



CCWRO Welfare News-2021-09

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In Brief

Child Tax Credit Resources - According to the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) families can sign up for the Child Tax Credit (CTC) monthly payments using the simple tool for non-filers through **November 15, 2021**. Treasury data reveal that at least 2.3 million families could be missing out on these payments. It is essential that the benefit reaches eligible individuals who do not normally file income taxes and therefore may not automatically be receiving the credit. Human services agencies serve many of these families and are well positioned to deploy resources on the ground to assist eligible individuals. [Non-filer portal](#).

Los Angeles County Criminalized The Homeless Population - Los Angeles DPSS adopted Policy 40-107.3 that classifies families in deep poverty and distress to be “high risk” cases. The County deems these cases prone to fraud. Characteristics of a “high risk” case include all cases where a member of the assistance unit or household has been convicted of welfare fraud; moves frequently; the household composition changes frequently; uses a mailing address or a post office box; or lives in a motor home or camper.

This policy encompasses all Los Angeles homeless families and criminalizes homelessness. We thank Lena Silver of Neighbor-

hood Legal Services for finding this policy. The next step is to identify the racial composition of these “high risk” cases in Los Angeles County.

Counties Not Using Substance Abuse Funds For Substance Abuse Treatment - During 2019-2020 the California State Budget allocated \$26,834,594 so that counties could provide substance abuse treatment to CalWORKs beneficiaries. Overall, the counties only used \$5,095,048 or 19% of the allocation and returned the rest back to the State’s General Fund. Alameda, Riverside and San Mateo Counties did not use any of their allocated funds. Los Angeles County only used \$2.6 million of the available \$15.4 million. Meanwhile, CalWORKs beneficiaries who seek substance abuse treatment go without services.

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Los Angeles DPSS to Open

– On September 22, 2021, Los Angeles Department of Public Social Services announced plans to resume in-person operations at all DPSS public-serving offices effective Friday, October 1, 2021. While DPSS has remained open to serve customers throughout the pandemic, this represents the reopening of all office lobbies to accept customers for services.

ProPublica Explains Why TANF/Child Support Laws are Anti-Family

- An informative article in ProPublica explains how TANF/CalWORKs child support laws work to destroy the lives and relationships of poor individuals and children. Most of the child support collected goes to the federal and state coffers and does not benefit the child. HHS Office of Child Support Enforcement data reveals that federal and state governments pocketed roughly \$684 million more in child support from these fathers in 2020 than in 2019, which experts say is mostly attributable to the dads' stimulus checks being intercepted. None of that money went to women and children. Many well-meaning absent parents are prevented from playing a role in the family that is beneficial to the development of the children. If the father paying child support starts visiting the children, the mom is often accused of welfare fraud for not reporting a man in the house who was a visiting man and not living in the house.

CalSAWS Update

-The 39 C-IV counties migrated to CalSAWS September 27, 2021. If you see cases in which applicants and recipients of public social services have problems using the new system, please contact CCWRO.

- CalWORKs benefits will increase by 5.3% effective 10-1-21. CalSAWS must update the Eligibility Benefits Determination Calculation to make sure CalWORKs families receive their increase on 10-1-21.

- CalSAWS IVR System: The CalSAWS Interactive Voice Response (IVR) received a system change that allows public benefit beneficiaries to cancel a scheduled appointment, but does not allow for the appointment to be rescheduled at the same time. Missed appointments is a major cause of CalWORKs and CalFresh denials due to "failure to meet procedural requirements". See Page 3 and 4 for more details.

- According to the August 2021 CalSAWS Policy Update, CalSAWS plans to complete programming for the increased Child Support Pass-Through which increased to \$100 effective 1-1-22. AB 79 was signed into law on June

29, 2000. Section 2 of AB79 amended Section 17504 of the Family Code to increase the child support pass-through from \$50 to \$100 for one child and \$200 for two or more children. ACL 20-115 was the implementing policy issuance.

- California's elderly and disabled beneficiaries often encounter many barriers trying claim Medical Deductions. CDSS published ACL 18-114 released the revised CF 31-the CalFresh Supplemental Form for Excess Medical Deductions. This form can be used to identify excess medical expenses that may qualify a household to claim the medical or standard medical deduction. CalSAWS release 22.01 will add the latest version of the CF 31 to the system and should add functionality to automatically mail the CF 31 to CF elderly/disabled household when a medical expenses record is pending. Although CF 31 is designed to identify excess medical expenses that may qualify a household to claim the medical or standard medical deduction, CalSAWS will only provide this form to folks who are claiming medical deductions and will not be made available to all elderly/disabled recipients/applicants to identify excess medical expenses that may qualify a household to claim the medical or standard medical deduction.

Procedural Denials Account For Most California TANF/SNAP (CalWORKs and CalFresh) Application Denials

California has been notorious for denying CalWORKs (CW) and CalFresh (CF) applications because applicants failed to meet the CW/CF bureaucratic procedural requirements. During the pandemic, the rate of procedural denials exceeded 70% of the submitted applications for many months during the pandemic.

Although each of the 58 counties adopted different business practices for processing applications, within those counties that have more than one office, often each office has its own business practices. Most of the business practices that counties adopt are designed to meet the needs and desires of the administrators and workers – not the applicant.

State regulations governing the CW/CF application process provide a lot of flexibility to counties, thus, the lack of uniformity becomes a major cause for procedural denials. In many counties it is not unusual that a person has a telephone interview and then receives a notice saying the application is being denied because they "failed to complete the interview." There are no statewide objective application processing rules to combat the widespread procedural denials.

The "call center" that most large counties adopted to save on labor costs creates immense barriers for the beneficiaries applying or receiving CW/CF benefits. There are no statewide minimum standards for call centers. Some counties utilize a call back feature but other counties don't.

