JBAY JOHN BURTON Advocates for Youth

2026-27 California State Budget:

Investments Related to Child Welfare & Youth Homelessness

Child Welfare		
Program Name	**Description**	**Funding Amount & Action**
Child Welfare Services-California Automated Response & Engagement System (CWS-CARES) Project	CWS-CARES is the new system being developed for the State of California to comply with Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) requirements, including foster care payments and services.	Allocates $179.8M in 2026-27
Foster Family Home (FFH) and Small Family Home (SFH) Insurance Fund	The FFH and SFH Insurance Fund is a state fund that provides liability insurance coverage for foster family homes, small family homes, resource families, and tribally approved homes.	Allocates $600,000 and allows up to $4.2M in additional claims reimbursement in 2026-27
Emergency Response (ER) Enhancement Program	ER provides child protective services to families in crisis 24 hours daily and improves investigation timeliness and staff retention.	Allocates $20M in 2026-27
Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program	CASA supports children in the foster care and juvenile justice systems through the use of volunteer advocates who advance the best interests of the children.	Allocates $20M in 2026-27
Returning Adoptive Children from Out-of-State Placement	Reappropriates funding for state operations costs, enhanced care planning, and service navigation to help adoptive children returning from out of state placements to in-state care and services.	Reappropriates up to $6.1M and newly allocates $392,000 in 2026-27
Tribal Foster Care Prevention Initiative	Provides funding for AB 1574 (Rogers) to assist any federal recognized Indian tribe in California with services aimed at preserving families and preventing the entry of children into foster care.	Allocates $2.4M annually
Federal Children's Savings 530A Accounts Automation	530A accounts are tax-deferred investment accounts for children born in certain years and for foster youth which can be seeded with a $1,000 federal investment.	Allocates $1M in 2026-27

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Housing		
Program Name	**Description**	**Funding Amount & Action**
Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Program	HHAP provides one-time grant funds to homeless Continuums of Care, counties and California's 14 largest cities to support a variety of homelessness interventions. Jurisdictions are required to dedicate a minimum of 10% of their HHAP allocation to addressing homelessness among youth.	Total HHAP Appropriation: $900M in 2026-27 Total Allocated to Local Jurisdictions: $829M in 2026-27 10% Youth Set-Aside: $82.9M in 2026-27
California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Housing Programs	CDSS Housing Programs for vulnerable seniors and children involved in foster care.	Allocates $100M in 2026-27
Bringing Families Home (BFH)	BFH was established in 2016 to provide financial assistance and housing support to families in the child welfare system experiencing or at risk of homelessness to increase family reunification and to prevent foster care placement.	Allocates $15M in 2026-27
The Veterans and Affordable Housing Bond Act of 2026	The Act submits a November 3, 2026, ballot initiative where if passed by voters, would authorize the State Treasurer's Office to issue general obligation bonds for the development or preservation of affordable housing, including youth housing and student housing.	Authorizes $11.25B (if passed by voters), consisting of: • $10B Total State General Obligation Bonds, including: - $150M for youth housing - $350M for student housing • $1.25B Total CalVet Home Loan Program

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Education		
Program Name	**Description**	**Funding Amount & Action**
McKinney-Vento Homeless Children and Youth Program for K-12 Students	Provides grants to Local Educational Agencies to support K-12 students experiencing homelessness.	Allocates $116M in 2026-27
First Star Academy	First Star Academy is an education support program for K-12 foster youth administered at some UC campuses.	Allocates $1.5M in 2026-27
UC Basic Needs, Housing and Disability Services	All 10 UC campuses have on-site basic needs centers, providing food, emergency housing and a comprehensive range of support services.	Allocates $20M in 2026-27
CalGrant Age Eligibility	Increases the age limit for CalGrant eligibility for community college transfers from age 28 to age 30, for five years starting in the 2027-28 academic year.	Allocates $9.8M per year for five years starting in 2027-28
Middle Class Scholarship Program	The Middle Class Scholarship Program provides a scholarship to low- and moderate-income UC and CSU students. The maximum award amount for each student is based on their unmet need and total funding available. The 2026-27 investment supports 2026-27 academic year awards, translating to 23% award levels. However, foster youth will continue to receive 100% of unmet need after accounting for a $7,898 self-help contribution and no longer need to recalculate their MCS award if they receive additional financial aid after their MCS award has been disbursed.	Allocates an estimated $690.5M in 2026-27
Workforce Pell Grant Program	The Workforce Pell Grant is an expansion of the federal Pell Grant program that allows low-income students and working adults to use financial aid for short-term job training programs. The 2026-27 investment is allocated to implement the program expansion authorized by HR 1, subject to legislation.	Allocates $665K to the California Student Aid Commission and $1.3M to the Office of Cradle-to-Career in 2026-27

	The state also adopted a policy to align CalGrant C with the new Workforce Pell Grant, expanding CalGrant C to include short-term training programs (8-14 weeks). This allows eligible students to combine state and federal financial aid to cover the cost of these short-term job training programs.	
Juvenile Justice		
Program Name	**Description**	**Funding Amount & Action**
Jails to Jobs (J2J) Pilot Program	J2J pilot in Los Angeles will connect people charged with low-level, nonviolent offenses to job training and employment pathways in high-demand fields like healthcare and the skilled trades.	Allocates $5M in 2026-27
Youth Offender Program (YOP) Camp Pilot Program Expansion	YOP Camp Pilot Program is an educational and rehabilitative program where participants receive wildland firefighter training and are trained in emergency response to wildfires, floods, and other natural disaster responses.	Allocates $1.95M in 2026-27
Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) Technical Assistance & Best Practice Guidance and Grants	OYCR provides technical assistance, disseminates best practices, and issues grants to counties and probation departments to improve outcomes for youth involved in juvenile justice.	Allocates $10M in 2026-27
Division of Juvenile Justice Realignment Evaluation	OYCR evaluates county probation department data and youth outcomes related to the realignment of juvenile detention from the state to local jurisdictions.	Allocates $2M in 2026-27
CalFresh*		
Program Name	**Description**	**Funding Amount & Action**
CalFood	CalFood provides local food resources to food banks across the state, including college and university campus food pantries.	Provides $108M in 2026-27 of which $8M is annual

CalFresh Outreach (CFO) Program	CFO raises awareness about CalFresh Food benefits and provides application assistance and support for Californians who may be eligible, including in partnership with college campuses and community-based organizations who promote the program.	Allocates $14M in 2026-27
County Administration of Medi-Cal and CalFresh changes under H.R. 1	Medi-Cal is California's Medicaid health program which provides free or low-cost health care coverage to those who are eligible. CalFresh, known federally as SNAP, provides monthly food benefits to individuals and families with low income. H.R. 1 is a federal law passed in 2025 that creates strict new eligibility rules for Medicaid and SNAP and creates additional workload for counties.	Allocates $197M for Medi-Cal and $223M for CalFresh administration in 2026-27 for encumbrance or expenditure through June 30, 2029

**Although CalFresh benefits serve a much broader population, JBAY has included a section on CalFresh this year to help readers understand how federal policy changes and the State's response to those changes may impact young people. Additional action will likely take place in August 2026, relative to investments and policies impacting CalFresh access for current and former foster youth.*