

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814



September 9, 1998

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-52-98

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

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

SUBJECT: CASH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR IMMIGRANTS

REFERENCE: AB 2779

The purpose of this notice is to advise counties of a new program required by this year's Budget Act implementation bill for social services (AB 2779, Chapter 329). It authorizes a state-funded cash assistance program for immigrants. Under the provisions of this bill, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) must establish and supervise a county, or multi-county consortia-administered program to provide cash assistance to certain aged, blind and disabled legal immigrants who are no longer eligible for Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP) benefits solely due to the immigrant provisions of Public Law 104-193 and its amendments.

AB 2779 primarily affects two groups of immigrants:

- 1) Those whose immigration status meets the SSI/SSP eligibility criteria in effect on August 21, 1996, and who were lawfully residing in the U.S. as of that date (whether or not they are currently receiving SSI/SSP), but who are not eligible for SSI/SSP benefits solely due to their immigration status under Public Law 104-193. We have preliminarily identified from this group of immigrants the following categories who may be eligible for the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants:
 - a. Non-citizens residing in the United States on or before August 21, 1996, who were scheduled to stop receiving SSI/SSP benefits effective September 30, 1998 because they do not meet the immigrant status provisions of P.L. 104-193. They had met the previous SSI/SSP immigrant status requirements for aliens Permanently Residing Under Color of Law (PRUCOL).

- b. Non-citizens, in the United States on or before August 21, 1996, who never received SSI/SSP and meet the previous SSI/SSP PRUCOL requirements, but not the current immigration status requirements.
 - c. Lawful permanent residents in the United States on or before August 21, 1996 who are 65 or older, but do not meet SSI/SSP disability requirements.
- 2) Sponsored legal immigrants who entered the United States on or after August 22, 1996, and either the sponsor died; the sponsor is disabled; or, the immigrant is a victim of abuse by the sponsor or the spouse of the sponsor.

Current SSI/SSP recipients will not be required to complete an application. Those not currently receiving SSI/SSP will be required to complete an application process, meet the SSI/SSP immigrant status requirements in effect on August 21, 1996; and meet all other current SSI/SSP eligibility requirements.

Payment amounts will be \$10 less than what they would otherwise have received from SSI/SSP. CDSS must reimburse counties for all grant and related administrative costs. Periodic redeterminations are required. The program will become inoperative on July 1, 2000. The bill's timeline requirements are:

- October 1, 1998 - CDSS must issue checks to immigrants who will lose their SSI/SSP benefit because of their immigrant status (assuming this is the first date of non-receipt of an SSI/SSP check). Responsibility for issuing checks and redetermining eligibility for the converted recipients will shift to the counties once they begin full operation of the program, presumably around January 1999.
- November 1, 1998 - Counties must begin accepting applications, determine eligibility and beginning date of aid.
- December 1, 1998 - Counties must issue checks and notices.

As of August 11, 1998, there were about 4,200 recipients in California whose SSI/SSP benefits are scheduled to be stopped. Recently introduced federal legislation (H.R. 4426) would extend the redetermination period for immigrants receiving SSI/SSP until March 31, 1999. The number of current recipients ultimately found to be ineligible for SSI/SSP under the new law is estimated to be less than 1,000, presuming that most affected recipients will actually be able to retain their SSI/SSP eligibility once their immigrant status and eligibility are redetermined.

Approximately 1,500 long-term immigrant residents who are 65, but not disabled are estimated to be eligible to apply for the new program by November 1, 1998. We've estimated there will be about 60 new applications per month from this group on an ongoing basis. We do not have an official estimate on the number of new sponsored immigrants who may apply for this program.

AB 2779 authorizes the CDSS to implement the program through an all county letter. The department needs to follow two separate tracks in implementing the provisions of this bill. Track 1 requires CDSS to issue checks on October 1, 1998 through the State Controller's Office, to current SSI/SSP recipients who will lose that benefit as a result of their immigrant status.

Under Track 2, CDSS must design and implement an entirely new program so that the counties can begin operations on November 1, 1998. We have obtained participation from counties in a workgroup which began meeting recently, and are expecting participation from the Social Security Administration in the near future, to design the eligibility rules, forms, and processes necessary to implement the new program.

Any questions regarding this information should be directed to Patty Russell, Chief of the Adult Programs Management Bureau, at (916) 229-4000.

Sincerely,

***Original Document Signed By Leonard Tozier For
Donna L. Mandelstam On 9/9/98***

DONNA L. MANDELSTAM
Deputy Director
Disability and Adult Programs Division