STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

CDSS
JOHN A. WAGNER
DIRECTOR

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GOVERNOR

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

[ ] State Law Change
[ ] Federal Law or Regulation Change
[ ] Court Order
[ ] Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
[x] Initiated by CDSS

November 10, 2010

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-74-10

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CalWORKs PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
ALL COUNTY CONSORTIUM PROJECT MANAGERS

SUBJECT: CALIFORNIA WORK OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO KIDS (CalWORKs) – EFFORTS TO REDUCE ERRONEOUS PAYMENTS

REFERENCE: INFORMATION MEMORANDUM TRANSMITTAL NO. TANF-ACF-IM-2010-02

The federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) has issued an Information Memorandum (TANF-ACF-IM-2010-02) providing guidance to the states on best practices for reduction of improper payments. The ACF is strongly encouraging states to stress the importance of payment accuracy and to seriously consider measures to reduce erroneous payments.

Additionally, a federal Office of the Inspector General review conducted in 2007 in 30 counties identified several improper payments in our state. The causes of the improper payments included the following: recipient families did not fully disclose information during their application or redetermination or did not notify the county of changes in their financial situation or other changes affecting eligibility; not all information provided to support the application was verified; or the appropriate documentation to support eligibility and payment determinations was not available or maintained in the case file.

Even though in the majority of the counties there were no errors cited, we want to reiterate and strongly encourage all counties to maintain and implement processes and procedures to ensure that payments are made to eligible families, that the payment levels are accurate, that recipients report accurately and timely, and that all actions are adequately verified and documented in the case files to support eligibility and payment determinations. All these efforts will contribute to the continued reduction of erroneous payments.

Recommended actions that may prove beneficial in this area include but are not limited to the following:

- Conduct local office quality control or supervisory reviews at both the initial intake and redetermination stage.

- Provide periodic reminders to county staff through training, written reminders or other means, of the need to accurately verify and document eligibility information and to maintain the appropriate documentation in all case files.

- Develop and maintain a reminder system and establish deadlines for critical follow-up actions on cases such as responding to reports of non-cooperation with child support, Income Eligibility Verification System alerts, redeterminations of eligibility, or failure to fulfill work requirements.

- Ensure that the counties' established process for the collection of CalWORKs overpayments from the appropriate recipient results in timely and accurate collection of erroneous aid payments.

- Remind recipients periodically of their responsibility to accurately report income, resources, and other family circumstances under quarterly reporting requirements.

- Conduct training on investigative interviewing techniques for intake workers and case managers.

- Perform periodic reviews of case records paying particular attention to documentation that includes a current application and facts supporting income, household composition, participation in work activities, and cooperation with child support enforcement.

- Establish and monitor internal procedures to ensure that CalWORKs payments are adjusted on a timely basis when changes to family circumstances affect case eligibility or the amount of payment.

If you have questions or need additional information regarding this notice, contact the CalWORKs Eligibility Bureau at 916-654-1322 for further assistance.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

KÄREN DICKERSON, Chief
Employment and Eligibility Branch