

January 17, 2024

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

This All County Welfare Directors Letter (ACWDL) informs counties of the upcoming 2024 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 background, purpose, goals, and timelines related to the 2024 reviews.



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January 17, 2024

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

FROM: ALEXIS FERNÁNDEZ GARCIA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT DIVISION

SUBJECT: 2024 CALWORKS ELIGIBILITY CASE FILE REVIEWS

REFERENCE: [SENATE BILL 1339 \(CHAPTER 801, STATUTES OF 2016\)](#); ALL
COUNTY LETTERS [97-70](#), [98-35](#), [13-51](#), [14-98](#), [15-22](#), [15-22E](#), [17-58](#),
[17-87](#), [18-82](#) AND [23-109](#).

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

This ACWDL informs counties of the upcoming 2024 CalWORKs Eligibility Case File Reviews and provides the background, purpose, goals, and timelines related to the 2024 reviews. An audit conducted in 2012 by the California State Auditor, Bureau of State Audits, determined that the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) must 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 Reviews is to review cases at the county level to assess the implementation of recent CalWORKs Eligibility policy changes, assess the need for further technical assistance and increase CDSS' oversight capacity. Attached to this letter is 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, including information on the summary of findings and when a Corrective Action Plan may be required.

REVIEW SCHEDULE

For the 2024 calendar year, CDSS plans to begin conducting the CalWORKs Eligibility Case File Reviews in March. Counties scheduled for review during the 2024 calendar year are as follows (subject to change if necessary):

County Name	Review Month	County Name	Review Month
Shasta	March	Santa Barbara	July
Contra Costa	March	Santa Clara	August
San Francisco	April	Madera	August
Merced	May	Solano	September
Kings	May	Butte	September
Monterey	June	Ventura	October
Yolo	July	Imperial	October

The 2024 reviews will be conducted via a hybrid model, wherein some county reviews may be conducted remotely, some may be conducted in person, and some may be conducted through a combination of both remote and in-person reviews. The Lead Manager and Lead Analyst for each review team will consult with the county staff in advance of the scheduled review month to determine which of these review methods will be used.

CASE FILE REVIEW PLAN FOR 2024

CDSS will review 14 counties and approximately 170 cases. CalWORKs Eligibility teams will consist of two 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,
- 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 the required documentation, and
- Provision of timely and adequate notice concerning requests for Immediate Need or adverse case actions.

CDSS will also conduct written policy reviews in conjunction with the case file reviews if the policies have not been reviewed during prior county review cycles.

The following are the CalWORKs Eligibility written policies that may be reviewed:

- Implementation of ACLs [97-70](#), [98-35](#), [13-51](#), [14-98](#), and [17-87](#): CalWORKs immunization policies.
- Implementation of ACLs [15-22](#) and [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 AU to receive full child support payments for an eligible step-sibling or half-sibling instead of cash aid.
- Implementation of [ACL 17-58](#): Changes to the Inter-County Transfer (ICT) process due to [SB 1339](#), and
- Domestic abuse policies, documentation and notices as detailed in [ACL 23-109](#).

Prior to the reviews, CDSS will provide the CWD with a complete list of the case files (by providing the case numbers) that will be reviewed, along with the updated *CalWORKs Eligibility Case File Review Tool*. The CDSS requests that 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 indicating whether there are any eligibility findings or observations. A finding occurs when aid is approved or denied incorrectly. An observation occurs when aid is approved or denied correctly, but there is 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 after 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 any findings in the final summary report, the CWD will be required to complete and submit a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to the CDSS. The CDSS will review the CWD's CAP to determine if the plan is sufficient to correct the current finding(s) and prevent any future findings in that area. The CDSS will work with the CWD if additional information or steps are necessary 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.

Attachment

CalWORKs Eligibility Case File Review Timeline

WEEK	TASKS
Eight Weeks Prior to Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CDSS will confirm the scheduled day(s) of the CalWORKs Eligibility CFR and request a CWD contact person.
Three to Six Weeks Prior to Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CDSS will work with the CWD to determine logistical details for review. 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"> 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"> 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 (post-review), 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"> CDSS will hold a post-review debrief conference call with the CWD to discuss the Review. 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"> 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"> 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"> 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"> CDSS will follow up with the CWD to monitor the CWD's progress with the CAP.