

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 4, 2016

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2058

Introduced by Assembly Member Mayes
(Principal coauthor: Senator Bates)
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Bigelow and Mathis)

February 17, 2016

An act to add Article 3.7 (commencing with Section 11340) to Chapter 2 of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to ~~CalWORKs~~, *CalWORKs*, and making an appropriation therefor.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2058, as amended, Mayes. ~~CalWORKs Educational Opportunity and Attainment Program~~. *CalWORKs: education incentives.*

Existing law requires each county to provide cash assistance and other social services to needy families through the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program using federal, state, and county funds. Under existing law, a recipient of CalWORKs is required to participate in welfare-to-work activities for a specified number of hours each week as a condition of eligibility for aid. Existing law authorizes certain welfare-to-work participants to engage in adult basic education in satisfaction of these work requirements.

Existing law establishes the Cal-Learn Program, under which a recipient of CalWORKs aid who is under 19 years of age and who does not have a high school diploma or its equivalent is required to participate in the program as a student attending school on a full-time basis.

Existing law provides for a supplement to, or a reduction in, a Cal-Learn participant's aid grant based on his or her performance in school.

This bill would create the CalWORKs Educational Opportunity and Attainment Program to provide CalWORKs recipients with ~~an a monthly education bonus, in an unspecified amount, each month after the attainment of~~ *incentive grant of \$100 for attainment of a high school diploma or its equivalent, \$200 for attainment of an associate's degree, or \$300 for attainment of a bachelor's degree, if the diploma or degree was earned while the recipient was receiving CalWORKs assistance. The bill would require the education incentive grant to be provided on an ongoing basis if the recipient meets certain eligibility criteria.* The bill would require a recipient, when applying for an education bonus, to submit evidence of completion of the educational program to the county. ~~The bill would also require the State Department of Social Services to develop a process for verifying educational achievement. The bill would establish the CalWORKs Educational Opportunity and Attainment Support Fund, and would provide that moneys in the fund be used, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to support the program. The bill would require the county, upon verification of completion of the educational program, to certify that the recipient is eligible for an education incentive grant and ensure that the recipient's monthly cash grant is increased.~~ By imposing additional administrative duties on counties, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

Existing law establishes the CalWORKs Recipients Education Program in the California Community Colleges. Existing law requires, to the extent that funding is provided in the annual Budget Act, a community college district to receive funding for purposes of providing special services for CalWORKs recipients, including job placement and workstudy.

This bill would appropriate \$20,000,000 from the General Fund to the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges to fund services provided under that program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

Vote: ~~majority~~^{2/3}. Appropriation: ~~no~~^{yes}. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Article 3.7 (commencing with Section 11340) is
2 added to Chapter 2 of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and
3 Institutions Code, to read:

4

5 Article 3.7. CalWORKs Educational Opportunity and
6 Attainment Program
7

8 11340. (a) This article shall be known, and may be cited, as
9 the CalWORKs Educational Opportunity and Attainment Program.

10 (b) The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

11 ~~(1) California is expected to spend one hundred thirty-six billion~~
12 ~~dollars (\$136,000,000,000) on health and human services programs~~
13 ~~in 2016, which is by far the largest state budget expenditure, while~~
14 ~~total education spending for kindergarten, grades 1 to 12, inclusive,~~
15 ~~and higher education programs is less than seventy billion dollars~~
16 ~~(\$70,000,000,000) per year.~~

17 ~~(2) California has the fifth largest Temporary Assistance for~~
18 ~~Needy Families (TANF) cash grant in the nation, and the second~~
19 ~~largest amongst the 10 largest states, yet poverty remains a~~
20 ~~persistent problem.~~

21 ~~(3) We must recognize that California's problems of poverty~~
22 ~~and inequality do not stem from a lack of safety net programs.~~

23 ~~(4) California needs to invest in programs that elevate people~~
24 ~~out of poverty rather than helping people live better in poverty.~~

25 *(1) In California's high-skill economy, it is very difficult to get*
26 *a good, middle-class job without vocational education or a college*
27 *degree, let alone a high school diploma.*

28 *(2) This is a significant barrier to socioeconomic mobility for*
29 *California's highly vulnerable CalWORKs recipients, because as*
30 *many as 65 percent of CalWORKs recipients do not have a high*
31 *school education.*

32 *(3) Research has consistently shown that postsecondary*
33 *education boosts social mobility, particularly for those at the*
34 *bottom of the income distribution scale, and that a parent's level*

1 of education has positive effects on his or her child’s level of
2 success into middle adulthood.

