

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814



May 31, 2001

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE I-43-01

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
 ALL CalWORKs PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
 ALL WELFARE TO WORK SPECIALISTS

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: INTER-COUNTY TRANSFER (ICT) PROCEDURES, REVISED CW 215 FORM, ICT COORDINATORS LIST, AND LEGISLATIVE REPORT

The purpose of this letter is to reiterate Inter-County Transfer (ICT) procedures and to transmit copies of the revised CW 215 (Notification of Intercounty Transfer) form, an updated ICT Coordinators List, and a Legislative report on ICTs. The ICT regulations and procedures were established to ensure continuous services and cash aid to California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) recipients when they move from one county to another. Achieving these goals requires good communication and ongoing cooperation between the counties involved.

ICT regulations are found in the Manual of Policies and Procedures, Sections 40-187 through 40-197 and provide instructions for both former and receiving counties.

FORMER COUNTY RESPONSIBILITIES

The former county of residence must ensure that documentation pertinent to the client's continuing eligibility is sent promptly (the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) suggests five working days). The client must also be made aware of the importance of establishing eligibility in the new county as soon as possible. Counties are required to inform clients, in writing, of their responsibility to apply for a redetermination of eligibility in their new county of residence. The ICT reminder notice (M40-195A) has been provided to counties for this purpose.

RECEIVING COUNTY RESPONSIBILITIES

Receiving counties are encouraged to make contact with the client to facilitate the re-application process. Likewise, the receiving county should make every effort to process ICT cases promptly to avoid any disruption of services or benefits to the client. Counties are reminded that in ICT cases, continuing eligibility is to be determined based on "recipient" criteria. ICT clients should **not** be treated as new applicants, especially in

the areas of income, property limits and restricted accounts. Failure to do this could result in an inappropriate denial of CalWORKs benefits.

Additionally, the former county of residence must discontinue transferred cases once the new county has assumed responsibility for the provision of aid. Counties that fail to discontinue ICT cases in a timely manner, cause overpayments and disruption in services and benefits to the client. Again, communication between counties is essential to ensure a smooth transition. To assist in this communication we are attaching an updated list of ICT coordinators for your use. Counties are encouraged to utilize this list to facilitate the transfer of information between counties.

CW 215

The CW 215 (05/01) form has been revised to reflect changes resulting from the implementation of the CalWORKs program. The form now incorporates Welfare-to-Work information, a space to document Maximum Family Grant informing dates, as well as various other revisions to the Sanctions/Penalties, Medi-Cal, and Documentation Sent sections. Sections that are no longer needed have been eliminated and the form has been re-formatted to accommodate as much information as possible. A camera-ready copy of the [CW 215](#) form is available on-line or you may contact the Forms Management Unit by telephone at (916) 657-1907 or by e-mail at fm@cdss.ca.gov.

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

Also attached to this notice is a copy of a legislative report on CalWORKs Inter-County Transfers. The 2000/01 budget act mandated CDSS to report findings and recommendations to improve the current CalWORKs ICT process to minimize disruption of services for CalWORKs recipients. As recommended in the report, CDSS will work with counties and advocates to strengthen current ICT regulations to improve uniformity among counties and to facilitate a smooth transition for CalWORKs clients. CDSS will also look at the feasibility of developing an abbreviated ICT application form.

If you have any questions regarding this notice or the ICT process, please contact Paulette Stokes at (916) 654-3386.

Sincerely,
Original signed by
Charr Lee Metsker on
5/31/01

CHARR LEE METSKER, Chief
Employment and Eligibility Branch

Attachments

c: CWDA
CSAC

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE
ON
CalWORKs INTER-COUNTY TRANSFERS

April 1, 2001

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Gray Davis, Governor

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
Grantland Johnson, Secretary

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Rita Saenz, Director

REPORT MANDATE:

Supplemental Report of the 2000 Budget Act, Item 5180-101-0001

DESCRIPTION:

The Supplemental Report of the 2000 Budget Act mandated the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to prepare and submit a report to the Legislature no later than April 1, 2001. The purpose of this report is to present findings and recommendations to improve the current CalWORKs Inter-County Transfer (ICT) process to minimize disruption of services for CalWORKs recipients.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Subject:

This report presents findings and recommendations on how to improve the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Inter-County Transfer (ICT) process.

Principal Findings and Recommendations:

Some evidence (including input from advocates and counties) suggests that ICT cases are not always processed appropriately. However, administrative data suggests that the degree to which this problem exists does not appear to be great. Nevertheless, it is recommended that the ICT regulations be strengthened and current procedures reiterated to counties to improve uniformity and to help ensure that a disruption in services does not occur.

