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In Brief

- The counties are testing the County Expense Claim Reporting Information System (CECRIS) which is designed to detail how each county spends their portion of the TANF block grant. CECRIS is the first program that tracks the counties' TANF expenditures. As of now, the public has no idea how counties spend the millions of dollars they get as a block grant also known as the "county single allocation."

- At the June 11, 2020 CWDA Adult Services meeting, county staff discussed a situation in which IHSS clients refuse to allow IHSS staff into their home. The participants determined that if the client refuses to allow the IHSS worker to come to their home and refuses to video conference with the IHSS worker, the client will be deemed out of compliance with program requirements because a video conference will not expose them to COVID. County IHSS staff and CWDA Adult Services seems unaware that not all IHSS beneficiaries have dependable internet access and the ability to video conference.

- CalSAWS will automate the Los Angeles County General Assistance hearing process to automatically create a hearing for GA/GR cases that have been discontinued in Los Angeles County. Other counties do not require that each discontinuance be given a mandatory hearing, and therefore will not opt in to this CalSAWs function.

CalWORKs WtW Sanctions Going During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Since March 2020, CDSS issued several guidances to counties on curing WtW sanctions during the current coronavirus pandemic.

The statewide June WtW 25s published by CDSS for the period of January 2020 to June of 2020 indicates that the number of WtW sanctions decreased by 33%, which is very significant. See Table #1. However, over 42,000 CalWORKs families remain under sanction, reducing their benefits by an average of \$125 during a crucial period in which families face intense economic pressures due to COVID-19.

Santa Barbara, Placer, Solano, Kings, San Mateo, Tulare, Santa Cruz, San Luis Obispo, Sacramento and San Diego counties reduced their sanction rate between 88% to 72%. Santa

| TABLE # 1 | Sanctions Cured from 1-20 to 6-20 |
|----------------------------|--|
| Counties | |
| Statewide | 33% |
| ☆☆☆☆☆ Star Counties | |
| Santa Barbara | 88% |
| Placer | 87% |
| ☆☆☆☆☆ Star Counties | |
| Solano | 82% |
| Kings | 81% |
| San Mateo | 80% |
| Sonoma | 79% |
| Tulare | 76% |
| ☆☆☆☆ Star Counties | |
| Santa Cruz | 74% |
| San Luis Obispo | 74% |
| Sacramento | 73% |
| San Diego | 72% |
| ☆☆ Star County | |
| Monterey | 33% |
| Riverside | 33% |
| Santa Clara | 33% |
| Stanislaus | 29% |
| 0 Star Counties | |
| San Bernardino | -3% |
| San Joaquin | -3% |
| Mendocino | -3% |

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Clara, Stanislaus and Monterey reduced their sanction rate by 33%. **Mendocino, San Bernardino and San Joaquin** were the worst performing counties, increasing their sanctions by 3% during a period in which the counties had stopped WtW activities. These continuing sanction rate defy the logic stated in the CWDA blog:

*“For children, deep poverty can cause toxic stress that harms brain development and early functioning, disrupting their ability to succeed in school and in life. Imagine as a child not knowing when you will be able to eat next, if you’ll be forced to sleep in a shelter tomorrow or if you can make it to school the next day; those real anxieties are oftentimes coupled with other traumatic events. **Even a short amount of time in deep poverty can derail a child emotionally, psychologically, physically and educationally.** These negative effects last through adulthood. Children who live in deep poverty are less likely to graduate high school, more likely to have poor health, and more likely to become involved in the criminal justice system. They are also three times as likely to be deeply poor as adults compared to children that do not grow up in deep poverty.(Emphasis added.)”*

Finally, the June 2020 report reveals the counties that have a significant higher number of sanctioned CalWORKs families than participating CalWORKs families during a period in which 95% of the WtW caseload was paused. See Table # 2 below.

