



CalWORKs PROMISING PRACTICES WEBSITE SUBMITTAL

I. Title	
The Effectiveness of A Social Worker: Assisting Caseworkers with Sanction Prevention and Engaging Exempt Clients	
II. County or Provider Characteristics	
County/Organization: Glenn County Human Resource Agency (HRA)	Region: North
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Demographic: Rural	Size: Small
III. Categories	
Engagement Strategies	
IV. Type	
Promising Practices	
V. Purpose	
The goal of redirecting social worker resources is to allow a social worker to assist caseworkers in helping to re-engage clients who are in sanction or in danger of going into sanction.	
VI. Summary	
<p>The Glenn County Human Resource Agency (HRA) redirected resources to allow for a social worker to assist other caseworkers that carry pre-sanction, sanction, and exemption status cases. The social worker’s primary function is to re-engage clients who are in sanction or in danger of going into sanction by giving focused attention to these cases and their needs. The social worker also looks for previously unidentified or new barriers, such as preventing and resolving transportation issues, and making referrals for mental health and alcohol and other drug (AOD).</p> <p>The social worker often uses strategies involving home visits and intensive phone contact with clients. For example, making visits to clients’ homes allows the social worker to see clients in their own environment and also changes the dynamic between the worker and the client, sometimes resulting in a more positive and comfortable experience. If the client does not respond when the social worker visits the home, he/ or she may call the home of the client to see if contact can be made at that time.</p> <p>The home visit team is usually composed of two staff. In most cases where a home visit is determined as appropriate, the social worker makes the initial visit unaccompanied, and then</p>	

determines based on the client's situation who should accompany him (e.g., the carrying caseworker, a mental health worker, AOD counselor, or other appropriate HRA staff) to aid in resolving client barriers.

Other duties of the social worker include some aspects of the application assistance process for Supplement Security Income (SSI). The social worker position also plays an important role by identifying families for linkage to Child Welfare Services and serving as a connection between these programs. The social worker currently works with clients at both the Willows and Orland locations, and participates in regular monthly sanction meetings in which a team of various HRA staff meets to brainstorm on what can be done with specific cases in sanction and pre-sanction status. The composition of this team is determined by the CalWORKs supervisors and may change based on the clients who are in pre-sanction or sanction status, and may include outside partner agencies or other parties that the clients have allowed to have access to their case information, such as the Glenn County Office of Education's Adult Literacy Program.

VII. Date Implemented

Approximately January of 2005

VIII. Recipient Reactions

The social worker has approached clients with the perspective that he is available to assist them with achieving positive changes in their family environment (e.g., defining and achieving success in their lives, bringing more income and services into the home, helping them to live their lives more independently, etc.) This non-threatening approach has encouraged the clients to openly discuss their circumstances and sanction status with the social worker.

In many cases, clients have been willing to take an immediate step to resolve their sanction (e.g., agreeing to meet with their Welfare-to-Work (WTW) caseworker to discuss the plan to stop their sanction, agreeing to pursue an exemption due to medical concerns, etc.). Other clients have stated they would like to stop their sanctions, but are unable to at this time for a variety of reasons. The social worker works with such clients to resolve these issues and makes it a point to advise them that he will return periodically to continue the discussion.

The clients seem to appreciate this positive approach and at a minimum usually state their willingness to at least consider stopping their sanction in the future. The social worker has encountered very little negative reaction to the home visits.

It is the opinion of the social worker that sanctioned clients become accustomed to their lifestyle as non-participants but become more willing to consider positive changes when provided with the motivation, encouragement and belief that they can, indeed, improve their circumstances.

IX. Employee/Staff Reactions

During the time of the County Peer Review (CPR) performed in May and June 2008, various HRA staff mentioned the ability of the social worker to make a connection and establish trust with clients, especially with those who are sometimes more difficult to assist. The social worker has been successful at developing rapport with clients very quickly and puts them at ease while working with them on their case.

X. Supporting Research (Best Practices Only)
XI. Funding
Costs for the dedicated services of one (1) Social Worker, posted to the Employment Services Unit, comes out of the CalWORKs Single Allocation to the Glenn County Welfare Department. There are no other fund sources used in the application of this particular staffing strategy.
XII. Implementation
Early implementation challenges included re-direction of a Social Worker (who had previously served under the Child Welfare organizational structure and CWS funding) into the Employment Services Unit structure and absorbing the costs of that employee into the CalWORKs Single Allocation. Automation accommodations required the subsequent training of the Social Worker (who was already familiar with CWS/CMS) into the C-IV system for CalWORKs eligibility, WTW, etc. In addition, some unit-specific cultural adaptation was necessary, as the unique culture of a Social Worker, serving within the Child Welfare genre is somewhat different from a Social Worker who serves in an Employment Unit, interfacing primarily with Employment & Training Worker (ETWs) and Integrated Case Worker (ICWs), as opposed to fellow Social Workers. In all of the above scenarios, the Social Worker adapted quite readily to the new and different environment and has an excellent working relationship with the Employment Unit staff and organizational structure.
XIII. Additional Information
N/A
XIV. Results
The social worker home visitation was successful in some situations, such as when the client answers the phone and subsequently agrees to meet with the social worker. This social worker strategy of performing home visits and working closely with clients are regarded among HRA staff as very helpful in preventing clients from going into sanction and to cure sanctions. HRA staff and management recognize the benefits of working with a social worker directly related to WTW across the board.
XV. Outcome Measures
Having the social worker re-engaging clients has proved useful in curing some client sanctions. In 2005, when this effort was launched, 21 percent of WTW families were in Sanction; Today, 11 percent are in Sanction, dipping as low as 6 percent for the month of March 2010.
XVI. Replication advice or drawbacks
To increase successes early in the development of this type of program, it is recommended that the social worker have a strong grounding in the WTW program and have access to the same computer files on clients as the case workers in order to have a complete understanding of what is occurring with the client's case.
XVII. Lesson Learned Only: Place an "X" below to keep your submission anonymous for posting, if desired: