



CWDA

May 30, 2014

To: The Honorable Nancy Skinner, Chair
Assembly Budget Committee

The Honorable Mark Leno, Chair
Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee

Honorable Members
Budget Conference Committee

From: Frank J. Mecca, Executive Director, CWDA

RE: Housing Support in CalWORKs (5180-101-0001) – SUPPORT ASSEMBLY VERSION

The County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) respectfully urges your support of the Assembly proposal to provide housing support to families in the CalWORKs program. Homeless and housing instability are two significant barriers to self-sufficiency, and addressing them is a priority issue for CWDA.

Stable housing is a fundamental foundation for the health, well-being, and educational attainment of children and for parents' ability to find and keep a job. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, residential stability is a necessary precursor to effectively addressing barriers that inhibit self-sufficiency, and research is clear that children who lack safe and stable housing demonstrate poorer academic and social outcomes.

In the CalWORKs program today, housing support is minimal, and families frequently struggle to find and retain safe, affordable housing. In fact, the United States Department of Health and Human Services has estimated that as many as 72 percent of welfare recipients experience housing instability and homelessness. The provision of housing support in the CalWORKs program will help to meet a critical need for families working to achieve self-sufficiency.

Furthermore, there are evidence-based interventions that have been proven effective at quickly rehousing families, stabilizing them in permanent housing and supporting them in addressing issues that impede access to housing. These models are excellent compliments to existing CalWORKs program, which focuses on barrier removal and employment supports. Housing is a component that currently does not exist in CalWORKs in a meaningful way, and this investment will meet a crucial need.

We thank you for your consideration of this proposal that represents a modest investment that will make a profound difference in the lives of poor families facing homelessness or housing instability. By providing safe and stable housing, children's well-being will be improved and parents will be better poised to move from welfare to work. Please do not hesitate to contact CWDA if you have any questions regarding our position.

cc: Jackie Wong, Office of President Pro Tempore Steinberg
Gail Gronert, Office of the Assembly Speaker
Chris Woods, Office of the Assembly Speaker
Samantha Lui, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee, Subcommittee 3
Chantele Denny, Republican Consultant, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
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