

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

San Bernardino County

Visit Date: October 15, 2013

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

San Bernardino 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 San Bernardino County on Tuesday, October 15, 2013 at the Transitional Assistance Department (TAD) in Rialto, CA. The field visit team included two managers and one staff member from the CDSS, Welfare-to-Work Division, CalWORKs Employment and Eligibility Branch along with San Bernardino County TAD Director, Deputy Director, Regional Manager, Program Specialist, and Employment Services Manager. The field visit consisted of a kick-off meeting, close-out meeting, staff interviews, and case management observations with county staff.

Implementation Strategies

San Bernardino County implemented the SB 1041 related program changes in phases as All County Letters (ACLs) were released by the CDSS and provided county staff with multiple instructional notices and flyers. Staff trainings were also done in phases as new information became available and were held in December 2012, March 2013, and May 2013. San Bernardino County developed training materials, sample exercises for staff to complete at trainings, PowerPoint materials, revised WTW orientation presentations, and utilized its available training centers.

Successes

San Bernardino County's SB 1041 training process was very successful and included utilization of Performance, Education, and Resource Center (PERC) trainers to train staff quickly and effectively. Employment Services Specialists (ESSs) in San Bernardino County were also able to have thorough comprehensive discussions with clients using the checklist tool as well as utilizing the new WTW Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2) form effectively to ensure client understanding. The creation of supportive services liaisons at local community colleges will be beneficial to San Bernardino County's large student population. San Bernardino County has also maintained a large subsidized employment program and is anticipating an additional increase in the availability and variety of placements using the new expanded subsidized employment program funding.

Key Recommendations

The Your WTW 24-Month Time Clock (CW 2208) form should be utilized as appropriate in addition to at redetermination and intake. San Bernardino County should manually track any sanction cures that are due to the new program rules. San Bernardino County may consider cross training eligibility staff on new program changes. This could facilitate outreach to sanctioned clients at redetermination or other points of contact regarding eligibility matters. San Bernardino County is encouraged to take advantage of the upcoming family stabilization program and funding that will be available for more intensive case management and barrier removal for families, including sanction cases.

Acknowledgments

The CDSS thanks San Bernardino County 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] 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 San Bernardino County on Tuesday, October 15, 2013 at the San Bernardino County Transitional Assistance Department (TAD) in Rialto, CA. The field visit team included two managers and one staff member from the CDSS, Welfare-to-Work Division, CalWORKs Employment and Eligibility Branch along with San Bernardino County TAD Director, Deputy Director, Regional Manager, Program Specialist, and Employment Services Manager. The field visit consisted of a kick-off meeting, close-out meeting, staff interviews, and case management observations with county staff.

Background and Data

San Bernardino At-a-glance

Total Caseload.....	49,049
<small>(Source: CalWORKs Cash Grant Caseload Movement Report CA 237 CW Line Item 8-July 2013)</small>	
WTW Enrollees.....	13,730
<small>(Source: CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Monthly Activity Report WTW 25/25A Line Item 1-July 2013)</small>	
Mandatory Participants (enrollees + sanctioned + non-compliance).....	26,470
<small>(Source: CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Monthly Activity Report WTW 25/25A Line Items 1, 3A, and 31-July 2013)</small>	
Reengagement Plan Received.....	Yes

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: **20,337.**
- 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: **14,520.**
- Sanctions that were cured as a result of SB 1041: **not available. At the time of the visit, San Bernardino County indicated that they had not been tracking how many sanctions were cured as a result of SB 1041.**
- Former short-term young child exempt clients (Assembly Bill [AB] X4 4) that have been reengaged: **1,329.**
- WTW plans that have changed as a result of SB 1041 implementation: **San Bernardino 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: **4,617.**
- Other statistics that the county is keeping related to SB 1041 implementation:
 - ❖ **As of October 21, 2013, the county had 430 exempt volunteers and 2,282 WTW customers in educational activities, including self-initiated programs (SIPs), vocational education training, job skills training – education directly related to employment.**

Summary of Documents provided by San Bernardino 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 training presentations, training practice scenarios, flyers provided to staff, and materials distributed during staff meetings.
- San Bernardino 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 three CDSS staff with several county administrators. The caseworker interviews were conducted by three CDSS staff members with two caseworkers.

