

COUNTY NAME:

San Mateo

CalWORKs County Plan Addendum

Date Submitted to California Department of Social Services:

January 4, 2007

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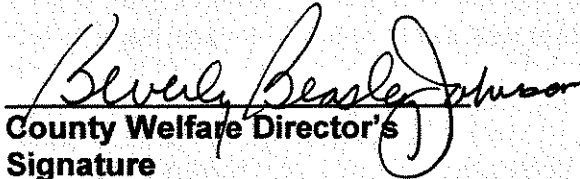
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I hereby certify that County Board of Supervisors was briefed regarding the contents of this Plan addendum prior to submittal.



County Welfare Director's
Signature

Beverly Beasley Johnson
Printed Name

December 21, 2006
Briefing Date

1) County Goals

After reviewing the county's existing CalWORKs County Plan, please provide a general description of how the county will meet the goals defined in Welfare and Institutions (W&I) Code Section 10540, while taking into consideration the work participation requirements of the federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005.

The goals of W&I Code Section 10540 are the following:

- 1) Reduce child poverty in the State;
- 2) Reduce dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; reduce out-of-wedlock births; and encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families;
- 3) Meet the requirements of federal law while avoiding unanticipated outcomes that negatively affect child well-being, the demand for county general assistance, or the number of families affected by domestic violence.

A. General description of how the county will meet the goals of W&I Code 10540

The County will meet the goals of W&I Code 10540 through a combination of maintaining effective current initiatives as well as new efforts. San Mateo County has been a leader in welfare reform since before PROWRA, and obtained a state waiver for its Shared Undertaking for Self-Sufficiency (SUCCESS) initiative in 1997. The SUCCESS Plan was amended to meet the requirements of PROWRA and CalWORKs in 1998 and became the basis for the CalWORKs Plan.

San Mateo County has a low unemployment rate, and many of the single-parent and two-parent families remaining on aid have significant barriers to employment. San Mateo County has a high cost of living, and job growth projections indicate that much of the expected job growth will not pay wages that provide economic self-sufficiency. The County has identified a number of efforts that can be expanded or initiated to support self-sufficiency while protecting children and families.

Existing Efforts:

San Mateo's current CalWORKs plan has been very successful. The SUCCESS Service Delivery Model has a number of features that support its effectiveness:

1. Single point of entry so that families only need to tell their story once;
2. Comprehensive strength-based screening and assessment to help identify resources and barriers to self-sufficiency;
4. Multidisciplinary Family Self-Sufficiency Teams (FSST) for families with acute or long-standing barriers to self-sufficiency to link families with needed services; and
5. One-Stop PeninsulaWorks sites that have co-located employment related services for the general public as well as CalWORKs clients, with job search resources including computers, phones, and fax machines.

Other aspects of SUCCESS that make it effective include: applicants are screened for domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental health issues during assessment to address barriers to employment; home visits are attempted prior to implementing corrective action; and the County operates a supported work environment known as Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) which offers production and food service jobs on site as well as supervised community placements. Support for families transitioning off of aid include a Family Loan program, operated by a local nonprofit, which helps low income families meet short-term needs with car repair or purchase, and the FSST Extraordinary Circumstances Fund, once in a lifetime financial assistance to help address temporary barriers to self-sufficiency.

Other successful local initiatives implemented since the 2004 CalWORKs Plan Addendum include:

1. Countywide Fatherhood Initiative to help engage fathers and promote their ability to support the family;
2. Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) initiative which utilizes community volunteers to help low income households file for the EITC;
3. Medi-Cal and Food Stamps outreach in neighborhoods and community sites to promote full participation among eligible households, with Food Stamps outreach being increased this year;
4. Family Resource Centers and Community Schools located in low-income communities to make services more easily available to families within their own neighborhoods;
5. Differential Response for families referred for possible child abuse and neglect, to help link them with appropriate services in the community to prevent child maltreatment;
6. The Housing Our People Effectively (HOPE) plan that identifies a concerted countywide strategy to end homelessness; and
7. A newly released Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) strategic plan that identifies families with young children with substance abusing parents as a priority population to serve.

