



CCWRO Welfare News-2018-10

October 26, 2018

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

Twelve-Month Eligibility For Stage 2 and Stage 3 Child Care For Welfare to Work Participants

Effective July 1, 2017, California Education Code §§ 8263(h) and 8263.1 provides that once a family establishes eligibility and a need for child care at initial CalWORKs certification or recertification, a family shall be considered to be eligible for Child Care Stage 2 for 12 continuous months. This only applies to CalWORKs families in Stage 2 and Stage 3. See California Department of Education (CDE) Management Bulletin 17-14.

CalWORKs Stage 1 Child Care regulations, Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) Section 47-420.3, specifies that county welfare departments shall notify the client whenever there is an approval, denial, change or discontinuance in the amount of the subsidy paid by the county for child care. See All County Letter (ACL) 10-46.

In most counties, WtW participants receive eligibility for Stage 2 very rapidly. In some cases, the county transfers the WtW participants to Stage 2 within a month. There are only two (2) exceptions to this rule:

1. A person who gets child care to look for work will be guaranteed Stage 2 Child Care for 6-months.
2. When the family's income for their family size exceeds 85 percent of the state median income (SMI) as published by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction or California Department of Education.

It is not unusual for county WtW workers to call the child care provider, exempt or non-exempt, and inform the child care provider that child care has stopped without any due process notice to the recipient. The county stops the 12-month Stage 2 child care in mid-period for CalWORKs students whose child care is because it is summer break or when the worker denies SIP or education because the student changed her major or took a class that was not approved by the county welfare worker. Below are some tips how to combat this illegal county actions.

ADVOCATE PRACTICE POINTER

When a CalWORKs beneficiary contacts an advocate regarding the stoppage of child care, the advocate should determine if:

1. Did the beneficiary get a NOA stopping child care? **Violation of MPP §§ 47-420.3;.31;.32.**
2. Is the beneficiary in Stage 2?
3. What month was the last time the beneficiary was approved or recertified for Stage 2?
4. If the beneficiary is in Stage 2 and 12 months has not elapsed from the last approval date/month, contact the county WtW/CalWORKs contact persons with a DPA-19 signed by the beneficiary and ask for immediate corrective action.
5. File for an expedited state hearing for stopping Child Care. Go to ccwro.org "advocate resources" for an expedited hearing request form.
5. Go to www.ccwro.org for county contacts and forms for a copy of the DPA-19.
6. Call CCWRO for anytime assistance at 916-712-0071 or email kevin.aslanian@ccwro.org.

(Cont'd from page 1)

Counties Double Collect CalWORKs and CalFresh Overpayments

Ms. K. of Sacramento County had a hearing in 2018 because she objected to the notices of action that stated that she had an unpaid over \$2,000 overpayment from 2004. During to the prehearing discussion, Sacramento County admitted that the overpayment had been collected in full in 2008 by Sacramento County Revenue and Recovery. The County agreed to a conditional withdrawal that no overpayment existed. In addition, the County discovered that the county recouped an additional \$300 that would be returned to Ms. K.

The reason why the County did not know that Ms. K.'s overpayments had been recovered is because the Department of Revenue and Recovery computer does not communicate with the SAWS/CalWIN system to provide a current accounting of CalWORKs overpayments or CalFresh overissuances.

This means that thousands of beneficiaries of CalWORKs and CalFresh may be forced to reimburse the County for "debts" that have been fully recovered.

There are several large counties that use outside agencies, such as Alameda, Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego, Santa Clara, Orange and Kern counties and many more. Thus, potentially these counties are also fleecing CalWORKs and CalFresh beneficiaries for overpayments that have been fully recouped.

CDSS Hides California Housing Support Program Hides From the Homeless

In 2018, the California Legislature appropriated an additional \$24.2 million in fiscal year 2018-2019 for counties to operate the state funded CalWORKs Housing Support Program. This raised funding to \$95 million on an on-going basis for County Housing Support programs.

The CalWORKs Housing Support Program is supposed to assist CalWORKs families to obtain and retain permanent shelter. Homeless families have no clue about what the program offers or how to apply for it. The California Department of Social Services webpage does not make information about the county specific programs public and transparent.

The California Department of Social Services does not make information about this program public and transparent.

Instead, the website contains information concerning the California Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council, California Department of Housing & Community Development, HUD, California Continuums of Care, National Alliance to End Homelessness and U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, which is valuable information for the county administrators, but not exactly what homeless families want to know.

The website also lists county telephone numbers which are not "homeless friendly". Homeless families do not have land-lines so as to be able to wait patiently for the next available representative. Homeless families rely on cell phones with limited minutes. There are over 33 counties with call-centers with long wait times. When calls are dropped, the homeless family must call again. Often calls are not authenticated and disconnected. In some counties, 50-80 % of the calls fail authentication.