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

San Bernardino County sent out the New Rules for CalWORKs WTW Activities (CW 2205) form using the Statewide Automated Welfare System Consortium-IV (C-IV) on November 9, 2012 to all non-excluded WTW eligible adults, both English and Spanish speaking, who received cash aid on behalf of or with a child, including sanctioned adults and clients with a current young child exemption. Comprehensive discussions with clients with less than 24 months left on their

CalWORKs 48-month time limit began on January 2, 2013, for 14,520 clients, all of which have been completed.

In general, clients were choosing the lower hourly requirements and those who were in vocational education training programs beyond 12 months were choosing to continue in those programs without participating in additional activities.

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

San Bernardino County began comprehensive discussions with clients with more than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit on January 2, 2013, for 20,337 clients, all of which have been completed. Clients are choosing a wide variety of flexible options on a case-by-case basis.

Clients who failed to attend SB 1041 appointments

San Bernardino County made contact with clients regarding the comprehensive discussion and new participation requirements at their next scheduled appointment, by phone, when the client came into the office to pick up supportive services, or the next time the client needed to sign a new WTW Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2) form. For employed clients meeting new participation requirements who failed to attend their scheduled SB 1041 appointment, the new WTW 2 was mailed to the client with a note to contact their Employment Services Specialist (ESS), complete the new WTW 2, and return it in the postage paid envelope.

General Comments

ESSs carry approximately 100 cases including active and noncompliance cases. The sanction caseload and exempt caseload are carried separately. The message given to county staff regarding the WTW 24-Month Time Clock is a sense of urgency to maximize this time and do everything they can to ensure client success as soon as possible. The roll-out of the WTW 24-Month Time Clock in San Bernardino County is client-focused. Clients are encouraged to take advantage of the options that are available to them that best suit their needs. San Bernardino County is working on additional outreach for sanctioned cases and is considering creating a sanction caseload specialist position on a rotational basis. San Bernardino County noted that the communication between eligibility and employment staff could be improved and would provide an opportunity for additional contact with sanctioned cases.

San Bernardino County has been able to maintain a very successful subsidized employment program during this period of change and is gaining support from San Bernardino County's Board of Supervisors. The program is being offered in 27 county departments and has roughly 500 placements. San Bernardino County has found that clients are generally very excited for the opportunity to gain work experience and have found that they have a good rate of success with employment following participation in the program. San Bernardino County is currently looking at possible strategies to improve and expand the opportunities offered as part of the subsidized employment program, including private placements. San Bernardino County has also created a robust volunteer income tax assistance (VITA) program of roughly 50 clients that were trained by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) on how to complete tax returns.

San Bernardino County has a large student population and has found that the new program rules are beneficial to students. San Bernardino County meets with community colleges every other month or quarterly at a minimum and has provided them with a checklist of information they need to provide to the clients and staff. San Bernardino County has an employment services liaison that is available onsite two days a week at some colleges. San Bernardino County is looking at ways to improve communication with local community colleges and have created a liaison in each office that will assist with providing supportive services for students as timely as possible.

New Young Child Exemption

San Bernardino County reported 4,617 clients have opted to take the new young child exemption as of September 23, 2013. Some sanctions were cured due to the new young child exemption and/or new program flexibility.

General Comments

San Bernardino County faced a challenge with how to code cases in the Welfare Data Tracking Implementation Project (WDTIP) system regarding the new young child exemption. An alternative exemption code was used in the interim prior to the establishment of an additional WDTIP code.

The new WTW Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2)

County staff utilized the form within C-IV and explained the new requirements using the CW 2205. Staff also referred to internal informational notices and made journal entries within C-IV using a checklist provided in the county handbook. The new WTW 2 was available within C-IV for use by March 2013.

