

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

**Contra Costa County**

**Visit Date: October 10, 2013**

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

**Contra Costa County**  
Senate Bill (SB) 1041 Implementation  
Field Monitoring Visit Summary

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## **Executive Summary**

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### **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 Contra Costa County on Thursday, October 10, 2013, at the Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department Agency in Martinez, California. The field visit team included three CDSS staff along with the county's Workforce Services Specialists, WTW Division Manager, WTW Stage 1 Child Care Cal-Learn Analyst, Workforce Services Director and the Employment and Human Services Department Director. The field visit consisted of a kick-off meeting, close-out meeting, staff interviews, and case management observations with county staff.

### **Implementation Strategies**

Contra Costa County began workgroups with county subject matter expert staff prior to the implementation of SB 1041. Workgroups were held November 29, 2012, December 13, 2012, January 10, 2013, and January 24, 2013. The workgroups discussed several SB 1041 implementation topics including, the WTW 24-Month Time Clock, reengagement, the new young child exemption, participation hours, informing notices, self-initiated programs, the Welfare-to-Work Plan Activity Assignment Sheet (WTW 2), tracking of the WTW 24-Month Time Clock and county tools and methods of distributing information to staff.

Contra Costa County utilized additional strategies for the implementation of SB 1041. These strategies included discussions with the county's WTW Committee and presentations/training to various groups via the All Supervisors meeting and district office meetings. In addition to the presentations/training, staff were provided information through Department Memorandums, Emergency Communications, emails from supervisors and the use of a questions and answers Department Memorandum. Information was issued to staff beginning December 2, 2012, and continued throughout the year. The presentations/training and additional information was provided to all staff that work with CalWORKs clients including WTW, CalWORKs, Medi-Cal Crossover and Stage One Child Care program staff.

Contra Costa County conducted the SB 1041 CalWORKs and WTW Program Changes District Training on June 11-13, 2013. This training included information on the following topics:

- The WTW 24-Month Time Clock;
- Alignment of State and Federal Participation Hours;
- New Young Child Exemption; and
- Reengagement.

Training materials were provided to the CDSS and aligned with SB 1041 implementation instructions issued by the CDSS. The training material was based on the training material provided by the CDSS through All County Information Notice (ACIN) I-08-13.

### **Successes**

Contra Costa County implemented SB 1041 using several different methods. In preparation, the county conducted workgroups with county staff beginning prior to implementation. These workgroups helped with the implementation process in Contra Costa County. Following the workgroups, several information delivery methods were used including comprehensive staff training, memorandums and emergency alerts to help inform staff of the changes related to SB 1041.

Contra Costa County regularly meets with community partners including, but not limited to, the local One-Stop partners, Adult Schools, State Department of Rehabilitation, county Community Services/Head Start, Employment Development Department and community colleges. For example, the county regularly meets with community colleges and has county staff on site to assist CalWORKs clients. The Keys Program is another example of Contra Costa County's successful partnerships with the community. Contra Costa County partners with a local credit union to offer automobile loans to CalWORKs clients or clients receiving retention services. The offer of this loan helps remove transportation barriers for CalWORKs clients and helps establish or enhance credit

scores. The Keys Program has offered over 100 loans and has a 98% success rate for repayment of loans. Cars for the Keys Program are obtained from the County General Services Department as surplus/retired county vehicles.

Contra Costa County has a comprehensive case management approach to the implementation of SB 1041. The county uses comprehensive case management to explain what the SB 1041 changes were for each client and individualizes the conversation specific to that client. The county also uses designated time on aid workers that will assist the county in tracking the WTW 24-Month Time Clock for clients. In addition, the county has social workers to perform intensive case management services. Contra Costa County utilizes Work Participation Rate strategies that prioritize the processing of this sample and has a unit that reviews cases for verification of activities and hours. The county has the Step-up program, a short-term activity, for clients that are not participating in an activity (e.g., a bridging activity) or for clients needing a few hours to meet the participation requirements.

