

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

San Joaquin County

Visit Date: October 23, 2013

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

San Joaquin 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 of the CWD, to gather promising practices in regards to implementation, to share these promising practices (when able) amongst all the 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 Joaquin County on Wednesday, October 23, 2013, at the CalWORKs Employment Center in Stockton, CA. The field visit team included one manager and two staff members from the CDSS, Welfare-to-Work Division, CalWORKs Employment and Eligibility Branch along with the San Joaquin County Employment and Youth Services Deputy Director, Human Services Agency Program Supervisor, CalWORKs Program manager and two Employment and Training Specialists (caseworkers). The field visit consisted of a kick-off meeting, close-out meeting, staff interviews, and case management observations with county staff.

Implementation Strategies

San Joaquin County began preparing for implementing the SB 1041 related program changes prior to the CDSS guidance being released through early staff meetings and internal discussions, including compiling customers lists by case type and planning for reengagement and comprehensive discussions. San Joaquin County began analyzing All County Letters (ACLs) as they were published, and in turn issued written Employment Services (ES) Transmittals to staff.

Additionally, guidance was provided at division and unit meetings and via emailed technical assistance. In-person training was provided over three sessions to all staff and was completed April 2013. Training material was provided in Powerpoint (overhead view and handouts), and on-going training is conducted weekly in division and unit meeting, including one-on-one technical assistance with staff.

Successes

San Joaquin County completed all comprehensive discussions with clients prior to July 2013 in an organized and thorough manner, beginning January 2013. San Joaquin's practice of monthly contact with clients facilitated efficient completion of comprehensive discussions. Via thorough training to staff on the SB 1041 related program changes, program rules are reviewed with clients and a discussion of the time clock occurred. Comprehensive discussions included conversation regarding client goals and barriers, such as child care, transportation, and mental health/substance abuse issues, as well as review for applicable welfare-to-work exemptions/good cause. The differences in participation within the 24-month clock and meeting CalWORKs federal standards were discussed.

San Joaquin's written guidance to staff was comprehensive and accurate. Information and tools were also shared through emails, clarification/question and answer, and trainings/presentations.

A very thoughtful approach was taken towards reengagement resulting in a sequencing schedule based on a flow basis, including all appropriate noticing, and verification that the noticing is complete. San Joaquin allows for clients to volunteer in the WTW program ahead of their reengagement data. San Joaquin's sequencing strategy includes appropriate noticing, assignment of cases to case managers, scheduling appointments, reminder phone calls, and follow up on unresponsive/noncompliant cases.

Cases reviewed demonstrated a completed comprehensive discussion in all cases, a learning disabilities screening offered in all cases, appropriate use of the new WTW 2 form (WTW Plan) in all cases (including client short/long term goals noted in the case file), appropriate completion/issuance of supportive services in all cases, and all reengagement noticing completed.

San Joaquin County has a number of innovative programs stemming from close collaboration with their partners. All county vendors attend monthly meetings to discuss services to clients and receive updated policy or other type guidance. These vendors offer on-site vocational education opportunities in construction technology, office technology, warehouse occupations, and culinary occupations. An on-site "Wellness Works" program for adults and teens is also offered Monday through Friday, providing classes on various topics, including physical wellness, stress/anger/money management, parenting, and career counseling.

On-site chemical dependency counseling for adults and youth, as well as on-site health care and behavioral health services are available to clients, again through good collaboration with other county agencies. San Joaquin collaborates with the local department of aging to offer "meals on wheels" community services opportunities to CalWORKs clients. San Joaquin County also offers a residential perinatal program and domestic violence services and woman's center shelter. In

addition to services aimed at women, San Joaquin County is engaged in fatherhood initiatives, including a partnership with the Fathers and Families program.

A good relationship with the community colleges includes staff located onsite that can assist clients with course counseling, supportive services and attendance documentation. San Joaquin also collaborates with college bookstores to provide book vouchers to students. An additional supportive service available to all clients is San Joaquin's transportation program that provides van rides to clients to and from WTW activities.

Key Recommendations

San Joaquin County should use the right side of the WTW 2 form to develop plans for clients who are planning to meet CalWORKs Federal Standards. The current approach used in the county is to "untick" months a client meets CalWORKs Federal Standards. While the net result is the same in terms of counting, or not, a month towards a client's WTW 24-Month Time Clock San Joaquin should prepare WTW plans in a prospective manner. San Joaquin County should ensure that all clients are receiving the Your WTW 24-Month Time Clock (CW 2208) form, as appropriate. During the case file review it was noted that a self-initiated program (SIP) case did not have the "SIP box" checked on the form so the county should ensure this box is checked for SIP cases. During the case file review it was noted that client receipt the CW 2205 was not noted in the case file so the county should ensure all cases are fully documented.

