

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

Riverside County

Visit Date: September 18, 2013

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

Riverside 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] 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.

County Visit General Information

The one-day field visit was performed in Riverside County on Wednesday, September 18, 2013 at the County of Riverside Department of Public Social Services in Riverside, CA. The field visit team included three CDSS staff along with the county's Deputy Director for CalWORKs and Welfare-to-Work, Deputy Director for Medi-Cal and Community Outreach, Deputy Director for Policy and Human Resources, a CalWORKs Eligibility Manager, a CalWORKs Supervisor, a Self-Sufficiency Trainer, seven Self-Sufficiency Managers, and two Employment Service Caseworkers. The field visit consisted of a kick-off meeting, close-out meeting, staff interviews, and case management observations with county staff.

Implementation Strategies

Riverside County began workgroups with county managers and subject matter expert staff prior to the implementation of SB 1041. Workgroups were held November 28, 2012, December 10, 2012. The workgroups discussed several SB 1041 implementation topics including, the WTW 24-Month Time Clock, reengagement, the new young child exemption, outreach to sanction clients, CalLearn, 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.

Riverside County utilized additional strategies for the implementation of SB 1041. These strategies included on-going Reform Workgroup Meetings/Trainings, held (as of the day of the site visit) on ten separate occasions between February 14, 2013 and September 12, 2013. Additional meetings/trainings were held with regional managers on February 4 and 7, 2013 to discuss the WTW 24-Month Time Clock and participation requirements. A WTW Reengagement Workgroup was also convened on March 29, 2013 to discuss and develop the reengagement sequencing plan; and a Reengagement Information Session was held with managers and staff September 11 and 12, 2013. In addition to the workgroups/training, staff was provided information through Department Memorandums, Program Announcements, and C-IV Announcements. Information was issued to staff beginning July 26, 2012, and continued throughout 2013. The presentations/trainings and additional information was provided to all staff that work with CalWORKs clients including WTW, and staff were also asked to work extended hours in order to complete SB 1041 implementation activities.

Riverside County conducted comprehensive SB 1041 CalWORKs and Welfare-to-Work Program Training during multiple six-hour sessions. This training including information on the following topics:

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

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

Successes

Riverside County implemented SB 1041 using several different methods, including multiple workgroups followed by comprehensive staff training, memorandums and program announcements to help inform staff of the changes related to SB 1041.

Riverside County regularly meets with community partners, including, but not limited to, community college partners and the county Mental Health Department.

Riverside County has a comprehensive case management approach to the implementation of SB 1041.

Riverside County demonstrates an excellent client outreach program and flexible service schedules which assisted in the implementation of SB 1041.

Riverside County has implemented several innovative strategies that improve client outcomes and county performance benchmarks, including: performance metrics, bi-monthly work participation rate best practice meetings; on-going case reviews; and on-site General Equivalency Degree classes. In addition, Riverside County is planning to implement subsidized employment this fiscal year.

Key Recommendations

Riverside 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 was 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.

Riverside County should continue to develop a Learning Disability Screening tool. The provision of on-site county mental health clinicians and counselors during Job Club presentations and to provide services to CalWORKs clients mitigates the situation as the current contracting process for an LD provider in the county moves forward.

Acknowledgments

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

Field Monitoring Visit Summary

Introduction

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Background and Data

Riverside County at-a-glance

Total Caseload.....	30,472
(Source: CalWORKs Cash Grant Caseload Movement Report CA 237 CW Line Item 8-July 2013)	
WTW Enrollees.....	8,750
(Source: CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Monthly Activity Report WTW 25/25A Line Item 1-July 2013)	
Mandatory Participants (enrollees + sanctioned + non-compliance).....	13,309
(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.....	June 1, 2013
Consortium System.....	C-IV

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 or less than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit as of January 1, 2013, that have had their comprehensive discussion: **8,025**
- Sanctions that were cured as a result of SB 1041: **24**
- Former short-term young child exempt clients (Assembly Bill [AB] X4 4) that have been reengaged: **91**
- Clients that have used the new once in a lifetime young child exemption: **529**

Summary of Documents provided by Riverside County

- SB 1041 related training materials including PowerPoint presentation and handouts on various SB 1041 topics, including 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. Departmental trainings were held on multiple occasions at various worksite locations between February and September 2013.
- SB 1041 tools and other county specific materials including the SB 1041 Worksheet for WTW 24 Months, the WTW 2 with Comments, WTW Comprehensive Discussion Journal Template, and Sample of Journal Entry.
- Multiple Departmental Memorandum and Program Announcements regarding SB 1041 implementation
- Riverside County's Assembly Bill (AB) X4 4 Short-Term Exemption County 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 three county administrators. The caseworker interviews were conducted by two teams of two 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

Riverside County issued the initial WTW 24-Month Time Clock General Informing Notice (CW 2205) centrally by the C-IV system November 3 through 10, 2012. Following the issuance of this notice, the county began comprehensive discussions with clients via phone, mail or in person beginning the last week of 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 staffs are instructed to include documentation of the comprehensive discussion in the case file.

