

**Senate Bill 1041 Implementation  
CalWORKs County Review Session Summary**

**Amador**

**Visit Date: November 30, 2015**

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
Welfare to Work Division  
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**Amador County**  
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## **Introduction**

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### **Purpose of County Sessions**

The purpose of the Senate Bill (SB) 1041 Implementation County Review Session is to obtain information regarding the county's ongoing progress in implementing program changes enacted by SB 1041 (Chapter 47, Statutes of 2012). In addition to benefits and challenges associated with SB 1041, Assembly Bill (AB) 74 (Chapter 21, Statutes of 2013) requiring the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to develop and implement an appraisal tool to be used by all County Welfare Departments (CWD) to assess client's strengths and barriers. This new in-depth Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool (OCAT) plays an integral role in identifying client service needs

### **Scope of County Session**

Specifically, the CDSS will determine how each CWD implemented SB 1041 program changes and AB 74 OCAT processes, including but not limited to:

- Welfare to Work (WTW) participation requirements;
- Post WTW 24-Month Time Clock services ;
- Training methods provided to staff in order to implement SB 1041 changes;
- Data outcomes related to SB 1041 program changes;
- Family Stabilization Program;
- Expanded Subsidized Employment Program; and
- Implementation of OCAT.

### **Goals of County Session**

The CDSS' goals of the County Review Session are to ensure that SB 1041 was implemented correctly by each CWD, to gather and share promising practices in regards to implementation 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. The CDSS will also assess the CWD implementation processes associated with OCAT as a result of AB 74. If any issues exist, they will be addressed by the CalWORKs Program Oversight Workgroup.

### **County Review Session General Information**

A County Review Session was held on Monday, November 30, 2015, via a teleconference call. The county review team included five staff from the CDSS, WTW Division, CalWORKs Employment and Eligibility Branch, and Amador County's Staff Services Analyst (SSA) and two Caseworkers. Within the county operation, the Staff Service Analyst (SSA) is responsible for the Employment Training Workers (ETWs) (I, II, IIIs) staff and distributing cases evenly. Eligibility workers are usually hired from the outside and WTW caseworkers are recruited from within the county. The ETWs take the initiative to build relationships with local businesses by attending the Chamber of Commerce meetings.

Amador County Health and Human Services Agency is located in Sutter Creek, CA. This location administers programs and services to include, but not limited to:

- CalWORKs/CalFresh/Medi-Cal;
- County Medical Services Program (CMSP);
- Child Protective Services (CPS)/Adult Protective Services (APS); and
- In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS).

Amador County's Sutter Creek office is also a One- Stop location for various supportive services. This One- Stop location includes services for America's Job Center of California (formerly the Job Connection), Public Health, Behavioral and Mental Health. The building also hosts The Resource Connection with whom Amador County contracts to provide clients childcare services.

Department of Social Services in Amador County also houses an online community college program known as the Amador Learning Center, established between the years 2013 and 2014. The Amador Learning Center, along with the Amador Community College Foundation (ACCF) is collaborating with Shasta College, Coastline Community College, Foothill College, and Allan Hancock Community College to be a part of the Distance Education Program. Each of these community colleges within Amador County offer residents the opportunity to earn Associates of Arts degrees and certificates and/or to complete transfer programs to California State Universities and University of California colleges via online courses.

Amador County staff has taken the initiative of taking advantage of its small 240 caseload size by providing hands on approach working with clients. During the time of the county session and information provided, Amador County reported each case worker handles between approximately 75-85 cases within the WTW program.

In 1998 the county established the First 5 program through Proposition (Prop) 10. Prop 10 is a state constitutional amendment known as "the Children and Families First Act" that appeared in the 1998 California General Election. This constitutional amendment put a tax on cigarettes and other tobacco products that would go toward funding early childhood education in California. The First 5 program is designed to promote, support, and enhance the optimal development of Amador County's children from zero to five years of age. First 5 classes are offered to CalWORKs clients every other month. Although the First 5 program was implemented in 1998, during the time of the county review sessions, more clients have been engaged to participate in the program.

### **Demographic Area and Economy**

As of the 2010 Census Bureau, Amador County has a population of approximately 38,091 residents. The City of Jackson within Amador County is a popular attraction for entertainment and employment due to its casino, Jackson Rancheria. In 2006, Amador County had the largest employment sector with jobs in retail trade, health care and food services. Since that time the county has seen an employment decline of approximately 25 percent.

Along with the decline in employment, Amador County has also seen various other challenges with CalWORKs clients and small businesses. Due to Amador County's small size, there is a lack of available childcare providers. Frequent challenges arise when attempting to match clients with the few child care providers that do exist due to time availability and client transportation.

