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# CCWRO Welfare News - 2018-05

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## 2018-2019 State Budget Highlights

### The State Budget makes several major changes:

1. CalWORKs grants will see a 10% increase effective April 1, 2019. See **Table #1** below. This is a down payment on getting the CalWORKs grants up to 50% of the federal poverty level. However, as shown on **Table #2** on page 2, California has a long way to get the CalWORKs average grant above 50% of the federal poverty level.

2. SSI recipients will start getting food stamp effective June 1, 2019. The budget trailer bill, AB 1811, Section 38 provides for CDSS to consult with advocates when developing the ending SSI cash out.

3. CalWORKs and SSI COLAs are restored effective 2022-2023 budget year.

4. Advocates and beneficiaries of public benefits programs will be invited to be involved in the construction of the new state computer system called CalACES, that would replace the Leader Replacement System (LRS) and CalWIN.

Replacing computer systems for public benefits has always been a nightmare for beneficiaries of the public benefit programs. What would the 10% increase mean to the Average CalWORKs grant?

**(Table #1) 2018-2019 State Budget CalWORKs 10% Grant Increase Impact**

2018 v. 2019 Region #1				2018 v. 2019 Region #2		
Family Size	MAP for Region #1 2018	MAP for Region #1- Eff. 4-19	\$ Increase	MAP for Region # 2 2018	MAP for Region 4-19	\$ Increase
1	\$355	\$391	\$36	336	\$370	\$34
2	\$577	\$635	\$58	549	\$604	\$55
3	\$714	\$785	\$71	680	\$748	\$68
4	\$852	\$937	\$85	810	\$891	\$81
5	\$968	\$1,065	\$97	922	\$1,014	\$92
6	\$1,087	\$1,196	\$109	1035	\$1,139	\$104
7	\$1,195	\$1,315	\$120	1136	\$1,250	\$114
8	\$1,301	\$1,431	\$130	1239	\$1,363	\$124
9	\$1,407	\$1,548	\$141	1340	\$1,474	\$134
10	\$1,511	\$1,662	\$151	1438	\$1,582	\$144

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**TABLE # 2- Average Grant**

**2018 v. 2019  
Average CalWORKs Grants**

Family Size	2018 Average Grant	% of 2018 FPL	2019 Average Grant	% of 2019 FPL
1	\$280	28%	\$308	30%
2	\$456	33%	\$502	37%
3	\$565	33%	\$621	36%
4	\$673	32%	\$740	35%
5	\$765	31%	\$842	34%
6	\$859	31%	\$945	34%
7	\$944	34%	\$1,038	33%
8	\$1029	32%	\$1,132	32%
9	\$1113	31%	\$1,224	31%
10	\$1194	31%	\$1,314	31%

\* Estimated

**CalACES System - Coming Soon**

The California Automated Consortium Eligibility System (CalACES) will be used by 40 Counties. CalACES includes the 39 C-IV counties and Los Angeles County. By 2022-2023 CalACES will be on all 58 counties.

CalACES, funded with federal and state funds will be operated by the counties and not the State.

CalACES is a customer-based, on-line and fully integrated case management system that will manage data for the following public assistance programs: (1) California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs); (2) Cal-Fresh (formerly known as Food Stamps); (3) County Medical Services Program (CMSP) / Medi-Cal; (4) Foster Care; (5) Adoption Assistance Program (AAP); (6) Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI); (7) Child Care Program; (8) Employment Services (WtW, FSET); (9) Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (KinGAP); (10) Refugee Assistance; (11) Approved Relative Caregiver Program (ARC)

CCWRO's website ([www.ccwro.org](http://www.ccwro.org)) contains the 2018 CalACES Regional Representation Telephone Rosters and more. Go to "contacts" at [ccwro.org](http://ccwro.org).

**IN BRIEF**

✓ According to County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), Counties have asked for guidance from Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) on how to use the on-line Kelley Blue Book (KBB) since it asks for information that is not always known to the counties. DHCS stated that "... counties are to use the lowest possible value when you don't know the specifics."

✓ **MC 355 Revisions** – During the March 1, 2018 CWDA Medical Care Committee meeting there was a discussion the MC 355 revision. The committee minutes state: "CalWIN reported that they are trying to automate the MC355 for counties and noticed that there is only room for one date for verification. CalWIN brought up the questions as to whether or not this is potentially against policy as different verification items have different dates.....Discussion surrounding the use of the CW2200 for MC only cases. DHCS reported they would look into the viability surrounding the CW2200, but would like to move forward with releasing the MC 355 since the process is almost complete. DHCS stated they would attempt to address any potentially usage of the CW 2200 when the ACWDL is released for the updated MC 355."