General Comments

County staff interviewed felt that the new WTW 2 form is effective as a guide during a client's SB 1041 discussion. The form was described as very thorough and helpful in walking clients through all of their options, goals, activities, time limits, supportive services, and exemptions they may be eligible to receive. It was noted that it would be helpful if the comments section of the form was bigger to allow for more detail, especially for clients going to school so their class schedule and other information can be included, or to reiterate participation requirements. County staff used a checklist for comprehensive discussions and found that the new WTW 2 reinforces this information. The new form is helpful to individuals that benefit from a visual representation of the various options available to them, and also ensures that clients are aware of supportive services available to them and can get access to them as soon as possible. County staff noted that some clients choose to participate in a way that prevents their WTW 24-Month Time Clock from ticking while some are eager to go to school, so county staff assist clients with whichever option is best for them depending on their focus and needs.

Reengagement Process

San Bernardino County's reengagement process officially began on January 14, 2013. The Reengagement Informing Notice (CW 2206) form mass mailer was sent on January 17, 2013 to all AB X4 4 short-term exempt individuals. As of September 23, 2013, San Bernardino County had 1,030 clients remaining that needed to be reengaged. As of October 2013, San Bernardino County

had approximately 700 remaining clients to reengage. San Bernardino County has a target completion date for reengagement of December 31, 2014, but expects to complete the reengagement process ahead of that date.

San Bernardino County's Sequencing Plan is as follows:

- **January 14, 2013**-At the expiration of the current volunteer WTW plan.
- **January 14, 2013**-Based on the client's redetermination date.
- **January 14, 2013**-At point of contact with the county if not addressed at the expiration of the current volunteer WTW plan or at redetermination. Clients not engaged by July 17, 2013 (six months after the initial CW 2206 was mailed out) will be mailed a new CW 2206.

San Bernardino County allowed clients to reengage upon request ahead of their reengagement sequencing process. County staff also discussed and explained other exemptions that may be available to the clients and the new WTW requirements. San Bernardino County noted some clients wanted to reengage earlier because they wanted to participate in school and receive supportive services such as books and transportation.

Clients who were voluntarily participating were allowed to continue volunteering until their volunteer status ended and then were required to sign a new WTW 2, or at the client's redetermination date.

Implementation Strategies

San Bernardino County implemented the SB 1041 related program changes in phases as All County Letters (ACLs) were released by the CDSS. Ad hoc reports and queries were run to identify clients in different categories pertaining to the new changes. Staff trainings were also done in phases as new information became available and were held in December 2012, March 2013, and May 2013. San Bernardino County developed training materials, sample exercises for staff to complete at trainings, PowerPoint materials, and revised WTW orientation presentations. All WTW staff were trained using the Performance, Education, and Resource Center (PERC) trainers. The PERC facilities can accommodate up to 100 individuals per day to be trained.

The following trainings were completed for San Bernardino County staff:

- December 11, 2012 – Introductions to the new WTW regulations (SB 1041) WTW 2, new Birth to 23 month exemption, CW 2186A and CW 2186B forms, current young child exemptions (YCEs) ending December 31, 2012, having a thorough discussion with clients regarding new regulations, and participation hours;
- March 18, 2013 – Additional training on the new WTW 2 available in C-IV on March 25, 2013, clarified policy on the Birth to 23 month exemption, the WTW 24-Month Time Clock, participation requirements, completing the new WTW 2, the new WTW Forms & Procedures, ticking and unticking the new clock;
- May 14, 2013 – The WTW 24-Month Time Clock available within C-IV, training on new clock, activation, what ticks/unticks the clock, participation hours, thorough discussion with clients regarding new regulations, and the signature date, post assessment boxes in the Activity Agreement Detail page within C-IV.

