

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814



December 11, 1998

TO: DISTRIBUTION LIST

FROM: LOIS VANBEERS, Project Leader
CalWORKs Data Systems Design Taskforce

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL TO SIMPLIFY THE Q5 DATA ELEMENTS

The CalWORKs Data Systems Design Taskforce was set up to focus on the Q5 data collection system in order to streamline the process of collecting data and improve the accuracy of the data collected. Staff from the Data Operations and Data Analysis and Publications Branches were pulled together to form this taskforce.

We have reviewed the data elements on the Q5 and are recommending that those data elements that are not needed to meet TANF or CalWORKs reporting requirements or perform Food Stamp Quality Control reviews be eliminated; and we would like your comments.

Currently the Q5 asks for similar information in different ways. For example, the survey asks to list all the adults in the case and then asks for the number of adults in the case. As another example, the survey will ask the ages of the case members even though those can be calculated from the birthdates that are also entered. This type of duplication creates opportunities for errors in the data.

We are also recommending deletion of elements where the data are not available in the case file or occurs so rarely that their analysis will yield such a large margin of error that the results are not meaningful.

You should be aware that we have identified all the Q5 data elements needed for AFDC quality control purposes and are recommending that they be eliminated. We are discussing the implications with members of the Welfare to Work Division. We expect that the decision to include or delete these items will be made separately as part of these discussions. We will be looking to your comments to let us know if you need the data for purposes other than payment accuracy.

Simplifying the Q5 instrument is a necessary first step to make it a more manageable and useful data collection tool. Please send your comments to Kim Estrada, MS 12-57, by **December 29, 1998**. You may reach her at 653-1375.

If you have any questions or you want to talk about these recommendations, please contact either Marie Thomas at (310) 516-7180 or Warren Ghens at (559) 445-6478. They are very experienced in using the Q5 and will be glad to answer your questions. I would also be glad to talk with you. You can reach me at 654-1792 or via e-mail.

Thank you for your comments and have a happy holiday.