

California Public Benefits: The Basics for Nonprofit and Pro Bono Advocacy 2021

Live Webcast

March 18, 2021

9:00 am – 5:00 pm (**Pacific Time**)

Why You Should Attend

Low-income clients need your help to protect their rights to potentially life-saving public 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 lead to unnecessary hunger and homelessness. Attorneys who work with low-income clients or pro bono attorneys interested in working on these types of cases can learn the basics of public benefits law in one day.

What You Will Learn

- Overview of the CalWORKs, CalFresh, and General Assistance programs
- Overview of Medi-Cal, including the Affordable Care Act, Covered California, and other health access issues
- Overview of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and the California Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI)
- Understanding of common issues related to administrative hearings
- Understanding of strategies and procedures for filing writs and appeals
- Understanding of changes to programs because of COVID-19

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 nonprofit organization attorneys and staff, benefits advocates, and benefits agency attorneys and staff.

AGENDA

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

9:00

Opening Remarks

Lauren Hansen, Joanna Parnes

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 emergency or homeless assistance.

Stephen Goldberg, Claudia Menjivar

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, as well as Disaster CalFresh, the Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) rule, and immigrant eligibility.

Lauren Hansen, Jessica Mark

11:15 Break

11:30

General Assistance

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, as well as indigent healthcare, and identify common issues that result in hearings, appeals, and litigation.

Raegan Joern, Melissa A. Morris

12:30 Lunch

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

1:30

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

Through the Affordable Care Act low-income Californians have better access to health coverage with the expansion of Medi-Cal, and the creation of Covered California. This training will provide a basic overview of these programs, including eligibility requirements, covered services, and due process rights for each program. Our training will also help advocates issue spot some common questions and problems that health consumers might have. Medi-Cal is a publicly funded health insurance program that covers many low-income individuals and families in California. Covered California is a health insurance marketplace where Californians can purchase health insurance coverage for themselves and their families, often with subsidies to help with premiums and co-pays.

Krista R. Granen, Helen Tran

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.

Rose Molloy, Joanna Parnes

3:30 Break

3:45

Writs & Appeals in Public Benefits Cases

State and County public benefits cases can proceed from administrative hearings to state court appeals. This session 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 under CCP §1094.5, as well as more broad-based challenges to government policies using a petition of writ of mandate under CCP §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.

Andrew Kazakes, Tyler Mischeaux Press Sutherland

5:00 Adjourn

Faculty:

Co-Chairs:

Lauren Hansen

Staff Attorney
Public Interest Law Project
Oakland, California

Joanna Parnes

Supervising Attorney
Bay Area Legal Aid
Oakland, California

Stephen Goldberg

Regional Counsel
Legal Services of Northern California
Sacramento, California

Krista R. Granen

Staff Attorney
Bay Area Legal Aid
Oakland, California

Raegan Joern

Supervising Attorney
Bay Area Legal Aid
San Francisco, California

Andrew Kazakes

Staff Attorney
Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles
Los Angeles, California

Jessica Mark

Staff Attorney
Bay Area Legal Aid
Oakland, California

Claudia Menjivar

Staff Attorney

Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles

Los Angeles, California

Rose Molloy

Staff Attorney

Bay Area Legal Aid

Oakland, California

Melissa A. Morris

Staff Attorney

Public Interest Law Project

Oakland, California

Tyler Mischeaux Press Sutherland

Staff Attorney

Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles

Los Angeles, California

Helen Tran

Staff Attorney

Western Center on Law & Poverty

Los Angeles, California

Senior Pro Bono Program Attorney: Christina Thompson