

COUNTY NAME: Orange County

CalWORKs County Plan Addendum

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

**County Welfare Director's
Signature**

Ingrid Harita
Printed Name

December 14, 2006
Briefing Date

This plan addendum is submitted pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Section 10534.

1) County Goals

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

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

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

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

The Orange County CalWORKs Program was developed with the overarching goal of fundamentally changing the public welfare program from a system that fosters dependency to one that promotes an affirmative emphasis on self-sufficiency and personal responsibility. Among the stated objectives of the Orange County CalWORKs Plan are to:

- Move recipients from welfare to work at the earliest opportunity
- Ensure that welfare benefits represent temporary assistance to families in crisis
- Provide preventive intervention services
- Provide welfare-to-work activities, which will increase income from earnings
- Ensure access to essential supportive services such as child care, transportation, child support, health care, substance abuse treatment, mental health services, and domestic violence counseling
- Ensure that the family unit is preserved and children are protected
- Work collaboratively with other county agencies and within the community to ensure successful implementation of CalWORKs

The Orange County CalWORKs Program will continue to work toward and meet the goals of W & I code 10540 while also evolving and embracing on-going strategies to meet newly identified needs of the community and changing programmatic requirements.

Since the inception of CalWORKs in January 1998, the CalWORKs population in Orange County has dropped from 82,000 to 39,000 recipients. This 52 percent caseload reduction is higher than the State reduction as a whole. This is a key indicator that Orange County policies are meeting the goal of W&I Code Section 10540 - reducing the dependence of needy parents on government benefits.

United States Census data indicates the percentage of individuals under age 18 living in poverty in Orange County is 11.2%. This is also below the California rate, as well as below the national rate. This is a key indicator that Orange County policies are helping to meet the goal of W&I Code Section 10540 – reducing child poverty in the State.

Orange County also continues to achieve federal work participation rates (WPR) at higher levels than the State and the nation from FFYs 2002 through 2005, as reflected in the following chart.

YEAR	2002	2003	2004	2005
CA	27.3	24.0	23.1	27.9*
U.S.	33.4	31.3	32.2	(No Data)
O.C.	38.1	44.3	44.0	44.9

* (estimate according to ACL 06-46)

This is a key indicator that Orange County policies are working toward the requirements of federal law.

The Orange County CalWORKs Program continues to develop and evolve. As the Program maintains an employment and economic self-sufficiency focus, the Social Service Agency (SSA) has developed a Welfare-to-Work (WTW) program designed to meet the needs of each individual being served. WTW participants are engaged in a program that addresses employment and educational opportunities as well as learning disabilities, domestic violence, mental health, substance abuse, and potential child abuse/neglect issues. These activities support stabilizing families while they develop the skills necessary to attain work, achieve self-sufficiency, and improve the well-being of each family member.

Orange County is recognized as an innovator in implementing CalWORKs strategies designed to avoid negative unanticipated consequences on children and families. Since July of 2000, the SSA Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) and Children and Family Services (CFS) Divisions have worked together to assist families that are served in both CalWORKs and child welfare services, which has resulted in provision of more efficient and comprehensive services. Since November 2002, Orange County has been a participant in the California Linkages collaboration and has initiated services for mutual clients that facilitate successful completion of case plans and prevent incidents of child abuse and neglect.

As a part of Linkages, SSA has implemented Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools to assess family needs and assist in making service-plan decisions. Screening is offered in a Strength Based interview with the intention of identifying families at risk of involvement with the child welfare system and developing tailored service plans to address identified needs.

In 1999, SSA initiated a comprehensive approach to serving victims of domestic abuse. Each CalWORKs region in Orange County utilizes a Domestic Abuse Services Unit (DASU) comprised of FSS and CFS staff. This collaborative approach helps to reduce duplication of effort, services and requirements; ensures the family's protection; and reduces trauma to children. This service approach identifies appropriate intervention and WTW activities and/or waivers. In addition, DASU services contribute to the development of family strengths and encourage successful relationships that lead to self-sufficiency.

The CalWORKs Program also maintains a link with community-based programs, such as Families and Communities Together (FaCT). FaCT is a partnership between SSA and Orangewood Children's Foundation that provides support and services to children and families through community-based collaboratives operating Family Resource Centers (FRC). FRC's provide services that facilitate parents' ability to be resources to each other, active participation in program decisions, and self-

advocacy in the community. FRCs also offer a continuum of services to prevent child abuse and strengthen families.

Linkages initiatives, Domestic Abuse Services Units, and community connections are a few examples of the array of services and strategies that Orange County utilizes to achieve the goals of W&I Code Section 10540.

In concert with the commitment to improving family well-being, Orange County is taking a proactive approach in engaging CalWORKs participants in WTW activities and improving work participation rates. SSA is currently convening collaborative workgroups with local Workforce Investment Boards, Education Providers, Child Care service providers, and other partners and stakeholders to develop and implement effective strategies and improve outcomes. Internal workgroups are reviewing current business processes and known best practices in order to make systems improvements that facilitate enhanced work participation performance. SSA staff are also participating in statewide workgroups to share data and effective strategies among counties. SSA will continue with these and other measures to improve client engagement and meet the challenges of the Federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005.

