



CDSS

WILL LIGHTBOURNE
DIRECTOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
744 P Street • Sacramento, CA 95814 • www.cdss.ca.gov



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

July 18, 2012

Lori Jones, Director
Alameda Social Services Agency
2000 San Pablo Ave., 4th Floor, Suite #445
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Ms. Jones:

This letter is to advise you that the Corrective Action Plan you submitted on April 30, 2012, in response to the results of our October 17-20, 2011 Civil Rights Compliance Review has been reviewed and given provisional approval.

There were some excellent corrective actions planned, especially those involving staff training and also involvement of the Civil Rights Coordinator in community advocate interactions. The provisional status of our approval is based on those corrective actions not yet fully developed, such as your agency plans to establish a centralized civil rights complaint process and log.

We did note, as well, that there was no response included with respect to the need for a full Annual Plan for the next year in lieu of an update of your existing plan. In the comprehensive annual plan, data regarding bilingual staffing is called for. In absence of current ethnic data of your caseloads and bilingual staffing provided at each site, assessment of the adequacy of bilingual staffing can only be made by a reviewer based on input from a small sample of staff who are a part of the review's staff interviews. Your Annual Plan for next year will be due August 1, 2012 and is to cover the period October 1, 2012 to October 1, 2013.

We will be monitoring the implementation of your corrective action items through your Civil Rights Coordinator and may schedule a monitoring visit for this purpose.

If you have any questions, please contact Elsa Garcia at (916) 654-2110 or by e-mail at Elsa.Garcia@dss.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



JIM TASHIMA, Chief
Civil Rights Bureau
Human Rights and Community Services Division

Enclosure

c: Darleen Brooks, Civil Rights Coordinator

Linda Patterson, Branch Chief
CDSS CalFresh Program

Mike Papin, Chief
CalFresh Policy Bureau

Marlene Fleming, Chief
Field Operations Bureau

Brian Tam, Chief
CalFresh Management Operations Section

Paul Gardes
CalFresh Policy Bureau

Thuan Nguyen
Refugee Programs Bureau

Joe Torres, Office of Civil Rights
USDA Food and Nutrition Services
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
Western Region

Hope Rios,
USDA Food and Nutrition Services
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
Western Region

Jodie Berger, Regional Counsel
Legal Services of Northern California

Civil Rights Compliance Review

DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION		
<p>Informational Element</p> <p>Explanation of CDSS' Publication 13</p>	<p>Corrective Action Required</p> <p>Alameda County shall ensure that the Pub. 13 pamphlets, "Your Rights Under California Welfare Programs" is both given and explained to program participants in all of the programs for which Alameda County administers and CDSS has oversight responsibility. (Div. 21-107.221)</p>	<p>Agency Response</p> <p>The Social Services Agency at the initial point of contact, and at the annual recertification and redetermination has consistently provided and explained the Pub. 13 "Your Rights Under California Welfare Programs" to clients. This process is conducted by the worker who reviews the paperwork with the respective client.</p> <p>Additionally the Pub. 13's are included in the application packets for further review by the client at their convenience are displayed at the reception areas in each facility. The Pub. 13 informational brochures are displayed at the reception areas in each facility.</p> <p>The Civil Rights Complaint Procedure is on the Agency's Intranet site and the Civil Rights Guidelines are made available to all staff on the Agency's Intranet site.</p> <p>The Pub. 13's are provided in the threshold languages at each facility.</p> <p>The Agency is unaware that workers do not provide sufficient detail to the telephone interpreters about the Pub. 13 to translate to clients so they fully understand. This issue has not been raised with the Agency in the past.</p>
<p>Directional signage</p>	<p>Alameda County shall ensure that instructional and directional signs are posted in waiting areas and other places that are frequented by clients and that where such areas are frequented by a substantial number of non-English speaking clients, such</p>	<p>Based on the recommendations each year from previous State CDSS auditors the Social Services Agency has consistently posted instructional and directional signage in both the waiting areas and other areas frequented by English and non-English speaking and LEP clients. We will, however, continue to monitor new signs that are placed in the waiting rooms to ensure translations are taking place.</p>

