

# San Benito County County Peer Review Visit Summary

November 5, 2009



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Welfare to Work Division

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## Executive Summary

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### Introduction:

The County Peer Review (CPR) Program was created for county peers and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to perform on-site reviews of counties' Welfare-to-Work (WTW) programs to identify and share promising practices, opportunities for improvement, and strategies that could positively impact work participation rates (WPR). San Benito County volunteered to host a CPR in June 2009 to focus attention on areas they felt would be of interest to other service providers and benefit San Benito County's California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program.

### San Benito County Health and Human Services Agency:

San Benito County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) is composed of several social service divisions and provides all services in Hollister, CA. Services include the following:

- CalWORKs
- In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)
- Child Protective Services
- Adult Protective Services
- Food Stamps
- Behavioral Health Services (BHS)
- Medi-Cal
- General Assistance

Other programs at this location include services by the Employment Development Department (EDD), a child care referral agency, and a private employment placement service.

### Site Visit General Information:

The San Benito CPR was held June 22 to 25, 2009. Major activities consisted of staff interviews, a client focus group, and case management observations (CMOs) with county staff. Interviews were completed with CalWORKs staff and with the HHS Director and Deputy Director. A total of 15 CMOs, which are reviews of case files, were completed by the CPR team with eight Integrated Case Workers (ICWs), one employment training worker (ETW), and two supervisors. The client focus group was conducted with 11 clients from the job club class.

At the time of the CPR, the San Benito County CalWORKs program had eight ICWs handling both eligibility and employment responsibilities. San Benito County also had two employment training staff that are responsible for San Benito County's job club class, called "iJobLINK!" The employment training staff also provides the WTW orientation, appraisals, and assessments.

### Scope:

The focus areas for this CPR were the ICW format, supportive services reimbursements, and resources for WTW activities.

### Promising Practices:

Some of the significant promising practices identified include the following:

- Centrally located services are convenient for CalWORKs clients (see pages 3 and 11 for details).
- ICWs are familiar with all program components, so ICWs provide a “one-stop” environment for clients (see pages 5-6 for details).
- San Benito County has a strong relationship with Gavilan Community College (see pages 8-9 for details).

**Opportunities for Improvement:**

Some of the areas noted as challenges during the CPR include the following:

- The timeliness of supportive services reimbursements to clients, particularly child care, has been impacted by higher caseloads (see pages 5-8 for details).
- There are limited resources for WTW placements and clients often travel to other counties for many of their WTW activities (see pages 8-9 for details).

**Client Focus Group** (see pages 11-14 for details):

Clients shared a variety of comments based on their experiences. Some of the notable opinions include the following:

- Admiration for the employment training staff.
- Interest in having résumés prior to job search so that they can present their résumés when applying and interviewing for jobs.
- Preference for more time for ICWs to do casework to improve the processing time of supportive services reimbursements.

**Key Recommendations for San Benito County:**

- Submit the strategy of centrally located services (CalWORKs, EDD, child referral services, etc.) to the CalWORKs Best Practices website (see pages 3 and 11 for details).
- Consider providing more support staff by having ICWs assign WTW clients through Work Experience (WEX) and allowing support staff to handle calls, mailings, bus tokens, and scheduling as appropriate (see page 6 for details).
- Explore ways to better educate clients up-front on how to complete paperwork for supportive services reimbursements so that clients are more likely to turn in correct and complete reimbursements (see pages 7-8 for details).
- Have clients complete résumés in the ¡JobLINK! class prior to job search so that clients will be better prepared when they begin applying and interviewing for jobs. This recommendation was implemented by the county following the CPR (see pages 12-13 for details).

**Acknowledgements:**

CDSS thanks San Benito County HHSA Director, Kathryn Flores, for hosting the CPR. CDSS also thanks San Benito County HHSA Deputy Director, Enrique Arreola, CalWORKs Supervisor, Pat Estrada, Employment Training Supervisor, Esther Alva, and Integrated Caseworker III, Susan Petree, for their assistance with the CPR. Lastly, CDSS thanks Monterey County Employment Training Supervisor, Jeannie Murrey, Monterey Employment Training Worker, Henry Galindo, and Merced County Family Services Supervisor, Suzy Cervantes, for serving as peer reviewers.

