

CCWRO Welfare News

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

<http://www.ccwro.org>

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Continuing education for welfare workers

Who are the people on the line working as welfare workers, more commonly known as eligibility workers (EWs)? Generally they are high school graduates. Once hired, they go through a rigorous training program, given a caseload and then they are functioning EWs. They issue benefits to a lot of people and do a heroic job under difficult working conditions. They also make mistakes. Such mistakes can mean families end up homeless, families break up due to poverty or working welfare moms lose their jobs. EWs do not get continuing education and are not regularly certified like other professions.

Alternative to regular continuing education for welfare workers – Program the computer to require employees to complete a “quiz of the day” before they are allowed to log on their computer.

This is not the fault of the EW in any way, shape or form. It is the fault of the welfare system that promotes negative incentives in any situation to obtain cooperation from the people they allegedly serve. The welfare system has no positive incentives to obtain cooperation unlike most other regular business practices in our society.

If the client does not do “x” their aid is stopped immediately. If a welfare mom does not go to job club when there are 14 people looking for three (3) available spots or because they did not have child care or transportation, boom – their share of the grant is stopped. The welfare system never verifies that supportive services are actually available to the individual before demanding their appearance at job club. If they have a baby while on aid, no aid for the baby – you should have had an abortion. And the list goes on and on.

Thus, after several years, even good EWs make mistakes that cause devastation to families. Maybe they forgot what they were taught or did not read the memo informing them of a new policy. Private enterprise has faced the same phenomenon - a

lot of work and no time for retraining or taking refresher courses. They have found a way to offer continuing education to their employees.

Like EWs, corporate employees must log on to their computers daily. They turn on the computer, enter their pass code and start working.

But, what if after entering the password each worker would have a simple quiz to answer before they were allowed to enter the system?

For example: Does a food stamp applicant, eligible for expedited service, have to ask for expedited service before the EW has to issue food stamp benefits? Yes__ No__.

Each day there could be a different quiz targeted to Medi-Cal workers, WtW workers or social workers.

It would take less than a minute to complete the “quiz of the day.” If the EW does not answer correctly, the answer would pop up so the EW could start work. If the worker is continuously failing to answer correctly, management should have the person enter a retraining program to upgrade his or her skills. Some may get fired. But that is better than poor people and families ending up homeless, broken and suffering extreme devastation.

Statistic of the Month

How much would welfare recipients contribute to the State General Fund under the Governor’s proposed 2012-2013 State Budget?

2011-2012 \$1.2 billion

2012-2013 \$2.7 billion

114% INCREASE over 1 year.