



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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COUNTY TO CONVERT TO NEW AUTOMATED WELFARE ELIGIBILITY SYSTEM

CalWIN System Implemented Statewide; Initial Transition May Result in Delays

On June 5, 2006, the County of San Diego will become the seventeenth California County to convert to a new automated welfare eligibility system, CalWIN (CalWORKs Information Network).

This new system changes the way workers determine eligibility for cash aid, Medi-Cal and Food Stamps benefits for about 165,000 cases monthly, said Rene Santiago, Regional General Manager, San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS). "Over the past several months, employees of HHS have worked tirelessly to ensure they are trained and prepared for the transition," Santiago said. Nearly 2,000 employees have been attending intensive training to learn the new system.

During the initial implementation and transition months, clients may experience longer wait times as employees adjust to the new way of doing business. Once the transition is complete, CalWIN will allow workers to spend more time working with their clients with less time devoted to paperwork.

The County has been proactive in informing clients and providers in the community about the impact of making the transition to CalWIN. A new phone line, 1-888-615-0301, has been set up for clients to call with any questions if they are unable to reach their worker directly.

The County is converting to CalWIN to comply with state requirements for all counties to automate eligibility and case management processes. Public assistance programs have become increasingly complex over the years and CalWIN will provide uniform application of welfare rules and regulations by using modern technology. CalWIN is one of four solutions to the State requirement of replacing the 30-year-old Welfare Case Data System, which records data and budget information that is, in large part, calculated manually. Eighteen California Counties will ultimately convert to CalWIN, with Fresno County, the eighteenth, scheduled to convert in July 2006.

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