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## County Peer Review: San Benito County Visit Summary

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### Introduction

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The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) County Peer Review (CPR) program was created as a result of Assembly Bill (AB) 1808 (Chapter 75, Statutes of 2006). The purpose of the program is for county peers and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to perform on-site reviews of counties' Welfare-to-Work (WTW) programs to identify and share promising practices, opportunities for improvement, and strategies that could positively impact work participation rates (WPR). San Benito County volunteered to host a CPR in June 2009 to focus attention on areas they felt would be of interest to other service providers and benefit San Benito County's CalWORKs program.

#### **San Benito County Health and Human Services Agency:**

San Benito County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) provides services at one location in Hollister, CA. San Benito County HHSA is composed of several social service divisions including the following:

- CalWORKs
- In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)
- Child Protective Services
- Adult Protective Services
- Food Stamps
- Behavioral Health Services (BHS)
- Medi-Cal
- General Assistance

Other services at this location include the following programs and agencies:

- Family Resource Center: education, health, social, cultural, and community services for families with children under the age of eighteen
- GoKids: a child care referral agency
- Manpower: a private employment placement service
- Regional Occupation Program (ROP): free training for students ages 16 and older to secure jobs, upgrade skills, or prepare for advanced career education; students may earn high school or college credit for some courses
- National Council on Aging: provides seniors with a variety of services including employment assistance and completion of forms
- Employment Development Department (EDD): co-operator of the San Benito County One-Stop Career Center along with San Benito County Community Services and Workforce Development
- San Benito County's Behavioral Health Services (BHS) program: provides mental health and substance abuse counseling services

At the time of the CPR, the county had eight Integrated Caseworkers (ICWs) handling both eligibility and employment responsibilities. Some ICWs also carry specialized caseloads such as sanctions, reunification, Spanish-speaking, foster care, and drug felons. Two of the ICWs are intake specialists who review applications and make determinations of eligibility. The intake specialists also provide clients with an introduction to CalWORKs rights and responsibilities. All of the ICWs are organized under the CalWORKs supervisor.

San Benito County's CalWORKs program also has one employment training worker (ETW) and one employment training supervisor who provide services to clients in the WTW job club class, referred to as "¡JobLINK!" ¡JobLINK! is provided in English and Spanish and includes classroom training and job search.

The first point of contact for clients requesting CalWORKs aid occurs with an intake ICW, who reviews the application, determines eligibility, informs clients of their rights and responsibilities, and assigns clients to a ¡JobLINK! class. After attending their first ¡JobLINK! class, clients are assigned to a long-term ICW.

As part of ¡JobLINK! the employment training staff presents the WTW orientation, provides appraisals in a group setting, and discusses appraisals with each client privately. The employment training staff also informs ¡JobLINK! clients of the supportive services available and provides referral vouchers for free interview clothing. While clients are in ¡JobLINK! ICWs provide supportive services payments for child care and transportation, as needed. Clients engage in job search after the completion of the classroom portion of ¡JobLINK! If the client does not find employment that fulfills the client's WTW participation requirements after four weeks of job search, the client is assessed by the employment training staff.

Each client's appraisal and assessment from ¡JobLINK! are provided to the long-term ICW before each client's first meeting with her or his ICW. The appraisal and assessment provide information for the ICW regarding the WTW activities the client needs to participate in and any barriers the client may face to participating. The client and ICW review the appraisal and assessment together and discuss goals for the client. The WTW plan is then completed, and both the ICW and the client agree on the activities to reach the client's self-sufficiency goals.

#### **Site Visit General Information:**

The CPR was performed in San Benito County June 22 to 25, 2009 at the San Benito County HSA office in the City of Hollister. The CPR team included an Employment Services Supervisor and an Employment Training Worker from Monterey County, a Family Services Supervisor from Merced County, and an analyst from CDSS. Additionally, the county's CDSS Employment Bureau liaison attended the review in order to further develop her relationship with county staff and assist with the CPR.

The CPR activities consisted of the following:

- Kick-off meeting
- Staff interviews: Interviews were completed with CalWORKs staff including an account clerk, the ETW, eight ICWs, two supervisors, and two directors.
- Case management observations (CMOs): A total of 15 CMOs, which are reviews of case files, were completed with eight ICWs, two supervisors, and the ETW.
- Client focus group: The client focus group interview was held with 11 ¡JobLINK! clients in order to obtain a sample of clients' feedback on their CalWORKs experiences.
- Close-out meeting

Most of the case file review information was reviewed in hard copy form, while some case information was obtained from the Interim Statewide Automated Welfare System (ISAWS). San Benito County HHSA converted to the Consortium-IV (C-IV) System effective November 2009.

