



New Welfare **NEWS** Bulletin

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In Brief

- ✓ **DSS is seeking a FNS waiver of face-to-face recertification interview** – On April 2, 2007, DSS submitted a request for a federal waiver of the face-to-face interview for food stamp annual recertification. In

lieu of a face-to-face interview, the annual recertification will be done by telephone for households who have to submit periodic reports. Federal law allows telephone recertification for cases where face-to-face interviews would cause a hardship to the household. The waiver is from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2009. **CCWRO COMMENT: Does the DSS have a similar policy for CalWORKs? Will this policy apply to CalWORKs? Why hasn't DSS implemented this policy for CalWORKs where a waiver is not necessary?**

- ✓ **Are Excluded household member's income and deductions counted?**

– On March 13, 2007, Sharon Papin of ISAWS Customer Support asked the Food Stamp Bureau whether the dependent care of an alien noncitizens excluded member of a Food Stamp Assistance Unit used to compute the food stamp benefits of the household. Joyce Brewer, Associate Governmental program Analyst of DSS answered that the income and expenses of ineligible noncitizens excluded household members are counted in computing the food stamp benefits.

- ✓ **ISAWS counties mail out food stamp recertification appointment letters** – 36 ISAWS counties mail out recertification interview appointment letters to Food Stamp households. The packet mailed out includes an appointment letter, SAWS 2, SAWS 2A. Some counties also include a Notice Ending Certification (NEC). CalWIN counties do not do this. They tell food stamp recipient to call and make an appointment. **Does this violates the statewide requirement of the food stamp program?** CalWIN counties

✓ **LEADER (Los Angeles) and C-4 counties also mail out an appointment letter** – According to Selja Begic, a C-IV policy lead, the four (4) counties also mail out a letter that includes case specific information, date and time for the interview, office, worker name and the list of verification.

✓ **IHSS News – 24 hour protective supervision form not mandatory** – In a letter dated April 26, 2007, DSS Adult Programs Operations Bureau Chief Eilen Carolls stated that “Once the need for protective supervision is established, services cannot be denied merely because the recipient is not receiving IHSS 24-hour each day.” Some county workers have implied that the person has to receive 24-hour care in order to be eligible for protective supervision. This is untrue. Counties are also forcing IHSS providers to complete a 24-hour protective supervision plan form also known as SOC 825. We asked if this was mandatory. Eilen responded “... a recipient is not ineligible for protective supervision simply because their provider refuses to complete or sign the SOC 825. She stated that “it is an optional tool to be utilized by county worker to identify how the 24-Hours-A-Day Coverage Plan will be attained in order for the recipient to remain safely in his/her home.” A copy of this letter is available from CCWRO upon request.

✓ **San Bernardino County cannot use the SFIS information for non-welfare purposes** – San Bernardino County officials have asked if they can use the Statewide Finger Imaging System (SFIS) for reasons other than public assistance. Department of Social Services Fraud Bureau informed them that it would be a violation of W&IC §10830.

✓ **Counties want paper and not electronic reports from DSS** – On or about January 24, 2007, DSS informed counties that effective March 1, 2007, counties will be receiving electronic copies of PVS030 and PVS040 reports. This is a payment verification system where the state lets the counties know the names of persons who had income and did not report it. Elimination of paper and efficiency did not go well with many counties. On January 24, 2007 Jeffrey Linback of San Diego County told DSS to continue to send paper reports. Sacramento County also insisted on getting paper PVS reports. On February 8 San Francisco asked for paper too.

