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

January 21, 2000

REFUGEE COORDINATOR LETTER NO. 2000-03

To: County Refugee Coordinators

This letter transmits responses to some frequently-asked questions, which have been presented to California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Refugee Programs Branch (RPB) staff during the recent reviews of county reporting procedures.

Question #1:

Please compare the requirements for self-sufficiency plans between the Refugee Program and California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Program. In what ways are the plans similar and in what ways do they differ? Can counties use the plans interchangeably?

Answer:

The Refugee Program Family Self-Sufficiency Plan

Counties that are using Targeted Assistance and Refugee Employment Social Services funding to provide services to refugees are required to ensure that a coherent family self-sufficiency plan is developed for each eligible refugee family. The plan must address the family's needs from time of arrival until attainment of economic independence. Each plan should address a family's needs for both employment-related services and other needed social services. The plan must include:

A determination of the income level a family would have to earn to exceed its cash grant and move into self-support without suffering a monetary penalty;

A strategy and timetable for obtaining that level of family income through the placement in employment of sufficient numbers of employable family members at sufficient wage levels; and

Individual employability plans for every employable member of the family. The individual employability plan must:

. Lead to the earliest possible employment and not be structured in such a way as to discourage or delay employment or job-seeking opportunities;

2 Contain a definite employment goal that is attainable in the shortest time period and consistent with the employability of the refugee in relation to job openings in the area; and

3 Require the individual to meet job search requirements, where appropriate.

The CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Plan

The CalWORKs welfare-to-work plan is not equivalent to the Refugee Program (RP) Family Self-Sufficiency Plan and cannot be used interchangeably.

The CalWORKs welfare-to-work plan, like the RP Family Self-Sufficiency Plan, must include the activities and services that will move a recipient into employment and self-sufficiency. Specific CalWORKs forms that counties are required to use have been developed by CDSS for this purpose. Furthermore, the CalWORKs welfare-to-work plan is specifically required for a CalWORKs participant, given that state law and regulations stipulate that the date that the client signs, or refuses to sign, the plan initiates his/her 18- or 24-month time clock for the receipt of aid. Under CalWORKs, which also is "work first" focused, a recipient may participate in welfare-to-work activities until he/she reaches his/her 18- or 24-month time limit. At that point, the recipient may continue to receive aid only if he/she remains financially eligible and participates in unsubsidized employment and/or community service for a minimum of 32/35 hours per week, averaged monthly.

The specific contents of the CalWORKs welfare-to-work plan are noted in Manual of Policies and Procedures Section 42.711.6, contained in All County Information Notice (ACIN) I-70-99. Counties may access an online copy of ACIN I-70-99 from the CDSS website located at http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/getinfo/acin99/default.htm.

Question #2:

Can refugee participants CalWORKs Self-Initiated Programs (SIPs) receive RP-funded services? How should counties report these participants on the Services Participation and Outcomes Report (RS 50)?

Answer:

The RP funds are to be used primarily for employability services designed to enable refugees to obtain jobs within one year of becoming enrolled in services in order to achieve economic self-sufficiency as soon as possible.

Federal regulations prohibit the use of RP funds "for long-term training programs such as vocational training that last for more than a year or educational programs that are not intended to lead to employment within a year" (CFR § 400.146 and 400.313). Counties are also required to ensure that a coherent Family Self-Sufficiency Plan is developed for each refugee family receiving RP-funded services. (Please see response to Question #1 above for a description of the Family Self-Sufficiency Plan.) Given these provisions governing the RP, refugees participating in SIPs may not meet the requirements for participation in RP-funded services since state law and regulations allow a CalWORKs recipient to participate in an approveable SIP for 18 to 24 months, depending on the individual's aid status when the county implemented its CalWORKs welfare-to-work program. However, if all RP requirements are met, a refugee in a SIP may receive RP-funded employability services and his/her participation in these activities can and should be reported on the RS 50. Any outcomes resulting from participation in RP-funded services should also be reported. Please note that Case Management (CM) activities which are limited to tracking the refugee participant's satisfactory progress in the SIP should not be considered RP services. However, if a refugee is receiving CM services in conjunction with other RP-funded employability services (e.g., Employment Services), it is appropriate and necessary to report these activities/outcomes on the RS 50.

For clarification of SIP policies in the CalWORKs program, counties should refer to All-County Letter (ACL) No. 99-32, which may be accessed on the CDSS' website at http://www.cahwnet.ca.gov/getinfo/99acl/default.htm.

Question #3:

In regard to the CalWORKs Program status codes, how should counties report on the RS 50 refugee clients who are "Deregistered" (Status 5) and "Pending Deregistration" (Status 7)?

Answer:

Refugee clients whose program status is "Deregistered" (Status 5) should not be reported on the RS 50. Those clients whose program status is "Pending Deregistration" (Status 7) may be reported in the Enrolled count (Part A, Item 1) but not in the Active count (Part A, Item 2) unless they are actively participating in services, including limited services, and until such time that their request for temporary deferral/exemption from participation is approved and their program status changes to "Deregistered" (Status 5) or the request is denied and their program status reverts to "Active" (Status 1).

Question #4:

Does a copy of the Arrival-Departure Record (Form I-94) and Social Security Card need to be in both the Central Intake Point's (CIP) and the contracted service provider's file?

Answer:

The county must always have or ensure the contracted service provider has a copy of the I-94 and Social Security Card in their case file. In lieu of a copy of the Social Security Card, the worker may document in the case file that he/she saw the card and record the number.

Since not all refugee-impacted counties have CIPs, it is the responsibility of the county to decide if they want subcontractors to keep copies of these documents in their files.

Question #5:

Has the "Green Card" recently been revised? Is a refugee's date of entry displayed on the card?

Answer:

The Immigration and Naturalization Service's newest version of the Alien Registration Receipt Card, commonly known as the Resident Alien Card or the "Green Card," is now known as the Permanent Resident Card. The Permanent

Resident Card was introduced in December 1997. The form number (I-551) remains the same.

The Permanent Resident Card does not show the date of a refugee's entry into the United States; it only displays the date when the refugee received their card. For additional information on the I-551, please refer to the Non-citizen Reference Guide (Page 13) which was transmitted to counties via ACL 99-64, dated September 9, 1999. (A copy of this ACL is available at the website address noted in the response to Question #2 above.)

If you have questions or require additional clarification regarding RP issues, please contact your RPB County Consultant at (916) 654-6379. If you have additional questions or need further clarification regarding these or other CalWORKs welfare-to-work issues, please contact Milt Yee, Employment Bureau, at (916) 657-3399.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Barton, Chief
Refugee Programs Branch