



# CCWRO Welfare News 2017-05 - 7-7-17

Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations, Inc. (CCWRO)  
1111 Howe Ave., Suite 150 • Sacramento, CA 95825-8551  
Telephone (916) 736-0616 • Cell (916) 712-0071 • Fax (916) 736-2645

## 2017-2018 CalWORKs Budget FACTS

**WINNER - Counties**  
**\$199 million**

- \$108.9 million for County Single Allocation
- \$47 million for County Housing Program
- \$43 million for County Housing and

**LOSERS -**  
**\$00.00**

CalWORKs Poor babies and children living at 31% of the federal poverty level

## SB 89- The Human Services Budget Trailer Bill

**CalWORKs Identity Verification** – SB 89, Section 15 and 16 require the Department of Social Services to submit a report to the Legislature by November 1, 2017 about how they will be implementing a nonbiometric identity verification method for the CalWORKs program.

The bill requires DSS to consult with stakeholders, including legislative staff, representatives of counties and county human services agencies, current or former CalWORKs clients, advocates for clients and others.

The bill ask the workgroup to consider how any new methods of identity verification would impact applicant or recipient experiences and make application and eligibility practices more efficient.

**OCAT Interface with SAWS**– SB 89, Section 20. The Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool (OCAT) is the new Welfare-to-Work (WtW) assessment tool. It is a several

## A CCWRO Point of View

### National Organizations Drop the Ball Regarding Means-Tested Program Block Granting

Block granting Medicaid is right around the corner. Next on the chopping block is food stamps. The conservatives argue that block grants will not hurt anyone – it will be great. Just look at the Clinton 1996 successful “welfare reform” bill. That was the first means-tested program to be block granted. Since the enactment of alleged Welfare Reform (TANF), Congress has not increased funding to the block grant. The common perception in the national press is that since the TANF block grant worked and it was a success.

National groups, including the Center for American Progress, Center on Budget Policy and Priorities, FRAC, Feeding America and others are not conveying the true failure of the so called “welfare reform” that continues to be a nightmare for the beneficiaries.

No one is saying on national TV that before October 22, 1996, 70% of the grants helped families and today only 30% of the money goes to the families. Poverty is up and families are suffering. There is no organized effort by the National multi-million dollar organizations to spend a few dollars to counteract the huge myth that welfare reform was a success. When will they wake up? How many more have to die?

Con't on page 2

## County Client Abuse Report

On June 28, 2017, Ms. 1B33725 received a notice of action stating that “We have looked at all of the information we have about your case. Based on this information, your eligibility for Medi-Cal will end on the last day of 03/2017. The back of the notice states: “If you ask for a hearing before an action on ... Medi-Cal ... takes place... your Medi-Cal will stay the same while you wait for a hearing”

How can somebody ask for a hearing before the end March of 2017 when they get the notice of action on or after 06/28/2017. Maybe Sacramento County knows how to go back in time. If so, it would help to let Ms. Ms. 1B33725 how to do that.

-Ms. BOXP522 applied for CalWORKs on May 2, 2017. She signed all of the necessary paperwork and assigned all of her rights to child support to the county as CalWORKs children do not get child support. Ms. Ms. BOXP522 fixed income is way below 50% of the federal poverty level, thus, her and her child are living in deep poverty. For the month of July 2017, Los Angeles County anticipated that Ms. Ms. BOXP522 would still receive child support while knowing that the child support payment would be kept from Ms. BOXP522.

### SB 89- The Human Services Budget Trailer Bill

- Con't from Page 1

hour process wherein WtW participants answer questions designed to identify potential participation barriers. Once OCAT spots the barrier, the county decides if they should address the barriers or ignore them and require participation in a WtW activity. Currently, the OCAT system does not interface with the county SAWS system. This section would require the interface.

**WtW Mental Health Services for CalWORKs Children SB 89, Section 21 through 29**– Under current law only WtW participants have access to WtW mental health service. These sections would make those services available to children.

**CalWORKs Educational Opportunity & Attainment Program – SB 89, Section 30** - The purpose of this statute is to provide CalWORKs recipients with positive incentives for achieving certain educational milestones. Section 11341 states that the county “may” issue incentives. Then Section 11342 states that the county shall issue the benefits. Finally, section 11345 makes it crystal clear that this is not an entitlement and that the counties do not have to do this unless there is funding available for this purpose. It would be interesting to see how this is implemented.

