

January 24, 2025

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

This letter provides guidance on existing California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids, Welfare to Work policies and flexibilities available to County Health and Human Services Agencies to serve individuals adversely affected by the Los Angeles and Ventura County fires and windstorm events as detailed in Governor Newsom's California State of Emergency declaration on January 7, 2025 ([Executive Order N-2-25](#)) and the federal Public Health Emergency declaration on [January 10, 2025](#).



JENNIFER TROIA
DIRECTOR

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



GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

January 24, 2025

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

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

SUBJECT: CALIFORNIA WORK OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO
KIDS (CALWORKS), WELFARE TO WORK (WTW) GUIDANCE
FOR SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY
THE LOS ANGELES AND VENTURA COUNTY FIRES AND
WINDSTORM EVENTS

REFERENCE: [ACWDL DATED OCTOBER 10, 2023](#); [ALL COUNTY LETTER 21-134](#); MANUAL OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (MPP)
SECTIONS [40-115.22](#); [40-126.33](#); [40-126.34](#); [42-711](#); [42-713](#);
[42-712](#); [44-211.4](#); [44-211.541\(a\) and \(b\)\(2\)](#); WELFARE &
INSTITUTIONS CODE SECTIONS [11320.3\(f\)](#), [11330](#) and [11330.5](#);
[CAL-OES WEBPAGE](#); [EXECUTIVE ORDER N-2-25](#); [U.S.](#)
[DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES](#)
[DETERMINATION THAT A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY](#)
[EXISTS IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA AS A RESULT OF THE](#)
[CONTINUED CONSEQUENCES OF WILDFIRES](#);
[ADMINISTRATION FOR STRATEGIC PREPAREDNESS AND](#)
[RESPONSE DECLARATIONS OF A PUBLIC HEALTH](#)
[EMERGENCY WEBPAGE](#)

The purpose of this All County Welfare Directors Letter (ACWDL) is to provide CalWORKs WTW guidance to County Health and Human Service Agencies (HHSAs) to serve individuals directly affected by the Los Angeles County and Ventura County fires and windstorm conditions detailed in Governor Newsom's proclamation of a State of Emergency in California on January 7, 2025 ([Executive Order N-2-25](#)) and the federal Public Health Emergency (PHE) declaration on [January 10, 2025](#).

This letter authorizes County HHSAs to implement county-wide policies and procedures for the provision of WTW “blanket good cause” suspending CalWORKs WTW hourly participation requirements during the declared State of Emergency and federal PHE, as authorized under current statute at [WIC 11320.3\(f\)](#). This letter also reminds counties of the existing eligibility flexibilities for families impacted by a state or federal-declared disaster emergency.

The California Department of Social Services (Department) will update this guidance as needed and as additional information becomes available.

WELFARE-TO-WORK PARTICIPATION AND BLANKET GOOD CAUSE

County HHSAs in a State of Emergency (currently Los Angeles and Ventura County) are authorized to implement county-wide policies and procedures to grant temporary “blanket” good cause for suspending CalWORKs WTW hourly participation requirements during the State of Emergency. Affected WTW participants may continue to participate voluntarily as they are willing and able. As a reminder, good cause determinations do not stop participants’ 60-month time on aid clocks.

Each county implementing a “blanket” good cause policy should establish an expiration date for that policy consistent with WIC Section 11320.3(f) that considers the time necessary to effectively reengage clients in WTW and extends no longer than the end of the state emergency declaration related to the fires. Following the end of the emergency declaration, counties are advised to continue utilizing good cause and exemptions from WTW participation to the extent possible under CalWORKs policy, on a case-by-case basis, to provide relief to participants experiencing health and economic impacts of the fires. The expiration date does not constitute a “hard deadline” to engage participants in good cause status. Counties should follow normal operating procedures for re-engaging participants in WTW.

The most up-to-date State of Emergency proclamations may be found at the [Cal-OES webpage](#) and PHE information may be found at the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response’s [“Declarations of a Public Health Emergency”](#) webpage.

ELIGIBILITY FLEXIBILITIES & REMINDERS

Current recipients of CalWORKs impacted by a state and/or federally declared disaster may be eligible for several exceptions or waivers of existing rules, including nonrecurring special needs payments, an exception to the once-every-12-month limit for Homeless Assistance (HA), and WTW requirements. Counties are also reminded that current recipients may be eligible for housing support and services through the CalWORKs Housing Support Program (HSP). For a more detailed list of program flexibilities and policy reminders, please refer to the [ACWDL dated October 10, 2023](#). This ACWDL will be updated to include additional flexibilities related to domestic violence.

As a reminder, due to disaster related relocation, it is anticipated that some evacuees will apply for CalWORKs outside of their home county. Evacuees may lack the documentation needed to verify eligibility and determine their grant amount (i.e., identification, age, social security number, value of property/resources, income, etc.) and may not be able to obtain such documentation within standard application processing time periods.

If evidence does not exist, or if the applicant and county make a good-faith effort to obtain verification of the evacuee's identity, time on aid, and linking and non-linking conditions of CalWORKs eligibility and are unable to contact the necessary entities/institutions, the county must accept the evacuee's statement signed under penalty of perjury in lieu of verification. Additionally, counties are reminded of existing flexibilities related to pregnancy verification, in-person photo identification requirements, and signature requirements as outlined in [ACL 21-134](#).

Families receiving ongoing CalWORKs assistance through the recovery period, must comply with regular verification rules as soon as practicable. Counties must advise families to make every effort to obtain and provide documentation of factors impacting their eligibility during the payment period, and to seek assistance from the county if they need assistance doing so.

CONTACT

If you have any questions or need additional guidance regarding the information in this letter, contact the CalWORKs Engagement Bureau at (916) 654-2137 or at CWEngagementPolicy@dss.ca.gov. For questions concerning CDSS Housing and Homelessness Programs, please contact the Housing and Homelessness Division at Housing@dss.ca.gov. For questions concerning eligibility, please contact the CalWORKs Early Engagement and Eligibility Bureau at CWEligibilityPolicy@dss.ca.gov.