

San Luis Obispo County

CalWORKs Plan



December 4, 1997

Department of Social Services

Moving people toward better lives.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services Mission, Values, and Goals	3
Executive Summary	5
Collaboration with Public and Private Agencies to Provide Training and Supportive Services	13
Partnerships with the Private Sector to Identify Jobs	16
Local Labor Market Needs	18
Welfare-to-Work Activities	20
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Treatment Services	22
Mental Health Services Available After Time Limits	26
Child Care and Transportation Services	27
Community Service Plan	30
Working with Victims of Domestic Violence	31
Performance Outcomes to Meet Locally Established Objectives	32
Public Input to the County Plan	33
Sources and Expenditures of Funds	34
Assisting Families Transitioning Off Aid	35
Job Creation	36
Other Elements	37
Compliance with Requirements of CalWORKs	39
Interaction with Indian Tribes	40
Certification	41
Acknowledgments	42
Attachment A: San Luis Obispo County Budget Plan	46

San Luis Obispo County

Department of Social Services

Mission

The Mission of the San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services is to improve the well-being of people in our Community, through services that promote partnerships, protect children and adults, and focus on personal responsibility, employment and self-reliance.

Values

The employees of the Department of Social Services Value:

- e Responsible Fiscal and Program Management
- e Ethical and Socially Responsible Behavior
- e Individual Strengths and Differences
- e Impartial Delivery of Quality Services
- e Appreciation and Recognition for Our Work
- e Personal Job Satisfaction
- e A Positive Work Environment

Goals

- e Foster partnerships with the community that coordinate and maximize resources.
- e Foster partnerships with participants that empower them to enhance their lives.
- e Assure a positive work environment that promotes excellence.
- e Ensure that the organizational structure and design meets changing needs.
- e Assure responsible fiscal and program management to best achieve the desired outcomes.

***Note: This plan is submitted pursuant to Section 10531 of the Welfare and Institutions Code required by "The Welfare to Work Act of 1997," AB 1542. Italicized sections in this document represent questions or suggestions provided by the State of California. The responses following these sections are San Luis Obispo County's CalWORKs plan.**

San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Briefly describe the CalWORKs program of San Luis Obispo County. Include:

- 1) A listing of the major program goals and objectives*
- 2) A brief description of the major program elements which will contribute to those goals and objectives.*

The impetus for this document was the passage of Federal Welfare Reform bill H.R. 3734, formally known as "The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996" and the passage of California State Law AB 1542, "The Thompson-Maddy-Ducheny-Ashburn Welfare-to-Work Act of 1997." Local Welfare-to-Work services, as mandated by these bills, shall be provided through the San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs program.

The purpose of this document is to introduce the San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs program and to describe what services the San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services (DSS) will provide to participants, how those services will be provided and how specified outcomes and performance goals will be met. After implementation this plan may be modified as appropriate. All modifications will be submitted to the State as addendums to this County Plan.

Goals & Objectives of San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs

Previously the primary outcomes of the financial assistance programs of the San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services have been the timely and accurate determination of eligibility and benefit amounts. With the passage of welfare reform and the fundamental shift of welfare from an income-maintenance entitlement program to a temporary assistance program, the outcomes have changed. Counties will now be judged by their ability to assist participants in finding and keeping jobs, to reduce pregnancies and to keep children in school, among other outcomes.

This change means that DSS employees must promote new ideas and attitudes when dealing with the public and with colleagues. For example, the Department must convey to all parents that they have a responsibility to contribute to the support and well-being of their children. It is also imperative that staff, as well as the public, realize that welfare is not an entitlement and that in the first step toward self-sufficiency, **any job is a good job**. The goals and outcomes of San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs embody this philosophy.

Program Goal

The goal of San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs is to provide comprehensive services to members of our community who need assistance in becoming self-sufficient. These services will be family-focused and based on the needs of each family.