Tables #1 and #2 on page 4 reveal how during the pandemic, when counties closed their offices and started using call centers without any minimum standards, widespread application denials due to procedural eligibility factors, not financial eligibility factors, are the predominant reason for denials. This demonstrates the widespread unlawful denials and failure of timely issuance of CalWORKs homeless assistance, CalWORKs Immediate Need and CalFresh Expedited Services.

TABLE # 1 - CalFresh Procedural Denials for FY 2020-2021- Source:CA255CW

Month/Year	Total Cases Denied	Total Cases Denied Due to Failure to Meet Procedural Requirements	PERCENTAGE of Total Cases Denied Due to Failure to Meet Procedural Requirements
20-Jul	91396	53282	58%
20-Aug	69454	42209	61%
20-Sep	56940	37005	65%
20-Oct	53349	35491	67%
20-Nov	47723	31849	67%
20-Dec	60719	40374	66%
21-Jan	72615	51366	71%
21-Feb	60888	41905	69%
21-Mar	63512	43784	69%
21-Apr	52979	37427	71%
21-May	53486	38517	72%
21-Jun	66206	46018	70%
21-Jul	85675	63323	74%

TABLE # 2 - CalWORKs Procedural Denials for FY 2020-2021- Source:CA255CW

Month/Year	Total Cases Denied	Total Cases Denied Due to Failure to Meet Procedural Requirements	PERCENTAGE of Total Cases Denied Due to Failure to Meet Procedural Requirements
20-Jul	12128	7264	60%
20-Aug	13327	7577	57%
20-Sep	14346	8113	57%
20-Oct	13705	7881	58%
20-Nov	13540	7883	58%
20-Dec	17571	10386	59%
21-Jan	15310	9387	61%
21-Feb	14220	8775	62%
21-Mar	14045	8663	62%
21-Apr	11583	7070	61%
21-May	11009	6647	60%
21-Jun	11751	7424	63%

P-EBT for School Aged and Young Children: The Next Phase- School Aged Children

The Pandemic-EBT (P-EBT 1.0) program created in 2020 provided food assistance funding for school aged children who as of March 2020 were locked out of their public schools because of the COVID-19 public health emergency. This meant these children no longer had access to free and reduced price school meals including breakfast, lunch and in some cases after school snacks and week-end food supplements.

Per the Food Research Action Center (FRAC), in California, the P-EBT program provided nutrition assistance funds to 3.74 million low-income school aged children and paid out \$1.36 billion in issued benefits.

<https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/9-14-20fa-stateprofile-ca.pdf>

The program was a success but it was not without its challenges and problems.

Federal funding was reauthorized in late 2020. The proposal submitted to the USDA Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) by CDSS staff had two parts -- a continuation for School Year (SY) 2020 - 2021 for school-aged children who were eligible for the free and reduced price meal program based on their Fall 2019 applications and new coverage for young child from birth to age 6 who were part of a CalFresh household.

The P-EBT 2.0 program provides direct payment of nutrition supplement funds to school-aged children with:

- no requirement of an application for benefits;

- new P-EBT 2.0 benefits provided on individual reloadable cards for each child in a household; and

-- a two-tiered payment rate based on whether a child's school was operating on an in-person schedule (\$0.00 payment), remote learning (about \$123.00) or hybrid learning (in-person and remote learning students will get about \$68.00) per month.

Currently all school aged children who qualified for free or reduced price school meals based on their Fall 2019 application for this program, are deemed eligible for P-EBT 2.0 benefits along with children in other categories, i.e. Foster Care. CDSS is issuing new P-EBT 2.0 cards to these children. **The cards are reloadable and should be kept as waves of payments will be made using these instruments.**

Current P-EBT Payments are as follows:

P-EBT 1.0 - paid \$365 (approx.) to all school aged children for SY 2019 - 2020.

Extended P-EBT 1.0 benefits were paid to children who met the P-EBT 1.0 eligibility rules for August and September 2020.

CDSS expects that the waves of P-EBT 2.0 payments will occur in late fall 2021 based on eligibility and school operating policies for the SY 2020-2021 school year.

More simply put, the benefits that will be issued for the P-EBT 2.0 program are retroactive coverage for SY 2020-2021. See <https://capandemic-ebt.org>

Further analysis of the need for and impact of P-EBT and related emergency child nutrition programs are discussed in the Kone Report commissioned by FRAC/CCPB. <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/P-EBT-Documentation-Report.pdf>

P-EBT 2.0 for Young Children

California's Pandemic EBT 2.0 or P-EBT 2.0 program is in the midst of the second issuance of P-EBT cards to school-aged children.

There is no application process. Cards are being issued based on existing information within the CDSS CalFresh program.

Per CDSS the issuance of P-EBT cards for young and pre-school aged children ages 0 to 6 years old was completed in August 2021. Eligible young children include those who were part of a Cal-Fresh (SNAP/Food Stamp) household between October 2020 and January 2021.

The reloadable cards are issued in the name of the child, one card per eligible child.

CDSS plans a series of distributions of the P-EBT benefit to young children. The benefits **are not for the current school year (SY 2021 - 2022)**. Rather the distribution is for benefits based on the SY 2020-2021. Per CDSS the planned distribution of benefits, through the automatic loading of each individual card, will happen during the latter part of 2021 in at least two waves.

The amount of benefits will be based on whether schools in the county where the child lives were closed or open using the hybrid (distance and in-person) learning model. For more information go to <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/home/pandemic-ebt> or <https://ca.p-ebt.org/>.

Written information is available in five languages: English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Traditional and Simplified Chinese and Arabic.

P-EBT also enhanced its telephone helpline services to assist with creating PINs and addressing other issues.

by Daphne Macklin