

June 18, 2021

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

The purpose of this All County Welfare Directors Letter is to provide programmatic guidance to the CalWORKs Home Visiting Program (HVP) counties that have opted to participate in implementing the Laptop Loaner Pilot Program, also known as Laptops 4 Life (L4L).



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

June 18, 2021

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER (ACWDL)

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

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

SUBJECT: RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE FOR CALIFORNIA WORK OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO KIDS HOME VISITING PROGRAM - LAPTOP LOANER PILOT PROGRAM ALSO KNOWN AS LAPTOPS 4 LIFE (L4L) PROGRAM.

REFERENCES: [WELFARE INSTITUTIONS CODE \(WIC\) ARTICLE 3.4 \(11330.6 – 11330.9\)](#); [EXECUTIVE ORDER N-33-20](#); [ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER DATED OCTOBER 19, 2020](#); [ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE I-4-20](#); [ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE I-55-20](#)

The purpose of this ACWDL is to provide guidance to the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Home Visiting Program (HVP) counties opting to participate in the Laptop Loaner Pilot Program, also known as Laptops 4 Life (L4L) Program. The California Department of Social Services (Department) and Cell-Ed have partnered together to establish the L4L Program. The pilot will distribute laptops and smartphones to identified CalWORKs HVP participants, while also providing participants resources to support digital navigation and distance learning via Cell-Ed.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

On March 19, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom issued [Executive Order N-33-20](#), which advised all non-essential working, California residents to remain in their residences in an effort to reduce the spread of Coronavirus Disease 19 (COVID-19). This has resulted in significant changes to the operation of CalWORKs home visiting services statewide, including socially distanced and virtual participation in CalWORKs HVP. The COVID-19 pandemic and stay at home order impacted the lives of all Californians, especially those most vulnerable, limiting their access to resources. To increase virtual participation in home visiting services and to address the limited resources for California's most vulnerable population, the Department and Cell-Ed have partnered to establish the L4L Program. Cell-Ed, in coordination with Tech Exchange, will administer the procurement and distribution of laptops and smartphones to CalWORKs HVP participants.

CELL-ED

Cell-Ed is a voluntary learning program that enables adults to acquire essential skills in various courses via distance learning on mobile devices. Cell-Ed brings extensive experience to the partnership by offering mobile e-learning solutions for vulnerable populations who have historically had little or no access to technology and devices to enable remote learning. Cell-Ed will procure laptop and cell phone devices to be used as a component of digital literacy and educational training programs. Applications such as language and digital literacy, numeracy and job skills, and other custom programs, will be offered via training and data analytics platforms. The applications will be used to better reach participants by text message and through coaching encounters, thereby allowing CalWORKs HVP participants to increase their skills remotely. Cell-Ed, in coordination with their partner, Tech Exchange, will provide instructions for Chromebook setup to be distributed upon delivery of devices to participants. Tech Exchange will handle most of the technical support for program participants. In addition, Cell-Ed will provide coaches to support learners with their new equipment and coursework and send weekly Digital Literacy tips via email and text message. Participants may opt out of coaching support and weekly tips.

Additional resources for accessing other Cell-Ed programs through the Department include:

- [All County Information Notice \(ACIN\) I-55-20 dated July 1, 2020](#), explains that Cell-Ed provides CalFresh Employment & Training (E&T), CalWORKs Welfare to Work (WTW), and Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)/Trafficking and Crime Victims Assistance Program (TCVAP) client's education and training through distance learning. The ACIN No. I-55-20 highlights the features and programs available through Cell-Ed and explains how Cell-Ed courses may count towards WTW and Refugee Social Services activities; as well as CalFresh E&T activities under Supervised Job Search, Education, and Vocational Training.
- [The ACWDL dated October 19, 2020](#) provides guidance on counting homework time as allowable activity hours for clients assigned to Cell-Ed.

For more information on the Cell-Ed program, please visit the [Cell-Ed website](#) or contact Cell-Ed at california@cell-ed.com.