Riverside County created tools including a speaking script and visual aids which assisted caseworkers 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.

In general, Riverside has seen clients chose to align their participation hours with federal requirements and some clients change activities as a result of the program rules. Clients who were working frequently chose not to reduce their hours.

Clients who failed to attend SB 1041 appointments

Clients with an existing WTW plan are not sanctioned for failing to participate in the comprehensive discussion. The comprehensive discussion is then conducted at the next regularly scheduled appointment. At that point, if the client fails to attend the appointment the non-compliance process may be initiated.

General Comments

Riverside County programs operate out of thirteen eligibility offices and ten welfare-to-work offices across the county. Employment caseworkers have approximately 85-100 cases. Specialized senior caseworkers handle the exempt and sanction caseloads in the county. In smaller county offices, the Employment caseworker will conduct the appraisal, orientation, assessment and ongoing case management; while in larger offices specialized staff conduct individual components of the CalWORKs program, such as orientation and ongoing case management.

New Young Child Exemption

At the time of the site visit, Riverside County had 529 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

Riverside County did not have clients receiving good cause for lack of supportive services.

The new WTW Activity Plan/Form (WTW) 2

The new Welfare-to-Work Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2) form was made available via the CDSS website December of 2012. Riverside County used the previous version available through the C-IV consortia 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 use 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

Riverside 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 and additionally use visual aids with clients to explain the WTW 24-Month Clock and 48-month Time on Aid clock.

Reengagement Process

Riverside County will began reengaging AB X4 4 exempt clients on June 1, 2013. Riverside County's Sequencing Plan is as follows:

- **June 2014**-Exempt volunteers.
- **July 2013**- Individuals at the household's yearly redetermination.
- **July 2014**-Individuals not reengaged as of June 30, 2014.

The reengagement process for Riverside County includes the following:

- Providing the client with the comprehensive discussion and required notices as well as informing clients about the non-compliance and sanction process. Clients are allowed to volunteer, and 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

The CDSS Field Monitoring Team reviewed five cases selected by Riverside 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

Riverside County uses the C-IV 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); however, the Your Welfare-to-Work (WTW) 24-Month Time Clock Notice (CW 2208) had not yet been automated in the C-IV system and was instead being manually tracked.
- Comprehensive discussions and additional outreach: All required comprehensive discussions were completed.
- Learning Disability Screening was not available in Riverside at the time of the site visit but was under development.
- 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 (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 reengagement noticing requirements were all complete. The Reengagement case included the comprehensive discussion conducted in June of 2013.

Conclusion

Successes

Riverside County implemented SB 1041 using several different methods. In preparation, the County conducted multiple workgroups with county staff beginning prior to implementation. These workgroups helped inform the implementation process in Riverside 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.

Riverside County regularly meets with community partners including, but not limited to, quarterly meetings with community college partners and single-points-of-contacts within the county to coordinate student services. Riverside County has successful partnerships with the community and other agencies, including the county mental health department, who is present during Job Club presentations and provides clinicians and counselors to provide services CalWORKs clients. Riverside County has implemented several service strategies over the years, including holistic approaches to services and data management/tracking to improve client outcomes.

One promising service strategy currently implemented in one county office is the provision of on-site General Equivalency Degree (GED) classes, which Riverside County may optionally expand to other county offices.

Riverside 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 caseworkers to assist with sanctioned and exempt caseloads.

Riverside County demonstrates an excellent client outreach program and flexible service schedules which assisted in the implementation of SB 1041. The County offers various services and clinics for clients as well as one-on-one availability in order to ensure the best outcomes for clients.

Riverside County has implemented several strategies that help clients achieve successful outcomes while at the same time promote achievement of work participation rate (WPR) requirements, including: Performance metrics for each county office related to engagement of CalWORKs clients in welfare-to-work activities; bi-monthly WPR best practice meetings; on-going case reviews for missed appointments; and expanding subsidized employment opportunities.

Challenges

Riverside County noted several challenges related to the implementation of SB 1041. These challenges included the concurrent timing of implementation of healthcare reform, short timeframes for SB 1041 implementation deadlines, and the intermittent release of the implementing SB 1041 All County Letters. In addition, Riverside County experienced challenges with the overall length of the WTW 2 and continue to receive questions regarding the determination of which part of the WTW 2 to complete.

Key Recommendations

Riverside 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 was 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.

Riverside County should continue to develop a Learning Disability Screening tool. The provision of on-site county mental health clinicians and counselors during Job Club presentations and to provide services to CalWORKs clients mitigates the situation as the current contracting process for an LD provider in the county moves forward.

Contact

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