

**Senate Bill 1041 Implementation
Field Monitoring
Visit Summary**

Visit Date: Alameda County

July 9, 2013

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Welfare to Work Division
Todd R. Bland, Deputy Director

Alameda County
Senate Bill (SB) 1041 Implementation
Field Monitoring Visit Summary

Executive Summary

Purpose of Field Monitoring Visit

The purpose of the Senate Bill (SB) 1041 Implementation Field Monitoring Visit is to obtain information regarding the county's progress in implementing program changes enacted by SB 1041 (Chapter 47, Statutes of 2012).

Scope of Field Monitoring Visit

Specifically, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) will review how each County Welfare Department (CWD) implemented SB 1041 program changes, including but not limited to:

- New Welfare to Work (WTW) participation requirements;
- WTW 24-Month Time Clock;
- Reengagement of the former short-term young child exempt population (Assembly Bill [AB] X4 4 group);
- CWD staff knowledge of SB 1041 changes;
- Training provided to staff in order to implement these changes; and
- Any pertinent data related to these program changes that are available.

Goals of Field Monitoring Visit

The CDSS' goals are to ensure that SB 1041 is being implemented correctly by each CWD, to gather promising practices in regards to implementation, to share these promising practices (when able) amongst all CWDs throughout the state, and to determine whether systematic or program issues relating to the integration of SB 1041 changes into the existing California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) and WTW program exist throughout the state. If such issues exist, they will be addressed by the SB 1041 Oversight Workgroup.

County Visit General Information

The one-day field visit was performed in Alameda County on Tuesday, July 9, 2013 at the South County Self-Sufficiency Center in Hayward, CA. The field visit team included three managers from the CDSS, Welfare-to-Work Division, CalWORKs Employment and Eligibility Branch along with Alameda County's Assistant Agency Director of the Department of Workforce & Benefits Administration, CalWORKs Program Specialist and two Employment Counselors. The field visit consisted of a kick-off meeting, close-out meeting, staff interviews, and case management observations with county staff.

Implementation Strategies

In December 2013, Alameda County developed a detailed SB 1041 training calendar that included Community Colleges partners, Managers and Employment Staff. An SB 1041 overview was presented to each of these groups. This presentation included the program, planning and support staff. Additionally, Employment staff received training in:

- techniques and strategies for conducting a successful SB 1041 interview;

- transitioning WTW participants to SB 1041 program requirements; and
- how to amend or develop a SB 1041 WTW 2 plan.

Successes

Alameda County developed an extensive amount of staff training materials for SB 1041 implementation in addition to numerous county created client notices. Also, Alameda County developed an updated orientation training entitled “*Working Our Way to Economic Self-Sufficiency*” to help clients prepare for and obtain meaningful employment.

Key Recommendations

Alameda County should continue to collect data on their progress of SB 1041 implementation to determine their ongoing needs for training. Additionally, caseworkers should continue to use their resources to assess clients’ ongoing needs and help them develop short and long-term goals.

Acknowledgments

The CDSS thanks Alameda County Social Services Agency for hosting the field monitoring visit. The CDSS appreciates the open collaboration with CWD staff to ensure the continued success of the CalWORKs program.

Field Monitoring Visit Summary

Introduction

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Background and Data

Alameda At-a-glance

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Total Caseload..... | 18,955 |
| <small>(Source: CalWORKs Cash Grant Caseload Movement Report CA 237 CW Line Item 8-April 2013)</small> | |
| WTW Enrollees..... | 4600 |
| <small>(Source: CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Monthly Activity Report WTW 25/25A Line Item 1-April 2013)</small> | |
| Mandatory Participants (enrollees + sanctioned + non-compliance)..... | 7528 |

Reengagement Plan Received.....Yes
Beginning Date of Reengagement.....July 1, 2013
Consortium SystemCalWIN

Data/Statistics:

- Clients who had more than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit as of January 1, 2013, that have had their comprehensive discussion: **3098**.
- Clients who had less than or equal to 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit as of January 1, 2013, that have had their comprehensive discussion: 1193.
- Sanctions that were cured as a result of SB 1041: **334**.
- Former short-term young child exempt clients (Assembly Bill [AB] X4 4) that have been reengaged: **At the time of the visit, Alameda County’s reengagement of former short-term young child exempt clients was set to commence on July 1, 2013.**
- WTW plans that have changed as a result of SB 1041 implementation: **Alameda County indicated that they had not been tracking whether or not clients had changed their plans as a result of SB 1041 implementation.**
- Clients that have used the new once in a lifetime young child exemption: **347**.
- Other statistics that the county is keeping related to SB 1041 implementation:
 - ❖ **The CW 2205 was sent to 9016 CalWORKs recipients on November 26, 2012 and**
 - ❖ **The CW 2206 was sent to 2816 AB X4 4 short-term exempt individuals on June 27, 2013.**

Summary of Documents provided by Alameda County:

- Instructional announcements provided by the county to county staff relevant to SB 1041 implementation.
- Informing notices and flyers provided to clients relevant to SB 1041 implementation.
- SB 1041 related training materials (formal and informal) including, but not limited to, a list of training strategies, materials available on-line, and materials distributed during staff meetings.
- Alameda County’s Reengagement Sequencing Plan.

