
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Benjamin Allen, Chair

2017 - 2018 Regular

Bill No: AB 2933 **Hearing Date:** June 20, 2018
Author: Medina
Version: April 9, 2018
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Lynn Lorber

Subject: Public social services: county liaison for higher education.

NOTE: This bill has been referred to the Committees on Education and Human Services. A "do pass" motion should include referral to the Committee on Human Services.

SUMMARY

This bill requires a county human services agency, or any other county agency responsible for social services, health services, or behavioral health services programs to designate an agency liaison for higher education, and requires the liaison to be the single point of contact in the agency for academic counselors and other relevant professional staff at community colleges located within the county.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) pursuant to the Food Stamp Act of 1964. (Title 7, United States Code, § 2011 et seq.)
- 2) Establishes the CalFresh program to administer the provision of federal SNAP benefits to families and individuals meeting specified criteria. Welfare and Institutions Code § 18900 et seq.)
- 3) Establishes the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Act to provide benefits to those eligible to receive public assistance benefits, as specified. (42 U.S.C. § 601 et seq. and WIC § 10065 et seq.)
- 4) Establishes the Restaurant Meals Program (RMP) under Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to allow eligible homeless, disabled, or elderly recipients to purchase hot, prepared food from participating restaurants. (7 U.S.C. § 2020, and WIC § 18919 et seq.)
- 5) Requires each public and private postsecondary education institution that is located in a county that participates in the RMP to apply to become an approved food vendor for participation in this program. (Education Code § 66025.93)
- 6) Establishes the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program to provide aid and welfare-to-work services to eligible families. (42 U.S.C. § 601 et seq.)

- 7) Provides that Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funds for welfare-to-work services in California are administered through the CalWORKs program. (WIC § 11200 et seq.)
- 8) Establishes within the California Community Colleges the CalWORKs Recipients Education Program to assist CalWORKs recipients prepare for employment. Further requires a community college to receive funds for curriculum development or redesign aimed at, among other things, linking CalWORKs courses to job placement through work experience and internships. (EC § 79200 et seq.)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires a county human services agency, or any other county agency responsible for social services, health services, or behavioral health services programs to designate an agency liaison for higher education.
- 2) Requires the agency liaison for higher education to be the single point of contact in the agency for academic counselors and other relevant professional staff at community colleges located within the county.
- 3) Requires the agency liaison to provide resource and referral information regarding relevant programs under the agency's jurisdiction to students who have expressed a need that might be met by those services.
- 4) Encourages a county agency to consult with community colleges located within the county to best determine how the agency liaison can assist counselors and other professional staff members in meeting the needs of the student population.
- 5) Requires any disclosure or sharing of personal information to be made in compliance with applicable state and federal confidentiality laws.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, "California Community Colleges educate over 2.1 million students, many of whom struggle with economic challenges and/or other difficulties. Counselors have the ability to connect students with appropriate county-funded or county-administered services, but many counselors do not have the time, nor do they have the expertise to navigate county government for this purpose. Some California counties have voluntarily established an educational liaison to serve as a single point of contact for the student CalWORKs population. The CalWORKs model has proven successful but is limited to counselors serving a narrow population of students."
- 2) ***Existing model.*** According to the Assembly Education Committee analysis of this bill, the inspiration for this bill stems from a similar practice in Orange County that utilizes an educational liaison to provide a single point of contact within the county for community college counselors serving CalWORKs students. Use of a

liaison has been in practice in Orange County for ten years and was implemented because it was found that counties and community colleges were both serving the same population of CalWORKs recipients. It was later determined within the county that a more coherent structure was needed to provide for the needs of that population. Under the Orange County model, when a community college counselor has a question about regarding public benefits for which a student may be eligible, the counselor contacts one of four regional liaisons in order to receive timely assistance. Orange County staff has reported that the relationship between community college counselors and county staff has resulted in increased knowledge and insights into the student CalWORKs population and program, and has led to increased collaboration for other programs, such as CalFresh and Medi-Cal.

- 3) **California Community College CalWORKs Program:** According to the Assembly Education Committee analysis, the California Community Colleges CalWORKs program exists in 113 of the state's community colleges, in addition to one adult education center. There are approximately 30,000 CalWORKs participants enrolled in community colleges throughout the state. Community college CalWORKs programs work with local county human services offices to provide case management and myriad services to participants, including: academic, career, and personal counseling involving intensive case management, coordination of child care services, career exploration, and coordination with off-campus community based organizations for emergency assistance, and on-campus student services; and on- and off- campus subsidized work-study placements. Additionally, English language learners and individuals seeking to complete high school equivalency programs may also access services through the California Community College CalWORKs program.
- 4) **Fiscal impact.** According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, this bill would impose ongoing state General Fund costs of about \$2 million annually for county agencies to designate a liaison to work with community college staff to provide resources to community college students. (Estimate assumes each of the state's 58 county agencies designate 0.5 of an employee's time to serve as a liaison.) The state would need to reimburse these costs to county agencies, if the Commission on State Mandates determines the bill's requirements to be a reimbursable state mandate.
- 5) **Related legislation.** AB 1894 (Weber, 2018) authorizes the Department of Social Services to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Chancellor of the California State University (CSU) in order to allow a qualifying food facility located on a CSU campus to participate in the Restaurant Meals Program (RMP), even if the CSU campus is located in a county that does not participate in the RMP. AB 1894 passed this Committee on June 6, on a 6-0 vote, and is scheduled to be heard in the Senate Human Services Committee on June 26, 2018.

SUPPORT

Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (sponsor)
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

California Faculty Association
California Federation of Teachers
National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter

OPPOSITION

None received

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