

# CCWRO Welfare News

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February 28, 2012  
Issue # 2012-04

## In Brief

◆ Jessica Bartholow of Western Center on Law and Poverty, a long time anti-hunger fighter, has been rewarded for her work fighting poverty in the U.S. by being presented with the Wheeler/Wellstone Anti-Hunger Advocacy Leadership Award at the Food Research and Action Center's National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference in Washington, DC. See picture of Jessica Bartholow and Jim Weill, Director of FRAC

## State Issues

◆ On November 11, 2011, DSS issued a finding that Sacramento County has an Income and Eligibility Verification System (IEVS) report backlog of about 27,466 cases and 33,466 unprocessed Integrated Fraud Detection (IFD) abstracts. As of March 31, 2011, the county had 13,466 open aid cases. Sacramento County was reminded by DSS that the county has 45-days to process the IEVS reports and 20% of the cases can be delayed beyond 45 days if the county is waiting for third party verification. MPP §20-006.424. The County was instructed to prepare a corrective action plan and submit it to DSS.

◆ In a August 2011 report, the Civil Rights Division of DSS informed Sacramento County that it failed to display the Pub 13, which informs applicants of social services of their rights and responsibilities in all 18 required languages.

◆ In 2011, the Civil Rights Bureau of DSS reviewed Alameda County and issued a report noting multiple civil rights violations. The County failed to make the Pub 13 available to applicants. The County uses client provided interpreters for limited English Persons instead of providing interpreters for social services applicants and Alameda County fails to document this fact in the case files. Case files do not contain mandated documentation when non-county third parties provide the interpretation. Case files often do not include documentation of completed Language Preference Survey form which identifies the applicant/recipient's ethnic origin and primary language preference.



◆ Santa Clara County asked DSS where in the regulations does it say that referral to early fraud prevention and detection program shall not delay the receipt of aid, including the issuance of immediate need as provided in California Welfare and Institutions Code Section 11055.5(d)(3) [Welfare and Institutions Code Section 11055.5(d)(3) provides "The referral and investigation shall not delay the receipt of aid, including immediate need payments, for eligible applicants and recipients."] DSS response was that "MPP 20-006 deals with the issue of time frames. It's not as clear-cut as the W&I Code, but it supports the same principle." 11055.5(d)(3) MPP 20-006 states "If the IEVS information is received during the application period, the CWD shall use it, to the extent possible, in making the eligibility determination. However, the eligibility determination shall not be delayed pending receipt of IEVS information if other information establishes the individual's eligibility." There is a major difference between the statute, which clearly states that the issuance of benefits should not be delayed because the case has been

referred for investigation and the regulation. The regulation only allows the issuance of aid if "other information established the individual's eligibility". On December 19, 2011, DSS informed Merced County that they have a backlog of 5,772 unprocessed IEVS abstract reports. This means overpayments pile up while the county is fully aware of the overpayment and does nothing to stop it. Trinity County was also cited for the same problem.

◆ DSS convened a workgroup to implement "telephonic signatures" after San Diego County already started doing it.

◆ Fresno County asked DSS if it's possible to make translation of forms a higher priority. Fresno County would like forms to be translated before an ACL/ACIN is released with forms. Advocates have made similar requests to DSS, but DSS is yet to issue ACL/ACINs with translated forms and notices of actions.

## The Nation

◆ The Obama Food Stamp Budget Proposal for Fiscal Year 2012 proposes \$47,145 million for FY 2012. The budget projects that the costs of food stamps will decline as the economy improves. FY 2013 - \$46,908 million; FY 2014- \$44,534 million; FY 2015 - \$ 42,888 million.

## Gallup Poll Report on Food Stamps

Hart Research Associates Released a poll results entitled "Public Opinion on Food Stamps and Hunger in America. The results of the poll are:

- More than four in five voters believe hunger is a serious problem in the United States of America.
- 72% of the voters believe that SNAP is very or fairly important for the country, and 53% say that the food stamp program is "very important". The support for the program cuts across the political spectrum, 86 % of Democrats; 73% of Independents and 53% Republicans see it as important to the country.
- More than three (3) in four (4) voters say reducing SNAP funding is the wrong way to reduce government spending.
- Voters are less like to vote for a candidate who favors cutting funds for the SNAP, and more likely to vote for a candidate who makes it a top priority to reduce hunger in the United States.