

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

Yolo County

Visit Date: March 20, 2014

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

Yolo 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 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

This one-day field monitoring visit was performed in Yolo County on Thursday, March 20, 2014 at the Yolo County Department of Employment and Social Services office in Woodland, CA. The field monitoring visit team included four staff from the CDSS, Welfare-to-Work Division, CalWORKs Employment and Eligibility Branch along with Yolo County's Division Manager, Administrative Services Analyst, Employment and Social Services (ESS) Program Supervisor, and two ESS Specialist IIIs. The field monitoring visit consisted of a kick-off meeting, close-out meeting, staff and administrator interviews, and case management observations with county staff.

Implementation Strategies

Prior to implementation of SB 1041, the county began workgroup discussions with county managers and subject matter experts and analyzed All County Letters (ACLs) as they were published. The workgroups discussed several SB 1041 implementation topics including the WTW 24-Month Time Clock, reengagement, the new young child exemption, outreach to sanction clients, Cal-Learn, participation hours, informing notices, self-initiated programs (SIPs), the *WTW Plan Activity Assignment Sheet* (WTW 2), tracking of the WTW 24-Month Time Clock, and methods of distributing information to staff. Yolo County also participated in the SB 1041 Oversight Workgroup process held by the CDSS and attended the CalWORKs Training Academy in December 2013.

Beginning January 2, 2013, implementation strategies consisted of a step-by-step, comprehensive approach to inform staff of SB 1041 related program changes, which included detailed Policy Memorandums and training materials. Announcements and Question and Answer sessions were conducted at the CalWORKs Employment Services (CWES) weekly staff and bi-monthly division meetings. Training on the CalWORKs Information Network (CalWIN) Business Environment Design Strategies (BEnDS) was provided to all staff. The county developed several tools such as flowcharts, checklists, new forms, and sample case scenarios to assist staff. Overtime was offered to staff and the Administrative Services Analyst was available via phone, in person, and on Saturdays for individual case consultations and to answer questions.

Successes

Yolo County's step-by-step approach to implementation of the SB 1041 program changes was extremely well organized and comprehensive. The county developed an extensive amount of informative documents which thoroughly explained the program changes and the impact on tasks carried out by ESS Specialists. The overall structure and depth of these documents appeared to benefit Yolo County's implementation of SB 1041 program changes.

Yolo County provided thorough training to staff on the SB 1041 related program changes, and the county continues to update staff as new ACLs become available. Information and tools were shared through emails, question and answer memorandums, online CalWIN BEnDS procedures and Case Review Checklists, power point presentations, case scenarios, flow charts, checklist tools, quick reference guides, and other handout materials. Yolo County used a Lead Administrative Analyst who is well trained and versed on ACLs relevant to SB 1041 to oversee and roll out all SB 1041 implementation changes.

The organized manner of reengagement and sequencing groups in Yolo County facilitated a smooth implementation process. The sequencing of groups began with exempt volunteers consisting mostly of students, followed by clients with less than 24 months remaining on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit, and then clients with more than 24 months remaining. Reengagement was handled by ESS Specialists individually. Specialists sent out the appropriate noticing, scheduled appointments, made reminder phone calls, etc., and monitored their CalWIN issued alerts.

Yolo County has a good relationship with the Woodland Community College whereby a liaison from the college attends weekly CWES staff meetings at the county. Some additional outreach takes place with Los Rios Community College and the University of California (UC) Davis.

The CDSS recognized the county efforts on submitting their Expanded Subsidized Employment (ESE) plan timely, and the county is currently working on finalizing their Family Stabilization (FS) plan for submission as of this visit.

Key Recommendations

The CDSS recommends that Yolo County strengthen its relationships with the Los Rios and UC Davis colleges, and continue its development of the new ESE program by hiring a job developer. The CDSS suggests the county continue to update and monitor its 24-Month Time Clock system check efforts on the new CalWIN automation to ensure that the time on aid is accurate and current. Yolo County is encouraged to take advantage of the new FS program and funding to assist with more intensive case management and barrier removal for families, including sanction cases.

