

# **Welfare to Work Grant Program**

## **Grant Program Partners**

The San Bernardino County Welfare Department (CWD) is working with the following U.S. Department of Labor Welfare to Work Grant Program Partners:

- City of San Bernardino Workforce Investment Board – formula grant funds
- San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board – formula grant funds
- Housing Authority of San Bernardino – competitive grant funds (15%)

## **Coordination of WtW Grant Activities with the WtW Grant Partners**

The Workforce Investment Boards reviewed San Bernardino County's CalWORKs plan and discussed the activities available through the Welfare to Work (WtW) grant. The two entities agreed that the County Welfare Department (CWD) and the Jobs and Employment Services Department (JESD) would provide CalWORKs Employment Services followed by Assessment. The County does not focus on any specific population and all eligible TANF recipients are referred to services with Welfare to Work contract service providers. These services include Post-Employment and Job Retentions services, as well as six months of Pre-Employment Education and Training. This satisfies the requirements of the welfare reform bill AB 1542 and H.R. 3424, in addition to meeting the County's CalWORKs plan for all welfare recipients to test the labor market through job search prior to receiving other services.

Following Employment Services and Assessment, WtW eligible TANF recipients will be referred to specialized workers in the JESD offices and County One-Stop Centers administered by JESD for referral to appropriate contract providers. Post-Employment services and Job Retention services are the focus of WtW contractor services. Contractors may recruit participants, but eligibility and placement are the responsibility of JESD.

The Housing Authority of San Bernardino County (HA) received a WtW competitive grant. TANF recipients who are determined to be eligible for WtW services will be referred to the HA. The HA's competitive grant project offers employment to participants while they are training in one of several aspects of property management. Participants will work and train in this field for two years, at which time they will be able to start property management companies of their own, or go into unsubsidized employment in the field.

JESD is currently working to establish linkages with the local Child Support Agency to identify and serve Non-Custodial Parents.

All WtW activities under the formula grant and the competitive grant will assist in meeting the Work Participation Rate (WPR) established for TANF recipients, as well as the goals of the local CalWORKs plan.

All WtW activities under the formula grant and the competitive grant will assist in meeting the Work Participation Rate (WPR) established for TANF recipients, as well as the goals of the local CalWORKs Plan.

## **CWD Identification and Referral of CalWORKs Recipients to WtW Grant Partners**

In San Bernardino County, JESD/CalWORKs staff determine Welfare to Work eligibility of TANF applicants or recipients and record the eligibility factors/information on the JTA system for reporting to DOL. Potential WtW eligibility and information is collected from several resources. Length of time on aid will be determined by the quarterly MEDS report sent from the California State Department of Social Services (CDSS). Earned income during the previous year is available on the welfare database and lack of a GED or High School diploma is recorded on GEMS (JESD's computer system). Low scores in reading or math are determined through assessment testing.

In accordance with San Bernardino County's "Work First" philosophy, WtW eligible participants follow the CalWORKs program path. All are referred to Employment Services as the first activity.

Prior to referral for placement with providers, WtW eligible participants attend Assessment. This activity consists of some combination of grade placement tests in Math and Reading, work-related interest and aptitude inventories such as the COPES battery, and a description of the participant's skills, abilities, and work history. The Assessment report includes recommended occupations and services appropriate for achieving self-sufficiency.

After Assessment, the JESD Employment Specialist (ES) refers the participant to the DOL WtW Grant Program ES. A copy of the Assessment report accompanies the referral documents. The WtW Grant Program ES evaluates what services the participant needs. The ES assists the participant in completing the Welfare to Work Plan and places the participant with a WtW contract service provider. The ES enrolls the participant in the JTA computer system and begins tracking on the JESD computer system for reporting to CDSS.

For the competitive grant project, eligible participants are referred to the Housing Authority of San Bernardino in essentially the same manner; however, a JESD Employment Specialist outstationed in the Housing Authority provides case management.

JESD receives referrals directly from the Probation Department to serve eligible probationers in the WtW Grant Program.

## **State Fund Matching Dollars**

State Match dollars are being used for Job Development for participants in the WtW Grant Program. Specialized JESD staff is used for job development throughout the County. We plan to use matching dollars to provide services to low-income custodial parents and former foster youth.

## **New Eligible Populations**

JESD anticipates that the One Stop Centers will serve the new eligible populations. Individuals who come to the One-Stop Centers looking for services will be screened for eligibility for the program. In addition, contractors will be able to do a reverse referral to determine if individuals who contact their program would be eligible under the new amendments. JESD anticipates working with the local Foster Care Agency to enroll individuals as they age out of Foster Care.