



AB 363 (Bryan)

CalWORKs Recipients Education Program(Rep)

Summary

AB 363 increases access to critical educational supports for low-income parenting students in need, strengthening the financial supports provided to program participants, and expanding participants' opportunities for experiential and work-based learning to enhance social and economic mobility.

Background

CalWORKs REP helps community college students receiving CalWORKs cash aid prepare for employment by providing vital services such as work study, job placement, childcare, skills training, and case management support. These services help students reach self-sufficiency and economic mobility. However, certain program requirements are keeping too many students out of the program.

Problem

First, students are only eligible for CalWORKs REP if they are currently receiving the cash-aid portion of the CalWORKs program administered by the county. In California, cash aid under CalWORKs is restricted to a 60-month lifetime limit for most adults; however, children under the age of 18 years old may be eligible for cash-aid. Prohibiting adults who have timed out of CalWORKs cash-aid disproportionately impacts adult community college students and limits their access to crucial services at a time when they need it the most. The compounded effect of losing cash-aid benefits and being ineligible for CalWORKs REP results in an overwhelming disruption to their family stability and chances of academic success.

Second, only the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) portion of funding for CalWORKs REP can be used to provide direct aid to CalWORKs REP students. The current legislative language does not provide the same kind of flexibility for the Proposition 98 portion of the program funding. This severely limits colleges' ability to provide adequate resources to CalWORKs REP students. Funds can help students pay for technology and equipment that are essential for their academic studies, including laptops, internet access, and software applications. CalWORKs REP students are typically single parents with childcare needs who may be unable to visit the college computer lab during evenings and weekends.

A final challenge is the requirement that employers provide a 25% match for work study wages, which serves as a disincentive for employers to participate in the program. This change would also bring state requirements in alignment with current Federal Work Study standards on employer engagement and provide a greater incentive for off-campus

employers to participate. This will increase the number of students who are placed in work study opportunities that align with their educational and career goals.

Solution

AB 363 would:

- Adjust CalWORKs REP eligibility to include CalWORKs recipient families, specifically adults who have timed out of CalWORKs cash-aid but have dependents who are currently receiving CalWORKs cash-aid and services;
- Allow the use of Proposition 98 portion of the CalWORKs REP funding to be used for direct aid
- Remove the employer match requirement for work study funds.

Contact

Justin C. Salenik
Senior Legislative Analyst
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
jsalenik@cccco.edu
916.324.2547