

In Brief

✓ **California Food Stamp Error Rate Down -- Thanks to Quarterly Reporting**

- The California error rate is down from 17% to 5.7%. So what really happened? Previously, food stamp recipients had to submit a monthly income report. If the recipient failed to report, then each monthly non-reporting counted as an error- 12 errors a year. With quarterly reporting, recipients only submit 4 reports a year, so rather than having 12 errors a year, now there are only four. Thus, **the magical reduction of the error rate from 17% to 5.7%.**

✓ **CalWIN Consultants may be getting \$1,200 a hour-** Our sources tell us that CalWIN computer consultants who are funded with welfare money, may be receiving as much as \$1,200 an hour to fix the lemon CalWIN computer system in counties who unfortunately signed up for the CalWIN system. Sacramento County officials acknowledged that there are CalWIN computer consultants, but could not say how much they get a hour.

✓ **Non-Assistance Food Stamp Caseload up-** CharLee Metsker, Deputy Director for DSS Welfare to Work Division informed the 7th Annual Food Stamp forum that since 2003, the California NAFS caseload has gone up by 20,000.

✓ **UCLA Reports that only 18% of those needing food stamp get it-**

A recent report from UCLA revealed 82% of the families who experience hunger and could benefit from the food stamp program are not getting food stamp benefits. The reasons are multiple, but in a nutshell there are many dangerous land mines between households trying to get food stamps and the foods stamps themselves such as application barriers and participation obstacles.

✓ **Oregon has "SS" managers-** Oregon, which has a very harsh work program has an unfortunate nickname for their "self-sufficiency workers" and "self sufficiency managers". They are called "SS" workers which was a term used during WWII referring to the dreaded secret service.

✓ **Flow Chart Secret to Success-**

Michelle Wallace of the Oregon welfare department told the 7th Annual Food Stamp Forum sponsored by DSS and the California Food Advocacy Project that they eliminated 23 steps in their medicaid application process by simply doing a flow chart of what happens with the application as it leaves the hands of the applicant and the approval or denial of the application. By asking why is each step was necessary, they reduced the entire application process down to 5 steps. Before it took 28 days to process the application. After doing the flow chart and analyzing the reasons for each step, applications are processed within less than five days. **THE LESSON LEARNED - Make a flowchart of the process before you try to reform the process.**

✓ **Faith Based Child Care Centers -**

Imperial County asked DSS on 8/31/05 whether or not a parent can select a "faith based" day care center and use Stage 1,2 or 3 funds. The answer came on 9/16/05 from Tonia Williams stating that "...Stage One Child Care regulations allow CalWORKs recipients to choose faith based providers for services. According

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Publisher: CCWRO.

Reporters: Kevin Aslanian and Grace Galligher.

Contributors: Steve Goldberg and Diane Aslanian.

to MPP Section 47-260.2, clients have a choice in selecting child care. The regulations do not prohibit clients from choosing child care that may be faith based, even if the faith based child care organization includes religious worship and/or instructions."

✓ **Child Care for Child in Common, but not in the Assistance Unit (AU)-** Imperial County asked whether the county can pay child care for a child in common who is not receiving CalWORK (CW). The CW recipient is being asked to participate in the WtW activity. The county has not been able to sanction her yet. She has two (2) children; a seven (7) year old receiving CW and a two (2) year old with her unmarried spouse who is working full time, thus, the 2-year is not eligible for CW.

DSS response by Caroline Prod on 9/7/05 was that the county has to pay for both children as MPP 47-201.121 and 123 provide that child care services shall be paid for a child not in the AU and in need of child care.

✓ **Why Doesn't DSS Food Stamp Website have all CWD Phone Numbers?**- Susan Pennell of the California Nutrition Network is trying to decrease hunger in California. The Network receives federal funds to do this. In their outreach work they are trying to collect the telephone numbers for the counties. Counties work for the State, so any rational person would figure that the State would have those numbers. So Susan asked the State for some numbers missing on the DSS Food Stamp webpage. Contra Costa, Mono, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Mateo, Tulare and Ventura.

DSS, who is supposed to be interested in increasing participation in the food stamp program should eagerly provide the numbers to Susan. Well, don't hold your breath. On August 4, 2005, Susan received an e-mail from Rosie Avena of DSS stating that "County telephone numbers will only be posted and made available on the FS website if the county elects to have it posted. If the county's phone number is listed in the telephone directory, but

the county elects not to have their phone number listed on the FS website, then the individual inquiring about the county's phone number should be referred to the telephone directory for the specific county's phone number. I know this sounds a little silly not to be able to post the county's phone number on the website if their phone number is already listed in the telephone directory which is available to the public, but we have agreed to only post those county phone numbers if we have obtained the county's permission to do so."

CCWRO COMMENT: Although this sounds comical, it really is not. County welfare departments have different names in different counties. In Los Angeles it is DPSS, in Sacramento it is DHA, in Santa Clara County SSA, easily confused with the Social Security Administration, also known as SSA. Moreover, it costs \$1.99 in Sacramento to get information from 411 per call.

CCWRO has a complete list of phone numbers of county welfare departments and needs no permission from a county bureaucrat to release phone numbers paid for by taxpayers for taxpayers.

CDSS Newly Appointed Director Retires

Dennis Boyle, formerly at CDSS, and then hired by Riverside County as county welfare director, has announced after less than a year as State Welfare Director that he will retire.

Dennis will leave effective November 30, 2005.

Effective December 1, 2005, Bob Sertich, will be the acting director. Bob is the current Chief Deputy Director.

Effective January 2, 2005, Cliff Allenby, who was a high ranking official of the Department of Finance, and is not the Director of the Department of Developmental Services, will move to 744 "P" Street and become the next state welfare director.

Below is a copy of the statement that Denise released to CDSS staff.