San Bernardino County provided multiple Interim Instruction Notices (IINs), including IIN 12-075, 12 -075 Errata, 13-024, 13-024 Errata, 12-024 Errata, and 13-037 Q&A (questions collected from

staff at trainings). In addition, San Bernardino County provided Flyer 12-260 in November 2012 with the CW 2205 attached, and Flyer 13-206 in August 2013 regarding comprehensive discussions. Monthly staff meetings are held in each district office. Staff meet regularly with supervisors and can email questions directly to them at any time. San Bernardino County maintains an online knowledge database that staff can refer to that contains frequently asked questions. Case reviews are done monthly to ensure staff are communicating the new program rules to clients. Corrective action supervisors analyze error trends in the county and provide additional training to those who need it. Staff are given quizzes to evaluate their understanding of new rules at quarterly policy reviews. These quizzes are helpful at identifying training needs, such as when all staff are missing one particular question or when just one staff member may need further training.

General Comments

San Bernardino County developed their own training material and did not use the CDSS's Training Aid. Eligibility staff did not receive training but have access to the county handbook material, were informed of all the new WTW program changes at stand-up staff meetings, and at bi-weekly unit staff meetings. The delay in guidance from the CDSS was a challenge for implementation of the new changes. This also caused delays for automation of the new changes as they cannot be programmed into C-IV until they are released by the CDSS.

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

San Bernardino County uses the C-IV case management system. The following is a summary of the case findings:

- *All clients received the CW 2205 on November 9, 2012. The Your WTW 24-Month Time Clock (CW 2208) form had not yet been issued to these clients.*

- *Comprehensive discussions were being noted within the case files and the new WTW 2 was being used and kept on file. Short and long term goals were reflected in the cases.*
- *One client opted to take advantage of the new lower hourly requirement of 20 hours for an adult with a child under six years of age.*
- *A learning disability screening was offered to all cases but was declined by all clients.*
- *Supportive services offered and/or issued were being documented in case files.*

Conclusion

Successes

San Bernardino County's SB 1041 training process was very successful and included utilization of PERC trainers to train staff quickly and effectively. Questions about the new program changes that arose during trainings were answered online in a knowledge database which maintains frequently asked questions on an ongoing basis. San Bernardino County's instruction notices contained detailed information about the new program changes and how to implement them. Staff members' understanding of trainings about the new program changes was evaluated using quizzes to make sure that information is being communicated and comprehended by county staff, and thus to clients. Error trends are monitored within the county to identify additional training needs. San Bernardino County has an open door policy to allow open communication channels with supervisors and staff that encourages discussion among staff and access to supervisors. County staff were also able to have thorough comprehensive discussions with clients using the checklist tool as well as utilizing the new WTW 2 form effectively to ensure client understanding.

The creation of supportive services liaisons at local community colleges will be beneficial to San Bernardino County's large student population. The availability of onsite child care at all offices in San Bernardino County is especially helpful to clients who need to come in for more than one appointment on the same day.

San Bernardino County's large subsidized employment program is reflective of their effort to mitigate the high unemployment rate in the county. San Bernardino County is anticipating an additional increase in the availability and variety of placements using the new expanded subsidized employment program funding.

Challenges

San Bernardino County found it was difficult to implement the new changes timely due to the delay in guidance from the CDSS. ESSs carry a relatively high caseload of approximately 100 cases per ESS. San Bernardino County's sanction caseload is sizeable and requires more intensive outreach to these clients beyond mailers and phone calls to make them aware of the new options that are available.

Key Recommendations

San Bernardino County should review their CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Monthly Activity Report 25/25A (WTW 25/25A) data reporting process to ensure that the best available data is being reported. The CW 2208 should be utilized as appropriate in addition to at redetermination and intake. San Bernardino County should manually track any sanction cures that are due to the new program rules. San Bernardino County may consider cross training eligibility staff on new program changes as this may facilitate outreach to sanctioned clients at redetermination or other points of

contact regarding eligibility matters. San Bernardino County is encouraged to take advantage of the upcoming family stabilization program and funding that will be available for more intensive case management and barrier removal for families, including sanction cases.

Contact

Elisabeth Nobriga, Program Analyst
CalWORKs Employment Bureau, Welfare to Work Division
California Department of Social Services
Email: Elisabeth.Nobriga@dss.ca.gov