

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

Santa Clara County

Visit Date: September 22, 2013

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

Santa Clara County
Senate Bill (SB) 1041 Implementation
Field Monitoring Visit Summary

Executive Summary

Purpose of Field Monitoring Visit

The purpose of the Senate Bill (SB) 1041 Implementation Field Monitoring Visit is to obtain information regarding the county's progress in implementing program changes enacted by SB 1041 (Chapter 47, Statutes of 2012).

Scope of Field Monitoring Visit

Specifically, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) will review how each County Welfare Department (CWD) implemented SB 1041 program changes, including but not limited to:

- New Welfare to Work (WTW) participation requirements;
- WTW 24-Month Time Clock;
- Reengagement of the former short-term young child exempt population (Assembly Bill [AB] X4 4 group);
- CWD staff knowledge of SB 1041 changes;
- Training provided to staff in order to implement these changes; and
- Any pertinent data related to these program changes that are available.

Goals of Field Monitoring Visit

The CDSS' goals are to ensure that SB 1041 is being implemented correctly by each CWD, to gather promising practices in regards to implementation, to share these promising practices (when able) amongst all CWDs throughout the state, and to determine whether systematic or program issues relating to the integration of SB 1041 changes into the existing California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) and WTW program exist throughout the state. If such issues exist, they will be addressed by the SB 1041 Oversight Workgroup.

County Visit General Information

The one-day field visit was performed in Santa Clara County on Tuesday, September 22, 2013, at the Santa Clara Social Services Agency in San Jose, CA. The field visit team included two managers from the CDSS, Welfare-to-Work Division, CalWORKs Employment and Eligibility Branch along with executive management, program managers, and program specialists from Santa Clara County's CalWORKs Employment Services Program. The field visit consisted of a kick-off meeting, close-out meeting, staff interviews, and case management observations with county staff.

Implementation Strategies

Although Santa Clara County admits that their greatest challenge was the short timeline to implement such significant and complex changes, actively participating in the SB 1041 Implementation Workgroup enabled them to design implementation strategies quickly. In December 2012, Santa Clara County developed a timeline and trainings for completing comprehensive discussions given to county staff and community partners. Their training included PowerPoint presentations which provided instruction on completing the new WTW Plan Activity

Assignment (WTW 2), hourly requirements, WTW 24-Month Time Clock exemptions, and flexibility of activities. Subsequent to the trainings, several SB 1041 Question and Answers were provided to staff, including those issued in ACLs by the CDSS, and also answers to questions generated by Santa Clara County Employment Counselors and CalWORKs recipients. Although training began prior to the release of the CDSS official SB 1041 Implementation Training Guide, clarification provided in the CDSS training guide was used later in a Questions and Answers document provided to staff and community liaisons. Additionally, Santa Clara County conducts a monthly CalWORKs Employment Services meeting with managers and staff to review ACLs released by the CDSS and to discuss any ongoing need for clarification.

Successes

The CDSS found many of the practices used for implementing SB 41 to be successful. For example, Santa Clara County utilized various methods of communication to inform clients of SB 1041 changes and help them better understand the major programmatic changes created by SB 1041. Text messages and emails to clients helped the county get a greater response from clients. Additionally, Santa Clara County required a supervisory review of all cases post-comprehensive discussion to ensure that all clients had reviewed and signed all portions of the new WTW 2. A secondary supervisory review of each case helped to ensure that clients were informed of all changes, and understood not only their requirements, but the requirements of the county to provide supportive services. The county also included stakeholders in all trainings concerning the SB 1041 implementation strategies, and as a regular practice holds regularly scheduled meeting with their stakeholders. In addition to these practices, Santa Clara County also has an extensive distance learning program that utilizes electronic tablets and iPods to help those clients in need of a few additional hours of participation fulfill their hourly requirements. This has resulted in many clients meeting federal work participation requirements and not having to use time on their WTW 24-Month Time Clock.

Key Recommendations

Santa Clara County should continue to verify clients' WTW 24-Month Time Clock and disseminate the form CW 2208 to all clients. Automation of the CW 2208 scheduled for February 26, 2014 will ensure the county consistently disseminates this notices to clients. The county has developed a supplemental form that provides information on the clients CalWORKs 48-month and TANF 60-month time clocks until the WTW 24-Month Time Clock is automated.

Acknowledgments

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

Field Monitoring Visit Summary

Introduction

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Background and Data

Santa Clara At-a-glance

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Total Caseload..... | 12,017 |
| <small>(Source: CalWORKs Cash Grant Caseload Movement Report CA 237 CW Item 8-July 2013)</small> | |
| WTW Enrollees..... | 3651 |
| <small>(Source: CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Monthly Activity Report WTW 25/25A Line Item 1-July 2013)</small> | |
| Mandatory Participants (enrollees + sanctioned + non-compliance)..... | 4559 |
| <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 2013

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: **1051.**
- 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: **560.**
- 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: **141.**
- WTW plans that have changed as a result of SB 1041 implementation: **950.**
- Clients that have used the new once in a lifetime young child exemption: **593.**
- Other statistics that the county is keeping related to SB 1041 implementation:
 - ❖ **Of the 593 clients who chose to take the new One-Time Young Child Exemption 196 opted to continue on participating as exempt volunteers.**
 - ❖ **Santa Clara County is also tracking the number of clients entering the program with children under the age of six years, and the rate at which they either meet or exceed the number of required hours of participation in the program.**

Summary of Documents provided by Santa Clara 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 a list of training strategies, materials available on-line, and materials distributed during staff meetings.
- Santa Clara 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 two CDSS staff with four county administrators. The caseworker interviews were conducted by one 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 Clara County used a substitute for the CW 2205 (Form SCD 2331A) that was mailed to all clients with less than 24 months remaining on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit on December 5, 2012. Employment workers were provided with a list of all clients with less than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time clock, and began holding their SB 1041

comprehensive discussions with these clients in January 2013. There were 1,145 clients in this group needing a comprehensive discussion in January 2013. Their target completion date was June 2013. As of August, 2013, of the original 1,145 clients in this population:

- 608 (53%) clients were still active WTW participants; and
- 560 (92%) had their SB 1041 comprehensive discussion.

At the time of our visit in October 2013, all comprehensive discussions for this population had taken place. Santa Clara County was reconciling reports to ensure that all active clients who had their comprehensive discussion were properly coded in the CalWIN and Welfare Data Tracking Implementation Project (WDTIP) tracking systems. Santa Clara County Employment Counselors used many forms of communication to reach clients including telephone calls, text messages, and in-person contacts. Letters and WTW 2 forms were mailed to participants as appropriate in order not to disrupt participation in activities. In general, clients with 24 months or less remaining on CalWORKs were choosing the lower hourly requirements but were opting to remain in their current activity.

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

All clients with more than 24 months remaining on their CalWORKs time limit, with the exception of those clients in the CalWORKs AB X4 4 Reengagement population, were mailed a substitute form SCD 2331B (for the CW 2205) on December 5, 2013. Santa Clara County started the SB 1041 transition for this group of 1,790 clients in March 2013. As of August 2013 of the original 1,790 clients in this population:

- 1,151 (64%) clients remained active as WTW participants; and
- 1,051 (59%) had their SB 1041 comprehensive discussion.

In general, clients with more than 24 months remaining on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit, like the less than 24-month population, were choosing to reduce the number of hours of participation when appropriate and continue on in their activities which usually met the federal standards, therefore not ticking their WTW 24-Month Time Clock. At the time of our visit in October 2013, all comprehensive discussions for this population had taken place. Santa Clara County was reconciling reports to have all active clients who have had their comprehensive discussion properly coded in the CalWIN and WDTIP tracking systems. Santa Clara County Employment Counselors used the same forms of communication to reach this population of clients as the clients in the less than 24-month group that included telephone calls, text messages, and in-person contacts. Whenever possible, letters and WTW 2 forms were mailed to participants to not disrupt participation in activities.

Clients who failed to attend SB 1041 appointments:

In situations where the assigned Employment Counselor was not able to contact the client, and it was determined that the WTW plan for said client had not expired, Employment Counselors mailed a letter and a WTW 2 that contained the current activities and participation hours in the client's existing plan. The letter indicated that the WTW 2 must be returned to the worker within 30 days, and, if the client does not return the WTW 2 form or contact the worker, the client's WTW 24-Month Time clock would begin the first of the month after the date of the 30-day period

had ended, unless the client met an exception such as meeting federal standards. If the client was unresponsive and his/her current hours did not meet the new requirements, the Employment Counselor initiated the non-compliance process pursuant to existing procedures.

