



Date May 26, 2018

To: The Honorable Philip Ting
Chair, Budget Conference Committee

Honorable Members
Budget Conference Committee

From: Frank J. Mecca, Executive Director

**RE: CALWORKS HOME VISITING INITIATIVE – SUPPORT
ASSEMBLY VERSION**

The County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA) respectfully requests your support of the Assembly's proposal to expand and enhance voluntary evidence-based home visiting by making permanent the CalWORKs Home Visiting Initiative and utilizing the resources provided by the Administration for the first few years of the program to extend its reach to CalWORKs families beyond first-time parents under age 25.

We thank the Senate for supporting the Administration's proposal with the addition of language which would require implicit bias training for home visitors and permit a five-year longitudinal study of the children who participated in the program to assess their overall well-being. We also appreciate the Administration putting this proposal forward, which will cost-effectively strengthen the youngest Californians and their families, while also enhancing the impacts of the CalWORKs program. Although unmet basic needs, adverse experiences, and circumstances of economic hardship can undermine the health and well-being of families, voluntary evidence-based home visiting programs (such as Healthy Families America, Nurse-Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers, SafeCare and Early Head Start Home-Based Option) are backed by decades of research demonstrating that they improve outcomes for both parents and children in myriad ways. When implemented with fidelity to their model standards, these programs can generate public savings by increasing healthy births, boosting positive parenting practices, reducing child maltreatment, and increasing family self-sufficiency in the forms of adult educational attainment, career training and employment.

The CalWORKs Home Visiting Initiative, as proposed by the Administration, would enable County Human Services Agencies to partner with other public agencies and community providers to offer evidence-based home visiting programs on a voluntary basis to first-time

parents under age 25 participating in CalWORKs who are pregnant or parenting a child under two years of age.

While we remain supportive of the Administration's proposal, we urge you to adopt the enhanced CalWORKs Home Visiting Initiative, that includes the following:

- Making the CalWORKs Home Visiting Initiative a permanent feature of the CalWORKs program, and allow for open and continuous enrollment of eligible, interested families.
- Extending the reach of these services to CalWORKs families beyond first-time parents under age 25.
- Ensuring the addition of the new parent support grant (a one-time grant of up to \$500 per participating family) for the purpose of assisting families on an as-needed basis with one-time costs related to the health and safety of the baby and family, such as cribs, car seats, childproofing supplies for the home, etc.

Voluntary, evidence-based home visiting programs are one of the best investments California can make to ensure children and families living in poverty have the opportunity to succeed. California can and should join the 30+ states that are already investing state funds and/or federal TANF dollars in voluntary, evidence-based home visiting programs to strengthen and support children and families.

For these reasons, CWDA urges your support of the Assembly's proposal for the permanent and enhanced CalWORKs Home Visiting Initiative.

cc: Jason Sisney, Office of the Assembly Speaker
Chris Woods, Office of the Senate President Pro Tempore
Gail Gronert, Office of the Assembly Speaker
Mareva Brown, Office of the Senate President Pro Tempore
Nicole Vazquez, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1
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