Mandated Goals

San Luis Obispo County is mandated through the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) legislation to achieve certain goals which include:

- c Child poverty will be reduced.c
- c The dependence of needy parents on government benefits will be reduced by promoting job preparation, work and marriage.c
- c Out-of-wedlock births will be reduced.c
- c The formation and maintenance of two parent families will be encouraged.c
- c Ensure that the implementation of programs promoting these goals does not result in unanticipated outcomes that negatively affect child well-being, the demand for County General Assistance or the number of families affected by domestic violence.c

Program Objectives

The role of the San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services (DSS) is to be a helping and supportive agency for the residents of San Luis Obispo County. As the Department works to achieve both the mandated goals and the program outcomes, it is important that CalWORKs applicants and participants be recognized as individuals with unique paths toward the accomplishment of these outcomes. To demonstrate, the various outcomes of the San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs program follow:

Employment

- c The number of CalWORKs participants who work will increase.c
- c Earnings for San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs participants will increase.c
- c Earnings for those who have left the San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs program will increase.c
- c Participants employed in unsubsidized jobs will continue to be self-sufficient.c
- c The minimum number of hours that San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs participants work or engage in work-related activities will be 20 hours per week in 1998.c
- c At least 30% of all San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs participants will work in 1998.c
- c 75% of two-parent families will work in 1998.c

Child Well-Being

- c Child support payments and collection for the children of San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs participants will increase.c
- c Entries into foster care will decrease.c
- c At-risk births will decrease.c
- c School achievement and attendance will be tracked.c
- c The number of child abuse reports will decrease.c
- c Families affected by domestic violence will be tracked.c

Supportive Services

- e The supply, demand and utilization of supportive services such as child care, transportation, mental health and substance abuse treatment will be tracked.e
- e The demand for General Assistance will be tracked.e

Local Objective

- e The number of births to unmarried teenagers in CalWORKs families will decrease.e

Critical Program Elements

Collaboration with Public and Private Agencies to Provide Training and Supportive Services (page 13)

In a program as comprehensive as San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs, the formation and enhancement of partnerships is crucial to provide needed services to participants. The San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services will foster partnerships with participants, other agencies and the community to achieve the goals and outcomes of San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs.

•e **Children's Services Network**

The Children's Services Network (CSN) plays a vital role in the delivery of services to children and families in San Luis Obispo County. Membership represents a broad cross-section of public and private agencies. The membership includes the directors of every County department whose mission includes serving children and their families. The Children's Services Network works to ensure the provision of comprehensive and culturally-sensitive services to the children and families in our community by improving the coordination and cooperation of agencies. As community needs are identified, this interaction of agencies allows for a timely, coordinated response. In addition, the CSN identifies gaps and overlaps in participating agencies' service delivery systems and sets priorities for interagency projects. The Department of Social Services is a key member of the Network Council. Elizabeth Schneider, Director of Social Services, presides as the vice-chair of the Network Council and as chair of the CSN Welfare Reform Task Force.e

•e **San Luis Obispo County Health Agency**

During orientation participants will complete drug and alcohol and mental health screening that will help to identify potential barriers to employment. When such barriers have been identified, DSS and Health Agency staff will provide collaborative case management to participants needing assistance.e

•e **San Luis Obispo County District Attorney, Family Support Division**

A representative of the District Attorney Family Support Division will be available in each DSS office a minimum of one day per week. If paternity has not been determined for the

child of a San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs applicant or if an absent parent is not currently meeting his or her child support obligation, a Family Support Officer will conduct an in-depth interview with the applicant. The applicant will be required to provide information regarding the absent parent to assist the Family Support Division in the collection of child support payments from the absent parent. Once an applicant has met with the Family Support Officer, the San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs process continues. Other applicants will have their applications reviewed by Family Support Division staff to determine if a personal interview is needed.

•e **Housing Authority of the City of San Luis Obispo** e

A participant living in qualified Section 8 housing may be eligible to participate in the Housing Authority's Family Self-Sufficiency program. Whenever possible, through a partnership with DSS, activities in the Family Self-Sufficiency program will be designated to meet mandated work-activities.e

•e **Economic Opportunity Commission**

Through the Economic Opportunity Commission (EOC), a participant can receive training as a child-care provider, a referral to child-care, and health care at an EOC clinic. In addition, the children of participants may take part in EOC's Headstart program for pre-school age children or in EOC's teen-pregnancy prevention program which works to reduce the number of teen pregnancies in San Luis Obispo County.e

•e **Private Industry Council and the Employment Development Department**

During 1997, staff from the Private Industry Council (PIC), the State Employment Development Department (EDD), DSS and Cuesta College have been planning for the creation and implementation of two One-Stop Career Centers, one in San Luis Obispo and one on Cuesta College's Paso Robles Campus. Each center will allow participants and other community members to access a wide range of employment-related services in a single location. In the future, the One-Stop Career Centers may be electronically linked to sites throughout the County.e