Acknowledgments

The CDSS thanks the Yolo County Department of Employment and Social Services for hosting this 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

Yolo at-a-glance

Total Caseload	1,871
(Source: CalWORKs Cash Grant Caseload Movement Report [CA 237 CW] Line Item 8-February 2014)	
WTW Enrollees	712
(Source: CalWORKs WTW Monthly Activity Report [WTW 25/25A] Line Item 1-February 2014)	
Mandatory Participants (enrollees + sanctioned + non-compliance).....	1,028
(Source: CalWORKs WTW Monthly Activity Report [WTW 25/25A] Line Item 1, 3A, and 31-February 2014)	
Reengagement Plan Received	Yes
Beginning Date of Reengagement	July 2013
Consortium System	CalWIN

Data/Statistics Available at the Time of Field Monitoring Visit

- Clients with more than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit as of January 1, 2013 who have had their comprehensive discussion: **622**
- Clients with less than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit as of January 1, 2013 who have had their comprehensive discussion: **291**
- Clients in the re-engagement process (i.e. scheduled to attend a reengagement appointment, completing assessment, completing the comprehensive discussion, signing a post-assessment Welfare-to-Work Plan Activity Assignment Sheet (WTW 2): **11**
- Sanctions that were cured as a result of SB 1041: **0**
- Clients who have met the definition of reengaged: **238**
- Clients who have elected to take the new once in a lifetime young child exemption: **148**

Summary of Documents provided by Yolo County

- Yolo County Policy Implementation Memoranda relevant to SB 1041 program changes.
- SB 1041 related training materials including instructional procedure handouts, quick reference guides, flow charts, checklists, a Time Limit Record form, follow-up question and answer documents, CalWORKs Information Network (CalWIN) Business Environment Design Strategies (BEnDS) Information and Forms, and other relevant training materials.
- Instructional and clarifying email correspondence with all staff regarding SB 1041 implementation.
- CalWORKs notifications including informing notices and appointment letters provided to clients relevant to SB 1041 implementation.
- Yolo County created a number of forms related to SB 1041 implementation including SB 1041 Appointment/Contact Letters, *New One-Time Young Child Exemption Request Form* and the *End of New Young Child Exemption*.
- A Comprehensive Discussion Information sheet was sent to clients and used by staff during comprehensive discussions.
- Yolo County's AB X4 4 Short Term Exemption 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 Yolo County administrator and ESS Specialists in-person regarding SB 1041 implementation. The tool was provided to the Yolo County Administrator and ESS Specialists in advance of the visit. The administrator interview panel consisted of four CDSS staff and two county administrators. The ESS Specialist interviews were conducted by four CDSS staff members with two ESS Specialists.

Summary of Observations

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

Transitioning Clients

[With less than and more than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit as of January 1, 2013]

Yolo County issued the *New Rules for CalWORKs WTW Activities Informing Notice* (CW 2205) through the CalWIN consortium system on November 29, 2012 followed by a corrected version on December 8, 2012. Yolo County began comprehensive discussions with clients on February 1, 2013. A Policy Memorandum was issued January 18, 2013 to all staff with a Priority List of the order in which to transition existing clients, which consisted of the following:

- First Priority – Sanctioned clients who are fully meeting new participation requirements and need to have their sanction cured.
- Second Priority – Clients with 24 months or less remaining on the CalWORKs 48-month time limit and have partial participation.
- Third Priority – Clients in education activities should be contacted prior to the start of the next semester of school.
- Fourth Priority – Clients with 24 months or less remaining on the CalWORKs 48-month time limit and have no known participation.
- Fifth Priority – Clients with more than 24 months remaining on the CalWORKs 48-month time limit.

At the time of the field monitoring visit, Yolo County had completed all comprehensive discussions.

In Yolo County, clients were scheduled for in-person appointments to complete the comprehensive discussion. If a client could not attend an appointment, his or her ESS Specialist was permitted to conduct the comprehensive discussion over the telephone. The CW 2205, alongside several Yolo County developed job aids (Memorandum on SB 1041 New WTW 2 Form, flow chart, and a Quick Reference Guide – SB 1041 Transition), were used by Yolo County's ESS Specialists to explain the new program requirements and the WTW 24-Month Time Clock to clients. These job aids were distributed to staff via an Administrative Services Analyst email on February 5, 2013. An activity labeled as the "SB 1041 Comprehensive Discussion" was created in the CalWIN System for staff to use as a way of documenting that the discussion occurred with existing clients transitioning to the new rules. Some staff also documented case comments in the

CalWIN system. The *Yolo County Comprehensive Discussion Information (YC 233)* form with client/ESS Specialist signature lines was later developed by the county to document that the information was shared with clients. Specialists kept their own monitoring/tracking sheets throughout the process.

