

CCWRO Welfare News

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WtW 17 form - **Designed to Make Sure No one is Screened for Learning Disability**

Learning Disability Screening – Learning disabilities are a major reason for sanctions in the CalWORKs program. The “propaganda” is that the Welfare-to-Work program is designed to assist participants to remove barriers to self-sufficiency. In order to remove that barrier CDSS, in concert with counties, concocted the WtW 17, Waiver of CalWORKs Learning Disabilities Screening and/or Evaluation. The WtW 17 informs the participant that unless a learning disability is identified, the participant will receive no special treatment and the participant will be subject to sanctions.

If the participant signs the WtW 17 and marks the Learning Disabilities Screening box and/or Learning Disabilities Evaluation box the participant waives the right to have an assessment. If the participant “refuses” to sign the WtW 17 form, the participant is deemed to waive the right to an assessment.

The question becomes how DOES the participant get a learning disabilities screening and assessment. In many counties, they don't. Generally when a participant attends WtW orientation he/she is told to cooperate with the worker or face a sanction. Later, when the worker gives the participant the WtW 17, the participant reads the form and wonders what is the difference between signing or not signing the WtW 17, since both results in a waiver of the learning disabilities screening and evaluation. The participant then signs the WtW 17, the worker enters the note that the participant understood the waiver and that he or she understand that the participant can change his/her mind anytime, but our experience tells us that this is rarely done. When the participant makes an oral request for a learning disabilities screening and assessment, there is no paper trail that the request was ever made.

Most CalWORKs recipients sign the WtW 17 and no learning disability evaluation is performed. This helps the county achieve the primary mission of the WtW program – sanctioning families for failure to participate due to a learning disability.

In January 2014, there were 117,845 participants in a WtW activity. In that same month, 57,606 families were being sanctioned for allegedly failing to participate – many with learning disabilities. In that same month, counties imposed new sanctions against another 13,285 families, many with learning disabilities.

Sanctioned families lose the CalWORKs benefits attributed to the parent. That means a family of two receiving \$490 in CalWORKs benefits would receive \$300 a month. This is clearly “felony economic child abuse” by CDSS and counties that is celebrated in California. No wonder California has the highest child poverty rate in the US and DSS has no plans to take remedial action to stop the misery endured by poor children of California. These sanctions also result in children becoming homeless. See TABLE #1.

Table # 1

What is the impact of sanctions on families?
Sanctions Family of one parent and one child

CalWORKs Payment Amount	Percentage of the federal poverty level	Percentage of the supplemental poverty level
\$515 without sanction	40%	30%
\$315 with sanction	24%	19%

Where are the DFA 296Xs ?

It has been over a year and DSS continues to be out of compliance with Welfare and Institutions Code Section 19813 that mandates quarterly reports ([DFA 296X](#)) on expedited services processing. This report provides basic aggregate data on the number of CalFresh expedited service (ES) requests received and disposed on during the quarter. The last report that DSS posted is for the October-December 2012 quarter that was revised on August 13, 2013. Apparently, all of the later quarter-

ly reports have been delayed due to data discrepancies. DSS is still trying to resolve the “data discrepancies” and will then issue the DFA 296Xs. The submission of the July-September 2013 and the October-December 2013 reports were due January 20, 2014. Our most recent information from CDSS is “no promises for the next 30 days”.

Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) Secret Documents

The national office and each FNS regional office have adopted a 2014 Priority Plan. Public funds paid for all of these plans. Yet the plans are not available to the public. They are “internal documents” hidden from the public and taxpayers.

FNS also has a procedure called “SWIM” to handle state policy requests. Swim is the method used by states to contact the regional office and the regional office forwards the request to the national office for policy decisions. These decisions directly impact the food security of millions of impoverished children but are not available to the public. SWIM communications are the private property of the FNS not to be shared with those pesky taxpayers and voters.

FNS Implements LIHEAP cuts – Keeping in mind that FNS has yet to fully implement the 2003 and 2008 Farm Bills, FNS has issued a non-public directive to states instructing them to immediately implement the LIHEAP cuts. Contrary to the mandates of the federal law that mandates the Secretary to make certain determinations, FNS has issued no guidance on implementing the cuts. It should be illegal for FNS to issue directives implementing provisions of the 2014 Farm Bill when they have not even finished implementing the 2003 and 2008 Farm Bills.