Contra Costa County demonstrates an excellent sanction outreach program and flexible orientation schedules which assisted in the implementation of SB 1041. The County offers a sanction clinic for clients that choose to cure their sanctions. This clinic includes job club leaders, assessment workers, and childcare workers to assist the client. In addition, the county offers flexible orientations for all clients several times a week at different times as well as one-on-one availability in order to ensure the least impact for clients.

### **Key Recommendations**

Contra Costa County should continue to strategize ways to complete the Your Welfare-to-Work (WTW) 24-Month Time Clock Notice (CW 2208) and a mechanism for tracking when the form is sent to clients. The county should continue to work around automation barriers to release the Your Welfare-to-Work (WTW) 24-Month Time Clock Notice (CW 2208) when required for clients upon application and at redetermination.

### **Acknowledgments**

The CDSS thanks Contra Costa County for hosting the field monitoring visit. The CDSS appreciates the open collaboration with Contra Costa County staff to ensure the continued success of the CalWORKs program.

## Field Monitoring Visit Summary

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### Introduction

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#### Purpose of Field Monitoring Visit

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#### 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] X44 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.

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## Background and Data

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### Contra Costa County at-a-glance

Total Caseload.....	<b>10,306</b>
(Source: CalWORKs Cash Grant Caseload Movement Report CA 237 CW Line Item 8-July 2013)	
WTW Enrollees.....	<b>2,935</b>
(Source: CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Monthly Activity Report WTW 25/25A Line Item 1-July 2013)	
Mandatory Participants (enrollees + sanctioned + non-compliance).....	<b>4,187</b>
(Source: CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Monthly Activity Report WTW 25/25A Line Item 1, 3A, and 31-June 2013)	
Reengagement Plan Received.....	Yes
Beginning Date of Reengagement.....	April 1, 2014
Consortium System.....	CalWIN

### Data/Statistics

The CDSS requested data in advance of the County Field Monitoring Visit. The following data was provided by the county:

- 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: **1,290**
- Clients who had less than 24-months or equal to 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit as of January 1, 2013, that have had their comprehensive discussion: **2,823**
- Sanctions that were cured as a result of SB 1041: **29**
- Former short-term young child exempt clients (Assembly Bill [AB] X4 4 ) that have been reengaged: **None**
- Number of WTW plans that changed as a result of SB 1041 implementation: **319**
- Clients that have used the new once in a lifetime young child exemption: **251**

### Summary of Documents provided by Contra Costa County

- Contra Costa County SB 1041 Workgroup agendas and workgroup material. These workgroups were held at the county on November 29, 2012, December 13, 2012, January 10, 2013, and January 24, 2013, and included topics such as the WTW 24-Month Time Clock, reengagement, the new young child exemption, participation hours, self-initiated programs, the WTW Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2) and internal procedures and tools for implementation.
- The SB 1041 related training materials including PowerPoint presentations and handouts on various SB 1041 topics. Departmental trainings were held at various worksite locations on June 11, 2013, June 12, 2013, and June 13, 2013.
- The SB 1041 tools and other county specific materials including the SB 1041 CalWORKs WTW Program Changes CalWIN Questions and Answers checklist, the CalWORKs Employment/Self-Sufficiency Plan, CalWORKs Contra Costa County PowerPoint presentation, Workforce Services Bureau CalWORKs/WTW-Employment Services Service Delivery and Service Delivery Process Flow.
- Departmental Memorandum and Emergency Communications regarding SB 1041 implementation.

- Contra Costa County's Assembly Bill (AB) X4 4 Short-Term Exemption County Reengagement Sequencing plan.

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## **County Administrator and Caseworker Interviews**

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The CDSS Field Monitoring Team used the county administrator and caseworker interview tools released in ACIN I-42-13 to interview the county administrator and case workers in-person regarding SB 1041 implementation. The tool was provided to county administrators and caseworkers in advance of the visit. The administrator interview panel consisted of three CDSS staff with three county administrators. The caseworker interviews were conducted by two teams of CDSS staff members with each team interviewing one caseworker.

