

Calaveras County County Peer Review Visit Summary

March 30, 2010



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Welfare to Work Division

Charr Lee Metsker, Deputy Director

Executive Summary

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). Calaveras County volunteered to host a CPR in October 2009 to focus attention on areas they felt would be of interest to other service providers and benefit Calaveras County's California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program.

Calaveras County Human Services Agency:

The Calaveras CalWORKs program is composed of an Eligibility unit and a WTW unit, both of which are housed on the same floor. At the time of the CPR, there were four intake Eligibility workers handling all programs, two continuing cash aid workers, and one worker handling sanction cases and a small cash aid caseload. The WTW unit had two Employment and Training Worker (ETW) II's, one ETW III, and one supervisor. The ETW III also had the Cal-Learn caseload, the work-eligible General Assistance population, a Linkages caseload, and carried approximately 83 WTW cases. At the time of the CPR, the two ETW II's carried approximately 130 cases.

Site Visit General Information:

The review was performed in Calaveras County on October 26 to 29, 2009, and consisted of three and a half days at the Calaveras County Human Services Agency in the San Andreas office. The CPR activities consisted of a kick-off meeting, staff interviews, case discussions with county staff, and close-out meeting.

Scope:

The focus areas included the assessment process and review of partnerships with internal and external resources, including community colleges, documentation and verification, supportive services, communication with Eligibility, and Self-Initiated Program (SIP) cases.

Promising Practices

Some of the significant promising practices identified include:

- Calaveras maintains numerous partnerships that provide valuable resources to clients. These partnerships include:
 - Columbia College that has a CalWORKs counselor
 - Calaveras Self Help Legal Center, that assists clients with expungement
 - Calaveras County Crisis Center, which provides substance abuse services and afterhours staff for domestic abuse counseling
 - Calaveras Adult Tutoring, that provides adult education for clients without a diploma or California General Education Development (GED) credential, and for English as a Second Language (ESL)

The county also maintains a regular close working relationship with their Child Welfare Services (CWS) program. The county is encouraged to submit this strategy of maintaining strong local partnerships, including community colleges, to the CalWORKs Best Practices website (see pages 6-8 for details).

- An efficient client management process between the Eligibility and WTW units allows sanctions to be removed and participation to be counted upon receipt of a Quarterly Report (QR) 7 indicating that a sanctioned client has begun to work, which helps to improve client participation and documentation, and is beneficial for both clients and workers (see pages 10-11 for details).

Opportunities for Improvement

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

- For more effective and helpful client assessments, WTW workers could benefit from additional training on conducting assessments and providing appropriate career guidance to clients (see pages 5-6 for details).
- Developing a procedure that outlines when it is permissible to modify or update a client's assessment and subsequent activity placement due to certain circumstances or life changes (see pages 5-6 for details).

Key Recommendations:

- Evaluate the possibility of utilizing the Comprehensive Career Guide (CCG) system as a tool that can be used outside of assessment when it could assist in identifying the direction for a client in the case that an assessment is not necessary (see pages 5-6 for details).
- Reassessing clients when circumstances have changed significantly or a new barrier has been identified, or when a barrier has been resolved. For example, if a client has resolved their substance abuse barrier, they may end up with a different assessment with a new direction (see pages 5-6 for details).
- Assess the possibility of a release of confidential information form that has been effective in another county and modifying it as necessary (see pages 8-10 for details).
- Evaluate opportunities to strengthen communication between Eligibility and WTW by implementing regular or more frequent meetings both formal and informal to enhance dialogue between the units (see pages 10-11 for details).

Acknowledgements:

CDSS thanks Calaveras Works and Human Services Agency Employment Services Supervisor, Adele Baroni, for hosting the CPR. CDSS also thanks Tuolumne County Human Services Agency Welfare to Work Supervisor, Michie Anderson, Tuolumne County Human Services Agency Social Worker II, Maxine Ortiz, and San Joaquin County Human Services Agency CalWORKS Staff Analyst, Carol Monroe, for serving on the CPR team as peer county reviewers.

County Peer Review: Calaveras County Visit Summary

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). Calaveras County volunteered to host a CPR in October 2009 to focus attention on areas they felt would be of interest to other service providers and benefit Calaveras County's California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program.

