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
     Cyndi Hillery, Assembly Republican Fiscal Office
     Alex Khan, Assembly Republican Fiscal Office
     Theresa Pena, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 3
     Rebecca Hamilton, Senate Republican Fiscal Office
     Irene Ho, Office of Assembly Member Philip Ting
     Hans Hermann, Office of Assembly Member Joaquin Arambula
     Marla Cowan, Office of Assembly Member Joaquin Arambula
     Sean MacNeil, Office of Assembly Member Richard Bloom
     Kelly Ash, Office of Assembly Member Rocky Chavez
     Veronica Badillo, Office of Assembly Member Rocky Chavez
     Luan Huynh, Office of Senator Holly Mitchell
     Matthew Montgomery, Office of Senator Richard Roth
     Marvin Deon, Office of Senator Nancy Skinner
     Spencer Street, Office of Senator John Moorlach
     Colin Sueyres, Office of Senator Jim Nielsen
     Mark Newton, Legislative Analysts’ Office
     Ginni Bella Navarre, Legislative Analyst’s Office
     Michelle Baass, Health and Human Services Agency
     Marko Mijic, Health and Human Services Agency
     Will Lightbourne, California Department of Social Services
     Robert Smith, California Department of Social Services
     Kären Dickerson, California Department of Social Services
     Kristin Shelton, HHS, Department of Finance
     Jay Kapoor, HHS, Department of Finance
     Justin Garrett, California Association of Counties
     County Caucus