Additionally, debriefings were held by CPR team members each day. These CPR team debriefings were opportunities to discuss trends, practices, and general observations noted during the days' activities in preparation for the close-out meeting and the development of this Visit Summary.

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## **Scope**

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The scope was established based on San Benito County discussions with CDSS and information gathered from a self-assessment tool completed by the county. The scope consisted of three focus areas:

- Benefits and Challenges of the ICW Format
- Supportive Services Reimbursements
- Resources for WTW Activities

Each focus area is discussed below with observations obtained by the CPR team from the staff interviews and CMOs. General observations not related to the focus areas, but which are significant and unique, are also discussed below. Each set of observations is followed by recommendations from the CPR team.

### **Focus Area 1: Integrated Caseworkers**

Observations:

San Benito County has an ICW format in which case workers handle both eligibility and employment for CalWORKs clients. Many ICWs indicated that by handling both employment and eligibility they have a better understanding of the clients and a better grasp of the cases. Many ICWs indicated that clients like the ICW structure better because the clients can go to one worker for all their CalWORKs case needs.

Several of the staff who were interviewed indicated that the integrated worker structure worked better when there were more ICWs. All interviewed staff indicated that due to budget restraints and staff reductions, caseloads are too high to serve clients adequately. During the time of the CPR, some ICWs had over 150 cases, and one ICW described a caseload of more than 180 cases, of which 130 were WTW cases. Many ICWs would like to have more time to work one-on-one with their clients for WTW services to help clients become self-sufficient, but much of the ICWs' time is spent on processing supportive services payments as well as eligibility grants and redeterminations.

ICWs have two "protected days" per week: days implemented by management which allow staff to focus on paperwork tasks. One day is for processing supportive services and general WTW tasks, and the other day is for processing eligibility tasks. Although these "protected days" are for paperwork tasks and not working with clients, ICWs still have to

see clients on these days. ICWs sometimes need to schedule eligibility appointments (e.g., redetermination) on these “protected days,” and sometimes they have to meet with emergency drop-ins; therefore, the actual time available to complete paperwork tasks can vary among ICWs.

Various staff explained that the ICW worker-of-the-day handles incoming calls from clients or sees drop-in clients when the assigned ICW for those clients is not available. The ICW worker-of-the-day has full program knowledge to answer clients’ questions. On the other hand, ICWs stated that the application screeners who register and screen new applicants do not have enough CalWORKs program knowledge about what questions to ask and have to call on the ICW worker-of-the-day or the long-term ICWs to deal with applicants’ questions and their requests. Management requires that all drop-in clients be seen by ICWs because the clients often travel long distances within the county and management prefers not to send clients away without service being provided.

Some staff stated that there is low turnover and high experience for ICWs. Management recognizes that staff is loyal, devoted, and committed; management is proud of staff and aware of their efforts to do their jobs well. Management is also aware that the low number of ICWs and high workload is causing stress among some staff, and management has expressed a willingness to develop and implement creative ideas to assist staff with these issues.

#### Recommendations:

- Add support staff through Work Experience (WEX) to alleviate some of the workload on ICWs, since no funding was available to add ICW staff during the time of the CPR.
- Review job duties performed by ICWs and the account clerk to determine what could be moved to support staff, e.g., bus tokens and schedules could be distributed at the front desk, so clients do not have to go to the account clerk.
- Shift some tasks to support staff to create opportunities to free up some of the ICWs’ and the account clerk’s time.
- Pursue enhancing WTW training and protocols for application screeners to reduce the number of clients who need to be referred to the ICW worker-of-the-day or another ICW.
- Evaluate why clients are dropping in without an appointment instead of calling when they need assistance, e.g., clients might not have access to a phone or clients may have a barrier that impedes communicating over the phone.
- Provide time management training to staff on responsibilities such as appointment scheduling, taking and returning calls, and prioritizing tasks.
- Implement a format, such as a reference chart or a mentoring program, for staff to quickly and easily share best workflow practices.
- Continue practices already in place to help with stress, e.g., management efforts to foster a positive attitude and staff participation in beneficial activities like luncheons, summer fun days, and birthday celebrations.

