



AB 2241 (Alvarez) Strengthening Communication between Beneficiaries and County Workers

Bill Summary

This bill would direct a county agency to recognize when they receive information from a beneficiary in an unsecure manner and guide them upon receipt of information to an alternative method for resubmitting their information.

Background

Several counties refuse to accept reports of changes of income or other circumstances of public benefit from beneficiaries. This can lead to a beneficiary being accused of failure to report changes that often lead to a referral for welfare fraud felony prosecutions and overpayments.

Current law requires CalWORKs and CalFresh beneficiaries to report to the county when their income exceeds the “income reporting threshold” to avoid overpayments within 10 days.¹ Counties receive 12.5% incentive payments for collecting overpayments that were allegedly caused by fraud.² Additionally, counties also deny applications for failure to verify, also known as “procedural reasons”. These examples often lead to unnecessary penalties that a beneficiary experiences.

Furthermore, the two tables below show the percentage of applications denied due to procedural reasons, many of which are failure to provide requested verification.³

¹ California Department of Social Services. “CF 296 - CalFresh Monthly Caseload Movement Statistical Report” October 28, 2022, <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/research-and-data/calfresh-data-tables/cf296>.

Beneficiaries should not have to experience tortuous and stressful barriers to receive critical resources such as food.

CalWORKs Applications Denied due to Applicants' Failure to Meet Procedural Requirements			
Month/Year	Total CW Appl. Denials	Total CW Appl. Procedural Denials	%
21-Jul	13181	7215	55%
21-Aug	13950	7492	54%
21-Sep	13516	7411	55%
21-Oct	12506	6914	55%
21-Nov	13459	7609	57%
21-Dec	13616	8059	59%
22-Jan	11831	6907	58%
22-Feb	12091	6775	56%
22-Mar	12911	7183	56%
22-Apr	12131	6356	52%
22-May	12339	6538	53%
22-Jun	12847	6695	52%
22-Jul	12119	6343	52%
22-Aug	14118	7298	52%

CalFresh Applications Denied due to Applicants' Failure to Meet Procedural Requirements			
Month/Year	Denials	Procedural Denials	%
21-Jul	89455	66152	74%

² California Department of Social Services. “CA 255 CW – CalWORKs Report on Reasons for Denials and Other Non-Approvals of Applications” October 27, 2022, <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/research-and-data/calworks-data-tables/ca-255-cw>.



21-Aug	98677	68798	70%
21-Sep	93541	68239	73%
21-Oct	82514	68347	83%
21-Nov	107161	80728	75%
21-Dec	97482	72450	74%
22-Jan	80218	57622	72%
22-Feb	86068	62347	72%
22-Mar	93146	64157	69%
22-Apr	86766	58930	68%
22-May	82730	54067	65%
22-Jun	89243	58889	66%
22-Jul	91722	60641	66%
22-Aug	107909	70751	66%

Details of the Bill

AB-2241 would strengthen the communication between the county worker and the beneficiary by requiring the county worker to allow the beneficiary an alternative method to submit their information, and not be penalized.

Support

- Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations (CCWRO) (Co-Sponsor)
- Western Center on Law & Poverty (Co-Sponsor)
- California Association of Food Banks
- California Council of the Blind
- Family Violence Appellate Project
- Grace Institute – End Child Poverty in CA
- Legal Aid Society of San Diego
- San Diego Hunger Coalition
- Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County

For More Information

Cynthia Yepez, Legislative Assistant
 Assemblymember David Alvarez, District 80
 Office: 916-319-2080
Cynthia.Yepez@asm.ca.gov