New Young Child Exemption

At the time of this visit, those clients eligible for the new one-time exemption, Santa Clara reported 593 clients to date have received the new young child exemption:

- 397 (67%) have chosen to not participate as an exempt volunteer; and
- 196 (33%) are participating as exempt volunteers.

The new WTW Plan Activity Assignment (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

Santa Clara County Employment Counselors hold an average caseload of between 75-100 cases and are required to have monthly contacts with clients. Comprehensive discussions began in January 2013 with all clients who had less than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time clock and sanctioned individuals. All SB 1041 Comprehensive Discussions with clients were held in person. Santa Clara County did offer overtime in order to help expedite completion of the comprehensive discussions. After the individual SB 1041 comprehensive discussions were held, Employment Counselors' Supervisors reviewed the newly signed WTW 2s to ensure accuracy.

The Employment Counselors interviewed felt that the WTW 2 is effective as a guide during a client's SB 1041 discussion. The separation of federal and state activities visually aids clients in selecting a path of participation. However, Employment Counselors noted that not being able to show both parents' activities on one sheet, when handling a two-parent assistance unit, has caused some confusion.

Additionally, the County's administrators and program staff acknowledged that the short timeline to implement such significant and complex changes was their greatest challenge.

Reengagement Process

The county's reengagement process officially began in April 2013. Each Employment Counselor had approximately five clients from the reengagement population on their caseload. Employment Counselors were provided with a list of clients contained in the reengagement population. The list included each client's time on aid as well as exempt/exempt-volunteer status to use as a tool for prioritizing which clients to schedule for their reengagement orientation and comprehensive discussion. Clients were scheduled based on the following prioritization:

- **April 1, 2013**-Clients with the most months of time left remaining on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit.
- **October 2014**-AB X4 4 Exempt Volunteers.

Santa Clara County followed the notification process as outlined in ACL 13-01, and developed specialized reengagement orientations. Two specialized orientations were held per month. The

reengagement orientation includes a comprehensive discussion of the changes created by SB 1041, completion of the WTW 2 by identification of activities, necessary supportive services, and an individual behavioral health screening. Employment Counselors determine clients' status, needs, and if another WTW exemption applies. Additionally, clients are informed of their time remaining on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit, and assigned appropriate WTW activity(ies) that may include the identification of barriers.

Santa Clara County noted that attendance at the specialized reengagement orientations was less than desirable. After all notifications had been provided, and a client failed to appear at their appointed reengagement orientation Employment Counselors began the non-compliance process. In some cases the clients responded to the notice of non-compliance and came in for the orientation raising attendance to some degree.

General Comments

County staff and community partners had many questions as to how the AB X4 4 exempt individuals and exempt volunteers would be reengaged. Santa Clara County provided trainings, timelines, and written materials including questions and answers, program updates, and agency memorandums to county staff and community partners for the AB X4 4 Reengagement population. This information is also contained on the County's intranet and in electronically shared folders for staff to utilize.

Volunteers

AB X4 4 short term exempt clients who were volunteering in the WTW program on December 31, 2013 were encouraged to continue volunteering until they were reengaged. AB X4 4 clients who are participating as exempt volunteers are not scheduled to be reengaged until between October 2014 and December 2014. AB X4 4 short term clients requesting to volunteer after January 1, 2013 were also been allowed to volunteer. Clients who chose to reengage earlier followed the reengagement process steps as outlined in the Counties sequencing plan.

