



CDSS

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EDMUND G. BROWN JR.  
GOVERNOR

<b>I. Title</b>	
GAIN Sanction Home Visit Outreach (GSHVO) Project	
<b>II. County or Provider Characteristics</b>	
County/Organization: Los Angeles	Region: South
Contact Name: Lorraine Sinelkoff or Feliciano Alvarado	Telephone Number and email address: (562) 908-5863 LorraineSinelkoff@DPSS.lacounty.gov (562) 908-5728 FelicianoAlvarado@DPSS.lacounty.gov
Demographic: Urban	Size: Large
<b>III. Categories</b>	
<p>Non-Compliance/Sanction Home Visits: When an individual fails or refuses to meet Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program requirements (Welfare to Work [WTW] activities), GAIN Services Workers (GSW) initiate noncompliance activities, which result in a GAIN sanction if the noncompliance issue(s) is/are not resolved. (GAIN is the name of the CalWORKs program administered in Los Angeles County.) Most sanctions occur before an individual participates in any activities; the most common reasons for non-participation are lack of adequate child care or transportation. To address these issues, the GSHVO project was started as a pilot in five regions then, due to its success, rolled out countywide to the two remaining regions.</p>	
<b>IV. Type</b>	
Best Practice	
<b>V. Purpose</b>	
<p>The GSHVO project provides extended outreach to individuals who do not comply with WTW requirements and are at risk of incurring a financial sanction or are currently sanctioned. The outreach is to enable an individual to cure (resolve) her or his noncompliance or sanction, engage</p>	

in WTW activities and access needed supportive services (transportation, child care, and ancillary such as textbooks or work equipment). By participating in WTW activities, GAIN clients are able to receive their cash aid, get on the path to self-sufficiency, and increase the county's work participation rate (WPR).

## **VI. Summary**

This practice involves telephone contacts, home visit appointment letters, home visits, and post-resolution follow-up activities. To ensure the project is successful, GSHVO staff visits the GAIN regional offices, provides training, conducts monitoring, and completes monthly reports to track performance.

Individuals going into noncompliance/sanction are identified by the GAIN computer system daily. Telephone contacts are initiated ten days later, as many individuals resolve issues on their own or respond to a previous GSHVO contact. If telephone contact is unsuccessful, a letter is mailed to inform the client of an upcoming home visit appointment. The individual has the right to refuse the home visit.

Once contact is made by phone or home visit, the GSHVO GSW performs the following actions:

1. Provides information to the individual on services offered by GAIN including services for individuals with mental health, substance abuse issues, and learning disabilities.
2. Identifies the reason(s) for noncompliance or failure to cooperate.
3. Educates the individual on the noncompliance/sanction process to avoid reoccurrences.
4. Identifies steps needed to cure the noncompliance or sanction such as completing Appraisal, Job Club, or another GAIN activity.
5. Negotiates a resolution to participate as required by GAIN program requirements.
6. Assists the individual to resolve barriers preventing participation.
7. Takes the necessary action to engage the individual in the next appropriate GAIN activity.

In 2009, more up-front engagement with noncompliant individuals was added. For example, if someone misses Appraisal, GSHVO personnel arrange to complete the Appraisal at the individual's home or in the office. [Anecdotal evidence is that this is working well, but there is no data for this item alone.]

## **VII. Supporting Research**

Two studies by the Los Angeles County Chief Administrative Office's Service Integration Branch. A few of the key findings in the reports are as follows:

- √ Almost two-thirds of sanctioned individuals are sanctioned before attending GAIN orientation;
- √ The most prevalent reasons for failure to participate are lack of adequate transportation and childcare; and
- √ Long-term sanctioned individuals face personal and program-level barriers that take priority

over complying with GAIN program requirements.

In response to the report's findings, Los Angeles County's Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) developed Sanction Action Plans in collaboration with managers from throughout DPSS, partners from other county departments, service providers, advocates, and the Commission for Public Social Services resulting in the creation of the GSHVO project.

### **VIII. Funding**

Budget for the project comes from the county's single allocation funding.

### **IX. Implementation**

The GSHVO project was implemented on October 31, 2005 in the five DPSS-operated regions for individuals with mental health and/or substance abuse needs. In December 2005, the project was expanded to the general GAIN population. In March 2006, the project was expanded to the two remaining, contracted regions. At that time, the project had 63 GSWs. Due to its success, GSHVO staff was increased to 99 in November 2006.

