

**County of Orange Social Services Agency
Family Self-Sufficiency and Adult Services**

Program/Area: CalWORKs

Title: Cal-Learn Program

Number: 100-C7

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Approved:

Status: *Signature on file*

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the Cal-Learn (CL) program is to reduce the chances of long-term welfare dependency by serving CalWORKs (CW) recipients who are pregnant and custodial/parenting teens under the age of 19, have not obtained a high school diploma or equivalent. The Cal-Learn program provides fiscal bonuses and sanctions as well as needed service arrangements and intensive case management to encourage these pregnant/parenting teens to stay in or return to school and graduate.

This policy provides guidance on CL program eligibility, including the CL bonuses and/or sanctions, addressing participants transitioning out of the CL program, while [policy 260 Cal-Learn Case Management](#) focuses on the Cal-Learn Case Management to support the participants completing the Cal-Learn educational plan.

**Cal-Learn
MANDATORY
PARTICIPANTS**

CalWORKs recipients who meet all the following criteria are considered Cal-Learn mandatory participants, unless exempt, and must be enrolled in CL program.

- Be a CalWORKs recipient under the age of 19
- Reside with their child and receive aid in the same AU or be pregnant and the pregnancy is verified
- Have not obtained a high school diploma or equivalent
- Must attend high school or an equivalent program on a full-time basis, as defined by the school, until they earn a high school diploma or its equivalent or turn 19-years old, unless SSA determines that the teen has good cause for not complying with this requirement

Note:

- If both mother and father teens are in the same AU and both meet the Cal-Learn eligibility requirements, they both must participate in the CL program
- Mandatory Cal-Learn participant may be aided in their own case or in their parent/caretaker relative's case
- An otherwise eligible teen that is 19-years old may continue to participate in CL on a voluntary basis until they earn a high school diploma or its equivalent or turns 20-years old. Refer to [Cal-Learn Voluntary Participants](#) section below for more information

- A pregnant CL participant is eligible for Pregnancy Special Needs. Refer to policy 100-D2 Pregnancy Special Needs for more information
- For pregnant/parenting teens under the age of 18-years old not living with their senior parent(s), refer to policy 100-B10 Minor Parent AU

**Cal-Learn
VOLUNTARY
PARTICIPANTS**

Individual who meets all the following conditions may participate in CL on a voluntary basis:

- Is a CalWORKs recipient 19-years of age
- **Was participating in CL prior to becoming 19-years of age**
- Has not obtained a high school diploma or equivalent
- Is attending high school or an equivalent program on a full-time basis, as defined by the school, unless SSA determines that the teen has good cause for not complying with this requirement
- Resides with their child in the same AU or is pregnant and the pregnancy is verified

Examples:

- A teen left CL at age 17 because her family went off CalWORKs. Individual is now 19-years old and reapplying for CalWORKs. If all other eligibility requirements are met, individual may again participate in CL on a voluntary basis until turning 20
- A 19-years old teen is receiving CalWORKs for the first time. Since individual did not previously participate in CL, they cannot volunteer for CL

Individual who is voluntarily participating in CL is eligible for the same benefits as a mandatory participant.

Individual who chooses not to voluntarily participate in CL is subject to WTW activities and time limits.

Cal-Learn BONUS and SANCTION An Assistance Unit (AU) with a CL participant will receive:

- A \$100 bonus up to four times in a 12-month period for each participant who makes satisfactory progress in their school program
 - A \$500 bonus for each participant earning a high school diploma or its equivalent before or within the month they turn 19-years old or turns 20-years old for a voluntary participant
 - \$100/\$50 sanction up to four times in a 12-month period for each participant who fails to make adequate progress in their school program without good cause
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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In Orange County, the Cal-Learn program has two agencies working closely together to successfully administer the Cal-Learn program. Social Services Agency (SSA)/Family Self-Sufficiency - Adult Services (FSS-AS) and Health Care Agency (HCA)/Maternal Child/Adolescent Health/Adolescent Family Life Program (AFLP) are partnering to administer the AFLP services to Cal-Learn participants. A key in this partnership is consistent communication between all staff involved.

FSS-AS Policy and Quality Assurance (PQA) will provide program oversight and policy development and will assist SSA Contract staff in the development and administration of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between SSA and HCA.

SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY

Intake/Continuing Worker - Determine CW and Cal-Learn eligibility.

- Identify any CalWORKs pregnant or custodial parenting teens under the age of 19, or CL eligible voluntary participants without a high school diploma or equivalent
- Obtain pregnancy verification, if applicable
- Transfer case to a Specialized CL Continuing Worker and CL Case Manager
- Document in case record

Specialized Cal-Learn Continuing Worker - Determine continuing CW and Cal-Learn eligibility.

