

January 20, 2022

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

This All County Welfare Directors Letter (ACWDL) informs counties of the upcoming 2022 California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Eligibility Case File Reviews. This letter identifies the fourteen counties participating in this year's review and provides the purpose, goals and timelines related to the 2022 reviews.



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DIRECTOR

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January 20, 2022

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

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

SUBJECT: 2022 CALWORKS ELIGIBILITY CASE FILE REVIEWS

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) would like to announce the upcoming 2022 county reviews. The purpose of these reviews is 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, the CDSS began conducting CalWORKs Eligibility Case File Reviews in March 2015.

The purpose of the CalWORKs Eligibility Case File Review 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.

The CDSS has enclosed the *CalWORKs Eligibility Case File Review Timeline* as a resource for CWDs to reference in anticipation of the upcoming county reviews. 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 2022 calendar year, the CDSS plans to begin conducting CalWORKs Eligibility Case File Reviews in March. While most reviews will be conducted remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic health emergency, the CDSS will consult with individual counties to determine if an in-person review can be accommodated. Counties scheduled for review during the 2022 calendar year are as follows:

| County Name | Review Month | County Name | Review Month |
|-------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| Riverside | March | San Bernardino | June |
| Napa | March | San Benito | July |
| Tuolumne | April | Amador | August |
| Glenn | April | Mariposa | August |
| Fresno | May | Los Angeles | September |
| San Diego | May | Lassen | September |
| Calaveras | June | Sacramento | October |

Case File Review Plan for 2022

In 2022, the CDSS will review 14 counties and approximately 160 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, and
- Timely and adequate notice with respect to requests for Immediate Need or adverse case actions.

Additionally, when applicable, the CDSS will be reviewing how Diversion services are offered at intake as well as the implementation of CalWORKs signature requirements at application that were first introduced May 1, 2020 as a result of COVID-19, and later made permanent by Assembly Bill 135 effective July 1, 2021.

The CDSS will also be conducting written policy reviews for selected counties in conjunction with the case file reviews and will be asking these CWDs to provide electronic copies prior to the case file review. Five counties, Lassen, Tuolumne, Glenn, Mariposa, and San Benito have been identified as needing to provide electronic copies of the following policies listed.

The following are the CalWORKs Eligibility written policies to be reviewed:

- Implementation of ACLs 97-70, 98-35, 13-51, 14-98, and 17-87: 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 case file review, the CDSS will provide the 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*. The CDSS requests county staff be available to field questions during the review.

Case Review Summary

Following the review, the CDSS will provide the 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 the CDSS following the receipt of the draft summary report. The CDSS will review any additional documentation provided by the CWD and issue a final summary report.

In cases where the CDSS identifies a finding in the final summary report, the CWD will be required to complete and submit a corrective action plan to the CDSS. The CDSS will review the CWD's corrective action plan to determine if the plan is sufficient to correct the finding and prevent future findings in that area. The CDSS will work with the 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 CWEligibilityPolicy@dss.ca.gov.

Enclosure

CalWORKs Eligibility Case File Review Timeline

| WEEK | TASKS |
|--|--|
| Eight Weeks Prior to Review | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) will confirm the scheduled day(s) of the CalWORKs Eligibility Case File Review (CFR) and request a County Welfare Department (CWD) contact person. |
| Three to Six Weeks Prior to Review | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CDSS will work with the CWD to determine logistical details for review. The CDSS will provide the CWD with a list of case files (specific case numbers) that will be reviewed and list of documents that will need to be ready prior to the review. |
| One Week Prior to Review | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CDSS will hold a pre-review call with the CWD. This call is to inform the CWD of what to expect the day of the review and to answer any questions they may have regarding any of the materials they have received thus far. |
| Week of Review | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CDSS will call the CWD contact the day before the review to confirm any last-minute logistical details and to answer any questions the CWD may have. The CalWORKs Eligibility CFR review will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrance Meeting: Introductions 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 (postreview), as well as an opportunity for the CWD and/or CDSS to ask any follow-up questions. |
| Two Week Post-Review | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CDSS will hold a post-review debrief conference call with the CWD to discuss the Review. The CDSS will issue its Final Summary of Review following the two-week post-review conference call when a county does not have any findings or observations. |
| Six Weeks Post-Review | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CDSS will issue the draft <i>CalWORKs 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-Review | <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 (CAP) 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. |
| Six Months After Receipt of Corrective Action Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CDSS will follow up with the CWD to monitor the CWD's progress with the CAP. |