



CWDA

Advancing Human Services
for the Welfare of *All* Californians

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TO: County Welfare Directors Association

FROM: Tom Joseph, Director, CWDA Washington, D.C. Office

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RE: Federal Priorities

CWDA's 2016 Federal Priorities, as approved by the CWDA Board of Directors, are as follows:

Health Reform

- Oppose efforts to reduce federal funding for Medicaid administration or benefits, including efforts to place a per-capita cap on funding, create Medicaid block grants for states, or limit the ability of states to leverage funds through assessments on providers.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

- Work with the federal government to ensure that SNAP reauthorization regulations and/or guidance on the bar on receipt of benefits for certain felons convicted of violent crimes is feasible to implement administratively. (Section 4008 of the new law bans receipt of benefits for those ex-felons who have served their time but who have violated the terms of their post-sentencing and/or probation.)
- Work with the federal government and national partners to increase outreach and enrollment for SNAP/CalFresh.
- Identify opportunities to streamline and simplify federal requirements for SNAP recipients to enhance enrollment and retention.
- Provide additional flexibility for states to align SNAP/CalFresh eligibility and processes with state TANF/CalWORKS and Medicaid programs, including the use of "reverse express lane" enrollment to automatically provide SNAP to Medicaid-eligible individuals.
- Improve timeliness of data provided by the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) to states for use in administering SNAP.

Child Welfare Services

- Support federal funding to respond to the service needs of youth who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation.
- Respond to potential regulations implementing the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Improving Opportunities for Youth in Foster Care Act to ensure that federal requirements are flexible when states and counties identify, report and/or determine services for youth at risk of being trafficked or are victims of trafficking.
- Support efforts to reform child welfare financing, including providing IV-E federal foster care match funding for prevention activities.
- As an alternative to monthly, in-person visits, support a provision allowing for “skyping” or other remote means of regularly connecting with non-minor foster youth in the extended foster care program when the youth is attending college or living with relatives in another state or out of country.
- Increase federal funding for services and income support, including housing supports, needed by parents seeking to reunify with children who are in foster care.
- Increase federal 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 eliminate outdated rules that base the child’s eligibility for funds on parental income and circumstances.
- 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 children with disabilities.

Legal Immigrant Benefits

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

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

- Support increased federal funding for the new priority under WIOA for out-of-school youth, including foster youth and those who have aged out of the foster care system.

Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014

- CWDA will work with the Child Care Committee to identify implementation issues.

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.
- 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 and move forward with common goals.