



2009 – 2010
Madera County Grand Jury
Final Report
Eligibility Workers

Prepared By: Public Safety & Welfare Committee

2009 - 2010
Madera County Grand Jury
Final Report
Madera County Department of Social Services Eligibility Workers

Introduction:

On October 8, 2009 members of the Madera County Grand Jury visited the Madera County Department of Social Services (DSS) Eligibility Workers (EW). EW determines eligibility for a wide range of services including California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWorks), Welfare to Work (WtW), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medi-Cal, County Medical Services Program and General Assistance. In the month of September, 2009 EW served 9433 clients that applied for county assistance.

Findings:

Total DSS budget is \$54,607,692. Assistance programs within DSS amount to \$32,116,900 of which EW receives a portion of these funds. These budget funds are received from federal, state and county sources.

EW staffing includes 45 Eligibility Workers, 8 Eligibility Supervisors, 16 Employment and Training Workers and 3 Training Supervisors. Included in this staff are EW from Chowchilla and Oakhurst. Madera Community Hospital has 2 full-time staff from EW.

CalWorks is California's version of welfare reform and encompasses all the mandates of the federal welfare reform program called Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. Families may be eligible for CalWorks cash aid benefits if there is at least one child in the home, who is deprived of parental support due to death, absence, disability or unemployment. Adults in the CalWorks program are limited to receiving cash assistance for a lifetime cumulative period of 60 months. Non-exempt adults must participate in a work activity. Employment services are available for adult recipients to assist in finding and keeping a job.

WtW is designed to assist CalWorks clients in becoming self-sufficient. A variety of employment services to move participants from WtW are in place. WtW pays for the cost of childcare, transportation and other work related expenses involved, including vocational training at the Madera Adult School and local Community Colleges. The goal is to help clients find and retain employment that will subsequently lead to financial self-reliance.

SNAP is administered jointly by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. The program provides monthly benefits to assist low income households to purchase food and maintain adequate nutrition levels. This is the only nationwide program available to all that need it, if eligible, regardless of age or family composition. This program was formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, which defrays the cost of groceries and home-delivered meals. Recipients no longer receive stamps but receive benefits electronically on an Electronic Benefit Transfer card. The State funded program for legal permanent non-citizens, legally present in the U. S. and determined ineligible for federal SNAP benefits, can benefit from the California Food Assistance Program.

Medi-Cal is the California Medical Assistance Program based on the national Medicaid program, and is designed to provide no cost or low cost medical benefits to low income families. CalWorks families are automatically eligible for no cost benefits. Other families qualify based on income and may qualify on a share of cost basis.

The County Medical Services Program provides medical services to low income and indigent adults between 21 and 62 years of age in 34, primarily rural, California counties that are not covered by Medi-Cal due to age, disability or lack of children in the home. This program provides medical services which would normally be provided by county hospitals.

General Assistance (GA) helps the indigent and poor who are not eligible for any other assistance program. The GA program is mandated by law and is county funded. It is not subject to any federal or state reimbursement. There are an estimated 80 cases countywide currently. GA also provides cremation and/or burial of ashes for the indigent.

EW case reviews are performed for program integrity and accuracy of information. The assurance of county aid to anyone deemed qualified is a priority within EW.

Conclusions:

The Madera County Grand Jury concludes that EW is working with minimal staffing and admirable efficiency. The staff is providing quality services in a fiscally responsible manner. A breadth of services is offered by well trained and dedicated staff in partnership with other agencies, volunteer organizations and local businesses.

Recommendations:

- With the current economic status of this county, EW is carrying a workload that will be increasing in future years. It is recommended that the budget be reviewed to

accommodate additional staffing that will be required due to inevitable increases in their workload.

Respondents: Written response required pursuant to PC 933 (c)

Madera County Board of Supervisors
200 West 4th Street
Madera, California 93637

Madera County Department of Social Services - Director
700 E. Yosemite Ave.
Madera, California 93638

Madera County Department of Social Services – EW Deputy Director
720 E. Yosemite Ave.
Madera, California 93638

Madera County Department of Social Services – EW Program Manager
720 E. Yosemite Ave.
Madera, California 93638