



LEGISLATIVE FACT SHEET:

CalWORKs Home Visiting Program (HVP) Expansion

Summary

The bill makes statutory changes to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), CalWORKs Home Visiting Program (HVP) that will ensure that participants in a voluntary evidence-based home visiting program can receive the full array of benefits by being able to enroll and participate in the HVP models' intended duration.

Background

Voluntary evidence-based home visiting programs (HVPs) match trained professionals with expecting and new parents to help them with critical early development for their children. Voluntary evidence-based home visiting is an umbrella term for certain program models that are backed by rigorous research studies, and meet federally established criteria for effectiveness, replicability, and quality. This includes offering resources, mentoring, cultural community building, and other supports that utilize parent's strengths and build skills. Research shows that participation in a HVP has immense benefits to the child(ren) and their families, such as better maternal and infant health, reduced emergency room visits, and increased safety practices. Long term, for children who participate to age 5, research shows improved language and cognitive development, improved math and reading scores, reduced absenteeism, and decreased school suspensions. For every \$1 invested in HVPs, communities receive a benefit of up to \$5.70 in savings in child welfare, K-12 education, and community safety.¹

There are two home visiting programs with ongoing funding from the state: the California Home Visiting Program (CHVP) managed by the Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the CalWORKs Home Visiting program (HVP) managed by the Department of Social Services (CDSS). The CHVP under CDPH follows models that allow families to remain in the program through a HVP model's recommended duration, which may be until the child enters kindergarten. There are presently 41 counties administering the CalWORKs HVP in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-24.

Existing Law

Under existing law, the CalWORKs HVP can only be offered to pregnant individuals and families with a child under 24 months of age. Further, existing law restricts state funding for participation until the child reaches 24 months or their second

birthday, whichever is later, children and families participating in CalWORKs HVP miss out on critical developmental benefits from participating in the programs for full duration of their evidence-based program design. As a result, families that would otherwise like to remain involved in the CalWORKs HVP are forced out of the program due to the statutory time limit before realizing the full evidence-based benefit of the program. Although it is possible for a family to transition to another HVP funded by CDPH or another community-based organization, it is only possible if there is funding and space available in those programs. Furthermore, research shows disruption to participation in a home visiting program leads to families dropping out. Children Now's latest California Children's Report Card highlighted that of the 1,004,160 families who could benefit from home visiting, only 1.3% of these families are being served.² Current law states that the CalWORKs HVP is not an entitlement program and allows counties to restrict participation in the program to keep costs within the budget allocation.

Proposed Solution

This bill proposes to change the Welfare and Institutions Code to extend the CalWORKs HVP enrollment period, allowing the program to be offered to children under 36 months of age instead of just those under 24 months. The bill would also allow counties to increase the time families can participate in the CalWORKs HVP program, extending their participation by at least 24 months or for the full duration of the applicable HVP model. This would align the CalWORKs HVP with current practices that follow a model's fidelity and move in stride with the CHVP under CDPH. These changes will provide continuity of HVP services to participating CalWORKs families and help to maximize the health and developmental benefits of the program for those families.

Support

County Welfare Directors Association of California (co-sponsor)
Children Now (co-sponsor)

Contact

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¹ Home Visiting: Improving Outcomes for Children.
<https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/home-visitingimproving-outcomes-for-children>

² 2024 California Children's Report Card.
<https://www.childrennow.org/portfolio-posts/2024-california-childrens-report-card/>