

**County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency (HHS)**  
**CalWORKs Program Guide**

**Age Requirements and Pregnant/Parenting Teens**

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**Revision Date:**

April 1, 2023

**Background:**

Teens who receive aid as a dependent child and have no children of their own remain eligible for aid if they meet the education/training requirements that must be completed by the teen's 19th birthday. The age of all children in the Assistance Unit (AU) must be verified, before granting aid. Continuing eligibility must also be reviewed for pregnant/parenting teens when turning age 18.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this section is to provide requirements for child age eligibility and eligibility for pregnant/parenting teens who turn age 18 years of age. This material revision is to reformat this section and to remove duplicate or obsolete policies. There are no policy or procedure changes. This revision also combines CalWORKs Program Guide (CPG) 42-100.B Pregnant and/or Parenting Teens and CPG 42-100.C Evidence of Age into this section, creating one singular section. Sections CPG 42-100.B CPG 42-100.C become obsolete with the issuance of this material.

**Policy:**

**Age Requirement**

A child meets the age requirement for CalWORKs until the child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Eligibility may extend into the child's 18<sup>th</sup> year if they meet the exceptions as listed below.

**Evidence of Age**

Verification of age is a condition of eligibility. The age of all eligible children must be verified. Acceptable Verification includes the following:

- Birth/Hospital certificate, physician/midwife's birth record
- Baptismal certificate or church record of baptism
- Confirmation papers or church record of confirmation
- Indian agency records (when applicable)
- United States (U. S.) government records of immigration or naturalization
- Adoption decree
- Passport
- State or federal census record (if the date of birth appears on the document)
- Other forms of verification not shown on this list (such as school records when the school requires proof of birth before the child is enrolled). The Family Resource Center manager must approve this verification
- Entries in a family Bible or other genealogical record or memorandum of customer
- A sworn statement of an adult (other than the customer) if this statement is based on the adult's personal knowledge, which substantiates the age of the customer. This statement, made under penalty of perjury, must recount the specific facts upon which the adult's knowledge is based, not the adult's personal belief
- Customer's sworn statement, made under penalty of perjury, verifying the age of their child(ren), when none of the above listed evidence is available; the sworn statement is to be used only as a last resort

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Refer to CPG 42-400.C6 section for follow-up actions

### Unacceptable Age Verification

Any evidence listed above, which does not appear to be substantive or genuine, such as certificates that have been filled in by the customer or any evidence that appears to have been altered.

**Note:** Altered documents are a basis for fraud referral.

### Case Documentation

The cases will be coded with the type of evidence provided for each child in the AU. If the code is not listed in the automated system, Case Comments will be made indicating the type of evidence provided to establish age, the pertinent evidence contained in such document(s) and the date the documentation was reviewed.

### Continuing Eligibility for 18-Year-Old Child

A child who is 18 may be eligible to CalWORKs if any of the following provisions apply:

- The child is a full-time student (as defined by the school) in high school
- The child has not completed high school, and the child is in either a vocational or technical training program (which cannot result in a college degree)

In addition:

- The child is expected to finish the school/training program before reaching 19 years old
- This requirement cannot be met by correspondence course work
- A student enrolled in a full-time program is considered attending on a full-time basis until enrollment is terminated by the school or the student
- For a child in receipt of Kin-GAP, the child and placement agency must sign a mutual agreement (KG 1) prior to or within the month the child reaches age 18

### Disability Criteria

Eligible 18-year-olds who attend school full-time, or vocational/technical training program, and are considered disabled under this criterion, will be eligible for CalWORKs benefits in their parent's/caretaker relative's case, until they complete the program, turn 19, or stop attending school full-time, whichever occurs first.

The 18-year-old is considered disabled if meeting any of the following disability criteria:

- Currently receiving, or has received in the past, Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP)
- Currently receiving, or has received in the past, services through a Regional Center Program pursuant to the Lanterman Act
- Currently receiving, or has received in the past, services at school in accordance with their Individual Education Plan (IEP) or under/pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (for example, a section 504 Plan or Section 504 Accommodation Plan)

### Disability Verification

The child's disability verification may include the following:

- Social Security Administration Award letter

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- Statement from the Regional Center or school
- Copies of the child's IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan/Section 504 Plan

When a child's disability cannot be verified by using the criteria described above, the parent/caretaker relative can provide independent verification, or authorize the county to obtain documentation, from a health care provider or a trained, qualified learning disabilities evaluation professional of a current or past disability.

Ineligible 18-Year-Old

An 18-year-old child becomes ineligible when the child:

- Graduates or completes the requirements for graduation from high school\*
- Completes the vocational/technical training program\*
- Drops out of high school or training and does not enter a high school or training program that meets the above conditions
- Will not graduate before turning 19 and there is no mental or physical disability condition
- Becomes 19 years of age

\*When an 18-year-old completes their graduation requirements before their 19th birthday, eligibility ends when the requirements are met, regardless of the date of the formal graduation ceremony. If there are any questions about the graduation date, the AU must provide verification from the school of the expected end date.