Calaveras County Human Services Agency:

The Calaveras CalWORKs program is composed of two separate units, Eligibility and WTW, which are located on the same floor. Each unit is supervised by a Program Manager. The WTW unit has a Social Services Program Manager and the Eligibility unit has an Eligibility Program Manager. Eligibility has one CalWORKs supervisor who also conducts Foster Care Intake and one worker who conducts continuing Foster Care and non-work eligible General Assistance services. There are four intake Eligibility workers who administer all programs and two continuing cash aid workers, one of whom handles sanction cases and a small cash aid caseload. WTW services are provided by two Employment and Training Workers (ETW) II's, one ETW III and one supervisor. The ETW III also has the Cal-Learn caseload, the work-eligible General Assistance population, a Linkages caseload, and carries approximately 83 WTW cases. The two ETW II's are carrying approximately 130 cases. Calaveras County does not contract out any activities and the three workers perform all activities within county offices. The three ETW workers are also required to complete at least four home visits per month. For the purposes of this visit summary, "workers" refers to a combination of ETWs and Eligibility workers unless otherwise specified. "Staff" refers to a combination of workers and/or management unless otherwise specified.

There are currently seven outreach office sites in Calaveras County. WTW services provided are Orientation/Appraisal (O/A), meeting with sanction participants, and assessments. Not all outreach sites are large enough to accommodate a group so most meetings are conducted one-on-one. WTW workers will take a county vehicle to these outreach sites and meet with their clients. Public transit within Calaveras County is not readily available – scheduled bus runs are limited and the transit system does not reach certain parts of the county. The Eligibility workers oversee the outreach sites where they process intake applications, Food Stamps, fingerprint imaging, Medi-Cal applications and annual renewals. The Eligibility workers also pick up all mail dropped off at the site and transport it to the main office. These outreach sites are supervised by an ETW III and are visited on a regular basis.

The WTW program does not have a quality control/quality assurance (QC/QA) team or worker, and the WTW supervisor performs all the case reviews. In addition, there are

no specialized WTW caseloads in Calaveras County, nor does Calaveras County have a multi-disciplinary team.

At the time of the CPR, the CalWORKs WTW flow was as follows:

- CalWORKs cash aid application is completed and approved in an average of 30 – 35 days;
- administrative documentation from the Eligibility worker is given to the clerical worker to set up the WTW case, which takes two to three days from the date the clerical worker receives the appraisal paperwork from Eligibility;
- the case is then assigned to a WTW worker on a rotating basis.
- the Eligibility worker assigns participants to the group orientation held every two weeks and the clerical worker would set them up in an orientation class list;
- an appraisal appointment is mailed out to clients who have attended orientation, which would be scheduled one to two weeks out;
- clients would then be assigned their activity.

The total time of the flow ranged from 25 – 30 days. The WTW flow has changed due to the increase of clients applying for aid. The same process is followed from Eligibility to clerical and on to the WTW program. The difference is that the WTW worker schedules their own O/A appointments and conducts them on a one-on-one basis. Each WTW worker is assigned approximately ten or more cases a month. During the time of the CPR, it took approximately 60 days to get participants in for their O/A appointment and longer than 90 days to sign a WTW Plan if the participant is assigned to job search.

The county contracts child care supportive services with The Resource Connection Family and Children programs, which are not co-located with the agency. WTW staff conducts monthly meetings with The Resource Connection Welfare to Work Child Care Coordinator and Calaveras Works and Human Services Staff Analyst, who develops the contract for the WTW program and The Resource Connection. Monthly child care meetings are also used to staff cases in addition to ongoing communication on issues that may arise over time.

During the time of the CPR, approximately 75 percent of WTW participants have a difficult time meeting the required hours and there are some who are unable to participate due to lack of child care and especially infant care. WTW workers will perform home visits to find out what families are doing to resolve their barriers. At the time of the CPR, the total WTW caseload was at 347, including the sanction caseload and the second parent cases. The exempt caseload is maintained separately from the ongoing WTW caseload and is monitored by alerts generated by the Interim Statewide Automated Welfare System (ISAWS) system or by the implemented remote desktop pilot (CITRIX) system.

