

Budget Deal Adopts Many Western Center Priorities
SSI Recipients Eligible for SNAP
\$500 Million for Housing and Homeless Programs
Largest CalWORKs Grant Increase Since 1978
New CalWORKs Baby Wellness Program

Sacramento, CA – June 18, 2018. The Governor and the Legislature have agreed to a new state budget that address some of California’s long standing issues of poverty and homelessness. The budget contains many Western Center priorities and initiatives, such as SB 982 (Mitchell), AB 3200 (Kalra), and AB 992 (Arrambula). These advancements represent years of advocacy by Western Center and other advocacy organizations to reduce poverty and end homelessness. The spending plan, which is now on the Governor’s desk for his signature, makes major commitments to:

- Provides a roadmap for ending deep poverty for CalWORKs families and children
- Permits 1.3 million aged, blind and disabled SSI recipients to apply for federal SNAP benefits (food stamps), bringing in \$365 million in new federal funds to California.

Provides more than \$500 million in funding for supportive housing, permanent affordable housing and new funds to prevent homelessness.
- Expand the state Earned Income Tax Credit to older and younger workers
- Creates a new home visiting program for CalWORKs families to help families with young children connect to services and information.

The 2018 budget will raise TANF/CalWorks welfare payments by 10 percent with a commitment to raise grants above 50% of the federal poverty line for families with children in the next two budgets, bring 900,000 children out of what has been dubbed “deep poverty”. For a family of four, this means surviving on an income of less than \$12,550 a year or \$8.60 per day per person. “This is a momentous step for children,” said Jessica Bartholow, Western Center Policy Advocate. “Children living in deep poverty face lasting physical and mental developmental issues that have profound and often tragic impacts on their lives. The state’s investment of \$360 million will improve the lives of 1 million children. It’s a small price to pay.”

California is the only state in the nation that prevents aged, blind, and persons living with disabilities who are recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) from participating the federal SNAP/CalFresh program. In 1974, the state increased SSI payments by \$10/month, making SSI recipients ineligible to receive food stamps and saving the State millions of dollars in administrative costs. These SSI recipients survive on benefits that do not reach the federal poverty line and often face the difficult choice of paying their rent or buying food. The Legislature has ended this chapter now. “This new law is a ‘win-win’, said Michael Herald, Western Center Policy Director. “It will likely bring nearly \$400 million a year into California through the federal program and improve the lives of 1.3 million Californians.” The deal protects families on CalFresh who have an SSI recipient by ensuring the state will supplement their CalFresh grant if ending cashout reduces their monthly benefits. The budget includes \$200 million in funding to provide these benefits to families.

While there is much more work to be done, Western Center thanks Governor Brown and the Legislature for the accomplishments in this budget and for all the progress achieved in the past five years. Governor Brown, in particular, deserves credit for restoring California's fiscal health and doing more than any Governor in recent memory to insure that the lives of low-income families and individuals were improved.

Western Center on Law & Poverty brings about system wide public and private sector policy changes that help millions of low-income Californians at a time, focusing on the issues of affordable housing, healthcare, public benefits, racial justice, economic equity and access to justice.

For more information, contact:

For more detail on the budget outcomes please see our website at www.wclp.org

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