Acknowledgments

The CDSS thanks the Human Services Agency in San Joaquin 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

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Scope of Field Monitoring Visit

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- 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 Joaquin County on Wednesday, November 6, 2013, at the CalWORKs Employment Center in San Joaquin, CA. The field visit team included one manager and two staff members from the CDSS, Welfare-to-Work Division, CalWORKs Employment and Eligibility Branch along with the San Joaquin County Employment and Youth Services Deputy Director, Human Services Agency Program Supervisor, CalWORKs Program manager and two Employment and Training Specialists (caseworkers). 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 Joaquin At-a-glance

Total

Caseload.....**16,473**

(Source: CalWORKs Cash Grant Caseload Movement Report CA 237 CW Line Item 8a-July 2013)

WTW Enrollees.....**3,577**

(Source: CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Monthly Activity Report WTW 25/25A Line Item 1-July 2013)

Mandatory Participants (enrollees + sanctioned + non-compliance).....	7,103
<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
Beginning Date of Reengagement.....	April 1, 2013
Consortium System	C-IV

Data/Statistics:

- Sanctions that were cured as a result of SB 1041: **not tracked**
- Former short-term young child exempt clients (Assembly Bill [AB] X4 4) that have been reengaged: **250**
- WTW plans that have changed as a result of SB 1041 implementation: **not tracked.**
- Clients that have used the new once in a lifetime young child exemption: **656**

Summary of Documents provided by San Joaquin County:

- Instructional announcements provided by the county to staff relevant to SB 1041 implementation.
- Informing notices, brochures, 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, checklist tools, journal templates, flow charts, reference sheets, flyers provided to staff, and materials distributed during staff meetings.
- San Joaquin 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 county administrators and caseworkers in-person regarding SB 1041 implementation. The tool was provided to the county administrators and caseworkers in advance of the visit. The administrator interview panel consisted of three CDSS staff with two 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

The WTW 24-Month Time Clock General Informing Notice (CW 2205) was sent to clients on November 9, 2012, and November 12, 2012, by the Statewide Automated Welfare System Consortium-IV (C-IV). A letter was sent to all clients with less than 24 months on their CalWORKs 48-month time clock that informed them of the new WTW rules and encouraged them to contact their case manager in order to schedule an appointment to discuss the new rules. The case manager was able to discuss the new rules over the phone or schedule an in-person interview with the client. As clients are seen by case managers, the new rules are explained and the new WTW Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2) and plans are signed.

Comprehensive discussions with clients with less than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit began on January 1, 2013. At the time of the visit, all clients with an open WTW case as of January 31, 2013 had their comprehensive discussion by June 30, 2013.

The majority of clients are choosing to lower their participation hours for activities other than employment, and San Joaquin observed more WTW plans focusing on education and noncore activities.

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

San Joaquin County began comprehensive discussions with clients with more than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit on January 1, 2013. All were completed before June 30, 2013. Staff in San Joaquin County has been very successful in connecting with clients for their comprehensive discussions. Case managers completed the comprehensive discussions with participants at their next in-person meeting with the participant. Contact was also made by telephone and mail for working participants.

General Comments

San Joaquin County's practice of monthly contact with participants was conducive to efficiently completing comprehensive discussions. Additionally, the county conducted home visits when participants could not otherwise be contacted to have a comprehensive discussion.

Clients who failed to attend SB 1041 appointments

For participants in an approved activity making satisfactory progress and/or meeting plan hours, ongoing efforts to have a comprehensive discussion continued until successful either by phone, mail, or the aforementioned home visits. For participants not meeting plan requirements and all contact attempts were unsuccessful the noncompliance process is initiated.

New Young Child Exemption

The majority of new and existing eligible clients in San Joaquin County are choosing to take the new young child exemption. San Joaquin County is careful to explain the "once in a lifetime" nature of the new exemption, and explains the potential advantages of saving the exemption if the client is considering having more children.

Clients with Good Cause for Lack of Supportive Services

In August 2012, San Joaquin County informed clients with the CalWORKs 48-month time limit exemption due to good cause for lack of supportive services that their time limit exemption would end and their 48-month time clock would restart. San Joaquin County extended the exemption through December 31, 2012, and incorporated clients with this exemption into their reengagement plan, including the ability for these clients to volunteer until the reengagement process was completed.

The new WTW Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2)

San Joaquin County has been using a hardcopy version of the new WTW 2 since February 2013, and then electronically beginning in March 2013 when the new WTW 2 became available in the C-IV system.

