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SB-947 Public assistance: personal interviews. (2015-2016)

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Senate Bill No. 947

CHAPTER 798

An act to amend Section 11052.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to public social services.

[Approved by Governor September 29, 2016. Filed with Secretary of State September 29, 2016.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 947, Pan. Public assistance: personal interviews.

Existing law provides for protection, care, and assistance for people of the state by providing appropriate aid and services to the needy and distressed. Programs established for this purpose include the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids program (CalWORKs), which provides cash assistance and other social services to needy families, using federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant program, state, and county funds. Existing law prohibits an applicant from being granted public assistance under CalWORKs until he or she is personally interviewed by the county human services agency or state hospital staff. Existing law also requires the county department to verify if an applicant is incapable of acting on his or her own behalf by personal contact with the applicant before aid is authorized.

This bill would authorize the county human services agency to conduct this personal interview telephonically or through electronic means, as specified. The bill would require a county, if that county elects to conduct the personal interview telephonically or through other electronic means, to conduct an in-person personal interview if requested by an applicant.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: no Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. This act shall be known, and may be cited, as the County Option of Efficient Interviewing of CalWORKs Applicants Act of 2016.

SEC. 2. Section 11052.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

11052.5. (a) An applicant shall not be granted public assistance under Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11200) and Chapter 5.1 (commencing with Section 13000) until he or she is first personally interviewed by the office of the county human services agency or state staff for patients in state hospitals.

(b) (1) In determining eligibility for public assistance under Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11200), in lieu of an in-person personal interview as required under subdivision (a), the county may elect to conduct the interview required by this section telephonically or through other electronic means.

(2) A county that elects to conduct the interview telephonically or through other electronic means shall include a set of procedures in its county plan for conducting interviews in that manner that ensure that clients whose interviews are conducted telephonically or through other electronic means are provided with the same information that is provided to individuals who have their interviews conducted in person.

(c) If an applicant is incapable of acting on his or her own behalf, the county department shall verify this fact by personal contact with the applicant before aid is authorized.

(d) The interview conducted pursuant to this section shall occur within seven days after the time of application unless there are extenuating circumstances that justify further delay.

(e) If a county elects to conduct the personal interview to determine eligibility for public assistance under Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11200) required under subdivision (a) telephonically or through other electronic means, pursuant to subdivision (b), the county shall conduct an in-person personal interview in lieu of an interview through telephonic or other electronic means if requested by an applicant.

(f) For purposes of this section, "public assistance" does not include health care as provided pursuant to Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 14000).