

CCWRO Welfare News

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In Brief

● United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is in the final stages of publishing a new fee waiver form and guidance that would waive filing fees for numerous immigration forms for persons who are receiving federal or state means tested benefits or whose income is below the poverty level for their household size. Persons whose income and expenses are about the same may also get a fee waiver.

● Sacramento County is refusing to pay for supportive services to Ms. L.R. (BG17592) for the month of September, yet the county is demanding that she submit a monthly WtW activity report for the same month. She submitted her report, but supportive services have not been paid by Sacramento County for September.

● The Welfare Director for Santa Clara County has been authorized by the County Board of Supervisors to do a **sole source contract** with InTelegy Corporation for \$500,000 to design and implementation of a Centralized Call Center model and related intake, and ongoing eligibility program processes, including the modifications of the centralized Integrated Document Management System for the Department of Employment and Benefits Services

● A 7-14-09 letter from Butte County confirms that the county is in violation of several civil rights violations and is undertaking cer

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rective action, such as failure to have directional signage in the lobby in English, Spanish and Hmong among other civil rights violations.

Quarterly Reporting v. Semi-Annual Reporting - FNS Waiver Hurts The Poor

On September 22, 2009, FNS informed DSS that their request for a four (4) year waiver to continue quarterly reporting (QR) system with a requirement that recipients report changes that federal regulations do not otherwise require, will come to halt on March 31, 2010.

FNS urged DSS to adopt semi-annual reporting that most states have been doing. This letter was issued by FNS at the urging of food stamp advocates, lead by the California Food Policy Advocates, because it would be beneficial to the poor of California in need of food assistance. CCWRO strongly supports ending this anti-family and anti-child federal waiver.

QR REDUCES STATE ERROR RATE - Several years ago California actually faced penalties
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WHO SUPPORTS THE ABOLITION OF THIS FEDERAL FOOD STAMP REPORTING WAIVER ?

(Partial List)

- Aleta Cruel, Executive Director, Compton Welfare Rights Organization
- Amanda Davis, Family Services Case Manager, Ocean Park Community Center
- Amy Scott, Food Pantry Coordinator, Friends In Deed
- Amy Tam, Youth Services Program Specialist, YouThinkAngeles
- Angie Cooper, Research Scientist, Public Health Institute
- Anne Holcomb, Executive Director, Food for People
- Antoinette Nelson, Food Pantry Coordinator, First African Methodist Episcopal Church Los
- Arturo Ybarra, Executive Director, Watts/Century Latino Organization
- Authur G. Kinslow, President, Christ Temple Church of Pomona
- Barbara Williams, Social Worker
- Beth Abrams, President, Beth Abrams' Center for Peace, Arts, Justice, and the Environment
- Carl R. Hansen, Executive Director, Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County
- Carol Lazarovits, Outreach Coordinator, St. John Vianney Church
- Cathy Mason, Office Manager, Trinity Baptist Church
- Chuch Huston, Director, The AIDS Food Store, Inc.
- Colleen Rivecca, Advocacy Coordinator, St. Anthony Foundation
- Dana Wilkie, CEO, Community Food Bank
- David Cox, Executive Director, St. Joseph's Family Center
- David Goodman, Executive Director, Redwood Empire Food Bank
- Deborah Waxman, Community Education and Outreach Coordinator, Food for People
- Douglas Ferraro, Executive Director, Hope-Net
- Eileen MacKusick, Lead Dietitian, Watsonville Community Hospital
- Frank Tamborello, Director, Hunger Action LA
- Fred Summers, Director of Operations, SOVA Food & Resource Program, Jewish Family
- Frederick Brown, Program Operations Manager, California Institute of Health & Social Services
- Gary Romriell, Food Bank Manager, Community Action Partnership of Kern
- George LeBard, Executive Director, Project MANA
- George Manalo-LeClair, Senior Legislative Advocate, California Food Policy Advocates
- Gianna Muir Robinson, Disaster Relief Coordinator, Jewish Family Service of San Diego
- H. Eric Schockman, President, MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
- Hallie Roth, Case Management Supervisor, Jewish Family Service of San Diego Healthcare
- Helen Anderson, Treasurer, Orange County Hunger Coalition
- Ilene Leiter, CEO, Kings' Care - A Safe Place, Inc.
- Janice Maseda, Director, Lutheran Social Services Los Angeles

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due to their high food stamp error rate. The State had to pay millions to the federal government due to the inefficient administration of the California Food Stamp program. The reason the error rate was so high was due to the fact that California was still using the 20th century monthly reporting system put in place by Governor Reagan in the 1970. This means every month there was a monthly report and each month that the report contained an error, it contributed to the error rate.

AB 444 IMPLEMENTS QR AND ERROR RATES GOES DOWN BY 75%. In order to reduce the error rate DSS decided to adopt a quarterly reporting system. It was contained in a budget trailer bill (AB 444 of 2001-2002), that never went to a committee hearing. It also authorized DSS to seek federal waivers. This would automatically reduce the error rate by 75%. Rather than having 12 errors a year, there were now only 4 errors a year. The California error rate has gone down and California is no longer paying penalties to the federal government.

