

CalWORKs Time Limits on Aid

California law limits cash aid to 48 months of CalWORKs for adults. The state will count all months of aid that you got as an adult, since January 1, 1998.

A month on aid will NOT count against your time limit if:

→ **You met a welfare-to-work exemption**

You may have had an exemption if:

- You were over 60 or under 18;
- You had an illness, injury or disability that kept you from regularly working or doing welfare-to-work (WTW) activities for your full hours for at least 30 days;
- You cared for a disabled household member;
- You lived on Indian land where the unemployment rate was higher than 50%;
- You were a relative (not a parent) caring for a child in or at risk of foster care, who needed special care that limited your time doing work or WTW activities;
- The county exempted you because they did not pay for needed support services;
- You cared for a young child (under 23 months).

→ **You qualified for a Domestic Violence time waiver**

This can be for current or past abuse. You can get the time limit stopped now, and for the past. This waiver applies whenever holding you to the time limit would unfairly penalize you or make it more likely that you would stay with or return to the abuser.

→ **Your aid was repaid by child support**

The state adds up the child support it collects for children who receive CalWORKs. When child support collected for a child equals the amount your family got for one month on aid, that aid will be considered "paid off." Months paid off this way are removed from your time limit. For example, if \$3,000 of child support was collected and your grant was \$500, six months would be added to your time clock. [$\$500 \times 6 \text{ months} = \$3,000$].

→ **If you meet a time “extender” ... you stay on aid after 48 months, or get back on after you have “timed out.”**

You qualify for this if:

- ◆ All adults in the household get a form of disability benefits, and your health condition significantly limits your ability to work or do WTW activities;
- ◆ The foster care and domestic violence reasons listed above apply, and if you are unable to find or keep employment (for this last reason, if you are already off aid, you would need to show that you have looked for work and cannot find or keep a job);
- ◆ You will get a 30-day notice listing the time you have used, and how many months were not counted against your time limit. **Ask for a hearing if you disagree. Provide proof of any disability.**

To receive more than 24 months of CalWORKs, adults must participate in certain WTW activities. A month does not count on the 24-month clock if the adult is participating in a “core” activity, which is:

- Unsubsidized employment
- Subsidized private or public sector employment
- Work study
- Grant based on-the-job training
- Work experience
- Community Service
- Vocational education (only for 12 months)
- On the job training
- Job search and job readiness if that is 50% of hours
- Providing child care to CalWORKs recipient

Adults can participate in another welfare-to-work activity for up to **24 months**. When those 24 months are used, the adult must change to one of the “core” activities or be removed from the grant.

In addition, months do not count towards the **24-month clock** when:

- A WTW exemption applies
- There is “good cause” for not meeting WTW participation requirements for at least half of the month.
- The adult has a WTW sanction
- You are participating in WTW appraisal, assessment, or otherwise in the process of developing a WTW plan
- You are eligible for CalLearn
- You have a domestic-abuse waiver

If an adult reaches the **24-month limit**, the adult can ask for an extension of the 24 month time limit if:

- You are likely to obtain employment within 6 months
- There are unique labor market barriers temporarily preventing employment
- You are making satisfactory progress in an education or treatment program, including adult basic education, vocational education, or you are participating in a self-initiated program (SIP) that has a known graduation, transfer, or completion date that would meaningfully increase the likelihood of employment
- You need additional time to complete a WTW activity specified in your WTW case plan due to a diagnosed learning or other disability
- You have submitted an SSI application and a hearing date is set
- You have a diagnosed learning disability
- You are a two-parent family and only one of you has exhausted the 24-month clock, and your combined participation meets minimum standards

PDF Download - **CDSS Exemption Request Form - CW2186A**

IF YOU NEED LEGAL HELP, CONTACT LEGAL SERVICES OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA