



CCWRO Welfare News

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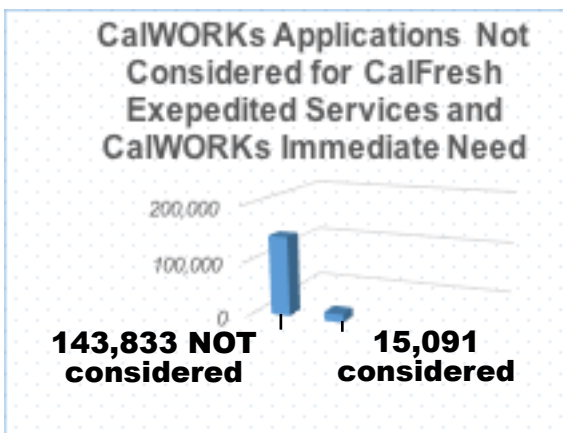
New York Asks How California Meets SNAP and TANF Emergency Assistance Requirements Using on-Line Application Tools. Answer: California Rarely Does

New York is developing an on-line application process and wants to know from California how they handle the requirements for emergency assistance for SNAP and TANF cash assistance. In California, that means CalWORKs and CalFresh.

What New York does not know is that California's laws and regulations governing emergency assistance for persons and families in dire need, are rarely obeyed. DSS has no meaningful monitoring process to insure compliance with the emergency assistance provisions of CalFresh Expedited Service and CalWORKs Immediate Need.

DSS used to get monthly reports about Immediate Need, but that was stopped in the nineties. We believe it was stopped to conceal the systematic refusal of counties to comply with the WRL v. Woods order and state regulations MPP §40-129.

The same is true for CalFresh. During the months of July, August and September of 2015 there were 15,091 CalWORKs applications that were considered for CalFresh expedited services-7,047 applications were denied expedited service CalFresh benefits.



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Los Angeles County Intentionally Delays Issuing CalWORKs Benefits to Needy Families

It is not uncommon for advocates to get a call regarding CalWORKs applicant benefits issuance delays in Los Angeles County after applicants have provided all county requested verification and information. When an advocate contacts the county the response is "we have 45 days to process an application." Los Angeles County workers make this excuse even when the applicant was issued Immediate Need. MPP § 40-129.9 mandates that the cases be issued full benefits within 15 working days.

MPP § 40-126.1 provides: "The determination of eligibility, including the gathering of any necessary evidence, shall be completed promptly."

Los Angeles County has decided that "promptly" means the full 45 days. There is no regulation that support this perplexing policy. So where did this policy come from?

First, in Los Angeles County, the intake worker does the interview, gathers all verification, determines if the case is eligible for aid, but cannot issue benefits unless the supervisor approves the issuance of benefits.

This is called "supervisory approval". There is no "supervisory approval" for denying the case, only for granting the case as far as we know. So where did this policy come from?

This policy comes from the when the AFDC program had quality control (QC) and Los Angeles County was dinged for an error rate of granting applications incorrectly. In response to being cited for the error rate, Los Angeles County developed a "corrective action plan" that all cases will be reviewed by the supervisor before benefits are issues at intake.

Now, there is no AFDC program and no QC for CalWORKs but the policy lives on. Cases that should be issued payments when eligibility has been cleared wait for days to weeks for the supervisor to get around to approving the case. Workers, when in doubt, deny the case to lighten the work of the supervisors.

Thus, there is an enormous amount of churning in Los Angeles County. This outdated policy from previous years should be ditched by DPSS immediately.

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Any person eligible for CalWORKs Immediate Need is also eligible for CalFresh Expedited Services in 99% of the cases.

During the July through September 2015 period, there were 143,883 CalWORKs applications. As stated above, only 15,091 CalWORKs applications were considered for CalFresh Expedited Service (CF-ES). CalWORKs applicants are categorically eligible for CalFresh, thus, they should all been considered for CalFresh expedited service. Some may argue that not everyone who applies for CalWORKs also applies for CalFresh. That is fair. But can anybody argue that only 10% of the CalWORKs applicants also applied for CalFresh?

During the same period only 15,091 cases out of the 143,883 applicants were considered for CalFresh Expedited Service. Given the fact that thousands and thousands of CalWORKs were not considered for CalFresh Expedited Services, it is reasonable to assume that they were not considered for CalWORKs Immediate Need also. CalWORKs families in deep poverty and distress should be provided with CF-ES and CalWORKs Immediate Need. TABLE # 1 reveals the number of applicants who were not considered for CalFresh Expedited and very likely not for CalWORKs Immediate Need in California's large counties.

So if New York really wants to know how California is complying with the Emergency Assistance requirements of California law – the answer is they are not, for the most part.

TABLE # 1 - CalWORKs Applicants Considered for CalFresh Expedited Services and Issued Expedited Service during July through September of 2015. If The county did not evaluate for emergency food stamps, then most likely they never evaluated for CalWORKs Immediate Need!

Column #4 reveals the estimated number of CalWORKs applicants evaluated for CalWORKs Immediate Need by the county.

Counties	CalWORKs Applications Considered for CalFresh Expedited Service	CalWORKs Applications Considered for CalFresh Expedited Service	PERCENTAGE CalWORKs Applications Considered for CalFresh Expedited Service	CalWORKs Applicants Received CalFresh Expedited Service	PERCENTAGE CalWORKs Applicants that DID NOT Receive CalFresh Expedited Service
Statewide	143,883	15,091	10%	8,044	47%
Orange	4766	1,240	26%	330	73%
Santa Clara	2584	83	3%	23	72%
Sacramento	7671	631	8%	262	58%
Monterey	1894	144	8%	66	54%
San Mateo	1129	67	6%	31	54%
Contra Costa	2763	151	5%	71	53%
San Joaquin	3876	421	11%	203	54%
San Diego	10,082	509	5%	248	51%
Fresno	5526	108	2%	53	51%
Tulare	3189	300	9%	152	49%
Stanislaus	3054	334	11%	177	47%
Ventura	2372	79	3%	42	47%
Kern	7125	765	11%	413	46%
San Bernardino	14494	1,404	10%	762	46%
Alameda	3393	389	11%	218	44%

SOURCE: 3rd quarter of 2015 Based on DFA 296X and CW 273 DSS Reports From California Welfare Departments