

CCWRO New Welfare News

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SAN DIEGO COUNTY VIOLATES FOOD STAMP LAWS

San Diego County ranks last with the lowest participation rate in the state. San Diego County prides itself for insisting that welfare recipients obey the welfare rules with vigorous welfare fraud enforcement and 100 percent home visit program. Yet, it has a record of disregarding the rules governing the food stamp program.

Recently, the Department of Social Services completed a food stamp compliance review to determine how well San Diego County complied with federal and state expedited food stamp rules.

In a March 11, 2010 letter to San Diego County, Welfare Director Nick Macchione cited San Diego County for the following violations:

VIOLATION #1 - Failure to comply with the signage requirement of MPP §63-300.35.

The report found that some San Diego County offices did not have signs as mandated by MPP §63-300.35 which requires counties to post signs in the certification office which explain the application processing standards and the right to file an application on the day of initial contact.

VIOLATION #2 – Failure to accept food stamp applications as required by MPP §63-300.32. “The household shall be advised that the household does not have to be interviewed before filing the application and may file an incomplete application form as long as

the form contains the applicant’s name and address, and is signed by a responsible member of the household or the household’s authorized representative.”

The report showed that the North Inland Office rejects incomplete or mail-in applications that only contain the name and address of the applicant.

VIOLATION # 3 – Failure to mail FS applications as required by MPP §63-300.34. “If a household contacting the food stamp office by telephone does not wish to come to the appropriate office to file the application that same day and instead prefers receiving an application through the mail, an application form shall be mailed to the household on the same day the telephone request is received. An application shall also be mailed on the same day a written request for food assistance is received.”

VIOLATION #4 – Failure to accept FS application on date received as required by MPP §63-300.3. The North Inland office does not accept Food Stamp applications left in the drop box. San Diego County contacts the applicant and tells the applicant they have to come back and apply in person. DSS report states: “The application should be accepted and the date received should be recorded/date stamped on the application. The applicant should not have to complete a second application. MPP §63-300.3

VIOLATION #5. The application date is not recorded or date stamped on the food stamp application as required by MPP §63-300.33. The review found that in some offices San Diego County failed to document the date that the application was filed with the county. MPP § 63-300.33 required that the CWD document the date the application was filed by recording on the application the date it was received by the food stamp office.

VIOLATION # 6. Food stamp applicants are not verbally informed of expedited services (ES) as required by MPP §63-301.521 at the point of reception when the SAWS1 is received and prior to being required to be signed by the applicant under penalty of perjury that it was explained.

MPP § 63-301.521 provides: “A CWD employee or volunteer shall inform potential applicants orally of the right to expedited service for eligible households and how to initiate the process, the availability of assistance in filling out the application and shall be responsible for screening applications as they are filed. The CWD also shall advise individuals who inquire about the Food Stamp Program by telephone of the expedited service processing standards for eligible households. The CWD shall assist an applicant, upon request, in filling out forms and completing the application process.”

DSS reviewed 32 randomly selected cases. Three of eight food stamp denials at the Centre City office were found to be invalid. Centre City staff did not issue notices of action in 2 food stamp denial cases.

Four of fifteen food stamp denials reviewed at the North Inland Office were invalid. In one case, staff denied the application 44 days after the application date, no copy of the appointment letter was in the file and the SAWS1 was also not in the file. One case had no documentation supporting the denial action.

In another, DSS found that the CalWIN comments did not match the notice of action (NOA) reasons for the denial. This applicant applied February 24, 2009 and failed to keep the first appointment. The second appointment was scheduled for March 26, 2009, which is outside of the 30 day timeline for processing food stamp applications. Verification was requested to be returned by April 6, 2009. The NOA denying the application was issued on May 3,

2009 for failure to provide verification to San Diego County by March 26, 2009.

COUNTIES SANCTION AND TERMINATE BENEFITS FOR NONCOMPLIANCE WHILE FAILING TO COMPLY WITH THE LAW

On January 30, 2010 the State Department of Social Services issued a Fiscal ACL to all counties as required by Chapter 75, Statutes of 2006 (AB 1808). DSS, in consultation with the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), developed a survey instrument in FY 2007-08 to capture the costs of county administration of the human services programs for the Budget process.

The letter states that "Completed budget worksheets are due to CDSS by March 1, 2010. Please submit your completed package of worksheets via email to the analyst assigned to your county (as listed on Attachment I included in the instruction package)." Counties were given 60 days to submit information. These same counties only give recipients of human services programs 10 days to provide requested information.

As of April 21, 2010, six counties failed to provide DSS with completed budget worksheets. The counties that failed to comply with the State Department of Social Services are:

- Calaveras
- Napa
- Santa Clara
- Santa Cruz
- Siskiyou and
- Stanislaus

Several of these counties informed DSS that they would provide the worksheets to DSS. However, Stanislaus and Santa Clara counties simply ignored the request for information.

