



# CCWRO Welfare News - 2018-02

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

## IN BRIEF

● A January 2018 USDA [report](#) for Fiscal Year 2015 shows that California is in the bottom of the barrel for SNAP/CalFresh participation but on the top for SNAP/CalFresh administrative spending.

● California continues to deny over 1 million hungry SSI recipients SNAP/CalFresh benefits while those who have the capacity to fix this travesty enjoy food abundance. California's policy to keep the SSI cashout in place is costing over \$100 million a month in CalFresh benefits. It should be noted that maybe 5-10% of current SSI recipients would see their benefits reduced, they would still have total purchasing power of over 100% of the federal poverty level. Currently about 1 million SSI recipients are living on an income that is about 90% of the federal poverty level.

● On February 23, 2018, the Trump administration published a USDA, FNS (SNAP/CalFresh agency that manages the food program) notice of proposed rule-making for addressing food insecurity "... by helping able-bodied SNAP recipients obtain and maintain employment...". It appears that the Trump administration thinks that CalFresh workers are employment counselors. They are not. Today the federal government currently spends billions of dollars on helping Americans, like able-bodied SNAP recipients, receive training and employment assistance through the Workforce Investment Act – [P.L. 113-128](#).

Rather than using those dollars, the Trump administration proposes to pour more money into the current segregated SNAP ET program that isolates poor SNAP recipients from other Americans seeking assistance with employment training and obtaining employment. Comments on this proposal are due April 9, 2018.

## The 2019 Federal SNAP Nutty Budget Proposal

The 2019 U.S. Budget includes a nutty new way of operating the SNAP program. SNAP beneficiaries would get boxes of food delivered to the household instead of being allowed to grocery shop and decide the foodstuff. Just the cost of delivering this food would be better spent on healthy food to the people.

This is the conservative billionaire class view of how commoners enduring food insecurity should secure food. These are the same people who fly first class on taxpayers' dime because they do not want to sit in coach with commoners.

## Federal TANF Proposed Budget for FY 2019

The proposal for the FY 2019 federal TANF program, which sends block grants to states to balance their budgets on the backs of impoverished families, is to cut the block grant by 10%. The budget requires that states use 30% of the money for forced work, often involuntary servitude work without pay. The budget also proposes to replace the Caseload Reduction Credit with an Employment Credit that rewards states for moving TANF recipients to work.

The budget proposes to eliminate the two-parent 90% work participation rate and collaps it into one standard rate that measures work engagement for families. The mystery is whether or not it would be 50% or 90% participation rates. Stay tuned.

## EBT Incident Update

February 16, 2018

### From the Office of Systems Integration

“CalWORKs, CalFresh and other program beneficiaries receive cash and food benefits on electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards which can be used at approved retailers or ATMs throughout the State. The EBT system is managed by the Office of Systems Integration (OSI) on behalf of the California Department of Social Services (CDSS).

Since the beginning of January 2018, there have been several incidents that affected the System’s performance. While **no clients lost benefits**, several instances resulted in either delayed benefit issuance by a few hours, or transactions processed slowly or required a repeat attempt before being approved. The State has been working with the EBT system vendor, Conduent (formerly Xerox) to identify the cause of these incidents, and to prevent their recurrence. This information is being provided for your awareness.

Immediately below is a brief description of these incidents, followed by a description of what is being done to resolve and prevent them. Also included with this update are two status letters from Conduent, which address the issues and their resolution along with a commitment to EBT delivery for California.

#### Incidents:

- On January 3, 2018, the EBT system experienced issues which made it impossible to “print” EBT cards (new or reissued in office) for clients seeking replacement or initial benefits onsite. This outage impacted multiple states. There was no impact on existing clients already in possession of their EBT cards. A hardware failure was identified as the cause and the necessary hardware fix was completed at approximately 3:00 a.m. on the morning of January 4.
- On January 4, 2018, from about noon until 1:32 p.m., the EBT system was not operational for CalWORKs and CalFresh recipients. Clients were unable to access their food or cash benefits at retailers or ATMs. This outage impacted multiple states. EBT services were restored after about 90 minutes, with transactions then again successfully processing.
- On February 1, 2018, the EBT system failed to load new benefits for CalWORKs and CalFresh recipients. This should have occurred by 5:00 a.m., but was resolved at 9:35 A.M. This issue did not affect cardholders who already had benefits loaded on their card or remaining balances on their card.
- Also on February 1, there was a phishing attempt by an unknown party that attempted to gain cardholder information (card number and PIN number) via social media

(Facebook) under the guise of being able to assist with accessing benefits. This attempt was reported to the EBT call center by cardholders and Conduent requested that Facebook remove the site. While assumed to be a crime of opportunity related to the unavailability of benefits, Conduent did confirm that the EBT system itself was not breached.

