

# CCWRO Welfare News

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July 9, 2013  
Issue #2013-10

## In Brief

● Effective January 1, 2013 SB 1041 imposed a punitive 24-month time limit on CalWORKs recipients. To offset this harshness, SB 1041 was supposed to result in more CalWORKs recipients participating in education through the self-initiated program (SIP) as the welfare-to-work plan for the first 24 months of implementation. However, to date, SB 1041 has had the opposite effect. In October 2012, 8.76% of the WtW unduplicated participants were in a SIP component. In May 2013, 8.10% of the WtW unduplicated participants were in a SIP component. This is a significant .66% decrease over 8 months.

● Based on previous expenditure reports to CDSS, CCWRO estimates that for fiscal year 2012-2013 counties will not spend \$87 million of the \$533 million allocated for CalFresh administration. This is 16% of the total CalFresh administration allocation while barriers to receiving CalFresh benefits remain.

● CCWRO estimates that of the total CalWORKs \$1.2 billion allocated to the counties, a significant amount of \$216 million will not be spent. This means 17% of the “county single allocation” is returned to the general fund while over 45% of the WtW participants are being denied their transportation supportive services. A “single county allocation” is the block grant that is handed over to the county to spend the way they see fit for all practical purposes.

● The 2013-2014 budget signed by Jerry Brown took over \$2 billion from the mouths of CalWORKs kids and gave it to the general fund. This was about \$800 million more from last year.

● CDSS estimates that the cost of using EQUIFAX to discover CalWORKs and Food Stamp overpayments would cost millions. There is a discussion about how to pay for it. EQUIFAX maintains information of new earned income in addition to credit reports. At the 5-9-13 CWDA meeting there was a proposal to take the money from “employment services” allocation to pay for an “eligibility” function.

***The 2013-2014 budget, signed by Jerry Brown took over \$2 billion from the mouths of CalWORKs kids and gave it to the general fund. This was about \$800 million more that what was taken from the same kids last year.***

This is rather strange because overpayments are not an employment function. Moreover why use employment money to pay for spotting food stamp overpayments?

● eNotifications will be implemented through the “County Letter Process”.  
<http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/lettersnotices/PG980.htm>

This letter is in sign-off process and waiting for DHCS to send language to CDSS that may have some changes to comply with the Medi-Cal program requirements.

● Policy Interpretations (PIs)- During a May 2, 2013 CWDA CalFresh Committee meeting, CDSS stated that it is in the process of categorizing the answered CalFresh PIs and

placing them in a shared file. The file will be made available soon according to Linda Patterson of CDSS.

● New CWDA Staff – Assmaa Elayyat is currently on assignment to the CWDA Office as a Medi-Cal Program Specialist. Assmaa is on loan from Riverside County. Riverside County Director, Susan Loew, was thanked for allowing Assmaa to be reassigned.

● New CDSS Staff – Will Lightbourne announced that Adam Dondro has been hired as Assistant Director for Horizontal Integration (HI). Horizontal Integration is designed to prevent multiple applications for aid by the same applicant. If an applicant initially applies for, or renews for a means tested program and also consents to have his or her application information used to simultaneously initiate an application for other means tested programs, the application will be considered for the other means tested programs. Dondro was originally from Senate Budget and is familiar with the issues including integration issues. Welcome to CDSS Adam.

**Los Angeles CalFresh Program  
Has Many Barriers to  
Participation. See Page 2.**

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## Los Angeles CalFresh Program Has Many Barriers to Participation

Los Angeles County leads the state in “churning” in CalFresh. Churning occurs when an eligible household is terminated from CalFresh due to a procedural requirement, such as failure to submit quarterly reports, application processing or renewals, and then reapplies the next month and receives CalFresh for they were eligible for CalFresh all the time. Los Angeles County forces many eligible people for CalFresh to go hungry or rely on a food bank while not receiving the benefits they are entitled due to solely procedural barriers. When DPSS asked community partners why they are not using the Los Angeles County on-line application web page for CalFresh applications, the community partners informed DPSS that the in-person applications are processed faster and they cannot recommend on line applications to the community they serve.

Other barriers for hungry people seeking CalFresh benefits include:

1. LA requires each CalFresh application be reviewed by a supervisor before benefits are issued. It is common for hungry applicants to call their worker to find out when their benefits will be issued, only to be told, “My supervisor must authorize it before it can be issued. We have 30 days to approve you case.” LA’s intake workers work on 50 to 100 cases a month depending on the volume of applications. Each supervisor has about 7 workers. This means that the supervisor has 20 working days in a month to review and authorize at least 400 cases. When you divide 400 by 20 days it means the supervisor must review 20 cases a day and will have no time to answer any questions, provide supervisory direction to any worker or attend meetings.
2. Applicants are given a telephone interview date and time, but may never receive a call from the welfare department resulting in applications being denied for failure to complete the application process.
3. When a telephone interview does occur, the application is often denied for failure to do an interview done by phone.
4. Folks who did complete their in-person interviews often received erroneous notices of action stating that they failed to do the interview.
5. When a CalWORKs applicant is denied, CalFresh is also denied even when he/she is eligible for CalFresh. It appears that LEADER is not programmed to insure that the person is actually ineligible for CalFresh before denying CalFresh benefits.
6. Applications are denied for failure to provide verification of identity when the county can “J” verify the identity. “J” verify is a process where the applicant or recipient’s identity can be verified through the MEDS computer system.

7. Applications are being denied for failure to submit verification that has been submitted.

8. CalFresh applicants eligible for expedited services often do not receive it. CDSS 296X report for the quarter October-December 2012 shows the following statistics for LA.

65% of the CalFresh expedited services applications are denied. Many are erroneously denied for not doing the interview that was in fact, completed. See Table # 1.

It is estimated that Los Angeles County will not spend \$18 million of the \$149 million allocated for CalFresh administration. This \$18 million could pay for many more CalFresh workers to address the immense workload issues.

There is no reason for poor folks in Los Angeles County to face barriers to CalFresh benefits when the county refuses to spend all of its administrative funds to address these problems. Los Angeles County needs a good overhaul of its CalFresh system to remove these inhumane barriers and STOP HUNGER IN LOS ANGELES NOW.

**Los Angeles County Expedited Services for the last quarter of 2012**

Number of Applications Considered for Expedited Food Stamps	<b>83,280</b>
Number of Applicants Receiving Expedited Service Food Stamps	<b>29,314</b>
Number of Applicants found Ineligible for Expedited Service Food Stamps	<b>53,966</b>
Percentage of Applicants Denied Expedited Food Stamps	<b>65%</b>

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