We asked DSS if there are any consequences for these counties refusing to

comply with a lawful request and discovered that there are none. Counties can simply ignore what their superiors ask for and nothing happens. We wonder if these same counties give their clients the same leeway?

We discovered that these six counties terminate benefits to impoverished families without any hesitation for failure to provide verification within 10 days.

To see if these counties allowed recipients the same latitude when failing to comply with County Welfare Department demands, that the counties took in submitting reports to DSS, one only needs to look at the County Statistical Reports for December of 2009.

County	Failure to Meet Procedural Requirements-Recipient/Applicant
Calaveras	51
Napa	72
Santa Clara	1,246
Santa Cruz	197
Siskiyou	59
Stanislaus	640

SOURCE: DSS CA 253 and 255 reports

County	Recipient Failure to Submit a QR-7
Calaveras	25
Napa	39
Santa Clara	859
Santa Cruz	138
Siskiyou	21
Stanislaus	76

SOURCE: DSS CA 253 Reports

County	WtW Sanction
Calaveras	5
Napa	54
Santa Clara	350
Santa Cruz	57
Siskiyou	40
Stanislaus	524

SOURCE: DSS WtW 25 Reports

County Refusal to Pay for Transportation of Unduplicated WtW Participants

	Unduplicated Participants	Unduplicated Participants NOT Receiving Transportation	Perc. of Undupl. Part. NOT Receiving Transp.
Calaveras	131	80	61%
Napa	159	139	87%
Santa Clara	4,652	1,408	30%
Santa Cruz	705	438	62%
Siskiyou	195	184	94%
Stanislaus	2,489	1,800	72%

SOURCE: DSS WtW 25 Reports

News From Englad

Press release Date 24/3/10

Nothing in budget for children living in poverty today

In response to today's Budget, End Child Poverty expresses its disappointment at the lack of any immediate help for low income families facing poverty. The campaign does, however, welcome the universal access to bank accounts and support for the international bank levy.

Sam Hyde, Director of the campaign said:

"The failure to prioritize children means that Government will continue to fall far short of the important milestone of halving child poverty, and is a serious set back on the road to ending child poverty by 2020. It's a missed opportunity to improve the lives of thousands of children, who will today be growing up with a poorer future."

"The recession and the deficit are no excuse. The children of today are the workers who will pay off the national debt tomorrow and we cannot afford to see their life chances slip away. We've seen government find money for what it thinks are priorities and we are disappointed that it doesn't consider important its commitments to the Child Poverty Bill, which will gain Royal Assent this week."

<http://www.endchildpoverty.org>

California Welfare-to-Work Program Update

How Much Do we Spend and What Do We Get?

2009-2010 Welfare-to-Work Services Appropriation

\$1,013,810.00

2009-2010 Welfare-to-Work Child Appropriation

\$515,197.00

	Jan. 2010	Febr. 2010
Number of Unduplicated Participants	141,566	140,909
Number of Participants Being Sanctioned	46,183	45,104
Number of Participants Sanctioned	25,495	25,523
Dollar Loss to Families and Children Being Sanctioned	\$5.5 million	\$5.6 million
Number of Participants Who Entered Employment	7,628	7250
Number of Participants Who Entered Employment that Resulted in Termination of CalWORKs	3,369	3,400
TOTAL JOBS	10,997	10,650
TOTAL SANCTIONS IMPOSED	25,495	25,523
HOW MANY MORE PARTICIPANTS WERE SANCTONED V. FOUND EMPLOYMENT?	14,498	14,473
Number of Unduplicated Participants NOT Being Paid Transportation by the County	77,866	76,339
Estimated Dollar Loss to the Family Not Being Paid Transportation by the County	\$7.8 million	\$7.6 million

Analysis

During January of 2010 **18%** of participants were sanctioned by the Welfare-to-Work Program. **10%** of participants found employment.

Thus, **8%** more participants were sanctioned compared to the percentage of participants who found employment. This difference provides significant statistical evidence that the program is slanted toward sanctioning participants rather than making participants self-sufficient.

Sanctions resulted in the loss of \$5.6 million dollars each month for California's impoverished families.

During January of 2010 **55%** of participants who are entitled to transportation did not receive these benefits. The law provides that needed transportation assistance be paid in advance to assure that participants do not use money from their fixed incomes; incomes which are at the same level that CalWORKs recipients received in 1989 for transportation. Over 90% of the participants have to use some means of transportation to reach the location of their WtW activity.

During January of 2010 CalWORKs recipients were denied 7.6 million dollars in transportation services by county welfare departments with the cooperation of the State Department of Social Services. CCWRO has voiced concerns for these issues for over 10 years.