**CCWRO COMMENT:** It appears a defective MC355 will go live.

✓ At the same CWDA Medical Care Committee meeting, DHCS reported that during 2018 they plan to review 12 counties, 3 counties each quarter. DHCS will review about 150 cases with the focus being on renewals. CWDA demanded that DHCS share positive practices they see as a result of the reviews. **CCWRO COMMENT:** How about the negative results?

✓ On March 29, 2018, Fresno County emailed CDSS CalWORKS bureau stating that Mr. Miller said at a CWDA CAT meeting "...the issuance process for the diaper issuance was not intended to be any different that our normal ancillary process. The ACL 18-38 does not appear to allow us the same flexibility as was presented during our discussion. Based on the ACL, Fresno would have to change business processes for the issuance and notify all of our eligible participants of this change. On March 29, 2018, Mr. Miller of CDSS responded that "The letter did not change rules around the method for providing supportive services payments. Below language was included in the letter, as provided under existing regulations"

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“Payment for diapers will be distributed on the household’s existing Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card as a supportive service. If a warrant or direct deposit is requested by the client, there must be a rationale for choosing the alternative payment option to EBT, as provided in MPP §16-325.313(a). There will be no new EBT benefit code developed for the diaper issuance.”

**PRACTICE POINTER:** *It appears that many counties, including Fresno County, have been unlawfully using checks to issue WtW transportation and ancillary services payments. The rule is that a check is only issued to the participant if the participant requests a check. Do you know your County’s policy?*

✓ At the March 1, 2018 CalFresh CWDA meeting, Stanislaus County asked when is the newborn added if the baby is born after the application date, but prior to approval? CDSS answered: “The newborn is added effective it’s date of birth (DOB).”

✓ CDSS has mailed voluntary surveys regarding reducing overissuances and overpayments. 38 counties have responded. CDSS will be scheduling site visits later this year.

✓ At the April 12, 2018 CWDA Adult Services Committee meeting counties complained that ALJs questioned the credentials of the social workers. CWDA considered that questioning of the county staff’s credentials to be an “attack” on county workers. CWDA promised to work with CDSS to make sure that judges do not question the credentials of the county workers.

**CCWRO COMMENT:** It appears that if the law requires the workers to have certain credentials, no one should ask the worker if they possess the credentials? Why do counties workers ask their own clients for proof of everything under the sun?

✓ At a CWDA meeting counties were told that if they disagree with the ALJ’s decision, they should ask for a rehearing and then escalate it to Charissa Miguelino of the Adult Services Branch who assured counties that “... the Presiding ALJs are supportive of addressing issues”. Counties were also told that if they have “issues on social worker treatment” ...send the concerns to the Presiding ALJ/state hearing. County staff should not be targeted that way.”

## County Abuse Report

✓ A Kern County mom, who has been separated for several years, lives with her kids in a RV. They did not have a place to park the RV so her ex-husband was nice enough to let them park their RV where he rents a home. He charges her \$200 a month for rent. There is no legal custody order for the children and the parents have split care and control. The children sleep at Mom’s place half the time and Dad’s the rest of the time.

On 10-11-17 Kern County told DSS that the County wants to deny CalWORKs and suggested that even though they are living apart and have shared custody, since they live on the same land, and share the same address, CalWORKs should be denied. DSS agreed with the county asserting that “home” is broadly defined as “any location where a family resides” per §40-129.14.

**CCWRO COMMENT:** Should the mom have parked the RV in a dangerous place, putting the children at risk and then be eligible for CalWORKs? This is a clear case of 50%/50% and the mom and kids should be eligible for CalWORKs. PI#17-26.

✓ On 11-28-17, Sacramento County asked DSS how to treat bit coins and virtual currency for purposes of CalWORKs and CalFresh in that there is nothing in state law or regulations relative treatment of bit coins or virtual currency. On 3-1-18 CDSS responded that “Virtual currency shall not be counted as income because it does not have legal tender status in any jurisdiction. If a bit coin is converted to U.S. currency once, it shall be considered a nonrecurring lump sum payment and it shall be counted as a resource in the month received per 7 CFR § 273(9)(c)(8). If the transfer is recurring it shall be considered income.

**CCWRO COMMENT:** 7 CFR § 273(9)(c)(8) and the DSS response did not make it clear that this rule only applies to CalFresh and not to CalWORKs.