

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

Santa Barbara County

October 14, 2014

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

Santa Barbara 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] 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

CDSS' goals are to ensure that SB 1041 is being implemented correctly by each CWD, to gather best practices in regards to implementation, to share these best 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 Santa Barbara County on Tuesday, October 14, 2014 at the Social Services office in Santa Barbara, CA. The field visit team included two managers and one analyst from the CDSS, Welfare-to-Work Division, CalWORKs Employment and Eligibility Branch along with Santa Barbara County's CalWORKs manager, CalWORKs Program Specialist and two Welfare to Work Specialists. The field visit consisted of a kick-off meeting, close-out meeting, staff interviews, and case management observations with county staff.

Implementation Strategies

In October 2012, Santa Barbara County formed a workgroup of Program Analyst, Program Case Managers and Supervisors to develop a plan to implement the CalWORKs changes. January/February 2013 countywide training went into effect.

Training consisted of a thorough review of the Administrative Directive outlining the business process for implementing the following:

- 24-Month WTW Clock
- Reengagement Process
- And New Once in a Lifetime Young Child Exemption

Along with daily e-mails to supervisors that included guidance to assist staff, Unit and Network meetings took place once a month for Career Employment Specialist and other staff members to help with questions, suggestions and work out scenarios in relation to SB 1041 changes. A new orientation video and participant handbook was updated to include the SB 1041 changes as well.

Key Recommendations

Santa Barbara should enhance engagement in using the CalWORKs 24-month time clock. Santa Barbara also should encourage exempts to volunteer and engage sanctioned adults through revisited outreach.

Acknowledgments

CDSS thanks Santa Barbara County Social Services Agency for hosting the field monitoring visit. CDSS appreciates the open collaboration with CWD staff to ensure the continued success of the CalWORKs program.

Field Monitoring Visit Summary

Introduction

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Background and Data

Santa Barbara At-a-glance

Total Caseload.....	3,866
<small>(Source: CalWORKs Cash Grant Caseload Movement Report CA 237 CW Line Item 8a-August 2014)</small>	
WTW Enrollees.....	1,344
<small>(Source: CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Monthly Activity Report WTW 25/25A Line Item 1-August 2014)</small>	
Mandatory Participants (enrollees + sanctioned + non-compliance).....	1,485
<small>(Source: CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Monthly Activity Report WTW 25/25A Line Items 1, 3A, and 31-August 2014)</small>	

Reengagement Plan Received.....Yes
 Beginning Date of Reengagement.....April 1, 2013
 Consortium System.....CalWIN

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: **75**
- 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: **131**
- Sanctions that were cured as a result of SB 1041: **4**
- Former short-term young child exempt clients (Assembly Bill [AB] X4 4) that have been reengaged: **281**
- WTW plans that have changed as a result of SB 1041 implementation: **75**
- Clients that have used the new once in a lifetime young child exemption: **120**
- Other statistics that the county is keeping related to SB 1041 implementation: **N/A**

Summary of Documents provided by Santa Barbara County:

- Instructional announcements provided by the county to county staff relevant to SB 1041 implementation. (Appendix I)
- Informing notices and flyers provided to clients relevant to SB 1041 implementation. (Appendix II)
- SB 1041 related training materials (formal and informal) including but not limited to a list of training strategies, materials available on-line, and materials distributed during staff meetings. (Appendix III)
- Santa Barbara County’s Reengagement Sequencing Plan. (Appendix IV)

County Administrator and Caseworker Interviews

The CDSS Field Monitoring Team used the county administrator and caseworker interview tools released in All County Information Notice I-42-13 to interview the county administrator and case workers in-person regarding SB 1041 implementation. The tool was provided to the county administrator and caseworkers in advance of the visit. The administrator interview panel consisted of four CDSS staff with one county administrator. The caseworker interviews were conducted by two CDSS staff members with 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

Santa Barbara County used the CW 2205 that was mailed on November 29, 2012 to 9,019 clients. They began their comprehensive discussions with clients that had less than 24 months left on their clock in June 2013 for 131 clients. Santa Barbara completed these discussions in February 2014. Clients were also sent a WTW 24 Month Time Clock Comprehension Form to provide clients the opportunity to discuss SB 1041 changes, options, and potential amendments to existing plans.

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

Santa Barbara County started SB 1041 transition for this group in February 2013 for 75 clients. Santa Barbara completed these discussions in February 2014. In general, clients with more than 24 months remaining on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit are choosing to meet federal standards and not tick their WTW 24-Month Time Clock.

