

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814



February 13, 2003

REFUGEE COORDINATOR LETTER NO. 03-01

TO: COUNTY REFUGEE COORDINATORS

SUBJECT: EXPIRATION OF REFUGEE CALWORKS BENEFITS

The refugee community has expressed their concern about the recent termination of benefits to the first generation of clients under the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program. These clients have "timed-out" after receiving the maximum sixty months of CalWORKs benefits since the advent of welfare reform. Refugee families who have "timed out" and not yet achieved self-sufficiency are experiencing considerable anxiety over the loss of benefits and services and the consequences this will have on their future for economic stability.

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information regarding benefits and services that "timed out" CalWORKs refugee clients may continue to receive. As some of the services may be optional and vary from county to county, you should contact staff responsible for CalWORKs administration in your county to learn exactly which services are available.

In CalWORKs, families' cash assistance will be terminated for the adults after sixty months; however, the children will continue to receive aid. In addition, programs and benefits for which a family may continue to access include:

- **Food Stamps:** In most cases, eligible CalWORKs families have already qualified for food stamps to help meet their food needs.
- **Medical Coverage:** In most cases, each member of the family receiving CalWORKs has also qualified for Medi-Cal which will pay for most medical costs, including those for mental health needs.
- **Child Support:** The County District Attorney (D.A.) Offices will continue to provide all necessary child support services, including establishing paternity, establishing and enforcing a support obligation and collecting support payments.
- **Family Planning:** The County will continue to provide information about methods for planning family size if a family asks for it.

- **Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP):** Regular, preventative medical check-ups will continue to be available to members of CalWORKs families under the age of 21.
- **Social Services:** Social Worker help is still available for families with problems such as drug abuse or legal difficulties.
- **Child Care:** Former CalWORKs recipients who need child care to work or participate in other activities may receive subsidized child care for up to 24 months after leaving CalWORKs cash aid. The provision of child care for former recipients is one service which is *not* optional for counties.

Additional other services that may be available include job retention services and case management and supportive services. Please see the enclosed All County Letter No. 02-92 for more information on these services. Also, innovative practices to prepare CalWORKs recipients as they approach their CalWORKs 60-month time limit can be found in All County Information Notice No. I-67-02, which can be found at the following web site address: http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/getinfo/acin02/pdf/I-67_02.pdf.

In regard to refugee-funded services that are available for timed-out refugee CalWORKs clients, counties receiving Refugee Employment Social Services funding are allowed to serve refugees over sixty months through September 30 of this year via the waiver California was granted by the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement.

We urge you to share this information with your refugee service providers, and that they likewise share it with their clients. Working together in sharing all the available resources with the CalWORKs refugee population will make their transition easier and less stressful. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Betts Smith, Manager, Operations & Performance Bureau at (916) 654-0495.

Sincerely,

THUAN NGUYEN, Chief
Refugee Programs Branch