

CCWRO Welfare News

Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations, Inc.
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In Brief

○ **CWDA 2012 Officers** - 2012 California Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) officers have been selected by the CWDA nominating Committee. The President will be **Jo Weber** of Sonoma, formerly employed by CDSS. **Bruce Wagstaff**, who also used to work for CDSS and now works for Sacramento County will be the Vice-President at Large.

○ **DPSS Has a New Acting Director** - Former Los Angeles County DPSS director **Philip Browning** has moved to Los Angeles Department of Child Welfare Services. **Sheryl Spiller**, the current Chief Deputy Director is the acting Director for DPSS. Sheryl started with DPSS way back in 1967. She just graduated from high school and applied for a job with the county. She was a leader in getting over 100,000 children enrolled in the Healthy Families program.

○ **California In Violation of Federal Law** - California has been in violation of Title 7 CFR, Section 273.31 that mandates DSS to offer food stamp recipients receiving transitional food stamp benefits "in the final month of transitional benefit period" a process to continue to get their food stamp benefits for years. Section 273.31 provides:

§ 273.31 *Closing the transitional period.*
"In the final month of the transitional benefit period, the State agency must do one of the following:

(a) Issue the RFC specified in §273.12(c)(3) and act on any information it has about the household's new circumstances in accordance with §273.12(c)(3). The State agency may extend the household's certification period in accordance with §273.10(f)(5) unless the household's certification period has already been extended past the maximum period specified in §273.10(f) in accordance with §273.27(a); or

(b) Recertify the household in accordance with §273.14. If the household has not reached the maximum number of months in its certification period during the transitional period, the State agency may shorten the household's prior certification period in order to recertify the household. When shortening the household's certification period pursuant to this section, the State agency must send the household a notice of expiration in accordance with §273.14(b)."

As of September 9, 2011 California continues to be out of compliance because counties refuse to carry out federal law through workaround and insist on continuing to break the law until the three (3) outdated computer systems are modified. Maybe a law suit would be in order?

○ DSS is in the process of rescinding state regulations that allow Foster Family Agencies (FFA) to perform the monthly social worker visits. By rescinding these regulation county social workers instead of will be doing the monthly visits.

FOOD STAMP? SNAP? CalFresh? What a Mess

An advocate told us the other day that a client called them complaining that the county refused to give her and her family CalFresh benefits even though her food stamps lasted for only about three weeks each month and she was hoping that she can feed her kids with these CalFresh benefits. She was very distressed and upset. How did this happen?

Most people in America are aware of the Food Stamp program. But some people who may have never received food stamps themselves decided that the name Food Stamp has "bad connotations" so the name of the program was changed.

Federally the program is now called the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). There are a whole host of outreach materials encouraging people to apply for SNAP. Many food stamp recipients decided that maybe they could get SNAP in addition to food stamps. Little did they know that SNAP was food stamps.

Then California decided that it wanted to change the name of the program also. After several focus groups and meetings, the Schwarzenegger administration changed the name of the food stamp program to the CalFresh program effective October 23, 2010.

http://www.cdss.ca.gov/cdssweb/entres/pdf/PressRelease/CalFresh_Press_Release.pdf

We recently surveyed recipients of food stamps and they had no idea what CalFresh was for most part, but they do know when they do not get their food stamps. Advocates have never received a call from a food stamp recipient saying "I did not get my CalFresh".

Now the State and others are spending thousands of dollars promoting this program called CalFresh. As a result many food stamp recipients come to the welfare office wait for hours to apply for CalFresh only to find out that they are already getting Food stamps which is the same as CalFresh.

In Los Angeles people have to wait for several hours in over 100 degree heat to go through the metal detection security to get into the welfare department and then be told that they are already getting food stamps which is the same as CalFresh. In many other counties people have a make a long trip to apply and then come back again for an appointment only to be told that they are getting food stamps which is the same as CalFresh. And these are people who are hungry and often penniless. It's not Fair.