TABLE #2

| County June 2020 | Sanctions | Unduplicated Participants |
|------------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| Butte | 356 | 209 |
| Imperial | 806 | 606 |
| Kern | 5,000 | 918 |
| Lake | 132 | 49 |
| Madera | 338 | 41 |
| Mendocino | 149 | 112 |
| San Bernardino | 8,301 | 2,957 |
| San Joaquin | 2,610 | 753 |
| Stanislaus | 1,218 | 691 |
| Sutter | 181 | 123 |
| Statewide | 42,328 | 54,774 |

County Welfare Department Victims of the Month

•County Terminates CalFresh Benefits After Moving from One County to Another - On 4-18-20 Mr. 1B9PC84 received a notice of action from CalWIN Sacramento County stating “You household’s application for CalFresh has been denied. Here’s why. You or a member of your household are not a resident of this County or have moved out of this County and are not eligible to receive CalFresh Benefits from this County. CalFresh Benefits may be applied for in the County where you or the member of your household lives.” (DFA 377.1A CalFresh Denial – Various Reasons.)

At all times, Mr. 1B9PC84 has lived and continues to live in Sacramento.

This notice is inadequate. The notice fails to identify the individual who left the county and why that individual is not eligible for an intercounty transfer. The notice also fails to state why the individual who allegedly did not move from the county is ineligible. If one member had left the county, why does the remaining member lose their CalFresh benefits?

Before CalFresh intercounty transfers began, when a person applied for food stamps in County “A” and moved to county “B”, the application was denied. That all changed in 2011, when AB 1612, authored by then Assembly Member Skinner, allowed for intercounty transfer (ICT) of CalFresh too just like CalWORKs. [ACL 11-22](#) - Chapter 725, Assembly Bill 1612.

Since 2011, millions have been spent on CalWIN to program ITC to make sure that folks like Mr. 1B9PC84 are not victimized for moving from one county to another county. Despite this investment, the CalSAWS EBCD system continues to end benefits when a beneficiary moves to a different county—even when that move is illusory, as in this case.

•Sacramento County Terminates Benefits Because SSA Offices are Closed - Ms. 1B9LQ59 and her family are refugees who entered the country during the coronavirus pandemic. They are not able to apply for a Social Security card because, like the welfare offices, the social security offices were closed. On 9-2-20 Ms. 1B9LQ59 received an NOA saying that they will be stopping her benefits for refusing to apply and get a social security card.

•Sacramento County Issues Inadequate CalFresh NOA – Sacramento County resident Mr. 1B8ZY93 who is a SSI beneficiary, received a NOA stating that

his CalFresh benefits will be decreased from \$113 to \$99 because: “Your housing costs has changed. When your housing cost changes, the amount of CalFresh benefits you are eligible to receive changes. Your utility cost changed. When your utility cost changes, the amount of CalFresh benefits you are eligible to receive changes.” The NOA did not include calculations showing the previous and current rent and/or utility costs used by the county..

- The B339628’s, an SSI couple received Cal-Fresh. They then received a July 18, 2020 NOA stating that their CalFresh benefits would be stopped because they failed to complete their annual review.

CDSS instructed counties that annual reviews for CalFresh would restart after August 31, 2020 because FNS did not approve California’s request for a further waiver of annual reviews.

But that did not prevent Sacramento County from stopping B339628 SSI couple’s CalFresh benefits before August 31, 2020 because they failed to complete their annual review. However, Sacramento County was not conducting any annual reviews during that time, so the couple had no way of completing one.

On July 29, 2020 B339628 SSI couple received another NOA stating “Your household’s application for CalFresh has been denied. Here’s why: Your CalFresh are being denied because your household’s income exceeds the maximum level for benefits issuance.” The NOA failed to identify the allowable maximum income and the income that the county alleged the household received in SSI.

Unfortunately, this is occurring statewide since these computerized NOAs were sent to thousands of SSI beneficiaries in California – compliments of the multibillion California computer system.

- Mr. 1B0GL85 of Yolo County is an SSI beneficiary who was told to apply for CalFresh. His CalFresh was approved in January 2020. In September 2020 his CalFresh stopped. He never got a letter or NOA. We assume it stopped because Yolo County did not get a SAR-7 which he never received from the county. How many other SSI beneficiaries have lost their CalFresh during this pandemic because the county welfare departments failed to perform their jobs?

