

# CCWRO Welfare News

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June 14, 2014  
Issue #2014-06

<http://www.ccwro.org>

## In Brief

■ On April 29, 2014, the Georgia Republican Legislature passed HR 772 requiring drug testing as a condition of getting food stamps. On June 3, 2014 the USDA, FNS office informed Georgia that they will be violating federal law if Georgia implements this inhumane bill..

In most developed countries no food stamp programs or nutrition programs exist because these countries provide income support that is often above 50% of median household income. That means the family can buy their own food rather than relying on food coupons and other 20<sup>th</sup> Century means of supporting the poor.

■ Counties track the 12-month Vocational Educational activities in SAWS through the Consortia.

CalWIN Counties	C-IV Counties	LEADER
Vocational Education information is tracked monthly and can be found in the "Management Reporting" feature.	Vocational Education hours are tracked each month. The system tracks the amount of months used for the WPR, and shows months used and months remaining.	Leader uses GEARS to capture WtW activities that includes vocational education. GEARS captures the activity start and end dates to track the 12-month allowable limit.

■ C-IV counties have noticed that the IEVS information in MEDS and in C-IV are not the same. C-IV suggested that counties maintain a remedy ticket log, but it is not clear how counties reconcile the inconsistencies.

■ On-Line CalWORKs Appraisal Tool (OCAT) is being tested in Fresno, San Bernardino, Los Angeles, Sonoma and Tulare Counties. The testing generated 110 pages of changes that were implemented by the so-called OCAT Control Board. Counties are now revising this tool in secret without involving the customer/consumer community.

■ San Bernardino County's WtW Sanction program has a new plan to enhance WtW sanctions – schedule students for a monthly interview and when they do not show up because the interview conflicts with the school schedule, impose a sanction. WtW program mission accomplished. Is it possible that San Bernardino County workers are way underworked? Why require monthly meetings with students working hard to overcome poverty? Grades are issued at the end of each semester and not every month. Oh yeah--forgot, this means more sanctions – the primary purpose of the San Bernardino County WtW program.

## CHILD CARE UPDATE

DSS reviewed county claims for child care and found notable variances when counties move cases from Stage 1 to Stage 2. In part, the variances occur because counties define "stable" differently, which is a prerequisite of transferring a child care case from Stage 1 with administration in house) to Stage 2 with administration contracted out.

DSS plans to form a workgroup that will include DSS' fiscal and program divisions, CWDA and various counties. Missing from this workgroup are representatives of the consumer/customers of the child care program. This workgroup will examine the methods that counties use to track any work done during the month, how counties get Alternative Payment Programs (APP) in order to provide accurate data and will clarify such difficult concepts as the federal definition of "assistance" and "nonassistance", "employment", "safety net policy was not available in the Stage 1 regulations" and "CalLearn".

## Los Angeles County DPSS – The CalFresh Recertification Churning Machine

DSS reported that during the fourth quarter of 2013, Los Angeles County completed 98% of the recertifications so that CalFresh benefits continued. Statewide, 78% of the CalFresh recertifications were completed. We strongly believe these percentages are fabricated and have nothing to do with the real world. CCWRO estimates that there is a 50% chance that a LADPSS CalFresh recipient going through the recertification process will be terminated for not completing the recertification process.

•**Disabled Woman Endures Hunger – Compliments Of Los Angeles DPSS** – Ms. B1H9X34 has chronic liver sclerosis and is on a donor transplant list waiting for a liver. Her liver damage was caused by a prescription drug prescribed by a doctor in the United States. She is also hungry in Los Angeles County because, for the fourth time, she has been a victim of churning.

Ms. B1H9X34 received her packet from Los Angeles County in April. The due date for the package was May 5th. She completed the packet, went to the post office, paid for the postage, and mailed it to DPSS on or about April 25th. (While other counties send prepaid envelopes to CalFresh recipients Los Angeles County makes it difficult and expensive for CalFresh recipients.) DPSS never

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scheduled an interview. During the first week of May, she called the DPSS Exposition Park office and was told that the county did not receive her packet. DPSS was nice enough to send her another packet, which she completed and had a friend drop it off at Exposition Park Office on May 15th because she was too sick to deliver the package.

