

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

Sacramento County

Visit Date: September 27, 2013

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

Sacramento 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 Sacramento County on Friday, September 27, 2013, at the Sacramento County Office of Human Assistance in Sacramento, CA. The field visit team included four CDSS staff along with Sacramento County's Welfare-to-Work Program Specialist, Program Managers, Division Manager, and Deputy Director. The field visit consisted of a kick-off meeting, close-out meeting, staff interviews, and case management observations with county staff.

Implementation Strategies

Sacramento County participated in the SB 1041 Oversight Committee meetings held by the CDSS beginning in the Fall of 2012. The County began planning the implementation of SB 1041 in October of 2012, and created seven workgroups within the county based on the following categories: Annual Reporting/Child Only (ARCO), Reengagement, WTW 24-Month Time Clock, Success Measures, Training, Staffing, Time On Aid (TOA), and Best Practices/Communication. The county gathered the same statistical elements in order to determine client and workload impacts. In January 2013, Sacramento County began providing all new applicants and continuing WTW participants up for renewal with an SB 1041 Comprehensive Discussion. In addition to speaking to those clients already scheduled for the annual renewal, the County's plan to engage clients in the SB 1041 Comprehensive Discussion was as follows:

- Clients with 24 months or less left on their CalWORKs 48-month time clock were sent an SB 1041 WTW Engagement letter in the months of February, March, and April of 2013;
- Clients who were in sanction were sent SB 1041 WTW Engagement Sanction letters by March 31, 2013;
- Clients with more than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time clock were sent an SB 1041 WTW Engagement letter in the months of May, June, and July of 2013.

Successes

Sacramento County developed an extensive amount of training materials for SB 1041 implementation. This included interactive training that was given to caseworkers in small segments. Sacramento County also conducted "Road Shows" led by upper management and veteran staff as a way to inform county staff of SB 1041 related changes. In addition, the County provides information to staff using email announcements, weekly unit meetings, monthly bureau meetings, monthly WTW performance meetings and formal trainings. Sacramento County's innovative training approach assisted in the successful implementation of SB 1041.

Sacramento County has developed many tracking mechanisms and related processes to help the county achieve implementing SB 1041. Sacramento County has developed a manual process to document time on a client's WTW 24-Month Time Clock until this process is automated. In addition, the county has a process in place to identify clients that are required to receive the Your Welfare-to-Work 24-Month Time Clock notice (CW 2208) and subsequently send out this notice. Sacramento County also has a team that specializes in reviewing time on aid and reengagement client data in order to ensure client level data is accurate and to develop county wide statistics.

Sacramento County has several additional practices that were identified during this visit as assisting in the successful implementation of SB 1041. Some of these practices included a detailed

Inter County Transfer process that requires staff to verify, and correct if necessary, the accuracy of information including time on aid. Sacramento County also utilized a WTW 24-Month Time Clock case comments within the CalWIN consortium system that assists in case management documentation. Caseworkers use an informational flyer and the new WTW Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2) to discuss SB 1041 program changes with clients including, but not limited to, the flexibility under the WTW 24-Month Time Clock. Sacramento County also has a strong relationship with local advocacy groups.

Key Recommendations

Sacramento County should continue to ensure all documents are scanned and available in the case file. Prior to the time of the visit, Sacramento County identified the issue and had already reminded staff of the requirement to scan documents to ensure all documents were included in the case file.

Acknowledgments

The CDSS thanks Sacramento County Human Assistance 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

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] 4X 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 Sacramento County on Friday, September 27, 2013, at the Sacramento County Office of Human Assistance in Sacramento, CA. The field visit team included four CDSS staff along with Sacramento County's Welfare-to-Work Program Specialist, Program Managers, Division Manager, and Deputy Director. The field visit consisted of a kick-off meeting, close-out meeting, staff interviews, and case management observations with county staff.

Background and Data

Sacramento County at-a-glance

Total Caseload.....	32,002
(Source: CalWORKs Cash Grant Caseload Movement Report CA 237 CW Line Item 8-June 2013)	
WTW Enrollees.....	10,975
(Source: CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Monthly Activity Report WTW 25/25A Line Item 1-June 2013)	
Mandatory Participants (enrollees + sanctioned + non-compliance).....	14022
(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.....	January 1, 2013
Consortium System.....	CalWIN

Data/Statistics

The following data and statistics were provided by Sacramento County prior to the County Field Monitoring Visit on September 27, 2013.