Federal Update from Center on Budget Policy & Priorities

As multiple news outlets reported yesterday, President Trump announced he has halted negotiations on a federal COVID relief package until after the November election. After the President’s announcement, Speaker Pelosi issued a statement slamming the President for “walking away” from the talks that she and the Administration (represented by Treasury Secretary Mnuchin) had just restarted a week ago.

While the dynamics could change, that’s unlikely — which would mean no COVID relief for at least a couple of months, if not longer.

As CBPP President Bob Greenstein tweeted, this news is extremely disappointing, as we all know the needs of millions of struggling families and state and local governments have not gone away.

Today’s release of the latest biweekly Census Household Pulse Data makes that continued hardship clear. Nearly 78 million adults — about 1 in 3 — are struggling to pay usual household expenses such as food, rent or mortgage, car payments, medical expenses, or student loans, according to our latest analysis of the Census data. This data further shows that people of color and low-income families and individuals are disproportionately affected by the pandemic and recession.

The failure of Congress and the Trump Administration to agree to a strong, bipartisan COVID relief package means that this hardship will only continue, putting more people at risk of homelessness, debt, and other long-lasting consequences. And, as Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said this week, a lack of federal relief would make the recession longer and more painful.

California Safety Net Public Benefit Applications by the Week

| Week/Month of 2020 | CalFresh | CalWORKs | Medi-Cal |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| March 2020 | | | |
| Apps Received March 2020 Week 1 | 42,366 | 7,662 | 44,706 |
| Apps Received March 2020 Week 2 | 41,918 | 6,765 | 41,630 |
| Apps Received March 2020 Week 3 | 57,177 | 6,294 | 37,851 |
| Apps Received March 2020 Week 4 | 95,516 | 14,380 | 55,128 |
| April 2020 | | | |
| Apps Received April 2020 Week 1 | 87,277 | 1,162 | 42,157 |
| Apps Received April 2020 Week 2 | 93,247 | 11,564 | 42,500 |
| Apps Received April 2020 Week 3 | 90,579 | 9,369 | 43,183 |
| Apps Received April 2020 Week 4 | 100,226 | 10,665 | 57,068 |
| May 2020 | | | |
| Apps Received May 2020 Week 1 | 66,646 | 8,158 | 38,352 |
| Apps Received May 2020 Week 2 | 60,854 | 7,180 | 37,719 |
| Apps Received May 2020 Week 3 | 63,107 | 7,350 | 35,653 |
| Apps Received May 2020 Week 4 | 67,539 | 6,165 | 36,899 |
| June 2020 | | | |
| Apps Received June 2020 Week 1 | 42,998 | 5,789 | 34,241 |
| Apps Received June 2020 Week 2 | 40,675 | 5,160 | 33,922 |
| Apps Received June 2020 Week 3 | 50,297 | 4,993 | 35,540 |
| Apps Received June 2020 Week 4 | 67,989 | 7,221 | 54,540 |
| July 2020 | | | |
| Apps Received July 2020 Week 1 | 38,853 | 5,968 | 32,964 |
| Apps Received July 2020 Week 2 | 44,114 | 6,174 | 36,361 |
| Apps Received July 2020 Week 3 | 42,336 | 5,571 | 38,488 |
| Apps Received July 2020 Week 4 | 59,047 | 8,211 | 61,211 |
| August 2020 | | | |
| Apps Received August 2020 Week 1 | 50,394 | 8,110 | 37,770 |
| Apps Received August 2020 Week 2 | 51,410 | 7,153 | 34,853 |
| Apps Received August 2020 Week 3 | 49,534 | 7,180 | 34,996 |
| Apps Received August 2020 Week 4 | 49,534 | 8,316 | 45,877 |
| September 2020 | | | |
| Apps Received September 2020 Week 1 | 33,209 | 5,689 | 31,411 |
| Apps Received September 2020 Week 2 | 50,238 | 7,325 | 34,500 |
| Apps Received September 2020 Week 3 | 41,255 | 6,174 | 33,353 |
| Apps Received September 2020 Week 4 | 51,969 | 8,205 | 54,729 |

Source: CDSS