

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814



September 22, 2006

ALL COUNTY LETTER (ACL) NO. 06-41

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
 ALL CalWORKs PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
 ALL REFUGEE COORDINATORS
 ALL FOOD STAMP COORDINATORS
 ALL CONSORTIUM PROJECT MANAGERS

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) INCOME REPORTING THRESHOLD (IRT)
 FOR QUARTERLY REPORTING/PROSPECTIVE BUDGETING
 (QR/PB)

REFERENCE: WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE SECTION 11265.3, MANUAL
 OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (MPP) SECTIONS 40-173.8,
 44-316.321(e), 44-316.324; AND ACL NO. 05-27

The purpose of this letter is to transmit the 2006 IRT chart for the CalWORKs Program. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) developed the attached IRT chart to provide the County Welfare Departments (CWDs) with the IRT amounts to be used to meet the income reporting requirements in MPP Sections 44-316.321 (e) and 44-316.324 for QR/PB. These IRT levels are effective October 1, 2006.

IRT Reporting Requirements

Under the QR/PB reporting system, CalWORKs recipients are required to report only certain changes in their income or family circumstances mid-quarter. One such mandatory mid-quarter report is when the Assistance Unit (AU)'s total income exceeds the IRT.

The IRT is the greater of 130 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for the number of persons whose needs are included in the determination of the cash aid amount, or the level at which an AU becomes financially ineligible. Income that must be reported for IRT purposes is the same as income that is required to be reported for determining eligibility and the cash aid amount. This includes income of sanctioned, penalized, excluded, and timed out individuals. The income to the AU includes the income of persons not in the AU who were included in the determination of income eligibility and grant amounts in the Maximum Aid Payment (MAP).

(Note: AUs with either no income or with unearned income only, will be required to report if they receive new earnings that, when combined with other household income, exceed the IRT mid- quarter. AUs with unearned income only are not required to report when that income by itself exceeds the IRT in mid quarter.)

If any member of the AU or person included in the family MAP has earned income or begins receiving earned income, the AU must report to the county when the family's combined gross income, earned and unearned, exceeds the AU's IRT during the payment quarter. Once the family receives income in excess of the IRT and reports it to the county, the county must take action, per MPP Section 44-316.324 (QR) (c) (1), to determine if the reported income is reasonably anticipated to continue and whether the AU's net nonexempt monthly averaged income for the remainder of the current QR Payment Quarter will exceed the AU's MAP. If the averaged income is reasonably anticipated to continue to exceed the AU's MAP for the remainder of the QR Payment Quarter, the county shall determine the AU financially ineligible and shall discontinue the AU at the end of the month in which the AU first received the income that exceeded the AU's MAP, with timely and adequate notice.

Informing Recipients of their IRT

The informing notice that provides the IRT limits must be individualized for each CalWORKs case. The CWD shall inform each household of their IRT at the following times: 1) at least once a quarter; 2) at redetermination/recertification; 3) anytime there are changes in the CalWORKs AU or Family MAP size; 4) when there is a change of persons who are required to report income; and 5) upon recipient request. Additionally, the AU must be informed of the new IRT levels any time the IRT chart is updated.

Due to differences in automation and other practices, CWDs may inform recipients of the IRT requirements on (1) the QR 7, (2) the Notice of Action used to add or remove AU members, or (3) on a separate informing notice. The CWD shall follow notification rules regarding individualized IRT levels in accordance with MPP Sections 40-173.8 and 44-316.324 as instructed above. The IRT level the recipient was last notified of will be used for reporting purposes until the CWD have had an opportunity to update the recipient of any applicable IRT change.

IRT Chart

The attached IRT chart is effective October 1, 2006. The figures on the chart for all AU sizes in both Regions are based on the October 2006 Food Stamp gross income limits (130 percent of FPL). The Food Stamps gross income limits are higher than the CalWORKs MAP levels for all reporting sizes in both Regions. Therefore, income at 130 percent of FPL or greater would render the family financially ineligible. The CalWORKs MAP levels are not used to establish the IRT.

Note: Historically, the income level that rendered an AU of two in Region One financially ineligible was greater than 130 percent of FPL. In that specific instance, the IRT was based on the CalWORKs income limit rather than the Food Stamp income limit. As a result of the two year suspension of the MAP COLA, the CalWORKs income limit for an AU of two in Region One is less than 130 percent of the FPL beginning October 1, 2006.

Like last year, an entry of zero to the IRT Chart is to reflect the IRT amount for a reporting size of zero. This is to address those relatively rare occurrences where no one's needs are considered in determining the CalWORKs cash aid amount. An example of this would be a case where the only eligible child is a Maximum Family Grant child and his/her caretaker relative (parent) is either being sanctioned or penalized and there are no other persons in the home whose needs are considered in the Family MAP. In this situation, the MAP amount is zero and the IRT is \$227. We arrive at the IRT level for a reporting size of zero using the following formula: Reporting size of zero in Region One and Region Two: $\$0 + \$225 = \$225 + \$1 = \$226$. (\$1 is added to make the reporting size of zero over the limit.)

Refugee Cash Assistance

The above instructions regarding the IRT also apply to the Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) Program in accordance with MPP Section 69-201.4 which states that CalWORKs Program regulations relating to financial eligibility and payments apply to RCA unless specifically superceded by RCA regulations.

Please direct any questions regarding the CalWORKs IRT chart to your CalWORKs County Consultant. For questions regarding the Food Stamp FPL, you may contact Joyce Brewer at (916) 654-3366. For questions regarding Refugee Programs, please contact Janet Sandlin at (916) 654-1246.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed by:

CHARR LEE METSKER
Deputy Director
Welfare to Work Division

Attachment

c: CWDA
CSAC