Site Visit General Information:

The CPR was performed in Calaveras County from October 26 to 29, 2009, and consisted of three and a half days at the Calaveras County Human Services Agency in the San Andreas office. The CPR team included a staff analyst from San Joaquin

County, a supervisor from Tuolumne County, a social worker from Tuolumne County and CDSS staff. The CPR activities consisted of a kick-off meeting, staff interviews, case discussions with county staff, and a close-out meeting. A total of seven county staff interviews were completed. Interviews were completed with the following staff: two with ETW IIs, one with an Eligibility Worker III carrying a sanction and continuing cash aid caseload, one with an intake Eligibility Worker II, one with the ETW III, one with the WTW supervisor, and one with the Social Services Program Manager for the WTW unit. Six case discussion sessions were conducted with WTW staff. Debriefings were held by CPR team members each day to collect observations. These CPR team debriefings were opportunities for trends, practices, and general observations noted during the days' activities to be discussed in preparation for the close-out meeting and the development of this Visit Summary.

Scope

The scope was identified by Calaveras County management to focus attention on areas they felt would benefit their CalWORKs program. The scope was based on Calaveras County discussions with CDSS and information gathered from a self-assessment tool completed by the county. The scope of the review covered the following areas:

- Review of the Assessment Process
- Partnerships with internal/external resources, including Community Colleges
- Review of Documentation and Verification
- Review of Supportive Services
- Exploring Communication with Eligibility
- Review of Self-Initiated Program (SIP) Cases

Each focus area is discussed below with observations obtained by the CPR team from interviews and case discussions with county staff. 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: Assessment Process

Observations:

The Comprehensive Career Guide (CCG) used for assessments consists of three different evaluations – Career Ability Placement Survey (CAPS), Career Orientation Placement & Evaluation Survey (COPES) and Career Occupational Preference System (COPS). The CAPS evaluation is timed and evaluates an individual's skills and abilities such as mechanical reasoning, math skills, language skills and more. The COPES evaluation captures what an individual may value in a job, and the COPS evaluation captures an individual's interest in what type of work they prefer.

WTW workers rely on the CCG system as the basis of the assessment for a client's level of skills and abilities, and as a way to address any learning disabilities (LD). Although the CCG system stresses LD; it was mentioned by some staff that clients with LD typically do not do well on the timed CAPS evaluation and results may not be accurate. Some WTW workers felt the assessment is too dependent on the CCG

system, and that only about 25 percent of assessments conducted are meaningful and valuable. Various WTW workers also stated that assessments are treated as too “black and white” and limiting, and mentioned that if both the client and worker treated the assessment more seriously, then it might have a more effective result, especially since many clients are not forthcoming with their barriers. Some WTW workers stated they were unsure if and when the COPES evaluation can be used outside of the assessment. The assessment was described by various workers as the starting point to create client tasks and goals. To emphasize the big picture, some workers expressed the importance of considering a client’s long-term goals, but felt that these are often overlooked as the county’s approach is on short-term goals with emphasis on finding jobs for the clients as soon as possible so they are participating. A number of WTW workers indicated that the assessment can be very effective, but it depends upon how honest the client is in answering the questions and their willingness to engage.

Training on utilizing the assessment outcomes would help workers gain more knowledge and experience on career guidance and counseling. WTW workers recognize that the assessment is a key piece in the WTW process and can result in a life-changing decision as it not only defines the next step in the WTW plan and appropriate activity placement, but also involves choosing a career path for the individual. Some WTW workers felt their lack of understanding and education of assessment evaluation and utilizing outcome information makes the assessment less useful and meaningful. In addition, some WTW workers struggle with obtaining the information from clients, while others were unsure if assessments are to be treated as the “be-all-end-all” or if they can be changed to be treated more as a living document that evolves or is modifiable at a later point in time if necessary.

Recommendations:

- Consider additional training for WTW workers on conducting assessments and providing appropriate career guidance to clients.
- Evaluate the possibility of developing a procedure that outlines when it is permissible to modify or update a client’s assessment and subsequent activity placement due to certain circumstances or life changes, such as possibly reassessing when circumstances have changed significantly, a new barrier has been identified, or when a barrier has been resolved. For example, if a client has resolved their substance abuse barrier, they may end up with a different assessment with a new direction.
- Explore utilizing the CCG system as a tool outside of assessment when it could assist in identifying the direction for a client, in the case that an assessment is not necessary.

Focus Area 2: Partnerships with internal/external resources, and Community Colleges

Observations:

The county partners with Delta College located in Stockton and Columbia College located in Sonora. Each college has CalWORKs advisors that serve as a single point of

contact for clients. Some WTW workers are unsure why it is only limited to Delta and Columbia, when there are other accredited schools located in the area that could be included (e.g., Heald College). Based on feedback from staff, the county has a very strong working relationship with Columbia College. Part of the process that contributes to the positive working relationship includes the counselor faxing over current schedules and report cards to the county, having quarterly meetings with county staff, and meeting with all resource programs to the county twice each year. County staff can call the counselor at Delta College when needed. Delta College and Columbia College assist with identifying and addressing LD. There are LD counselors on campus, and LD evaluations are also done through a private evaluator who comes to the county office.

