

August 21, 2020

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 20-94

This letter transmits the Federal Fiscal Year 2021 Income Reporting Threshold (IRT) chart for the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Program to the County Welfare Departments (CWDs). The CWDs must inform all CalWORKs, Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), Entrant Cash Assistance (ECA), Trafficking and Crime Victim Assistance Program (TCVAP), recipients of their individualized IRT amounts whenever they change. The IRT chart provides CWDs with the IRTs that trigger the recipient income reporting requirements in the Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) sections 44-316.321(e) and 44-316.324. The One and Two Tier IRT levels are effective October 1, 2020, for all Assistance Units.



KIM JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
744 P Street • Sacramento, CA 95814 • www.cdss.ca.gov



GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

August 21, 2020

ALL COUNTY LETTER (ACL) NO. 20-94

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY CALWORKS PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
ALL CALFRESH PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
ALL COUNTY REFUGEE COORDINATORS
ALL COUNTY CONSORTIA REPRESENTATIVES

SUBJECT: CALIFORNIA WORK OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO
KIDS (CALWORKS): FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR (FFY) 2021
INCOME REPORTING THRESHOLD (IRT)

REFERENCE: [WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE SECTION 11265.3](#);
[MANUAL OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES \(MPP\) SECTIONS](#)
[40-173.8](#), [MPP 44-316.321\(e\)](#), [MPP 44-316.324](#),
[MPP 44-316.324\(b\)-\(c\)\(SAR/AR/CO\)](#), [MPP 69-201.4](#),
[MPP 69-202.1](#), [MPP 69-202.2](#), [MPP 69-206](#), [MPP 69-301](#) and
[MPP 70-105.1](#); [ACL No. 19-76](#), [ACL No. 12-25](#), and [ACL No. 12-49](#).

The purpose of this letter is to transmit the FFY 2021 IRT chart for the CalWORKs Program. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) developed the attached IRT chart to provide the County Welfare Departments (CWDs) with the IRTs that trigger the recipient income reporting requirements in the MPP sections 44-316.321(e) and 44-316.324. These IRT levels are effective October 1, 2020, for all Assistance Units (AUs). The CWDs must inform all CalWORKs, Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), Entrant Cash Assistance (ECA), Trafficking and Crime Victim Assistance Program (TCVAP), recipients of their individualized IRT amounts whenever they change.

IRT Reporting Requirements

Under the Semi-Annual Reporting (SAR) and Annual Reporting/Child-Only (AR/CO) reporting systems, recipients are required to report only certain changes in their income or family circumstances mid-period. One such mandatory mid-period report is when the AU's total income exceeds the IRT. The CalWORKs IRT for an AU is the lower of two

tiers. The two tiers include: 1) 55 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for a family of three, plus the amount of income last used to calculate the AU's monthly grant amount, and 2) 130 percent of the FPL which is also the level at which a household becomes financially ineligible for CalFresh.

In accordance with MPP sections 44-316.324(b)(SAR) and 44-316.324(b)(AR/CO), AUs with either no income or with unearned income only are required to report income changes only if they receive new earned income that, when combined with other household income, exceeds the IRT mid-period. Therefore, AUs with only unearned income are not required to report when that income by itself exceeds the IRT mid-period.

Income that must be reported for IRT purposes is the total combined earned and unearned income for the AU. If any member of the AU or a person included in the family's Maximum Aid Payment (MAP) has earned income or begins receiving earned income, the AU must report to the CWD when the family's combined gross income, earned and unearned, exceeds the AU's IRT during the SAR or AR/CO payment period.

Once the family receives income in excess of the IRT and reports it to the CWD, the CWD must take action, per MPP sections 44-316.324(c)(SAR) and 44-316.324(c)(AR/CO), to determine if the reported income is reasonably anticipated to continue. If the income over the IRT will continue but is not at a level that will result in ineligibility (i.e. exceeds the AU's Tier Two IRT), the CWD must use the new reasonably anticipated income to recalculate the grant amount based on the reported income. If the CWD determines the grant should be decreased, the CWD shall decrease the grant at the end of the month in which timely and adequate notice can be provided. If the income reported is reasonably anticipated to continue to exceed the AU's Tier Two IRT for the remainder of the payment period, the CWD shall determine the AU financially ineligible and discontinue the AU at the end of the month in which timely and adequate notice can be provided. For complete details on decreasing grants, discontinuing cases or establishing overpayments due to income over the IRT, please refer to ACL No. 12-25 for SAR AUs and ACL No. 12-49 for AR/CO AUs.

