

CCWRO Weekly New Welfare News - #2002-05

February 5, 2002

HEADLINES

-- BUSH'S FOOD BUDGET PROPOSALS

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-- CWD VICTIMS OF THE WEEK

■ STATISTICS OF THE WEEK - DSS RESPONSES TO CCWRO E-MAILS REGARDING FAILURE OF COUNTIES TO SUBMIT MONTHLY REPORTS TO DSS

BUSH'S FOOD BUDGET PROPOSALS

Bush has received some press about making changes in the Food Stamp program to make benefits available to immigrants. Well, the proposal is to make it available after five (5) years. This is not a restoration of benefits to immigrants. This is a slight scaling down of the mean-spirited welfare cuts of 1996.

The details of the proposals have not been released yet, but we are working to get more information for you.

IN BRIEF

-- The County Advisory Team, also known as CAT, meet with DSS regarding several issues, including Time Limits Notification. DSS is planning to notify CalWORKs participants of the number of months left in their 60 month time clock at least at application, redetermination and the 54th and 58th months. The State plans to develop forms and notices to go with this.

The CAT minutes reveal the following information:

"They also discussed exemption months and extenders. This has created some complexity in determining the number of months.

There was discussion on how reimbursement through child support extends months. The child support exemption is based on the cumulative amount of child support received. For example, if the grant was \$400 the first \$400 of child support received will reimburse the grant and create an exempt month. This exempt month will then be added back to the 60 month total. The disregard amount is excluded from the reimbursement amount. SDSS plans to have a draft ACL available for review by the CAT sometime this month. SDSS

has been meeting with Child Support Department on some of the issues, but also encouraged county staff to talk to their local Family Support Divisions.

They discussed time limits for adults and extenders. SDSS provide draft regulations on this. Extenders will go for an indefinite period of time but must be reviewed every 12 months. SDS discussed with counties how domestic abuse waiver rules affect the Maximum Family Grant (MFG) rules. Counties requested an ACL or All County Information Notice (ACIN) that provides information about how this waiver can affect eligibility rules.

The state want counties to inform clients about Medi -Cal and Food Stamp benefits that continue after CalWORKs has been discontinued. They would like a mailer to be sent at discontinuance. This could be problematic. Counties suggested that it be done as a stuffer at specific intervals with checks or Medi Cal mailings. The mailer will be optional to counties.

SDSS is putting together a list of questions they have gotten since the ACL on 18 year old pregnant parenting teen. They discussed these questions with the CAT, which gave them different ways of looking at the questions. This assisted SDSS in developing answers for a follow-up ACIN."

-- CAT also discussed the Work Number. This agency has contracted with many employers to provide payroll information. They provide sketchy information sometimes in response to county requests. Counties can subscribe to this service to get more complete information. If a client does not have actual pay stubs. **SDSS said counties can accept the client's statement sworn under penalty of perjury.**

-- DSS is working on draft regulations that would allow for an extension of time for participants who have an inability to participate.

-- CDSS told counties that counties can continue to provide employment services to individuals beyond their 60-month of cash aid when the individual is participating in community services. Community Services is the Unpaid Labor program of Welfare to Work where individuals work for the government and don't get paid - something practiced in America before the Civil War - and is still alive for welfare recipients in the 21st century. Why can't DSS pay for CalWORK parents who want an education? Is education that bad? Isn't Gray Davis the "Education Governor"?

-- DSS is preparing an ACIN that would address waivers of the MFG rules for victims of domestic abuse.

-- The revised CW-61, which asks for comprehensive information from doctors about a CalWORKs recipients' disability has resulted in clients paying for the completion of these forms. Some doctors say that Medi-Cal will not pay for the completion of forms, while others state there is a billing code.

-- After two (2) years DSS has still failed to develop an inter-county-transfer policy for child care. This is a concern expressed by the CWDA Child Care Technical Review Team (TRT).

-- DSS has stated that there is a possibility of an over abundance of money in Stage 1 and DSS will be asking counties to take a look at their budgets. This is not surprising given the fact that counties often refuse to issue child care to eligible persons or deceitfully discourage eligible individuals from claiming child care.

-- San Diego County is forcing WtW clients to sign a statement declining supportive services. This is done so victims of counties failure to pay supportive services cannot get relief in a fair hearing forum.

-- CWDA raised the issue of a WtW participant who moved from Santa Cruz County to a neighboring county. The participant already had a Santa Cruz based child care provider, but the neighboring county paid less because each county pays based on what is called the regional market rates. The second county refused to pay the rates of Santa Cruz County. This is an ITC problem that DSS has refused to address for the past two (2) years.