### **X. Additional Information**

The GSHVO project employs data collection and reporting techniques among all GAIN regions. Project oversight, performance, and analysis are performed on an ongoing basis. Monthly reports from each region are validated and finalized. GSHVO staff participates in the project's changes.

### **XI. Results**

Between November 2005 and December 2008, project staff contacted more than 201,100 individuals. Of this number, over 144,500 or 72% resulted in a successful resolution with agreements to participate, exemptions granted, good cause determinations, and other outcomes which resulted in preventing or resolving sanctions. During this period, sanctions dropped considerably.

### **XII. Outcome Measures**

The number of existing sanctions since the project's implementation have been reduced by 9,700 (47 percent); furthermore, new sanctions have dropped since November 2005.

### **XIII. Replication advice**

Please see attached summary and charts.

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES**  
**GAIN SANCTION HOME VISIT OUTREACH PROJECT**  
**February 2009**

**BACKGROUND**

In California, adult cash aid recipients, unless exempt, must participate in CalWORKs welfare-to-work activities and meet program requirements as a condition of receiving aid. When an individual fails or refuses to meet Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program requirements, GAIN Services Workers (GSW) initiate noncompliance activities, which result in a GAIN sanction if the noncompliance issues are not resolved. States are now required to include sanctioned parents in the denominator used to calculate participation rates.

GAIN Sanctions had been an area of ongoing concern in part because monthly sanction rates grew considerably between the start of 2003 and the end of 2005. Two studies by the Los Angeles County Chief Administrative Office's Service Integration Branch – Urban Research Division on sanctions identified areas that needed to be addressed by the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) in its welfare-to-work GAIN Program. The first report was released in March 2005 and the second in October 2006. A few of the key findings in the reports are as follows:

- Almost two-thirds of sanctioned GAIN individuals are sanctioned before participating in any welfare-to-work activity, primarily for failure to attend orientation;
- The most prevalent reasons identified for this failure to participate are lack of adequate transportation and child care and failure to receive notifications in a timely manner; and
- Long-term sanctioned individuals (referred to in the study as chronically sanctioned individuals) face personal and program-level barriers that take priority over complying with work requirements.

In response to the study findings, DPSS developed two Sanction Action Plans through a collaborative process involving managers from throughout DPSS and key external partners. Pursuant to the study findings various strategies from computer modifications to proactive outreach to GAIN individuals were developed. A major strategy of the Sanction Action Plans is the GAIN Sanction Home Visit Outreach (GSHVO) project.

## **GAIN SANCTION HOME VISIT OUTREACH PROJECT (GSHVO)**

The GSHVO project was implemented on October 31, 2005. The project provides outreach to individuals who do not comply with welfare-to-work requirements and are at risk of incurring a financial sanction. The purpose of the outreach is to enable an individual to cure his/her noncompliance/sanction, engage in welfare-to-work activities and access needed GAIN services. To expedite services, project staff completes the GAIN Appraisal, schedules the Orientation/Job Club/Assessment appointment, and initiates child care services. Additionally, cases in long-term sanction status receive extended outreach services.

The project's strategy involves telephone contacts, home visit appointment letters, home visits, and post-resolution follow-up activities by GSHVO staff. To ensure the project is successful, program staff conducts site visits to the GAIN Regional Offices, provides training, conducts monitoring, and completes monthly reports to track and report performance.

