



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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Lawrence Berkeley
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DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE AND
NATURAL RESOURCES

January 17, 2025

The Honorable Scott D. Wiener
Chair, Joint Legislative Budget Committee
1020 N Street, Room 553
Sacramento, California 95814

The Honorable Dr. Joaquin Arambula
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 6220
Sacramento, California 95814

Director Jennifer Troia
California Department of Social Services
744 P Street
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Senator Wiener, Assemblymember Arambula, and Director Troia:

Pursuant to Section 66027.9 of the Education Code (AB 1326, Chapter 570, Statutes of 2021), enclosed is the Public Social Services County Liaison Legislative Report prepared by the California State University, Chico's Center for Healthy Communities. The enclosed report was developed in partnership with the three California public higher education segments, the California Department of Social Services and the California State University, Chico's, Center for Healthy Communities.

The University of California Office of the President (UCOP) has closely partnered with the Center for Healthy Communities (CHC) at California State University. Nine UC campuses are subrecipients of CHC's CalFresh Outreach Program, grant funded by the United States Department of Agriculture and CHC has been instrumental in supporting the University of California (UC) in increasing CalFresh outreach and application assistance. County liaisons have been instrumental in supporting UC CalFresh efforts, and the UC continues to support these collaborative efforts.

If you have any questions regarding this report, Associate Vice President Cain Diaz would be pleased to speak with you. Cain can be reached by telephone at (510) 987-9350, or by e-mail at Cain.Diaz@ucop.edu.

Sincerely,

Michael V. Drake, MD
President

Enclosure

cc: Senate Budget and Fiscal Review
The Honorable John Laird, Chair
Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee #1
(Attn: Mr. Diego Lopez)
(Attn: Mr. Kirk Feely)
The Honorable David A. Alvarez, Chair
Assembly Education Finance Subcommittee #3
(Attn: Mr. Mark Martin)
(Attn: Ms. Sarah Haynes)
Mr. Hans Hemann, Joint Legislative Budget Committee
Ms. Jessica Holmes, Department of Finance
Ms. Jessica Deitchman, Department of Finance
Ms. Gabriela Chavez, Department of Finance
Mr. Gabriel Petek, Legislative Analyst Office
Ms. Jennifer Pacella, Legislative Analyst Office
Mr. Ian Klein, Legislative Analyst's Office
Provost and Executive Vice President Katherine S. Newman
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Associate Vice President Cain Diaz

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

AB 1326 Public Social Services County Liaison Legislative Report

This legislative report provides information pursuant to the requirements of AB 1326. It describes the results of a survey conducted on the efficacy of county human services agency liaisons with campuses. Appendix I includes the legislative language to which this report responds.

Basic Needs at the University of California

All ten campuses of the University of California (UC) have a central point for students to access basic needs support, often referred to as “basic needs centers” or “basic needs hubs.” Those services include CalFresh application assistance and referrals to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), which can support students in applying for other public welfare programs like CalWORKs and Medi-Cal. In 2023–24, UC provided approximately 52,928 CalFresh prescreens and submitted approximately 17,281 CalFresh applications systemwide either directly through campus basic needs centers or via referral links provided by basic needs centers.

AB 1326 County-Campus Liaisons

AB 1326, Chapter 570, Statutes of 2021, required county human services agencies to designate no less than one employee as a staff liaison to serve as the point of contact for professional staff at postsecondary institutions within their jurisdiction. The 2022–23 year was the first year all ten UC campuses were assigned a liaison. Points of contact assist campus staff in problem-solving CalFresh student application issues, provide insights on why applications are denied or approved, and are instrumental in on-campus CalFresh events. However, some campuses receive more support from their liaisons than others.