ACA Application Not Considered a CalFresh Application

The Covered California application includes a place for persons applying for benefits under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to also connect with food stamps. The current application asks the ACA applicant if he/she wants to be referred for CalFresh. Answering “yes” to this question only means that the county will eventually contact the individual concerning the submission of a CalFresh application. The State, with great deliberation, decided that the date that the ACA application was signed is irrelevant for purposes of establishing the CalFresh applica-

tion date. This leaves millions of federal dollars on the table that could have been transferred to California's economy if the ACA application was also considered an application for CalFresh. But then why do that? That would create jobs in California. The bureaucrats obviously oppose more California jobs and more money for Californians.

The Leader Replacement System (LRS) Intentionally Built For Inefficiency

California has been spending hundreds of millions of dollars to replace Leader, the Los Angeles County computer system. The new system is Leader Replacement System (LRS). The LRS consortia will include Los Angeles County and the 38 C-IV counties.

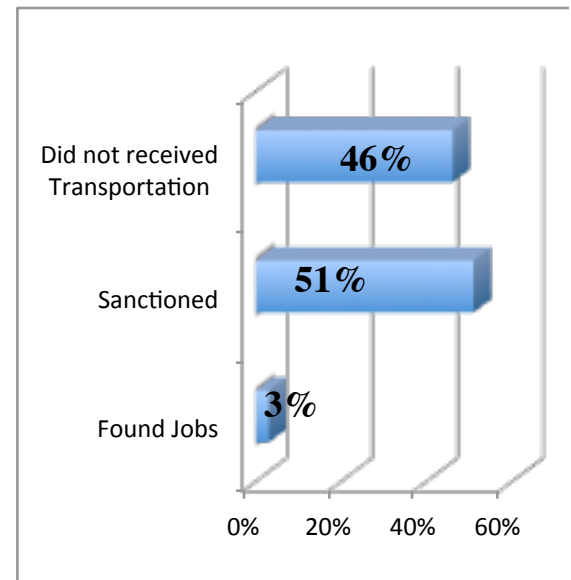
Computers can be designed to enhance efficiency and reduce worker errors. However, the people building this system do not believe in efficiency. The new system will allow any county to turn off an automatic eligibility determination so as to allow the worker to make the eligibility determination which will lead to more worker errors. For example, if a person states that they have a social security number 111-22-3333 the computer can verify that automatically. But if a county has a business practice of requiring the applicant to show their SSN card or go to the Social Security office and apply for a new card, the worker will have to input that information. This creates more hoops for the applicant to jump through, more work for both the county worker and the social security office, but it does adhere to the counties wasteful & inefficient business practice.

LRS should be built to maximize the efficiency features and not to allow counties to turn off LRS functions that can result in errors and inefficiency. Any county disabling an automatic function of the LRS system should be required to go through a public hearing process at the local level to justify its decision and receive written permission from the state entity that is responsible for the statewide administration of the California TANF and SNAP program.

Someday maybe FNS and ACF will wake up from their deep sleep and stop this fleecing of taxpayer dollars by county welfare departments and realize that county practices contribute to the lowest CalFresh participation in the nation and the highest child poverty rate in the nation.

January 2014 California Welfare-to-Work Program Outcomes Report How Much Do We Spend and What Do We Get?

Number of Unduplicated Participants During September, 2012	120,078
Gross Number of Unduplicated Participants Being Sanctioned	48,227
Number of Participants Sanctioned During September, 2012	12,567
Percentage of Gross Unduplicated Participants being Sanctioned During the Month of January 2014	51%
Dollar Loss to CalWORKs Families Due to Sanctions this Month Estimates at \$125 Per Sanction for During the Month of January 2014	\$7.6 million
Number of Unduplicated Participants Who Entered Employment That Resulted In Termination of CalWORKs During the Month of January 2014	3,249
Percentage of Unduplicated Participants Who Entered Employment That Resulted In Termination of CalWORKs During the Month of January 2014	3%
Taxpayer Cost Per Unduplicated Participants Who Entered Employment That Resulted In Termination of CalWORKs During the Month of January 2014	\$455,242.97
Number of Participants NOT Being Paid Transportation by the County During the Month of January 2014	64,582
Percentage of Number of Participants NOT Being Paid Transportation by the County During the Month of January 2014	46%
Estimated Dollar Amount Poor Families Defrauded by Counties Not Receiving Transportation @ \$100 Per Participant During the Month of January 2014	\$6.5 million



2013-2014 Welfare-to-Work Services Appropriation
\$1,479,084,400 million

Source: State Department of
 Social Services [WtW 25 reports](#).