

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

Stanislaus County

Visit Date: August 28, 2013

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

Stanislaus 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 Stanislaus County on Wednesday, August 28, 2013, at the Stanislaus County Community Services Agency in Modesto California. The field visit team included CDSS staff along with Stanislaus County's Assistant Director, Welfare-to-Work Manager, Supervisor and two Family Service Specialist IIIs. The field visit consisted of a kick-off meeting, close-out meeting, staff interviews, and case management observations with county staff.

Implementation Strategies

In December 2013, Stanislaus County presented to staff an SB 1041 overview training, and followed with several additional staff training opportunities. The following trainings were completed:

- Understanding Changes to CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work;
- New Rules for Welfare-to-Work: Welfare-to-Work 24-Month Time Clock;
- Assessment and the New Welfare-to-Work 2;
- Welfare-to-Work Reengagement and Sequencing; and
- New Rules for the CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Program.

Clarification on additional issues was addressed via staff memorandums. Larger issues were addressed via formal training as described above. Family Service Specialist IIIs and other staff also self-initiate review of All County Letters as they are released from CDSS. All staff memorandums and training materials reviewed met the requirements of SB 1041.

Successes

Stanislaus County developed an extensive amount of training materials for SB 1041 implementation. This training included formal training sessions and staff memorandums on SB 1041 changes. Stanislaus County is also establishing kiosk centers in their offices for clients to scan documentation to county workers without waiting in line. The county also offers an onsite General Educational Development (GED) program to assist clients in meeting their short-term and long-term goals. These existing programs and processes assisted the county in the implementation of SB 1041.

Additionally, county welfare department staff is onsite at the local community college to assist CalWORKs students and provide training to the community college counselors to continue their collaboration efforts to ensure CalWORKs students success in their education... Stanislaus County partners with the Accelerated Career Training (ACT) program through the Modesto Junior College to assist clients in reaching self-sufficiency through varying vocational education pathways. These pathways include focused professional careers in electrical repair, auto body repair, automotive technology, advanced manufacturing, computer hardware, heavy equipment operation, and welding. The ACT program results in employers hiring from this program for higher wage jobs in these fields. The ACT program can range from four to 12 months of classroom and labs with a 20-36 hour per week commitment. Stanislaus County's partnership with the local community college that offers an array of education and training programs will assist clients in reaching their educational goals and support the intent of SB 1041.

Stanislaus County is prepared to transition smoothly into future program changes such as the new family stabilization program that became effective on January 1, 2014. In prior years, the County administered a similar program referred to as Building Successful Tomorrows (BST) that contained

components similar to family stabilization. The County's experience with the BST program has prepared the county for this new component of the CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work program.

Key Recommendations

Stanislaus County should continue to collect data on their progress of SB 1041 implementation to assist in their implementation of SB 1041 and to identify needed training for their staff and other stakeholders that serve CalWORKs clients. Examples include data collection and training to ensure that all clients receive the Your Welfare-to-Work (WTW) 24-Month Time Clock Notice (CW 2208) as required by All County Letter (ACL) 13-12 and tracking of which clients had received the comprehensive discussion as required by ACL 12-67.

Acknowledgments

The CDSS thanks Stanislaus County Community 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.

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Stanislaus County Field Monitoring Visit Summary

Introduction

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County Visit General Information

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Background and Data

Stanislaus at-a-glance

Total Caseload.....	11,674
(Source: CalWORKs Cash Grant Caseload Movement Report CA 237 CW Line Item 8-June 2013)	
WTW Enrollees.....	3650
(Source: CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Monthly Activity Report WTW 25/25A Line Item 1-June 2013)	
Mandatory Participants (enrollees + sanctioned + non-compliance).....	5,032
(Source: CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Monthly Activity Report WTW 25/25A Line Item 1, 3A, and 31-June 2013)	
Reengagement Plan Received.....	Yes
Beginning Date of Reengagement.....	April 1, 2013
Consortium System.....	C-IV

Data/Statistics

Stanislaus County provided the following information prior to the field monitoring visit:

- Clients that have used the new once in a lifetime young child exemption: **254**

Summary of Documents provided by Stanislaus County

- CalWORKs Notifications including informing notices, letters and flyers provided to clients relevant to SB 1041 implementation.
- SB 1041 related training materials including PowerPoint presentations on various SB 1041 topics.
- Stanislaus County's Assembly Bill (AB) X4 4 Short-Term Exemption County Reengagement Sequencing plan.
- Reengagement planning calendars and reengagement evaluation journal template.

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 three county administrators. The caseworker interviews were conducted by two teams of two CDSS staff members with each team interviewing one Family Service Specialist III.