AB 1326 County-Campus Survey on Liaison Efficacy

The University of California campuses participated in a survey to gauge the effectiveness of CDSS campus liaisons supporting basic needs programs in accordance with AB 1326. This survey was administered by the Center for Healthy Communities (CHC) at California State University, Chico to both UC campuses and CDSS. CHC is a trusted community partner, providing campuses with CalFresh outreach assistance across all three public higher education segments in California. Nine UC campuses participated in the survey, and most of the respondents worked directly with students. The following presents a summary of survey results from UC campuses. For more detailed information on the survey results, please see the Center for Healthy Communities full report at <https://calfreshoutreach.org/templates-resources/#efaq-ab-1326-campus-county-partnerships>.

UC Survey Results

Campuses experienced challenges and successes engaging with the county liaisons, including variability in liaison communication from campus to campus, liaisons lacking knowledge of public assistance programs, and lack of liaison capacity due to high workloads. Most respondents, however, also reported that their county liaisons addressed case-related issues, provided or coordinated county program application assistance, and communicated promptly. Half of campuses communicated five or more times per month with their liaison, and the majority of campuses reported that their liaison did not, rarely, or only sometimes participated in campus meetings or events. Approximately two-thirds of respondents stated that the liaisons did not meet their expectations.

The majority of campuses reported staff's increased general knowledge of CalFresh and Medi-Cal since the implementation of the liaison role, but not that of CalWORKs. They also reported staff's increased knowledge of eligibility criteria and verification requirements for CalFresh, but not for Medi-Cal or CalWORKs. Campuses indicated that county liaisons often do not have expertise in these programs and that Medi-Cal and CalWORKs were often not part of the survey respondents' roles.

The majority of respondents provided referrals to county social service programs and successfully shared data between their own campus departments, providing opportunities for collaboration and cross-referrals, including CalFresh application assistance and outreach programs, food pantries, and homeless assistance programs. Respondents also expressed legal or privacy-related concerns about sharing data with the county. This may limit opportunities for collaboration, cross-referrals, and targeted assistance.

Respondents also reported their perceptions about student experiences with county social services. All respondent campuses reported that students often get positive outcomes from participating in social service programs, including helping their academic performance. However, all campuses also reported that students rarely, never, or only sometimes found it easy to access county programs, get prompt county assistance, or reach county eligibility workers, or found that needs were met by eligibility workers or that the services fully met their needs. Additionally, respondents reported that most students never, rarely, or only sometimes received updated eligibility criteria from the county or felt adequately supported.

Student CalFresh, CalWORKs, and Medi-Cal Eligibility

The California Policy Lab (CPL) estimates that in fall 2019, 33 percent of UC undergraduates and 7 percent of UC graduate students were likely eligible for CalFresh and that 33 percent of eligible undergraduates and 26 percent of eligible graduate students were not participating in the program. CPL estimates that in the spring of 2022, 0.7 percent of UC students participated in CalWORKs.¹ However, UC campuses, the University of California Office of the President (UCOP), and CPL are unable to estimate current eligibility or take-up rates for CalFresh or eligibility rates for CALWORKs or Medi-Cal due to lack of available data. The CDSS CalFresh

¹ CPL worked with CHC to supply UCOP with CalWORKs data in support of the legislative report.

Student Data Dashboard does not provide CalFresh student participation rates by segment or campus.²

Conclusion

AB 1326 provided for establishing county human services agency liaisons with campus staff. This has been important for supporting students with CalFresh. Successes have included the support that students receive from CalFresh once they participate and the development of a pathway for more effective communication with county social services. Over 60 percent of respondents estimated that at least fifty-one students per month are enrolled in CalFresh due to the collaboration with county staff, 7 percent of respondents estimate that eleven to fifty students per month are enrolled in Medi-Cal, and half of respondents estimated zero to ten students are enrolled in CalWORKs. Challenges include prompt communication with and timely information delivery from county liaisons and inconsistent experiences with the level of support that campuses receive from their liaisons. Additionally, both campus staff and county liaisons often do not have the capacity or knowledge to provide significant support to students in applying for CalWORKs or Medi-Cal.

² CDSS CalFresh Student Data Public Dashboard available at:
<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/california.department.of.social.services/viz/CFdashboard-PUBLIC/CalFreshStudents>

Appendix I

Assembly Bill No. 1326 CHAPTER 570

An act to add and repeal Section 66027.9 of the Education Code, and to add Section 10006 to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to public social services.

