



JOHN BURTON
Advocates
for Youth

MEMORANDUM

Status of the Expectant Parent Payment Rollout

FOR EXPECTANT FOSTER YOUTH IN CALIFORNIA



MAY 2022

SUMMARY

The 2021-22 state budget included \$800,000 in ongoing funding to establish an Expectant Parent Payment (EPP) for foster youth to prepare for the birth of their child. Effective January 1, 2022, all youth in out of home placement expecting a child are eligible to receive a monthly payment in the 7th, 8th, and 9th month of pregnancy that is equal to the amount of the monthly infant supplement which is \$900. The policy language for the EPP was included in [Assembly Bill 153](#) and the California Department of Social Services provided guidance to county child welfare agencies via All County Letter [21-123](#) and All County Information Notice [1-45-22](#).

The EPP is intended to support pregnant foster youth and improve pregnancy and birth outcomes, promote birth readiness, promote maternal and child health, and help prevent child abuse and neglect. The funds may be used to meet the specialized needs of pregnant minors or nonminor dependents, and to properly prepare for the needs of the infant. To understand current policy and practices related to early implementation of the EPP, John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY) surveyed county child welfare agencies in March 2022.

In response to the survey, JBAY created an [EPP Implementation toolkit](#), which includes a factsheet, sample budget, outreach materials, and two sample policies. The toolkit is intended to support counties' policy development, raise awareness of the EPP in their region, and support expectant parents with financial planning.

METHODOLOGY

In partnership with the University of California Berkeley School of Public Health and the County Welfare Directors Association of California, JBAY administered a 9-question online survey to all 58 counties. Forty social services agencies (68%) responded to the survey, and the respondents represent approximately 738 (95%) of the 777 minor and nonminor dependent parents in foster care in California as of January 1, 2022.¹

¹ Data Source: CWS/CMS 2022 Quarter 1 Extract. Retrieved April 4, 2022 from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <https://ccwip.berkeley.edu>

FINDINGS

A primary goal of the survey was to understand statewide progress of the early rollout of the Expectant Parent Payment and identify common challenges, barriers, and successes at the local level. Statewide, most counties have made progress in developing policies and procedures for the Expectant Parent Payment. Counties with larger populations of expectant foster youth are further along in policy development than counties with fewer parenting youth.

Provided below is a summary of county responses about the status of their policies and procedures for the Expectant Parent Payment; payment options and disbursement; types of outreach utilized to raise awareness of this new benefit; challenges, benefits, and successes they have observed; and types of support that would be most helpful for program implementation.

1 Statewide, most counties have made progress in developing policies and procedures for the Expectant Parent Payment (EPP).

- Counties were asked about the status of their policy and procedure to refer all expectant minor and non-minor dependents to receive the EPP. Over one-third of counties (35%) reported having a complete written policy or procedure. A total of 28% of counties reported their policy is in progress, 32% had not yet started, and the remaining counties were unsure. **Given this, 74% of parenting youth live in a county that has a written policy and procedure for referring all expectant foster youth to receive the EPP.**

2 Most counties reported checks as the sole payment option in place for disbursement of EPP funds.

- Counties were asked about the types of payment disbursement options available to expectant foster youth. Almost three-quarters of counties (73%) reported that there is at least one payment option in place, and the remaining counties reported no payment options or were unsure. **Given this, 95% of parenting youth reside in a county with some form of payment option.**
- Of counties with a form of payment in place, a paper check is the sole option for 86%. The remaining 14% of counties with a payment option in place reported alternatives to checks, specifically debit cards, electronic payments using services like Venmo or CashApp, and direct deposit.

4 Over half of all counties reported at least one challenge related to implementation efforts. Counties are experiencing different challenges depending on their stage of implementation.

- Counties were asked about the types of challenges they have experienced when trying to establish a protocol for the EPP. More than half (55%) of counties reported that their county has experienced a challenge related to implementation of the EPP program, and the remaining counties reported no challenges or were unsure. **Given this, 84% of parenting youth live in a county reporting an implementation challenge.**

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES	COUNTIES WITH POLICY IN PLACE	COUNTIES WITH POLICY IN-PROGRESS	COUNTIES WITH NO POLICY	TOTAL (ALL COUNTIES)
Bank acct/check cashing barriers	57%	-	20%	20%
Concerns about use of funds	54%	25%	-	20%
Process identifying expectant foster youth	39%	50%	20%	20%
Lack of awareness among youth/staff	23%	25%	60%	18%

5 Overall, counties appear to be highly engaged in outreach efforts, with over half of all counties reporting that they have engaged in outreach efforts to raise awareness of the EPP.