### **Summary of Observations**

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

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

Contra Costa County issued the initial WTW 24-Month Time Clock General Informing Notice (CW 2205) November 28, 2012, with a second issuance of the notice on December 7, 2012. Following the issuance of this notice, the county began comprehensive discussions with clients via phone, mail or in person beginning January of 2013, and completed all discussions by June 30, 2013. New and existing clients continue to receive the comprehensive discussion. The county tracked the completion of the comprehensive discussions using ad-hoc tools and manual reviews. County staff are instructed to include documentation of the comprehensive discussion on the caseload inventory log. Some caseworkers also have the client sign the WTW 24-Month Time Clock General Informing Notice (CW 2205).

Contra Costa County created tools including the New Rules for CalWORKs WTW Program CW Intake Script which assisted Employment Specialists in discussing the new SB 1041 changes, including the components of the comprehensive discussion, for both new clients and clients whose CalWORKs case is being restored. Clients whose cases are being restored will receive a copy of the New Rules for CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Activities Informing Notice (CW 2205). Another tool the county utilized was the SB 1041 CalWORKs WTW Program Changes CalWIN Questions and Answers Checklist that answered questions such as what stops the WTW 24-Month Time Clock and explained how the new rules could be implemented within the CalWIN consortia system (e.g., how to enter specific populations into the consortium system).

In general, some clients are choosing to lower their hours and/or change their activities. Clients who were working frequently chose not to reduce their hours. Clients that have exhausted their 12-month vocational training limit for CalWORKs Federal Standards are choosing to utilize the WTW 24-Month Time Clock for education activities.

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

Clients meeting new participation requirements who failed to respond to the county's request to discuss the SB 1041 changes received additional contact(s) by the Employment Specialists. Contra Costa County used several methods of outreach including letters and phone calls to the clients as well as setting up formal appointments. Approximately 10% of clients could not be reached for the comprehensive discussion; however, the county continues to outreach to this population and expected completion of the discussion to occur shortly after the time of the visit. These clients are sent an informing notice with an option to request an appointment. The WTW Plan Activity Assignment Sheet (WTW 2) is sent to clients meeting federal requirements with a request that they sign the plan within 30 days. Additional information is provided to unresponsive clients who are not meeting federal requirements, including the Welfare-to-Work 24-Month Time Clock Notice (WTW 38) and any necessary follow-up calls. The non-compliance process is initiated when appropriate.

### **General Comments**

*Employment Specialists have approximately 80-100 cases and WTW Assessment and Intensive Services Field Workers have approximately 50 cases. Employment Specialists have a mix of cases. A client will be assigned to an Employment Specialist that will conduct the appraisal, orientation, assessment and ongoing case management. The client will also be referred to a Child Care Specialist to address childcare needs and a social worker if barriers are identified by the Employment Specialist and ongoing case management is needed. The county also has staff that specialize in cases with college students.*

### **New Young Child Exemption**

Contra Costa County had 251 clients choose to take the new once in a lifetime young child exemption. Some clients chose to preserve this one time exemption to use in the future. Clients that chose the new once in a lifetime young child exemption were offered the opportunity to volunteer to participate.

### **Clients with Good Cause for Lack of Supportive Services**

Contra Costa County did not have clients receiving good cause for lack of supportive services. The county identified approximately 12-15 cases that were classified as having good cause however, upon further review it was determined these clients were actually under the AB X4 4 Young Child Exemption and will be reengaged accordingly.

### **The new WTW Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2)**

The new Welfare-to-Work Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2) form was made available via the CDSS website December of 2012. Contra Costa County used the previous version available through the CalWIN consortium system with required notation until the revised version became available January or February of 2013. In general, county staff used the Welfare-to-Work Activity Assignment (WTW 2) as a tool to explain the activities available under the WTW 24-Month Time Clock and the CalWORKs Federal Standards. In addition to the Welfare-to-Work Activity Assignment (WTW 2), county staff used the CalWORKs Employment/Self-Sufficiency Plan to identify goals and plans to meet those goals in the areas of employment, education, physical and mental health, family and housing, transportation and other goals as identified.



