

# CCWRO Weekly New Welfare News

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## *What's Cooking at DSS* Regulations

**DSS Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Work Participation Rate Penalty Pass-on Regulations.** DSS is developing TANF Work Participation Rate Penalty Pass-on regulations. The Federal Law requires that 50% of the families required to participate in WtW must meet the federal participation standards. Counties have a lot of flexibility in operating the WtW program, thus, they are primarily responsible if California does not meet the federal participation rates. DSS regulations should be available within 6 months or sooner. The regulations may include an appeal process for counties similar to the appeal process that the federal penalty regulations provide. Counties asked if there are provisions in the regulations for penalty relief for poor counties. DSS responded that there is penalty relief for counties who need relief. There are no similar penalty relief provisions in the regulations that counties promulgate for their General Assistance Programs for the poor or in the state penalty regulations that contain a variety of monetary penalties against impoverished families living on a fixed income of 1989.

### All County Letters (ACL) & All County Information Notices (ACIN)

- **CalWORKs Homeless Assistance Program Questions and Answers.** This ACL contains Q&As regarding the homeless assistance program

- **CalWORKs Case Record Retention** – This is an annual ACL regarding what CalWORKs records the county have to retain.

- **Disaster Food Stamp Benefit Identifier Types.** This ACL addresses the issue of the four California computer systems having procedures in place for disaster response.

- **Documentation of Interpretative Services** – This is an ACL that would reduce the documentation of interpretative services that counties provide to immigrants. This is response to counties who were unhappy with being required to document that they provide interpretative services. This ACL would

minimize such documentation and allow counties to get away with not providing interpretative services to immigrants. A victory for CWDA and counties and a loss for limiting English-speaking customers of CalWORKs.

- **Revision of ACL 07-05 – Can Counties Sanction Participants for not submitting Monthly Progress Reports?** This ACL addresses the issue of whether or not the counties can take away 30%-to 50% of the fixed income of WtW participants for failure to submit monthly participation reports. Many counties have been unlawfully sanctioning WtW participants for failure to submit a monthly WtW participation report. This ACL tells counties that they cannot do this. Counties can only impose their punitive sanctions if the participants fails to make satisfactory progress and the activity that they are participating in has a satisfactory participation standards that has been given to the participant.

- **Payment of Tuition and Fees for CalWORKs participants in an WtW activity.** This ACL tells counties that other than a SIP if the county assigns a participant to an activity that has a fee or tuition, then the county has to pay such fees and tuition.

- **Engagement of CalWORKs Participants During Breaks and Assigned Activities.** Counties have been concerned about what to do when a participant is waiting for the education or training and not meeting the FWPRs. Some counties are having participants do job search when they know that the person will be going back to school. This ACL informs counties that bridging activities such activities have to be designed to increase the participant's ability to gain or retain employment and it has to be consistent with his or her WtW plan. Counties cannot have bridging activities just to meet the federal participation rates without regards to the participants WtW plan. Moreover, the bridging activity must be discussed with the participant prior to assignment and documented as a part of the case file.

- **Relative Caregivers and Permanency Options.** This ACL implements AB 298 which provides that relative caregivers shall be given preference for legal guardianship over adoptions and provide such caregivers with information regarding guardianship and adoptions.

- **Support Services for CalWORKs Recipients Participating in On-Line Courses.** This ACIN provides guidance to counties for providing support services to CalWORKs participating enrolled in on-line educational courses.