- Process bonuses and sanctions when approved by the CL Case Manager (CM). Refer to the Cal-Learn Bonus and Sanctions Processing Guide
- Evaluate and process service arrangement (limited to services participants need to attend their school programs regularly)
- Record and update Cal-Learn Participant School Name in case record based on information reported on the Cal-Learn Plan for Education (F063-41-98)
- Communicate with the assigned CL CM and AFLP CM changes about the Cal-Learn participant as needed via the Cal-Learn/AFLP Communication Document (F063-41-326)
- Document in case record

Cal-Learn Case Managers (CM) - Provide Cal-Learn case management services.

- Complete the Cal-Learn Orientation or send the CL 2 Cal-Learn Program Requirements to the participant, and submit the Adolescent Family Life Program (AFLP) referrals (F063-41-334) to HCA within 5 working days

- Ensure that the teen parent understands the program requirements and consequences of not making adequate or satisfactory progress
- Develop a Cal-Learn Plan for Education (F063-41-98) to assist the teen parent to graduate from high school or its equivalent
- Send a copy of the Cal-Learn Plan for Education (F063-41-98) to the assigned CL Continuing worker and AFLP CM via the Cal-Learn/AFLP Communication Document (F063-41-326) no later than 90-days after the start date of the Cal-Learn Program and/or as needed
- Identify the need for and method of providing service arrangements and initiate service arrangement task to the assigned Specialized Cal-Learn Continuing worker for processing
- Monitor school progress; determine exemptions, deferrals, and good cause
- Complete monthly contact with participant and document on the Cal-Learn Case Manager Monthly Checklist (F063-41-331) and document in case record
- Determine bonus or sanction based on the participant's educational plan
- Update report cards schedule to ensure timely bonus/ sanction.
- Send Cal-Learn/CalWORKs Communication Document (F063-41-78) to the CL Continuing worker to issue bonus
- Document in case record
- Complete the STAT 45 Cal-Learn Program Monthly Status Report and utilize the STAT 45 Monthly Log to manage the CL cases and provide accurate statistics

CalWORKs Policy and Quality Assurance (PQA)

- Provide program oversight and policy development
- Assist regional staff in policy interpretation

HEALTH CARE SERVICES

AFLP Case Managers (CM) - Provide intensive case management services in accordance with Adolescent Family Life Program Standards (AFLP) for Cal-Learn participants. The intensive case management services shall include the following:

- Link each parent to needed health and social services available in the teen parent's community, including, but not limited to those designed to:
 - Reduce the incidence of maternal and child morbidity and mortality, including the incidence of low birth-weight infants
 - Enhance the teen parent's parenting skills
- Facilitate an effective ongoing relationship between the teen parent, the noncustodial parent and the child where it is in the best interest of the child and the teen parent

- Assess the suitability of the teen parent’s living situation including, but not limited to, the physical and emotional health and safety of the teen parent and child
- Provide teen parent-centered, culturally appropriate and goal-oriented services involving the teen parent and the teen parent’s family, significant others, and support persons as equal partners with the Case Manager to identify needs and defining ways to meet those needs
- Communicate with the assigned Specialized CL Continuing worker and/or CL CM about the CL participant, as needed via the Cal-Learn/AFLP Communication Document ([F063-41-326](#))

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

School districts and other providers may identify and refer teens to SSA and HCA for CL program.

CalWORKs TIME LIMITS

Cal-Learn participants are exempt from the CalWORKs time on aid (TOA) limit. Any month of participation in Cal-Learn does not count toward the CalWORKs TOA. The CalWORKs 60-month time limit will begin at the time the Cal-Learn participant transitions out of Cal-Learn and becomes a mandatory WTW participant.

For Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF):

- If the Cal-Learn participant is aided in their own AU, the TANF clock ticks
- If the Cal-Learn participant is not aided in their own AU, the TANF clock does not tick

Refer to [CalWORKs Policy 100-E3 Time on Aid](#) for more information.

CL BONUS ISSUED ON OPEN CASE

A CL bonus is an incentive for satisfactory progress that was earned by the Cal-Learn participant.

- The Continuing worker takes action to issue a bonus upon receipt of the Cal-Learn/CalWORKs Communication Document ([F063-41-78](#)) from the CL CM. The Continuing worker should communicate with the CL CM if additional information is needed
- A Cal-Learn bonus should not be included in the calculation of an overpayment adjustment, or Homeless Assistance payment

Bonuses

- \$100 bonus is issued when the report card reflects satisfactory progress. The bonus may be authorized four times per year
- \$500 bonus is issued when Cal-Learn participant graduates from high school with a diploma or equivalent. Issuance is one time only

Note:

- CL bonus is issued to the CL participant via:
 - Warrant when the teen is not the head of household
 - EBT when the teen is the head of household
- Do not issue \$100 satisfactory progress bonus when the Cal-Learn participant will receive a \$500 graduation bonus for the same report card period.

TIME FRAME FOR ISSUANCE OF A CL BONUS

Cal-Learn/CalWORKs Communication Document ([F063-41-78](#)) is received by the Continuing worker at any time during the month. CL bonus must be issued no later than the following month.