### **General Comments**

*Contra Costa County felt that the Welfare-to-Work Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2) is effective as a guide during a client's SB 1041 comprehensive discussion. Some concerns were expressed about the length of the form and size of the font. In general, the detail in the form and the supportive services page were found to be helpful.*

### **Reengagement Process**

Contra Costa County will begin reengaging all AB X4 4 clients on April 1, 2014. Contra Costa County's Sequencing Plan is as follows:

- **April 2014**-Clients with less than 12 months of their CalWORKs time clock.
- **May 2014**- Clients not participating.
- **June 2014**-Two-parent households with one parent participating.
- **July 2014**- Clients partially participating

The reengagement process for Contra Costa County includes the following:

- Allowing clients that request to reengage ahead of when they were scheduled to be reengaged to reengage after providing the clients with the comprehensive discussion and required notices as well as informing clients about the non-compliance and sanction process. Clients are also informed that if they choose to reengage early they will no longer be exempt unless they qualify for another exemption.

### **Implementation Strategies**

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## Case Reviews

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The CDSS Field Monitoring Team reviewed five cases selected by Contra Costa County 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**

*Contra Costa County uses the CalWIN case management system. The following is a summary of the case findings:*

- Noticing Requirements: All noticing requirements were met including the New Rules for CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Activities Informing Notice (CW 2205) and Your Welfare-to-Work (WTW) 24-Month Time Clock Notice (CW 2208).
- Comprehensive discussions and additional outreach: All required comprehensive discussions were completed.
- Learning Disability Screening was offered to four out of five cases reviewed. The fifth case will be offered the Learning Disability Screening when his or her exemption expires. Three out of four cases waived the screening and one case received the screening.
- Welfare-to-Work Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2)
  - All case files with plans developed on or after January 2013, used the new Welfare-to-Work Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2).

- All plans were complete and included supportive services to be provided to the clients.
- New Young Child: One case reviewed chose to take the new young child exemption and all requirements were met.
- Reengagement: The county has not begun reengagement therefore, reengagement noticing requirements could not be evaluated. The Reengagement case included the comprehensive discussion conducted in April of 2013, and the issuance of the Your Welfare-to-Work (WTW) 24-Month Time Clock Notice (CW 2208).

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## **Conclusion**

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### **Successes**

Contra Costa County implemented SB 1041 using several different methods. In preparation, the county conducted workgroups with county staff beginning prior to implementation. These workgroups helped with the implementation process in Contra Costa County. Following the workgroups, several information delivery methods were used including comprehensive staff training, memorandums and emergency alerts to help inform staff of the changes related to SB 1041.

Contra Costa County regularly meets with community partners including, but not limited to, the local One-Stop partners, Adult Schools, State Department of Rehabilitation, county Community Services/Head Start, Employment Development Department and community colleges. For example, the county regularly meets with community colleges and has county staff on site to assist CalWORKs clients. The Keys Program is another example of Contra Costa County's successful partnerships with the community. Contra Costa County partners with a local credit union to offer automobile loans to CalWORKs clients or clients receiving retention services. The offer of this loan helps remove transportation barriers for CalWORKs clients and helps establish or enhance credit scores. The Keys Program has offered over 100 loans and has a 98% success rate for repayment of loans. Cars for the Keys Program are obtained from the County General Services Department as surplus/retired county vehicles.

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flexible orientations for all clients several times a week at different times as well as one-on-one availability in order to ensure the least impact for clients.

## **Challenges**

Contra Costa County noted a couple of challenges related to the implementation of SB 1041. These challenges included the timing of automation and the release of the implementing All County Letters.

## **Key Recommendations**

Contra Costa County should continue to strategize in ways to complete the Your Welfare-to-Work (WTW) 24-Month Time Clock Notice (CW 2208) and a mechanism for tracking when the form is sent to clients. The county should continue to work around automation barriers to release the Your Welfare-to-Work (WTW) 24-Month Time Clock Notice (CW 2208) when required for clients upon application and at redetermination.

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## **Contact**

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