligible for FR for the remaining months in their FR temporary absence period if recommended in their reunification plan; eligibility for reunification services for these parents is effective the date the timeclock is adjusted.

AID CODES AND UPDATED DEFINITIONS

The CalWORKs FR aid codes will remain as 4P and 4R. Their updated definitions are as follows:

4P CALWORKS FAMILY REUNIFICATION – ALL OTHER FAMILIES

Provides for approval of a FR cash grant for up to six full months and WTW services for the duration of the reunification plan, to all families, except two-parent families, when an eligible child(ren) has been removed from a CalWORKs home by CWS and is placed into out-of-home care, and the county has determined that provision of a cash grant and/or services is necessary for FR. All WTW services, including supportive services and child care services, as well as the once every 12 months temporary HA special needs payment are covered by this aid code.

4R CALWORKS FAMILY REUNIFICATION – TWO PARENT FAMILIES

Provides for approval of a FR cash grant for up to six full months and WTW services for the duration of the CWS reunification plan, for two-parent families when an eligible child(ren) has been removed from a CalWORKs home by CWS and is receiving out-of-home care, and the CWS or a court has determined that provision of a cash grant and/or services is necessary for family reunification. All WTW services, including supportive services and child care services, as well as the once every 12 months temporary HA special needs payment are covered by this aid code.

As stated in [ACL 03-52](#), non-citizens who are eligible for CalWORKs and have a reunification plan are to be reported as either 4P or 4R, whichever is applicable, when the CWS or a court has determined the provision of CalWORKs services is necessary for reunification. For example, cases with aid code 30 (CalWORKs– All Families) are to be transferred to aid code 4P (CalWORKs – Family Reunification – All Families) during the FR period.

CALWORKS/CWS CROSS-SYSTEM COLLABORATION

The function of CalWORKs/CWS cross-system collaboration is to facilitate the process of determining which WTW services are necessary for FR, and to coordinate services to make it easier for a reunification parent(s) to meet both WTW and CWS requirements. Consolidating activities into a single reunification plan allows the goals of CWS, CalWORKs, and the reunification parent(s) to be better aligned. While an activity might

not initially seem WTW-related, the example below demonstrates how activities can build both parental and work skills.

Example of a consolidated activity:

Attending parenting classes helps meet requirements for both CWS and WTW. During the classes, parents learn skills they can use to take better care of their children, but they also learn how to be on time, take notes, and apply what is being taught in one environment (class) to their role in another environment (home and work). These are valuable skills for maintaining family stability and for work readiness and success.

To accomplish the intent of cross-system collaboration, CDSS encourages counties with an established [Linkages](#) practice to continue to improve on their practice and enhance policies and processes. For other counties, establishing a collaborative case management process such as a [Linkages practice](#) should be considered to best support families. Cross-system collaboration often includes CWS social workers and CalWORKs eligibility and/or WTW workers. Ideally, counties will employ and co-locate Linkages staff who can navigate both the county's CalWORKs program and CWS. While Linkages staff may not be available in every county, CWS and CalWORKs staff are encouraged to establish a written collaboration policy so CalWORKs and CWS staff can work together to best serve families, leveraging the services and supports available through CalWORKs to achieve the family's safety, permanency, and well-being goals.

If the family agrees, CWS should invite CalWORKs staff and any other individuals identified by the family to regular Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings. CFTs are family-centered teams to support coordinated case planning and decision making to achieve safety and well-being of the child(ren) and their family. CFTs are useful when coordinating reunification plan services and providing supports during the reunification process. For more information on CWS and CalWORKs collaboration, visit the [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#) or visit the [Child and Family Policy Institute of California's \(CFPIC\) Linkages Toolkits](#). Please refer to [ACIN I-25-23](#) for information about the updated CalWORKs and Child Welfare Linkages Guidelines and to access the Linkages case plan.

As mentioned above, for existing reunification cases whose reunification plans do not include the provision of cash aid, CalWORKs workers are encouraged to reach out to CWS to inform them of the availability of cash aid in FR, and to discuss potentially amending the reunification plan to include the provision of cash aid if appropriate.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

The CalWORKs worker must provide supportive services for the duration of the reunification plan when CWS or a court has determined they are necessary for reunification, or whenever a reunification parent(s) needs these services to participate in their reunification plan. The exception to this is the diaper supportive service, for which

a parent(s) is required to maintain care and control of the child; therefore, reunification cases are not eligible for diaper benefits.

CHILD CARE

The child(ren) of families participating in FR may receive child care in CalWORKs Stage One, Two, or Three as specified in [WIC Section 10370 through 10376.5](#), when the child(ren) is placed in out-of-home care and CWS or a court determines child care is necessary for reunification. This will allow children who are already receiving child care services to maintain continuity of care, or to start receiving child care if CWS deems the provision of child care services as necessary for reunification.

It is not necessary for a child(ren) to have already been receiving CalWORKs child care services prior to their placement in out-of-home care in order to qualify for child care under AB 135; however, the reunification plan must specify that child care is necessary for reunification in order for FR families to qualify for child care services. A CCB regarding child care eligibility for reunification cases will be released under separate cover.