New Efforts:

This Addendum focuses on how to increase the WPR for households which were not previously included in the WPR calculation. The County has sought the input of local community partners, which is incorporated throughout the Plan Addendum. The focus of the Plan Addendum is on three areas:

1. A renewed focus on Work Pays through the training of staff, redesign of lobbies and reception, recognition and awards, and printed and multimedia materials;
2. Development of a specialized Engagement and Retention Team to re-engage participants who are at risk of sanctions or sanctioned, and encourage voluntary participation of safety net, and exempt families; and
3. Expansion of work and employment related activities available to help clients meet their work participation requirements.

2) Participation Improvement

Please describe what immediate and long-range actions the county will take to improve the federal work participation rate (WPR) among CalWORKs applicants and recipients. At a minimum, describe how the county will address increased participation in the areas listed below. When responding, provide a detailed description of the policy or strategy in each program area, the anticipated outcome that will result in program improvements, the percentage of families affected, and how success will be determined. Please note that if a county is already using a particular strategy that is successful, a description of that strategy is sufficient.

B. Providing up-front engagement activities

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy).

HSA currently has a number of strategies in place to facilitate early engagement, and is considering a number of new efforts as well. Currently, three-way conferences take place as needed between the Income and Employment Services Specialist (IESS), the Employment Services Specialist (ESS), and the client to coordinate the plan for work participation.

Expansion:

1. Although HSA has adopted a Work Pays strategy, there are a number of ways that the Work Pays message will be renewed and refocused. Ideas being implemented immediately by staff include redesigning the lobby and reception areas to focus on work by using posters and other visual aids, refashioning the telephone reception message to mention work pays, and creating a Wall of Success in the lobby area to identify those who have gotten jobs. The Welfare to Work video as well as the Work Pays brochures will be reviewed and updated, and applicants will be provided a clear explanation of the process and timeline;
2. Staff orientation for all agency employees will be enhanced to include the Work Pays philosophy; training and a regular schedule for refresher training will be implemented for CalWORKs staff including motivational interviewing and identifying and addressing substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental illness; and
3. WtW orientations will be enhanced to meet participant's needs, such as increasing the frequency, providing one on one orientations, and using strength-based evaluations to identify family strengths and resources.

New:

4. The feasibility of an interface for monthly reports and regular staff discussions of crossover cases with Children and Family Services (CFS) will be explored in order to better coordinate services; and
5. Systems improvements will be made to improve customer service, including reviewing and improving internal processes and simplifying the process for repeat clients, as well as improvements in CalWORKs Information Network (CalWIN) entries and accuracy to identify previous involvement and developing procedures for participants who have attended orientation in the past so they do not need to repeat the orientation.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly?

These strategies will increase the percentage newly approved CalWORKs participants with WtW plans and will decrease the time required to develop WtW plans by an estimated two weeks. The above mentioned strategies will affect 50% of participants who attend orientation.

How will success be determined (quantitative or qualitative assessment of effects)?

These strategies will help engage a higher percentage of new participants, and reduce the startup planning time for repeat participants. It is expected that participants will think more about work, since it will be more salient. For example, seeing the Wall of Success will encourage participants to feel that they, too, can find work. Improved coordination with CFS will reduce the barriers to participation for these families, who may have work requirements that conflict with the court-imposed requirements. Better service for repeat clients, who may be cycling through again after losing a job, will help them to become re-engaged and more quickly gear up for job search.

The WPR impact is combined with other strategies in section H. On a qualitative basis, participants will be asked their opinions using opinion cards in the lobby and at orientation. Staff will be asked during unit meetings whether they believe these efforts have made a difference – this will also refocus staff to think about WorkFirst.

C. Achieving full engagement by individuals who are required to participate, and who are partially participating, not participating, or are between activities

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy).

The County has a number of efforts in place to maximize participation for those who are under-involved. For example, the County recognizes the prevalence of part-time work and helps participants understand how to combine and manage two part-time jobs and identify strategies to find full-time employment. Training also teaches job advancement strategies. The County also informs participants about how to expunge criminal records and works closely with the Employment Development Department (EDD), which has a specialist who works with ex-felons. The County will expand some efforts and initiate new efforts to increase the work participation rate of participants who are not participating, partially participating, or in between activities.

Expansion:

1. Enhance the availability of mental health and drug and alcohol assessments and counseling through the One-Stops if needed and make domestic violence counseling available through the One-Stops, using strength-based assessments to identify family strengths and resources.