CDSS recommends the following measures be taken in consultation with advocates and counties:

- Strengthen current regulations to:
 - Add specific language to ensure “recipient” criteria is applied for eligibility determination in ICT cases.
 - Specify timeframes for counties to provide information to receiving counties and discontinue clients in a timely manner.
 - Instruct counties to attempt contact with the client.
- Explore the feasibility of developing an abbreviated application form for ICTs.
- Distribute the revised ICT form.
- Reiterate proper ICT procedures to all counties.

CDSS has already begun to work on some of the above recommendations. The revised ICT form has been completed and an All County Information Notice is being drafted to restate proper ICT procedures. In addition, CDSS is working with the advocate community and counties on the feasibility of developing an abbreviated application form. These recommendations are measures that can be implemented administratively. More extensive modifications to the ICT process would require a statutory amendment.

Fiscal Impact:

Minimal fiscal impact limited to administrative costs relative to the development and distribution of a new form and revised regulations.

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

CalWORKs INTER-COUNTY TRANSFER PROCESS

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to present findings and recommendations to improve the current Inter-County Transfer (ICT) process to ensure continuation of services for California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) recipients who move to a new county. This report is mandated by the Supplemental Report of the 2000 Budget Act.

Background

CalWORKs ICT Requirements

Under current ICT requirements,¹ the CalWORKs family's former county of residence initiates the ICT process by sending an intercounty transfer form to the new county upon notification that the client is moving. The client is informed in writing of their responsibility to apply for a redetermination of eligibility in the new county. Typically, this entails the completion of a new application form to provide the new county with information on the client's current circumstances. The former county is to provide copies of documentation relative to the client's eligibility, time on aid, work history, etc., to the receiving county and retains responsibility for the provision of aid during the transfer period. The transfer period ends no later than the first day of the month following 30 calendar days after the ICT notification is sent to the new county. The transfer period may be shortened by mutual agreement between the counties involved. Current regulations are not specific with regard to timelines, as well as county and recipient responsibilities. For instance, the regulations do not designate a period of time by which the former county must send documentation to the new county. The regulations also fall short of establishing deadlines by which recipients must reapply in the new county before being discontinued from aid. In each county, a designated ICT Coordinator serves as the county contact to handle problematic transfers. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) updates the list of ICT Coordinators annually and transmits it to counties via an All County Information Notice.

Other Program ICT Requirements

The Medi-Cal program currently has the same intercounty transfer requirements as CalWORKs. However, to ensure continuing Medi-Cal benefits for this population, the federal Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) has recently notified states that they must conduct ex parte Medi-Cal redeterminations. That is, counties must to the

¹ ICT procedures were established in Welfare and Institutions Code Section 11053 and 11102, and are regulated under the Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) Sections 40-187 through 40-197. Current regulations were previously revised in May 1997, to incorporate modifications as a result of the ICT Simplification Demonstration Project conducted from May 1994 to April 1997.

extent possible, determine continuing eligibility for Medi-Cal benefits without the involvement of the client based on information in the individual's public assistance case records. This requirement maintains reliance on the former county's records to continue Medi-Cal benefits.

There is no intercounty transfer process in the Food Stamp Program. When a client relocates to another county, they are notified that their food stamp allotment will be discontinued at the end of the month. The client is instructed to reapply for continuing food stamp benefits in the new county.

Methodology

CDSS looked at the ICT issue from the viewpoint of counties and welfare advocates, and consulted with other states, CDSS legal and program staff, the Health and Human Services Data Center, and the Department of Health Services. Administrative data relative to the number of ICTs that occur and the number of hearings requested on ICT issues were reviewed to assess the extent of the problem.

Counties have provided input through monthly meetings between CDSS and county representatives, a CalWORKs policy simplification survey issued in March 2000, and through telephone surveys with selected counties. CDSS staff has conferred with advocates to discuss their concerns and the possibility of developing an abbreviated application form specifically for ICT cases.

Findings

Other States Perspective

States with county-administered welfare programs (like California) were asked about their procedures, forms, timeframes, compatibility with food stamp and Medicaid programs, and whether they felt their process was effective. Two of the three states that responded reported that clients must submit a new application when they move to another county, and one state requires clients to report only pertinent changes (e.g., rent, wages, etc.) to the new county. All three states send relevant documentation from the clients' case file from one county to another. All reported that the procedures followed in their state were effective.

Advocate Perspective

The advocate community has expressed dissatisfaction with the current transfer process. Some welfare advocates allege that counties routinely determine eligibility in transfer cases, based on criteria used for a new applicant rather than a continuing recipient. Eligibility requirements differ between applicants and recipients in such areas as the treatment of income, property limits and restricted accounts. Therefore, ICT recipients may be found ineligible for CalWORKs if the county uses applicant eligibility criteria rather than recipient rules.

