



CCWRO Welfare News

Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations, Inc.
1111 Howe Ave., Suite 150 • Sacramento, CA 95825-8551
Telephone (916) 736-0616 • Cell (916) 712-0071 • Fax (916) 736-2645

<http://www.ccwro.org>

December 29, 2016
Issue #2016-12

In Brief

✓ IHSS Q&A from DSS: “Question. Recipient is legally married. The spouse moves out of the house, yet continues to be the IHSS provider. Do the “able and available spouse” regulations apply to this case? Answer. No. Per MPP § 30-763.4 the “able and available spouse” regulations under MPP§ 30-763.41 only apply in a shared-living situation where spouses live together.”

✓ On October 21, 2016, FNS notified DSS that FNS had approved the sum of \$2,100 for one DSS staffer to attend the FNS sponsored National and State EBT Directors meeting with private industry sponsored EFTA-EBT Next Generation Conference to be held in Clearwater, Florida on November 6-9, 2016 and State and FNS EBT Coordinators’ Meeting on November 9, 2016.

✓ On 9-6-16, LRS trouble ticket # 317893 revealed that the DPSS would not let the worker end the sponsorship deeming date for the LPR case effective 5-1-16. It took 4 months to take corrective action and even that failed.

✓ On 9-6-16, LRS trouble ticket # 317922 reports that the worker was not able to input the name of a child in need of child care. This confirms the reports that child care referrals have been on the decline with LRS going live.

✓ On 9-7-16, LRS trouble ticket #320526 Nazeli Adamian reported that in a two-parent family, adding a newborn is failing “...Mandatory/Optional Rules for father and no deprivation for newborn...”. LRS response to Ms. Adamian was, “This is a training issue: when both parents are in the home child should have unemployment deprivation to CalWORKs active. Otherwise the program will discontinue.” LRS has incorrectly been programmed to limit 2-parent families to only “unemployment” when this is not true. There is also the disability deprivation.

2016 Review from the Perspective of CalWORKs Beneficiaries

2016 was a mixed year. The heroic unparalleled leadership of Senator Holly Mitchell to repeal the Maximum Family Grant (MFG) rule was finally achieved. This three-year effort led by Jessica Bartholow of Western Center on Law & Poverty and with the support of countless organizations, including the County Welfare Directors Association. A lot of credit goes to Ed Barnes, formerly of East Bay Community Law Center, who started the march towards repealing the MFG rule, and Luan Hyhnh, also formerly of East Bay Community Law Center and joined the staff of Senator Mitchell in 2016.

The budget also repealed the senseless “once-in-a-lifetime” rule for homeless assistance and gave SSI recipients a small COLA for their SSP portion of the grant.

There were about 10 welfare bills that were successfully guided through the legislative process by welfare advocates that were signed into law.

On the downside, about 1.3 million SSI recipients are still not getting CalFresh. Over 1 million of them are living on a fixed income which is less than 90% of the federal poverty level and not getting CalFresh. Why? Because 60,000 SSI disabled kids and their families (who live on a fixed income of over 100%), or 5% of the SSI caseload, would become ineligible or receive reduced CalFresh benefits just as in the other 49 states. We have no idea how long this unjust treatment of the 95% of the SSI caseload will continue.

Finally, 25% of the country voted for a billionaire who may decimate the safety net for America’s needy and instead , build a large safety net for the country’s greedy. The vehicle for this decimation is Speaker Paul Ryan’s plan to block grant most means-tested programs, like the TANF program, where 70% of the funds go the bureaucracy and a meager 30% goes to families and children in need. This does not mean we should all crawl in a hole and disappear. This is the time to unite and fight back together.

CalWORKs/CalFresh Inter-County Transfer Improvements a Cash Cow for SAWS?

Last year, the Legislature enacted SB 1339 which made changes to the CalWORKs inter-county transfer (ICT) process. DSS asked the SAWS consortias how much it would cost to implement the provisions of SB 1339. CalWIN responded with \$1.5 million while Leader Replacement System (LRS) would like \$500,000. Why the \$1 million difference? Who knows. DSS does not request justification for a difference in the costs from each consortia. Could it be the bonuses or the profit margins from each of these profit making entities?

