

California Public Benefits: The Basics for Non-Profit and Pro Bono Advocacy 2017

San Francisco, Live Webcast and www.pli.edu,* March 23, 2017

Why You Should Attend

Low-income clients need your help to protect their rights to potentially life-saving benefits. Many low-income clients have difficulty navigating the confusing and bureaucratic processes to establish and maintain eligibility for public benefits. Without legal assistance and advocacy, large numbers of clients go without the benefits to which they are entitled, which can often lead to unnecessary hunger and homelessness. Attorneys who work with low-income people or pro bono attorneys interested in working on these types of cases can learn the basics of public benefits law.

What You Will Learn

- Overview of CalWORKs, CalFresh, General Assistance
- Overview of Medi-Cal and other health benefits, including the Affordable Care Act
- Overview of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI)
- Understanding of common issues that result in administrative hearings
- Understanding of strategies and procedures for filing writs

Who Should Attend

Attorneys assisting pro bono clients with benefits matters through representation or in clinical settings, firm pro bono coordinators and partners, corporate law department pro bono managers, law clinic students and faculty, public interest and non-profit organization attorneys and staff, benefits advocates, and benefits agency attorneys and staff.

Program Schedule

Morning Session: 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

9:00

Program Overview and Introductions

Steven Weiss

9:15

CalWORKs

The federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, known as CalWORKs in California, provides an essential but weakening safety net to California families with minor children. Topics to be addressed by this panel include Welfare-to-Work requirements and exemptions, Time on Aid limits and extenders, child care and support services, and the Maximum Family Grant (MFG) or child exclusion rule.

Antionette Dozier, Maya Watts

10:15

CalFresh

The federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps and called CalFresh in California, provides assistance to individuals and households to meet their basic nutritional needs. This panel will give an overview of the CalFresh program, and address common issues related to the CalFresh program that result in state hearings and potentially in appeals.

Stephanie Haffner, Lisa M. Newstrom

11:15

Networking Break

11:30

General Assistance and Indigent Health

General Assistance (GA), also known as Interim Assistance (federally) or General Relief (in some counties), provides a meager cash and/or in-kind benefit, to indigent individuals in California who are not eligible for other cash benefits. GA is state mandated, but county funded and administered, resulting in a patchwork of different program rules. This panel will provide an overview of the GA program and indigent healthcare, and identify common issues that result in hearings and appeals.

Kendra Amick, Lauren Hansen

12:30

Lunch Break

Afternoon Session: 1:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

1:30

Health Care for Low-Income Californians: A Primer on Medi-Cal and Covered California

Medi-Cal is a state and federally funded health insurance program that covers many low-income individuals and families in California. Covered California is a health insurance marketplace where Californians can compare and purchase health insurance coverage for themselves and their families. Low-income Californians may also qualify for cost sharing subsidies and premium tax credits from Covered California to lower the cost of their health insurance premiums and co-pays. This training will provide a basic overview of both programs, and also help advocates issue spot some common questions and problems that health consumers might have.

Tiffany Huyenh-Cho, Shirley E. Sanematsu

2:30

Social Security Disability Insurance, Supplemental Security Income and CAPI

Social Security disability benefits, including Supplemental Security Income (SSI) help many Californians with disabilities to maintain housing stability and to access other services. California's Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI) provides similar benefits for immigrants who were made ineligible for SSI by the 1996 welfare reform due to their immigration status. This training will provide an overview of the SSDI and SSI programs, eligibility criteria, common issues that result in the need for hearings and appeals, and Social Security complaints in federal court.

Abby Herzberg, Joanna Parnes

3:30

Networking Break

3:45

Writs & Appeals in Public Benefits Cases

Public benefits cases can proceed from administrative hearings to court appeals. This workshop will discuss the use of writ petitions to compel state or county compliance with the law in state court. Participants will learn strategies and procedures for litigating administrative writs on behalf of individuals, as well as more broad-based challenges to government policies using the "policy writ" under C.C.P. § 1085. Topics will include how to develop an adequate administrative record for purposes of appeal, and the standards of judicial review under each type of proceeding.

Robert P. Capistrano, Stephanie Haffner

5:00

Adjourn

Faculty

Chairperson

Steven Weiss

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