"November 4, 2005

TO: ALL CDSS STAFF
SUBJECT: NEWS AND VIEWS

This is a News and Views that is really tough for me to write. I joined you here in Sacramento almost a year ago and I intended this to be the last assignment in a career of public service that began at 8:30, on Tuesday morning, March 4, 1969. It is an assignment that I have cherished. My home was and is in Redlands, in Southern California.

Each Monday since I began as your Director I kiss my wife goodbye at about 5:00 a.m. at the Ontario Airport and fly up here to Sacramento for the week. I see my wife again around 6:00 p.m. Friday, back at that same Ontario airport. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with you, but I long for the time when I spend my days, all my days, with my wife. That time has come.

It is with very mixed emotion that I tell you that I have decided to retire from public service at the end of November and rejoin my wife, my bird, and my cat at home. I will miss you and I hope that you will remember me. Always remember that the work we do here makes a difference. Be proud of your service in the public interest. America and California are better places to live because of what you and I do and what you will continue to do.

I will be active as your Director until my retirement date. I wanted you to hear from me right away so you did not learn of this through rumor. Your Chief Deputy Director, Bob Seritch will serve as the acting Director of CDSS during the month of December. Cliff Allenby, currently the Director of the Department of Developmental Services, will report for duty as the Director of CDSS on January 2, 2006. I have known Cliff for many years and I have a high level of respect for his intellect, integrity,

and talent. I am sure you will be happy with him as your Director!

You know all those stories you read where a public official says they are leaving their job to spend more time with their family? This time it's true!

God bless you.
God bless America!
Dennis J. Boyle, Director"

CCWRO NOTE: We have also been informed that Dennis will receive a much higher pension thanks to his one (1) year work at DSS. Have a nice retirement Dennis.

California Refugee Programs Tid-Bits

FRESNO COUNTY REPORTS NO EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO REFUGEES - We recently reviewed the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY 04-05) third quarter report for California, dated September 6, 2005 covering the months of April, May and June of 2005.

The report reveals that Fresno County provides refugee employment services (RESS) to refugees, but has provided no such services to new applicants during the months of April, May and June, 2005.

Most of the major counties receiving refugee money for employment services report persons in the columns dedicated to "new RCA enrollees during this quarter". Fresno County reported zero new enrollees. RCA benefits is limited to 8 months and refugees have to enroll in the county refugee employment programs as a condition of eligibility. English-as-a second language (ESL) is part of the RESS services.

Fresno County reported that did they provide cash assistance to 116 cases during the months of April, May and June, but no services.

DSS has recently reviewed Fresno County and found that they are in full compliance with the requirements of RCA.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY OPERATES CONTRACTS IN VIOLATION OF THE LAW - Like the White House, Los Angeles County is distributing money to contractors without going through the lawful contracting process. RCA funds come to DSS from the federal government (100% federal funding), who then distributes the money to various counties. Counties contract with various organizations to provide services to refugees. The contracts can be extended for three (3) times then it has to go out to bid again.

Los Angeles County went out for bids in 2001 and has been extending their contracts year after year. Many of the providers have been operating in violation of state law by unlawfully refusing to issue supportive services to refugee families for several years. The money that these families were defrauded out of by these contractors has not been returned to the families. We are talking about millions of dollars.

In fact, according to a September 26, 2005 letter from CDSS to Maria Rodriguez of Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services, (DPSS) has asked for a six (6) month extension for submission of the FFY 2005-2006 Refugee Employment Services plan. The DSS letter signed by Ms. Nguen informs Los Angeles County that they have yet to submit their 2004-2005 employment services plan, which was due back in June of 2004. Now Los Angeles County wants an extension for their 2005-2006 plan.

The letter declares that "Los Angeles County is currently without a valid Request For Proposal (RFP) for contracts to provide services. The last

RFP was issued in 2001 and contracts authorized under that RFP should not have been extended beyond the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2003-2004, despite the fact that the County Board of Supervisors allowed these contracts to continue into SFY 2004-2005 and 2005-2006." It is clear that millions of dollars have been expended without a valid RFP by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and it is also very possible that CDSS has been submitting "false claims" to the federal government being reimbursed for unlawful expenditures of federal funds.

UNACCOMPANIED MINORS PROGRAM Serves One Special Kid -

During April, May and June of 2005 California had only one (1) refugee unaccompanied minor. The entity receiving funding for providing services to the refugee unaccompanied minors program is San Jose Catholic Charities who, according to their quarterly progress report, serve the only one refugee unaccompanied minor in the State. When we called them and asked whether they served only one refugee-unaccompanied minor, the person answering the phone was totally unaware of the refugee-unaccompanied minor program. In essence, there are six paid staffers who receive funding for one refugee unaccompanied minor. This must be the most important kid on the planet.

Catholic Charities reports their staff for the refugee-unaccompanied minors program consist of:

1. Theresa Samuel-Boko
2. Azra Macek
3. Colleen Gulbraa
4. Sister Marilyn Lacey
5. Archana Sharma, and
6. Terry Waters

CCWRO SERVICES AVAILABLE TO LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAMS & WELFARE RECIPIENTS REFERRED TO US BY LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAMS

TYPES OF SERVICES OFFERED: LITIGATION, FAIR HEARINGS REPRESENTATION, FAIR HEARING CONSULTATION, INFORMATIONAL SERVICES, RESEARCH SERVICES, AND IN DEPTH CONSULTATION.

PROGRAMS COVERED: CALWORKS, WELFARE TO WORK (WTW), FOOD STAMPS, MEDI- CAL. GENERAL ASSISTANCE AND REFUGEE IMMIGRATION PROBLEMS

**You can reach CCWRO @
916-736-0616 OR 916-387-8341 OR
916-712-0071**