County Administrator and Caseworker Interviews

The CDSS Field Monitoring Team used the county administrator and caseworker interview tools released in All County Information Notice I-42-13 to interview the county administrator and case workers in-person regarding SB 1041 implementation. The tool was provided to the county administrator and caseworkers in advance of the visit. The administrator interview panel consisted of four CDSS staff with one county administrator. The caseworker interviews were conducted by two CDSS staff members with one caseworker.

Summary of Observations

WTW 24-Month Time Clock Implementation and New WTW Participation Requirements

For clients with Less than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit

Alameda County used a substitute for CW 2205 (Form 42-151) that was mailed on November 29, 2012 to 9,019 clients. They began their comprehensive discussions with clients that had less than 24 months left on their clock in February 2013 for 1,683 clients. Their target

completion date is October 31, 2013. As of July 2013, there are 491 clients with less than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit awaiting an SB 1041 transition that includes a comprehensive discussion. Clients were also sent an SB 1041 Contract/Appointment Letter (Form 42-152) to provide clients the opportunity to discuss SB 1041 changes, options, and potential amendments to existing plans. In general, clients with 24 months or less remaining on CalWORKs were choosing the lower hourly requirements and responded positively to the flexibility of the new program rules. Clients who were attending Vocational Training programs past 12 month time limit were choosing to continue in those programs.

For clients with more than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit

Alameda County started SB 1041 transition for this group in February 2013 for 649 clients. As of July 2013, there are 551 clients with more than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit awaiting an SB 1041 transition that includes a comprehensive discussion. In general, clients with more than 24 months remaining on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit are choosing to meet federal standards and not tick their WTW 24-Month Time Clock.

Clients who failed to attend SB 1041 appointments:

Clients meeting new participation requirements who failed to attend their scheduled SB 1041 appointment were sent SB 1041 Contact/Appointment Letter (Form 42-152) to attend a scheduled appointment and a copy of new WTW 2 Plan. The form indicated that if the client failed to attend the appointment, their WTW 24-Month Time Clock would begin ticking the first of the following month, 30 days after the initial appointment date was sent. For clients not meeting new participation requirements who failed to attend their SB 1041 appointments, they were sent the SB 1041 Contact/Appointment Letter (Form 42-152) as well. Clients are allowed to reschedule appointment once if they fail to attend, the non-compliance process is initiated for those who failed to attend.

General Comments

Employment Counselors have approximately 80-100 cases. There wasn't a clear order to which the cases were sorted. For example, some Employment Counselors went down a list while others worked the case when an attendance report was due and others did it when clients came in to drop off paperwork. It wasn't consistently required for clients to come and have a face-to-face meeting.

New Young Child Exemption

There were a few cases that chose the new exemption. Alameda County reported 347 clients to date have received the new young child exemption.

The new WTW Activity Plan/Form (WTW) 2

The new WTW 2 form was made available on the county Intranet forms library and the county began its use effective January 1, 2013.

General Comments

The Employment Counselors interviewed felt that the WTW 2 is effective as a guide during a client's SB 1041 discussion. It allows the participant to have a visual on the different

options they can select from. However, Employment Counselors also noted that some clients get a little confused when they see the same activities listed on both sides of the form under CalWORKs and Federal Work Activities. Also, the statement at the bottom of the form regarding the two-parent family hour break down is hard for clients to understand. In some cases, clients are unable to choose and ask that the Employment Counselor make the choice(s) for them.

Reengagement Process

The county's reengagement process officially began on July 1, 2013. The CW 2206 mass mailer was sent on June 27, 2013 to all AB X4 4 short-term exempt individuals. Appointment letters go out at least 30 days prior to Reengagement evaluation appointments. The target completion date for reengagement is December 31, 2014.

Alameda County's Sequencing Plan is as follows:

- **July 1, 2013**-Two-Parent Families, first parent participating and second parent AB X4 4 Exempt.
- **February 1, 2014**-AB X4 4 Exempt Volunteers.
- **May 1, 2014**-AB X4 4 Exempt Individuals from most time on aid remaining to the least.

The reengagement process for Alameda County includes the following:

- Send a CW 2206 at least 60 days prior to reengagement evaluation appointment;
- Case file review; and
- Send a reengagement evaluation appointment letter at least 30 days prior to reengagement evaluation appointment attach a CW 2186A and a copy of CW 2206.

The county also provides additional reminders and makes a third contact via a telephone call prior to the reengagement evaluation that includes the following a reminder to the client of appointment and offer (and issuance) of necessary supportive services to attend appointment. Employment Counselors are required to document telephone call in case comments and allow one reschedule for those that cannot attend the appointment. The telephone contact must include SB 1041 discussion points for clients who are not required to attend in-person such as exempt volunteers who are fully meeting participation requirements.

During their SB 1041 appointment, clients are provided with a general description of supportive services available, program requirements and flexibility under SB 1041. Employment Counselors determine clients' status and needs and if another WTW exemption applies. Additionally, clients are informed of their remaining number of CalWORKs 48 months, assigned appropriate WTW activity(ies) that include the identification of barriers.