- 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: **3,555**
- 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: **3,510**
- Sanctions that were cured as a result of SB 1041: **1,505**
- Former short-term young child exempt clients (Assembly Bill [AB] X4 4) that have been reengaged: **2,258**
- Clients that have used the new once in a lifetime young child exemption: **691**

Summary of Documents provided by Sacramento County:

- CalWORKs Senate Bill (SB) 1041 Series Announcements:
- Announcement #1, Summary, Q&A & General Information
- Announcement #2, More About the WTW 24-Month Time Clock
- Announcement #3, Welfare-to-Work (WTW) Participation Comparison Table
- Announcement #4, WTW Activities
- Announcement #5, WTW Engagement Process for New WTW Participants
- January WTW Engagement Process
- Announcement #6, New Young Child WTW Exemption
- Announcement #7, New WTW 2
- Announcement #8, SB 1041 DHANET Link
- Announcement #9, Summary OF SB 1041
- Announcement #10, Detailed Reports, WTW Engagement Process, etc.
- DHA 24-Month Process, WTW Engagement Plan – All Mandatory Participants
- Announcement #11, Sanction Cover Letter, CW 2186A

- Announcement #12, Reengagement Population
- Announcement #13, Summary of Reengagement for Expired Short-Term
- Exemption Q&A
- Reengagement Summary
- Reengagement Population Q&A
- Announcement #14, March Engagement, WTW Engagement Process
- Comprehensive Discussion Information Flyer
- Announcement #15, Sanction Cover Letter
- Announcement #16, April Engagement, WTW Engagement Process
- Announcement #17, CW 2208
- Announcement #18, SB 1041 Q&A
- Announcement #19, WTW Noncompliance Program Document
- Announcement #20, Revised April Engagement
- Announcement #21, WTW Participation Comparison Table
- Announcement #22, Revised April Engagement, WTW Engagement Process
- Announcement #23, CW 2208
- Announcement #24, Revised April Engagement, July Engagement
- Announcement #25, New Young Child Exemption Q&A
- State Q&A #6
- WTW Plan Review Cover Letter
- WTW Sanction Cover Letter
- WTW Plan Appointment Letter
- Reengagement Cover Letter/Reengagement-RRR Appointment Letter
- Reengagement Task Calendar
- WTW Handbook, SC 246.245

SB 1041 Trainings

- SB 1041 Changes PowerPoint presentation to Sacramento County staff.
- SB 1041 Interactive Trainings known in Sacramento County as Roadshows deliver training to county staff with information provided by many levels of program management.
- Training Certificate provided to Sacramento County staff upon completion of the interactive training.

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 caseworkers 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 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit

Sacramento County began SB 1041 Comprehensive Discussions with clients who had less than 24 months left of their CalWORKs 48-month time clock in January 2013. These clients were sent an SB 1041 WTW Engagement letter in the months of February, March, and April of 2013. The county's outreach to clients beyond the The New Rules for CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Activities Informing Notice (CW 2205) included three letters with the comprehensive discussion topics included on the back side of each letter. For those participants who had been determined to be meeting the program requirements, Sacramento County included a revised WTW Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2) with the mailed letter. For those clients partially participating had the option to discuss the program changes through a phone appointment. Clients with no hours recently entered into the CalWIN system were invited in for a face-to-face appointment. At the time of the CDSS's visit Sacramento County had not completed all SB 1041 Comprehensive Discussions for this population, but anticipated a completion date of September 30, 2013.

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

Clients with more than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time clock were sent an SB 1041 WTW Engagement letter in the months of May, June, and July of 2013. This population received the same notices as well as the same appointment procedures as the clients with less than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 24-month time clock. At the time of the CDSS visit Sacramento County had not completed all SB 1041 Comprehensive Discussions for this population, but anticipated a completion date of September 30, 2013.

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

Sacramento County elected to outreach to all individuals serving a WTW sanction by mailing a form letter specifically designed for this population. The letter contained the SB 1041

Comprehensive Discussion Topics on the back side of the letter, and attached was the CalWORKs Exemption Request Form (CW 2186A) listing all WTW and CalWORKs time clock exemptions. For sanction clients who confirmed that they were meeting the program requirements, Sacramento County lifted the sanction and wrote a new WTW Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2). The County invited sanctioned clients who were partially participating to cure their sanction. Those sanctioned clients who were not participating to any extent received a different version of the Sanction Cover Letter with the above referenced documents also attached.

Clients who failed to attend SB 1041 appointments

The noncompliance process was initiated for clients who did not respond to any attempts by the county to provide the comprehensive discussions and who also did not have any hours of participation recently entered in to the CalWIN system.

General Comments

Sacramento County staff were instructed to use the Informational Flyer along with the new WTW Activity Assignment Sheet (WTW 2) to explain the new program requirements as well as the new flexibility associated with the WTW 24-Month Time Clock. Sacramento County is of the belief that saving time on the WTW 24-Month Time Clock is a good idea, as it may greatly benefit a client should an emergency or barrier to participation arise. However, the County does emphasize that it is the individual's choice when deciding to meet the State or Federal work requirements.

Additionally, Sacramento County staff reported that the new rules are very difficult to explain, and recognize that it will take time for staff and participants to really grasp all of the nuances associated with such large programmatic changes. In September, Sacramento County had just begun to develop their staff Announcement explaining the CalWORKs federal standards, and had planned to go out to individual bureaus in October and November of 2013, for open discussion and training on this issue. This delay in training staff on this particular subject was partially due to the delayed release by the CDSS of Question and Answers specific to this subject, and due to CalWIN data changes associated with the WTW 24-Month Time Clock.

