

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814



March 28, 2003

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-15-03

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CalWORKs PROGRAM 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: CALIFORNIA WORK OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO KIDS (CalWORKs) APPLICATION AND INTERVIEW REQUIREMENTS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

REFERENCE: MANUAL OF POLICY AND PROCEDURES (MPP) 40-101, 40-105.1, 40-107.1, 40-131.12, 40-161, 40-181.31, 80-301.a (7), 82-828.2 & .23, 63-300.4

The purpose of this All County Information Notice (ACIN) is to provide counties with answers to questions regarding face-to-face interview requirements.

1. Question: Is the second parent or step-parent in a two-parent family also required to attend a face-to-face interview?

Response: Yes. Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) Section 80-301.a (7) defines an applicant as the person who requests aid, or a person on whose behalf a request for aid is made. Therefore, both parents in a two-parent case are considered applicants and must attend the face-to-face interview. In a stepparent case, the stepparent is required to participate in the face-to-face interview if he/she is included as an optional person.

MPP 40-131.3 provides the content of the interview. One purpose of the interview is to ensure that all responsible parties are informed of their rights and responsibilities described in MPP 40-107.1. Although only one parent is designated as the caretaker payee, this does not reduce the responsibility of the second parent in the home. Both parents are applicants/recipients and are held equally accountable for accurate reporting and for the repayment of overpayments.

For redeterminations, MPP 40-181.31 requires that the annual redetermination include an interview with the parent or person responsible for the child or the person having responsibility for the care and control of the child. It does not require that this interview take place face-to-face. A home visit as defined in MPP 40-161 may be scheduled if the applicant/recipient has physical or mental barriers which limits his/her abilities to attend a face-to-face interview.

2. Question: Are both parents required to attend the same face-to-face interview during the intake and redetermination process?

Response: No. MPP 40-131.11 provides that a face-to-face interview take place with the applicant prior to the granting of aid. Therefore, this regulation supports the need for both parents to attend a face-to-face interview, but the interviews can occur separately. See the response to question one above regarding the need for an interview to occur only with the person having care and control of the child at redetermination.

As noted in MPP 40-101.12 and MPP 40-107.1, the county is responsible for assisting the applicant/recipient in performing his or her responsibilities to secure aid to which he/she is eligible. When requested by the applicant, the county should make every effort to assist the applicant by scheduling appointments at a convenient time, especially when the applicant is working and will need to get time off from his/her job. However, it is not required that county workers rearrange normal work hours to accommodate such an interview.

In addition, the regulations do not prohibit the county from informing the individual of their rights and responsibilities on the telephone. However, this would not change the requirement for a face-to-face interview and the need for the individual's signature acknowledging that they understand their rights and responsibilities.

3. Question: Can a county require a family to bring their children to the interview?

Response: No. Children, who are not caretakers or heads of households, are not required to attend a face-to-face interview. However, counties may require the parents to attend a face-to-face interview, or a home visit may be conducted as, stated in MPP 40-161, when such a contact is necessary to clarify inconsistent information regarding children in the home.

4. Question: The Food Stamp Program allows the waiver of the face-to-face interview. Can CalWORKs also waive this requirement when the worker is conducting a joint application interview?

Response: No. There is no regulatory provision to allow waiver of the CalWORKs application face-to-face interview. As stated in MPP 40-131 a face to face interview is required prior to granting aid. In many counties, separate workers determine eligibility and benefits for each program; this does not negate the requirement for a CalWORKs face-to-face interview, for eligibility purposes.

Please contact Cheryl Almquist at (916) 653-9546 if you have questions regarding this ACIN.

Sincerely,

Original signed by Charr Lee Metsker

CHARR LEE METSKER, Chief
Employment and Eligibility Branch

c: CWDA
CSAC