

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

January 9, 1996

ALL-COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO.
I-02-96

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

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

SUBJECT: WELFARE INTEGRITY - WELFARE ABUSE WORK GROUP

The purpose of this All-County Information Notice is to inform you of the accomplishments of the California Department of Social Services' Welfare Abuse Work Group. Because of the diligent efforts of its members, the Work Group has fulfilled its mission to advise the Department on improving the integrity of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program in California.

To improve the integrity of California's welfare system, a Strategic Planning Task Force convened in October 1993. After three months of intensive effort, the task force identified 85 action steps to improve integrity. These steps were subsequently incorporated into the California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) Strategic Plan, Bringing Integrity to Welfare in California, which identified five broad areas of program improvement:

- o Emphasizing prevention;
- o Improving tools and technology to detect fraud;
- o Increasing accountability through more effective penalties and better collection of overpayments;
- o Cracking down on program abuse; and
- o Refocusing program management to stress integrity, quality, and efficiency.

Several of the AFDC abuse problems identified in the strategic planning process required in-depth analysis. As a result, CDSS convened the Welfare Abuse Work Group to develop options for resolving these program abuse issues. The Work Group has assisted CDSS in completing the following:

I. ADMINISTRATIVE SOLUTIONS

<u>Issue Area</u>	<u>Solution</u>
Verifying the Presence of Children	CDSS issued All-County Information Notice (ACIN) No. 61-95 in December 1995 addressing the concern that many adults receive aid for children who are not really living with them. Among other options, the notice suggests that workers monitor situations more closely, refer cases to the Special Investigative Unit and consider a home visit to view children. CDSS revised both the AFDC Handbook (PUB 62) and the CA 1030 form to inform recipients that home visits may be conducted. The Handbook was distributed in December 1995. The CA 1030 is scheduled to be issued in January 1996.
Identification of Excluded Parents	Current federal and state regulations stipulate that persons applying for AFDC are required to provide a social security number (SSN) as a condition of eligibility. Concerns exist that if verification does not include obtaining a SSN, an excluded parent's income could be overlooked in computing the grant amount for the assistance unit. CDSS will issue an ACL during February 1996. The ACL will clarify that to the extent an SSN is available, it should be used to verify the excluded parent's income.
Unannounced Home Visits	The revised AFDC Handbook (PUB 62) and the SAWS 2A also includes narrative that clearly states that a county worker can make unannounced home visits. The Handbook was distributed in December 1995. The SAWS 2A is scheduled to be issued in January 1996.
Improved Eligibility Worker Use of Immigration and Naturalization Service Documents	The Alien Guide was released with All County Information Letter I-47-95 on October 10, 1995.

Issue Area

Solution

Overpayment Recovery

Emergency regulations were transmitted to the counties in September 1995 with an effective date of December 1, 1995. These regulations implement a new federal Action Transmittal that clarifies priority order for collections.

Temporary Absence

Final regulations which limit temporary absences to one full calendar month, unless extenuating circumstances exist as defined in regulations, are projected to be effective June 1, 1996. In addition two forms are being revised (CA 7 and SAWS 7) to remind clients of the reporting requirements of temporary absences. The scheduled release date for the forms is January 1996.

Deeming Income of Excluded
Undocumented Parents

A public hearing was held and testimony received in October 1995 on proposed regulations to reduce inequities between noncitizen parents and excluded parents in deeming income. The target effective date for the regulations is March 1, 1996.

II. LEGISLATIVE/WAIVER SOLUTIONS

Issue Area

Solution

Misuse of AFDC Funds and Abuse
of Homeless Assistance Payments
(HAP)

The Governor signed AB 908 (Chapter 307, Statutes of 1995) which limits eligibility of temporary shelter and permanent housing assistance to once-in-a-lifetime, with certain exceptions. CDSS issued ACL 95-62, dated October 30, 1995, which implements these homeless assistance limitations.

Enforce Affidavit of Support
of Sponsored Immigrants

The Governor signed AB 836 of (Chapter 196, Statutes of 1994) barring sponsored aliens from AFDC for five years contingent on a federal law change.

CDSS appreciates the Work Group's resolute efforts to assist the Department in fulfilling its strategic plan to bring integrity to the AFDC program. Any future issues will be addressed by CDSS in consultation with the County Welfare Directors' Association (CWDA) and the California Welfare Fraud Investigators Association (CWFIA)

If you have any questions concerning this letter, please call Charr Lee Metsker, Chief, AFDC Policy Development Bureau, at (916) 654-0870.

*Walter Bannus
for Bruce Wagstaff*

BRUCE WAGSTAFF
Deputy Director
Welfare Programs Division