## **Focus Area 2: Supportive Services Reimbursements**

### Observations:

During the time of the CPR, all of the ICWs stated that supportive services requests often take more than a month to process, and service providers frequently call to find out what has delayed their payments. ICWs explained that most supportive services delays happen because clients do not complete child care paperwork correctly: clients do not obtain signatures, do not complete all necessary entries, and/or do not provide adequate verification. As a result, ICWs have to call the clients and/or have the clients come in to the office, sometimes several times, to correct and complete the paperwork.

ICWs explained that child care reimbursements are handled using a multi-step workflow:

1. ICWs process paperwork, review required verifications, and perform calculations.
2. The account clerk processes payments.
3. When payments fall behind schedule, the CalWORKs supervisor and ICW III assist in processing of payments.

Some ICWs noted that transportation and ancillary claims are easier to process because they do not require as much verification and paperwork as child care claims, but transportation and ancillary claims add to the overall workload of processing supportive services payments. Once all supportive service claims come in around the beginning of the month, the claims quickly begin to back up because of the volume of supportive services reimbursements and the time required to process child care reimbursements.

During the time of the CPR, no guides for Spanish speaking clients on how to correctly fill out child care reimbursement paperwork existed; however, a Spanish speaking client can request to speak to bilingual San Benito County HHS staff and get help regarding how to complete paperwork. HHS staff can also direct clients to local agencies that will help clients to complete the paperwork.

Some ICWs also discussed how the processing of QR7s (quarterly CalWORKs status reports) is sometimes slowed due to the reports being incomplete. As indicated by some ICWs, some clerical staff were accepting QR7s that were lacking pay stubs and other documentation and indicating the QR7s were complete.

### Recommendations:

In order to improve the processing of supportive services requests, and thereby lessen the administrative burden on staff, the county may want to consider the following:

- Implement a process and develop reference materials to better educate clients up-front on how to complete paperwork for supportive services reimbursements.
- Develop a reference packet for English and Spanish speaking clients to enhance their ability to fill out supportive services forms and listing common paperwork mistakes that clients make when completing supportive services requests.
- Include examples of correctly completed forms with the supportive services reference packet.



- Consider transferring some duties performed by ICWs, such as answering some incoming phone calls and mailing out forms, to support staff.
- Train clerical staff on how to recognize and accept only properly completed QR7s.
- Schedule time to meet with GoKids, the on-site child care referral service, and discuss child care tasks that GoKids may be able to support the ICWs with, including performing background checks and aiding clients with paperwork.
- Create an ICW staff subject matter matrix of which ICWs are most skilled in which supportive services areas so that ICWs needing help can quickly see who has the expertise they need and receive assistance.
- Institute a mentoring program for ICWs to share their skills regarding processing supportive services reimbursements.

### **Focus Area 3: Resources for WTW Placements**

Observations:

San Benito County HHS staff discussed both the strengths and challenges concerning resources to place WTW clients in activities in San Benito County. According to HHS staff, while San Benito County has some notable activity placements such as a satellite campus for Gavilan Community College and employers such as Earthbound Farms and Target, the county has limited resources for placements. Many of the resources and job opportunities San Benito County clients need are in neighboring counties, including various employers and the Center for Employment Training in Santa Clara County, Heald College in Monterey County, and Cabrillo College in Santa Cruz County.

All of the ICWs noted that Gavilan Community College is a valuable resource that is fifteen minutes away from Hollister in Santa Clara County. Gavilan Community College provides a wide array of general education and specialty classes. The college offers its own bridging activities between sessions. There is a shuttle service from San Benito County to Gavilan College. Additionally, Gavilan has a satellite campus in central Hollister offering some of the classes of the main campus. San Benito CalWORKs management meets once a month with the college to discuss Self-Initiated Programs (SIPs). A SIP is an education program that a client is attending at the time of appraisal and that the client may continue as a WTW activity.

ICWs explained that San Benito County has multiple options for clients whose assessments reveal a need for behavioral health services. The county's Behavioral Health Services department, offering mental health and substance abuse services, is located in a building next to CalWORKs. Clients can also access similar behavioral health services at Community Solutions, an off-site, non-profit agency that offers counseling services to community members.