What major changes does SB 1339 provide? (1) It simplifies the process by aligning the face-to-face interview with the process of the CalFresh program – no face-to-face interview; (2) requires the initiation of the ICT process no matter which county discovers that the CalWORKs assistance unit has moved. So if Mr. Brown moves from Santa Clara County to San Mateo County and San Mateo finds out about it, they must tell Santa Clara County to start the ICT process. Today if Mr. Brown told San Mateo County that he just moved from Santa Clara County, San Mateo County would tell Mr. Brown to tell his worker in Santa Clara County that he moved to San Mateo County. SB 1339 requires the San Mateo worker to email Santa Clara County that Mr. Brown is now living in San Mateo County. How much will it cost to do this? CalWIN \$1.5 million and LRS \$.5 million. What's the cost of an email?

CalWIN admits that their estimate includes changes to their system to support the electronic exchange of domestic abuse information and "...streamline the ITC process as recommended by a county workgroup focused on improving the eICT process". This is fine, but this cost should not be attributed to SB 1339.



County Client Abuse Report

✓ In 2016, California like 48 other states, did not meet the 2-parent WPR, which is set at 90% participation. The penalty is supposed to be small. DSS is working on the county share of the penalties. State law requires that counties pay 50% of the penalties. However, counties can claim good cause and not pay any penalty. That is nice. How does good cause work for CalWORKs recipients who lack child care and are being sanctioned for allegedly not participating in a Welfare-to-Work (WtW) activity? In many counties lack of child care is not good cause to avoid a WtW penalty for CalWORKs parents. The county response is "we would have paid for child care." - sanction imposed - grant reduced from \$560 to \$333 for a family of two.

✓ Ms. H.S. regularly runs out of food at the end of the month. She recently told us that she believes that the assigned district office has a systemic problem that adversely affects CalFresh recipients. The West Valley district in Chatsworth has a reputation as being the worst district in LA County. She believes this to be true based by how they have treated her case. Her benefits are delayed every time there's a SAR 7 or Recertification due and the office forgets to send notifications regarding the case, refuses to take complaints about the case worker's negligence on the case, and enters false case comments in the case file. Ms. H.S. must take time off from work to go to the office and after waiting for more than 6 hours to speak with someone about her case, nothing gets resolved. She has asked to speak with a supervisor regarding the case worker's failure to call her on the 2 scheduled intake appointments, and failure to process the SAR 7 timely but the supervisors refuse to come out and speak with her.

The workers claim that they haven't received any documents but she has a certified mail receipt showing that the missing documents were mailed and received by them. The workers are rude and have threatened not to assist her in receiving benefits, and have even hung up on her over the telephone prior to explaining what is needed to cure her case. The 866 number is equally as bad; they schedule appointments that the EW misses because "it's her lunch hour" and can't be disturbed.

The telephone operator she spoke with also hung up when she asked to speak with his supervisor to get an email sent to the worker's supervisor regarding the case. When Ms. H.S. followed up with the civil complaints telephone hotline, they informed her that the telephone operator didn't enter any case comments in the system so no official complaint can be registered. Although Ms. H.S. speaks limited English, the office does not provide her with an interpreter. Ms. H.S.'s issues have yet to be resolved.

✓ Fresno County CalFresh beneficiary Review Number (RN) 506006 submitted a timely SAR 7. During the last redetermination, six months ago, the beneficiary reported self-employment income for the month of December of 2015. The SAR 7 for May of 2016 showed no income. Fresno County took a negative action to terminate benefits for not reporting income in May 2016 like RN 506006 did in December of 2015 but did not issue a NA960X – just closed the case. Maybe this person did some work during the holidays? The DSS Quality Control reviewer found nothing wrong with discontinuing aid for the entire household when there was no evidence from the "work number" of an IEVS report that the household was still getting income and failed to report. The negative action was appropriate, according to DSS and Fresno County, because RN 506006 submitted a SAR 7 that is incomplete, failed to provide previously reported information, and did not turn in self-employment income." So according to DSS and Fresno County if a household reported income six (6) months ago and the same source income is not reported six (6) months later, the CalFresh recipient is lying and not reporting

income, for we all know once a person has a source of income, it never stops for folks getting CalFresh. It just continues forever. This victim was terminated. Most likely the victim reapplied and said that this was a Christmas gig reported to the county. DSS calls this "churning". We call this abuse and demeaning.