Advocates also argue that most of the responsibility for the continuation of aid should be placed on the counties and clients should not be required to fill out a new application form because they move. It has been suggested that the development of an abbreviated application form specifically for ICT clients may reduce the amount of paperwork transferring clients are often required to complete. Most county representatives believe that the application form cannot be abbreviated substantially, if at all, for ICT clients. Factors affecting program eligibility (e.g., job, earnings, resources, household expenses, etc.) often change after a residential change. Much of the information requested on the CalWORKs application forms, including all of the food stamp questions, are necessary to determine continuing eligibility.

County Welfare Department Perspective

County welfare departments have also expressed dissatisfaction with the current ICT process. In March 2000, CDSS requested input from counties regarding the simplification of policies and regulations in the CalWORKs program. Of the 23 counties that expressed an opinion concerning ICTs, virtually all felt that the ICT process is cumbersome and inefficient, and recommended that ICTs be eliminated.

The greatest difficulty counties face is the inability to obtain case file records from the former county in a timely manner, if at all. It is also problematic for counties if the client does not establish eligibility in the new county in a timely manner. Counties may be unable to process their application before the end of the transfer period, resulting in a break in aid. Under the counties proposed solution, the former county would discontinue the case at the end of the month following the move. The client would complete a new application (and provide verification) to determine continuing eligibility in the new county. This would ensure that eligibility is established appropriately and eliminate delays in the provision of aid that occur because of the difficulty counties have in obtaining the necessary documentation from the former county. Clients that fail to reapply before the discontinuance date would lose their recipient status and have to apply as new applicants.

The counties' proposed process would align with the procedures followed in the Food Stamp Program. That is, the case would be terminated in the former county at the end of the month following notification of the move. The client would then reapply for both cash aid and food stamps in the new county of residence. Counties feel that this would be a cleaner process, and would eliminate some confusion on the part of the client. As it currently stands, the client must continue to submit a monthly report to the former county for cash aid and to the new county for food stamps until the end of the transfer period. This is because the former county is still providing cash aid, while the new county has already taken over responsibility for the provision of food stamps.

The elimination of the ICT process, as the counties propose, would require a statutory amendment, which would be opposed by advocates who believe the process is necessary to ensure uninterrupted continuation of aid. In addition, this would be inconsistent with HCFA's guidelines for the Medicaid program. HCFA specifies that, in a county-administered Medicaid program, when a family moves within the state, the state and the counties are responsible for transferring the case record from the former

county of residence to the new county of residence so that Medicaid can continue without interruption. The state cannot require the family to reapply for Medicaid or comply with a Medicaid redetermination solely based upon a move to a new county.

Administrative Data

Approximately 2.4 percent of the total CalWORKs caseload (11,800 families) moved to another county one or more times in 1999. Smaller counties receive as few as 10 ICT clients per month while larger counties can receive as many as 162.

The CDSS State Hearings Division reported only six ICT-related hearings within the last six months. Based on this data, it appears that the incidence of inappropriate ICTs is low.

Recommendations

CDSS believes the responsibility for the continuation of CalWORKs benefits when a recipient moves from one county to another is shared by both the recipient and the counties involved. Recipients must take responsibility to reapply for aid in a timely manner. Likewise, all counties must transfer the necessary documentation and discontinue cases in a timely manner when the responsibility for providing aid is no longer theirs. In an effort to improve the transfer process, absent a change in state statute, CDSS shall:

- Work with advocates and county representatives to strengthen the ICT regulations to:
 - Establish a timeframe by which counties must provide needed documentation.
 - Add specific language regarding the discontinuance of clients at the end of the transfer period.
 - Specify the eligibility criteria to be used in ICT cases.
 - Add language directing receiving counties to attempt contact with the client when an ICT notification is received from another county.
- Work with advocates and county representatives to explore the feasibility of developing an abbreviated ICT application form.
- Reiterate proper ICT procedures via an All County Information Notice and provide counties with the revised ICT notification form to facilitate the transfer of pertinent case information.

CDSS has already begun to work on a number of the stated recommendations. The revised ICT form has been completed and a letter is being drafted to restate proper ICT procedures to all counties. In addition, CDSS is collaborating with the advocate community and counties on the possible development of an abbreviated application form.

Fiscal Impact

The fiscal impact would be minimal and limited to state administrative costs relative to the development and distribution of a new form and revised regulations. Counties may incur a small increase in administrative costs associated with the procurement of the new form and any system programming necessary for its use.

ATTACHMENTS

Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 11053 and 11102

Inter-County Transfer Regulations (Manual of Policies and Procedures
Section 40-187 through 40-197

NOTIFICATION OF INTERCOUNTY TRANSFER Form (CW 215)

Inter-County Transfer Reminder Notice of Action