Some San Benito County HHS staff discussed the migrant worker assistance program in Hollister. This program provides affordable rental housing and support services for migrant farm worker families during the peak harvest season. Some staff stated this is an important service because the top industry in San Benito County is seasonal agriculture, which employs many migrant workers.

Other challenges related to placing clients in WTW activities:

- Some ICWs explained that San Benito County is mostly rural and has limited public transportation routes within the county and to other counties.
- Some ICWs stated that the Manpower employment placement service co-located with the San Benito County CalWORKs program offers many jobs that require skills that are too high level for many CalWORKs clients and not enough unskilled or basic skills jobs.
- Some ICWs stated that Spanish-speaking clients may need to wait up to two months for ¡JobLINK! after they are determined eligible for aid. This wait is due to the need to have at least five or six clients to start a Spanish ¡JobLINK! class.
- During the time of the CPR, San Benito County HHSa did not have services for felons.

Recommendations:

- Implement recurring focus groups with staff to discuss improving resources available for clients—brainstorm ideas on placements and bridging activities (e.g., WEX placements on-site at HHSa). Many ideas provided by staff could have little to no cost associated with them, yet they may provide efficiency improvements and raise morale even more by empowering staff and implementing their ideas:
  - Have an all-staff potluck
  - Create an idea board where staff can place post-it notes with suggestions
  - Have a formal all-staff meeting
  - Promote a suggestion box program specifically for resource ideas, called “Ask the Deputy Director” or some other fun name suggested by staff
- Refer Spanish-speakers and other non-English speakers to placement testing for English as a Second Language (ESL) at Gavilan College. ESL classes and testing could provide a long-term WTW placement or a bridging activity and could provide information about clients’ needs and skills prior to starting ¡JobLINK!
- Develop and hold focus groups among all San Benito County HHSa bilingual staff to brainstorm bridging and other activities for Spanish speakers.
- Refer clients with felons to a free expungement service in Watsonville, which is located nearby in Santa Cruz County.

### **General Observations (Significant, Unique):**

In addition to observations related to the focus areas, other significant or unique information was also observed during the CPR. These general observations cover a wide range of topics and provide a greater understanding about the operations of San Benito County’s CalWORKs program.

#### Communication, Management, and Training:

Supervisors and directors have formal, one-on-one meetings at least every two weeks. Staff meets twice a month and the deputy director attends at least one of those times each month. Communication from directors goes through supervisors to ICWs.

When facing the challenges of reduced staffing and an increase in caseloads, San Benito HHS management is maintaining an attitude of flexibility. If something is not working, then they are willing to try something new.

During the time of the CPR, ICWs received training in two forms:

- UC Davis Extension conducts trainings that the agency has requested for the staff.
- All other training is done by the supervisors and ICW III with the ICWs.

Some staff expressed that the duties and roles of clerical staff were not entirely clear, and some ICWs noted that they need more clerical support, e.g., help with phone calls and paperwork, such as mailings to clients.

#### Ancillary and Transportation Supportive Services:

The San Benito County WTW clothes closet closed due to lack of space, but there is another resource, Hazel's Thrift Store, that provides clients access to clothing for up to three interview outfits or other work-related clothing. Hazel's is less than two miles from the San Benito County HHS, in downtown Hollister. Clients in need of interview clothing receive a clothes referral voucher from the ICWs or the employment training worker to obtain free clothing at the store. ICWs and employment training staff stated that this service is considered valuable for all clients.

Supportive services payments, such as transportation reimbursement, can be very large, and the county is interested in ways to control these costs while still providing the support clients need to participate. During the time of the CPR, monthly transportation costs ranged from a low of \$20.00 for local travel up to about \$2000.00 for clients who travel outside of the county for WTW activities.

#### WPR and Sanctions:

San Benito County HHS management indicated strongly that they would like the state CalWORKs program to start counting partial participation to recognize efforts that go into engaging clients even if the clients are not fully participating. Management added that oftentimes the ICW and client are making great efforts to achieve full participation, but due to circumstances such as the economy or a lack of accessible placements and bridging activities, the client may fall just short of meeting the required hours for CalWORKs participation.

San Benito County HHS management commented that the CalWORKs sanctioning regulations may not be strong enough because instant curing makes it too easy for clients to come back on aid and then stop participating again.