HOMELESS ASSISTANCE

CALWORKS TEMPORARY HOMELESS ASSISTANCE (THA)

Reunification families experiencing homelessness may be eligible for THA for temporary shelter if CWS or a court determines that THA is necessary for reunification. FR families are subject to the general rules and regulations that apply to THA, including the once-every-12-month limit. When determining the daily rate for THA for reunification cases, the child(ren) who was removed from the home should be included. For more information about THA, please see [ACL 18-71](#) and [ACL 21-121](#), or visit the [Homeless Assistance webpage](#).

CALWORKS HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAM (HSP)

HSP provides housing-related supports to eligible CalWORKs recipients, including families eligible for cash aid in FR, who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Per FR service requirements described in [WIC Section 11203\(b\)](#), for a family in FR to be eligible for HSP, the county must first determine that provision of HSP services is necessary for that family to reunify. For more information about HSP for families in FR, see [ACWDL dated December 13, 2021](#), or visit the [Housing Support Program webpage](#).

BRINGING FAMILIES HOME

Bringing Families Home provides funds to counties and tribal governments for the purpose of providing housing-related supports to families in receipt of CWS, including but not limited to families in FR who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness, or in a living situation that cannot accommodate the child(ren). More information about this

program, including program eligibility and its requirements can be found at the [Bringing Families Home webpage](#) and in [ACWDL dated February 11, 2022](#).

CALFRESH

Reunification cases may continue to be eligible for CalFresh benefits as long as all other eligibility requirements are met. The CalWORKs cash grant is considered unearned income for CalFresh eligibility purposes. The initial report of the child(ren)'s removal from the home is considered information known to the agency. CWDs must follow instructions in [ACL No. 21-101](#) to determine the impact of the removal of the child(ren) to the CalFresh household.

Transitional CalFresh (TCF) may be available for CalWORKs AUs who leave CalWORKs in good standing. For more information on TCF, see [ACL No. 20-129](#).

MEDI-CAL

Families participating in FR are not eligible for cash-linked Medi-Cal. CWDs should follow existing policies and re-evaluate eligibility for Medi-Cal for AU members remaining in the home upon a CalWORKs discontinuance. When a family is assigned a FR aid code, a separate evaluation of Medi-Cal eligibility must take place if there was no prior re-evaluation and cash-linked Medi-Cal is still active. As mentioned in Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) [ACWDL No. 21-27](#), the AU members [parent(s) and/or child(ren)] may be transitioned into aid code 38 to maintain their Medi-Cal eligibility while the county reviews for ongoing eligibility. There are certain instances where a family and/or child(ren) must not be transitioned into aid code 38. Please refer to DHCS [ACWDL No. 21-27](#), Enclosure 5, titled CalWORKs Discontinuance Reasons Ex Parte/Aid Code Decision Table, and DHCS [ACWDL No. 01-36](#) for information about the applicability of aid code 38. As previously instructed in the DHCS [ACWDL 04-29](#), the Medi-Cal aid code will be the primary aid code and the FR aid code will be the secondary aid code.

If an AU member participating in FR is not eligible to continue to receive Medi-Cal under their current aid code, they should be screened for eligibility for other Medi-Cal programs such as Non-MAGI or Consumer Protection Programs (CPP), and [Covered California](#) plans, if applicable. Please refer to DHCS ACWDL 21-27 for more information. If no eligibility is found for Covered California subsidized health plans, the county must evaluate eligibility for [County Medical Services Program \(CMSP\)](#) if available in the county.

JUVENILE DETENTION

Minors involved with the juvenile justice system whose parents are CalWORKs recipients are considered permanently absent from the home when the minor is, on the first of any month, expected to remain at a correctional facility for one full calendar month or more per [MPP Section 82-812.61](#). In these cases, if the client reports or the county becomes aware that the minor is permanently absent due to confinement in a

juvenile correctional facility, the CalWORKs worker must take mid-period action to remove the minor from the AU at the end of the month with adequate and timely notice per [MPP Section 82-812.52\(c\)](#). Cases where the only eligible child(ren) is confined in a juvenile correctional facility are not eligible for FR. However, if there is another child(ren) in the AU who has been placed in out-of-home care, the family may be eligible for FR pursuant to a CWS recommendation.

AUTOMATION

Implementation will be effective the date SAWS completes the necessary automation. The Welfare Data Tracking Implementation Project (WDTIP) Tracking Recipients Across California (TRAC) database will reflect months on aid (displayed by month and year) for FR cases receiving cash aid pursuant to AB 135.

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

Guidance regarding claiming and new and revised forms and Notice of Action (NOA) messages is forthcoming.

CONTACTS

If you have any questions or need additional guidance regarding the information in this letter, please contact:

- CalWORKs Early Engagement and Eligibility Bureau: CWEligibilityPolicy@dss.ca.gov
- CalWORKs Engagement Bureau: CWEngagement@dss.ca.gov
- Child Care Policy and Development Bureau: CCPB@dss.ca.gov

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By

ALEXIS FERNÁNDEZ GARCIA
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