

HEW's Study And Miller's Report Differ

HEW's Social and Rehabilitation Service today released the findings of a federal study of the state of Nevada's special review of eligibility in its Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) Program.

The Federal Study differs markedly from the report by the Nevada Welfare Director that 22 percent of the state's AFDC cases were ineligible and were abruptly terminated for that reason.

The Federal study found an ineligibility rate of 7.4 percent and that almost half of these cases would have been routinely declared ineligible by the state and were in the process of normal closeout. This reduces the net ineligibles properly attributable to the state's special review to 3.8 percent of the Nevada Caseload.

In addition, the study found that of the 22 percent of total cases reportedly closed out by the state, almost 1/3 were not terminated at all, and another third were either discontinued before the state's review or were closed contrary to the state's federally approved policy.

Other findings of the Federal study:
 --Nevada did not in all cases follow Federal requirements for timely and adequate notices of intent to cut off or reduce payments before acting.

--Contrary to Nevada's report of its review, which attributed solely to recipients the errors affecting eligibility, the state agency itself was either wholly or partially responsible for one-third of the errors.

The study also noted that contrary to the Nevada Report, the Federal Government does not require the use of the simplified eligibility system (called Declaration in Nevada). Furthermore, the state did not follow Federal regulations in using the optional simplified eligibility system.

"While we have found the state's ineligibility figure is not supported by the facts in the Federal study," said John L. Costa, Commissioner of SRS's Assistance Payment Administration, "Nevertheless the state's review served a constructive purpose. It disclosed an additional number of ineligible people, amounting to more than 3 percent of its total caseload, that apparently would not have routinely been found ineligible under the state's system."

In December 1970, the Nevada Welfare Department made an intensive review of all AFDC cases in the state. In January 1971, the state agency reported that 889 of 4,438 cases reviewed, were terminated.

According to the state agency's report, the main sources of the problem were the failure of recipients to report fully on their earnings and the use by the state of a "Declaration System" which the state said was required by the Federal Government.

Because of the serious nature of the problem reported by Nevada, HEW sent a team to Nevada to make an intensive field evaluation. The field study included a review of a sample case records from the Las Vegas and Reno Welfare Offices; Interviews with former recipients; and interviews with state staff and people in Carson City, Las Vegas, and Reno.

"The Federal Government is committed to assist Nevada in bringing the discrepancy rate to the lowest possible level," Mr. Costa said. "However, we will need assurance that the denials of recipients rights which occurred during the review do not recur."

"RUBY DUNCAN SAYS"

HEW's findings show conclusively that the state of Nevada was wrong in every aspect of the welfare cuts.

- 1.) Nevada claimed massive welfare fraud when there was, in fact no fraud to start with.
- 2.) Nevada violated constitutionally protected rights of recipients.

The massive purge of welfare recipients was a fraudulent episode started by Welfare Director George Miller and perpetuated by Gov. O'Callaghan.

Nevada Welfare Rights Organization realized from the first the grave injustice being committed by the state audit. On December 18, 1970 we made the request which brought HEW into Nevada to conduct a full investigation. WRO then moved ahead fighting the cuts on all fronts--in the courts, in the welfare offices, and in the streets. The HEW report has now been released and proves that we were right.

The report shows that the massive audit only discovered 3.8% of ADC families which were not previously known to be ineligible. The reports shows that of the 3.8% ineligible families, not even all of these could be fraud cases. Being found ineligible is not equivalent to fraud. The report shows that for a high percentage of cases terminated in the purge, the welfare department, not welfare recipients, had made an error in computing eligibility.

Gov. O'Callaghan's only response to the HEW report was that the federal welfare administration is not perfect either. O'Callaghan did not challenge the correctness of HEW's findings.

The illegal cuts and terminations based on imaginary fraud, have reaped for Nevada:

- 1.) Hundreds of families suffering without the necessities of life.
- 2.) National embarrassment
- 3.) Large legal costs
- 4.) Higher welfare costs in the future due to increased awareness of people's right to apply for welfare benefits
- 5.) Organized welfare recipients across the state

The Nevada Welfare Rights Organization has shown through demonstration and marches that it does not intend to see the rights of welfare recipients denied.

Nevada WRO intends to continue its vigilance to ensure that the HEW report and the court decisions are not violated.

Put Rubbish On The Run

Beauty is only skin deep, according to the old saying. Sometimes clean-up around the house during the year is only skin deep too. Out where the family does most of its living, everything is neat and orderly as can be.

But how about the spare room or storage closet, the work shop or garage corner?

"These are apt to be the forgotten spots," says Fire Chief Miller, "and they can be the trouble spots, where destructive, dangerous fire starts."

Put rubbish on the run in all these areas, the Chief urges. Clean out any stacks of newspapers and magazines, discarded clothing, mattresses, old furniture and lamp shades, draperies--all the clutter that collects in closets, garages, storerooms, etc.

Do the same clean-up job in the home workshop too--shavings, scraps, oily rags, old paint cans, and get rid of any crates and cartons outside the house.

"A good, thorough clean-up job now -- and repeated at regular intervals -- one of the smartest things you can do to keep your home and family safe from fire," Chief Miller says.



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For easy combing most professional hairdressers soften the hair first with a product like Hair-So-New. It temporarily relaxes hair so tangles and snarls quickly go away and scalp feels soothed. Combing is easy... and fewer ends are broken.

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