- Counties were asked about the types of outreach efforts they have utilized to raise awareness of the new EPP program to stakeholders such as youth, providers, and resource families. Sixty-five percent of counties reported that their county has engaged in at least one type of outreach to raise awareness of the EPP program, and the remaining counties reported no outreach or were unsure. **Given this, 86% of parenting youth live in a county that is reporting active outreach efforts.**

OUTREACH EFFORTS	COUNTIES WITH POLICY IN PLACE	COUNTIES WITH POLICY IN-PROGRESS	COUNTIES WITH NO POLICY	TOTAL (ALL COUNTIES)
Notification at CFT	85%	67%	-	43%
Email/phone	69%	84%	57%	45%
Training for staff	69%	100%	57%	48%

6 Most counties who have disbursed at least one payment since January 1, 2022, were able to identify at least one benefit of the EPP for expectant foster youth and their infants. Counties are reporting benefits to parents and infants that are consistent with the aim of the Expectant Parent Payment.

- Counties were asked to identify any uses of the funds that have been beneficial to expectant foster youth and their children. A total of 82% of counties with at least one EPP disbursement reported a benefit to expectant foster youth and their children. **Of the parenting youth living in counties that have disbursed at least one payment, 95% are living in counties who are reporting benefits of the EPP program.**

BENEFITS TO EXPECTANT FOSTER YOUTH	
Infant furniture (cribs, changing tables, etc.)	100%
Infant carriers (car seats, strollers, etc.)	89%
Infant and maternity clothing	89%
Misc. infant items (diapers, bibs, etc.)	89%

7 Statewide, counties are very receptive to receiving EPP implementation support, with the majority (88%) of counties requesting at least one type of support.

MOST COMMONLY REQUESTED SUPPORT	
Outreach materials	73%
Fact sheet	60%
Sample policy	58%
Sample budget	43%

LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Utilize support to develop and finalize county EPP policy and practice.

- There are a number of available resources and staff who can provide technical assistance with the new policy including the JBAY [toolkit](#), county sample policies, and scheduling a meeting with JBAY or CDSS staff.



2

Make retroactive payments to new Infant Supplement recipients in 2022 who did not receive their EPP.

- ACL 21-123 states that, until automation is established in 2023, counties must identify processes identifying expectant foster youth and disbursement of funds. It is additionally stated that expectant foster youth must receive the entire three months of payment even if their pregnancy is not identified prior to the 7th month of pregnancy. Utilizing Infant Supplement data and implementing other formalized tracking measures may assist in these efforts.



3

Consider payment alternatives to check such as direct deposit, electronic payment, or debit cards.

- Two counties have made debit card payments an alternative option to checks, a third county allows direct deposit, and a fourth county allows debit card and electronic payments. CashApp accounts provide an account number and routing number that allows for direct deposit, which may be a good option for youth experiencing challenges opening a bank account as well as for any counties whose systems allow for direct deposit of funds.

4

Connect minors and nonminor dependents with Independent Living Program services and local financial literacy services to ensure they receive budgeting and banking support.

- Examples include services such as Bank On LA, or through other existing county financial services agency partnerships. Connecting expectant foster youth with these services early in their pregnancy might alleviate some of the banking challenges reported by counties, as well as providing financial literacy education to support budgeting and spending decisions.



5

Track and discuss the benefits of the EPP with recipients.

- Early implementers have expressed more confidence in expectant foster youths' purchasing decisions and report benefits that are aligned with the goals of the EPP. Tracking and reporting this data will help instill confidence in the purchasing decisions of expectant foster youth, and in turn instill confidence in expectant foster youths' engagement with financial literacy services and the EPP program.

STATE IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS



1 Convene a Healthy Sexual Development workgroup meeting to support county implementation.

- ▶ Early implementers have wisdom that can be shared with counties who have not yet implemented their EPP policy. Scheduling dedicated time for counties to come together and share implementation insights will support statewide rollout of the EPP.



2 Link the toolkit to CDSS Expectant and Parenting Youth Support Hub.

- ▶ Including the toolkit as a resource on the Support Hub will assist with dissemination of this resource, and support awareness-raising of the EPP among eligible foster youth, providers, and other stakeholders.



3 Use Infant Supplement data to assist counties in making retroactive payments.

- ▶ Providing counties with this data, such as a monthly report, will help to ensure all eligible youth receive the EPP by cross-referencing new Infant Supplement and EPP recipient lists.

APPENDIX A

NUMBER OF PARENTING YOUTH IN CARE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2022

COUNTY	PARENTING YOUTH
Los Angeles	300
San Bernardino	46
Sacramento	37
Orange	30
Kern	27
Riverside	25
San Joaquin	25
San Diego	21
Tulare	14
Alameda	14
Stanislaus	13
Santa Clara	12
Fresno	11
Ventura	11
Balance of the State	136
TOTAL	722



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