

CCWRO Welfare News

Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations, Inc.
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In Brief...

- Ms. 1B45N26 is a WtW participant and attends college. She has a signed contract to attend school. The Sacramento County worker for Ms. 1B45N26 said that Sacramento County does not pay for ancillary services or transportation. It takes Ms. 1B45N26 more than an hour each way by public transportation from her house to her activity at the college. The worker told her that she should use her PELL grant to cover the transportation. A court order in the Yslas v. Anderson issued on December 20, 1990 said that the county cannot do this. But then why would the county worker care about what a court said? See MPP §50-024.1.

- The [California Welfare Fraud Investigators Association](#) are having their annual three-day conference in San Diego from October 8 through 10, 2013 using taxpayer money. Registration for nonmembers is \$400 and for members it is \$325. The cost of staying at the hotel is \$129 a night. All paid with money that comes from the various welfare programs operated by the State of California funded primarily by federal and state funds.

- At a November 2012 meeting of Bay Area police chiefs, DSS received a complaint from the police chiefs that they do not get information from the DSS Fraud Bureau. DSS representative stated that they provide this information to California Welfare Fraud Investigators Association who apparently do not share that information with the police chiefs. The police chiefs also complained that county welfare directors do not share information with the police chiefs. DSS was asked to put the police chiefs in the loop.

- DSS is working on a Policy Interpretation identifying mandatory for Intake and RE appointments – this information is needed to program the computers for implementation of Semi-Annual reporting 10-1-13. This information will need to be flushed out prior to implementation of semi-annual reporting – (SAR) as the annual redetermination will take the place of the 2nd SAR 7 each year.

DSS & COUNTIES CONTRIBUTE TO FOOD INSECURITY IN CALIFORNIA

DSS has cited Shasta County for their refusal to screen applicant Review Number 502079 for food stamp expedited service on an application filed 1-12-12 at 11:30 am. The applicant completed questions 14 through 18 on the SAWS 1. This applicant needed emergency assistance and was scheduled for a telephone interview on 2-7-12, about 22 days behind the 3-day requirement for persons eligible for expedited services.

None of the computer systems schedule food stamp expedited service (FS-ES) appointments. If the applicant answers “yes” to questions 14-18 on the SAWS1, then the computer should schedule an appointment for FS-ES. But then that would mean that applicants suffering from food insecurity would actually be helped. DSS and the three computer consortia refuse to program the computers to assure that California’s poor do not suffer from “food insecurity” as revealed in Shasta County and most other counties in the State of California.

Question for Consortia	LEADER	CalWIN	C-IV
What automation is currently programmed into the system generating timely interview appointment letter for Expedited Service time-frame (3-day) if any?	There is no automation in place for generating an appointment for an Expedited Service interview	Appointment scheduling is a county specific business practice which is not 100% automated in CalWIN.	No automation in C-IV to generate this automatically due to the nature of the short term time-frame.

It is the position of DSS that “foods insecurity” is not a big enough concern to necessitate automation. Neither county staff or DSS staff are suffering from food insecurity.

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When advocates suggested that computers be programmed to assure that households suffering from food insecurity would be assisted timely, Linda Patterson, who is in charge of the California Food Stamp program, stated that "automated scheduling of expedited service appointments could do more harm than good by removing the ability of counties to accommodate applicants who can't make an appointment in three days." According to Jodie Berger of [LSNC](#) "first of all counties generally DO NOT make accommodations-it's their way or the highway. Secondly, many ES applications are denied because the hungry household could not attend the 7 am or 7:45 am appointment due to lack of transportation."

Ms. Berger points out that this alleged concern by Ms. Patterson will be remedied once DSS receives a waiver to postpone the FS-ES interview.

According to the latest [DSS 296X](#) report from DSS, during the months of July 1, 2012 through September 30, 2012, there were 394,825 applications which were identified as potentially eligible for expedited service because they had less than \$100 in resources and less than \$150 in income. Of those households, counties denied 62% of their request for FS-ES.

Whopping 236,637 FS-ES applications were "found not entitled to expedited service" according to the county reports. Why these households with less than \$100 in resources and income less than \$150 were denied at such a high rate is unknown. DSS has made no effort to identify the reasons for such a high rate of denial of food assistance to households suffering food insecurity.

EQUAL JUSTICE? NOT FOR REGULAR FOLKS

Ms. Cooper has been on welfare for a couple of years. She is now working and no longer needs welfare. She also has \$2,000 overpayment because of unreported income. She talked to the county welfare fraud people and admitted that she did not report the income. She also agreed to pay it all back. That was about a year ago or so. The County recouped \$500 from her welfare benefits. She has now repaid every penny back from her new job and now owes nothing to the welfare department. Self-sufficiency has been achieved. Welfare-to-work became a reality. Recently, she was served with a welfare fraud felony complaint. She was informed that she has to

turn herself in and she was released the next day on her own recognizance.

She met with her public defender. She was advised to plead guilty to a felony and would get probation rather than doing jail time. She takes the guilty plea and is sentenced to three years of probation and 100 hours of community service.

When her employer found out that she was a convicted felon, she was laid off. Now she is back on welfare thanks to the "work-to-welfare" program operated by the county welfare fraud folks. Ms. Cooper is now a felon and cannot find a job because every time she applies for a job and puts down that she has a felony conviction, she does not even get an interview.

So what would have happened to Ms. Cooper if she were an American corporation? The [American Bar Association Criminal Justice Section Newsletter Volume 21, Issue 2](#) has some practice tips.

"The [Department of Justice's Principles of Prosecution of Business Organizations](#) set out clearly the factors that are considered by DOJ.

...There are usually three main preconditions before the DOJ will be willing to enter into a ... non-prosecution agreement (NPA), without the imposition of a monitor:

1. There needs to be evidence that all of the facts are known before the DOJ will access the extent of the wrong-doing;
2. The company needs to show that remedial action is not only planned, but that steps have already been taken to avoid similar case in the future;
3. The company need to be, and be perceived to be, fully cooperative, i.e. to disclose all relevant facts through internal investigations."

If Ms. Cooper could have only been a multinational corporation, she would not have been prosecuted and would still be working. Instead, she is living on a fixed income of what welfare families in California received in 1987 and is still looking for a job with a felony conviction, compliments of the California's Work-to-Welfare Program.