Volunteers

The AB X4 4 short term exempt clients who were volunteering in the WTW program on December 31, 2013 were allowed to continue volunteering until they are reengaged (February 1, 2014). The AB X4 4 short term clients requesting to volunteer after January 1, 2013 were not allowed to volunteer. These clients were informed that if they chose to participate prior to reengagement sequencing plan, their CalWORKs 48-month time limit, unless meeting a clock stopper reason, would begin to tick on the first of the following month from the date a new or amended WTW 2 Plan was signed. These clients were offered the option to either reengage early or wait until their

reengagement prioritization. Clients who chose to reengage earlier followed reengagement process steps. Clients were allowed to waive the 60 day informing period. In addition, a sworn statement to document the waiver is obtained and kept in the case file. For clients who request to reengage ahead of the sequencing schedule they have been informed that if they chose to participate prior to reengagement sequencing plan, their CalWORKs 48-month time limit, unless meeting a clock stopper reason, would begin to tick on the first of the following month from the date a new or amended WTW 2 Plan was signed. These clients are offered the option to either reengage early or wait until their reengagement prioritization. Clients who choose to reengage earlier followed the reengagement process. Clients are allowed to waive the 60 day informing period. In addition, a sworn statement to document the waiver is obtained and kept in the case file.

Implementation Strategies

In December 2013, Alameda County developed a detailed SB 1041 training calendar that included Community Colleges partners, Managers and Employment Staff. An SB 1041 overview was presented to each of these groups. This presentation included the program, planning and support staff. The following trainings were completed:

- December 2012-SB 1041 Overview Presentation to Managers and Community Colleges Partners;
- January 2013-SB 1041 Overview Presentation to Employment Staff;
- February 2013-Techniques and Strategies for conducting a Successful SB 1041 Interview for Employment Staff (UC Davis);
- March 2013-How to Amend or Develop a SB 1041 WTW 2 Plan Workshops for Employment Staff; and
- April 2013-SB 1041 Clinics for Employment Staff.

The county released an extensive list of newsletters and other written documents regarding the implementation of SB1041 on their county website:

- Newsletter 12-02-Summary of SB 1041 CalWORKs WTW Program Changes effective January 1, 2013;
- WTW Handbook 42-7.2-Exemptions and Good Cause/Deferral Reason in the WTW Program;
- Newsletter 13-01-Transitioning WTW Participants to Senate Bill 1041 WTW Program Rule Changes;
- Newsletter 13-02-Reengagement of ABX 4 4 Short Term Exempt Individuals Who Are Pulled for WPR Review to Request to Participate in WTW Program Prior to July 1, 2013;
- Newsletter 13-03-WTW 24-Month Time Clock and Participation Requirements Questions & Answers; and
- Newsletter 13-06-Reengagement Process for AB X4 4 Short Term Exempt.

General Comments

The county developed their own training material prior to the release of the CDSS's Training Aid. There is a need for further development of the plans including specific benchmarks on how to achieve their goals within the projected 48 months or less.

Case Reviews

The CDSS Field Monitoring Team reviewed five cases selected by the CWD in advance of the visit. The purpose of this component of the visit is to review how SB 1041 program changes are being integrated into case management, understand how SB 1041 policies are being operationalized by the caseworker, and better comprehend case management within the county.

There were five specific case types requested:

- Case One-a client with **less than or equal to** 24-months left on the CalWORKs 48-month time limit as of January 1, 2013;
- Case Two-a client with **more than** 24-months on the CalWORKs 48-month time limit as of January 1, 2013;
- Case Three-a new client (beginning date of aid January 1, 2013 or later);
- Case Four-a client who is sanctioned that has earnings and is curable based on the new participation requirements (may be a case actually cured since January 1, 2013 based on new participation requirements); and
- Case Five-a client that is part of the former short-term young child exemption (AB X4 4)/ reengagement population, and is currently in the process of or has been reengaged.

General Comments

Alameda County uses the CalWIN case management system. The cases shared at this visit had all received the appropriate notices and applicable benefits and supportive services. This included the issuance of the CW 2205 and CW 2208 when appropriate in addition to the use of the new WTW 2.

Conclusion

Successes

Alameda County developed an extensive amount of training materials for SB 1041 implementation. In December 2013, classroom trainings began for managers, employment staff, and community colleges partners. Along with the classroom training, newsletters were distributed to program staff with additional details on SB 1041 implementation. The county created eight client notices specific to SB 1041. Alameda County also developed an updated orientation training entitled “*Working Our Way to Economic Self-Sufficiency*” orientation to help clients prepare for and obtain meaningful employment.

Challenges

Alameda County found that their greatest challenge was the implementation of such significant changes to the program in such a short amount of time. Additionally, Employment Counselors acknowledge that at times it has been difficult explaining those changes to clients.

Key Recommendations

Alameda County should continue to collect data on their progress of SB 1041 implementation to determine their ongoing needs for training. Additionally, Employment Counselors should continue to use their resources to assess clients' ongoing needs and help them develop short and long-term goals.

Contact

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