- On February 5, 2018, the EBT system was not operational for CalWORKs and CalFresh recipients. Clients were unable to access their food or cash benefits at retailers or ATMs and the system issue also prevented the loading of new benefits with an availability date of February 5<sup>th</sup>. It remains unknown at precisely what time transaction processing ceased, but service was restored at 6:13 a.m. Benefit loading did not occur at 5:00 a.m., and was restored at 8:15 a.m.
- On February 8, 2018, third-party payment processors reported timeouts affecting some EBT transactions. Conduent took down the EBT Client Website at 12:49 PM PT in an effort to alleviate the system degradation, and restored it at 3:28PM. Potentially related to this service degradation, Los Angeles County periodically has reported performance degradations (system slowness) outside of the dates and times above.

#### Remediation and Prevention:

The January 3 incident was resolved by a hardware fix. Referring to the incidents that occurred on January 4, February 1, February 5, February 7 and February 8, it originally was thought that there might be various root causes responsible for the system issues. However, now it is known that each of these incidents had the same root cause, which now has been mitigated: On February 7, Conduent noticed an extremely high volume of traffic to the California EBT cardholder website that resulted in service degradation issues with the EBT system. Further investigation pointed to a third-party mobile application that was accessing the cardholder website. The third-party application allows users to check EBT balances, find locations that accept EBT, and plan food purchases. However, it causes an excessive number of database connections for an individual user, affecting service.

After the root cause was identified, Conduent, in collaboration with the State, implemented a new firewall on February 9, 2018 in order to block or manage connections to the database based on volume thresholds. To date, this has alleviated the system performance issues, and work on a permanent resolution continues with the third-party vendor.

The COSS, OSI, and Conduent remain committed to ensuring the proper administration of the EBT system. The included letters from Conduent provide more detail about its steps and commitments. Conduent also is doing active in-person on-site monitoring of transaction processing and batch jobs that normally are overseen by automatic pro-

cesses, in order to quickly mitigate issues that arise.”

**Counties track time on aid on WDTIP & TRAC:**

Staff from the CDSS Refugee Bureau inquired how a county should manage their consortium systems to match time on aid with WDTIP and TRAC. “We are along in the conversation where we have answered all of the program questions and the counties are having system and aid code related questions. Please find below the counties’ question...”

The CDSS SAWS Unit | Program Automation Bureau responded “The original question – do the consortia need to “untick” data from their systems to reconcile the local system with the state-wide TRACK system? Seeking direction on how to track R1/IV for cases receiving assistance prior to 1/1/17.

After consulting with OSI the answer is the following: “If the consortia needs to ‘untick’ data to reconcile with WDTIP that is up to them. If they have sent the history to WDTIP, WDTIP will keep the data stored but it is only ‘ticking’ from January 1, 2017. The consortia will have to find a way to verify the applicants Time on Aid information prior to the January 1, 2017 date if they need to, to ensure the applicant is eligible for the benefit.” -Office of Systems Integration

It appears that counties have two systems of tracking time on aid: WDTIP and TRAC. And then there is a question of how data is entered into these systems and how valid they are.

**Restoration of CalWORKs Applications**

In California, there are two (2) types of applications for applicants who had a break in aid: (1) applications; and (2) restorations. Restorations are when the applicant has not received CalWORKs (CW) during the prior 12 months.

*“40-103.42 Restoration -- The applicant was a recipient of the same category of aid in the same county and his or her grant has been discontinued for 12 months or less at the time of the current application. See Section 40-125.9 Request for Restoration of Aid.”*

There are certain exceptions to the “restoration”

rule, but for the most part when an applicant has been off aid for less than 12 months, their application should be treated as a restoration. This month we looked at the most recent CW 237 for December 2017. The report reveals that California is applying this law erratically. If CW recipients reported income like counties implement restorations, counties would be screaming “fraud” at the top of their lungs.

During December 2017, Orange, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Solano and Yolo counties had zero restorations. That means that out of the 2,662 applications received by these counties during December 2017, not one of them were on aid during the previous 12 months.

Meanwhile, for the same month a quarter of the applications were restorations in Riverside, Imperial and Kern Counties– consistent with state regulations.

Table #1 below shows the counties where over 22% cases were restored reflecting the churning phenomenon.

