
**WORKFARE
— IT ISN'T
WORK AND
IT ISN'T
FAIR**

TESTIMONY BEFORE

SANTA CLARA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ON THE

COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA WORKFARE PLAN

FOR

1986-1987

*Welfare Recipients League, Inc. and
Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations, Inc.*

**WORKFARE WILL SENTENCE
WOMEN AND CHILDREN
TO A LIFE OF POVERTY**



As many as 15% of all participants could end up on workfare indefinitely with little likelihood of finding full-time employment, said Carl Williams, special assistant to the director of social services.

Los Angeles Times

July 19, 1985

INTRODUCTION

This is a consumer analysis of the Santa Clara County Department of Social Services Workfare County Plan by the Welfare Recipients League, Inc. and the Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations, Inc.

The Welfare Recipients League is a recipient organization of Santa Clara County representing welfare recipients. The Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organization (CCWRO) is a state wide legal services back-up Center assisting legal services and welfare rights organizations throughout the state with welfare and workfare issues.

CCWRO has issued one of the most comprehensive analysis of the new California Workfare Program. We have analyzed all of the seven county plans received by the State Department of Social Services to date.

CCWRO was recently invited to testify before the House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee's subcommittee on Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation relative to the newly enacted California workfare program.

TOKEN PARTICIPATION OF THE POOR

It is true, that on a committee to assist the department in developing this plan there were two representatives of the poor, including many providers of child care and education services. In reality, what happened was, that the department wrote the plan, and then gave the committee the plan consisting of hundreds of pages and asked them to react to it.

A true participatory process for developing a plan would have had the department inform the committee of the various options that were available to the county under the workfare legislation, then based upon the committee's recommendations of the specific options, develop a plan.

ANALYSIS OF JOBS IN WHICH PARTICIPANTS WILL RECEIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

On page 7 of the Executive Summary outlines the types of jobs that Santa Clara County

will be targeting.

These are the jobs for which this newly enacted program would provide "training and education" for the first time.

This should be a glorious day for the low-income families in Santa Clara County. The long awaited training and education programs, that would get AFDC families off welfare and into unsubsidized employment, has finally arrived.

However, once the low-income people read this plan and discover that they will be trained and educated to become desk clerks; security guards; clerks; typists; receptionists; secretaries; word processors; data entry clerks; light vehicle drivers; nurses aides; orderlies; custodians; cooks; cook's assistant; pantry workers; and sales clerks and cashiers, they would wonder if this was yet another "cruel joke" that government has played upon them. **YES IT IS.**

These kinds of jobs can be obtained without training and college education. In fact we called various colleges and asked if they had educational programs for cook's assistant, light vehicle driver, security guards, clerks, orderlies, nurses aids", etc. Some of the persons answering the phones hung up on us because they thought we were crazy. We don't blame them for thinking this.

Moreover, these jobs do not pay enough to support a family of three (3) in Santa Clara County. Most of them pay minimum wage.

REMEDIAL EDUCATION

The county's survey demonstrates that about 70% of the participants are in need of "remedial education". The plan also reveals that the provision of remedial education is an identified "unmet need". Thus, the county plan proposes to abrogate the clear mandate of the law, and illegally require persons in need of remedial education to participate in a training program.

We submit that such illegal behavior on the part of the welfare department, would not be tolerated by the representatives of recipients. Just as the Santa Clara County

Department of Social Services vigorously prosecutes any person who commits "welfare fraud", welfare advocates will vigorously prosecute any violations of the law by the department in the interest of equal justice under the law.

If the department does not provide sufficient resources and services for remedial education, then all such recipients shall be deferred from participation in the program, rather than manipulating the program for the justification that the ends justifies the means.

Or maybe this plan is premature and the department should go back to the drawing board and submit the plan when the resources to provide the statutory services are available.

CHILD CARE

The plan also suggests that Santa Clara County does not have the child care resources to meet the needs of participants.

We have a real problem with the way the department defines "persons in need of child care". The plan defines child care to mean, child care that is needed while participating in the program.

This definition is fine if the sole purpose of the program is training and education. However, the first step of the program, after the remedial education has been resolved, is job search. The purpose of this step is to help persons find employment. We have already received several complaints from recipients who, under the WIN program, were offered a job and had to refuse the job for lack of full-time child care, yet, they were asked to continue to look for work. This is ludicrous to say the least. This plan does not address this problem.

Thus, our first objection to the plan is that it does not address the issue of child care in a meaningful manner. Our second objection is that although the plan admits that Santa Clara County lacks child care resources (see IX. Proj. Unmet Needs. page 2 of three. E. Child Care), its proposed solution to this problem of turning AFDC recipients into child care providers is also ludicrous.

In order for an AFDC recipient to become a child care provider, he/she would have to own their own home and be able to pay

astronomical insurance costs. Only 5% of the AFDC caseload owns a house. All others either rent or live with another family because they cannot afford to pay high Santa Clara County rents. Moreover, under DSS regulations, a person babysitting in her house cannot have more than 6 children under her care, including her own children. This kind of work would not produce enough income to support a family. It would be a great second income, but many of the workfare administrators forget that AFDC recipients are the sole income earners of their family.