The county has a partnership with the Calaveras Self Help Legal Center through Self Help grant funding. The legal center can assist clients with expungement of criminal records and suspended licenses for driving under the influence (DUI). The legal center has an attorney that performs pro-bono work with clients. The legal center offers a free clinic class on expungement of criminal records that has proven to be very successful.

The county partners with the Calaveras County Crisis Center, which provides substance abuse services through the County Department of Mental Health. The crisis center has afterhours staff available for domestic abuse counseling, and previously had a contracted program called "Supporting Success" that was very successful, but no longer exists due to county lay-offs.

Calaveras Adult Tutoring is offered through the library and provides adult education for clients without a diploma or California General Education Development (GED) credential. Some workers mentioned they have received poor feedback from clients on the adult education program run through Calaveras County Office of Education (e.g., several clients complaining of not getting returned calls and overall lack of communication), so workers often start clients with adult tutoring at the library instead. The adult education program also receives positive feedback from clients for helping with English as a Second Language (ESL).

The WTW staff has a good working relationship with Child Welfare Services (CWS) and share many of the same clients. These programs work together to follow the CWS plan and focus on getting people healthy and job-ready, which reflects management's philosophy. They also meet on a weekly basis and often works together to resolve client barriers (e.g., when there is a child abuse case, the ETW and the Eligibility worker will be involved with the case). One ETW attends the weekly CWS Emergency Response Staff Meetings, which is not limited to Linkages cases and can include any case that is both CalWORKs and CWS. The CalWORKs/Child Welfare Partnership Project, also known as Linkages, is a coordinated services approach between CWS and CalWORKS services to better serve families and improve outcomes. In addition, joint home visits are conducted when necessary.

The ETW III handles clients who are work-ready, and refers those who have a disability to Adult Services to assist with the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) application

process. The ETW III and the supervisor often attend the Chamber of Commerce mixers. The county is also able to connect a client to a community resource for missing child support. The county contracts with The Resource Connection for all stages of child care, which helps significantly with reducing workload. The county also uses a vision screener for Medi-Cal that many workers felt was useful and effective.

Recommendations:

- Submit this strategy of maintaining strong local partnerships, including with the community colleges, to the CalWORKs Best Practices website (see pages 6-8 for details). The website can be viewed at <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/calworks/bestpractices.htm>.
- Schedule regular meetings with the counselor at Delta College to strengthen and ensure ongoing communication.
- Evaluate potential opportunities that may exist with expanding the county's partnership with additional accredited schools in the area or in neighboring counties.

Focus Area 3: Documentation and Verification

Observations:

Documentation and verification is the biggest challenge for most workers. There are no system-generated reminders, so everything must be tracked manually. Workers manually send out a letter before the Notice of Action (NA) 840 every month (e.g., to remind a client that their worker has not received their timesheet, etc.). The clients must turn in timesheets every two weeks, which results in a huge paperwork processing load for workers that is time-consuming and must be completed twice a month. The alerts sent by the Interim Statewide Automated Welfare System (ISAWS) system or by the implemented remote desktop pilot (CITRIX) system to the worker are both ways of maintaining documentation.

The WPR report that is done every month serves as another reminder to follow up on necessary documentation and verification, although this process is under a time constraint. Some workers felt confused with projecting client income and hours using the Quarterly Report (QR) 7. In addition, some indicated that the form used for documentation of activities is effective and that it is helpful to allow clients to fax in their timecards if that is most convenient way of providing documentation to the county.

Cases are kept well organized by most workers and that it is easy to locate information or items in a file. However, it is a challenge to get self-employment receipts from clients and to get a substance abuse release form that allows a worker to talk to a client's substance abuse counselor. During the time of the CPR, the county developed a new release of information form; however, some workers felt it is too long and cumbersome.

Recommendations:

- Staff could brainstorm on creative ways to improve the efficiency of the documentation and verification process and present ideas to county

management. In the interim, workers could make phone calls in addition to sending letters to remind clients to turn in documentation, such as timesheets.