New:

2. Develop a process for closer tracking of individuals between activities, including negotiating with providers to track recipients and report back, and home visits as needed.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly?

These strategies will increase participation in work activities through support in addressing barriers and through better tracking of individuals who have less than full participation. The above mentioned strategies are expected to effect approximately 20% of the caseload.

How will success be determined (quantitative and qualitative assessment of effects)?

The number of partially participating, non-participating, and individuals between activities, will be tracked on a monthly basis. The WPR impact is combined with other strategies in section H.

D. Providing activities to encourage participation and to prevent families from going into sanction status

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy).

Currently, prior to imposing sanctions the County attempts a home visit to encourage compliance and determine if intervention is needed so that the individual will re-engage. The county will undertake an array of new steps to encourage participation and prevent sanctions:

1. Focus on the benefits of work through a unified Work Pays message;

2. Establish one or more specialized Engagement and Retention Team(s) made up of an Employment Services Specialist (ESS), Income and Employment Services Specialist (IESS), Screening and Assessment Specialist (SAS) and other identified staff to re-engage participants at risk of sanctions, or sanctioned and encourage voluntary participation of safety net and exempt families through home visits, phone calls, specialized re-engagement clinics, and barrier-busting;
3. Contact clients at least monthly, to discuss the family situation, attendance and WtW participation; and
4. Continue to use FSSTs to develop team-based plans that guide families to self-sufficiency, and increase the number of referrals to FSSTs.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly?

These efforts will identify and address potential noncompliance early on, working with participants on an individual basis to overcome barriers to participation. Taken as a whole, these activities will impact the entire WtW caseload.

How will success be determined (quantitative or qualitative assessment of effects)?

Qualitatively, success will be measured by asking staff whether these interventions seem to make a difference. Quantitatively, these strategies will supplement the other strategies outlined in this Plan to increase the overall WPR, which will be measured on a quarterly basis. The WPR impact is combined with other strategies in section H.

E. Reengaging noncompliant or sanctioned individuals

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy).

The County does not currently have any specific targeted efforts focusing on sanctioned clients, but with the new federal requirement that individuals in sanctions after 90 days will be included in the WPR count, the County will initiate the following:

1. Establish one or more specialized Engagement and Retention Team(s) made up of an ESS, IEES, SAS, and other identified staff that will work closely with sanctioned or noncompliant participants through home visits, phone calls, and barrier-busting.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly?

Working more closely with sanctioned and noncompliant individuals, through more intensive contact and outreach including home visits, will help to identify and address barriers and increase the motivation and ability of participants to comply with work requirements. The above mentioned strategies are expected to affect approximately 20% of the caseload.

How will success be determined (quantitative or qualitative assessment of effects)?

The number of sanctioned and noncompliant individuals will be tracked on a monthly basis. The WPR impact is combined with other strategies in section H.

F. Other activities designed to increase the county's federal WPR?

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy):

The County is considering a variety of additional strategies that will affect all staff and participants, including:

1. Expand meaningful core activities including soft skills training, apprenticeship programs, subsidized employment, work experience, subsidized on the job training, job shadowing, mentoring, and community service. This can include expanding partnerships with businesses throughout the county and expanding and enhancing internship opportunities with adult schools, ROP, and community colleges; and
2. Explore the feasibility of expanding VRS business opportunities to additional sites countywide;
3. Explore the feasibility of using the successful Jobs for Youth model as a hiring practice, and developing agreements to hire CalWORKs participants with County government and other public agencies, including the Probation Department which has cross-over clients and sometimes has agency-sponsored placements;
4. Explore the feasibility of counting internships and volunteer work as community service hours; and
5. Increase marketing and recognition activities, for example through the use of human interest stories in the media, a Public Address system to announce and celebrate when a participant gets a job, certificates upon completion of WorkFirst classes or obtaining a job, a reward system for participants who remain employed for 6 months and 12 months, and exploring the feasibility of a Work Pays news bulletin for staff and clients to share success stories and information on resources;
6. Expedite client involvement and allow more flexibility, for instance providing open entry/exit classes at several locations and allowing clients to choose activities such as life skills classes and meaningful community service opportunities;
7. In alignment with ongoing training and regular refresher training for staff to reinforce the Work Pays philosophy/ message, establish a staff recognition program for teams who meet or exceed performance expectations. Improved communication with staff can include sharing goals with staff and weekly measurements of progress;
8. Look at expanding the Family Development Credential (FDC) courses to incorporate the Work Pays focus; and
9. Use job coaches to work closely with clients entering employment and those at risk of losing their jobs.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly?