### **Implementation Strategies**

Amador County's implementation strategy consisted of following the guidelines from various All County Letters (ACLs) related to SB 1041 and conducting biweekly meetings with staff onsite. County staff also attended the Valley/Mountain Regional meeting to keep updated on state changes and processes other counties are implementing. During the county review session, it was noted that the WTW supervisor held one-on-one meeting with the case manager to help have a consistent understanding of the SB 1041 requirements during the implementation process. Amador County had some difficulties with initial implementation due to limited resources of having only one caseworker on staff at the time of the release of SB 1041. The county was able to rejuvenate the SB 1041 implementation in 2013, with the hiring of two more caseworkers.

### **Some of Amador's Key Successes Included:**

- Every client receiving one-on-one services to fit their individual needs and county ability to develop more personal relationships with client due to manageable caseload. Amador County also conducts occasional visits to client's homes for those who have no means of transportation to assist with travel needs.
- Low turnover rate among staff allow for a sustained CalWORKs knowledge base to assist clients accurately. Majority of staff have been with the Amador County between 10-25 years.
- Collaboration and relationship building extended within the county as a result of the WTW Case Managers attending the Chamber of Commerce meetings. These meetings have allowed for the development of a sound bond with all the local businesses to assist in providing work experience opportunities for CalWORKs clients.
- Amador County partner with an online college program within the same building that is known as The Amador Learning Center. This online college program is a convenient learning opportunity of clients.
- Amador County collaborates with a fatherhood program known as The First 5 Program. This program promotes, supports, and enhances the optimal development of Amador County's children from zero to five years of age.
- Institution of a shopping day within the county for clients as part of a Job Club activity. The shopping day allows clients to obtain outfits for interviews in order to present themselves in a professional manner during the job search process. As part of the shopping day process, case managers take clients to a local thrift store and buy them two different appropriate types of interview attire.

- Amador County utilizing and recommending to clients a Lifestyle Management program along with Mental Health Services for clients in need. The Lifestyle Management program is available Tuesday through Thursday and assists clients with Drug Diversion, Drunk Driver programs and provides individual counseling.

**Acknowledgments**

The CDSS thanks the Amador County Department of Health and Human Agency for accepting this County Session via teleconference. The CDSS appreciates the open collaboration with CWD staff to ensure the continued success of the CalWORKs program.

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**Background and Data**

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**Amador at-a-glance**

Total Caseload .....	299
(Source: CalWORKs Cash Grant Caseload Movement Report [CA 237 CW] Line Item 8a-July 2015)	
WTW Enrollees .....	130
(Source: CalWORKs WTW Monthly Activity Report [WTW 25/25A] Line Item 1-July 2015)	
Mandatory Participants (enrollees + sanctioned + non-compliance) .....	187
(Source: CalWORKs WTW Monthly Activity Report [WTW 25/25A] Line Item 1, 3A, and 31-July 2015)	

**Summary of Documents obtained for Amador County’s Teleconference Session:**

- 2015-2016 Quality Improvement Plan Document: Provide insight on structure and track Mental Health Services to clients in the county. Amador County provides 24-hour crisis intervention, Psychiatry services, Group Therapy, Wellness and Recovery programs.
- Amador County Department of Social Services Organization Chart: Displays all staff members within the Amador County Department of Social Services Office.
- AB 74 County Welfare Department Family Stabilization Plan: Amador County describes their Family Stabilization Program. (Ex: How clients will be informed of the program, how clients will be able to request participation, how Amador County will determine eligibility for clients, etc.)

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**County Administrator and Caseworker Interviews**

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The CDSS County Review Team used updated county administrator and caseworker interview tools following those released in ACIN I-42-13 regarding SB 1041 implementation. These tools were provided to Amador County in advance of the County Review Process Teleconference Call. The interview panel consisted of four CDSS staff and three Amador County staff. The interviews were conducted by one team of four CDSS staff members, and one single CDSS staff member interviewing one Amador County administrative worker and two caseworkers.

## Summary of Observations

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

#### Transitioning Clients

[Less than and more than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit as of January 1, 2013]

- As of January 1, 2013, Amador County had 90 clients with more than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit that had their comprehensive discussion. Of these 90 clients, only active cases were pulled, while exempt clients were excluded. Additionally, the county had 15 clients with less than or equal to 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit that had their comprehensive discussion.

#### Clients who failed to attend SB 1041 appointments

- Amador County indicated once staffing was increased back in June of 2013, five out of 11 sanctioned clients came into the county office to sign plans as a result of SB 1041. Caseworkers continue to monitor the sanction population by sending out request to cure letters every three months. These letters are to encourage sanctioned clients to contact the county to begin the process of curing their sanctions. The county follows the Non-Compliance process according to ACL 03-59 and our Manual Policy and Procedures (MPP 42-721) as it is written.
- Amador County stated caseworkers make frequent phone calls to clients who have failed to attend SB 1041 appointments and occasional home visits, if necessary.