Civil Rights Compliance Review

	<p>signage shall be translated into appropriate languages.</p>	<p>The directional and instructional signage has been translated appropriately based on the threshold languages for each office and the agency. The Agency will continue to ensure that instructional and directional signage is posted in waiting areas and other areas frequented by clients including non-English speaking clients and translated into the appropriate languages.</p>
--	--	--

FACILITY ACCESSIBILITY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

North Oakland Self Sufficiency Office, 2000 San Pablo Ave.

Facility Element	Findings	Corrective Actions	Agency Response
Parking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The signage designating accessible parking spaces was missing the sign regarding minimum fines for parking in designated accessible spaces without proper placard or license. The space designated as the van accessible space has the access aisle (loading/unloading clearance) on the driver's side of the vehicle. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> An additional sign below the international symbol of accessibility sign shall state "Minimum Fine". Van-accessible should have access aisles on the passenger side of a space, and should be a minimum of 18' long by 9' wide. 	<p>Signs have been ordered and will be installed no later than April 30, 2012.</p> <p>The General Services Agency parking will have an ADA Specialist look at the space and make their recommendations and will make the necessary corrections.</p>
Restrooms	<p>Pressure required to open the doors was too high</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Force to open doors, exterior and interior, shall be 5 pounds maximum. 	<p>Door pressure was reduced and completed on April 16, 2012. New closers have been installed.</p>

Civil Rights Compliance Review

Fremont Self-Sufficiency Office 39155 Liberty St.

Facility Element	Findings	Corrective Actions	Agency Response
Parking	<p>1. The signage designating accessible parking spaces was missing the sign regarding minimum fines for parking in designated accessible spaces without proper placard or license</p>	<p>1. An additional sign below the international symbol of accessibility sign shall state "Minimum Fine of \$250.00".</p>	<p>Signs were ordered and will be installed by the General Services Agency no later than April 30, 2012.</p>
Lobby	<p>1. Phones provided for clients to call their workers were placed 50' high (from the floor), which exceeds the 40-42' height needed to qualify as accessible.</p> <p>2. Document Drop Boxes for client use are mounted at 49' from the floor</p>	<p>1. The same standard as for elevator call buttons or restroom dispensing fixtures are used to access the accessibility of equipment provided to clients for their use in contacting their workers. The "operable part" of the fixtures are to be no higher than 40 inches from the floor and the centerline of a hall call button for elevators should be no higher than 42 inches. At least one phone should be lowered to accessibility to persons in a wheelchair.</p> <p>2. Same as above.</p>	<p>Effective 3/15/12, the phones were lowered to meet the required height between 40'. Clients are now complaining about having to bend over to dial because the phones are too low.</p> <p>The General Services Agency will complete the work by April 30, 2012.</p>

Civil Rights Compliance Review

<p>Parking</p>	<p>1. There was unclear designation of the spaces intended for accessible parking. There were 4 freestanding signs, but only 3 spaces with ground markings and two of those spaces had no access aisles.</p>	<p>1. Each parking space for persons with disabilities shall be identified by a reflectorized sign posted adjacent to and visible from each space. The surface of each accessible space must have identification painted on the pavement outlining a profile view of a wheelchair with occupant located so that it is visible to a traffic enforcement officer when a vehicle is properly parked in the space and shall be 36" X36".</p> <p>Each accessible space is to be served by an access aisle (load/unload) and should be a minimum of 18' long and 5' wide (except for van-accessible space which requires it to be 8' wide and on the passenger side of the vehicle.</p>	<p>General Services Agency completed the work on April 10, 2012.</p>
<p>Door Pressure</p>	<p>2. The signage designating accessible parking spaces was missing the sign regarding minimum fines. Both the building's entrance and restroom facilities measured door pressure in excess of the standard for accessibility: Building Entrance: two sets</p>	<p>2. An additional sign below the international symbol of accessibility sign shall state "Minimum Fine \$250.00". Force to open doors, exterior and interior, shall be 5 pounds maximum.</p>	<p>The work was completed on April 23, 2012.</p>