These strategies will support the Work Pays message for staff and clients, fostering an atmosphere that focuses on work. Improved training and communication about the goals and results of Work Pays, together with employee recognition, will improve staff performance. The entire WtW caseload will benefit from these strategies, taken together.

How will success be determined (quantitative or qualitative assessment of effects)?

Qualitatively, success will be measured by asking staff whether these interventions make a difference. Quantitatively, these strategies will supplement the other strategies outlined in this Plan to increase the overall WPR, which will be measured on a quarterly basis. The WPR impact is combined with other strategies in section H.

G. Please provide a description of how the county will collaborate with local agencies, including, but not limited to, local workforce investment boards, community colleges, universities, adult schools and regional occupational centers/programs that provide activities that meet federal work participation requirements and provide participants with skills that will help them achieve long-term self-sufficiency. For each individual agency, responses should include elements such as how information is shared or will be shared, ongoing or planned contracts, ongoing meetings established, etc.

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy).

The Human Services Agency (HSA) has long-standing and effective collaborative relationships with a large number of community partners, and will continue and enhance these collaborative efforts to ensure the success of the revised CalWORKs plan.

1. HSA will establish a CalWORKs Advisory Committee to meet quarterly to receive updates on program and caseload data that are collected, learn about environmental factors that impact the program such as new regulations or economic and labor market factors, and identify programmatic recommendations to be considered by the agency. The Advisory Committee will also support outreach and public education efforts by HSA, for example to engage additional employers who are willing to hire CalWORKs clients. This advisory committee model was effective with the SUCCESS Advisory Committee, which met regularly when the SUCCESS plan was being implemented. The CalWORKs Advisory Committee will potentially include representatives from the Board of Supervisors, the Workforce Investment Board (WIB), community colleges, the early care and education community, the County Office of Education Regional Opportunity Program (ROP), Adult Schools, Public Health, Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol, Probation, businesses, labor, employment and training and workforce development providers, community based organizations, the faith community, and participants. Its purpose will be to help the County successfully implement the revised CalWORKs plan, through honest dialogue and feedback. The role of the advisory committee will be to help identify program successes and potential areas for improvement, to support community outreach, and to develop recommendations for consideration by HSA.
2. HSA will also undertake a planning effort to work specifically with the community college district to tailor programs to the needs of the CalWORKs population. This collaboration will be based on current agreements to provide specialized classes and certificates for HSA staff and clients, including the Family Development Credential (FDC) classes that lead to a certificate for direct service workers and home visitors. For example, the FDC courses may be expanded to incorporate the WorkFirst focus. It may also be feasible to develop a certificate program for after-school and recreational program staff, since the implementation of Proposition 49 is anticipated to create demand for after-school jobs.
3. HSA will work closely and intensively with area employers including County government and the WIB to identify their needs, match them with participants for entry level jobs, and provide incentives for hiring participants with barriers including criminal records. HSA will explore with County government whether the County can provide HSA early notice when recruiting for County positions in order to give a boost to CalWORKs participants. HSA will outreach to Chambers of Commerce, service clubs and explore the development of creative benchmarks to measure progress of employment, for example through visual representations and graphics. HSA will explore the feasibility of partnering with an outside agency or business to participate in job shadowing/mentoring. HSA will also use local job developers, job fairs, certificate training programs, and more hands on job development instead of computer searches. Job developers will work with multiple providers. HSA will also increase job fairs on site and develop mechanisms for employer recognition.
4. HSA will look into innovation and expansion of work related services through VRS. The County will develop additional interagency agreements with local agencies, nonprofits, schools, and businesses to provide coordinated services. These agreements may include expanded job search, expanded internship and

community service opportunities and partnership with retail stores. Some provider activities are currently underutilized and can be expanded to help participants generate the needed work participation hours. HSA can include as work activities job shadowing, informational interviews, volunteer work in their field, internships, and providers as mentors.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly?

The CalWORKs Advisory Committee will be the umbrella for community engagement. The collaboration with the community colleges will lead to vocational and training programs that are acceptable under federal and state law. This will open up opportunities for participants who need specific work-related skill development, and increase the work participation rate for this subgroup of participants. Closer collaboration with business will expand the jobs available and the employers willing to hire CalWORKs clients.