Thus babysitting will not lead AFDC families into self- sufficiency.

It should also be pointed out that most AFDC recipients have a hard enough time raising their own children all by themselves.

The plan also assumes that one third of the participants can arrange child care with friends and relatives. This is a very sweeping statement and it has not been verified. For example, who is the friend or relative? Are they capable of providing child care? Are the children safe with them?

The department has always been concerned about the health and welfare of AFDC children. To prevent any possible child abuse we **recommend** that the department be mandated to verify such relative or friend is actually providing the care and is capable of doing so.

It should also be pointed out that child care on the East side of the county is scarce, which is where 45% of the potential participants are located. The plan raises this issue, but fails to address the problem directly.

On page 15 of Chapter VI. Child care; states that there are 33,385 available child care slots and there are 9,640 workfare children in need of those slots. What it does not point out is that these available slots are also utilized by Santa Clara County residents in general.

COMMENTS ON PROGRAM OPERATION

1. X. Delivery of Service- Page 2 of 15

This section describes the deferral process. This section should be amended to include

the following requirements:

a. That the county develop a form which shall be completed by all workfare participants soliciting information relative to deferrals, in writing, during the registration process;

b. Participants be **empowered** to complete this form and assert their need for a deferral;

c. That the statements made by the participants shall be deemed to be correct, and the deferral shall be granted, unless the county has evidence to the contrary;

d. If the county decides to require verification of a certain deferral, then the gathering of such verification should be governed by EAS §§ 40-105;40-107; and 40-115.22.

2. X. Delivery of Service- Page 2 of 15-Basic Contract 5.

This section provides that the intake worker will "identify child care needs". It fails to set forth the purpose of such child care.

Is it for the purpose of getting a job, or merely to participate in the program without regard to the real purpose of the program, which is to obtain and maintain full time unsubsidized employment.

3. X. Delivery of Services- Page 3 of 15-Basic Contract Ancillary expenses.

This section fails to state how participants would be empowered to express their need for "ancillary expenses. We would **recommend** that the county develop a "ancillary expense request form" that should be completed by the participant each time the contract or the amended contract is signed and anytime the participant expresses his or her desire to complete this form.

4. X. Delivery of Services- Page 4 of 15-Amended Contract

This section addresses the issue of selecting a component. This is the big "**client choice**" that this program is supposed to be famous for. The plan fails to explain exactly how the participant would exercise his or her choice of component. Would he or she have

to beg the county to be allowed to choose a component of his or her choice, or would he or she be empowered to complete a form indicating his or " c h o i c e " .

We would recommend that a form be mailed to the client proposing the various choices and ask the participant to choose from the various options. The choice of the participant shall ne accepted, unless there is substantial evidence showing that the component selected by the participant is completely unsuitable for the participant.

5. X. Delivery of Service- Page 6 of 15 Targeted Population

This section provides that for the first year the county would target the long term AFDC recipients.

There are many questions that we have about this statement in the plan. Some of them are:

- a. What is the definition of long term AFDC recipients?
- b. How long would he or she had to be on aid to be considered a long term AFDC recipients?
- c. What percentage of the persons participating in the program would be long term AFDC recipients, and what percentage would be non-long term AFDC recipients?

6. X. Delivery of Service- Page 12 of 15-Workfare Slots

The plan clearly shows that the workfare slots would be in violation of Section 11320.35 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. First of all there is no evidence in the plan that the department has evaluated and made a determination that such jobs do not violate the displacement language of the workfare legislation.

For example, "entry level clerical in county offices", "park maintenance" in county parks; etc. It appears that most of these jobs would violate the displacement language of the law.

FAILURE TO COMPLETE ALL OF THE STATE REQUIRED BUDGET AND PROGRAM FORMS

On March 7,1986, the State Department of Social Services mailed out a document entitled "GAIN County Plan Guidelines". This document contains numerous mandatory state forms which must be included in the "county plan" before it is approved by the state. The plan before the County Board of Supervisors does not include these forms.

is that the plan does not specify how many persons will register with the workfare program, how many persons would be enrolled in remedial education, how many persons would participate in the job club portion of the program, how persons would participate in the job search portion of the program, how many persons would be assessed, how many people would participate in the 90-day job search program, and how many people would find a job at the various points of the program.

Another primary problem with the program

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE "COUNTY PLAN"

1. *How many persons will receive remedial education in 1986-1987?*
2. *How many persons will participate in job club?*
3. *How many persons will participate in job search?*
4. *How many persons will obtain employment at the conclusion of the job search portion of the program?*
5. *How many persons will be assessed?*
6. *How many persons will participate in the 90-day job search portion of the program?*
7. *How many persons will obtain employment after the components and 90-day job search participation?*
8. *What will happen to persons who are entitled to remedial education, but cannot receive it because the county does not have the ability to provide such services. Will the IR participation in the program be deferred?*

These are some of the questions that have not been answered in the plan, including the other issues raised in this report.

It should be noted that most of the plans that we have reviewed do answer these questions.

May 6,1986