Summary of Observations

WTW 24-Month Time Clock Implementation and New WTW Participation Requirements

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

Stanislaus County targeted all clients, regardless of time on aid, for SB 1041 implementation strategies. Stanislaus County mailed the WTW 24-Month Time Clock General Informing Notice (CW 2205) issued through the Consortium IV (C-IV) system on November 9, 2012. They began their comprehensive discussions with all clients January 7, 2013. Their target completion date is December 31, 2013. As of August 2013, Stanislaus County projects that 75 percent of all comprehensive discussions have been completed. County staff is instructed to include documentation of the comprehensive discussion in the C-IV case journal.

In general, more clients chose to change activities while only some clients chose to reduce their hourly participation requirements as a result of the new program rules. Generally, clients who were working frequently chose not to reduce their hours.

Comprehensive discussions took approximately ten minutes and were included as part of an orientation, assessment, ACT appointment, non-compliance or good cause appointment. These discussions took place either in person or via telephone contact. Family Service Specialist IIIs used the Welfare-to-Work Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2) and the General Informing Notice (CW 2205) to explain the SB 1041 changes and to conduct the comprehensive discussion as required.

Clients who failed to attend SB 1041 appointments

Clients meeting new participation requirements who failed to respond to the County's request to discuss the SB 1041 changes received additional contact(s) by the Family Service Specialist III. Stanislaus County used several methods of outreach including letters and phone calls to the clients as well as setting up formal in-person appointments.

General Comments

Stanislaus County reported that Family Service Specialist IIIs were required to place all cases in an Excel spreadsheet and determine when the comprehensive discussion should take place, when the Welfare-to-Work Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2) was sent to the client, when it was returned and when the WTW 24-Month Time Clock should begin for the client. Strategies for the order of cases scheduled to receive the discussion appear to be determined based on the next point of contact and individual Family Service Specialist III strategies. For example, clients participating in the Stanislaus County's ACT program are scheduled to meet with their Family Service Specialist III at least once a semester to review their contract for the ACT program. This next point of contact was used to also conduct the comprehensive discussion.

New Young Child Exemption

At the time of the visit, Stanislaus County had 254 clients choose to take the new once-in-a-lifetime young child exemption. Some clients chose to preserve this one-time exemption to use in the future. Clients that chose the new once-in-a-lifetime young child exemption were offered the opportunity to volunteer to participate in the CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work program.

Clients with Good Cause for Lack of Supportive Services

Stanislaus County opted to apply good cause for clients due to lack of supportive services. This option which was modified with the passage of AB X4 4 in 2009 to exempt clients from the CalWORKs 48-month clock changed as a result of SB 1041 and time began counting toward clients' 48-month time limit beginning January 1, 2013. Stanislaus County notified clients of this change the first week of February and time was not counted toward the clients' 48-month time limit until March 1, 2013. In general, some of the clients that received good cause for lack of supportive services were found to be eligible for a Welfare-to-Work exemption or had another reason for good cause status.

The new WTW Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2)

The new Welfare-to-Work Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2) form was made available via the CDSS website December of 2012. Stanislaus County used the version available on the CDSS website until the electronic version became available on the CIV consortium system in March 2013. In general, Family Service Specialist IIIs used the WTW 2 as a tool to explain the activities available under the WTW 24-Month Time Clock and the CalWORKs Federal Standards. In addition to the WTW 2 Family Service Specialist IIIs use an action plan form (plan 107) to identify employment goals as well as other short- and long-term goals.

General Comments

Stanislaus County felt that the WTW 2 is effective as a guide during a client's SB 1041 comprehensive discussion. It allows the client to have a visual aid demonstrating the different options he or she can select from. The county noted that the expanded supportive services section helped clients understand the services available to them while participating in an activity. In addition, Family Service Specialist IIIs use the WTW 2 to strategize ways to preserve the WTW 24-Month Time Clock and strategize the types and combinations of activities used based on the individual short- and long-term goals of each client. The Family

Reengagement Process

Stanislaus County's reengagement process officially began on April 1, 2013. The Reengagement Informing Notice (CW 2206) mass mailer was sent on January 17, 2013, to all AB X4 4 short-term exempt individuals. The Reengagement Informing Notice (CW 2206) was sent again on April and July of 2013. Reengagement appointment letters go out at least 30 days prior to Reengagement

evaluation appointments. In addition, the county conducts the required third contact via phone one week prior to the reengagement appointment.

Stanislaus County's Sequencing Plan is as follows:

- **April 1, 2013**-Clients initiated contact that requests WTW engagement.
- **July 1, 2013**-Clients who have children that aged out of temporary exemptions prior to July 1, 2013.
- **July 1, 2013**-Engage clients according to time limits, beginning with least time left on aid, that are not addressed in groups one and two.