Clients who failed to attend SB 1041 appointments:

Clients meeting new participation requirements who failed to attend their scheduled SB 1041 appointment were sent SB 1041 Contact/Appointment Letter (Form 42-152) to attend a scheduled appointment and a copy of new WTW 2 Plan. The form indicated that if the client failed to attend the appointment, their WTW 24-Month Time Clock would begin ticking the first of the following month, 30 days after the initial appointment date was sent. For clients not meeting new participation requirements who failed to attend their SB 1041 appointments, they were sent the SB 1041 Contact/Appointment Letter (Form 42-152) as well. Clients are allowed to reschedule appointment once and if they fail to attend the non-compliance process is initiated for those who failed to attend. Individuals who were not able to meet in person, staff conducted the comprehensive discussion over the phone.

General Comments

Santa Maria, Santa Barbara and Lompoc are fully staffed that includes all services in the one location. Santa Maria has services for the Women, Infants and Children Nutritional program (W.I.C.), Medi-Cal and CalFresh. A Business Service Center (BSC) has been established in Santa Maria to include a Call Center, along with Medi-Cal and Cal-Fresh ongoing cases. The Average caseload countywide is 3,810 cases. WTW caseworkers have approximately 40-80 cases each in Santa Barbara and in Santa Maria, while Lompoc has 80-100 cases per caseworker. Temporary retirees have been hired to help assist in caseload management in Lompoc.

Santa Barbara County has Job Developers and Job Coordinators on board. Job Developers find employment opportunities for clients and volunteers. Job Coordinators find clients to fit into the open vacancies. Job Coordinators find clients during job club. The county has used the Expanded Subsidized Employment (ESE) program plan to help facilitate the Job Coordinators and Job Developers connections with retailers, restaurants, Tourist places, etc.

New Young Child Exemption

There were a few cases that chose the new young child exemption. Santa Barbara reported 120 clients to date which have received the new young child exemption.

The new WTW Activity Plan/Form (WTW) 2

The new WTW 2 form was made available on the county Intranet forms library and the county began its use effective January 1, 2013.

General Comments

The caseworkers interviewed felt that the new WTW 2 started off to be a little confusing and time intensive. Confusion was due in part in the case workers explanation of the changes which seem to overwhelm the client. Overtime, the WTW 2 is now easier to comprehend and explain to clients, especially the Supportive Services section. Both caseworkers agreed that the new WTW 2 is very helpful in explaining the process to receive supportive services to clients. For students, each caseworker uses the WTW 2 as a guide in explaining the advantages of assigning educations activity and its impact to the WTW program.

Reengagement Process

The county's reengagement process officially began on April 1, 2013. The CW 2206 mass mailer was sent on February 1, 2013 to all AB X4 4 short-term exempt individuals. Appointment letters go out at least 30 days prior to Reengagement evaluation appointments. The Target completion date for reengagement was set for October 2014.

The sequence of reengagement was determined by using a local developed county report (DSS 156 Ad Hoc report) to identify the correct priority for an individual in the reengagement population. The report identifies whether or not they are a volunteer, how many months remaining on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit, and whether there is a time-on-aid issue that must be addressed.

The first priority groups were those not participating in WTW and having less than 12 months remaining. The second priority groups were those exempt/volunteers (participating 0-19 hrs per week) and having less than 12 months remaining. The third priority groups were those not participating in WTW with 12-24 months remaining. The fourth priority groups were those exempt /volunteers.

When clients attend Orientation or WTW Appointment, the comprehensive discussion is conducted informing them of the new SB 1041 requirements regarding WTW 24 Month Time Clock, change in weekly participation requirements (core/non-core), flexibility in activities, plan types, exemptions and supportive services.

Santa Barbara County's Sequencing Plan is as follows:

- **April 1, 2013**-All individuals with less than 12 months remaining of CalWORKs 48-month time limit and not engaged in any activity.
- **April 1, 2013**- individuals with less than 12 months remaining of CalWORKs 48-month time limit and engaged in any activity.
- **May 1, 2013**-All individuals with 13-24 months remaining of CalWORKs 48-month time limit and not engaged in any activity.
- **May 1, 2013**-All individuals with 13-24 months remaining of CalWORKs 48-month time limit and engaged in activity.

The reengagement process for Santa Barbara County includes the following:

- Send a CW 2206 at least 60 days prior to reengagement evaluation appointment;
- Case file review; and
- Send a reengagement evaluation appointment letter at least 30 days prior to reengagement evaluation appointment attach a CW 2186A and a copy of CW 2206.

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The first priority group was those not participating in WTW and having less than 12 months remaining. The second priority group was those exempt/volunteers (participating 0-19 hrs. per week) and having less than 12 months remaining. The third priority group was those not participating in WTW with 12-24 months remaining. The fourth priority group was those exempt/volunteers.