FNS WAIVER - According to federal regulations quarterly reporting can only require a report four times a year. In fact the federal regulations state:

7 CFR §273/12(a)(4)(vii) "Sole reporting requirement. The quarterly report form shall be the sole reporting requirement for any information that is required to be reported on the form, except that able-bodied adults subject to the time limit of §273.24 shall report whenever their work hours fall below 20 hours per week, averaged monthly." If a recipient reports a change voluntarily during the mid-quarter, then the county is sup-

posed to take action on the report.

7 CFR §273/12(a)(4)(vi) Changes reported outside of the quarterly report. The State agency must act on any changes reported outside of the quarterly report in accordance with paragraph (c) of this section.

DSS WANTS TO CONTINUE THE BAD WAIVER - However, DSS did not want to give up on the punitive reporting process completely. They were able to get waivers from the federal government to allow the state to still force families to report changes that were not mandated by federal law, such as certain amount of income, address change, etc. Thus, it maintains some of the punitive features of the monthly reporting, but reduces the state error rates by 75%. It was a win-win for the welfare bureaucracy and damaging for recipients. The waiver was approved in 2003 and it is still in effect until March 31, 2010.

WAIVER IS NOT NEEDED TO CONTINUE QR IN CALIFORNIA - California welfare industry has been acting as if the waiver is crucial to quarterly reporting. If the waiver is gone, the QR system in California will continue without the anti-poor provisions of the waiver. In reality, the waiver is crucial to DSS and counties so they can continue to terminate impoverished families with children from food benefits because they do not have an address to report during the non-reporting months and for other reasons. Thousands of children have experienced hunger due to this waiver.

The 9-22-09 letter informs California that they can adopt a semi-annual reporting system or continue with quarterly reporting without a waiver. This is good news for the low-income community of California.

- Jeff Dronkers, Chief Programs and Policy Officer, Los Angeles Regional Foodbank
- Jenn Sramek, Board President, Haight Ashbury Food Program
- Jennifer Tracy, Food Stamp Outreach Coordinator, San Diego Hunger Coalition
- Joni Halpern, Esq., Director, Supportive Parents Information Network, Inc.
- Joyce Hutson, Program Manager, Greater Richmond Interfaith Program
- Kathleen Harmon, Executive Director, Interfaith Council of Amador
- Ken Hecht, Executive Director, California Food Policy Advocates
- Kevin Aslanian, Ex. Dir. Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations, Inc
- Lane Tobias, Activist/Community Blogger, Mother Earth/OBrig.org
- Laurie True, Executive Director, California WIC Association
- Lisa Perry, Director, Connections of Hope/ERG Community Services
- Lisa Sherrill, Community Relations Manager, Food Bank of Contra Cost and Solano
- Luis M. Lozano, Executive Director, The Beacon House Association of San Pedro
- Lynis Chaffey, Executive Director, Inter-Faith Ministries
- Lynn Kersey, Executive Director, Maternal and Child Health Access
- Mable Everette, President/CEO, Community Nutrition Education
- Magud Franco, Office Administrator, Inglesia Apostolica Manantial de Vida
- Mara Schoner, President, Neighbor2Neighbor
- Marc Ross, Nutritional Specialist, Downtown Women's Center
- Maria G. Orozco, Community Referral Specialist, Chula Vista Community Collaborative
- Marie M. Mugan, Administrative Services, Little Sisters of the Poor
- Mark Lowry, Co-Chair, Orange County Hunger Coalition
- Marla Feldman, California Program Director, MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
- Mary Agnes Erlandson, Center Director, St. Margaret's Center/Catholic Charities of Los
- Mary Ann Kelly, RD, Consultant Dietitian, Dietitian of the Desert
- Mary Buckley, Executive Director, Plowshares
- Maya Hagege, Project Assistant, South LA Healthy Eating Active Communities
- Merle Preston, Access to Care Manager - Community Healthy Programs, Neighborhood
- Mike Mallory, CEO, Second Harvest Food Bank of San Joaquin & Stanislaus Counties
- Nancy Tivol, Executive Director, Sunnyvale Community Services
- Natalie Caples, Nutrition Education Coordinator, Community Food Bank
- Olga De Jesus, Program Coordinator - Failure to Thrive Program, Harbor UCLA Medical Center Pantry
- Pastor Roger R. Kuehn, Pastor of Church - Administrator of Food Pantry, Antioch Food Closet
- Paul Ash, Executive Director, San Francisco Food Bank
- Paul Bellerjeau, Director of Programs, Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Cruz County
- Paul S. Castro, CEO, Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles
- Phil Huisman, Administrator, Shepherd's Pantry
- Rabbi Marvin Gross, CEO, Union Station Homeless Services
- Reverend Will Wauters, Vicar, The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany
- Robert V. Shear, Executive Director, Mid Valley Recovery Services
- Rosa Murillo, Coordinator, St. Josephs God Parents
- Sandy Rechtschaffen, Social Justice Coordinator, Congregation Emanu-El Services of Los Angeles
- Shelly Hahne, Hand Up Youth Pantry Coordinator, Jewish Family Service - Hand Up Youth Food
- Sonia Pereira, Dual Diagnosis Case Manager, Ocean Park Community Center Access Center
- Sue Sigler, Executive Director, California Association of Food Banks
- Susanna Sibilsky, Community Consultant, Sibilsky & Associates
- Trish Ribail, Executive Director, Imperial Valley Food Bank
- Victoria Beeher, Advocate, Mental Health Systems - Building Bridges Together