- ✓ **Tulare County complains on January 29, 2007 that they have not received the earnings clearance abstract due in December, 2006** – On January 29, 2007, Linda Alcorn of Tulare County informed DSS that they had not received the New Hires abstracts that were due in December. This means overpayments of October or November are still not received by Tulare County and overpayments continue to accrue that could have been stopped had the state done their job.
- ✓ **During 2nd and 3rd quarters of Federal Fiscal Year 2006 LEADER of Los Angeles did not establish overpayments** – Los Angeles County LEADER computer system, which has been flawed since its inception, reported programming flaws resulting in the system being unable to establish any new overpayment and overissuance claims during the 2nd and 3rd quarters of FFY 2006. Los Angeles County claims that most of these OP/OIs were agency errors.
- ✓ **OP/OI claims decline due to quarterly reporting** – Due to quarterly reporting there has been an annual 3% reduction in OP/OI claims.
- ✓ **DSS estimates that it would cost \$7.1 million to translate forms for the Vu v. Saenz settlement** – The Vu settlement could cost \$7.1 million for automation reprogramming costs in 2007-2008. For more information about Vu v. Saenz see CCWRO Litigation Report below.
- ✓ **RAND has a contract with DSS** – The RAND corporation, which never provided a “sanction report” that they were funded to provide in 2005 still have a data sharing agreement with DSS to do a “CalWORKs Statewide Evaluation” until 12/31/07.
- ✓ **Gas prices rise. Counties Refuse to increase mileage reimbursement and DSS is silent** – The law states that counties shall pay “regional market rates for mileage reimbursement. After the election gas prices in California have gone up from \$2.30 to \$3.50 a going up. DSS has been silent. DSS have refused to tell counties that they need to adjust their mileage reimbursement rates to make sure that WtW participants are not using money from their 1989 level fixed income to pay for transportation.

WHAT DID \$230 MILLION TO COUNTIES GET? MORE SANCTIONS

Last year while denying a COLA to CalWORKs recipients the Democratic State Legislature gave county bureaucrats \$230 million dollars to get more people to participate in Welfare-to-Work (WtW) activities and to reduce sanctions. In the same year the California Democratic Legislature DENIED the annual COLA for CalWORKs impoverished families who are living on a fixed income of 1989 without any adjustment for inflation.

What have counties done with this newfound money? Good times are here again. The purpose was allegedly to reduce

the sanction rate and get more people engaged in WtW activities.

Impoverished families and children rate low in the priorities of the Governor and budget writers. And meanwhile poor children suffer in California living on a fixed income of 1989 without a COLA in the cards for 2007-2008. But the budget does propose to give Los Angeles County \$200 million to build their own personal computer system.

We looked at data from October of 2006 through February of 2007 and found that counties are doing business the old way – sanction – sanctions – sanction. Table #1 reveals that the number of participants placed in sanction is climbing. Moreover, the rate of unduplicated participants who were found to be out of compliance, which generally leads to sanctions, is also increasing.

The \$230 million given to counties could have been used for the COLA of 2006-2007 and had a left over to cover the COLA for 2007-2008. Impoverished fami-

lies and children rate low in the priorities of the Governor and budget writers. And meanwhile poor children suffer in California living on a fixed income of 1989 without a COLA in the cards for 2007-2008. But the budget does propose to give Los

Angeles County \$200 million to build their own personal computer system.

TABLE #1	Sanctions	Compliance
October, 2006	38645	21.69%
November, 2006	39339	22.11%
Dececmber, 2006	42282	23.64%
January, 2007	42804	22.35%
February, 2007	50137	22.79%

AB 674 - A Good Bill

AB 674 a bill by Charles Calderon, Democrat of the 58th district covering Montebello, Whittier and Hacienda Heights. This bill would require an increase in the maximum aid payment for an assistance unit that includes a child who is enrolled as a pupil in elementary or secondary school, in the amount of \$50 annually for each enrolled child, if the parent or guardian satisfies specified parental involvement requirements. The requirements are: (1) Back-to-school night; (2) Open house and (3) Parent-teacher conferences. In order to receive increased aid as provided by this section, the recipient shall confirm compliance with these activities in their regular reports.

The bill would exempt the amount paid pursuant to the bill from consideration as income for purposes of determining CalWORKs eligibility or grant amount. The bill would require the State Department of Social Services to adopt regulations to implement the bill by July 1, 2008.

Finally a bill that would use positive incentives, rather than negative means to achieve desired actions.

We urge people to send a letter supporting AB 674 – a positive bill.

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