AB 1326, Arambula. Public social services: county liaison for higher education.

Existing law provides for the protection, care, and assistance for the people of the state, and the promotion of the welfare and happiness of all people in the state by providing appropriate aid and services to the needy and distressed. Under existing law, counties are responsible for administering the various public social services programs and related services, including, but not limited to, CalFresh and general assistance benefits.

Existing law establishes the California Community Colleges, under the administration of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, the California State University, under the administration of the Trustees of the California State University, and the University of California, under the administration of the Regents of the University of California, as segments of public postsecondary education in this state. Existing law establishes community college districts, locations of the California State University, and campuses of the University of California throughout the state.

This bill would require a county human services agency to designate at least one employee as a staff liaison to serve as a point of contact for academic counselors and other professional staff at a campus of an institution of public higher education located within the county. The bill would require any disclosure or sharing of personal information under the bill to be made in compliance with applicable state and federal confidentiality laws. The bill would require a county human services agency, with input from the public institutions of higher learning in the county, to develop protocols for engagement between the staff liaison and a campus of an institution of public higher education located within the county and would encourage those entities to consult with specified stakeholders in the development of those protocols. The bill would authorize the State Department of Social Services to implement its provisions by all-county letters or similar instructions. By requiring counties to perform new duties, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

This bill would also require the Office of the Chancellor of the California State University and the Office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges, and request the Office of the President of the University of California, in collaboration with county human services agencies, to conduct a survey to determine the effectiveness of the county liaison position and submit, on or before January 1, 2025, a report with the results of the survey to specified legislative committees and the State Department of Social Services. The bill would repeal these provisions on January 1, 2026.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to the statutory provisions noted above.

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) In a 2019 survey of California students conducted by the Student Aid Commission, 35 percent of respondents indicated that they experienced food insecurity, 35 percent of respondents indicated they experienced housing insecurity, and the survey further found that students of color experienced the highest levels of housing and food insecurity.

(b) County health and human services offices have a number of programs that could greatly benefit many students facing these challenges related to providing for their basic needs.

(c) It is the intent of the Legislature to expedite the connection between students in need and critical county services.

SEC. 2. Section 66027.9 is added to the Education Code, to read:

66027.9. (a) The Office of the Chancellor of the California State University and the Office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges shall, and the Office of the President of the University of California is requested to, in collaboration with county human services agencies, conduct a survey to determine the effectiveness of the county liaison position established pursuant to Section 10006 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. The survey shall address, at a minimum, all of the following:

(1) The barriers and opportunities faced by county staff liaisons in responding to the requests of counselors or other relevant professional staff.

(2) The barriers and opportunities faced by counselors or other relevant professional staff in engaging with county staff liaisons.

(3) The barriers and opportunities for increased collaboration between student assistance programs enabling cross referrals between different programs including, but not limited to, CalFresh, food pantries, and homeless student assistance.

(4) Any changes in counselors' or other relevant professional staffs' knowledge or awareness of county programs as a result of the county liaison position.

(5) The experiences of students connected to county services through counselors or other relevant professional staff.

(6) An estimated number of college students at each institution of public higher education likely eligible for but not receiving public assistance program benefits, including CalFresh, CalWORKs, and Medi-Cal.

(7) An estimated number of college students at each institution of public higher education that enrolled in public assistance programs, including, but not limited to, CalFresh, CalWORKs, and Medi-Cal, as a result of the engagement with the county liaison position.

(b) The Office of the Chancellor of the California State University and the Office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges shall, and the Office of the President of the University of California is requested to, report the results of the survey described in subdivision (a) to the Senate Committees on Education and Human Services, the Assembly Committees on Higher Education and Human Services, the Assembly Committee on Budget, the Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, and the State Department of Social Services on or before January 1, 2025.

(c) (1) A report to be submitted pursuant to this section shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code.

(2) Pursuant to Section 10231.5 of the Government Code, this section is repealed on January 1, 2026.