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March 12, 2009

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-21-09

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS
ALL STAFF DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

SUBJECT: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON CHILD WELFARE TRAINING
REGULATIONS

REFERENCE: ALL COUNTY LETTER (ACL) NO. 08-23

The purpose of this All County Information Notice (ACIN) is to provide answers to frequently asked questions submitted by counties regarding the Child Welfare Training Regulations.

Overview and Background

In response to the September 2002 Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) conducted by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, California developed a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) effective July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2005. Related to training and staff development, the PIP addressed findings that California did not have sufficient statewide requirements for the initial and ongoing training of new child welfare workers and supervisors. It also addressed the lack of necessary child welfare requirements for probation officers and supervisors who are working with Title IV-E placement wards. As a result, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has developed and revised regulations to meet the standards identified in the CFSR and required in the PIP. These regulations were distributed via ACL No. 08-23 and went into effect July 1, 2008.

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

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

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The CDSS created an email address to respond to inquiries regarding the implementation of these regulations. Attached are the questions and answers that have been received to date. If you have questions regarding the Training Regulations, please email them to: cwstrainingquestions@dss.ca.gov .

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed by:

LINNÉ STOUT, Acting Chief
Child Protection and Family Support Branch

Attachments

c: CWDA

Questions and Answers Training Regulations

- 1) We have supervisors who have completed the Supervisor Core and one that did not finish. Are they considered "trained"?

ANSWER: If the Supervisor didn't finish training within the first twelve months of the hire/promotion date, that supervisor would be non-compliant.

- 2) We have three newly hired supervisors who were hired on June 30, 2008 and are considered as New Hires for the Fiscal Year 07-08 but are neither trained nor non-compliant. Do we include them in the projections section for New Supervisors for 08-09?

ANSWER: Yes. The three newly hired Supervisors would fall under the projections for State Fiscal Year 08-09.

- 3) What is the definition of "Continuing Training"?

ANSWER: Per the Manual of Policy and Procedures (MPP) 14-130 c.(2), " 'Continuing Training' means an ongoing program of training planned to enable County Welfare Department (CWD) employees to (a) reinforce his/her basic knowledge and develop the required skills for the performance of specific functions, and (b) acquire additional knowledge and skill to meet changes due to enactment of new legislation, development of new policies, or shifts in program emphasis."

- 4) We provide new worker and continuing training for county workers. We currently do not keep track of training for participants who do not complete a course. We only report hours to the county for completed courses. If workers only attend a portion of a class, will the hours they did attend be acceptable to the state as "continuing training" hours? We do have allowances for short absences, but do not give credit if significant portions of the class is missed. Please advise.

ANSWER: It is the responsibility of the counties to track the training of their employees. The regulations do not change the role of the Regional Training Academy (RTA). If the RTA has not given credit for training courses due to trainee absences, and does not report on hours of training attendance for courses not completed, then the hours spent by the worker in training courses they did not complete cannot be counted for purposes of meeting training requirements.

- 5) What are the training requirements for non-case carrying Child Welfare Services (CWS) social workers (in our county, this would be licensing social workers, hotline screeners, etc.)?

ANSWER: The training requirements for non-case carrying Child Welfare Services (CWS) social workers are the same as the requirements for all social workers.

- 6) What are the training requirements for part time CWS social workers? Is it a fraction of the hours they work (i.e. 20 hours per week = requirement to complete 20 hours of training per two years, rather than 40)?

ANSWER: No. Part time Social Workers must satisfy all of the training requirements that are applicable to full time Social Worker's.

- 7) Are all CWS social workers considered child welfare workers?

ANSWER: Yes.

- 8) Would these additional training requirements be applicable to those Probation staff assigned to the placement unit strictly or any officer who may claim Title IV-E activities for the prevention of youth who enter foster care (Family Maintenance type services)?

ANSWER: Requirements are applicable to all staff that have youth in placement who fall under Division 31.

- 9) Can staff who are pursuing a Master's degree (i.e., Social Work or Counseling, or other closely related field) be exempt from the training hour obligation while they are in school?

ANSWER: For ongoing training, only students enrolled in the Masters of Social Work (MSW) classes could be considered compliant, provided the following rules are observed.