•e **University of California, Davis**

In order to assist DSS staff and management with the transitions inherent in implementing the new San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs service delivery system, the Department contracts with U.C. Davis to provide a series of trainings designed to explore such topics as collaboration, innovation, supervision and motivation.e

•e **Cuesta College**

DSS is working closely with Cuesta Community College in several areas. The college is working to implement a streamlined curriculum which would benefit CalWORKs participants in training for child care.e

Currently Cuesta College operates a Learning Center in Northern San Luis Obispo County

which has Adult Basic Education, General Education, and English-as-a-Second-Language classes. Cuesta will be developing an integrated employment component for these classes.

In addition staff from Cuesta College, the Private Industry Council (PIC), the Employment Development Department (EDD) and DSS have been planning for the creation and implementation of One-Stop Career Centers which will allow participants and other community members to access a wide range of employment-related services in a single location.

Partnerships with the Private Sector to Identify Jobs (page 16)

The San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services, within the Children's Services Network, organized a Welfare Reform Task Force which includes an Employment Committee. Through this committee, the agency has a direct connection with private sector employers in formulating a prospective job base for CalWORKs participants.

Local Labor Market Needs (page 18)

The Private Industry Council, the University of California at Santa Barbara, the Central Coast Regional Technology Alliance, San Luis Obispo County, local cities and Chambers of Commerce, the Economic Vitality Corporation and local nonprofits each cooperate in different surveys that determine local labor market needs.

Welfare-to-Work Activities (page 20)

Diversion

A participant may choose diversion which would provide one-time services or assistance instead of on-going CalWORKs cash assistance. If the participant chooses the diversion program, is approved by DSS staff and does not go on CalWORKs during the diversion period, the one time assistance will not count toward their CalWORKs time limits. If the CalWORKs family applies for and is eligible to CalWORKs during the diversion period, the individual may choose to have the 60 month time limit reduced by the number of appropriate months or have the diversion payment recouped from the grant.

San Luis Obispo County is developing details for the diversion portion of the San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs program. Details under discussion include the scope and duration of services that will be provided along with criteria for eligibility for diversion. Further information will be included in an addendum to this plan at a later date.

Employment Services

If a participant chooses Employment Services under San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs, he or she will be assigned to a Job Search workshop. The participant will be assisted with child care, transportation and other services as needed. The participant will be intensively involved in the Job Search Workshop which includes learning how to write a resume, fill out an application, conduct a face-to-face interview and retain a job, plus self-esteem and motivational activities. Following the

Job Search activities, the participant will work in the Network Center researching and calling local businesses, applying for jobs and performing other work-related activities.

Assessment/Welfare-to-Work Plan

If a participant does not secure employment during the Job Search and Network Center components of the program, he or she will meet with an assessment specialist. Following the in-depth assessment, the Welfare-to-Work plan will be developed. The assessment will cover employment skills and aptitude and identification of possible barriers to employment including any deficit in education, skills or training, substance abuse or other problems. The Welfare-to-Work plan will specify services to be provided by DSS and other community agencies as needed. The plan will also include the responsibilities and actions expected from the participant.

Work Activities/Community Service

Allowable work activities to be included in the Welfare-to-Work plan are unsubsidized employment, subsidized public or private sector employment, public or private sector work experience, on-the-job training, job search and job readiness assistance, vocational education or training, job skills training directly related to employment, education directly related to employment, GED education for those who have not completed secondary school, supported work or transitional employment, work-study programs, community service, adult basic education or English-as-a-second-language, participation in mental health, substance abuse, or domestic violence treatment programs, self-employment, or other activities as determined necessary to assist participants in obtaining unsubsidized employment.

A participant may be involved in one or several of the above activities, in sequence or concurrently, for 18 months, with possible extension to 24 months on a case-by-case basis. If still unemployed at the end of the plan activities, the participant must be re-assessed and community service activities must be provided for the remainder of the 60 months of CalWORKs eligibility. A Welfare-to-Work plan may be modified at any point as the needs of the participant or available services change.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Treatment Services (page 22)

Barriers to employment will be identified through assessments given during the initial San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs program orientation, after an unsuccessful job search, or at reappraisal. The San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services and the Health Agency will utilize a collaborative case management approach to assist participants in overcoming barriers to employment: Substance abuse and mental health treatment services will be developed collaboratively and will be designed to assist CalWORKs participants in gaining self-sufficiency.