In general Sacramento County's WTW participants were choosing to use the new SB 1041 flexibility and lower participation hour requirements. Sacramento County has a specialized Management Reporting Unit who records and will be providing data on trends created by SB 1041 changes.

New Young Child Exemption

Most clients in Sacramento County who qualified for the new one-time birth to 23 month young child exemption are opting to use this exemption. 691 clients have opted to use this exemption.

The new WTW Plan Activity Assignment (WTW2)

Sacramento County began using the new WTW Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2) upon issuance by the CDSS. In general County staff and clients in Sacramento County provided positive feedback

regarding the new form. It is described by staff as a good visual aid when helping to explain the differences between the WTW 24-Month Time Clock and CalWORKs Federal Standards requirements.

Reengagement Process

Sacramento County will begin Reengagement in January of 2014. Clients will be reengaged based on clients' 2014 renewal month. Clients that request to reengage prior to the clients scheduled reengagement will be allowed to volunteer to participate.

Implementation Strategies

Sacramento County participated in the SB 1041 Oversight Committee meetings held by the CDSS beginning in the Fall of 2012. The County began planning the implementation of SB 1041 in October of 2012, and created seven workgroups within the county based on the following categories: ARCO, Reengagement, 24-Month, Success Measures, Training, Staffing, TOA and Best Practices/Communication. The county gathered the same statistical elements in order to determine client and workload impacts. In January 2013, Sacramento County began providing all new applicants and continuing WTW participants up for renewal with an SB 1041 Comprehensive Discussion. In addition to speaking to those clients already scheduled for the annual renewal, the Counties plan to engage clients in the SB 1041 Comprehensive Discussion was as follows:

- Clients 24 months or less left on their CalWORKs 48-month time clock were sent an SB 1041 WTW Engagement letter in the months of February, March, and April;
- Clients who were in sanction were sent an SB 1041 WTW Engagement Sanction letter by March 31, 2013;
- Clients with more than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time clock were sent an SB 1041 WTW Engagement letter in the months of May, June, and July.

Case Reviews

The CDSS Field Monitoring Team reviewed five cases selected by the Sacramento 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

Sacramento County uses the CalWIN case management system, and customized a case comment section specifically for notation of ticking/un-ticking of the WTW 24-Month Time Clock until it can be fully automated in the CalWIN system. All necessary documents, learning disabilities screenings, hours, activities, and supportive services were found complete in all five case files with the exception of the Your WTW 24-Month Time Clock notice (CW 2208) which was noted in the case file as being sent, but a scanned copy could not be found in three of the case files reviewed.

Conclusion

Successes

Sacramento County developed an extensive amount of training materials for SB 1041 implementation. This included interactive training that was given to caseworkers in small segments. Sacramento County also conducted “Road Shows” led by upper management and veteran staff as a way to inform county staff of SB 1041 related changes. In addition, the County provides information to staff using email announcements, weekly unit meetings, monthly bureau meetings, monthly WTW performance meetings and formal trainings. Sacramento County’s innovative training approach assisted in the successful implementation of SB 1041.

Sacramento County has developed many tracking mechanisms and related processes to help the county achieve implementing SB 1041. Sacramento County has developed a manual process to document time on a client’s WTW 24-Month Time Clock until this process is automated. In addition, the county has a process in place to identify clients that are required to receive the Your Welfare-to-Work 24-Month Time Clock notice (CW 2208) and subsequently send out this notice. Sacramento County also has a team that specializes in reviewing time on aid and reengagement client data in order to ensure client level data is accurate and to develop county wide statistics.

Sacramento County has several additional practices that were identified during this visit as assisting in the successful implementation of SB 1041. Some of these practices included a detailed Inter County Transfer process that requires staff to verify, and correct if necessary, the accuracy of information including time on aid. Sacramento County also utilized a WTW 24-Month Time Clock case comment within the CalWIN consortium system that assists in case management documentation. Caseworkers use an informational flyer and the new WTW Plan Activity

Assignment (WTW 2) to discuss SB 1041 program changes with clients including, but not limited to, the flexibility under the WTW 24-Month Time Clock. Sacramento County also has a strong relationship with local advocacy groups.

Challenges

Sacramento County found that their greatest challenge was the implementation of such significant changes to the program in such a short amount of time.

Key Recommendations

Sacramento County should continue to ensure all documents are scanned and available in the case file. Prior to the time of the visit, Sacramento County identified the issue and had already reminded staff of the requirement to scan documents to ensure all documents were included in the case file.

Contacts

Samantha Basquez
Program Analyst
Welfare-to-Work Division
744 P Street, M.S. 8-8-33
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 651-9055
Samantha.basquez@dss.ca.gov