Yolo County reported that very few clients opted to change their WTW plans or assigned activities. Clients did choose to utilize the reduced hourly requirements and WTW 24-month time clock flexibility regarding activities in order to attend school. A number of clients with self-initiated programs (SIPs) chose to go to assessment in order to change their SIP plan to vocational education training to utilize study hours.

Clients who failed to attend SB 1041 appointments

Yolo County's action towards clients who were unresponsive to contact varied depending on the client's situation. If clients already had WTW plans that met the new requirements and they were participating, the county completed the comprehensive discussion and new WTW 2 at their next regular office visit. If they were not participating adequately, then the county attempted to contact clients by phone and/or home visits. If clients failed to attend this appointment and failed to make contact with their ESS Specialist, the non-compliance process was initiated.

General Comments

Yolo County has two offices staffed in Woodland and West Sacramento to assist clients with Eligibility and WTW, along with providing outreach assistance to a number of rural areas. After some review and feedback, the county recently made the decision to revert back to assigned caseloads with specialists carrying intake and continuing cases. The average caseload for CalWORKs lead specialists is 133 and 109 for regular specialists. WTW specialists are responsible for approximately 72 cases and perform full-time case management.

ESS Specialists utilized the YC 233 form and Your WTW 24-Month Time Clock Informing Notice (CW 2208) to explain the WTW 24-Month Time Clock and CalWORKs federal standards to clients along with the benefits/non-benefits of each type of plan. Students within their 12-month limit of vocational education activities were encouraged to participate with enough hours to meet the CalWORKs federal standards and the county encourages job club/job search participants who had a lower hourly requirement to attend the full workshop.

New Young Child Exemption

Information regarding the New Young Child Exemption was distributed to Yolo County WTW staff beginning in February 2013. In order to streamline the request process, Yolo County developed the *New One-Time Young Child Election (YC 112)* form for this particular exemption. All eligible clients were provided with this form alongside the *CalWORKs Exemption Request Form (CW 2186A)* and asked to complete it as a means to confirm and document the client's decision of whether or not to take the exemption. Workers explained the benefit of saving the exemption to each client. This form also ensures that clients who elect to take this new exemption are offered the opportunity to volunteer to participate in WTW.

According to data presented at the time of this field monitoring visit, approximately 148 clients in Yolo County had elected to take the New Young Child Exemption.

General Comments

Yolo County ESS Specialists noted that some clients did not understand why they could not continue to use their New Young Child Exemption if they went off aid for 30 plus days and came back, even though their child was still 0-23 months old.

Clients with Good Cause for Lack of Supportive Services

Yolo County did not utilize the AB X4 4 option to provide clients with WTW good cause due to lack of supportive services with a CalWORKs 48-month time limit exemption.

The New WTW Plan Activity Assignment Form (WTW 2)

Yolo County utilized the existing WTW 2 until the new form was available via the CDSS website in December 2012. Memorandum instructions were provided to staff beginning February 2013 with step-by-step instructions on how to review and complete the form with clients and a link to the CDSS website location. Most ESS Specialists used the new WTW 2 directly from the CDSS website and saved it electronically via the county's Compass Imaging System.

General Comments

The Yolo County ESS Specialists had mixed opinions about the new version of the WTW 2 form. Some specialists liked how the state and federal activity requirements are shown side by side which helps some clients understand that core/non-core requirements only apply to the federal requirements while the WTW 24-month time clock requirements are more flexible. Other specialists stated not much worked with the new form as they, along with their clients, found it confusing and felt that the amount of information required was too much. Additionally, the Total Hourly Requirements section was hard to understand, particularly for SIPs and volunteers. Staff stated they liked the fact that the client had to initial their hourly requirements and supportive services as it reiterated what they had already discussed and gave the client the opportunity to ask additional questions for clarification.

Reengagement Process

Yolo County began reengagement with their AB X4 4 clients on July 1, 2013 with a goal of reengaging all clients by December 31, 2013. Beginning July 2013, the county's Reengagement Sequencing Plan was as follows:

1. Engage exempt clients who are currently volunteering to participate in WTW activities.
2. Engage clients with 24 months or less remaining on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit.
3. Engage clients with more than 24 months remaining on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit.

