

CCWRO New Welfare News

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April 25, 2010
Issue # 2010-10

Welfare Around the Nation

• Advocate Ty Jones of Virginia reports, "There was a good proposal during the session that was killed. This proposal sought to create a statewide TANF funding pool, where there was a competitive grant process for organizations to apply for TANF block grant funds for expanded TANF programs. This process would be in lieu of the current mechanism where organizations that have relationships with certain legislators are able to receive TANF funding. This bill was proposed because in Virginia we currently have a structural imbalance in our TANF block grant because so much TANF money was going in so many other places/organizations that now we have to make sure we have enough funds for the core services. The Department of Social Services was in support of this bill, but the legislators on the budget committee and those organizations who currently receive TANF funding were all in opposition to the bill. So this bill died."

• Vermont proposes to cut TANF grants by 20%. They also propose to implement full family sanctions and eliminate transitional food stamps.

• Last year New York enacted legislation phasing in a 10% increase each year for 3 years in the basic TANF grant [which excludes a separate shelter allowance]. This year the Governor proposes to roll back the second two installments, phasing it in at 5% a year over 4 years instead of two. Welfare advocates want to keep the current increases on schedule and add increases for the following 2 years, which will still leave the TANF 25 - 40% below the grant levels in 1990.

• A bill in Illinois this year proposes to raise the TANF grant amount 15% a year over a several year period. Illinois' Legislature also introduced a TANF-recipient drug testing bill which would have mandated all candidates for the General Assembly to take a drug test. Note: The US Supreme Court has held that candidates for state office (in Georgia) cannot be required to take a drug test. *Chandler v. Miller*, 520 U.S. 305 (1997).

• Advocates in New Hampshire defeated a bill requiring drug testing of public assistance recipients. Advocates also fought efforts to count SSI income when figuring TANF eligibility. There are ongoing issues regarding adequate funding because of caseload increase.

• Kansas, Maine, North Carolina, Utah and New Hampshire use EBT cards for Child Care payments.

Monterey County Board of Supervisors Suggest Verification of Unannounced Home Visits to Protect the Elderly & Disabled

On January 13, 2010 Monterey County Board of Supervisors chair Sharon Thrall mailed a letter to Deputy Director of the Adult Services Division of CDSS Eva Lopez stating that several IHSS recipients are concerned and appalled by the requirement that disabled persons admit any persons into his/her home who self identifies that he/she is from IHSS. The letter goes on to say, "I am contacting you to request that you implement a verification system so that a recipient can telephone your office to confirm that the person at the door in fact represents your Department."

DSS has not taken any steps to protect our vulnerable aged, blind and disabled from being victims of a crime by adopting this common sense proposal.

San Bernardino County Violates Food Stamp Laws

DSS recently released a Food Stamp Program Management Evaluation Report for San Bernardino County. The report reveals several violations of food stamp laws.

MPP 63-300.381 states that a food stamp applicant can file a food stamp application anytime during regular work hours. The Barstow office of San Bernardino County has a drop box for applications. All food stamp applications must be deposited in the drop box, to be picked up and date stamped the day after the application is put in the drop box. This has caused the loss of thousands of food stamp benefits to poor people living in San Bernardino County.

MPP 63-301.521 requires that the food stamp workers verbally inform food stamp applicants about expedited service food stamp benefits. In California, applicants are forced to sign the SAWS1 under penalty of perjury "the county has told me of my rights to Expedited Service." Yet DSS' Food Stamp Program Management Evaluation Report for San Bernardino County noted that San Bernardino County refused to inform food stamp applicants of their right to Expedited Service food stamps, but made the applicant sign the SAWS 1 anyway. This problem has been occurring in San Bernardino County for several years.

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