

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814



December 7, 2004

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 04-55

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CalWORKs PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
ALL FOOD STAMP COORDINATORS

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: COUNTY WELFARE DEPARTMENT OFFICE CLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

The purpose of this All County Letter (ACL) is to remind County Welfare Departments (CWDs) of their responsibilities with regard to office closures. The final judgment in the Blanco v. Anderson court case ordered that when CWDs are closed during the regular eight hours of the working day, they must make it possible for individuals to apply for and receive food stamps, cash aid, Medi-Cal benefits, including emergency benefits, within the time frames prescribed by state and federal law. The CWDs must also provide notice of their hours of operation, and of the procedures during these hours of closure for applying for and receiving these benefits.

Specifically, MPP Section 11-601.3 established the following requirements when county welfare offices are closed during the regular eight hours of a working day:

- Provide individuals the opportunity to file an application for and receive food stamps and/or cash aid within the time frames prescribed by federal and state law by making applications readily available and providing a drop-box, mail slot, or other reasonable means for filing applications.
- Provide individuals the opportunity to file an application for and receive expedited food stamps, immediate need cash aid, and homeless assistance benefits by maintaining sufficient staff to accept and act upon all such applications, and/or maintaining a local telephone service with sufficient staff to accept and act upon all applications as if the requests had been made in person at the CWD's office.
- Greet incoming calls on the main telephone lines of the CWD's offices with an announcement informing the caller of the working days, or regular eight hours of a working day, when the offices will be closed, the procedures for obtaining and filing applications for food stamps and cash aid during those hours of office closure, and the procedures for applying for and receiving expedited food stamps, immediate

need cash aid, and homeless assistance benefits within the time frames prescribed by federal and state law during those hours of office closure.

- Post notices in prominent locations within the CWD's offices and in the public areas, including the doors immediately outside the CWD's offices which inform the public about the working days, or the regular eight hours of a working day when the offices will be closed, the procedures to obtain and file applications, and the procedures for applying for and receiving expedited food stamps, immediate need for cash aid, and homeless assistance benefits.

In addition, MPP Section 63-301.53 requires the CWD to make the authorization document, or access device available to the recipient either by mail or for pickup at the household's request no later than the third calendar day following the date the application for food stamp benefits was filed for households entitled to expedited service at initial application. For purposes of this section, a weekend (Saturday and Sunday) is considered one (1) calendar day. Whatever system a CWD uses to ensure meeting this delivery standard shall be designed to allow a reasonable opportunity for redemption of an authorization document, or use of an access device no later than the third calendar day following the date the application was filed.

CWDs must follow the procedures outlined above to ensure that individuals may apply for and receive benefits within the time frames mandated by state and federal law when offices are closed during regular business hours. If you have any questions or need further information regarding this letter, please contact the CalWORKs Eligibility Bureau at 654-1322 or the Food Stamp Policy Bureau at 654-1896.

Sincerely,

***Original Document Signed
By Charr Lee Metsker
On 12/7/04***

CHARR LEE METSKER
Acting Deputy Director
Welfare to Work Division

c: CWDA
CSAC