When clients attend Orientation or WTW appointment, the comprehensive discussion is conducted informing each client of the new SB 1041 requirements regarding WTW 24 Month Time Clock, change in weekly participation requirements (core/non-core), flexibility in activities, plan types, exemptions and supportive services.

Volunteers

Volunteering is promoted during the orientation process at the Social Services office in Santa Barbara. During AB X4 4, 50 percent exempt volunteers primarily chose education to volunteer in. Individuals in the reengagement population who are already WTW volunteers as of 1/1/13 were permitted to continue in their WTW activities until identified for reengagement. Individuals in the reengagement population are allowed to volunteer for the WTW program only if they are engaged in an activity and require WTW services (e.g., obtained a job, enrolled in school, etc.).

Implementation Strategies

In October 2012, Santa Barbara County formed a workgroup of Program Analysts and Supervisors to develop a plan to implement the CalWORKs changes. January/February 2013 countywide training went into effect. Training consisted of a thorough review of the Administrative Directive outlining the business process for implementing the following:

- 24-Month WTW Clock
- Reengagement Process
- And New Once in a Lifetime Young Child Exemption

Multiple training dates and video conference Q&A's were scheduled by the program lead. Monthly trainings with the CalWORKs/WTW Team consisted of discussions for the 24-month time clock and progress within the reengagement sequencing plan.

General Comments

Santa Barbara county used ACIN 1-08-13 as a guide to help with monthly trainings for implementation to SB 1041 changes. Program policy updates from CDSS were sent via e-mail to staff members for discussion during staff meetings. Career Employment Specialist had weekly network meetings with CalWORKs and WTW team members. A Comprehensive Discussions checklist and 24-Month WTW Clock Informing Notice was created to facilitate the dialog between case managers and clients. The county chose to conduct Comprehensive Discussions on all new and ongoing clients.

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

Santa Barbara County uses the CalWIN case management system. The cases shared at this visit had all received the appropriate notices and applicable benefits and supportive services. This included the issuance of the CW 2205 and CW 2208 when applicable in addition to the use of the new WTW 2. The county did note staff appreciate the flexibility with the SB 1041 changes to the CalWORKs program; however they are frustrated by the lack of automation of the CalWIN system.

Conclusion

Successes

Santa Barbara created an effective way to train staff on SB 1041 changes through use of weekly and monthly staff/unit meetings. The level of documentation to go along with training and directives for implementation served to be very helpful for caseworkers to assist clients. Each Career Employment Specialist (CES) receives 6 week induction training in relation to all SB 1041 changes toward the CalWORKs program.

The Department Business Specialist (DBS) is a well trained staff position that specifically studies and analyzes State ACL's, CDSS and DHS Letters, Welfare Regulations and other materials that pertain to the CalWORKs, WTW and other Social Services programs to help further train staff. The DBS assisted with the training of staff on the 24-month time clock through network meetings and consistent email questions & answers conversations.

The county has helped its staffing issues by hiring retirees to assist clients in office locations where caseloads are higher. The Santa Barbara Office is a one stop office to hold other services such as Social Security, Family Advocacy and Mental Health. With multiple services in one location, it is very helpful to have staff on hand to deal with just these caseloads after clients are identified of what services are required for each of them.

Challenges

Santa Barbara found that their greatest challenge was the implementation of such significant changes to the program in such a short amount of time. Additionally, caseworkers acknowledge that at times it has been difficult explaining those changes to clients, especially the 24-month time clock and how that differs with the 48-month TANF clock.

The CalWIN system seems to have its automation issues of the 24-month time clock, as caseworkers have stated multiple errors have happened. Since Santa Barbara is in the higher end for cost in the housing market, those residents/clients in the CalWORKs program struggle with housing options within the city limits. Lompoc and Santa Maria house most of the clients responsible for the highest caseloads within the CalWORKs program.

Key Recommendations

Santa Barbara County has a good handle on clients exempt; however it would be a good idea to know exactly how many exempt individuals are volunteers and maybe where they are volunteering exactly for statistical data purposes. The county should engage clients early and often as possible to put use to the WTW 24-month time clock. Santa Barbara County is encouraged to review sanctions and exemptions for an extended period of time. Revisiting the sanction population (called WTW Reengagement Program or WREP) could help those clients in need and it is also a strong recommendation the county finish the reengagement population, during the time of the county visit there were 17 clients that needed to be reengaged.

Santa Barbara County has seen the difficulties first hand being short staffed when dealing with clients, primarily in the city of Lompoc. The county also needs to revisit reasons for consistent employee turnover and implement a long term strategic plan to house employees at each office location. Otherwise, Santa Barbara County should continue to collect data on their progress of SB 1041 implementation to assist their ongoing needs for training. Additionally, caseworkers should continue to use their resources to assist client's needs and help them develop short and long-term goals.

Contact

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