**CalWORKs Outcomes and Accountability Review (CalOAR) – SB 89, Section 38** of the COAR Act requires DSS to establish a workgroup comprised of representatives from county human services agencies, legislative staff, interested welfare advocacy, research organizations, current and former CalWORKs recipients, organizations that represent county human services agencies, county boards of supervisors, representatives of community colleges, tribal organizations, and the workforce investment system, and any other state entities that the department deems necessary.

What would CalOAR do? Counties received \$108.9 million in additional funds for 2017-2018 while the CalWORKs and WtW caseload is going down. CalOAR is supposed to be a process to show that the counties are spending the additional millions and millions of dollars that they have been showered with while CalWORKs families are living on a fixed income equal to 31% of the federal poverty.

The workgroup will consider the current performance indicators and suggest additional performance indicators. The workgroup is also tasked to consider giving counties additional incentives to do their job besides getting a \$108.9 million windfall. CalOAR would come up with standards, then ask the county to do a self-assessment of whether they are meeting these standards and if the county, by some miracle, decides they are not, they may opt to do a “CalWORKs system improvement plan” while they continue to get the millions of current and additional dollars.

**Immigrant Services – SB 89, Section 40** - Existing and proposed policy of the United States Department of Homeland Security, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA), provide that certain persons who do not have legal status in the United States and who meet specified guidelines may apply for deferred action on removal from the United States, as specified.

Today the Department of Social Services, subject to the availability of funding, is required to provide grants to qualified organizations, as specified, to be used to provide persons living in California with specified services, including services to assist with the application process for initial or renewal requests of deferred action under the DACA and DAPA policies, and to provide legal training and technical assistance to other qualified organizations. The qualified organizations are also required to provide free education and outreach information, services, and materials about DACA, DAPA, naturalization, or other immigration remedies.

This bill would expand the legal services for which grants are available to refer to “immigration remedies,” as specified, and would delete the specific references

to DAPA. The bill would instead authorize the department to provide grants to qualified organizations to provide legal training and technical assistance, as defined. The bill would make these services available to persons presently or formerly residing in California. This bill would authorize the State Department of Social Services to transfer funds appropriated for purposes of contracting with qualified nonprofit legal services organizations and providing grants to qualified organizations among any of the services provided in response to the results of requests for applications received or to changing state or federal law.

**County Single Allocation Revise – SB 89, Section 47** – The county single allocation (CSA), a block grant that counties often do not use, has been going down during the past two years as the CalFresh and CalWORKs caseloads started declining. Today, counties are actually using all of their CSA, but have fewer beneficiaries to serve. This opens the door for counties to keep staff with fewer clients. Depending on the county, some workers may be helping folks and some may be pursuing folks for alleged fraud and WtW sanctions to justify their monthly paychecks.

The CalWORKs case load has been going down from 2014-2015 by 16%. See Table 1.

**TABLE # 1**

Fiscal Year	CalWORKs Cases
2014-2015	535,532
2015-2016	463,540
2016-2017	459,173
2017-2018	451,022

The WtW funding allocates \$382.73 for each case. For 2016-2017 counties got paid \$382.73 for 183,134 cases, when in reality, only approximately 90,414 participated in a WtW activity. The county gets paid for sanctioned cases and for exempt cases.

These are cases that costs the county nothing but they still get \$382.73 per case. Now if a welfare recipient submitted a travel claim for an

expected 1200 miles, and it turns out that the participant only traveled 200 miles, the county would impose an overpayment, attach their federal and state EITC payments and attach any tax returns. Counties got paid for 183,134 cases, but only served 90,414 cases – does anybody dare ask the county for the money back? No.

Section 47 of SB 98 provides that DSS shall work with CWDA to develop recommendations to the modify county single allocation methodology and as part of the process for of developing these recommendation, legislative staff, advocates, and organizations that represent county workers shall be consulted. The recommendations for 2018-2019 shall be submitted to the Legislature by January 10, 2018. By October 1, 2018, the same people must submit recommendations for 2019-2020.

**Safe Drinking Water Supplemental Benefits – SB 89, Section 53** – Under this section, until July 1, 2020, would require the Department of Social Services to create the Safe Drinking Water Supplemental Benefit Pilot Program to provide time-limited additional CalFresh nutrition benefits to residents of prioritized disadvantaged communities that are served by public water systems that consistently fail to meet primary drinking water standards. It would require the benefits to be delivered through the EBT system’s flexible benefit issuance mechanism. The bill would make these provisions inoperative on July 1, 2020, and would repeal them as of January 1, 2021.

**Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDS) Improvements – SB 89, Section 54-56-** Section 54 provides that the DSS, and not the county, shall submit the ABAWDS waiver to the USDA/FNS. Some counties that are not eligible for a waiver have zip codes within the county that may be eligible for waiver. This would require that the county submit the waiver for a subarea within the county. Section 55 provides counties can allow ABAWDS recipients to self-initiate volunteer work of 20 hours

**TABLE # 2 - DSS Paying Counties for WtW Participants Not Receiving Any WtW Services -**

January Fiscal Year	Number of Participants Counties Were Paid for	Actual Number of Participants Served	Percentage of Participants that DSS is paying to counties who are <b>not</b> participating in any WtW activity
2014-2015	230,032	123,453	46%
2015-2016	195,209	111,961	43%
2016-2017	183,134	90,414	51%
2017-2018	180,495	88,442	51%

a week as long as the ABAWDS recipient provides verification of working 20 hours a week. Finally, section 56 provides that anybody homeless is deemed to be exempt from

the ABAWDS requirement to the extent permitted by federal law.

**County Housing Assistance Money - \$46,675,000** shall be available for county housing supports for those families in receipt of CalWORKs for whom homelessness or housing instability is a barrier to self-sufficiency or child well-being pursuant to Section 11330.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

**County Housing and Disability Advocacy Program Funding - \$43,461,000** was appropriated to counties for the Housing and Disability Advocacy Program to increase participation among homeless persons with disabilities who may be eligible for disability benefits programs pursuant to Section 18999.1 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. This funding shall be available for encumbrance or expenditure until June 30, 2020.

## 2017-2017 State Budget Workgroups

**SFIS WORKGROUP - W&IC §10831.** (a) The department (DSS) shall implement and maintain an automated, nonbiometric identity verification method in the CalWORKs program. It is the intent of the Legislature to codify additional details regarding this method so that recipients of aid, other than dependent children, will be required, as a condition of eligibility, to cooperate with this method.

(b) The department shall update the Legislature, no later than November 1, 2017, regarding options for the design, implementation, and maintenance of an automated, nonbiometric identity verification method in the CalWORKs program.

(c) The options developed under this section shall be for use in California counties and shall include procedures and a schedule for implementation.

(d) Prior to the update to the Legislature, the department shall do both of the following:

(1) Consult with stakeholders, including legislative staff, representatives of counties and county human services agencies, current or former CalWORKs clients, advocates for clients, and other stakeholders, as appropriate.

(2) Consider how any new methods of identity verification would impact applicant or recipient experiences and

make application and eligibility practices more efficient.

(e) (1) A method implemented and maintained pursuant to this section shall be reviewed annually, with an update to the Legislature in the course of the annual spring budget subcommittee process, according to the following criteria:

(A) The extent to which the method improved identity verification and prevented duplicate aid.

(B) The extent to which the method improved the client experience.

(C) The extent to which the method aided in the efficiency and efficacy of the file clearance process.

(2) A method implemented and maintained pursuant to this section shall be evaluated, and a written report shall be submitted to the appropriate fiscal and policy committees of the Legislature, addressing the criteria in paragraph (1) by April 1, 2019.

**County Single Allocation Workgroup/ Consultation - 15204.35.** (a) The State Department of Social Services shall work with representatives of county human services agencies and the County Welfare Directors Association to develop recommendations for revising the methodology used for development of the CalWORKs single allocation annual budget. As part of the process of developing these recommendations, legislative staff, advocates, and organizations that represent county workers shall be consulted.

(b) (1) Recommendations for initial changes to the methodology for development of the CalWORKs single allocation for the 2018–19 fiscal year shall be made to the Legislature by January 10, 2018.

(2) Recommendations for additional changes to the methodology for the 2019–20 and subsequent fiscal years shall be made to the Legislature by October 1, 2018.

### **ABAWDS Workgroup/Consultation -**

**W&IC §18926.1.** (a) To the extent not prohibited by federal law and guidance, the department shall ensure that all recipients subject to the federal ABAWD time limit described in Section 18926 are permitted to meet the work requirements of the time limit through all forms of work, including, but not limited to, volunteer work at a nonprofit organization or a public institution that the recipient chooses, if the county can verify the hours of participation using the process established by the department pursuant to subdivision (b).