Ms. B1H9X34 then received a notice of action dated May 1, 2014 stating that effective May 31, 2014 she will no longer get CalFresh. In June she is foodless – compliments of the wonderful Los Angeles Food Stamp Program designed to try every trick in the book to deter the hungry from getting food stamps.

**• A working mom endures hunger-compliments of Los Angeles DPSS.** Ms. 2014122067 has been forced to reapply for CalFresh for several years. Each time, she mails in the information, sometimes the worker never gets it. When the worker does receive it, there are other tricks, such as VERIFICATION, to insure that the household is not recertified. In Ms. 2014122067's case the Deputy Director of the South Central office insisted that Ms. 2014122067 failed to verify income. When Ms. 2014122067 asked what income was not verified, the Deputy Director refused to specify the income, but did admit that Ms. 2014122067 did report and verified income. However, since the income is less than her rent, Ms. 2014122067 must have additional unreported income. How sick. Yes, there are people in America whose income is less than their rent, this is not an anomaly. DPSS also demanded a copy of her and her son's social security card, birth certificate for her son, her birth certificate and her daughter's school report card for CalFresh. When her benefits did not show up, she went to the South Central Office to find out what happened to her CalFresh. She was informed that the county closed her case since DPSS did not receive the packet. The county did not offer her an application so that she could complete it and be interviewed the same day while they have her in the office. No, that would be "customer service" and that is not the mission of Los Angeles DPSS. *Epilogue - Today Ms. 2014122067 finally received her food stamps*

**• DPSS Pilots On-Line Recertification** – DPSS is piloting an on-line recertification process where recipients complete the recertification documents. The on-line process requests unnecessary verification. When the on-line process does work, DPSS uses the interview process to close cases. Upon the completion of the interview, the worker fails to let the computer know that the interview was completed. The computer then issues a notice of action stating that the recipient did not complete the interview, which means no benefits, which means hunger.

If DPSS really wants to stop this rampant churning, why not just add a "chat" function to the On-line Recertification so before the application recertification forms and verification are submitted, the recipient can be interviewed on-line by a worker to make sure that the recipient does not have to take time off work to do this often meaningless interview.

The next column contains data from the fourth quarter of 2013 showing the percentage of food stamp recertifications that failed.

### Percentage of CalFresh Recertifications Completed During the Last Quarter of 2013

County	Percentage	County	Percentage
California	22%	Siskiyou	36%
Mono	59%	Lake	36%
El Dorado	51%	Del Norte	35%
Plumas	46%	Stanislaus	35%
Inyo	46%	Monterey	35%
Nevada	45%	Kern	35%
Colusa	45%	San Bernardino	33%
Humboldt	45%	Merced	31%
Amador	44%	Madera	31%
Tuolumne	43%	San Joaquin	30%
Lassen	42%	Imperial	29%
Butte	42%	San Francisco	25%
Calaveras	42%	Solano	23%
Yuba	42%	Sonoma	22%
Napa	42%	San Diego	22%
Sierra	41%	Alameda	22%
Glenn	41%	Ventura	21%
Mariposa	40%	Santa Cruz	21%
Trinity	40%	Placer	21%
San Benito	40%	San Mateo	20%
Tehama	40%	Contra Costa	19%
Shasta	40%	San Luis Obispo	19%
Modoc	40%	Yolo	17%
Sutter	40%	Santa Barbara	17%
Mendocino	40%	Santa Clara	16%
Marin	39%	Orange	15%
Alpine	38%	Sacramento	15%
Kings	37%	Fresno	13%
Riverside	37%	Tulare	12%
		<b>Los Angeles</b>	<b>2%</b>

Source: CDSS WtW CalFresh Dashboard