Each county has a Housing Support Program that is unique to the county. Thus, homeless families have no idea what benefits they can and cannot get in their county. Although each county is required to submit a plan on how they will use the millions of dollars, those plans are absent from the "CDSS Housing and Homelessness Programs" webpage and not available to the homeless families for which they are meant.

(cont'd on page 3)

It is sad that the Brown Administration opted to hide

(Cont'd from page 2)

information from California's homeless families with children, while spending over \$95 million.

We have been told the reason for hiding this information from homeless families is because counties objected to putting it on the web page. Homeless families are kept in the dark. Moreover, homeless families have no say in how the program should be operated and no knowledge what these programs can do for them.

CalWORKs Outcomes & Accountability Review (CalOAR) Has Major Challenges Given the Lack of Information about WtW Supportive Services

The purpose of Cal-OAR is to establish a local accountability system that facilitates continuous improvement of county CalWORKs programs by collecting and disseminating data and best practices within the implementation of CalWORKs. Cal-OAR will consist of three components: performance indicators, a CalWORKs self-assessment process, and a CalWORKs System Improvement Plan.

Implementation of the Cal-OAR program costs millions of dollars which will allow each county to look at their CalWORKs program for a three-year period and then come up with a proposal to improve deficiencies they agree is a problem after looking at the performance indicators.

One area of concern that CalOAR is supposed to address is examining WtW supportive services. To examine the performance of supportive services it is reasonable to assume that the county would look at how many people need supportive services and how many actually get it. However, given the current WtW program set up, this will be impossible. There is no process for WtW participants who need any supportive service to get it. Counties continuously OPPOSE WtW participants requesting needed supportive services in the most effective and efficient 21 century manner - like requesting the service on-line. Most WtW sanctions occur for failure to attend

OCAT because counties refuse to verify that the participants actually need child care for the safety of the children and minimizing risk, or that the participants needed transportation. For a family of two (2) a sanction means the monthly CalWORKs grant is reduced from \$577 a month down to \$355 a month.

This autumn a San Bernardino County official testified under oath that in San Bernardino County participants only receive transportation after they participate and transportation is never advanced in order to participate. No wonder San Bernardino has so many WtW sanctions. San Bernardino County has 5,851 persons actually participating during July 2018 and, in that same month, had 9,644 persons being sanctioned. It is called the "welfare-to-sanction" program in the CalWORKs beneficiary community.

During the passage of the GAIN program, back in 1985, CDSS did a survey and discovered that 70% of the participants would need child care. Well, less than 22% of the partici-

pants received child care in July 2018. In July 2018 there were 73,145 unduplicated participants per WtW 25 CDSS report and only 16,116

A San Bernardino County official testified under oath that in San Bernardino County participants only receive transportation after they participate and transportation is never advanced in order to participate.

families received child care per CDSS CW 115 reports. Counties allege that many CalWORKs recipients just don't want to bother getting child care funds from the county. We wonder how many county employees entitled to benefits from the county don't claim them?

The same problem exists with students going to college without necessary text books. Each semester, thousands of CalWORKs recipients have to drop out of college because the welfare worker did not timely authorize ancillary payments for text books. Counties verify everything they can, even if it is not required and often, when not permitted before authorizing funds for class text books. Counties have returned millions of WtW County Single Allocation WtW dollars to the state General Fund rather than helping CalWORKs students become self-sufficient.

(Cont'd from page 3)

(cont'd on

page 4)

The common county response for participants not receiving supportive services is that the CalWORKs recipient should ask for it. How does the individual ask? Call the call center where calls are dropped, where there are long waiting periods, where thousands of calls are dropped because the county has a complicated authentication process that CalWORKs parents cannot navigate.

Why would a county verify that the parent has child care, transportation or other supportive services needs before requiring participation? To reduce the number of WtW participants being sanctioned? This would mean that the county would have to spend WtW dollars on WtW participants and not on themselves.

CalOAR would never be able to correctly access the effectiveness of supportive services, because the

CalOAR would never be able to correctly access the effectiveness of WtW supportive services, because the WtW program is fundamentally designed to make sure many participants are not able to request supportive services...

WtW program is fundamentally designed to make sure many participants are not able to request supportive services, thus the only indicator that

CalOAR could use is, who is getting supportive services? vs Who needs supportive services?

The table to the right reveals during the month of July 2018 how many CalWORKs participants were actually participating in a WtW activity and how many were getting transportation; Orange 23%, Fresno 30%, San Joaquin 34%, Contra Costa 37%, Stanislaus 40% - some of these counties have rural areas. These are counties that are providing transportation below the statewide average of 65% and the majority of them are rural counties.

