

January 17, 2020

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

This All County Welfare Directors Letter (ACWDL) informs counties of the upcoming 2020 county site visits. The purpose of the visits will be to conduct California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Eligibility Case File Reviews. This letter provides the purpose, goals and timelines related to the upcoming reviews.



KIM JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

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January 17, 2020

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

FROM: JENNIFER HERNANDEZ, Deputy Director
Family Engagement and Empowerment Division

SUBJECT: CALWORKS PROGRAM: 2020 ELIGIBILITY CASE FILE REVIEWS

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) would like to announce the upcoming 2020 county site visits. The purpose of these visits will be to conduct CalWORKs Eligibility Case File Reviews. This letter provides the purpose, goals and timelines related to the upcoming reviews.

An audit conducted in 2012 by the California State Auditor, Bureau of State Audits, determined that the CDSS needed to increase the monitoring of CalWORKs Eligibility programs at local County Welfare Departments (CWDs). As a result, CDSS began conducting CalWORKs Eligibility Case File Reviews in March 2015.

The purpose of the CalWORKs Eligibility Case File Reviews is to review cases at the county level in order to increase CDSS' oversight capacity, to assess the implementation of recent CalWORKs Eligibility policy changes, and to assess the need for further technical assistance.

CDSS has enclosed the *CalWORKs Eligibility Case File Review Timeline* as a resource for CWDs to reference in anticipation of the upcoming county visits. The timeline provides the sequence of events for the case file review process, which includes information pertaining to the summary of findings, and when a corrective action plan may be required.

Review Schedule

For the 2020 calendar year, CDSS plans to begin conducting CalWORKs Eligibility Case File Reviews in March. Counties scheduled for review during the 2020 calendar year are as follows:

County Name	Review Month	County Name	Review Month
Tulare	March	Santa Cruz	June
Kern	March	Alameda	July
San Joaquin	April	Humboldt	July
Yuba	April	San Luis Obispo	August
Placer	May	Mendocino	September
San Mateo	May	Sutter	September
Stanislaus	June	Orange	October

Case File Review Plan for 2020

In 2020, CDSS will review 14 counties and approximately 120 to 140 cases. The CalWORKs Eligibility teams will consist of three to six CDSS Early Engagement and Eligibility Bureau staff. The factors that will be reviewed include:

- Citizenship status and residency of the family,
- Composition of the Assistance Unit (AU),
- Child deprivation,
- Family income,
- Family resources,
- The grant calculation, including recoupment of any applicable overpayments;
- Cooperation with child support requirements,
- Whether the case has all required documentation on file,
- If the county assisted the applicant or recipient in obtaining required documentation,
- Timely and adequate notice with respect to requests for Immediate Need, Homeless Assistance or adverse case actions.

Additionally, CDSS will be reviewing the timely lifting of CalWORKs immunization penalties for children who have reached the age of six, and the implementation of the increased CalWORKs overpayment collection threshold to \$250 on closed cases.

CDSS will be conducting reviews of county written policies in conjunction with the case file reviews and will be asking CWDs to provide electronic copies prior to the site visit. The following are the CalWORKs Eligibility written policies to be reviewed:

- Implementation of ACLs 97-70, 98-35, 13-51, and 14-98: CalWORKs immunization policies.

- Implementation of ACLs 15-22 & 15-22E: Changes to the school attendance requirements and the timely lifting of school attendance penalties for children under 16 years of age.
- Implementation of ACL 18-82: Allowing a CalWORKs assistance unit (AU) to receive full child support payments for an eligible stepsibling or half-sibling in lieu of cash aid.
- Implementation of ACL 17-58: Changes to the Inter-County Transfer (ICT) process as a result of SB 1339.

Prior to the site visit, CDSS will provide CWD with a full list of case files (by providing the case numbers) that will be reviewed and the updated *CalWORKs Eligibility Case File Review Tool*. CDSS will require CWD to provide access to CWD's automated system and electronic storage software for each CDSS staff reviewer. CDSS requests county staff be available to field questions during the review.

Case Review Summary

Following the review, CDSS will provide CWD with a draft case review summary report identifying each of the eligibility criteria reviewed in the case files and indicate whether there are any eligibility findings or observations. A finding occurs when aid was approved or denied incorrectly. An observation occurs when aid is approved or denied correctly, but there was an administrative error.

CWDs will have the opportunity to refute any findings or observations, if applicable, by providing additional documentation or evidence to CDSS following the receipt of the draft summary report. CDSS will review any additional documentation provided by CWD and issue a final summary report.

In cases where CDSS identifies a finding in the final summary report, CWD will be required to complete and submit a corrective action plan to CDSS. CDSS will review CWD's corrective action plan to determine if the plan is sufficient to correct the finding and prevent future findings in that area. CDSS will work with CWD if additional information or steps are necessary in order to address the identified area(s).

The Early Engagement and Eligibility Bureau looks forward to open collaboration with you and your staff to ensure the continued success of the CalWORKs program. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this information further, please contact the Early Engagement and Eligibility Bureau at (916) 654-1322.

Enclosure

CalWORKs Eligibility Case File Review Timeline

WEEK	TASKS
Eight Weeks Prior to Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CDSS will confirm the scheduled day of the CalWORKs Eligibility Case File Review (CFR) and request a CWD contact person.
Three to Six Weeks Prior to Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CDSS will work with the CWD to determine logistical details for the visit. The CDSS will provide the CWD with a list of case files (specific case numbers) that will be reviewed and a list of documents that will need to be ready the day of the visit.
One Week Prior to Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CDSS will hold a pre-visit call with the CWD. This call is to inform the CWD of what to expect the day of the visit and to answer any questions they may have regarding any of the materials they have received thus far.
Week of Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CDSS will call the CWD contact the day before the visit to confirm any last-minute logistical details and to answer any questions the CWD may have.
Day of Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CalWORKs Eligibility CFR visit will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrance Meeting: Introductions, facility tour and review of the day's agenda. Case File Review: Review of selected CalWORKs applications, redeterminations, and terminations. Closing Discussion: This will include what the CWD should expect next in the process (post visit), as well as an opportunity for the CWD and/or CDSS to ask any follow-up questions.
Two Week Post-Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CDSS will hold a post-visit debrief conference call with the CWD to discuss the Review. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CDSS will issue its Final Summary of Review following the two-week post-visit conference call when a county <u>does not</u> have any findings and observations.
Six Weeks Post-Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CDSS will issue the draft <i>CalWORKs Eligibility Case File Review Summary</i> and forward to CWD Director, Deputy Director and identified county management. The CDSS will review any additional data requested by the CDSS or submitted by the CWD.
Twelve Weeks Post-Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CDSS will issue the final <i>CalWORKs Eligibility Case File Review Summary</i> and forward to CWD Director and Deputy Director.
45 Days Following Receipt of Final Summary of Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CWD will submit a Corrective Action Plan to the CDSS (if applicable). The CDSS will follow up with the CWD within one week of the CAP receipt to ensure the corrective action plan is sufficient.