- Provide additional training and/or reference materials for workers on projecting hours and income on QR 7s. This may improve the process used for documenting and verifying client employment information.
- Evaluate using a release of confidential information form that has been effective in another county and modifying it as necessary.

Focus Area 4: Supportive Services

Observations:

Public transportation is a major challenge within Calaveras County – the bus system runs on an inconvenient schedule for clients and is very unreliable (e.g., not uncommon for riders to wait longer than two hours). Workers and clients both feel that the bus transit schedules are difficult to read. In addition to providing public transportation, the county provides mileage reimbursement equivalent to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rate, e.g., if an activity requires a client to drive outside of county lines.

Issuing immediate need checks instead of using their county credit cards is cumbersome for both clients and workers, and the county is charged for each check issued. It also forces the client to purchase the items themselves and then bring in the receipts to be reimbursed for those purchases. During the time of the CPR, the county was facing significant fiscal challenges and was coping with overspending in prior years on the budgeted amount for supportive services, including transportation.

Some workers indicated that it seems easier for a client to maintain and turn in his or her attendance sheets twice a month to their worker, although it may be time consuming and requires additional paperwork processing for both client and worker. Turning in attendance forms twice a month is also helpful for workers because it can alert the worker that a client has stopped participating sooner, as opposed to finding out ten days after the end of the month. Overall turning in attendance forms twice a month helps workers to keep up with status of the client and following up as needed, in addition to monitoring their caseload and assisting with issuing mileage reimbursement checks to clients more timely.

Recommendations:

- To mitigate transportation related costs, consider developing a mileage reimbursement rate that uses a “two-tier” system as clients may be more successful in obtaining employment if methods of transportation accommodate their work schedule.
- Consider allowing clients to place specific items on hold or layaway at stores so that workers can call the retailer to pay the exact amount of the approved items. Also consider issuing vouchers limited to certain approved items and/or amounts.
- Explore methods of offering supportive services prior to approval of cash aid, which may help employed applicants maintain their jobs, or could “capture”

clients upfront while they are more likely to be motivated to participate rather than after they may have lost interest.

Focus Area 5: Communication with Eligibility

Observations:

The Eligibility unit has a lot of autonomy and maintains good communication with workers in other units, including face-to-face discussions and phone calls in addition to back and forth notes. However, various workers also stated that communication with supervisors could be improved by incorporating phone and face-to-face interaction so as not to rely solely upon email as a form of communication. Some workers mentioned that communication was better and more open when Eligibility and WTW workers were located in the same area and could interact and ask each other questions directly and have ongoing dialogue, that supervisors for Eligibility and WTW communicate well together, and that communication was good worker-to-worker and worker-to-supervisor(s). A number of workers noted that the “open door” policy administered by the Eligibility supervisors was helpful in making them more available when needed and that supervisors address client issues not only on an individual level but also universally.

Another aspect of communication between Eligibility and WTW workers is that the Eligibility worker will involve the WTW worker when a QR 7 has been received indicating that a previously sanctioned client has begun to work. This allows the client’s sanction to be lifted and their participation to be counted which as a result helps to improve both participation and documentation and is beneficial to both clients and workers. The Eligibility worker also involves the WTW worker at the client’s annual renewal appointment so they can re-engage the client if needed.

During the time of the CPR, some workers stated that their cases were inconveniently located physically, in particular the sanction caseload, and hindered easy access to files. In some situations, the migration to the Statewide Automated Welfare System (SAWS) Consortium-IV (C-IV) may alleviate this issue. As an added administrative touch, it is a good practice for Eligibility workers to bring attention to clients’ appointment dates by highlighting the date and time on the NA 840 forms to avoid oversight by clients. Some workers also noted that it is a good practice when the Eligibility worker writes their case comments immediately before leaving the interview room. This ensures complete case information, except for the documents that are still needed from the client, and eliminates distractions at the worker’s desk.

Eligibility workers are enthusiastic about the WTW program when giving the client information upfront and explain how the county can help them. Workers go over the advantages of the WTW program and clarify that the program is there to help them move to self-sufficiency. Workers try to balance between the “perks” of the WTW program such as potential supportive services and assuring clients that they are attentive to their needs, and between what clients are required to do as part of the program.