Per MPP 14-510 Continuing Training

1. County welfare departments shall make provision for training activities designed to meet employee needs including but not limited to the following:
 - .11 Preparing for newly assigned job duties;
 - .12 Expanding knowledge and understanding of their jobs' subject field;
 - .13 Providing knowledge and understanding of new and changing ideas;
 - .14 Remaining current on program changes, new programs and other subject areas related to their duties and responsibilities.

MPP 14-130 t(1) 'Training' means any structured activity which meets all of the following conditions:

- (a) Is the result of a consciously assessed learning need (by line, management or training personnel).
- (b) Is designed to improve an individual's or organization's Performance.
- (c) Is characterized by a set of overt learning objectives.
- (d) Is characterized by processes designed to foster adult learning.
- (e) Is controlled, coordinated, or monitored, and is actively supported by the training personnel.

- 10) How do we handle cases where a staff member is unable to complete the required hours, due to an extended period of absence from work (illness or other excused absence)?

ANSWER: A written plan of correction must be submitted with the Annual County Training Plan. Please refer to MPP 14-611.7.

11) Are there any penalties if the 40 hour per 2-year training requirement is not met?

ANSWER: Failure to comply may result in the withholding of “part or all of state or federal funds until the county shall make a showing of compliance.” (Manual of Policies and Procedures, Fiscal Management and Control, General Administrative Responsibility, 25-240, Withholding of State and Federal Funds Because of Noncompliance.) California Department of Social Services (CDSS) will consider the circumstances for non-compliance in regards to any fiscal action. To ensure that CDSS has all necessary information regarding non-compliance, it is incumbent on the Child Welfare Department to explain the rationale behind the non-compliance and what is being done to restore compliance. This information is to be reported when the Annual County Training Plan is submitted.

12) MPP Section 611.1 begins "All NEW child welfare workers shall complete a standardized core training program. "Does that mean that it applies only to those social workers hired after 7/01/08? People hired prior to that date are not NEW workers?

ANSWER: The regulations only pertain to the new social workers that are hired on/or after 7/1/08. Social Workers that were hired prior to 7/01/08 are not held to the same reporting standard. However, as of today’s date, new requirements are considered “best practice”, and counties should consider training all of their Social Workers to these requirements.

13) Is an employee who was promoted to Social Worker supervisor in November 2007 now required to complete Supervisor Core by November 2008? Or, does she have one year from 7/1/08, the effective date of the new regulations? Or, is she exempt from the regulations because she was not a NEW supervisor on/or after 7/01/08?

ANSWER: She is exempt.

14) A Social Worker was hired in March of 2007. She completed Core training in her first year of hire. Must she now complete secondary core training within 24 months of hire, which would be March 2009? Or, because the regulations became effective 7/01/08, does that extend the date to complete secondary Core? Or, is she exempt because she is not a new hire since the regulation was enacted?

ANSWER: She is exempt.

15) Is a Social Worker required to complete one class in each of the topics (a) through (n) listed in MPP Section 14-611.1-.12? For example, topic (c) is "court proceedings." The Northern Academy administered by UC Davis offers 3 different classes in this area. Does the social worker have to take all three or is only one required? If all three are required, must a social worker in the permanency planning unit who will never write a petition take the class called, "Court Petition Writing" or could she be granted an exemption? Is there a minimum number of hours required in each topic area? Is there a cumulative total of hours required for secondary core?

ANSWER: Social Workers are to complete one class in each of the topic areas. The topic areas are purposefully broad so that a range of classes will meet the requirement. In the Northern Regional Academy's class schedule, classes are coded the classes as to which requirement each class fulfills.

16) Do Case Aides have to complete the standardized core training program?

ANSWER: No. The requirements are for Social Workers.

17) In our county, we plan to track continuing training compliance (with existing social workers after the completion of required Core classes) by their hire date. For example, if a worker is hired in November 2008, they have until November 2009 to complete the first year requirements and (by November 2010 the 24 month requirements must be complete). The following year, 20 training hours must be completed by November 2011, and this remains in effect every year thereafter.

ANSWER: The time frame for continuing training for the above individual begins "with the state fiscal year after completion of core training." So, the above Social Worker who completes core as of November 2010 would start the continuing training timeframe on July 1, 2011. The worker would have until June 30, 2013 to complete the 40 hours of training. Counties may choose to require their workers complete 20 hours per year for training and tracking purposes. Counties, at their discretion, can require shorter timeframes for the completion of core training and continuing training. In these training regulations, CDSS has established the maximum timeframe for completion of training.