The reengagement process for Stanislaus County includes the following:

- Allowing clients to volunteer or reengage ahead of when they were scheduled if not reengaged.
- Beginning in August 2013, conducting Saturday orientation/appointments with clients to reengage them in WTW.

Prior to reengagement, clients are allowed to volunteer to participate or they can reengage ahead of when they were scheduled in the County's sequencing plan.

Stanislaus County uses a Re-Engagement Evaluation Appointment Checklist to ensure that all required components of the reengagement process are met. Family Service Specialist IIIs are required to document the checklist components in the client's case file.

During their SB 1041 appointment, clients are provided with all of the required components contained in ACL 13-01. Family Service Specialist IIIs determines clients' status, barriers, and if another WTW exemption applies. During the reengagement evaluation, clients will be assessed as to whether they require an appraisal. Appraisals are conducted with clients if it has been more than one-year since the last appraisal activity.

During the CalWORKs WTW appraisal, Family Service Specialist IIIs:

- Review the Welfare-to-Work Rights and Responsibilities form (WTW 1);
- Offer the Learning Disability screening;
- Conduct the Behavioral Health Services Screening;
- Complete the supportive services need statement (STAN WTW 3); and
- Schedule the next appropriate activity.

Implementation Strategies

In December 2013, Stanislaus County presented to all staff an SB 1041 overview training and followed with several additional staff training opportunities. The following trainings were completed:

- Understanding Changes to CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work;
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- New Rules for the CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Program.

Clarification on additional issues was addressed via all staff memorandums. Larger issues were addressed via formal training as described above. Family Service Specialist IIIs and other staff also self-initiate review of All County Letters as they are released from the CDSS. All training material was reviewed and met the requirements issued by the CDSS.

Case Reviews

The CDSS Field Monitoring Team reviewed five cases selected by the Stanislaus County 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 Family Service Specialist IIIs, 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

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

- Noticing Requirements: All noticing requirements were met with the exception of the Your Welfare-to-Work (WTW) 24-Month Time Clock notice (CW 2208). All clients did not receive this notice required by All County Letter 13-12 at the time of the visit. The county stated they were in the process of issuing the *Your Welfare-to-Work (WTW) 24-Month Time Clock Notice* (CW 2208) to clients.
- Comprehensive discussions and additional outreach: Three ongoing cases noted a comprehensive discussion occurring. No comprehensive discussion notation was found in one

case file. The case file for the new client was not assessed as new clients receive the comprehensive discussion components as part of orientation.

- Learning Disability screening was offered to all of the cases reviewed. All five cases waived this screening.
- Welfare-to-Work Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2):
 - All case files with plans developed on or after January 2013 used the new Welfare-to-Work Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2).
 - One case file showed a reduction in hours as result of SB 1041. Two cases showed changes unrelated to SB 1041.
 - Two cases are scheduled to develop new WTW plans.
- New Young Child Exemption: Two cases were eligible for the once-in-a-lifetime young child exemption during 2013. None of the cases reviewed chose to take the new young child exemption.
- Reengagement: The one case reviewed met the reengagement requirements including, but not limited to, noticing timelines and requirements along with the provision of supportive services per All County Letter 13-01.

Conclusion

Stanislaus County developed an extensive amount of training materials for SB 1041 implementation. This training included formal training sessions and staff memorandums on SB 1041 changes. Stanislaus County is also establishing kiosk centers in their offices for clients to scan documentation to county workers without waiting in line. The county also offers an onsite General Educational Development (GED) program to assist clients in meeting their short-term and long-term goals. These existing programs and processes assisted the county in the implementation of SB 1041.

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components similar to family stabilization. The County’s experience with the BST program has prepared the county for this new component of the CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work program.

Challenges

Stanislaus County found that their greatest challenge was the implementation of such significant changes to the program in such a short amount of time. Also, competing priorities such as the implementation of the Affordable Care Act proved to be challenging as well. Moreover, data tracking for the purposes of following the SB 1041 implementation process was also difficult for the County.

Key Recommendations

Stanislaus County should continue to collect data on their progress of SB 1041 implementation to assist in their implementation of SB 1041 and to identify needed training for their staff and other stakeholders that serve CalWORKs clients. Examples include data collection and training to ensure that all clients receive the Your Welfare-to-Work (WTW) 24-Month Time Clock Notice (CW 2208) as required by All County Letter (ACL) 13-12 and tracking of which clients had received the comprehensive discussion as required by ACL 12-67.

Contact

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