



February 27, 2019

To: The Honorable Dr. Joaquin Arambula  
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1

Honorable Members  
Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1

From: Frank J. Mecca, Executive Director

**RE: FUND CALWORKS 2.0 AUTOMATION IN SAWS**

The County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA) respectfully requests your consideration and support for funding to automate the CalWORKs 2.0 tools in the SAWS and make them available to CalWORKs participants via the SAWS online web portals, as part of the 2019-20 budget. Currently, the CalWORKs 2.0 tools are primarily paper based, and there is no way to store much of the information they capture in the SAWS, which is the system of record for the CalWORKs program. This lack of automation impedes outcome tracking.

The CalWORKs program has changed significantly over the last 25 years in response to economic, budgetary, and political forces. Some of these changes have expanded the options available for helping customers, but there is still room for improvement. Recognizing this, counties have been working to identify enhancements to the program that incorporate emerging research evidence on brain science, behavioral science, and how adults learn and build critical skills. Collectively, we have been calling this new approach “CalWORKs 2.0,” and we have engaged the state and legislative staff, as well as advocates who work with CalWORKs parents, to share our learning and incorporate their feedback. Overall, this effort offers county staff a new way to engage with their customers that focuses on helping them set and achieve their goals.

CalWORKs 2.0’s success depends on a culture shift—away from compliance-oriented, directive case management and toward supportive and responsive interactions between the case manager and the customer. These interactions are focused on identifying, planning for, achieving, and revising goals. This culture shift may already be happening in many counties to some degree; CalWORKs 2.0 gives them specific tools and resources that can be used to solidify and operationalize the concepts.

Automation of the CalWORKs 2.0 tools in SAWS will make it easier for both CalWORKs participants and their county workers to use them, and thus encourage greater adoption of the tools. It will also allow the data they gather to be recorded in SAWS, where it can be used for future analysis and reporting. Specifically, SAWS automation will include the following:

- o Creating a web version of the five CalWORKs 2.0 tools, making them available on the SAWS portals for CalWORKs participants to complete, submit, and update (displaying the last version's information for update), in English and Spanish.
- o Adding the necessary fields to SAWS databases so that workers can store and/or update information from these tools in SAWS.
- o Providing the ability for counties to export/download this data.

As these tools are relatively new, and will be newly automated, report programming is not included in this request, as counties need additional time to determine what types of ongoing reports will add the most value. CWDA anticipates that such reports will be developed in the future, after all counties have migrated to CalSAWS.

Based on estimates gathered from the SAWS, we anticipate it will cost \$5.07 million in total costs for automation, which is anticipated to take 9 to 12 months from the time that funding is available and the changes are approved for implementation.

We urge you to include funding in the 2019-20 budget to automate the CalWORKs 2.0 tools in SAWS, which will enable counties to encourage greater adoption of these promising tools in supporting CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work participants. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

cc: Gail Gronert, Office of the Assembly Speaker  
Jason Sisney, Office of the Assembly Speaker  
Nicole Vazquez, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1  
Cyndi Hillery, Assembly Republican Fiscal Office  
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