



CDSS

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February 17, 2010

ALL COUNTY LETTER 10-09

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CalWORKs PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
ALL COUNTY WELFARE-TO-WORK COORDINATORS
ALL REFUGEE PROGRAM COORDINATORS
ALL CONSORTIA MANAGERS

**SUBJECT: CALIFORNIA WORK OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO KIDS
(CalWORKs) WELFARE-TO-WORK (WTW) SUPPORTIVE SERVICE
REIMBURSEMENT**

REFERENCE: ALL COUNTY LETTER (ACL) No. 04-04 and ALL COUNTY INFORMATION
NOTICE (ACIN) I-50-04

This letter provides counties with clarification on payment for supportive services, such as textbooks and school supplies, when a recipient is eligible for Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) and/or Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE) programs. Additionally, this letter addresses coordination with the college financial aid and campus CalWORKs offices, and the EOPS and CARE programs to ensure that participants receive timely and appropriate non-duplicative supportive services.

CalWORKs Welfare-To-Work (WTW) participants at community colleges must meet specific eligibility requirements for the EOPS/CARE programs. The services these programs provide may vary among colleges along with the demand of non-CalWORKs students for these services. The EOPS/CARE or campus CalWORKs office may not provide ancillary services needed for educational WTW activities and the county cannot require that a student use such services in lieu of CalWORKs supportive services, with one exception as described below.

Pursuant to Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) Section 42-750.332, counties cannot deny or reduce WTW supportive services if a participant indicates that financial aid is not available to meet the individual's supportive services needs. In accordance with All County Information Notice I-50-04, counties are required to provide all recipients participating in education or training activities, including self-initiated plans, with the WTW 8, Student Financial Aid Statement, Welfare-to-Work Supportive Services form. The WTW 8 provides information to participants about the voluntary decision to use student financial aid to pay for supportive services, and is used to document a participant's decision regarding whether or not to use financial aid, including EOPS and CARE, to pay for CalWORKs eligible supportive services.

It is key to use the WTW 8 with all students, to ensure that CalWORKs WTW participants are adequately informed of their rights and responsibilities regarding financial aid and supportive services. If students bring in the WTW 8, workers should review the information required and sign the certification.

EOPS and CARE Programs

The financial aid offices at each community college administer and coordinate more than a dozen local, state, and federal student aid programs, including grants awarded by EOPS and CARE. EOPS provides academic and financial support to community college students, which may include CalWORKs recipients, whose educational and socioeconomic backgrounds might prevent them from successfully attending college. CalWORKs and non-CalWORKs students must meet all EOPS and CARE eligibility requirements to receive supportive service offered by the program. EOPS supplements CalWORKs eligible supportive services and a college's other financial aid programs and services, which may include book services, such as vouchers, loans, or grants. The extent of CalWORKs eligible supportive services, financial assistance and EOPS services provided varies by campus and is restricted by federal Title IV financial aid regulations to not exceed a student's total cost of attendance.

As a supplemental component of EOPS, CARE provides educational supportive services designed for the academically underprepared, low income, single parent student. Services may include grants and allowances for educationally related expenses including assistance with childcare expenses for in-class and study hours, textbooks and school supplies, transportation costs, and other educational support. CARE funds are supplemental monies that should be used for services in addition to those provided to other EOPS students.

Some community colleges choose to offer aid restricted to specific goods or services, such as a book voucher that can only be used for required textbooks. Other community colleges offer assistance not restricted to specific educational expenses. Each college receiving EOPS and CARE funds may determine how best to administer their programs based on the needs of the student population served. Under Title 5 state program regulations, EOPS and CARE grants are awarded to EOPS-eligible students for the purpose of reducing potential student loan indebtedness, or to reduce unmet financial need after Pell grants and other state, federal, or institutional financial aid is awarded to the student.

Additional information on these two programs, along with a comparison chart of CalWORKs, EOPS, and CARE programs, can be found at the [California Community Colleges website](#).

Advancement/Reimbursement for Supportive Services obtained through a County Welfare Department or EOPS and CARE Programs

Counties are reminded that MPP Section 42-750.21 states that payments for supportive services, except childcare as described in Chapter 47-100, must be advanced to the participant when necessary and desired so that the participant need not use personal funds to pay for these services. Payment for supportive services, whether by advance pay or reimbursement must be made as soon as administratively possible and should not impede the individual's participation in the WTW activity.

Counties must encourage participants to apply for financial aid, including educational grants, scholarships, and awards. Also, counties must consider the availability of financial aid received by the participant in the form of educational grants, scholarships and awards when determining the need for WTW supportive services payments. However, unless earmarked for specific needs, such assistance cannot be presumed to be available for supportive services needs.

When a participant receives CalWORKs eligible supportive services aid through the EOPS and/or CARE program that a college does not restrict to specific goods or service, the county must reimburse the participant for the supportive service he or she has obtained. Since the unrestricted aid received could have been used for a different educational expense, the recipient has the right to decide whether to use it for a CalWORKs eligible supportive service.

Conversely, when a participant receives supportive services aid through the EOPS and/or CARE programs and the community college has restricted its use to a specific good or service the participant is asking reimbursement for, the county should not reimburse the recipient to avoid any duplication of payments. County CalWORKs staff, however, should confirm that if the payment is restricted to a specific item or need, whether the student has school-related needs for that item that exceed what CalWORKs would cover, prior to determining that the need has been met or reduced. These forms of restricted aid have no monetary value outside of their specific purpose and cannot be applied towards any other need.

Example: If the EOPS provides a book voucher restricted to recommended books, and the county does not provide supportive services for such optional books, the county cannot count the book voucher against the participant's eligible supportive services. If the EOPS voucher was for books, without specifying what kind, the student may use this to purchase books for which the CalWORKs program would not otherwise provide supportive services. In this case, CalWORKs must provide supportive services. If, however, the EOPS voucher was specifically earmarked for required textbooks, CalWORKs would not provide supportive services for those books, as that would be duplicative aid.

Appropriate Coordination with EOPS, CARE and Other Services

Pursuant to MPP Section 42-750.334 - .335, counties are to attempt to enter into written agreements with financial aid offices at educational institutions providing welfare-to-work

services in order to avoid duplication of supportive services payments to CalWORKs WTW participants. When a county has an agreement with a community college in which the college provides restricted EOPS or CARE aid to CalWORKs WTW participants for services that would have otherwise been an eligible CalWORKs supportive service, the county should refer the recipient to the EOPS and CARE program at that college to determine eligibility for supportive services that must not duplicate what a recipient is entitled to receive from the county. In situations where such agreements are not in place, a county cannot withhold reimbursement or advance payment for a CalWORKs eligible supportive service.

Counties are strongly encouraged to collaborate with their local community colleges to ensure proper coordination of local resources, so that CalWORKs WTW participants receive the supportive services needed to participate in WTW activities as expeditiously as possible.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact your California Department of Social Services Employment Bureau county consultant at (916) 654-2137.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

CHARR LEE METSKER
Deputy Director
Welfare to Work Division