As long as the AU's income does not exceed the CalWORKs Tier Two IRT (130% of the FPL), the case will stay open and the AU may remain eligible for supportive services and/or CalWORKs special needs. This may also allow some CalWORKs cases to remain open with a zero grant if the AU's income remains below 130 percent of the FPL.

Informing Recipients of Their IRT

The informing notice that provides the IRT limits must be individualized for each AU. The CWDs must inform recipients of their IRT at least once per SAR Payment Period or AR/CO Payment Period, or whenever the AU's IRT changes. The CWDs should

also remind recipients that in addition to the IRT requirement, they must report all income and property on their SAR 7 and/or at redetermination and provide relevant verification.

The IRT must be provided to the AU using the SAR 2, AR 2, or AR 2 SAR form as appropriate upon approval of application and at any time the AU's IRT changes during the payment period. The IRT can be listed on separate forms as long as the CWDs ensure that it is easily visible to the recipient and that the SAR 2, AR 2, or AR 2 SAR is issued to each family. The CWD shall follow notification rules regarding individualized IRT levels in accordance with MPP sections 40-173.8 and 44-316.324 as instructed above. The IRT level in which the recipient was last notified will be used for reporting purposes until the CWD has had an opportunity to inform the recipient of any applicable IRT change. This means the CWD shall not use the new IRT for any AU until the AU has received notification that their IRT has changed, and the new IRT is not to be used retroactively as explained below.

IRT Chart Increments

The attached IRT chart is effective beginning October 1, 2020. The Tier Two figures on the chart for all AU sizes in both Regions indicate the recipient income limits of 130 percent of the FPL for all AU sizes. The CWDs shall not retroactively apply the revised 2020-21 IRT. The new IRT level will apply prospectively as soon as the CWD informs the recipient of the new 2020-21 IRT. The IRT previously sent to the AU shall be used until the CWD can notify the recipient of their new IRT and will be effective for that AU upon the notification.

Because there is no FPL assigned to families of 0, AUs of 0 will be assigned the Tier Two IRT for an AU of 1. This is to address those relatively rare occurrences in which no person's needs are considered in determining the CalWORKs cash aid amount. An example of this would be a case in which the only child in the home is a child in receipt of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and whose parent was sanctioned. The CalWORKs case would remain open but there would be no grant until the sanction is lifted. In this situation, the MAP amount is zero and the IRT is \$1,383.

CalFresh IRT

The FFY 2021 CalFresh IRT amounts by household size will be released under separate cover.

Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)/Entrant Cash Assistance (ECA) and Trafficking and Crime Victims Assistance Programs (TCVAP)

The above instructions regarding the IRT also apply to the RCA/ECA Programs in accordance with MPP sections 69-201.4 and 69-301, which state that CalWORKs Program regulations relating to financial eligibility and payments apply to RCA/ECA unless specifically superseded by RCA/ECA regulations (i.e., MPP section 69-206),

which exempt specific income and resources from the income eligibility determination process.

The above instructions regarding the IRT also apply to the TCVAP in accordance with MPP sections 70-105.1, which state that eligible TCVAP clients are entitled to benefits and services to the same extent as refugees as defined in MPP sections 69-202.1 and .2. CalWORKs Program regulations relating to financial eligibility and payments apply to TCVAP unless specifically superseded by TCVAP and RCA/ECA regulations (i.e., MPP sections 69-201.4 and 69-206), which exempt specific income and resources from the income eligibility determination.

If you have any questions regarding this ACL, contact your CalWORKs County Consultant or the CalWORKs Eligibility Bureau main line at (916) 654-1322. For questions regarding the CalFresh IRT, please contact the CalFresh Policy Bureau at (916) 651-8047. For questions regarding RCA/ECA or TCVAP, please contact the Refugee Programs Bureau at (916) 654-4356.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

JENNIFER HERNANDEZ
Deputy Director
Family Engagement and Empowerment Division

Attachment

c: County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA)

Attachment

**Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2021 CalWORKs Income Reporting Threshold (IRT)
Effective October 1, 2020**

The CalWORKs IRT amount for each AU is the lesser of A or B below.

- A. \$996 (55% of the FPL for a family of three) plus the amount of income last used to calculate the AUs monthly benefits or;
- B. The amount of income likely to render the AU of that size ineligible for CalFresh benefits, or 130% of the FPL, as shown in the chart below.

AU Size	Income Reporting Threshold
0	\$1,383
1	\$1,383
2	\$1,868
3	\$2,353
4	\$2,839
5	\$3,324
6	\$3,809
7	\$4,295
8	\$4,780
Each additional member	\$486