

Census Income Now Exempt in CalWORKs & CalFresh October 2019

On October 2, 2019, Governor Gavin Newsom signed [Assembly Bill 807 \(Bauer-Kahan\)](#) into law. This bill adds to the list of income considered exempt when determining eligibility and the amount of assistance a family can receive under the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program. Exempt income will now include certain scholarships, rental payments received by a government entity, and income related to the Decennial Census. AB 807 was co-sponsored by Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations and Western Center on Law and Poverty.

Because AB 807 included an urgency clause, it became law on October 2, 2019, the day that it was signed. The Department of Social Services will be issuing guidance in the near future.

Decennial Census Related Work Income Exemption in CalWORKs and CalFresh

Effective immediately, income or a stipend paid by the United States Census Bureau, any government entity, or any nonprofit organization for temporary work related to improving participation in the Decennial Census are exempt. That means this income will not be considered when determining a family's CalWORKs eligibility and aid amount.

This change in law compliments a recent, though slightly more narrow policy change to CalFresh rules for temporary employees working on the 2020 Decennial Census, allowing them to exempt income received by the U.S. Census Bureau. As per [All County Letter 19-79](#), effective July 1, 2019, income earned for work at the Bureau and related to the 2020 Decennial Census must be excluded when determining CalFresh eligibility and benefits. This exemption is available through a [Demonstration Project](#) approved by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and is effective through September 30, 2020.

Additional CalWORKs Income Exemptions Included in AB 807

AB 807 also created to other CalWORKs income exemptions. With the signing of the Act, an award or scholarship provided by a public or private entity to a dependent youth is now exempt and will not be considered when determining CalWORKs eligibility and aid amount. Additionally, any payment made to a CalWORKs family by a government entity to prevent homelessness or support housing costs is now exempt under the new law. (Note: housing subsidies paid directly to the landlord have always been exempt).

About Western Center on Law and Poverty

For over five decades, the Western Center on Law & Poverty has advocated on behalf of individuals with low incomes in every branch of California government—from the courts to the Legislature. Through the lens of economic and racial justice, we litigate, educate and advocate around health care, housing, and public benefits policies and administration. Learn more at: www.wclp.org for more information about this bill, contact: Jessica Bartholow, Legislative Advocate, at jbartholow@wclp.org or (916) 282-5119.