Recommendations:

- Consider implementing regular or more frequent meetings where both Eligibility and WTW are present to establish another avenue for effective communication. For example, consider monthly all staff meetings to discuss relevant issues and procedural changes or improvements, and weekly unit and/or team meetings between supervisor and workers. Issues could be case-related or staff-related (e.g., promotion, operational efficiency changes, informal refresher training). The county could then evaluate the effectiveness of having regular meetings. Team meetings among workers themselves could allow issues to be resolved at the worker level and then elevate remaining concerns and/or suggestions when necessary. Teambuilding activities could be a great avenue to build rapport among units and among staff.
- Explore having a communication process outlined for staff to follow in order to help ensure effective communication among staff and to ensure that one form of interaction within the work environment is not solely relied upon.
- Consider co-locating the Eligibility and WTW units within closer proximity to one another to enhance the flow of information and improve staff communication.

Focus Area 6: Self- Initiated Programs (SIP) Cases

Observations:

Many clients live within Calaveras County but commute to work or school outside of county lines. Various WTW workers indicated that the process for handling SIP cases is unclear, and would like the criteria to determine if the situation meets the qualifications of a SIP to be more clearly defined. Some WTW workers were aware that a list of approved schools existed, but could not locate the SIP list during the time of the CPR, while others were not sure if a list of approved schools existed. During the time of the CPR, the SIP list was being newly developed for C-IV and will use the results of the Employment Development Department's (EDD) regional surveys of jobs in demand as a resource. Some WTW workers felt that requiring the client to obtain a letter guaranteeing employment upon completion of a program or certificate is not a realistic expectation. For example, sometimes the job may not be in demand in the client's current county, but is in demand in nearby counties, and the client may be willing to relocate upon completion of their program.

Recommendations:

- Evaluate the possibility of developing a new list of approved schools with programs accepted as SIPs by the county and a process for communicating this information to the appropriate workers.
- Consider providing refresher trainings for workers to go over the new approved SIP list and process associated with determining when a client's situation meets the criteria to be approved as a SIP to ensure consistency among all workers.
- Develop a reference binder or online folder location to provide a consistent source of current information for workers to ensure the correct information is being provided to workers to ensure clients receive accurate information and consistent services to meet their needs.

General Observations:

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 Calaveras County's CalWORKs program.

Internal Communication:

Some workers mentioned they want better communication between all levels of management and line workers. During the time of the CPR, management appears to be several levels removed from workers and some staff felt communication among all levels could be improved.

Workers stated they would like an explanation of why they do things, and some workers mentioned they are sometimes afraid to ask questions, which negatively affects management's relationship with workers and overall rapport. Some staff stated that workers' autonomy is decreased while dependence on already taxed supervision is increased. For some staff, this dynamic between management and line staff appears to contribute to the lack of communication. Some workers are comfortable with their knowledge of regulations and rules, and feel time is unnecessarily wasted by the requirement to obtain approvals.

Client Communication:

Workers have developed trust and maintain good rapport between each other, and with their clients and get to know them very well. Workers also are familiar with the different services available for clients and can make appropriate referrals. For example, workers indicated that they work well with the CWS plan and use those activities when possible. Illustrating the point, a client that called her WTW worker to let her know that she might have a Child Protective Services (CPS) issue potentially occurring illustrated the trust clients have with their worker. Overall, workers seemed very skilled at building trust in a community of people that is typically not trusting of social services.

Case File Organization:

Workers and supervisors indicated that the case file organization overall is effective; cases are kept well organized and workers keep files current as much as possible. Also, Eligibility workers have good organizational skills and an efficient filing system for maintaining accurate and timely documentation and verification. Eligibility workers seem aware of what motivates the client. For example, when calling to remind a client to turn in their QR 7, the Eligibility worker may inform the client that a late QR 7 could delay their food stamp benefits as well. Some Eligibility workers mentioned that supervisors give them the autonomy to make decisions on what is reasonable to give good cause for a late QR 7, which is better for both the client and worker and eliminates unnecessary paperwork and the client having to reapply.

Acknowledgements:

CDSS thanks Calaveras Works and Human Services Agency Employment Services Supervisor, Adele Baroni, for volunteering Calaveras County to serve as a site county for the CPR, and for her assistance with the site visit logistics and contributing to the CPR materials.

CDSS would like to acknowledge Tuolumne County Human Services Agency Welfare to Work Supervisor, Michie Anderson, Tuolumne County Human Services Agency Social Worker II, Maxine Ortiz, and San Joaquin County Human Services Agency CalWORKS Staff Analyst, Carol Monroe, for serving on the CPR team as peer county reviewers. Their program knowledge and expertise was greatly appreciated throughout the CPR site review.