**TABLE # 1**  
**Counties Doing Restorations**

County	Total Applications Filed	Restorations	%
Riverside	2,351	517	22%
Imperial	236	58	25%
Kern	1,655	412	25%
San Joaquin	956	248	26%
Madera	253	68	27%
Merced	596	161	27%
Los Angeles	8,162	2,259	28%
San Bernardino	3,154	936	30%
Monterey	973	373	38%



## County Client Abuse Report

**Ms. 18023120** of Los Angeles County is a first-time pregnant mom receiving CalWORKs from Los Angeles County. Her case is in GAIN Region VII, which is operated by Virginia-based Maximum Corporation. Recently Ms. 18023120 received a call from her Maximus worker saying “I need authorization to release medical information from you doctor, stating that you cannot work or participate. That is the only way we will not send you to find a job.” Ms. 18023120’s mother asked “Is this how they help a young 22-year old woman, who is pregnant for the first time, who is going to be a single mom? With threats? Doesn’t she have enough on her plate?”\



**# 2017123164** of Los Angeles County received fewer IHSS hours than should have been authorized. Los Angeles County stipulated that it had given the IHSS recipient fewer hours and had failed to assess for protective supervision as mandated by MPP §30-757.74.

**# 2017124143** of Los Angeles County is a 10-year old child with Autism Spectrum Disorder who was denied IHSS. The Judge ruled that the child was entitled to 64 hours and that the county did not assess for protective supervision. Los Angeles County was ordered to assess for protective supervision.

**#2017132161** of Los Angeles County was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and speech impairment from October 2016. At the hearing, Los Angeles County admitted that it could not defend its action to deny protective supervision to Ms. 2017132161.

**#2017135204** of Los Angeles County is an IHSS recipient is suffering from Alzheimer’s Disease and has been trying to get protective supervision since January 2016. The family called Los Angeles County over 22 times to no avail. They finally contacted Legal Aid who got an order that the county assess #2017135204 for protective supervision which should have been done in 2016.

**#2017146013** of Los Angeles County is a five-year old child diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. His family filed for a state hearing in 2017. After filing for a state hearing, Los Angeles County was forced to concede that the child was eligible for protective supervision effective August 1, 2016. Had the family not filed for a state hearing they would have been without protective supervision in 2018.

**#2017048092** of Los Angeles County is 20-year old male whose medical condition includes Autism Spectrum Disorder, moderate intellectual disability, semi-nonverbal, and Type 1 diabetes. The county did not authorize protective supervision. The hearing decision ordered the county to conduct an assessment for protective supervision.

**#2017033186** of Los Angeles County is an IHSS recipient diagnosed with Williams Syndrome, a permanent condition. The county only authorized 15 hours a month. The Judge ruled that this IHSS recipient is entitled to 210 hours a month in lieu of the county’s 15 hours a month.

**#2017144079** of Los Angeles County is a severely disabled person who applied for IHSS on December 22, 2016. Los Angeles County refused to grant protective supervision. After the request for hearing was filed, the county waited until the hearing was scheduled before admitting that the county unlawfully refused to issue protective supervision. At the hearing, the county stipulated that given the overwhelming documentation of the IHSS recipient’s entitlement to protective supervision, the county agreed to issue protective supervision effective December 22, 2016.

**#2017086267** – Los Angeles County is a 9-year old male diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), speech and developmental delay and was granted only 86 hours. #2017086267 filed for a state hearing and the judge ruled on August 31, 2017 that the county had underpaid #2017086267 195 hours a month retroactive to June 2016.

## 2018 Lead Testing Bills

### **AB 2122– Reyes (D)**

Room # 32175

Tel. 916- 319-2047

Staff: Matthew Hamlett

matthew.hamlett@asm.ca.gov

SPONSORS: Environmental Work Group and  
CCWRO

Medi-Cal-Lead Testing – This bill would require the DHCS to ensure that a child enrolled in Medi-Cal receives blood lead screening tests at 12 and 24 months of age, and that a child 2 to 6 years of age, inclusive, receives a blood lead screening test if there is no record of a previous test.

### **SB 1041 - Leyva– (D)**

Room # 4061

Phone 916-651-4020

Staff: Nicholas Romo

Nicholas.romo@sen.ca.gov

SPONSORS : Environmental Work Group  
and CCWRO

Lead Testing –This bill would require the information to include a lead screening report aggregated to show the total number of children enrolled in Medi-Cal, and not enrolled in Medi-Cal, broken down by county and age, who have received blood lead screening tests.



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