General Comments

Prior to February 2013, San Joaquin County used the WTW 2 to assign both pre- and post-assessment activities. Since February 2013, San Joaquin County developed a new county form (ES 2, WTW Pre-Assessment Form) to assign pre-assessment activities following WTW orientation and prior to signing a WTW Plan following assessment. The pre-assessment county form informs clients of their hourly requirements and assesses supportive service needs, and includes a rights and responsibilities certification from the client. San Joaquin County felt the new WTW 2 form was initially challenging to utilize and explain to clients, and therefore modified their business practice to use the WTW 2 post-assessment after clients have a deeper understanding of CalWORKs participation requirements.

Reengagement Process

San Joaquin County began reengaging clients on April 1, 2013. Their process included verification that clients were issued the informing notice CW 2206 on January 17, 2013. A second notice was sent to clients providing a date for a reengagement/evaluation appointment. This notice was sent 30 days prior to the evaluation appointment. A third contact 10 to 15 days after the second notice was sent was conducted to ensure clients were able to attend the evaluation appointment. This third contact included information about a potential new WTW Plan or exemption. The reengagement appointment included a review of the case, comprehensive discussion, time clock discussion, possible SIP determination, and identification of barriers, good cause, or exemptions, and completion of a new WTW Plan if appropriate.

San Joaquin County's Sequencing Plan is as follows:

- **April 4, 2013**-Individuals that no longer have a child under two or two children under six
- **April 2013**-Individuals with two children under age six, but both children older than 23 months
- **July 2013**-Individuals with a child 0-23 months
- **Aug 2013**-All other clients not identified in groups 1 through 3 above

Implementation Strategies

San Joaquin County began preparing for implementing the SB 1041 related program changes prior to the CDSS guidance being released through early staff meetings and internal discussions, including compiling customers lists by case type and planning for reengagement and comprehensive discussions. San Joaquin County began analyzing All County Letters (ACLs) as they were published, and in turn issued written Employment Services (ES) Transmittals to staff. Additionally, guidance was provided division and unit meetings and via emailed technical assistance. In-person training was provided over three sessions to all staff, completed April 2013. This training material was provided in Powerpoint (overhead view and handouts), and on-going training is conducted weekly in division and unit meeting, including one-on-one technical assistance with staff.

San Joaquin County provided training to staff on the new WTW 24-Month Time Clock, new WTW participation requirements, reengagement, the new young child exemption, and the new WTW 2. As new ACLs or clarification on existing ACLs become available, the county continues to update their staff. On-going technical assistance has been provided at staff meetings with follow-up at individual team meetings. In addition, information has been disseminated electronically to all levels of staff.

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

- *All clients received the CW 2208 WTW 24 Month Clock informing notice in November 2012, including the sanction case.*
- *All clients, except the sanction case, received the CW 2205 time clock notice.*
- *The new WTW 2 form was used for all cases, including appropriate use of the supportive services section of the form, and notation of long-term and short-term goals.*
- *No cases reviewed reduced client hours as a result of SB 1041 changes.*
- *For the reengagement case, the CW 2206 informing notice was sent 60 days prior to the reengagement appointment.*
- *The second 30 day reengagement notice was noted in the case file.*
- *The third required reengagement contact was noted in the case file.*
- *Reengagement volunteerism discussion was noted in the case file.*

Conclusion

Successes

San Joaquin County completed all comprehensive discussions with clients prior to July 2013 in an organized and thorough manner, beginning January 2013. San Joaquin's practice of monthly contact with clients facilitated efficient completion of comprehensive discussions. Via thorough

training to staff on the SB 1041 related program changes, program rules are reviewed with clients and a discussion of the time clock occurred. Comprehensive discussions included conversation regarding client goals and barriers, such as child care, transportation, and mental health/substance abuse issues, as well as review for applicable welfare-to-work exemptions/good cause. The differences in participation within the 24-month clock and meeting CalWORKs federal standards were discussed.

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Challenges

San Joaquin County found it was difficult to issue instructions to staff and provide training within the given SB 1041 implementation timeframes. Partner agencies within the county receiving independent training and/or issuing internal directives at times caused confusion. San Joaquin noted that the complexity and extended timeframes for the reengagement process led some clients to “lose interest” in the process. Concerns over how the changes resulting from SB 1041 will impact the work participation rate were voiced.

Key Recommendations

San Joaquin County should use the right side of the WTW 2 form to develop plans for clients who are planning to meet CalWORKs Federal Standards. The current approach used in the county is to “untick” months a client meets CalWORKs Federal Standards. While the net result is the same in terms of counting, or not, a month towards a client’s WTW 24-Month Time Clock San Joaquin should prepare WTW plans in a prospective manner. San Joaquin County should ensure that all clients are receiving the Your WTW 24-Month Time Clock (CW 2208) form, as appropriate. During the case file review it was noted that a SIP case did not have the “SIP box” checked on the form so the county should ensure this box is checked for SIP cases. During the case file review it was noted that client receipt the CW 2205 was not noted in the case file so the county should ensure all cases are fully documented.

Contact

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