County	Unduplicated Participants	Getting Transportation	Percentage
Statewide	53756	34941	65%
Alpine	0	0	0%
Del Norte	48	0	0%
Lassen	10	0	0%
Mono	1	0	0%
Lake	108	14	13%
Colusa	6	1	17%
Ventura	830	157	19%
Glenn	15	3	20%
San Mateo	202	46	23%
El Dorado	142	35	25%
Santa Barbara	438	109	25%
Inyo	4	1	25%
Orange	2903	765	26%
Merced	554	147	27%
Shasta	278	81	29%
Fresno	3905	1160	30%
Butte	283	87	31%
Trinity	28	9	32%
Mendocino	100	33	33%
San Francisco	936	311	33%
San Joaquin	837	283	34%
Tehama	106	38	36%
Contra Costa	1176	431	37%
Placer	247	96	39%
Yolo	271	106	39%
Stanislaus	881	353	40%
Tulare	1689	714	42%
San Benito	73	31	42%
Modoc	7	3	43%
Humboldt	262	121	46%
Madera	149	70	47%
San Diego	3871	1821	47%
Kern	1578	754	48%
Sierra	2	1	50%
Sacramento	3884	2089	54%
San Luis Obispo	114	62	54%
Amador	18	10	56%
Sutter	120	70	58%
Tuolumne	29	17	59%
Calaveras	75	44	59%
Sonoma	387	232	60%
Santa Cruz	438	264	60%
Mariposa	24	15	63%
Nevada	72	45	63%
Marin	81	52	64%

Source: CDSS WtW 25 reports

Gavin Newsom's Plan to Reduce Child Poverty Rates in California

Democratic candidate for Governor, Gavin Newsom, recently described California as both “the richest and poorest state.” “The economy is booming for many,” he said, “while millions of others are mired in poverty when considering the state’s high “cost-of-living,” he claimed. “Close to half of the children (are) at or near poverty,” Newsom said, while campaigning in Los Angeles County on Sept. 10, 2018. “How can that be in this place, this extraordinary place, in the world’s 5th largest economy? We must do more and we must do better.”

Researchers have found that 45.8 percent of children in California were “at or near poverty.” Researchers have also found that 21 percent of California’s children live in poverty. Additionally, nearly 25 percent of children live in “near poverty,” meaning their family incomes was one-and-a-half times the poverty line.

Newsom’s Plan For Child Poverty -Newsom’s campaign website includes several proposals for reducing child poverty. They include creating college savings accounts for every incoming kindergartener; expanding the state’s Earned Income Tax Credit for very low-income earners and increasing CalWORKS grants, a financial assistance program for families in need.

“Today, one in five of California’s children are living in poverty, amounting to nearly two million – more than any other state in the country. Almost one-third of African American children and one-third of Latino children in California live in poverty. And while our state’s unemployment rate has declined since the Great Recession, our child poverty rate has remained mostly stagnant. That’s a moral outrage.

Over the past decade, advances in cognitive research have shown that the stress that comes with growing up in poverty quite literally alters children’s brains, making it nearly impossible for them to focus on their schoolwork.

It’s no surprise that study after study shows just how debilitating growing up in poverty is to a kid’s potential in life. It’s correlated with lower educational attainment, lower incomes, increased likelihood of homelessness and, devastatingly, increased likelihood of interacting with the criminal justice system. No kid should be denied a fair shot at success in life because of their parent’s income or the zip code in which they live, but for so many kids in this state, that

is all too often the case. Gavin is making the elimination of child poverty the north star of a Newsom administration.

Gavin is proposing a two pronged strategy to ensure equal access to opportunity and prosperity for all of our children. First, we must do more to help young people and their families who are currently living in poverty. Second, those efforts must be part of a broader strategy to break the cycle of multi-generational poverty through education and creating real opportunities for economic advancement for every child.”

From the Newsome webpage:

“Restore Benefits -California can, and must, dramatically increase CalWORKS grants, a life-changing program that provides financial and other assistance to families in need. Most very poor children live in homes with parents on welfare, but the grants those families receive have lost much of their purchasing power over the last 20 years. They’re not enough to pay for a decent apartment, let alone the other necessities like food and clothing, a kid needs to thrive. It’s also time to explore allowing welfare recipients to keep a greater portion of their grant aid.

Prepare Working Families for the Jobs of Tomorrow- Californians, regardless of their background, deserve the opportunity to achieve a successful and fulfilling career. As Governor, Gavin will focus on **expanding access to higher education**, as well as refocusing career technical education and workforce development programs. He will encourage businesses to become creators, not just consumers of talent by partnering with our community colleges and establishing 500,000 earn-and-learn apprenticeships by 2029, creating a new vocational education pipeline of high-skill workers.”