CalWORKs HVP: LAPTOPS 4 LIFE PILOT PROGRAM (L4L)

The L4L Program will provide laptops and smartphones to CalWORKs HVP participants, allowing participants access to participate in virtual home visiting services and family educational activities. The partnership between the Department and Cell-Ed is to establish a laptop distribution program that will place laptops and smartphones in the hands of California's most vulnerable populations, with the goal of increasing digital literacy, and building essential skills through additional services provided by Cell-Ed. The intended outcome of the program is to enable low-skilled, low-literacy, and low-wage workers access to remote workforce training opportunities that will increase their employability by removing barriers to employment. There is a limited quantity of smartphones for the L4L program. Allocations of smartphones will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Once inventory is exhausted, smartphones will not be replenished.

Free Wi-Fi is not covered by the program, however, resources for reduced cost broadband services will be included on the virtual toolkit provided by Cell-Ed. Another resource for broadband services is the Emergency Broadband Benefit which is a Federal Communications Commission program to help households struggling to pay for internet service during the

pandemic. More information can be found on the [Emergency Broadband Benefit](#) website.

ELIGIBILITY

Participants must be eligible and enrolled in the CalWORKs HVP to receive a laptop and smartphone. Refer to [Welfare and Institutions Code section 11330.6\(c\)\(2\)](#) for CalWORKs HVP eligibility. Additionally, participants must not have received a laptop or smartphone through the CalWORKs program in the past. Participants that have already received a laptop or tablet purchased with the CalWORKs HVP material goods fund will not be eligible for a device under this program. Participants can request both a smartphone and a laptop if the county or home visiting partner has assessed that the family is in need of both devices for the household. The home visitor(s) who are requesting multiple laptops for one family household must provide a written explanation of need on the order form. Loan of the devices is indefinite, and participants are permitted to keep the laptops.

DISTRIBUTION PLAN

- Each participating County Welfare Department (CWD) should work in coordination with their home visiting partner(s) to establish the home visiting assessment process that will determine a participant's need for a device. This process could mirror the assessment process used for issuance of the \$500 material goods funds found on the [ACIN No. 1-4-20 dated January 22, 2020](#).
- To request equipment, the CWD or home visiting partner must first register on the [L4L Program](#) website. Cell-Ed will send a virtual toolkit to all registrants with a link to request equipment and next steps.
- When requesting equipment, staff will need to provide their information, their supervisor's information, the number of devices requested, a written explanation of need if more than one laptop is requested, and the individual client information if known.
- Once the online L4L Program request form has been completed, Cell-Ed and their partner Tech Exchange, will process the request and ship the device to the county or the participant. For devices shipped to the county, the CWD and the home visiting partner must establish a process to transport the device(s) to the participant.
- When distributing laptops to participants, the home visitor will need to register the laptop using the Checklist on the Cell-Ed app and may need to oversee the initial setup of the laptop with the participant. Wi-Fi access is required to perform the initial setup. For laptops shipped directly to participants, the home visitor may need to walk through the initial setup process with the participant.
- Consent from all participants to share their information (such as SSN or CalWORKs ID#) with Cell-Ed and the Department for shipping and tracking purposes may be needed. Counties have the flexibility to create their own form or use the template available on the virtual toolkit provided by Cell-Ed. Counties should consult with their legal staff to determine what is necessary to share client information for this pilot program.
- Cell-Ed and Tech Exchange will keep a spreadsheet of all serial numbers and the shipping information for tracking purposes.
- Counties and home visitors will contact Cell-Ed if there are any issues with distribution.

PARTICIPATING COUNTIES

The following 20 counties are piloting the L4L Program for HVP: Alameda, Butte, Fresno, Humboldt, Imperial, Kern, Los Angeles, Mono, Monterey, Napa, Placer, Riverside,

Sacramento, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Shasta, Solano, Stanislaus, and Tuolumne. Counties and their partner agencies participating in the program will not be held liable for missing or damaged laptops.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions on this ACWDL or more information on how counties can opt-in to the L4L Program, please contact the CalWORKs HVP Unit at CalWORKsHVP@dss.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed by

JENNIFER HERNANDEZ, Deputy Director
Family Engagement and Empowerment Division