- The federal government is requesting that DSS return the "incentive funds" it has given to counties during the past several years because DSS has violated the federal Cash Management Act. The reason for this is that the state policy of giving counties the TANF incentive funds without incurring expenses violates federal statute. CCWRO has been opposed to giving counties incentive money for doing what they are already paid to do and get reimbursed to do, but we never know that it violated the federal Cash Management Act. We are very happy that the Federal Government has busted this fleecing of the federal funds by counties who often used these funds for pork barrel projects and to fund their pet projects. Well the party is over. It's about time.

-- We were recently told that child support hearings are "exploiting". The Department of Child Support assumed that people would not file for fair hearings, because the law provided they would have to work it out with the county child support agency. Many had anticipated that this is a faulty assumption and they were right. The local agencies are not willing to work things out - they just want to push people around. Thank God for the Fair Hearing Process

-- STATISTICS OF THE WEEK - DSS RESPONSES TO CCWRO E-MAILS REGARDING FAILURE OF COUNTIES TO SUBMIT MONTHLY REPORTS TO DSS

-----Original Message-----

From: Kevin Aslanian [mailto:daslanian@earthlink.net]

Sent: Sunday, February 03, 2002 12:45 PM

To: infosrvc@dss.ca.gov
Subject: No CalWORKs data after 9/01

Currently DSS has published the 9/01 data on a number of CalWORKs statistical reports. CCWRO requested information on CalWORKs 237s, WtW25s and Child Care reports

"Is there a reason for these reports being so late? What would DSS do if CalWORKs recipients did not have their 10/01, 11/01, 12/01, 1/02 reports by 2/1/02, such as the CA7?"

DSS RESPONSE:

From: "Huerta, Pauline@DSS" <Pauline.Huerta@dss.ca.gov>
Date: Mon, 4 Feb 2002 13:29:20 -0800
To: 'Kevin Aslanian' <daslanian@earthlink.net>
Subject: RE: No CalWORKs data after 9/01

We are currently working with counties to gather the data. Some county reports have not yet been submitted, some have been submitted and are in process. We expect to have data through Dec. 2001 on the web before the end of the month.

From: Kevin Aslanian [mailto:daslanian@earthlink.net]
Sent: Sunday, February 05, 2002 16:10 PM
To: infosrvc@dss.ca.gov
Subject: No CalWORKs data after 9/01

In our 2/5/02 e-mail we responded that we wish the counties would work with CalWORKs clients who cannot submit their CA7s on time (like DSS works with counties) Counties simply stop all benefits- thus families starve - become homeless. On the other hand counties continue to get a paycheck, even through they fail to report. What a life for the counties!

CCWRO NOTE: There is a clear double standard at DSS. Poor families and children are severely punished and labeled deviants for late reporting while counties are coddled when they behave like deviants.

CWD VICTIMS OF THE WEEK –

SOLANO COUNTY IMPOSES UNLAWFUL SANCTION AND DSS UPHOLDS UNLAWFUL SANCTION

On March 21, 2001, Ms. 2001121255 was mailed a Notice of Action stating that effective 4/1/01 her cash aid will be reduced for failure to participate in an assigned WtW activity. On 4/5/01 Solano County mailed another letter scheduling the Ms. 2001121255 for a 4/24 and 4/25 orientation. Ms. 2001121255 claims that she has medical problems, thus did not keep the appointment. Although in this case the county had clearly failed to mail Ms.

2001121255 a 30 day notice, the State Department of Social Services unlawfully terrorized Ms. 2001121255 and imposed an illegal sanction upon this poor family. We hope Director Saenz on her own motion would review this injustice and correct it.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY IMPOSES SANCTION ON DISABLED FOR NOT BEING ABLE TO GET VERIFICATION BECAUSE DHS HAS NOT APPROVED THE DOCTOR'S MRI REQUEST

Ms. 2001152258 received a letter on 4/21/01 from Los Angeles County reducing her cash aid effective 5/1/01. Ms. 2001152258 informed Los Angeles County that she could not participate because she is disabled. The county insisted on getting verification. Ms. 2001152258 asked her doctor for verification, but the doctor stated that he needs to do an MRI before he can fill out the county disability forms. The Department of Health Services as of the date of the hearing had not approved the doctors request for an MRI, thus Ms. 2001152258 did not have medical evidence of her disability. At the hearing she testified and her claim was granted.

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

Types of Services Offered:

Litigation, Fair Hearing Representation, Fair Hearing Consultation, Informational Services, Research Services, In depth Consultation.

Programs Covered

CalWORKs, Welfare to Work (WtW), Food Stamps, Medi-Cal and Refugee Immigration Problems

Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations, Inc. 1901 Alhambra Blvd Sacramento, CA 95816

Tel. 916-736-0616

After 6 PM - 916-387-8341

Message/cell number 916-712-0071

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