Implementation Strategies

In December 2013, Santa Clara County held trainings and regular meetings to discuss the implementation of SB 1041; in addition the county released an extensive list of newsletters and other written documents regarding the implementation of SB 1041. The following documents and trainings were produced by Santa Clara County:

- Agency Memorandum # 12-11: Reinstatement of the Cal-Learn Program;
- Agency Memorandum # 13-03: Extension of the Young Child Exemptions;
- Agency Memorandum # 13-05: Reengagement of CalWORKs Temporary Young Child Exempt Individuals in WTW;
- BEnDS 2013-3: New WTW Exemption for Providing Care to a Child 0-23 Months of Age;
- BEnDS 2013-16: Pre-Automation for WTW Time Clock Calculation;
- BEnDS 2013-16: Pre-Automation for WTW 24-Month Time Clock;
- CWES Request to Process: Un-tick TOA Manually of AB X4 4 Reengagement Client;
- "Did You Know?"- Volume 7 for 2012;
- Santa Clara County Employment Services Implementation of SB 1041 Overview Guide;
- SB 1041 Overview for CWES Staff and Partners;

- SB 1041 Implementation – Key Dates Document;
- SB 1041 Implementation Part 2;
- SB 1041 Questions & Answers Part I;
- SB 1041 Questions & Answers Part II (Revised);
- SB 1041 Tracking Detail Listing;
- Update 2012-15: CWES New WTW 24-Month Time Limit and Work Participation Hours;
- Update 2012-16: CWES Job Club and Supervised Job Search Sessions for 20-Hour Clients;
- Update 2013-2: CWES New Young Child Time Limit Exemption;
- Update 2013-6: CWES New WTW Orientation Folder Form;
- Update 2013-9: CWES New WTW 24-Month Time Limit Chapter;
- Update 2013-20: CWES New Young Child Exemption Questions & Answers;
- Update 2013-18: CWES Key Implementation Components for the Reengagement Population and CalWORKs Federal Standards of WPR;
- Update 2013-19: CWES Additional Q&A's Associated with SB 1041 & New WTW 38 Form; and
- Welcome to the CalWORKs Employment Services Orientation.

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 case 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

All cases reviewed during this visit received all appropriate notices, completed WTW 2s, and included all necessary supportive services.

Conclusion

Successes

The CDSS found many of the practices used for implementing SB 41 to be successful. For example, Santa Clara County utilized various methods of communication to inform clients of SB 1041 changes and help them better understand the major programmatic changes created by SB 1041. Text messages and emails to clients helped the county get a greater response from clients. Additionally, Santa Clara County required a supervisory review of all cases post-comprehensive

discussion to ensure that all clients had reviewed and signed all portions of the new WTW 2. A secondary supervisory review of each case helped to ensure that clients were informed of all changes, and understood not only their requirements, but the requirements of the county to provide supportive services. The county also included stakeholders in all trainings concerning the SB 1041 implementation strategies, and as a regular practice holds regularly scheduled meeting with their stakeholders. In addition to these practices, Santa Clara County also has an extensive distance learning program that utilizes electronic tablets and iPods to help those clients in need of a few additional hours of participation fulfill their hourly requirements. This has resulted in many clients meeting federal work participation requirements and not having to use time on their WTW 24-Month Time Clock.

Challenges

Santa Clara County found that their participation in the SB 1041 Implementation Workgroup was very helpful in generating training and disseminating information to county staff. However, despite their participation in this workgroup their greatest challenge was the short timeline to implement such significant and complex changes. Ensuring that all clients received all necessary notices, and face-to-face comprehensive discussions in less than six months, while guidance from the CDSS was still being issued was not only produces major time constraints on staff and management, but at times created confusion for county staff and clients alike. Although requiring clients to come into the office for any discussion is always challenging both for the client and staff alike, Santa Clara County felt that a face-to-face meeting proved to be the most beneficial to clients. Employment Counselors acknowledge that at times it has been difficult explaining such plentiful and significant changes to clients during one discussion, but felt that an in person explanation of these changes was necessary considering the complexity of the changes to clients.

Key Recommendations

Santa Clara County should continue to verify clients WTW 24-Month Time Clock and correctly disseminate the form CW 2208 to all clients. The county has developed a supplemental form that provides information on the clients CalWORKs 48-month and TANF 60-month time clocks until the WTW 24-Month Time Clock is automated. While this helps to ensure that clients are aware of months remaining on their CalWORKs 48-month and TANF 60-month time clocks, it will be imperative that the reconciliation of clients WTW 24-Month Time Clock is completed in an accurate and timely manner. Additionally, the verification of data sent to the CDSS such as the information provided on the WTW 25 is a crucial part of tracking the progress of the CalWORKs WTW program.

Contact

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