

CCWRO Welfare News

Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations, Inc.
1901 Alhambra Blvd. Sacramento, CA 95816

<http://www.ccwro.org>

December 27, 2011
Issue # 2011-25

In Brief

◆ TANF was reauthorized for 60 more days on December 23, 2011 by HR 3765. The TANF reauthorization was part of the payroll tax extension and unemployment insurance benefits extension package. This was a clean extension of TANF with no riders. This extension ends March 1, 2012.

◆ Homeless Assistance - On 10-4-11 Gary Alvarez of Fresno County asked DSS about homeless assistance eligibility in this situation: "... a client with one child is living with her father in the City of Sanger. Her father evicts her from his home stating that he cannot afford to keep them on, client and child are now homeless. Client applies for an get temporary homeless, but later request permanent homeless to move into an apartment owned her father in the City of Reedley?"

On 10-17-11 DSS responded "...The client was not returning to the same house or apartment she lived in prior to becoming homeless. As long as the client meets all other Homeless Assistance eligibility requirements, she should have been approved for permanent homeless assistance."

◆ On 9-21-11 Kasey Rogers of Riverside County asked DSS about a CalWORKs recipient who "... owns several horses. None of which are income producing. Would the horses be considered property and the value counted in the property determination or would they be considered pets like a cat or a dog?"

On 10-14-11 DSS responded "Animals that are kept as pets have not value and would not be considered and counted as property. In this case, the horses are excluded as personal property, because the horses are not used as a resource that producing income to support the family."

◆ In a recent federal audit, Sacramento County was informed that in four (4) CalWORKs cases there were no SAWS1s, SAWS 2 and QR7s. It is ironic that after spending billions on computer systems that prevent cases from going forward when mandatory forms are not in the system that an audit can find these forms are missing from cases. One possible reason is that

each county has their own scanning system. Sacramento County uses a system called FileNet which does not talk to the CalWIN system where case actions are taken..

Sacramento County's corrective action plan is to remind staff that they need to have the SAWS1s, SAWS2 and QR7s in the CalWIN system and to adopt some policies and procedures to make sure the forms are entered in CalWIN. We wonder what the old policy was and how the new policy is different. This information is not included in the so-called "corrective action plan"

◆ Yolo County was cited in a federal audit for not having an IEVS report in the casefile. The audit points out that this a repeat condition from 2009. In 2009 there were 13 cases without an IEVS report while in 2010 there were 4. Maybe in 2020 all cases will have an IEVS report. This is like Yolo County receiving a QR-7 that did not answer 4 questions. What would happen to that family? All aid would be terminated immediately for failure to submit a complete QR7. What happens to Yolo County when they fails in 13 cases and fail a year later in four (4) cases? Yolo County contends that it made significant progress by reducing the number of IEVS errors from 13 to 4. We wonder why this same standard does not apply to processing QR7?

Los Angeles County DPSS forbids poor people to help other poor people

Kevin Shephard of VWRO is advocating for welfare recipients in Los Angeles County. On December 16, 2011 Kevin went to the Rancho Park office with a person needing help with food stamps.

On December 16, 2011 Kevin was ordered by Acting Director of the DPSS Rancho Park Office Mr. Americo Garza not to assist the poor because he is poor and on welfare. Mr. Garza contends that a welfare recipient helping another welfare recipient is a "conflict of interest." Mr. Garza made clear that if Kevin approached someone struggling with a welfare process he be would be arrested.

He was told that he could only assist the person he came in with and was ordered to sit next to the person he was with and not to try to help anybody. "It appears that Los Angeles County has a county ordinance pro-

mulgated by Mr. Garza prohibiting welfare recipient from assisting other welfare recipients” said Kevin Shepard.

Kevin continued to say that “next thing I know two sheriffs are standing in front of me laughing. After talking to Americo Garza then seeing two sheriffs pop up standing in front of me I felt like I was in the Soviet Union so I went home.”

Los Angeles County DPSS Violates Confidentiality of Working Poor Getting Food Stamps.

Ms. B1DP678 receives Food Stamps in Los Angeles County. Ms. B1DP678 is working and actually has a job during the Great Recession. She submitted her quarterly report to DPSS, but DPSS did not like the report. Next thing she knew people at work knew she was getting Food Stamps. How did this happen? DPSS asked the employer to verify her income for the quarterly report.

Ms. B1DP678 was livid. Her confidentiality was violated by DPSS. Her scheduled promotion at work was down the drain – food stamp recipients are not promoted some places.

She contacted Garegin Manasarian, DPSS IEVS supervisor for the Rancho Park office who told Ms. B1DP678 that DPSS can mail a letter to her employer anytime without her consent requesting income information.

On Friday, December 16, 2011 she spoke with Deputy Director Americo Garza. Ms. B1DP678 said “Mr. Garza position, to put in succinctly, was aggressive and arrogant especially when I asked what right does DPSS have to contact my employer. My conversation resolved nothing, but it did raise some questions about confidentiality.”

Mr. America Garza also told Ms. B1DP678 that she should not seek assistance from any person from welfare rights. It appears Mr. Garza does not like welfare recipients getting assistance from somebody of their choosing.

We called Mr. Garza and he confirmed that it is DPSS policy not to allow poor people to help other poor people because it is a violation of confidentiality, but saw nothing wrong with happened to Ms. B1DP678.

California Welfare-to-Work Update

Periodically CCWRO updates its readers of the progress that California’s welfare-to-work (WtW) program is making during the current Great Recession.

While counties receive about \$1.3 billion to operate a WtW program that includes child care and providing the working poor on CalWORKs transportation, the numbers reveal that about 43% of the participants still do not receive transportation in California.

The devastating WtW sanctions reduced the fixed income of CalWORKs that is in the same dollar amount that it was in 1985 is reduced by at least 25% or more causing undue hardship on innocent children who are the real victims of this “sanction program”. Research reveals that most sanctions are caused by the fact that the participant was not denied supportive services that they needed, such as child care and transportation.

**How Much Do We Spend and What Do We Get?
2010-2011 Welfare-to-Work Services Appropriation**

\$878,783.000

2010-2011 Welfare-to-Work Child Appropriation

\$489.569.000

& The Outcomes?

<i>Number of Unduplicated Participants THIS MONTH</i>	129,708
<i>Gross Number of Participants Being Sanctioned THIS MONTH</i>	49,505
<i>Number of Participants Sanctioned THIS MONTH</i>	28,020
<i>Percentage of Gross Participants Sanctioned THIS MONTH</i>	22%
<i>Dollar Loss to CalWORKs Families Due to Sanctions this Month Estimates at \$125 Per Sanction THIS MONTH</i>	\$6,188,125
<i>Number of Unduplicated Participants Who Entered Employment That Resulted In Termination of CalWORKs THIS MONTH</i>	4,921
<i>Percentage of Unduplicated Participants Who Entered Employment That Resulted In Termination of CalWORKs THIS MONTH</i>	4%
<i>Number of Participants NOT Being Paid Transportation by the County THIS MONTH</i>	55,944
<i>Taxpayer Cost Per Unduplicated Participants Who Entered Employment That Resulted In Termination of CalWORKs THIS MONTH</i>	\$23,172
<i>Percentage of Number of Participants NOT Being Paid Transportation by the County THIS MONTH</i>	43%
<i>Estimated Dollar Amount Poor Families Defrauded by Counties Not Receiving Transportation @ \$100 per participant THIS MONTH</i>	\$5,594,400