#### Other Programs:

San Benito County HHS management proudly shared that the county's Youth Employment Training Program was going to serve over 140 youths in the summer of 2009. CalWORKs clients or their older children ages 14-24 were able to participate in this program. The program was overseen by the San Benito County CalWORKs Deputy Director.

Some San Benito County HHSA staff noted that ¡JobLINK! and the EDD One-Stop Career Center have some overlapping services such as computers for job search and résumé assistance, but these services are separate. One of HHSA's goals is to streamline services by identifying and evaluating overlapping services and eliminating duplication of effort.

The CPR team agrees that the logistics of having multiple services for CalWORKs clients available at one location is a promising practice. Services include the following:

- Employment Development Department (EDD): One-Stop Career Center, Community Services Workforce Development, ROP, Council on Aging
- GoKids Childcare Referral
- Family Resource Center
- Manpower Employment Placement Services
- Behavioral Health Services

Recommendations:

In order to improve communication, teamwork, and rapport among different units and departments, the county may want to consider the following:

- Consider more social events and trainings, for example between the CalWORKs and support staffs.
- Develop supportive services strategies by team brainstorming sessions and continue to follow-up with county peer review team members and the Employment Bureau county liaison for technical assistance.
- Create a resource center: place copies of CDSS All County Letters (ACLs), regulations, county policies, etc. in one centralized location and make procedure manuals (one for case work staff, one for support staff).
- Expand WEX placements for WTW clients to restart the WTW clothes closet and have the WEX employees bring a variety of interview clothing choices to the ¡JobLINK! classes, so clients can have interview clothing as soon as they start class (e.g., maintain a clothing rack for the class).
- Submit the strategy of centrally located services to the CalWORKs Best Practices website, which is located at <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/calworks/bestpractices.htm>.

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## Focus Group

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The focus group was conducted with eleven clients in the ¡JobLINK! class, which is the starting point of WTW activities in San Benito County. Of the 11 clients in attendance, most did not have any experience with their long-term ICWs, and they only had limited experience with supportive services. Also, the clients' experience with resources available in the county related primarily to their job searching. The clients were able to share helpful comments related to the focus areas based on their experiences and about the county's WTW program.

Observations:

### Employment Training Staff and ICWs:

Clients stated a variety of opinions concerning employment training staff and ICWs:

- Clients expressed admiration for the employment training worker and supervisor: the clients feel the employment training staff is willing and devoted to go the extra mile to help clients.
- Clients also stated that they want ICWs to have more time to do their casework so the clients can receive their supportive services payments on time.
- Clients suggested that they would like the employment training staff to find out more about them at the start of ¡JobLINK! so the clients are seen more as individuals instead of as another ¡JobLINK! group.
- Some clients mentioned that during intake they would like to receive more consideration by the ICWs of their ideas for their WTW plans, such as attending school.

### Résumés

Several clients stated that they start job search in the ¡JobLINK! class without a résumé and would prefer to have résumés as soon as they start job searching. Employment training staff informed the CPR team that résumé writing and review is a part of the class. During the time of the CPR, the ¡JobLINK! clients had started job search, but the clients had not yet worked on résumés.

Some clients noted that there are résumé resources in the One-Stop Career Center, which is co-located with the CalWORKs program, and it is up to each client to utilize the service for résumés. There is no one in the One-Stop Career Center to review the résumés. Clients expressed a desire to be sure their résumés are correct and of good quality before sharing the résumés with prospective employers.

### ¡JobLINK! (Job Club Class):

Clients discussed that coming back for recap at the end of the day can interfere with job search off-site. The ¡JobLINK! recap is a check-in at the end of the day for the ¡JobLINK! clients to confirm job search activities. Since there are not many employers in the local area, clients often have to travel long distances to apply for jobs, and the clients may be a significant distance away from the CalWORKs office putting in an application or at an interview and have to travel back to the ¡JobLINK! class for the recap on the day's job search activities. If the clients are late returning for the recap, the clients stated they lose credit for job search participation that day.

Some of the clients discussed the disruptive behavior of previous ¡JobLINK! clients during recap. Clients explained that ¡JobLINK! recap is not just for the current ¡JobLINK! class but also earlier class participants who are now in job search. The clients who are no longer in the class can be disruptive as the current class tries to complete ¡JobLINK! for the day.