Civil Rights Compliance Review

	<p>of doors @ 15-18 pounds; Restrooms: 12-13 pounds.</p>	
--	--	--

Provision For Services To Applicants And Recipients Who Are Non-English Speaking Or Who Have Disabilities

Area of Findings	Corrective Actions	Agency Response
<p>Adequacy of Language Services to Non-English Speaking Clients:</p> <p>a) Bilingual Staffing:</p> <p>b) Effectiveness of telephone interpreters</p>	<p>A sufficient number of qualified employees shall be assigned to public contact positions in each program and/or location serving a substantial number of non-English speaking persons. The number of public contact positions in each major program/location whose non-English language cases equal or program/location.</p> <p>When the percentage of non-English cases is more than five percent, the agency shall ensure that effective</p>	<p>The Agency continues to provide a sufficient number of available qualified employees in public contact positions to serve the threshold languages identified by the Agency in each office.</p> <p>Departments within the Agency also work with Human Resources to target additional recruitment of bi/multi-lingual staff whenever there are job vacancies. The Agency has a contract with Lion Bridge Interpreter Services that helps us to meet the needs of our non-English speaking clients.</p> <p>Rosters which include all bilingual workers are disseminated on a monthly basis and are available for all staff on the intranet and shared drive.</p> <p>The Agency has bilingual staff who are certified in a multitude of languages</p>

	<p>bilingual services are provided. This requirement may be met through bilingual staff, paid interpreters, qualified employees of other agencies or community resources.</p>	<p>including the agency's five threshold languages.</p> <p>Additionally the agency utilizes Lions Bridge Interpreter Services to provide for its telephone services.</p> <p>The Language Access Plan that is referenced under "Additional Discussion" is in its final draft, pending review by advocates who participate on the Language Access Taskforce Committee. We anticipate that this document will be finalized by October 31, 2012. Staff is also engaging the Training and Consulting Team in conversations to provide training for staff with public contact. The training has been on-going and is included in the new employee orientation. Beginning May 14, 2012, training will include how to utilize Lion Bridge Interpreter Services.</p>
--	---	---

DOCUMENTATION OF APPLICANT/RECIPIENT CASE RECORDS

Areas of Action	Corrective Action	Agency Response
<p>Documentation that bilingual services were provided (interpreters)</p>	<p>Alameda County SSA must ensure that staff document the method used to provide bilingual services, e.g., assigned worker is bilingual, other bilingual employee acted as interpreter, volunteer interpreter was used, or client provided interpreter.</p>	<p>Although staff has been reminded in unit meetings with their managers of the requirements outlined in ACIN I-02-08 and the agency maintains these requirements on the Language Access Website, we will identify other means of reminders such as Tips of the</p>

Civil Rights Compliance Review

Documentation of discussion concerning use of own interpreter	When applicants/recipients provide their own interpreter, SSA shall ensure that the applicants/recipients are informed of the potential problem of ineffective communication. It shall be documented in the case record that the applicant/recipients were so informed.	Week/Month, and random auditing of files on an ongoing basis. Although staff has been reminded in unit meetings with their managers of the requirements outlined in ACIN I-02-08, the agency will continue to enforce this and require that it be placed on every agenda and discussed at every meeting as a reminder of the requirement.
---	---	--

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

Areas of Action	Corrective Action	Agency Response
Ongoing Civil Rights Training	Each public contact employee shall receive training in the requirements of Division 21. These requirements of Division 21 shall be incorporated into the content of orientation and continuing training programs.	All new employees receive Division 21 training during their Social Services Agency orientation provided within the first month of hire. Ongoing training has been more sporadic. This issue is being addressed in collaboration with the Human Resources Department in a larger effort to identify all mandatory classes necessary across the Alameda County Social Services Agency. It is anticipated that this process will be completed by end of fiscal year 2011-2012 and that a schedule of ongoing training will follow immediately after. The Training and Consulting Team strives to assure that cultural awareness as a concept is woven in some form or

