

CCWRO Welfare News

Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations, Inc. 1901 Alhambra Blvd. Sacramento, CA 95816
• Telephone (916) 736-0616 • Cell (916) 712-0071 Fax (916) 736-2645

March 16, 2009
Issue 09-07

In Brief

● **Christine Webb-Curtis**, the Bureau chief for Employment Services has been promoted to Food Stamp Branch chief effective 3-16-09. **Cora Myers**, supervisor of the Eligibility Bureau has been promoted to Chief of the Child Care Bureau. **Christine Brinks**, who used to be **Christine Sanchez** before she got married, sued to work for the employment bureau has been promoted to the position of Manager of Food Stamp Branch Employment and Special Projects Unit.

● The newly enacted American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), more commonly known as the Stimulus Bill, suspended the 3-month limit for able bodies adults, "ABAWDS", until September 30, 2010. This means that thousands of eligible ABAWDS not getting food stamps today because their 3 months expired will be eligible for food stamps after April 1st. There are no plans by California to get these folks back into the food stamp program.

● The ARRA money can also be used to subsidize employment, such as work-study. ARRA would put up 80% of the money and the state or counties could put up 20%. This allocation would enhance California's ability to meet the federal work participation rates and get folks working.

● Some counties are now refusing to accept cell phone numbers and demand that recipients use land lines. Counties do not pay for the telephone, but demand a land line. Having a land-line is not a condition of eligibility for CalWORKs, Food Stamps or Medi-Cal.

● ARRA is estimated to provide California \$220 million for childcare. 5% of that money can be used for administrative costs and 4% for what is called "quality of care". The California Department of Education is supposed make a spending plan for this

new money. Child Care in California is run locally by childcare bureaucrats (APPs) who often treat welfare recipients worse than the welfare department. These child care bureaucrats will terminate child care benefits on a dime if a poor mom is alleged have failed to report something to the high minded child care bureaucrats. There is no due process. Notices of actions violate due process and the hearings are simply a chat with a co-worker that took the negative action and a letter confirming the initial determination

● The California Food Stamp Policy Advocates discussed means to increase Food Stamp participation. The presentation focused on Louisiana's experience with increasing food stamp participation.

As food stamp participation increased, procedural terminations went down, the error rate did not go up. This was done by instituting a "culture change" from the top. Treat welfare recipients like you would want to be treated. One of the interesting points was how to deal with "whereabouts unknown". Often families and households are terminated for "whereabouts unknown" only to come back on the program as an applicant. It is more expensive to process an application than a continuing case. Louisiana required "supervisory approval" before the family was terminated for "whereabouts unknown" and checked the school to see if the kids are still in school.

● Counties are complaining about not having money and laying off workers. DSS is seeking a waiver of face-to-face Food Stamp interview that would have a county option. Thus, counties who are do not want to save state money can waste it with these interviews. The county should pay for the interviews with county dollars only.

● **President Obama** has promised to abolish child hunger by 2015. That can't happen with the current TANF grant levels.

The Trigger Debate in Sacramento

The recently passed legislation, AB 16, Chapter 5, statutes of 2009, provides for a host of cuts to go into effect if the state receives less than 10 billion from the federal government. The cuts include elimination of dental services for adults, a further 4% cut in CalWORKs grants that are currently at the same level that they were in 1989 and a host of other cuts in human services. By April 1, 2009 the Department of Finance and the Treasurer would have to certify that the federal money received by the state is more than \$10 billion to stop these cuts, otherwise they go into effect.

To date the Department of Finance has estimated that only \$8 billion of ARRA money would be available.

The Schwarzenegger Administration obsessed with screwing the poor has resorted to understating the money California from P.L. 111-5, the 2009 Recovery Act so the slaughter of the poor can start. The Department of Finance underestimated \$1.1 billion of Medicaid federal funds. According to the Office of Senator Feinstein California will get over 10 billion dollars.

At a legislative hearing, Assemblyman Feuer was able to get a representative of the Legislative Analyst to admit that letting these barbaric cuts go into effect would deprive California of millions of federal dollars.

The final decision would be made by April 1, 2009. There is a possibility of litigation if the Department of Finance uses this phony estimate. The sad thing is that it is not a felony for state officials to practice dishonesty and harm the impoverished of California. It should be.

CCWRO is an IOLTA funded support center serving IOLTA legal services programs in California. Types of Services Offered: **Litigation, Co-Counseling, Fair Hearing, Representation, Consultation, Informational Services, Research Services, In-Depth Consultation and Welfare Training.** Programs Covered: CalWORKs, Welfare to Work (WtW), Food Stamps, Medi-Cal, General Assistance & Refugee/Immigrant Eligibility. Refugee/Immigrant Eligibility. All Rights Reserved. **Contributors: Kevin Aslanian, Grace Galligher, Steve Goldberg and Diane Aslanian**