Clients stated that the county may want to evaluate reducing paperwork requirements while clients are in ¡JobLINK! because clients mentioned there is a lot of stress with

completing paperwork, such as child care reimbursements, job search logs, mileage reimbursement, and multiple time tracking documents: time cards (for staff), and time logs (for themselves), to track meeting the 32 or 35 hour weekly requirements. One suggestion mentioned by a client was for someone from the CalWORKs staff to shadow clients on a typical ¡JobLINK! day to be able to better understand from a client's perspective what it is like to complete all of the clients' paperwork requirements.

Clients stated that they need ancillary payments when they start class so they can get interview clothes right away. Employment training staff and ICWs stated they provide clothes referral vouchers to Hazel's Thrift Shop first. If a client cannot find clothing at Hazel's, then staff can process the ancillary request for interview clothing. Clients also mentioned wanting to have snacks provided while in class, as they get hungry during class and that makes it harder for them to focus.

#### One-Stop Career Center:

Clients stated they are not sure about how to sign in and sign out at the One-Stop Career Center to make sure their job search time is credited. The clients stated they have been given conflicting information about when to swipe their One-Stop Career Center Membership Cards. This requirement of swiping their cards is in addition to the ¡JobLINK! class time log sheets they must complete. To remedy this concern, HHSA management stated they are looking into a self-directed system (with staff support as needed) that will allow all clients the opportunity to check-in and check-out by swiping their membership cards and using a touch screen monitor.

Some of the clients mentioned they would like more time for internet job search at the One-Stop Career Center since many employers require online applications instead of in-person applications. Some of the clients also noted that ¡JobLINK! clients are given credit for the time spent at the One-Stop Career Center as long as the clients' time there can be verified.

#### Recommendations:

##### ¡JobLINK!:

- Evaluate the need of possibly rescheduling job search while clients are in the ¡JobLINK! class, so clients can work on résumés. Consider waiting until class is completed to have whole days for off-site job search.
  - Since the time of the CPR visit, the county has restructured the format for each ¡JobLINK! class. Instead of releasing clients in the afternoon to conduct job search, class time is extended each day. After classes are conducted and each client has a well developed résumé, clients begin their job search.
- Implement training for clients on how to apply for jobs online: 21<sup>st</sup> century job searching requires skills such as creating electronic résumés, which are not necessarily the same as traditional résumés.
- Help clients to develop a "Pocket Résumé": a wallet-sized, pre-prepared application to have information ready when applying for jobs—no hunting for phone numbers, references, dates, etc.

- Explore the possibility of utilizing the skills of ¡JobLINK! clients who are good with computers and/or résumés to help their classmates to create résumés and cover letters.
- Consider moving the ¡JobLINK! recap to the morning instead of having clients come back in the afternoon. This way the recap may not cut into job search time, and current ¡JobLINK! clients do not have to be disrupted by the clients who are no longer in the ¡JobLINK! class who are also checking in during the afternoon for their job searches and competing for the employment training staff's time.

#### Time Management, Stress, and Motivation:

- Add time management education to the ¡JobLINK! curriculum to help clients deal with the pressures of the class and daily activities in preparation for the clients transitioning to full-time employment, a combination of work and school, etc.
- Post motivational, inspirational, and success materials such as photos and mini-biographies of clients who got jobs by placing the photos and biographies in a book or hanging them on the walls in the ¡JobLINK! classroom.
- Encourage ¡JobLINK! clients to post their goals in the classroom in a format that can be updated, such as sticky easel pages. The goals can be updated as the clients go through class, and the goals can be easily moved as needed or taken home by the clients.
- Share success stories by inviting back previous clients who found employment to be speakers in the ¡JobLINK! class.

#### Other topics:

- Explore the possibility of employment training staff performing one-on-one appraisals privately prior to the start of the ¡JobLINK! class so that employment training staff may know more about each client. Clients may have questions and concerns while filling out the self-appraisals that they do not want to discuss in front of the group.
- Evaluate having clients begin applying for ancillary payments for interview clothes as soon as they are assigned to ¡JobLINK! class if they are unable to find sufficient interview clothing with their vouchers at Hazel's Thrift Store.
- Encourage HHSA staff to continue looking into free resources for snacks in order to address the clients' concerns about being hungry in class. HHSA staff informed the CPR team that they were looking into providing snacks from a local food locker or having snacks donated from a bakery, restaurant, or grocery store.

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