Yolo County initiated their reengagement process by issuing the *Young Child Exemption Ends December 31, 2012 - New Rules for CalWORKs WTW Activities Informing Notice* (CW 2206) via the CalWIN system to its first sequencing group of reengagement clients in May 2013. A second letter was issued by the assigned ESS Specialist 30 days prior to the client's reengagement appointment as required. An additional letter or phone call was made by the ESS Specialist ten days prior to the appointment reminding the client of his or her appointment date and time.

At the reengagement appointment, the assigned ESS Specialist completed the comprehensive discussion, discussed their time on aid, and reviewed the appraisal and existing WTW plan if applicable. If the client's appraisal had occurred more than 12 months prior, the ESS Specialist would complete a new appraisal and explain the New Young Child Exemption.

Using the county developed flow chart, ESS Specialists met with each client to review all of the required components referenced in Memorandum SB 1041: Reengagement of AB X4 4 clients referencing All County Letter (ACL) 13-01. ESS Specialists explained program requirements, available options, activities, and support services, and guided each client through the appropriate WTW flow based on each client's reengagement path.

Yolo County ESS Specialists worked with all clients who wished to reengage ahead of their reengagement sequencing process. If a client chose to reengage in advance of the counties reengagement sequencing, the ESS informed the clients of the reengagement process as documented in Memorandum 1041: Reengagement of AB X4 4 clients. If clients wished to continue in the process, they were given a Reengagement Informing Notice, if not previously received or more than six months had elapsed since it was issued. If the individual chose not to reengage in advance of the counties reengagement sequencing, they were reengaged when they normally would have been selected for reengagement as part of the county's sequencing plan.

Clients in the reengagement population who were volunteering prior to January 1, 2013 were allowed to continue participating as volunteers until reengaged. If a client who was not already a volunteer as of December 31, 2012, made a request to volunteer after January 1, 2013, Yolo County honored the new request to volunteer by reengaging the client early and typically included assessment and development of a WTW plan.

General Comments

At the time of this visit, Yolo County had completed the reengagement process for all of their AB X4 4 clients with the exception of 11 remaining clients. These 11 clients are either in the non-compliance process for not participating in the reengagement process or were inter-county transfers from other counties where reengagement had not yet begun. Tools were developed and distributed to assist ESS Specialists throughout the reengagement process which included a flow chart and question and answer sheets.

Implementation Strategies

Prior to implementation of SB 1041, the county began workgroup discussions with county managers and subject matter experts and analyzed All County Letters (ACLs) as they were published. The workgroups discussed several SB 1041 implementation topics including the WTW 24-Month Time Clock, reengagement, the new young child exemption, outreach to sanction

clients, Cal-Learn, participation hours, informing notices, SIPs, the WTW 2, tracking of the WTW 24-Month Time Clock, and methods of distributing information to staff. Yolo county staff also participated in the SB 1041 Oversight Workgroup process held by the CDSS and attended the CalWORKs Training Academy in December 2013.

Beginning January 2, 2013, implementation strategies consisted of a step-by-step, comprehensive approach to inform staff of SB 1041 related program changes. This included detailed Policy Memorandums and training materials that were distributed to all staff. Announcements and Question and Answer sessions were conducted at CalWORKs Employment Services (CWES) weekly staff and bi-monthly division meetings. Training on the CalWIN BEnDS was provided to all staff in computer labs using actual cases, along with some individual case consultations and training. Full case reviews were conducted in order to apply the BEnDS to each case prior to November 9, 2013. The county developed several tools such as flowcharts, checklists, new forms, and sample case scenarios to assist staff. Overtime was offered to staff and the Administrative Services Analyst was available via phone, in person, and on Saturdays for individual case consultations and to answer questions.

Yolo County used a variety of methods to best prepare its ESS Specialists for explaining these program changes to clients. A SB 1041 Comprehensive Discussion Information activity was created in the CalWIN system for staff to use as a way of documenting that the discussion occurred with existing clients. Later, the county developed the YC 233 form with client/ESS signature lines to document that the information was shared with new clients. Additionally, the county developed a SB 1041-CalWIN BENDS Case Review Checklist and Time Limit Record which also documented the date of the comprehensive discussion.

