

DECEMBER 2010 = E-NEWSLETTER

From the Director

When was the last time you walked into a video store [if you can still find one] to rent a movie? The dramatic change in the business model for movie rentals is just one example of how new technologies are radically altering the way in which service providers interact with their customers. These same technology tools are now becoming available to assist human service agencies to alter their business model as well. As public and private funding for human services continues to fall farther behind the demand for these services, the need to change our business model and give our clients more "self-service" options has taken on increasing urgency. Over the last couple of years, county social service departments have been evolving away from the "video store" model and offering their customers new ways to obtain help without having to actually travel to a social service office and stand in line for hours.

At EHSD, we've already implemented a web-based "self-screening tool" that the public can use to see if they might be eligible for programs such as CalWORKS, CalFRESH [Food Stamps], Medi-Cal or General Assistance [the self-screening tool can be found at: <http://www.contracostabenefits.org/>]

On December 13, we launched "Access CalWIN", an Interactive Voice Response System that is linked to our CalWIN welfare system data base. In much the same fashion as you can get information about your bank account through an automated phone menu system, clients can call 1-877-505-4630 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and get detailed information about their income, food, or medical assistance case or the status of their application. This includes getting copies of verification and report documents or requesting replacement Beneficiary and EBT cards. In addition, all callers can quickly access information about how to apply for assistance, find other social services, report fraud or abuse, or find offices hours and locations. Access CalWIN also provides callers the option to talk directly to an EHSD staff person during normal business hours if the automated menu doesn't answer their questions. During non-business hours, callers will have an option to leave a message for workers from a select list of options. Information will be available in English, Spanish, and Cantonese and Vietnamese.

24-Hour Toll Free Automated Information Line!
Llame a Nuestro Numero de Información Automatizada las 24 Horas!

1(877)505-4630

Get information about your case 24 hours a day from your telephone...
Do you need to get information about your CalWORKS, Food Stamps, Medi-Cal or General Assistance case?
Do you need information about your case but can't wait until our offices open?
Do you want to find out about our services or how to apply for assistance?

By dialing 1 (877) 505-4630, you can:

- Get information about your benefits for the last six months, including monthly benefit amounts, date of cost, renewal date, the status of any reporting forms you have sent us.
- Request benefit verifications.
- Request replacement Medi-Cal (IRC) card.
- Get information about Electronic Benefit Transfer services (EBT card).
- Get information about our office locations and hours.
- Report child abuse or elder abuse.
- Report fraud.
- Find out about other services.
- Talk to a live county representative for additional assistance during office hours.

Obtenga información sobre su caso por teléfono a cualquier hora del día (las 24 horas / 7 días a la semana)...

¿Necesita obtener información sobre su caso con CalWORKS, estampillas para comida, Medi-Cal, o Asistencia en General?
¿Necesita información sobre su caso y no puede esperar a que abramos nuestras oficinas?
¿Necesita obtener información sobre nuestros servicios o como solicitar asistencia?

Al llamar al 1 (877) 505-4630, usted puede:

- Obtener información sobre sus beneficios de hasta seis meses atrás, incluyendo la cantidad de beneficios recibidos por mes, parte del costo, fecha de renovación, el estado de cualquier forma o solicitud que ha enviado, etcétera.
- Solicitar verificación de sus beneficios.
- Solicitar su nueva tarjeta de Medi-Cal (tarjeta IRC).
- Obtener información sobre servicios de Transferencia Electrónica de Beneficios (tarjeta EBT).
- Obtener información sobre la dirección de nuestras oficinas y sus horarios.
- Reportar abuso de niños/juveniles.
- Reportar fraude.
- Obtener información sobre otros servicios.
- Hablar con un representante del Condado para asistencia adicional durante nuestros horas de oficina.

Contra Costa County
Employment & Human Services

Sometime in January, we'll be launching the next component of our evolving suite of client "self-service" tools called "Benefits CalWIN." Benefits CalWIN will provide a website where the public can not only self-screen for potential eligibility for financial, food, or medical assistance but can actually submit their application on line as well. For some types of cases, the entire application screening and interview process can be conducted over the phone and the internet. Benefits CalWIN creates new "portals" of access into the financial, food, and medical assistance system. Especially exciting is the fact that community based organizations can now help their clients access services from any location. The number of persons and families who have historically taken

advantage of the Food Stamp program [now called CalFRESH] has always been low. Benefits CalWIN removes many of the barriers that have made it difficult to apply.

Future enhancements to both of these systems will include the ability to send out automated appointment reminders, look up case information on the internet, electronically submit renewal forms, and allow email correspondence between worker and client. Not too long ago, the commonly heard criticism of employing internet based strategies was that many of our clients did not have access to computers. However, with the evolution of smart phones with internet browsers, our clients will be able to apply for assistance or get case information as easily as they can "Google" other information.

As we continue to hear gloomy projections for budget deficits at all levels of government, working with our community based partners to take advantage of new technologies to serve those in need will become increasingly important.

Joe Valentine, EHSD Director

We continue to invite your comments; just [click here](#).

If you would like to *unsubscribe*, please click on the "Contact Us" link below, and we will remove your name from the mailing list.

Holiday Helpers & Angel Tree

During this year's Holiday Helpers and Angel Tree programs, we served 250 families in the Ellinwood Office. 150 more families were served in the Richmond Office. The communities have been very generous in supporting EHSD families and children, although donations were down from last year.



... And As We End 2010 ...

We hope you have enjoyed our inaugural year of the EHSD E-Newsletter. We've enjoyed compiling stories and items of interest to the community to keep you better informed of the many programs and concerns that provide safety net services to Contra Costa County residents. As always, we welcome your comments and invite your input as to what you would like to learn from us.

However you may celebrate at this time of year, all of us at EHSD wish you the happiest of holiday seasons and look forward to working with you in 2011!



Joe Valentine, Director