



CCWRO Welfare News-2019-01

February 9, 2019

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

CalWORKS Homelessness in California

Homeless CalWORKs children and their families have become fixtures in the CalWORKs program. There are many reasons why CalWORKs families become homeless. The fact that the average CalWORKs grant in 2018-2019 is \$556 a month for a family of three is a major contributor of the CalWORKs child homelessness phenomenon. The CalWORKs grants today are at the same benefit amount as they were in 1985. However, the purchasing power of the grant has been drastically reduced.

California Governors are the major contributors to today's unconscionably low grants levels. Jerry Brown, Pete Wilson and Arnold Swarzanegger as well as the democratic legislative bodies are all responsible. Since 1998, CalWORKs has contributed over \$1 billion each year to the California General Fund for a grant total of over \$29 billion.

SEE TABLE # 1.

TABLE #1 - CalWORKs Funds Redirected from the Mouths of Needy Babies and Children to the State General Fund for Non-CalWORKs Programs

	CalWORKs Involuntary Contribution to the General Fund
FY 98-99	\$708,502,000.00
FY 99-00	\$745,249,000.00
FY 00-01	\$1,021,913,000.00
FY 01-02	\$1,126,647,000.00
FY 02-03	\$1,088,940,000.00
FY 03-04	\$1,163,238,000.00
FY 04-05	\$1,087,321,000.00
FY 05-06	\$1,299,448,000.00
FY 06-07	\$1,184,134,000.00
FY 07-08	\$1,745,291,000.00
FY 08-09	\$1,268,997,000.00
FY 09-10	\$1,262,291,000.00
FY 10-11	\$1,262,046,000.00
FY 11-12	\$1,234,159,000.00
FY 12-13	\$1,896,060,000.00
FY 13-14	\$1,586,755,000.00
FY 14-15	\$1,661,424,000.00
FY 15-16	\$1,661,764,000.00
FY 16-17	\$2,076,557,000.00
FY 17-18	\$2,312,158,000.00
FY 18-19	\$2,404,295,000.00
TOTAL	\$29,797,189,000.00
19-20 Proposed Budget	\$2,557,119,000.00

(Con't on page 2)

(Cont'd from page 1)

County welfare departments also contribute to California's CalWORKs homeless problem. The CW 255 reports have a cell called "Enter the number of denials that resulted from the failure of a member of the applicant group to comply with procedural requirements specified for CalWORKs eligibility requirements." These are CalWORKs families with children who are financially eligible, but failed to meet one or more of the county welfare requirements. (The county requirements were authorized by statute to give counties "flexibility" to meet the local needs.) 17,215 families were discontinued from CalWORKs during October 2018 for reasons such as not meeting income, property, deprivation, timing out and failing to meet the "procedural requirements". 11,246 cases (65% of the discontinuances) were due to failure to meet CalWORKs bureaucratic reasons. The discontinuances affected about 22,500 children.

One classic example is submitting a SAR-7 that has no change to report to the county after the 11th of the month. CDSS regulation § 40-181.22 states, "*SAR 7s not received by the 11th of the SAR Submit Month shall be considered late.*" Counties generally take 5-10 days from the beginning date of the month to restore benefits, by that time many families are issued a 3-day late payment notice with a 30 or 60-days eviction notice for being late with the rent.

The CalWORKs Immediate Need regulations do not even consider whether rent is due and has not been paid as an emergency requiring Immediate Need for applicants. However, the applicant waits and gets an eviction notice, then they are eligible for \$200 and are on their way to homelessness because of inept laws that do not consider the rent due to be Immediate Need.

CALIFORNIA'S FRACTURED HOMELESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Governor's budget for 2019-2020 proposes to spend about \$90 million for the County Housing Support Program (HSP) that would serve, maybe, a meager 6,500 persons. This program has been operating for several years and there is no data on the number families the counties were funded to serve, how many were served, what happened to the unused money, how much of the money was used for payments for housing assistance and how much was used for the administration of the program. The HSP is not an entitlement. It is up to each county as to how they operate the program on any one day of the week.

Moreover, the California Department of Social Services refuses to publish the proposals submitted to it and funded with dollars from the California legislature, to assure that the constituents of the California legislature know what is available to them.

TABLE #2 reveals how counties are funded that does not make sense. For example, San Luis Obispo County was awarded \$2.6 million while Fresno County only received about \$900,000. There is also a large difference between the cost of serving per family at \$24,000 per family for San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties versus \$2,800 in Kings County and \$3,700 in Tulare County. There is no evidence that housing in San Mateo and Santa Clara are 600% higher than housing in Kings and Tulare County.

Moreover, the HSP only served 6,500 persons a year while the Homelessness Assistance Program serves about 57,000 families a year and it can do better with more resources. The homeless assistance program provides a homeless family with 16 days of temporary homeless assistance limited to a hotel or motel. This is a major barrier in that the \$85 given to the CalWORKs family cannot secure a hotel/motel room, because most CalWORKs recipients do not have the prerequisite of a VISA or Mastercard in order to rent a room. Families who are able to get a room at a

(Cont'd on page 3)

(Cont'd from page 2)

hotel/motel which doesn't require a credit card, are forced to bring their children to rooms with mold, lead poisoned water, crime and flea infestations.

