



BY ALISSA ANDERSON

## CalWORKs Grants Fall Short of Covering Housing Costs

The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Program provides modest cash assistance for nearly 1 million low-income children while helping parents overcome barriers to work and to find jobs. Despite modest increases in recent years, CalWORKs grants fall far short of allowing families to achieve a decent standard of living. The Governor’s proposed 2016-17 budget does not make any new investments in CalWORKs, leaving the maximum grant for a family of three in all counties at around 40% of the federal poverty line. At this level, the grant is not high enough to cover the “Fair Market Rent” for a one-bedroom apartment in most of the state’s 58 counties. The grant is particularly inadequate in the San Francisco Bay Area and along the southern coast from Santa Barbara to San Diego. Insufficient CalWORKs assistance is a concern because families are at greater risk of becoming homeless when housing costs account for more than half of household income.

### The Maximum CalWORKs Grant Is Not Enough to Cover Rent for a One-Bedroom Apartment in Most Counties

County	Maximum CalWORKs Grant for a Family of Three, 2016-17*	Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a One-Bedroom Apartment**	Amount of Grant Remaining After Paying Rent	One-Bedroom Apartment FMR as a Percentage of Grant	Rank by FMR (Highest to Lowest)
Alameda	\$704	\$1,663	-\$959	236.2%	4
Alpine	\$670	\$663	\$7	99.0%	46
Amador	\$670	\$787	-\$117	117.5%	29
Butte	\$670	\$713	-\$43	106.4%	38
Calaveras	\$670	\$713	-\$43	106.4%	38
Colusa	\$670	\$701	-\$31	104.6%	43
Contra Costa	\$704	\$1,663	-\$959	236.2%	4
Del Norte	\$670	\$731	-\$61	109.1%	34
El Dorado	\$670	\$815	-\$145	121.6%	25
Fresno	\$670	\$690	-\$20	103.0%	44
Glenn	\$670	\$615	\$55	91.8%	54
Humboldt	\$670	\$748	-\$78	111.6%	30
Imperial	\$670	\$643	\$27	96.0%	50
Inyo	\$670	\$739	-\$69	110.3%	32
Kern	\$670	\$639	\$31	95.4%	51
Kings	\$670	\$611	\$59	91.2%	55
Lake	\$670	\$726	-\$56	108.4%	35
Lassen	\$670	\$723	-\$53	107.9%	36
Los Angeles	\$704	\$1,154	-\$450	163.9%	11

County	Maximum CalWORKs Grant for a Family of Three, 2016-17*	Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a One-Bedroom Apartment**	Amount of Grant Remaining After Paying Rent	One-Bedroom Apartment FMR as a Percentage of Grant	Rank by FMR (Highest to Lowest)
Madera	\$670	\$704	-\$34	105.1%	42
Marin	\$704	\$1,814	-\$1,110	257.7%	1
Mariposa	\$670	\$705	-\$35	105.2%	41
Mendocino	\$670	\$789	-\$119	117.8%	28
Merced	\$670	\$601	\$69	89.7%	56
Modoc	\$670	\$569	\$101	84.9%	58
Mono	\$670	\$1,090	-\$420	162.7%	15
Monterey	\$704	\$1,114	-\$410	158.2%	14
Napa	\$704	\$1,145	-\$441	162.6%	13
Nevada	\$670	\$908	-\$238	135.5%	22
Orange	\$704	\$1,324	-\$620	188.1%	7
Placer	\$670	\$815	-\$145	121.6%	25
Plumas	\$670	\$711	-\$41	106.1%	40
Riverside	\$670	\$945	-\$275	141.0%	20
Sacramento	\$670	\$815	-\$145	121.6%	25
San Benito	\$670	\$1,025	-\$355	153.0%	17
San Bernardino	\$670	\$945	-\$275	141.0%	20
San Diego	\$704	\$1,153	-\$449	163.8%	12
San Francisco	\$704	\$1,814	-\$1,110	257.7%	1
San Joaquin	\$670	\$735	-\$65	109.7%	33
San Luis Obispo	\$704	\$1,009	-\$305	143.3%	19
San Mateo	\$704	\$1,814	-\$1,110	257.7%	1
Santa Barbara	\$704	\$1,226	-\$522	174.1%	8
Santa Clara	\$704	\$1,582	-\$878	224.7%	6
Santa Cruz	\$704	\$1,198	-\$494	170.2%	9
Shasta	\$670	\$663	\$7	99.0%	46
Sierra	\$670	\$901	-\$231	134.5%	23
Siskiyou	\$670	\$666	\$4	99.4%	45
Solano	\$704	\$1,024	-\$320	145.5%	18
Sonoma	\$704	\$1,090	-\$386	154.8%	15
Stanislaus	\$670	\$717	-\$47	107.0%	37
Sutter	\$670	\$661	\$9	98.7%	48
Tehama	\$670	\$626	\$44	93.4%	53
Trinity	\$670	\$633	\$37	94.5%	52
Tulare	\$670	\$584	\$86	87.2%	57
Tuolumne	\$670	\$747	-\$77	111.5%	31
Ventura	\$704	\$1,197	-\$493	170.0%	10
Yolo	\$670	\$870	-\$200	129.9%	24
Yuba	\$670	\$661	\$9	98.7%	48

\* The Governor's proposed budget assumes that there will be no increase to CalWORKs grants in the 2016-17 fiscal year, which begins on July 1. Maximum grants are set higher in counties that the state defines as having a higher cost of living.

\*\* The FMR is for federal fiscal year 2016, which ends on September 30, 2016. FMRs are determined by the federal government and generally estimate the dollar amount below which 40% of standard-quality rental housing units are rented.

Source: Department of Social Services and US Department of Housing and Urban Development