## **DATA COLLECTION & REPORTING**

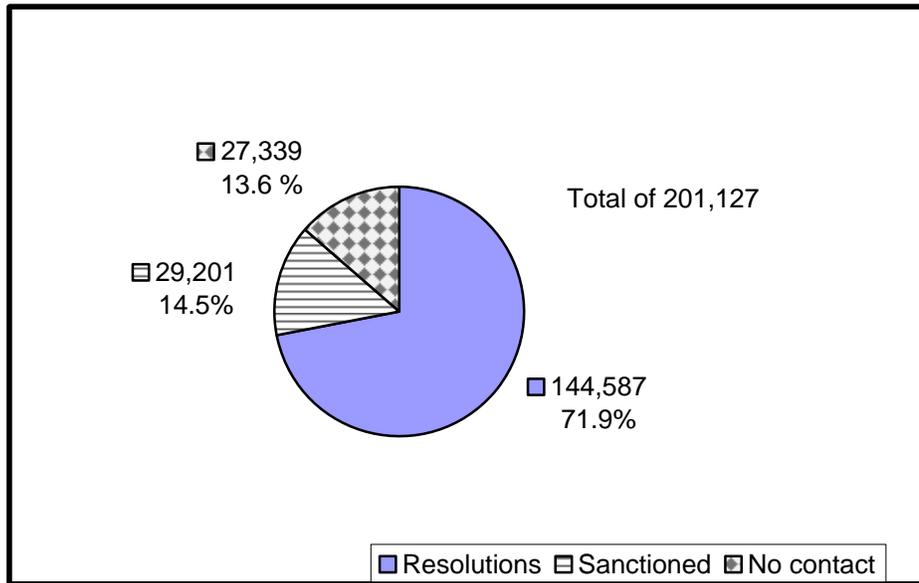
The GSHVO project employs data collection and reporting techniques among all the GAIN Regions. Project oversight, performance, and analysis are performed on an ongoing basis. Monthly reports from the GAIN Regions are validated and finalized. Site visits to the GAIN Regions provide an avenue for discussion and discovery of best practices to be integrated into the project. GSHVO staff is provided with the opportunity to participate in the project's changes and/or modifications.

## **RESULTS**

The goal of the GSHVO project is to reduce sanctions and increase participation by serving GAIN individuals more effectively through outreach. As illustrated in Chart #1 on page 7, the GSHVO project data for the period of November 2005 through December 2008 reflects that the project staff outreached to over 201,100 individuals. Of this number, over 144,500 or 72% resulted in a successful resolution with agreements to participate, exemptions granted, good cause determinations, and other outcomes (see chart #2 on page 7) which resulted in preventing or resolving a sanction.

As a result of the action items in the two Sanction Action Plans and the GSHVO project, the number of sanctioned cases has been reduced considerably. Chart #3 on page 8 compares the December 2005 sanction rate with the rate for December 2008 and reflects a decrease in GAIN sanctions in Los Angeles County from 29.7% to 18.5% during this period.

**Chart #1**  
**Los Angeles County - GSHVO Project Results**  
**November 2005 through December 2008**



**Chart #2**  
**Los Angeles County - GSHVO Resolutions**  
**November 2005 through December 2008**

ACTIVITY	CASES	PERCENTAGE
No contact (not home, incorrect address)	27,339	13.6%
Opted for a sanction	29,201	14.5%
Resolutions (see detail below)	144,607	71.9%
<b>Total cases</b>	<b>201,147</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
RESOLUTIONS BY CATEGORY	CASES	PERCENTAGE
Agree to participate	46,634	32.2%
Good Cause	43,730	30.2%
Exempt	16,809	11.6%
Employment	14,129	9.8%
Homeless	7,025	4.9%
Cash Aid/GAIN case terminated	10,373	7.2%
GSW error	3,355	2.3%
System error	1,797	1.2%
Other	755	0.5%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>144,607</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Chart #3

Percentage of Sanction Individuals  
Los Angeles County and Other California Counties  
Past and Present

December 2005	Enrollees	Sanctions	Rate
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>174,418</b>	<b>48,978</b>	<b>21.9%</b>
Fresno	10,618	6,173	36.8%
<b>Los Angeles</b>	<b>49,086</b>	<b>20,713</b>	<b>29.7%</b>
Riverside	6,982	1,993	22.2%
Kern	6,642	1,688	20.3%
San Bernardino	12,849	2,914	18.5%
Santa Clara	6,296	1,210	16.1%
Orange	4,927	849	14.7%
Tulare	6,906	863	11.1%
Alameda	7,514	273	3.5%
Sacramento	14,453	105	0.7%

December 2008	Enrollees	Sanctions	Rate
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>197,734</b>	<b>40,163</b>	<b>16.9%</b>
Kern	7,061	3,927	35.7%
San Bernardino	16,764	4,268	20.3%
Fresno	11,796	2,861	19.5%
Riverside	11,275	2,665	19.1%
<b>Los Angeles</b>	<b>48,493</b>	<b>11,015</b>	<b>18.5%</b>
Orange	5,769	1,001	14.8%
Alameda	7,179	1,240	14.7%
San Diego	11,714	891	7.1%
Tulare	6,470	312	4.6%
Sacramento	16,651	451	2.6%

Source: State website - WtW 25 & WtW 25A