3 (4) California has the seventh-largest federal Temporary
4 Assistance for Needy Families cash grant in the nation, and the
5 second largest among the 10 largest states.

6 (5) Poverty remains a persistent problem.

7 ~~(5)~~

8 (6) This act is intended to provide incentives for CalWORKs
9 recipients to pursue education, thereby improving the opportunities
10 and outcomes for adults and children in the CalWORKs program.

11 11341. (a) A CalWORKs recipient may apply to receive an
12 education ~~bonus~~ *incentive grant* in the following amounts:

13 (1) ~~_____ dollars (\$_____)~~ *One hundred dollars (\$100)* per month
14 for completion of high school or its equivalent.

15 (2) ~~_____ dollars (\$_____)~~ *Two hundred dollars (\$200)* per month
16 for completion of an associate’s degree.

17 (3) ~~_____ dollars (\$_____)~~ *Three hundred dollars (\$300)* per
18 month for completion of a bachelor’s degree.

19 (b) The amounts listed in subdivision (a) are not cumulative. A
20 recipient shall ~~receive~~ *receive, on an ongoing basis*, the highest
21 monthly bonus to which he or she is entitled.

22 (c) *The amounts listed in subdivision (a) constitute ongoing*
23 *adjustments to the recipient’s monthly cash grant.*

24 11342. (a) When applying for an education ~~bonus~~, *incentive*
25 *grant*, a recipient shall submit evidence of completion of the
26 educational program to the county. A recipient is not eligible unless
27 ~~both~~ *all* of the following criteria are satisfied:

28 (1) *The recipient completed an educational program included*
29 *in the recipient’s welfare to work plan approved by the county.*

30 ~~(1)~~

31 (2) The recipient ~~graduated from~~ *completed an educational*
32 *program offered by an accredited educational institution.*

33 ~~(2)~~

34 (3) The recipient ~~attained the diploma or degree~~ *completed the*
35 *educational program while receiving CalWORKs assistance.*

36 ~~(b) The State Department of Social Services shall develop a~~
37 ~~process for verifying educational achievement.~~

38 (b) *Upon verification of completion of the educational program,*
39 *the county shall certify that the recipient is eligible for an education*

1 *incentive grant, and shall ensure that the recipient's monthly cash*
2 *grant is increased as prescribed in Section 11341.*

3 ~~11343. The CalWORKs Educational Opportunity and~~
4 ~~Attainment Support Fund is hereby established in the State~~
5 ~~Treasury. The moneys in the fund are available, upon appropriation~~
6 ~~by the Legislature, for the support of CalWORKs Educational~~
7 ~~Opportunity and Attainment Program.~~

8 *11343. (a) A CalWORKs recipient who is receiving an*
9 *education incentive grant and then ceases to receive CalWORKs*
10 *assistance shall not be eligible for the same education incentive*
11 *grant if he or she begins receiving CalWORKs assistance in the*
12 *future. The recipient is eligible, however, to receive a different*
13 *education incentive grant if he or she attains a higher level of*
14 *education while receiving CalWORKs assistance.*

15 *(b) A CalWORKs recipient is permanently ineligible for an*
16 *education incentive grant under all of the following circumstances:*

17 *(1) The recipient has exhausted his or her CalWORKs benefits.*

18 *(2) The recipient has been sanctioned.*

19 *(3) The recipient has committed public assistance fraud, as*
20 *described in Article 7 (commencing with Section 11475.2).*

21 *SEC. 2. The sum of twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000) is*
22 *hereby appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of*
23 *Governors of the California Community Colleges to fund services*
24 *provided under the CalWORKs Recipients Education Program*
25 *(Article 5 (commencing with Section 79200) of Chapter 9 of Part*
26 *48 of Division 7 of Title 3 of the Education Code), including, but*
27 *not limited to, education and career counseling services,*
28 *employment development services, including job development staff*
29 *positions, and workstudy positions.*

30 ~~SEC. 2.~~

31 *SEC. 3. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that*
32 *this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to*
33 *local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made*
34 *pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division*
35 *4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.*

O