

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814



August 29, 2002

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 02-64

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS  
ALL COUNTY WELFARE-TO-WORK  
COORDINATORS

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change  
 Federal Law or Regulation  
 Change  
 Court Order or Settlement  
 Agreement  
 Clarification Requested by One  
 or More Counties  
 Initiated by CDSS

SUBJECT: MODIFICATIONS TO THE LEARNING DISABILITIES  
SCREENING PROTOCOLS

REFERENCE: ALL COUNTY LETTER (ACL) 01-70 AND 02-35

The purpose of this letter is to notify counties of some modifications to the protocols on screening for learning disabilities contained in ACL 01-70, dated October 17, 2001. These modifications are optional and are meant to provide flexibility to counties on when to offer the screening to California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Welfare-to-Work (WTW) participants. We believe that the modifications discussed in this letter offer a balanced approach towards meeting the counties' need for some measure of workload relief while also ensuring that individuals with potential learning disabilities are identified and accommodated as early as possible.

Counties that have successfully implemented the screening protocols as described in ACL 01-70 are encouraged to continue. However, counties that choose to implement the modifications specified below must implement them by the deadline specified in ACL 02-35, dated May 8, 2002. Regardless of the procedure a county selects, all counties must fully implement the protocols outlined in ACL 01-70 and/or this letter by the aforementioned implementation deadline. In all other regards, the rest of the provisions outlined in ACL 01-70 continue to apply.

The modifications are as follows:

I. Screening Individuals When Certain Events Occur

Counties are required to offer learning disabilities screening to **CalWORKs WTW individuals**, who were not previously offered a screening by the county, whenever certain events occur which indicate that a participant may have a potential learning disability. The offer must be presented both orally and in writing. These events include, but are not limited to any of the following:

1. Individuals have a suspected learning disability, as identified by the county, WTW contractor, or participant;

2. Individuals are in the good cause determination, compliance, or sanction processes; and
3. Individuals are failing to maintain satisfactory progress in their WTW activities, including employment, or are failing to progress in their assigned activities.

II. Information about the Availability of a Screening at WTW Orientation/Appraisal

Counties will be required to present some brief information about the availability of a screening for learning disabilities at the first WTW contact (i.e., orientation or appraisal). Anyone who requests a screening at this point must be screened prior to any assignment to a WTW activity, including up-front job search. If the screening indicates that an individual has a potential learning disability, the county must refer the individual for a learning disabilities evaluation as soon as administratively feasible.

A prepared script about the availability of screenings for learning disabilities is enclosed. Counties are required to make this information part of their presentation at the participants' initial WTW contact. (The script will be translated into Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese and Russian and will be mailed out as soon as it becomes available. Counties should allow six to eight weeks for the translations to be mailed to their CalWORKs Forms Coordinators.)

III. Screening CalWORKs Individuals

1. Counties are required to offer a learning disabilities screening to all **new CalWORKs WTW participants** no later than assessment (rather than at appraisal). Counties that choose to offer the screening at assessment will need to ensure that assessment personnel are trained on how to administer the recommended (or other validated) screening tool before the implementation deadline.

As a reminder, staff or contractors operating the up-front job search component must also be aware of the availability of the learning disabilities screening, the characteristics of learning disabilities, and the protocols in order to make a referral for the screening when they suspect a learning disability or the participant requests a screening.

2. Counties are no longer required to offer a learning disabilities screening to existing CalWORKs WTW participants at the annual eligibility

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redetermination date. However, counties are required to offer a screening to **all existing participants**, who were not previously offered a screening, by September 3, 2003.

Reminder about Fair Hearing Decisions

Counties are reminded that the provisions in ACL 01-70 apply to all CalWORKs WTW participants with suspected or verified learning disabilities, including those individuals who had previously asked for a state hearing prior to October 17, 2001 (the date ACL 01-70 was issued). The same policies and procedures contained in ACL 01-70 and in this letter apply to these individuals. Counties must not withhold appropriate relief (e.g., offering a screening and/or evaluation for learning disabilities, providing retrospective adjustment of the 18- or 24-month WTW time clock, etc.) solely because recipients have been subject to a previous administrative hearing decision.

Technical assistance from the Department's learning disabilities training contractor, Payne & Associates, Inc., is available through September 30, 2002. Questions regarding the learning disabilities protocols should be directed to Yvonne Lee, Unit Manager in the Employment Bureau, by email at [yvonne.lee@dss.ca.gov](mailto:yvonne.lee@dss.ca.gov) or telephone at (916) 657-5039. Ms. Lee will coordinate the questions and responses with the training contractor.

If you have any questions, please contact Suzanne Nobles, Chief of the Employment Bureau, at (916) 653-7103 or Yvonne Lee, Unit Manager, at (916) 657-5039.

Sincerely,

***Original Document Signed By  
Bruce Wagstaff on 8/29/02***

BRUCE WAGSTAFF  
Deputy Director  
Welfare to Work Division

Enclosure

c: CWDA  
CSAC

## SCRIPT ON LEARNING DISABILITIES SCREENING

Many people have a learning disability, but don't know it.

You can find out if you may have a learning disability by answering some questions. This is called a "screening."

### **Did you know?**

- Up to two out of five adults on welfare have learning disabilities.
- Most people with learning disabilities are intelligent and many are gifted.

This includes many famous people like Whoopi Goldberg, Cher, and President John F. Kennedy!

### **Why get screened?**

If you have a learning disability,

- You can learn your strengths and find ways to make it easier for you to learn and help you be more successful at school and on the job.
- The county can help you get into the right kind of welfare-to-work activity, such as training.

### **Some signs of learning disabilities:**

- Do you have a hard time filling out forms? Following directions? Getting people to understand what you are trying to say?

- Ever been in special education or got extra help in school as a child?

These are signs that you may have a learning disability.

### **If you have a learning disability, it may be hard for you to:**

- read
- listen
- understand directions
- write
- spell
- do math
- organize things
- get along with others
- say your ideas out loud
- pay attention

People with learning disabilities can have a lot of problems with some of these things, but do great with others.

### **What is the screening like?**

- The screening is very simple. It only takes about 30 minutes. It is just a few questions about your learning experiences and your health.
- The screening is confidential, and it is your choice if you want to do it. Let your worker know if you want to be screened.

### **What happens after the screening?**

The screening will help you decide if you want a referral to a specialist to find out if you have a learning disability.

The specialist can help find your strengths and weaknesses, so the county can help you get the services you need.