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

October 24, 2008

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 08-50

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

SUBJECT: ENGAGEMENT OF CALIFORNIA WORK OPPORTUNITY AND
RESPONSIBILITY TO KIDS (CalWORKs) PARTICIPANTS DURING
BREAKS IN ASSIGNED ACTIVITIES

REFERENCE: ALL COUNTY LETTER (ACL) 99-65

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

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

The purpose of this All County Letter is to address questions raised by counties regarding welfare-to-work (WTW) participation during breaks in activities assigned as part of a CalWORKs WTW plan, taking into account the guidance provided by ACL 99-65.

In light of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) reauthorization and the state's need to increase ongoing participation, the Department is and has been encouraging counties to develop bridging activities to maintain participant engagement in the WTW program. Bridging activities are temporary activities made available to participants when there is a planned or unplanned break in assigned activities, such as school breaks.

ACL 99-65 directed counties to treat as CalWORKs participation "holiday periods of one week or less, if the employer, provider or work activity site is not open." These instructions were issued over concerns that counties were assigning WTW participants to more than the required number of hours per week in order to compensate for holidays, absences, and other cases where participants had good cause for not participating. This directive remains in effect, as counties may not require recipients to participate in more than 32 or 35 hours per week. However, counties may, and are encouraged to, assign participants to activities during periods when the participants' normal activities are temporarily unavailable, including holiday breaks.

When counties assign an individual to bridging activities as part of a WTW plan or after a WTW plan has been developed, the activities should be consistent with the participant's assessment and be designed to increase the participant's ability to gain or retain employment. Any bridging activities that have not been discussed and agreed upon through the development of the WTW plan must be discussed with the participant prior to assignment and documented as part of the case file. Supportive services needed to participate in the bridging activity must be arranged as part of the discussion and documented. Participants assigned to bridging activities must be given sufficient notice of the activity in order for participation to be required. A participant may not be sanctioned for non-compliance with a bridging activity unless sufficient notice is given. It is recommended that bridging activities be arranged far in advance of breaks, when known, to ensure that the individual is prepared to participate.

If you have any questions or need additional information regarding the information in this letter, please contact your California Department of Social Services Employment Bureau county consultant at (916) 654-2137.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

CHARR LEE METSKER
Deputy Director
Welfare to Work Division

c: CWDA