Example: Communication document received November 9th; the Continuing worker will issue the bonus no later than December 31st.

CL BONUS ISSUED ON CLOSED CASE

Issue a bonus on a closed case if it was earned while the CalWORKs case was active.

- **Case closed and in Continuing worker caseload number -** Continuing worker issues the bonus
- **Case closed and in Caseload #XXOB -** Contact FSS/AS PQA for further instructions on issuance of the bonus

CL SANCTIONS IMPOSED ON OPEN CASE

The Continuing worker takes action to impose a sanction upon receipt of the Cal-Learn/CalWORKs Communication Document ([F063-41-78](#)) from the CL CM. The Continuing worker should communicate with the CL CM if additional information is needed.

Do not include a Cal-Learn sanction in the calculation of an overpayment adjustment, or Homeless Assistance payment.

Sanctions

- \$100 sanction is imposed when:
 - Full-time credits not met
 - No Good Cause found for Less than Adequate Progress
 - No Report Card Received
- \$50 sanction is imposed when:
 - Good Cause found for Less Than Adequate Progress

- No Good Cause found for late submission of a Report Card regardless of the progress (Less Than Adequate Progress, Adequate Progress or better)

CL sanctions are applied to the AU grant over two consecutive months following timely notice. If a \$100 sanction is imposed, \$50 will be deducted from the CalWORKs grant each month. If a \$50 sanction is imposed, \$25 will be deducted from the CalWORKs grant each month.

CL sanction is considered a County-Initiated Action and may occur at any time during the Semi-Annual/Annual Payment Period. CL sanction shall be initiated mid-period/year only after timely and adequate notice of action can be provided to the participant.

Example: The SAR Payment Period established is January, February, March, April, May, and June. On January 22nd, the Cal-Learn participant provides a report card that shows Less than Adequate Progress. The CL CM notified the Continuing worker to initiate a \$100 sanction; however, there is not enough time to issue a 10-day NOA to reduce February benefits, the sanction will be applied to March and April CalWORKs grants.

TRANSITIONING OFF CL

The CL CM is required to assist the CL participant in transitioning to WTW activities when it is known that the CL participant is approaching the end of the CL program.

When a CL participant has reached the end of their CL program, the CL CM shall discontinue the Cal-Learn program and notify the CL Continuing worker. The CL CM will also notify the AFLP worker via Cal-Learn/AFLP Communication Document ([F063-41-326](#)).

The Cal-Learn Continuing worker will Register the participant in the WTW program and complete a CalWORKs Communication Document (F063-41-70) to assign the WTW case per current business process.

Note: Prior to registering the participant in the WTW program, the CL Continuing worker will evaluate if the participant meets a WTW exemption. Refer to [Policy 100-F1 WTW Exemptions](#).

CALFRESH

Bonuses and sanctions shall be treated as follows in the CalFresh program:

Bonuses - The \$100 and \$500 bonuses are exempt from income. They are considered a non-recurring lump sum payment and counted as a resource in the month received.

Sanctions - The actual CalWORKs grant received is to be considered in CalFresh. When the CalWORKs grant is reduced due to CL sanction, use the reduced amount in CalFresh allotment calculation.

CORRECTIVE ACTION WHEN THE COUNTY FAILS TO ENROLL PREGNANT OR PARENTING TEEN IN CL PROGRAM

When discovered a teen was not enrolled in the CL program, staff follow these steps:

- Deem notification to have occurred as of the date the teen would have been noticed if they had been properly referred to the CL program
- Restore bonuses that would have been issued during the time the teen was erroneously not enrolled in CL
- Reimburse the teen for any child care, transportation, and ancillary expenses incurred during this time
- Retroactive bonuses and service arrangements are not considered income or property in the month received or the following month
- Retroactive bonuses cannot be used to offset any overpayments; however, the teen may voluntarily repay service arrangements overpayment
- No sanction shall be retroactively applied since the lacked proper notice and the service arrangement to help motivate them to make adequate progress in school
- Existing CL NOAs are to be used to inform the teen of retroactive payments

FORMS

- [Cal-Learn/CalWORKs Communication Document \(F063-41-78\)](#)
- [Cal-Learn Plan for Education \(F063-41-98\)](#)
- [Cal-Learn/AFLP Communication Document \(F063-41-326\)](#)
- [Cal-Learn Case Manager Monthly Checklist \(F063-41-331\)](#)
- [Cal-Learn/AFLP Referral \(F063-41-334\)](#)

REFERENCES

- EAS Manual 42-762 – 42.769
 - ACIN I-10-02
 - ACL 12-60, 12-25, 12-49
 - [Policy 100-B10 Minor Parent AU](#)
 - [Policy 100-D2 Pregnancy Special Needs](#)
 - [Policy 100-E3 Time on Aid](#)
 - [Policy 100-F1 WTW Exemptions](#)
 - [Cal-Learn Bonus and Sanctions Processing Guide](#)
 - [Cal-Learn Cases - Operational Direction](#)
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