✓ Alameda County CalFresh beneficiary RN# 505001 provided a SAR 7 for the month of April 2016 on 5-5-16. The county found that the SAR 7 was incomplete. The report filed by DSS is also incomplete in that it failed to say what was "incomplete". Was it that the 't' was not crossed? Or the 'i' was not dotted? In any event, DSS CalFresh Operations Bureau program consultant found that Alameda County terminated the case without issuing a notice of action and that the NOA was suspended in the print queue on the date it was supposed to be issued, 5/5/16. Alameda County submitted a so-called "corrective action plan".

The County met with staff to discuss invalid actions taken and provided instructions on corrective action needed. The report does not include a copy of the alleged "instructions on corrective action" most likely because there was nothing issued. The report also states that the "County has discussed with Management creating different reminders for staff to stay focus on the task at hand."

✓ Los Angeles County resident M.Y. was referred to the DPSS webpage by the FNS web page <http://keepyourhomecalifornia.org/>. The DPSS web page then lead her to phone number 800-221-5689. M.Y. tried to get information from DPSS, but the person answering the call was evasive saying repeatedly "I don't know. I never applied for food stamps before". The call was made on 9-26-16 at 12:23 and the Call Center hung up on her at 12:26. M.Y. filed a complaint with FNS Office of the Inspector General.

CalWORKs Applicants Experience Long Delays in Alameda, Ventura and Santa Cruz Counties

CalWORKs applications must be processed within 45 days. The Department of Social Services (DSS) require counties to report the number of applications they have at the end of the month, the number they processed during the month and how many were carried over to the next month.

The September 2016 CW 237 report reveals that Alameda County had 9,055 cases to process during September 2016. They only processed 938 cases. At the end of September Alameda County still had not processed 8,117 cases. Assuming Alameda County processes 1,000 a month, they would need an additional 8 months, or May 2017, to finalize the September applications. Ventura and Santa Cruz counties have similar problems, but not as egregious as Alameda County. See TABLE # 1 below.

TABLE #1. Counties that have large backlogs of CalWORKs cases -
 Source: CDSS CW 237 Caseload Movement Report

Counties September-2016	Total App. on Hand	Application Acted Upon	Pending at the End of the Month	Percentage of Applications Acted Upon During the Month	Months Catch Need to Catch Up
Alameda	9,055	938	8,117	10%	8.7
Ventura	4,656	672	3,984	14%	5.9
Santa Cruz	532	114	418	21%	3.7

Counties Do not Use \$75 million of their Child Care Allocation for Fiscal Year 2015-2016

The California State Department of Social Services released the 2015-2016 Child Care allocation and expenditures. The State allocated \$409 million and counties did not spend over \$75 million.

Madera county only used 16% of its child care allocation. The reason is that child care is allocated to counties not based on how many people actually need child care to participate, but how many people may, theoretically, participate.

Madera County, during the month of March of 2016, had 543 enrollees. 385 of them were exempted for various reasons. 247 of them were sanctioned. 96 people actually participated and 65 received child care. Thus, Madera received a child care allocation for 543 persons and only 65 people received child care. No wonder they did not use their allocation.

In Stanislaus County there are 1,135 participants who are sanctioned while 1,457 are participating. Only 233 of the 1,457 unduplicated participants are getting child care. Thus, Stanislaus county received \$6,478,523 and only used \$3,730,252.

County	Percentage of Child Care Allocation Used	Percentage of Unduplicated Participants Receiving Child Care in 3-16
TRINITY	6.68%	4%
TUOLUMNE	8.49%	22%
MARIPOSA	12.94%	13%
MADERA	15.84%	68%
TEHAMA	25.79%	31%
LAKE	26.41%	24%
EL DORADO	28.00%	27%
NEVADA	29.76%	37%
HUMBOLDT	30.99%	30%
SISKIYOU	37.96%	24%
CALAVERAS	39.54%	31%
STANISLAUS	42.42%	16%
MENDOCINO	43.49%	27%
NAPA	43.88%	42%
YUBA	45.35%	32%

Source: CW 115 & DSS County Single Allocation and Expenditure Report