Civil Rights Compliance Review

		<p>fashion throughout much of the training provided. Specific examples of such training most recently have been the "Service with Heart" series. This customer service series had very explicit cultural content and a specific module regarding valuing cultural diversity. Additionally much of that content will be included in the "Service with Heart for Supervisors". Children and Family Services has provided and will continue to provide training on issue relating directly to services to the LGBTQ community, Disproportionality, Working Together in a Multicultural Workplace.</p> <p>Per the mandated training schedule that is being developed, as referenced above, every public contact employee shall receive training in the requirements of Division 21 in fiscal year 2012/13. The training shall be incorporated into the New Employee Orientation and shall be provided on an ongoing basis as prescribed by Agency policy and practice. In addition to citing the mandate, training will include working examples from various departments across the Alameda Social Services Agency so that staff has a clear understanding of their responsibilities. Current training will be reviewed for</p>
--	--	--

		content to ensure that there is sufficient content in support of honoring the cultural diversity in Alameda County.
DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT PROCEDURES		
<p>Areas of Action</p> <p>Discrimination Complaint Log</p>	<p>Corrective Action</p> <p>Procedures must be developed to establish accountability for maintaining a central client discrimination complaint log that meets the requirements of Division 21-203.21.</p>	<p>Agency Response</p> <p>The Agency is currently going through reorganization and reviewing the appropriate department for filing client discrimination complaints and maintaining the discrimination complaint log. This process will be finalized by December 31, 2012.</p> <p>A civil rights resource guide was developed in 2004 and is updated as the need arises; it is made available to staff on the agency intranet.</p>
<p>Discrimination Complaint Process</p>	<p>Alameda SSA must ensure that clients have access to and understand how to use the discrimination complaint process. (This includes training of staff as well)</p>	<p>Pub. 13 and Pub. 86 posters are prominently displayed and are made available at the reception areas in each facility. The poster provides information to clients on how to contact the Civil Rights Officer for the Social Services Agency.</p>

COMMUNITY INPUT

The Agency has made efforts to communicate with community advocates since 2003. The Agency has attempted to take a more proactive approach specifically with Bay Area Legal Aid and East Bay Community Law Center by working more closely with the Assistant Agency Director and Program Managers to resolve issues with respect to Language Services. Regular meetings have been organized and held between the Policy Office (Language Access) and community advocates. The Civil Rights Coordinator in the past

Civil Rights Compliance Review

has attended several meetings with the advocates. It is the intent of the Agency to increase the number of meetings that the Civil Rights Coordinator attends in order to play a more active role in the process.

The Agency has addressed the following recommendations as part of the findings from the Discrimination Research Center (DRC):

- Hired a Language Access Coordinator for the Agency;
- Continued its efforts to educate its employees on the utilization of telephone interpretive services, including the bilingual roster and the language line. Information booth employees, in particular, should receive additional training in this area, as they use these services the least and are the first point of contact for many ACSSA clients. Training on language access rights and protocols should also include education on cultural sensitivity
- Continued its efforts to educate limited English proficient clients about their rights to receive language interpreters and materials in their preferred language. Appropriate consent must be obtained if the client instead opts to use a friend or family member to interpret confidential information; however, it is highly recommended that a bilingual staff person or language line be used if a child is brought in to interpret
- Continue its efforts to translate all documents for LEP clients; all written materials are currently available in Spanish and many written materials are now available in Vietnamese and Cantonese. Translations should be written clearly and simply so that clients of all reading levels can understand the document.
- Maintained contact with CBO's regarding the ongoing status of improvements made in the provision of translated materials.

The Agency provides services to over 200,000 clients on a daily basis and has strengthened its efforts to improve language access for all clients of the agency. The number of Language Access complaints has been minimal (less than 30 a year) considering the number of clients that the Agency serves.