#### New Young Child Exemption

- Amador County had no clients on the New Young Child Exemption in January 2013, due to clients that rolled on the age of child exemptions until August of 2014. During the time of county session, Amador County had 21 clients who have taken the New Young Child Exemption.

#### Post WTW 24-Month Time Clock

- During the time of the County Review Session, no clients in Amador County had exhausted their WTW 24-Month Time Clock since implementation of SB 1041; therefore, no Extensions have been requested and/or granted.

#### Family Stabilization

Amador County has a Family Stabilization (FS) Plan and has used the services to its full capacity. Amador County utilizes the FS program to assist with various transportation and housing issues such as; to prevent clients from being homeless by partnering with rental assistance; helped paid for Driving Under the Influence (DUI) classes; assisted couples in completing Domestic Violence

classes; and assisted clients with their Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) fines. The Butte County fire affected Amador County by taking up a number of rentals in the area. With the FS program in place, the county was able to assist clients by paying for hotel stays until permanent housing could be found.

### **Expanded Subsidized Employment (ESE)**

Amador County at the time of the county review session did not have an ESE program.

### **OCAT Implementation**

During the roll out of OCAT per ACL 15-09 and ACL 15-43, OCAT training was provided to the SSA and to the ETWs; however, during the time of the county review session, the county stated they will be fully implemented effective mid-September of 2016. The County does note there have been some time constraints and system glitches when initial implementation began.

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## **Conclusion**

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### **Successes**

Amador County's bi-weekly meetings to discuss SB 1041 related issues and participation at the Valley Mountain Regional meetings have helped contribute to the counties understanding of the SB 1041 changes. The SSA attends the Valley Mountain Regional meetings to keep updated on all state changes and processes other counties are implementing. Amador County provides same day services to a majority of the clients that walk in the door. Given the CalWORKs WTW caseload size of 240, Amador County's "hands-on" approach has allowed working with client's individual needs be more proficient and allows for rapport building with clients.

Each case worker has a sanction caseload and is required to send a request letter to have client's cure their sanction every three months by mail. During the time of the county session, the county implemented an additional step to the sanction process where clients meet with the county investigator. The county investigator assist the client by determining what challenges existed prior to the client going on sanction and what steps can be taken to prevent a secondary sanction after curing. This internal sanction process is shared with all future clients during the orientation process.

Amador County has utilized the FS program on a wide scale to assist clients with various needs and services. The county has helped clients with numerous of transportation barriers, such as: DMV fees, DUI classes, oil changes and car registration. The FS program has further assisted the county during the Butte Fire, in which the county used the program funds to help client's maintain a hotel room until each receive permanent housing.

Amador County partners with a fatherhood program known as The First 5 Program. This program promotes, supports, and enhances the optimal development of Amador County's children from zero to five years of age. The First 5 Program was established in the county in 1998, with focus on a father's role. The First 5 mission is to promote, support, and enhance the optimal development of Amador County's children from zero to five years of age.



## **Challenges**

Amador County has seen a 25 percent decline since 2006 in employment opportunities. This has impacted CalWORKs clients of the county with having trouble finding employment for WTW activities and has created challenges with presenting use of the ESE program. Amador clients have had struggles with attending SB 1041 related appointments due to transportation being limited within area. Clients either do not have their own means of transportation or live in remote areas away from the Amador Transit, the local public transportation bus. During the initial implementation phase, Amador County had challenges associated with SB 1041 Implementation, specifically with the 24-month time clock due to staffing. Since August of 2014, the county has hired more staff; however there are still struggles of creating an effective process of tracking client's time on the 24-month time clock. During the time of county review session, Amador County was still attempting to get staff trained on OCAT. The county has also had concerns over the types of questions asked in OCAT, which slightly delayed the implementation.

## **Key Recommendations**

Amador County should continue to build and strengthen relationships with local community colleges, for additional resources for clients. In addition, Amador County should continue to build relationships with local businesses and business partners to assist in expanding additional programs, such as the ESE program. The ESE program can build and add additional work opportunities for CalWORKs clients. The CDSS recommends the county to continue to evaluate different strategies for additional transportation services to various clients. In addition, the CDSS encourages the county to maintain and strengthen relationships with public agencies (e.g. Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug, etc.), local schools and Child Care providers to continue to help clients with various needs. The CDSS encourages Amador County to continue with its outreach efforts with local partners (e.g. Valley Mountain Regional) and with other counties for best promising practices. Amador County did not express that a full OCAT training is needed, but is open to either attending or receiving training if any come up in the future. Information on receiving OCAT trainings has been passed on to the Amador County SSA for reference.

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## **Contact**

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