(b) On or before January 1, 2018, the department, with input from the County Welfare Directors Association and advocates for CalFresh recipients, shall issue an all-county letter instructing counties as to how to verify hours of the volunteer work specified in subdivision (a).

### **CalWORKs Outcomes and Accountability Review CalOAR - State**

**Workgroup - W&IC §11523(c) (1) (A)** - By October 1, 2017, the department (DSS) shall convene a workgroup comprised of representatives from county human services agencies, legislative staff, interested welfare advocacy and research organizations, current and former CalWORKs recipients, organizations that represent county human services agencies and county boards of supervisors, representatives of community colleges, tribal organizations, and the workforce investment system, and any other state entities that the department deems necessary. The workgroup members shall also include individuals with expertise related to domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental health. The workgroup shall establish a workplan by which the Cal-OAR shall be conducted, pursuant to the provisions described in this section, including a process for qualitative peer reviews of counties' CalWORKs services. The workgroup shall discuss potential costs for state and county participation.

(B) The department shall report annually to the Subcommittee on Health and Human Services of the Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review and the Subcommittee on Health and Human Services of the Assembly Committee on Budget during the budget process with an update on the schedule for development of and future changes to the Cal-OAR.

(2) At a minimum, in establishing the work plan, the workgroup shall consider existing CalWORKs performance indicators being measured, additional, alternative, or additional and alternative process and outcome indicators to be measured, development of uniform elements of the county CalWORKs self-assessment and the county CalWORKs system improvement plans, timelines for implementation, recommendations for reducing the existing CalWORKs services data reporting burden in light of new requirements established by the act that added this section and the resulting Cal-OAR, recommendations for financial incentives to counties for achievement on performance measures, and an analysis of the county and state workload associated with implementation of the requirements of this section.

(d) The Cal-OAR shall consist of the following three components: performance indicators, a county CalWORKs self-assessment, and a county CalWORKs system improvement plan.

(i) Process measures shall include measures of participant engagement, CalWORKs service delivery, and participation. Specific process measures shall be established by the department, in consultation with the workgroup, and may include measures of engagement as shown by improvement in program participation, timeliness of service provision, rates of utilization of program components, such as vocational education, and referrals and utilization of services based upon recommendations from the Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool.

(ii) Outcome measures shall include measures of employment, educational attainment, program exits, and program reentries, and may include other indicators of

family and child well-being as determined by the department, in consultation with the workgroup.

(B) Performance indicator data available in existing county data systems shall be collected by counties and provided to the department, and performance indicator data available in existing state department data systems shall be collected by the department and provided to the counties. These data shall be reported in a manner and on a schedule to be determined by the department, in consultation with the workgroup, but no less frequently than semiannually.

(C) (i) During the first three-year Cal-OAR cycle, performance indicator data, as reported by each county, shall be used to establish both county and statewide baselines for each of the process measures. After the first review cycle, the department shall, in consultation with the workgroup, establish standard target thresholds for each of the process measures established by the workgroup.

(ii) The department, in consultation with the workgroup, shall develop a process for resolving any disputes regarding the establishment of standard process thresholds pursuant to clause (i).

#### **Local Level Program Involvement** - (ii)

Local stakeholders shall include county CalWORKs administrators, supervisors, and caseworkers; current and former CalWORKs recipients; and county human services agency partners. To the extent possible and relevant, local stakeholders shall also include representatives of community colleges, tribal organizations, and the local workforce board. Additional specific county human services agency partners shall be determined by the county and may include, but are not limited to, adult education providers, providers of services for survivors of domestic violence, the local housing continuum of care, county behavioral health departments, county drug and alcohol programs, community-based service providers, organizations that represent CalWORKs recipients, child care resource and referral programs, and alternative payment programs, as appropriate.

#### **County Board of Supervisor Involvement**

- (3) (A) (i) The county CalWORKs system improvement plan shall consist of uniform elements to be developed by the workgroup. It shall, at a minimum, describe how the county will improve its CalWORKs program performance in strategic focus areas based upon information learned through the county CalWORKs self-assessment process. The county CalWORKs system improvement plan shall be approved in public session by the county's board of supervisors or, as applicable, chief elected official, and submitted to the department.

(ii) The county CalWORKs system improvement plan shall be completed every three years by the county, approved in public session by the county's board of supervisors or, as applicable, chief elected official, and be submitted to the department.