ENDING DEEP CHILD POVERTY IN CALWORKS

Policy Insights
March 22, 2018
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CalWORKs

- California’s Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) program
- Provides basic needs cash aid and services to low-income families with children to alleviate the impact of poverty on children and help parents overcome barriers to employment
- Serves 1.1 million individuals in California, 80 percent of whom are children
The CalWORKs Grant Has Lost More Than One-Quarter of Its Purchasing Power Since 2007-08

Maximum Monthly CalWORKs Grant for a Family of Three in a High-Cost County

* 2018-19 proposed.
Note: The Governor’s proposed budget does not provide a grant increase in 2018-19. Inflation adjustment is based on the California Necessities Index.
Source: Budget Center analysis of Department of Social Services data
Without an Increase in 2018-19, CalWORKs Grants Will Be Below the Deep-Poverty Line for the Eleventh Straight Year

Annualized Maximum Grant for a Family of Three as a Percentage of the Federal Poverty Line

Note: Grants are for high-cost counties. The proposed 2018-19 budget does not increase grant levels. Source: Budget Center analysis of Department of Social Services, US Department of Health and Human Services, and US Social Security Administration data.
Why Deep Child Poverty Matters

- Chronically unmet basic needs undermine health and well-being, as well as future potential.
- Deep poverty causes toxic stress that harms brain development and early functioning.
- Even a short amount of time spent in deep poverty can derail a child for a much longer time period.
- Children who are born in deep poverty are three times as likely to be deeply poor at age 40.
Success at Six Stages of Life

- Circumstances at Birth:
  - Deer Poor (50% of FPL): 0%
  - Just Poor (51-100% of FPL): 0%
  - Middle Quintile: 66%

- Early Childhood:
  - Deer Poor (50% of FPL): 36%
  - Just Poor (51-100% of FPL): 39%
  - Middle Quintile: 59%

- Middle Childhood:
  - Deer Poor (50% of FPL): 39%
  - Just Poor (51-100% of FPL): 44%
  - Middle Quintile: 62%

- Adolescence:
  - Deer Poor (50% of FPL): 19%
  - Just Poor (51-100% of FPL): 26%
  - Middle Quintile: 48%

- Transition to Adulthood:
  - Deer Poor (50% of FPL): 31%
  - Just Poor (51-100% of FPL): 40%
  - Middle Quintile: 58%

- Adulthood:
  - Deer Poor (50% of FPL): 31%
  - Just Poor (51-100% of FPL): 37%
  - Middle Quintile: 56%

Source: Authors' Analysis of Social Genome Model data set, based on NLS

BROOKINGS
End Deep Child Poverty

#EndDeepPoverty
Children’s Defense Fund
SB 982 (Mitchell)

- Ends childhood deep poverty in CalWORKs
- Sets a floor for grants at 50% of the federal poverty level
- Protects children from the worst harms of chronically unmet basic needs
Thank you!

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Children’s Defense Fund – California
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Brooking’s Social Genome Project Benchmarks of Success

Family formation
- Born at normal birth weight to a non-poor, married mother with at least a high school diploma

Early childhood
- Acceptable pre-reading and math skills
- Behavior generally school-appropriate

Middle childhood
- Basic reading and math skills
- Social-emotional skills

Adolescence
- Graduates from high school w/GPA ≥ 2.5
- AND
- Has not been convicted of a crime nor become a parent

Transition to adulthood
- Lives independently
- AND
- Receives a college degree or has a family income ≥ 250% of the poverty level

Adulthood
- Reaches middle class (family income at least 300% of the poverty level)