Current California law knowingly allows children to go homeless and intentionally does nothing about it. It is indeed State Child Abuse. The Homeless Assistance Program limits aid to the homeless to once a year and only allows 16 days to find housing. The 16-day rule was enacted into law in the late 1980s. Since then, the housing market has gone through a major transformation, yet the CalWORKs program is operated as if it is still the 1980s. Today, 16 days is simply not enough time for families to locate permanent housing. However, the most callous provision of the current law is that

homeless assistance is limited to once a year. It appears lawmakers are OK with thousands of CalWORKs children living on the streets of America because they have already used their once-a-year homeless assistance. The message being received is that homeless kids do not deserve a place to live because they've already received assistance this year. If that is not child abuse, then what is?

Why are they homeless again? There are many reasons. Any landlord can give a tenant a 60-day notice for no reason. Sometimes their welfare benefits are terminated, often unlawfully, by the county welfare office. Sometimes their aid is reduced for one of the various CalWORKs behavioral sanctions, such as child support sanctions, failure to provide verification of immunized children and a host of other reasons, including the fact that majority of the CalWORKs families are living in deep poverty.

TABLE #2 - County Funding for the Housing Support Program (HSP)

County	Newly Housed	Continuing to be Housed	Total	Allocation	Average Cost per family
Alameda	79	27	106	\$1,877,071	\$17,708
Amador	18	4	22	\$170,000	\$7,727
Butte	220	50	270	\$2,000,000	\$7,407
Calaveras	5	5	10	\$143,642	\$14,364
Colusa	10	8	18	\$75,000	\$4,167
Contra Costa	100	25	125	\$2,415,719	\$19,326
Del Norte	40	6	46	\$197,131	\$4,285
El Dorado	63	16	79	\$889,891	\$11,264
Fresno	70	30	100	\$957,615	\$9,576
Glenn & Trinity	80	30	110	\$645,596	\$5,869
Humboldt	60	21	81	\$744,107	\$9,187
Imperial	80	60	140	\$850,000	\$6,071
Kern	209	6	215	\$930,828	\$4,329
Kings	170	50	220	\$633,973	\$2,882
Lake	25	0	25	\$290,000	\$11,600
Lassen	9	9	18	\$188,425	\$10,468
Los Angeles	490	280	770	\$6,990,594	\$9,079
Madera	60	30	90	\$413,019	\$4,589
Marin	25	18	43	\$882,824	\$20,531

County	Newly Housed	Continuing to be Housed	Total	Allocation	Average Cost per family
Mariposa	10	3	13	\$118,657	\$9,127
Mendocino	38	5	43	\$343,000	\$7,977
Merced	200	72	272	\$2,170,427	\$7,980
Monterey	80	20	100	\$1,000,000	\$10,000
Napa	24	2	26	\$243,860	\$9,379
Nevada	20	10	30	\$414,768	\$13,826
Orange	86	38	124	\$1,000,000	\$8,065
Placer	36	12	48	\$578,759	\$12,057
Plumas	10	10	20	\$100,000	\$5,000
Riverside	275	42	317	\$2,547,000	\$8,035
Sacramento	225	59	284	\$2,843,416	\$10,012
San Benito	11	5	16	\$159,065	\$9,942
San Bernardino	220	102	322	\$4,140,000	\$12,857
San Diego	376	101	477	\$3,817,500	\$8,003
San Francisco	110	115	225	\$4,879,304	\$21,686
San Luis Obispo	70	120	190	\$2,618,079	\$13,779
San Mateo	50	38	88	\$2,117,338	\$29,751
Santa Barbara	69	10	79	\$738,281	\$9,345
Santa Clara	128	40	168	\$4,128,125	\$24,572
Santa Cruz	67	41	108	\$1,958,500	\$18,134
Shasta	65	40	105	\$929,840	\$8,856
Siskiyou	16	9	25	\$332,523	\$13,301
Solano	42	78	120	\$2,456,802	\$20,473
Stanislaus	80	60	140	\$1,338,675	\$9,562
Sonoma	52	12	64	\$1,219,825	\$19,060
Stanislaus	80	60	140	\$1,338,675	\$9,562
Sutter	60	55	115	\$788,500	\$6,857
Tehama	10	5	15	\$143,738	\$9,583
Tulare	75	29	104	\$382,088	\$3,674
Tuolumne	25	15	40	\$230,000	\$5,750
Ventura	75	45	120	\$1,080,000	\$9,000
Yolo	100	30	130	\$1,800,000	\$13,846

2019-2020 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOMELESS ASSISTANCE

1. Ensure that the services offered by the CalWORKs Housing Support Program are transparent and easily accessible to the community.
2. Allocate the Housing Support Program money to those counties that put up a 50% match and mandate that at least 85% of the funds shall be used for direct assistance to homeless families.
3. Hold county public hearings on the Housing Support Program plan to assure that the local community is involved in developing a plan that meets the needs of the community.
4. Amend the Homeless Assistance Program (HAP) to provide:
 - a. 32 days of temporary homeless assistance;
 - b. Allow temporary homeless assistance to be used at hotels, motels and any other businesses or private individuals that are willing to give a homeless family shelter;
 - c. Authorize homeless assistance for families who need assistance with preventing eviction to prevent homelessness;
 - d. Repeal the once a year limitation for HAP eligibility.
 - e. Authorize additional temporary homeless assistance if the family's temporary homeless has been exhausted for families that have a permanent home paid for by HAP, but they have to wait to move in.
 - f. COLAtize the THA daily rate each year.