

# CCWRO Welfare News

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September 11, 2011  
Issue # 2011-15

## In Brief

### ○ Food Stamp On-Line Application Link on EDD Web-Page:

Los Angeles DPSS called Brian Tam of DSS and asked about putting a link on the EDD website for On-Line Food Stamp applications. DSS asked other counties what they thought of the idea. Counties said that they would rather have one central location for On-Line Food Stamp Application rather than each county have a link on their web pages. As of September 5, 2011, Labor Day there is no link for food stamp applications on EDD's web page. DSS has a link on their web page where any person can apply for food stamps on-line. This link can also be on EDD's web page for applicants of unemployment benefits visiting the EDD web page would have an opportunity to apply for food stamps. Hopefully this will happen soon to help the unemployed of California get food stamp benefits.

### ○ California Public Assistance State Plans Not Transparent:

The Food Stamp Employment and Training Program state plan has to be submitted to the federal government by September 23, 2011. State plans are often submitted to the federal government without any public involvement. Only the Community Services Block Grant state plan has a legislative hearing every year to assure public transparency. The Brown administration asserts that it believes in transparency and simplification. According the Brown Administration should take steps to make state plans submitted to the federal government transparent.

## AB 6 - Fuentes

AB 6 has passed the Senate and was sent to the governor's desk on September 2, 2011. You can more information about AB 6 at:

[http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/postquery?bill\\_number=ab\\_6&ses=s=CUR&house=B&author=fuentes](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/postquery?bill_number=ab_6&ses=s=CUR&house=B&author=fuentes)

This bill would implement semi-annual reporting, which means CalWORKs and Food Stamp recipients would have to submit two (2) reports a year with reporting requirements in excess of what is required by federal law, repeal finger-imaging for food stamp recipients and use the Low-Income Energy Assistance Outreach Funds to pay a nominal portion of all food stamp recipients utility costs to assure that they all get a standard utility deduction.

The bill was opposed by the California District Attorney's Association who would like to keep the current quarterly reporting system so they can charge more counts of perjury when prosecuting for welfare fraud.

The California quarterly reporting system has been operating on repeated FNS waivers that have allowed California to make the food stamp program more punitive than allowed by current federal regulations. The state has been allowed to terminate an estimated 48,000 households from food stamp benefits for not reporting an "address."

\* However, reporting an address is not a condition of eligibility for food stamps. This is one way of terminating food stamp benefits that result in more hunger and malnutrition in California. AB 6 continues this address reporting requirement despite the fact that it is not required. (See 7 CFR § 273.12(a)(5)(iii)(E) and (v).) The bill provides that DSS can seek federal waivers from FNS to maintain reporting requirements

in excess of what the federal law requires to saddle impoverished California households with hunger and malnutrition.

The federal Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has been urging California to adopt a semi-annual reporting system for several years.

The major benefit of AB 6 for the State and County food stamp program is that semi-annual reporting would reduce the California food stamp error rate by 50% by reducing the reports per year from 4 to 2.

The bill provided for the repeal of finger-imaging as a condition of eligibility for CalWORKs and Food Stamps in California. The bill was subsequently amended to repeal the fingerprint requirement only for Food Stamps and keeps the fingerprinting mandate in place to CalWORKs.

The CalWORKs reporting threshold, also known as the Income Reporting Threshold (IRT), the level at which additional reporting must occur, has been set at 55% of the poverty level for CalWORKs and 130% for Food Stamps.

AB 6 would also take a nominal amount from the LIHEAP program Outreach Fund and give it to all food stamp recipients. The result is that all food stamp recipients will get a utility deduction.

*\* This estimate is based on the number of families terminated from CalWORKs based on the same address reporting rule.*

## CCWRO NUMBER OF THE WEEK

DSS DPA 482 Welfare Fraud IIEVS Management Report reveals during April-June of 2011 counties processed 173,960 reports and only 12,553 had a discrepancy. That is:

**93% Waste**

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