



CCWRO Welfare News

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News Brief

✓ The 296X (CalFresh Expedited Service quarterly reports) for October 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014 shows that 1,138 CalFresh households in Los Angeles County did not receive expedited service within 7 days, in violation of federal law. The report also reveals that Los Angeles County did not cause any delays, in fact, according to the 296X, CalFresh applicants caused the delays in every case. Statewide, 4,336 households received CalFresh expedited services after 7 days with 2,440 client-caused delays and 1,896 county-caused delays.

✓ The California Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) CalWORKs Action Response Team known as "CAT" suggested that all applicants and recipients complete the "Year/Make/Model" and "Vehicle License Number" sections of the CW 80 to ensure that all applicants answer these questions, even if the vehicle is exempt. The CAT proposal violates MPP § 40-105.12 that states: "It is the responsibility of all who are concerned with the administration of aid to do so with courtesy, consideration, and respect toward applicants and recipients and *without attempting to elicit any unnecessary information.*" (Our emphasis added)

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TANF Reauthorization Proposal Benefits Poor Families

In 1996, Bill Clinton signed legislation that eliminated the AFDC program and limited food stamps to adults without children to a 3-month period every three years. This was one of the most punitive and barbaric changes in law that has contributed to the deep income divide in America today.

The legislation also provided that the employment programs for poor families be administered by welfare departments instead of having each state's "jobs department" work with poor families to obtain employment. This would be like a carpenter performing heart surgery. But when it came to finding poor families jobs it was decided to use welfare departments that are not in the employment business.

Under AFDC, 70% of the money was used for direct payments to families. Under TANF, only 30% of the money is used for direct payments to families. Many states decided the way they would get more money for the state bureaucracies was to impose "full-family sanctions" on families. In essence, the TANF program allows states to punish children for what their parents do. This is clearly government child abuse.

PROPOSED TANF REAUTHORIZATION PLAN FOR THE IMPOVERISHED FAMILIES AND CHILDREN OF AMERICA

If Congress cares about poor children and families then they should reauthorize TANF as follows:

1. States must use 70% of the TANF block grant and State Maintenance of Effort (MOE) for direct payments to eligible families with children;
2. 20% of the block grant and MOE shall be transferred to the state "jobs/employment/labor department to provide employment services to eligible families with children over 3 years old. Parents with a child under 3 can opt to voluntarily participate in the employment program.
3. 10% of the funds shall be used by States for TANF program administration.
4. No state shall take away benefits from children solely because of the failure of the parent to cooperate without good cause in an employment program. Good cause shall include, but shall not be limited to, lack of childcare or transportation.
5. Any "payments to families" funds not used by September 30th shall be returned to the federal government to be used to pay down the National Debt.
6. TANF recipient shall be entitled to receive childcare through the Child Care Block Grant (CCBG) program. Any funds left over CCBG program can be used to provide childcare to others eligible for CCBG benefits.

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Why would CAT violate this provision? If verification of a vehicle, even when exempt, is required and the applicant and recipient fails to provide that verification, the county will deny the application or terminate ongoing benefits. When the applicant or recipients does provide the Year/Make/Model" and "Vehicle License Number" the county can then request additional information such as the vehicle's value.

✓ **OCAT NEWS:** The On-line CalWORKs Appraisal Tool which was to be operational when the 24-month clock started in January of 2013, is still under construction.

✓ Counties wonder if they can sanction a WtW participant for not signing the privacy form (WtW 47). Counties agree that participants shall not be sanctioned for not signing the WtW 47, but does that mean that participants will not be sanctioned for failure to cooperate? DSS should revise the form by deleting the signature requirement, which is not required by law or regulations and can result in unnecessary sanctions.

✓ The CWDA-CAT meeting minutes reveal that counties will only do an assessment of a learning disability for English-speaking clients only. This is a violation of the civil rights of non-English speaking CalWORKs recipients. Ask your county if they are violating the civil rights of non-English speakers by refusing to conduct assessment of a learning disability. The state law mandating a learning disability review does not limit it to English speakers. California's Constitution does not give the county or a county group the right to be lawmakers.

✓ **WINS**, a program designed to give working Cal-Fresh households with children, \$20 a month to keep them in the TANF caseload without giving them CalWORKs benefits, has made a difference. DSS is hoping that WINS will help California avoid federal work participation sanctions for a number of years – sanctions that can add up to several hundreds of millions of dollars. WINS payments are now going out between the 20th and 24th of the month so counties can verify the income before issuing the \$20 payment.

How Much Does The Governor's Proposed Budget for 2015-2016 Take Away from California's Impoverished Families with Children Enduring the Highest Rate of Child Poverty in the Nation?

\$1.8 Billion

Counties Violate State Law SB 1041 Family Stabilization

The law below mandates that counties provide family stabilization services to Welfare-to-Work participants. These services shall include, but shall not be limited to housing, mental health, substance abuse and domestic violence.

• Welfare & Institutions Code Section 11325.24 provides:

11325.24. (a) If, in the course of appraisal pursuant to Section 11325.2 or at any point during an individual's participation in welfare-to-work activities in accordance with paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 11322.85, it is determined that a recipient meets the criteria described in subdivision (b), the recipient shall be eligible to participate in family stabilization.

(b) (1) A recipient shall be eligible to participate in family stabilization if the county determines that his or her family is experiencing an identified situation or crisis that is destabilizing the family and would interfere with participation in welfare-to-work activities and services.

(2) A situation or a crisis that is destabilizing the family in accordance with paragraph (1) may include, but shall not be limited to: (A) Homelessness or imminent risk of homelessness. (B) A lack of safety due to domestic violence. (C) Untreated or undertreated behavioral needs, including mental health or substance abuse-related needs.

(c) Family stabilization shall include intensive case management and services designed to support the family in overcoming the situation or crisis, which may include, but are not limited to, welfare-to-work activities."

Counties were required to submit a county plan to DSS for this program but the law did not require those plans to be approved by the Department of Social Services. Why would lawmakers ask the Department to do their job? To be honest it was the Department of Social Services that drafted the language that did not require that they approve the plans. All they wanted was a plan.

Family stabilization is supposed to provide assistance with (1) homelessness; (2) mental health; (3) substance abuse; (4) domestic violence and (5) case management services. Each county submitted a plan. The plans are publicly available on the web page of the DSS.

Del Norte County plan violates W&IC § 11325.24 and limit family stabilization program (FSP) to addressing homelessness only.

Sacramento County plan violates W&IC § 11325.24 and limit family stabilization program (FSP) to addressing homelessness and domestic violence only.

San Diego County plan violate W&IC § 11325.24 and limit family stabilization program (FSP) to addressing homelessness only.

Amador, Butte and Calaveras county plans violate W&IC § 11325.24 and limit family stabilization program (FSP) by limiting only homelessness in their county plan.

Lassen County did not submit a family stabilization plan at all. In February 2015, Lassen County had 14 families being sanctioned. Not one of the 14 families had access to stabilization services.

DSS is taking no action against these counties breaking the law to date.