Case Reviews

The CDSS field monitoring team reviewed five cases selected by Yolo County in advance of the visit. The purpose of this component of the visit was to review how SB 1041 program changes are being integrated into case management, understand how SB 1041 policies are being operationalized by individual ESS Specialists, and better comprehend case management within Yolo 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 was sanctioned, had reported earnings and whose case was curable based on the new participation requirements (preferably a case actually cured since January 1, 2013 based on new participation requirements); and
- Case Five - A client that was part of the short term young child exemption (AB X4 4) population, and is in the process of or has been reengaged (if applicable).

General Comments

Yolo County uses the CalWIN case management system and Compass Imaging System. The following is a summary of the case findings:

- Noticing Requirements
All noticing requirements for the CW 2205 and CW 2208 were met for all cases reviewed.

- Comprehensive Discussions and Additional Outreach
Comprehensive discussions were completed and noted on the SB 1041 Comprehensive Discussion Information document, on the Time Limit Record, and on the SB 1041 – CalWIN BEnDS Case Review Checklist. The comprehensive discussion date was documented on the CalWIN BEnDS Checklist and imaged to the Compass Imaging System.

- WTW Plan Activity Assignment Form (WTW 2)
All case files reviewed with WTW plans developed on or after January 2013 used the new WTW 2. One case reviewed did not have a WTW 2 due to the client’s pre-assessment activities and a sanction.

- Sanction Case
For the sanction case, Yolo County reviewed the client’s hours based on paystub information provided; however, the hours were not sufficient to cure the sanction as the client worked part time. The county outreached to the client, but the client responded that she did not want to cure her sanction.

- Reengagement Case
The case reviewed met all reengagement noticing requirements, including the CW 2206, timelines for the secondary contact/appointment, third contact reminder, etc. When reengaged, the client chose to use the new young child exemption, volunteered, and signed a new WTW 2 with reduced hours.

- New Young Child Exemption
Two of the cases reviewed were eligible for the New Young Child Exemption and both chose to take the exemption.

- Learning Disability Screening and Supportive Services
A learning disability screening was offered to clients in all cases reviewed. Four clients waived the screening. One client was screened with no additional follow up needed.

Supportive Services were offered and/or issued and were documented in all of the case files reviewed.

Yolo County makes additional efforts to outreach to its sanction population. Unannounced home visits are made by ESS Specialists when clients don’t respond. If clients remain in sanction after a home visit, these cases are then forwarded to a

specialized Sanction Reconnection Specialist who provides additional outreach. The Sanction Reconnection Specialist outreaches to 25 sanctioned clients quarterly.

Conclusion

Successes

Yolo County's step-by-step approach to implementation of SB 1041 was extremely well organized and comprehensive. The county developed an extensive amount of informative documents which thoroughly explained the program changes and the impact on tasks carried out by ESS Specialists. The overall structure and depth of these documents appeared to benefit Yolo County's implementation of SB 1041 program changes.

Yolo County provided thorough training to staff on the SB 1041 related program changes, and the county continues to update staff as new ACLs become available. Information and tools were shared through emails, question and answer memorandums, online CalWIN BEnDS procedures and Case Review Checklist, power point presentations, case scenarios, flow charts, checklist tools, quick reference guides, and other handout materials. Yolo County used a Lead Administrative Analyst that was well trained and versed on ACLs relevant to SB 1041 to oversee and roll out all SB 1041 implementation changes.

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Challenges

Yolo County found utilization of the new WTW 2 form a challenge. Some specialists noted it was confusing, along with their clients, and felt that the amount of information required was too much. Specialists found the Total Hourly Requirements section hard to understand, particularly for SIPs and volunteers. Additionally, clients did not understand why they could not continue to use their new young child exemption if they went off aid for 30 plus days and came back on, even though their child was still 0-23 months old. The county also found it difficult to engage some clients in the reengagement process, especially with clients who received the AB X4 4 exemption since they first enter the WTW program and had not been required to participate previously.

Key Recommendations

The CDSS recommends that Yolo County strengthen its relationships with the Los Rios and UC Davis colleges, and continue its development of the new ESE program by hiring a job developer. The CDSS suggests the county continue to update and monitor its 24-Month Time Clock system check efforts on the new CalWIN automation to ensure that the time on aid is accurate and current. Yolo County is encouraged to take advantage of the new FS program and funding to assist with more intensive case management and barrier removal for families, including sanction cases.

Contact

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