Indirectly, all WtW families will be impacted through the improved community involvement. It is hoped that the business community representatives can help identify potential employers and help HSA to establish positive relationships with them. The participant members will provide feedback on services which can be translated into program improvements that are responsive to the needs of participating individuals and families.

How will success be determined (quantitative or qualitative assessment of effects)?

The CalWORKs Advisory Committee will undertake an annual review, including (1) how well the CalWORKs program is working; (2) understanding the challenges as well as successes; (3) improving community understanding of CalWORKs; and (4) making actionable and effective recommendations to HSA with regard to participant engagement and WPR. The review will take the form of a facilitated discussion at a regularly scheduled meeting.

Quantitative measures of success will include the number of participants who graduate from a community college program or are hired by a participating local business. The WPR impact is combined with other strategies in section H.

3) Plan to measure quarterly progress

Please describe how the county will measure the extent to which cumulative policies or strategies in the Plan addendum are successful, and how the county will measure progress on a quarterly basis (for example, participation rate of a specific population, sanction rate, orientation show rate, etc.). In addition, include the projected cumulative impact the county's policies or strategies will likely have on the county's federal work participation rate for each year of the next three years (for example, current rate of X will be increased to Y).

H. Plan to measure quarterly progress

The agency will establish a CalWORKs workgroup that includes representatives of line staff, supervisors, and managers from each of the three regions of the County. The Workgroup will provide a variety of perspectives on process improvements and data.

The Workgroup will take the lead on data and trend analysis, including developing profiles of participants who are timed out, noncompliant, at risk of sanctions, in sanction status, or participating less than fully. Participant views will be gathered to identify participant needs, challenges (for example, lack of activities or scheduling problems), the type of barriers experienced by participants (for example, child care, transportation,

child support, domestic violence, child maltreatment, mental health or substance abuse problems), and potential incentives to increase participation.

The Workgroup will meet monthly to review progress, and report on a quarterly basis to the CalWORKs Advisory Committee. Monthly meetings will include feedback from supervisors and staff regarding what works and what doesn't, needs and challenges as identified by staff and participants, and will develop benchmarks for improvement.

The CalWORKs Advisory Committee will meet quarterly to review data that are collected and make recommendations to be considered by the agency. Additionally, HSA will continue to track WPR at multiple levels, such as worker, unit, office, region and Agency. Reports will continue to be distributed to staff, supervisors, managers, and directors.

Measures of quarterly progress:

CalWIN will be used to track participation rates on a monthly basis, and report available data on federal and state WPR. Elements to be measured may include the number of new WtW recipients, the number who attend orientation, and the number who enroll in WorkFirst activities. Separately identified and tracked groups will include the numbers who are exempt, good cause, sanctioned, noncompliant, or partially participating, and the number of two-parent families. For each group the federal work participation rate (WPR) will be calculated each quarter in order to identify the successes and where more work is needed to increase WPR.

Projected impact on county's federal work participation rate:

We project an increase of 1 to 3% in the WPR over the three year period. The County will determine the WPR baseline based on the first quarter that the new law is applicable (October-December 2006). The success will be measured based on the County's WTW25 and WTW30 reports as well as CalWORKs reports to be developed.

4) Funding

Describe how the county has spent and plans to utilize single allocation and other funding for the county's CalWORKs program. This section will help explain to county and State stakeholders how increased funding will be used.

Program Component	Fiscal Year 2005-06 Actual Expenditures	Fiscal Year 2006-07 Budgeted Amount	Description of how additional funding provided in Fiscal Year 2006-07 will be used
CalWORKs Eligibility Administration	\$6,848,385	\$10,936,982	To pay for increased staff and administrative costs.
WTW Employment Services	\$5,402,839	\$6,123,516	To pay for increased staff, supportive services, and administrative costs.
CalWORKs Child Care	\$3,522,159	\$7,623,590	Support target population with child care needs as they move in to the workforce.
Cal-Learn	\$36,082	\$47,712	Maintain level of service.
CalWORKs Funded Mental Health Services	\$154,560	\$161,979	Maintain level of service.
CalWORKs Funded	\$279,288	\$276,892	Maintain level of service.

Substance Abuse Services			
Other			
Other			