

CCWRO WEEKLY WELFARE NEWS

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In Brief

● San Bernardino

County News Last week San Bernardino County Administrative Officer Mark Uffer informed members of the county's Employee Advisory Group, some of whom work for the county's Transitional Assistance Department, that if the State does not give the county the funds needed to issue welfare checks, he will shut down TAD offices. Since more than cash grants, e.g. food stamps and Medi-Cal, are issued through these offices, it is unclear how those programs would be affected. More to follow.

● Child Care Regional Market Rates Change.

Effective March 1, 2009 there are new child care regional market rates that can be found for each county at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/cd/ap/index.aspx>. Some rates have gone down.

● San Joaquin County RCA Program a Mess -

On November 26, 2008 Joe Chelli, Director of San Joaquin County was mailed an evaluation of his county Refugee Assistance Program. The Evaluation noted such deficiencies as not having self-sufficiency plans, not informing RCA clients that social security number disclosure is voluntary, and the failure to document what activities and services were provided. The County will be required to submit a corrective action, however the County will likely continue to have the same violations at the next review. There is no meaningful accountability enforcement mechanism in the law for counties - only for the county clients.

● County Funds Cut Back and they Go Ballistic -

For the past 20 years welfare recipients have been subject to devastating reduction of benefits and have suffered immensely. The fixed incomes of welfare families in 2009 are the same as they were in 1989 - 20 years ago. County welfare officials never testified before the Legislature that this is unconscionable. Now that County Welfare Offices have been cut much less than welfare recipients - they are incensed. Counties are considering using call-in centers or banking cases and other cost saving measures that would reduce services to save money.

Maybe counties will see what it is like to go to sleep hungry Thanksgiving day or Christmas night like thousands of welfare children have been doing for many years while some welfare officials have been dumping food. But we doubt it. Salaries of welfare administrators and workers are not stuck at the same level as they were in 1989.

● Santa Clara County IHSS Report.

Santa Clara received their IHSS report card on September 30, 2008. This report card is an annual quality assurance monitoring summary. This year the county failed to complete the initial application assessments within 45 days in 15 of the 24 cases reviewed. This is a 62.5% failure rate. The law also required reassessment every 12 months. DSS reviewed 36 cases and in 25 cases Santa Clara County failed to complete the reassessment within 12 months. This is a 69% noncompliance rate. Are there any consequences to Santa Clara County for willfully and routinely breaking the law. No.

COUNTY CLIENT ABUSE REPORT

Los Angeles County Forces the Poor to Use Their CalWORKs Money for Supportive Services. - On 12-5-08 Los Angeles DPSS mailed a letter to Ms. 20073620391 denying her request for supportive services. On December 15, 2008 she filed for a state hearing. At the hearing the claimant presented evidence of entitlement to such supportive services. The county agreed to rescind the denial of supportive services and continue to process the request for supportive services. The hearing decision and Los Angeles County did not explain why they did not advance the payment and forced an impoverished family to use their meager fixed income of CalWORKs that the same they received 20 years ago to pay for his activity.

Santa Clara County Terminates Benefits to Victim of Domestic Abuse.

Ms. 08207383 and her two children are victims of domestic violence. On 7-15-08 Santa Clara County mailed a notice terminating the benefits of these victims of domestic violence (DV) because the abuser is getting SSA benefits. She filed for a state hearing and won the hearing. Santa Clara County was ORDERED not to deny CalWORKs to a DV victim by deeming the abusers income to be available to the victim.

Fresno County Sanctions Family for Not Participating in WtW who lives 10 miles from the closest bus stop -

Fresno county mailed a notice of action to Ms. 08228906 imposing a Welfare-to-Work (WtW) sanction for not participating in Fresno County's WtW program effective 9-1-08. She filed for a state hearing on 8-13-08. The decision states:

"Claimant lives in a rural area. It was undisputed that claimant has no private transportation and the nearest bus stop is 10 miles away." The WtW worker knew or should have known these facts, yet imposed the sanction. The county appeals worker knew or should have known these facts yet went ahead with the hearing to make the sanction stick.