

2012 CWDA Federal Priorities

In addition to advocating on pending legislation and budget proposals, CWDA monitors federal agency regulations and policy changes that affect county human services programs. For the current session of Congress, CWDA's federal priorities include:

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Reauthorization

Principles Include:

- I. Maintaining the overall work focus of the program, while recognizing that "work first" does not mean "work only." Research indicates that the most successful welfare-to-work programs combine work with training and supportive services, as appropriate. CWDA supports a permanent authorization and appropriation of funding for subsidized employment as enacted originally in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.
- II. Restoring and enhancing state and county flexibility to tailor work and family stabilization activities to families' individual needs.
- III. Measuring states' performance in a fair and comprehensive manner that recognizes multiple potential positive outcomes for families.
- IV. Rebuilding the partnership between the federal government, states and counties in order to move forward with common goals.

Health Care Reform

- Work with the federal government and national partners to develop rules and requirements for Medicaid enrollment and Exchange enrollment under the PPACA that reduce program complexity, recognize the county role in eligibility and enrollment, and support SAWS consortia modernization efforts.
- Oppose efforts to block grant the Medicaid program or other initiatives to reduce funding for program administration or benefits.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Reauthorization

- Work with the federal government and national partners to increase outreach and enrollment for SNAP/CalFresh.
- Provide additional flexibility for states to align Food Stamps (CalFresh) eligibility and processes with state TANF programs.
- Oppose efforts to roll back program rules that allow for state flexibility and streamlining, such as categorical eligibility rules that California has implemented.

Child Welfare Services

- Support efforts to reform child welfare financing, including prevention activities.
- Provide adequate federal funding for services and income support needed by parents seeking to reunify with children who are in foster care.
- Increase financial support for programs that assist foster youth in the transition to self-sufficiency, including post-emancipation assistance such as secondary education, job training, and access to health care.

- Retain the entitlement nature of the Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance programs and advocate for the elimination of outdated rules that base the child's eligibility for funds on parental income and circumstances.

AB12/Fostering Connections Improvements

- Change federal law to allow for a successor guardian in same manner as a successor adoptive parent is allowed today in order to minimize disruption for children whose guardians die or become incapacitated.
- Change federal law limiting extended guardianship and adoption under Fostering Connections only for youth whose adoption or guardianship was established at age 16 or older in order since it is a disincentive for permanency for these children.

Adult and Disability Services

- Appropriate \$100 million authorized under the Elder Justice Act to support state and county adult protective services programs.
- Restore full funding for the Social Services Block Grant, which in California is used primarily to augment county and state funded in-home supportive services for elderly and disabled persons, and to coordinate services to disabled children.

Legal Immigrant Benefits

- Restore benefits to legal immigrants that were ended by the 1996 welfare reform legislation.