Example: Child will be 19 on June 10th. The graduation requirements are met on May 30th. The graduation ceremony takes place on June 15th. The child must be discontinued at the end of May. If the graduation requirements were met on June 5th, the child would be discontinued at the end of June.

Acceptable School and Training Programs

- High School: Includes high schools, adult high schools and General Educational Development (GED) course work sponsored by a local high school or community college
- Vocational/Technical: Includes business schools, cosmetology schools, vocational programs offered through the junior college system (if the program does not lead to a college degree), and Job Corps
  - A Technical school is one that provides instruction in the practical industrial, mechanical arts, or applied sciences
  - A Vocational school is one that provides instruction intended to prepare the individual for a career, trade, or occupation. Correspondence course work does not meet this requirement

Pregnant/Parenting Teens

A teen who is pregnant or a custodial parent and who is aided in their parent/caretaker relative's AU, in accordance with mandatory inclusion requirements, may choose one of the following:

- Remain a dependent child in their parent/caretaker relative's case after they turn 18, provided they continue to meet the educational or training requirements
- Have their own AU established on the first day of the month following the month in which they turn 18 (unless they turn 18 on the first day of the month, in which case the change is effective on that date)

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### Informing Requirement

Notice CW 2103 *Reminder for Teens Turning 18 Years Old* must be sent to all pregnant/parenting teens up to 60 days before the teen turns 18 to inform them of the options. This notice also instructs the senior parents/caretakers to provide the notice to the teen approaching age 18.

These teens must be informed that:

- Their grants will increase in most cases (and the parent/caretaker's grant will go down or stop) if they start their own AU
- They do not have to move out of their parent/caretaker's home to start their own AU
- Their CalWORKs Time-on-Aid (TOA) clocks will not start to run until they leave the Cal-Learn Program, if applicable

### Seamless Determination of Eligibility

The transition for pregnant/parenting teens to their own AU must be as seamless as possible. If a pregnant/parenting teen requests an AU of their own, to aid in the transition into their own AU and ensure that there is no break in aid, the following steps must begin up to 60 days before the teen's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday:

- A copy of the latest application (SAWS 1) for the family contained in the case in which the teen was aided will be obtained; this is to be used to establish the separate AU
- An interview will be scheduled with the teen
- The teen will not be required to furnish any documentation previously provided to the county
  - This could include but is not limited to birth certificate, social security number (SSN), identification, pay verification, vehicle registration, benefit award letter, etc.
  - If required by regulation, a release of information will be obtained from the teen's parent/caretaker relative to secure sensitive information (such as senior parent information on child support, medical records, absent parent information, etc.) from the parent/caretaker relative's case file for the teen's case
  - Documentation that is public record, such as the teen's birth certificate, does not require obtaining a release of information from the teen's parent/caretaker relative

This is not considered an application but a transfer of aid. If the teen does not complete the eligibility requirements to establish their own AU, their aid is to be continued from the case in which they were originally receiving assistance, without a break in aid.

### Transition Eligibility Requirements

Certain eligibility criteria are necessary to process the teen into their own AU. Listed below are some additional requirements when processing these types of cases:

- The teen is required to attend Orientation
- The teen may be required to sign additional documents such as the rights and responsibilities, statement of facts (SOF), etc.
- The teen will be required to fill out the child support referral forms (CW 2.1/CW 2.1Q) and attend an interview with the Local Child Support Agency (LCSA)
- The teen must present a photo identification in-person, as described in CPG 40-100.A

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Income And Resources

The teen will be treated as a **recipient** rather than as an applicant. However, the teen's income, if any, will be budgeted in accordance with the Semi-Annual Reporting (SAR) regulations.

Underpayment - Overpayment

- Underpayment: An underpayment will be provided to any pregnant/parenting teen who had previously been aided as a dependent child and had a break in aid between being aided in their parent/caretaker relative's case and establishing their own case
- Overpayment: Payments made to a teen parent as head of their own AU will be offset against any existing cash aid overpayment that may have occurred on the teen's case
  - These payments will not be used to offset any supportive service overpayment

Non-Minor Dependents (NMD)

Refer to CPG 40-183.B for eligibility criteria for NMD.

**Procedure:**

- Processing Guide 40-100.E5 Birth Certificate Request, In-Person Identity Verification and Third-Party Payment Process
- To determine if the child who is turning 18-years-old is attending school full-time, or to verify the disability, verification will be obtained in accordance with CPG 22-000.B Request for Verification and CPG 42-100.F 18-Year-Old Students

**Impacts:**

Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and Trafficking and Crime Victims Assistance Program (TCVAP)

Regulations relating to financial eligibility and payments apply to RCA/TCVAP unless specifically superseded by RCA/TCVAP regulations.

**References:**

- Eligibility and Assistance Standards (EAS) 40-105.5(b), 40-109.3, 40-171.11, 42-101, 42-111, 42-762.21, 82-820
- All County Letter (ACL) No. 01-77
- All County Information Notice (ACIN) No. I-71-02

**Sunset Date:**

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by April 30, 2026.

**Approval for Release:**

 4-3-23

Rick Wanne, Director  
Self-Sufficiency Services