CCWRO Weekly New Welfare News

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Food Stamp Expedited Service in California

On July 21, 2006, legal services attorneys **Julie Aguilar, Jodie Berger and Bill Kennedy** of LSNC, and **Grace Galligher** of CCWRO filed a CCP §1085 Writ of Mandate action against the Department of Social Services and the Sacramento County Welfare Department (DHA) for not issuing expedited service food stamp benefits on time as required by MPP §63-301.5.

Prior to filing the litigation LSNC and CCWRO had mailed several letter complaining about the fact that DHA is not meeting the state law mandating that food stamp expedited service (FS-ES) benefits be issued in three days.

Expedited Services for Food Stamps is available to any household who at the time of application: (1) has less than $150 of regular income; (1) less than $100 in liquid resources; (3) who combined income and resources is less than their monthly rent and utility costs. Such households are entitled to food stamp benefits within three (3) calendar days. See State Regulation MPP §63-301.5.

Each time DHA got a letter they would write and say that they going to take certain measures that never resulted in long-term compliance with the law.

At the insistence of the eligible clients and the primary local charity known as Sacramento Loaves and Fishes, a law suit was filed.

After the lawsuit DHA started to take effective and meaningful steps to resolve this problem.

The county started to schedule appointments for FS-ES households the next working day and issuing ES.

FS-ES is identified at the window. There are some application assistants who help the applicants with their applications.

Sacramento County has also decided to get new scheduling software to meet the FS-ES and CalWORKs immediate need standards.

At this time Sacramento is barely at 95%. The major force behind this lawsuit was the lead attorney Julie Aguilar with the invaluable support of Jodie Berger and Grace Galligher.

DSS published quarterly reports showing how each county and the state are meeting the FS-ES standards as required by state law. **Some of the large counties that are way out of compliance and crying for litigation are Alameda, Los Angeles, Sonoma, Tulare, Fresno, Santa Clara, and the State of California.**

CCWRO is willing to work with any Legal Services Office contemplating doing litigation to bring their county into compliance and assure that people do not suffer from hunger due to county violation of state law. The data can be found at: **http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/research/PG354.htm**. **The table below** reveal the percentage of households whose FS-ES benefits for Public Assistance households were issued beyond the three (3) day time frame for timely issuance of FS-ES benefits.

April-June, 2008		January - April, 2008		October-December, 2007		July-September, 2007	
Statewide	**36%**	**Statewide**	**40.08%**	**Statewide**	**42.92%**	**Statewide**	**47.65%**
Shasta	90%	Alameda	75.59%	Alameda	69.59%	Alameda	71.65%
Sonoma	84%	Humboldt	80.00%	Humboldt	90.00%	Sonoma	80.43%
Alameda	74%	Shasta	74.42%	Los Angeles	64.01%	Humboldt	80.00%
Imperial	67%	Sonoma	73.68%	Tulare	61.68%	Tulare	69.16%
Los Angeles	62%	Los Angeles	61.08%	Solano	60.00%	Los Angeles	68.67%
Solano	57%	Solano	60.67%	Sonoma	58.49%	Solano	59.78%
Tulare	53%	Tulare	56.92%	Placer	56.76%	Imperial	54.24%
Nevada	50%	Santa Barb.	50.00%	Santa Clara	47.67%	Kings	53.33%
Santa Barbara	50%	Fresno	49.32%	Fresno	45.95%	Sacramento	50.89%
Santa Cruz	49%	San Luis Ob	48.00%	Santa Barbara	40.00%	Placer	46.84%
Santa Clara	44%	San Fran.	47.83%	San Mateo	37.93%	Yolo	46.15%
San Luis Ob.	41%	Yolo	47.37%	Contra Costa	37.86%	Contra Costa	42.64%
Fresno	40%	Santa Clara	46.05%	Imperial	37.50%	Santa Barbara	40.00%
San Francisco	38%	Imperial	41.38%	Orange	35.85%	Orange	38.30%
Yolo	38%	Orange	39.29%	Shasta	31.25%	Santa Clara	37.76%
San Mateo	36%	Santa Cruz	38.33%	San Luis Ob.	31.03%	Shasta	36.84%
		Placer	35.14%	Sacramento	30.86%	Fresno	33.71%
						San Luis Ob.	33.33%
						San Mateo	30.77%