

CCWRO New Welfare News

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Food Stamp v. TANF Caseload Imbalance Since the Recession

12-07 to 2-10	Food Stamp Caseload	48%
12-07 to 3-10	TANF Caseload	12%

Recent data reveals that TANF is not meeting the needs of the poor it was meant to serve. Why has the TANF caseload not kept pace with the needs of recipients? TANF gives States "flexibility" to do whatever they want with the TANF money – like spending 30% on payments to families while using 70% for administration and expenditures not directly used to aid TANF families. States and their supporters are seeking more block grant money for States. There is no need to give more money to States for TANF unless all of the new money is targeted only for payments to families ONLY.

Governor Proposes to Eliminate CalWORKs to Save \$1.2 Billion to Have a General Fund Rainy Day of \$1.2 Billion

On Friday May 14, 2010 Governor Schwarzenegger released his May version of the 2010-2011 State budget. The budget proposes to eliminate the CalWORKs Program to save the \$1.2 billion as a "reserve" for the general fund.

Parents who put money in a rainy-day fund while their kids starve would be accused of child abuse. In California, such behavior would result in being charged with a felony for child endangerment.

The proposed cuts would cost the State \$3.5 billion in federal monies that will impact 1 million poor kids and about 600,000 families in California. In addition, the budget proposes to eliminate all funding for childcare, which will save \$2.5 billion in General Fund.

Last year, the Governor and the Legislature reportedly agreed to no major

cuts in CalWORKs for a two-year period. Now the Governor is back for more cuts.

Over the past 10 years, welfare programs have contributed to over \$14 billion towards the General Fund. This is achieved by using TANF money for General Fund programs that are not part of the CalWORKs program. This is called creative accounting.

On May 18, 2010 the Legislative Analyst Office issued a report opposing the elimination of the CalWORKs program. The state has a \$19.7 billion deficit. Even if all programs for the poor were eliminated, the budget would not be balanced. The fact is the state has been reducing its revenues by enacting various tax cuts over the years beginning with Prop. 13, while cost of living has been rising.

County Client Abuse Report

• **Los Angeles County uses terminated General Assistance income at the end of January to deny food stamp benefits in February.** Ms. B16M943 was found to be ineligible for Food Stamp benefits effective February 1, 2010 due to income from disability and General Assistance. However, Los Angeles County had already terminated Ms. B16M943's General Assistance effective February 1, 2010. We wonder how many other Food Stamp recipients have lost their food stamps because of General Assistance that has already been terminated. A computer system that cost millions should be preventing these mistakes.

• **Sacramento County tries force a college student to quit her educational activities, do job search and perform unpaid labor know as CWEX.** Ms. 2010039064 received a Notice of Action (NOA) ordering her to change her Welfare-to-Work activity from "education" to Job Club and County Work Experience. In addition, the county issued a Notice of Action terminating all of her benefits because of "whereabouts unknown". The "whereabouts unknown" charge was a false charge by the county because she had never left the State of California or the County of Sacramento.

The reason that Sacramento County terminated Ms. 2010039064's educational activity is because she had a grade point average (GPA) less than 2.00 for the last semester, but the victim's overall GPA was

2.394. Sacramento County has never demonstrated support for education as a way to self-sufficiency. They have explored every loophole to divert welfare moms from education and place them in activities that do not lead to self-sufficiency. In this case, Ms. 2010039064 was lucky. She requested a State hearing where it was ruled that Sacramento County was wrong to terminate her right to continue her education just because her GPA for one semester was less than 2.00.

• **Los Angeles County sanction reversed for failure to give a 30-day notice and failure to allow the participant to participate before imposing the sanction.** On November 3, 2009, Ms. 2009342338, who was homeless at the time, was mailed a Notice of Action effective December 1, 2009, imposing a sanction for being late to a job search appointment. Ms. 2009342338 explained that she was homeless and was late due to fact that her child was sick.

• **San Diego County refuses to pay for ancillary services needed by a WtW participant.** On December 14, 2009, San Diego County mailed a Notice of Action denying Ms. 2009356141's request for a Stentura writing machine that was required for her studies at Sage College. She was referred to Sage College by her WtW worker and required to sign a WtW plan. Ms. 2009356141 provided verification from the college that she need the transcribing machine for her classes, but San Diego County refused to provide her with the same tools needed by other students in the same class. She requested a State hearing and received a ruling that the county had to obey state laws and regulations and provide her with the required tools to complete her WtW plan. This represents another participant who is on her way to self-sufficiency notwithstanding the barriers of the county welfare department.

• **Fresno County denies childcare for failure to submit a childcare application. Ms. 20093644023 signed a WtW activity assignment on June 18, 2009 and requested transportation, ancillary and child care services.** When she submitted her county-provided child care claim form which she and the provider completed, Fresno County denied paying the childcare alleging that she had failed to submit a child care application. There is no childcare application requirement in state law or regulations, and yet Fresno County attempted to deprive this mandatory participant's provider the wages she earned – wages that were below minimum wage. Thankfully, she filed for a state hearing and this gross injustice was corrected. We wonder how many other participants are victimized by this unlawful practice of Fresno County.

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