

COUNTY SERVICE CENTER GROUP

CSCG MISSION STATEMENT:

The County Service Center Group is committed to maintaining a membership organization which promotes continuous learning and the exchange of information and ideas between California County Medi-Cal/Food Stamp Service Centers. We partner in an ongoing effort to improve work processes and deliver quality service in a professional, timely and efficient manner.

CSCG Member Counties:

- Contra Costa
- Sacramento
- San Francisco
- San Mateo
- Santa Barbara
- Santa Clara
- Santa Cruz
- Solano
- Sonoma
- Tulare
- Orange
- Monterey
- Riverside

Intake is swamped. Let's help out

Let's talk numbers: The stock market has lost over 60% of its value in the last two years. Since January 2009, unemployment is up 52 % to a California average of 11.6%, with a high of 27.5% in Imperial County and a low of 8% in Marin County. The number of people at or close to the poverty level is projected to reach 17%, compared with 12.8% in 2007.

The impact of the economic downturn can be seen throughout all of the social service agencies benefit programs.

- *San Francisco* has experienced a 22% increase in Food Stamp intakes for the first 6 months of this year compared to the previous 6 months and their ongoing caseload has increased by 27% over the last year.
- *Santa Clara County* is reporting a 23% increase in new applications in June 2009 compared to June 2008.
- *Monterey County* has seen a total of an 8% increase in Medi-Cal, Food Stamps, and Cal-Works applications since January.
- *Sonoma* is reporting a 24% increase in Food Stamps, 7% increase in Medi-Cal/CMSP and a 25% increase in cash aid applications.

Demand in Intake is up significantly and your Service Center can help. Providing your clients with access to information BEFORE they come into the application center benefits both the client and your operation. It means that less people will drive, take the bus, find a ride or walk to the office only to find out that they are not eligible for benefits. It also means that those that are eligible may show up with the proper documentation to help expedite the application process. The chart below shows the intake process change recommendations:

Process	Current Intake	How can the service center help?
Pre-screening for eligibility	In person in lobby or at the interview	Telephone pre-screening and web site self screening Q&A
Application Completion	In person at interview	Web applications, Mail-In applications and telephone applications
Application Interview	In person	Telephone interviews

Taking this service one step further, to include phone applications and interviews, could mean that benefits reach clients that may not otherwise have had the ability or time to apply. With the help of some exciting technology, your clients could also help themselves through web information and a web application. All of these options benefit the client and make it easier for you to provide service with decreased budget and staff.

The Service Center is already an important part of your business; why not expand that service to support the most critically impacted areas like Intake?

~Vail Dutto, CEO
InTelegy Corporation

UPCOMING CSCG NEWS:

CSCG Quarterly Conference Call — Mark your calendars for the next CSCG conference call, Wednesday, September 16th 11:00am. We will discuss what an intake/Web app can look like in a service center. Your invitation and conference call access information will arrive in your email inbox. Contact [Margaret Condie](#) if more information is needed.

CWDA Conference — The conference venue and date have been set. Mark your calendar for October 14-15th in Sacramento. The topic will be: *The California Symposium on Poverty: Consequences for Society, Implications for Policy.*

Join the CSCG Bulletin Board Community:

Have you logged onto the CSCG Bulletin Board recently? Take a moment right now and visit the bulletin board at: www.intelegy.com/bb. Recent postings include topics such as "Caseloads in a Service Center", "Fair Hearings", and "Service Center ROI". The bulletin board has the potential to quickly disseminate information between the Counties and can be an added tool in service center problem solving. The CSCG bulletin board promotes our mission of continuous learning and the exchange of information and ideas between members. InTelegy consultants are available to help you register, navigate the forum, learn how to reply to and/or post a topic. We are confident that this bulletin board will soon become another useful InTelegy resource. Here are the instructions on how to register for the board:

- Go to: www.intelegy.com/bb.
- On the blue bar, in the upper right hand corner, click on the Register link
- Accept the InTelegy.com terms
- Complete the registration form
- The user name will be your full name (e.g. Margaret Condie)
- E-mail address required
- Select a personal password
- Verify the language is posted as British-English
- Verify time zone as Pacific Standard
- Submit registration
- Click on the General Forum hot link. From there you will be able to see all topics and responses posted.
- To post a reply, hit the yellow Post a Reply button and you can type in your reply.
- If you have a new topic to post, hit the yellow New Topic button, complete the form and post away!

Any questions, just give us a call at 925-855-6601.

Case study: Phone support in Intake

We are all getting comfortable with the idea of a service center or call center supporting the ongoing case management for benefit clients. We've even seen an expansion of the programs that can be supported by the service center. But did you know that the service center model has also been in use in an Intake organization? Since October 2007 San Francisco's Non-Assistance Food Stamp program has been supporting both continuing and intake with service center operations. The Food Assistance Service Center (FASC) supports 19,500 NAFS cases today. Since applications for food stamps have increased 22% in just the last 6 months, having this service center operation in place has been a support to this increasingly burdened organization. Intake EWs scheduled for desk duty also log into the phone system and take phone calls. The Intake Service Center is staffed daily by 4 intake EW's and receives an average of 735 calls/month (35/day) . The call types range from eligibility screening, application process support and general program information. They have experienced a 20% increase in these inbound calls since January. Before the service center, customers did not have an opportunity to call and get this support. The intake service center, similar to the ongoing maintenance group, exceeds expectations for phone service levels and call abandon rates. Bill Vaughn, Intake Section Manager, believes that by supporting clients over the phone they have not only made information easier to these clients, but also improved the effectiveness of the in-person application process; clients come more prepared for their interviews when they've received support over the phone first.

Web + phone support of Intake applications

The newest tool recently launched by the FASC is their much acclaimed web application. The June launch saw 100 applications without any significant marketing of the tool. July 1-15 saw 182 applications alone, so the tool is showing great success. So far the Intake Service Center has not had to provide significant support to these web application clients over the phone, but they are prepared to assist in the process as well. Improving the client experience and providing easier access to benefits is a goal that San Francisco is achieving with their phone, and now web application, as part of the intake process.

~Carole Dotson
Director of Consulting

IN THE NEWS: COUNTY SERVICE CENTER UPDATES

Santa Clara County— Santa Clara County's Medi-Cal Service Center (MCSC) celebrated the launch of their task management tool in April. To date their clerical staff have entered over 21,000 assignments and their EW's have completed over 95% of them! The MCSC continues to improve their operation and is considered a model for client service in the Department of Employment and Benefit Services.

Expanding on this success, the MCSC will soon have a new name. In fall of 2009 the operation will be expanded to include Food Stamp and Medi-Cal/Food Stamp cases. The new operation will be the Benefits Assistant Service Center (BASC) and will support over 78,000 continuing cases.

Monterey County—Monterey County's Department of Social & Employment Services completed a Service Center Strategy and Plan in June of 2009. They are now considering their options for timing and location for a service center operation to support their Medi-Cal and Food Stamps Continuing and Intake operations. Monterey County is the first CIV County to develop a service center plan. Welcome!!

Santa Barbara – In June, InTelegy was brought back on board to complete an operational assessment of the Benefits Service Center and lead the development of a detailed project plan to achieve "best practice" performance and adherence to planned processes. The operational assessment was recently presented to Executive members and we are now finalizing the detailed project plan of improvement initiatives.

We welcome member participation. Feel free to share your ideas, author a column, or refer a new member. Contact CSCG group administrator, Margaret Condie at: margaretcondie@Intelegy.com or 925-786-8431.