Mental Health Services Available After Time Limits (page 26)

If a participant exceeds the CalWORKs time limits, the County Mental Health Department may continue to provide treatment services based on their eligibility criteria.

Child Care and Transportation Services (page 27)

The Department of Social Services currently operates five offices throughout the county. No matter which DSS office a participant first enters, he or she will be able to access a child-care information

and referral specialist who can match the participant's specific needs for child care to providers with openings. The specialist will also assist participants in developing a comprehensive child care plan that is consistent with their welfare-to-work plan.

In addition to child care, participants will find that care managers in each office will assist with regional transportation needs including route design, car pool matching and fare assistance. Route-matching allows a transportation specialist to match travel patterns from home, child-care and work to existing routes and methods of transportation in order to create an effective travel system for the participant. The development of the route-matching system will occur in partnership with California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo utilizing a Caltrans New Technology Program grant awarded to the University.

Community Service Plan (page 30)

DSS intends to provide community service activities for participants who are unable to obtain employment after 18 months of employment services. It is the Department's intention to provide the specific details of the Community Services Plan as an addendum to this County Plan. This addendum will include project development, case management services and fiscal administration.

Working with Victims of Domestic Violence (page 31)

Training for staff working with CalWORKs participants who have experienced domestic violence will be provided in collaboration with the San Luis Obispo County Victim/Witness section of the District Attorney Office and the local Women's Shelter Programs. A training module, "Working With Participants Who Have Experienced Domestic Violence," will be added to the Department of Social Services' curriculum for new employees. After the initial training for current staff additional training will be provided.

Because existing protocols for determining good cause to waive program requirements for participants who have experienced domestic violence do not address the specific and sometimes conflicting needs of CalWORKs participants, DSS is currently developing San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs protocols which will be submitted in an addendum to this plan. Until these protocols are developed, the criteria in GAIN Good Cause (EAS 47-782.1(o)) will be used.

Performance Outcomes to Meet Locally Established Objectives (page 32)

During the San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs plan development process a local program outcome was identified: The number of births for unmarried teenagers in San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs families will decrease. This outcome will be tracked through the monitoring of DSS reports which indicate the number of teen parents in San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs families.

Public Input to the County Plan (page 33)

Applicants, participants and other community members have had the opportunity to participate in the development of the CalWORKs plan through several regional public forums held in April and October 1997, the Welfare Reform Task Force of the Children's Services Network, a welfare reform public information telephone number and the DSS Welfare Reform web page.

Sources and Expenditures of Funds (page 34)

Fiscal Responsibility is one of the values of the San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services and an integral component in the management of sources and expenditures of public funds. As program funding shifts from an entitlement system to a block grant, it is the responsibility of managers to avoid any potential financial sanctions and to enhance potential incentive payments. Because San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs is an ongoing investment in the community, responsible fiscal and program management will best meet the needs of all San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs applicants and participants. Fiscal responsibility will permit the Department to offer such services as diversion, child care and transportation. The reinvestment of any savings in the program will allow the Department to provide more intensive services to those participants who have greater barriers to employment.

Assisting Families Transitioning Off Aid (page 35)

As a participant transitions from welfare-to-work, self-sufficiency will be supported by transitional services. Once a participant is no longer receiving cash assistance, he or she may become eligible for transitional services including Medi-Cal benefits, child care, transportation and job retention services for up to one year and child care services for up to two years.

Job Creation (page 36)

San Luis Obispo County is requesting a resolution from the Board of Supervisors indicating interest in applying for funding from the Job Creation Investment Fund in order to expedite local job creation for San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs participants.

Other Elements (page 37)

DSS has developed several local pilot projects including the joint case management of Medi-Cal & Non-Assistance Food Stamp caseloads, the Healthy Start Multi-Disciplinary Team project and the Child Protective Services/CalWORKs pilot. The Department does not intend to apply for any of the pilot projects described in the CalWORKs legislation at this time.

Compliance with the Requirements of CalWORKs (page 39)

The San Luis Obispo County CalWORKs plan has been developed in accordance with the applicable federal, state and county laws and regulations. The terms of this plan, including all applicable laws, regulations, conditions, and certifications, will be adhered to during the implementation and execution of this plan, subject to plan amendments.

Interaction with American Indian Tribes (page 40)

No American Indian tribes have been identified within the County of San Luis Obispo.