2) Participation Improvement

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

B. Providing up-front engagement activities

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy). Example: A county describes a new policy to engage recipients in orientation and appraisal within one week of application.

Orange County's Plan Addendum goal is to meet the requirements of the CalWORKs Program through a review of current strategies and development of new strategies that will result in program enhancements that improve work participation outcomes. The following policies and strategies have been identified as continuing to promote, expand, and/or develop for up-front engagement.

Current Policies/Strategies that have proven effective:

- New applicants attend a voluntary Orientation on the date of application designed to engage the participant in the WTW program and to inform the participant about available services, employment opportunities, and participation expectations. This Orientation is conducted by a contracted Job Services provider, which promotes consistency of message to the applicant from the date of their application through their assignment to Job Services.

- Voluntary Applicant Job Services are accessible in the Employment Resource Rooms located in each CalWORKs Regional Office reception area. Employment Resource Rooms are staffed full-time by Job Developers who provide job seekers with up-front access to tools that will assist them in attaining employment including, but not limited to, job leads, résumé writing assistance, internet accessible computers, fax machines, and telephones.
- Initial Services Workers (ISW) are the single point of contact for CalWORKs applicants and newly-approved WTW participants. The ISW performs eligibility determinations and WTW case management while working with applicants through benefit determination, WTW participation determination, appraisal activities, needs assessments, participation barrier resolution, supportive services coordination and delivery, Job Search/Readiness (JSR), and Vocational Assessment. ISW positions are filled by trained Social Workers to bring the necessary engagement and assessment skills to the assignment. This service delivery model promotes successful participant cooperation and engagement by eliminating duplicate reporting requirements in the first phases of the participants' WTW activities. Following Assessment the case is transferred to Ongoing Services for continuing case maintenance.
- Ongoing Services includes a two-worker team consisting of an Employment and Eligibility Specialist who is responsible for on-going eligibility and a Case Manager (CM) who is a trained social worker responsible for on-going employment services. EES responsibilities include ongoing eligibility determination, employment support, and authorization of supportive services (child care, ancillary and transportation.) CM responsibilities include: developing a WTW Plan; monitoring participation; evaluating for supportive services and other needs; making referrals for services including mental health, substance abuse and domestic violence; monitoring participant progress and activity compliance; providing employment counseling including assessment of participants' job skills and experience; working with the Job Developers for referrals to appropriate job openings; evaluating good cause for non-compliance with WTW plans, and imposing sanctions. The EES and the CM work closely together to address barriers and provide services. Their cooperative process provides a continuum of contact and promotes communication within County staff, and between County staff and the participant. Strength-based practices built on the participant's capabilities and support networks are applied to motivate the participant and to develop and implement an appropriate WTW Plan.
- Participants receive a Personal Action Planner upon completion of the Appraisal interview that details the information provided by their worker(s), including referral assistance such as the Local Child Care Resource and Referral provider, and a calendar with the dates of their next planned activity.
- An open-entry/open-exit model will be utilized by our contracted Job Services provider for assignment of JSR activities, which will minimize unnecessary waiting periods prior to starting JSR.
- A Participation Workgroup focuses on communication, meeting with caseworkers, and partnering with service providers to determine methods of communicating swiftly and effectively. This activity supports a streamlined service referral process and identifies participants with potential attendance/progress barriers before there is actually a reduction in work participation.
- Child abuse/neglect Prevention Services are provided on a voluntary basis to enhance family well-being. Services are designed to address needs of families who are identified to be at great risk of future child maltreatment. With a signed informed consent applicants are screened by the ISW at the time of application to evaluate the family for potential risk of future child maltreatment. If a

potential risk is identified, the ISW initiates a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meeting of County staff, service providers working with participant, and the participant. A case plan is then developed that addresses the identified child safety or neglect issues while building on the family's strengths and self-sufficiency goals.

- Early identification of participant barriers enhances the individual's participation in WTW activities. Use of the MDT facilitates early intervention and access to services such as health, mental health, substance abuse, domestic abuse, shelter, and support services such as basic needs, transportation, ancillary and child care services.

New and/or potential Policies/Strategies:

- New focus on "engagement" to maximize participation in appropriate WTW activities for the required number of hours. An existing participation workgroup is to reassess all current WTW practices for meeting up-front engagement requirements and implementing new engagement strategies into WTW business practices.
- Evaluate methods to provide information about available Prevention Services at Orientation so that participants can discuss barriers and service needs with their ISW early in the CalWORKs WTW process.
- Utilize the Job Developers to work with applicants, on a voluntary basis, prior to the start of JSR if there is a scheduling delay.
- Conduct "Mini-Orientations" at the start of JSR, co-presented by the contracted Job Services provider and a CM. The Mini-Orientations will be designed to reinforce what was presented at the initial Orientation. This will enhance the collaboration between the County and the contracted Job Services provider to promote a consistent work participation message. It will also reinforce to the participant that their CM and other service provider partners work together in addressing their needs.
- Implement a new contract, effective FY 2007-2008 for the contracted Job Services provider to assume responsibility for Job Development and Interim Job Search, including Job Search Pending and other job search activities. The contractor will utilize the employment Resource Rooms located in each CalWORKs Regional Office for applicant job search and to provide community resource information during the application process (Applicant Job Services). The integration of Job Developer responsibilities with contracted Job Services will create a more streamlined process for the participant.
- Evaluate a pre-Assessment/pre-WTW Plan meeting to be scheduled by the ISW during the third week of JSR if the participant has not attained full-time employment. This meeting will include the ISW, the contracted Job Services provider, and the participant to re-assess barriers to participation and needed services. This process improvement will provide the opportunity to evaluate the value of continued participation in JSR and ensure the job search activity occurs when the participant is most job-ready. This strategy will also free up Assessment slots resulting in expedited referrals to Assessment.
- Work with the Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) to develop additional short-term open-entry/open-exit training or work experience programs.

Expansion/Revision of current Policies/Strategies:

- Implement contracted Applicant Job Services in the Employment Resource Rooms prior to activity assignment to JSR. Currently, County staff and the Case Management contractor provide Job Developers for Employment Resource Rooms. Effective July 2007, this function will be integrated and become the responsibility of the contracted Job Services provider. This will provide improved continuity in Job Search and Job Retention services.

- Refine and expand the range of JSR workshops tailored for specific participant needs. In addition to the primary JSR workshops structured for the majority of participants, there will be a minimum of three enhanced JSR workshops structured to meet particular participant needs:
 - “Gateway” for limited English language skills
 - “Intensive Job Ready” for participants with higher job skills or more work history
 - “Job Prep” for participants with lower job skills or less work history
- Meet with WTW activity services providers to evaluate the referral process and activity start time to facilitate more open-entry/open-exit and short-term employment-related activities.
- Expand collaborative contacts with child care providers to create a more seamless and efficient transfer of participants from Stage One CalWORKs to Stage Two Alternative Payment Provider child care.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly? Example: The county describes how recipients are expected to have welfare-to-work (WTW) plans developed sooner and includes how much sooner, what percentage of the county’s WTW caseload will be impacted, etc.

The County believes that the combination of best practices and innovative strategies will assist WTW participants to:

- Achieve program participation that lead to self-sufficiency
- Promote strong family connections
- Provide positive work participation performance results

It is anticipated that participation among newly enrolled participants as a result of employing innovative strategies for educating participants regarding the program and work participation requirements; reiterating the participant’s rights and responsibilities; and emphasizing the support systems of the Orange County CalWORKs Program established for participants. Approximately 35% of the Orange County caseload is engaged in up-front WTW activities and will be impacted by the new policies and strategies created to achieve early engagement.

How will success be determined (quantitative and qualitative assessment of effects)? Example: The county describes the percentage by which the earlier engagement policy will increase the county’s federal WPR and State participation levels, the percentage by which a reduction in sanctions will increase the county’s federal WPR and its State participation levels, etc., by year, over three years (beginning with this year). The county also describes how early engagement will result in better identification of barriers to employment, better identification of exemptions, etc. (including percentages as appropriate). If the county cannot identify the percentage increase to its WPR for an individual policy/strategy because of overlap with another policy/strategy, the WPR impact can be combined with other strategies in Section H below.

Through the strategies identified above, it is expected that participants will have a clear understanding of the CalWORKs and WTW Programs, the services available to address potential barriers to participation, and the activity requirements for achieving family self-sufficiency. Program outcome data will be evaluated as we continue to assess and develop new innovative strategies. It is anticipated that work participation rates will increase and the time participants stay on aid will decrease.

Orange County will monitor:

- The percent of eligibility determinations within 45 days from the date of application. The desired trend is an increase.
- The number of applicants screened for Prevention Services. The desired trend is an increase.
- The percent of JSR participants that attain full-time employment before the completion of JSR. The desired trend is an increase.
- The number of enrollees assigned to an activity within five days of appraisal or the end of a previous activity. The desired trend is an increase.

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

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy). Example: The county describes a new policy to work with recipients up front to identify community service areas in which they have specific personal interest (such as volunteering at a local nonprofit) that could be utilized to increase participation in federally allowable activities when recipients are in between activities or need additional hours to meet the 32-/35-hour weekly participation requirement.

Orange County's Plan Addendum supports meeting the requirements of the CalWORKs Program through a review of current strategies and development of new strategies that will result in program enhancements that improve work participation outcomes. The following policies and strategies have been identified as continuing to promote, expand, and/or develop for full engagement.

Current policies/strategies that have proven effective:

- WTW30 Work Participation Rate case reviews are utilized as a quality control mechanism. When cases are identified as having insufficient participation hours, management and supervisory staff are notified and appropriate action is taken to ensure the individual is fully engaged.
- Enrollment in concurrent activities for the WTW plan is a strategy to achieve full engagement by appropriately including Behavioral Health Services (Mental Health and Substance Abuse), Domestic Abuse Services, Child Welfare case plan elements, paid or unpaid Work Experience, Work Study, as well as a variety of educational activities in Adult Education and Vocational Training.
- Collaboration with the County Public Health Nurses (PHN) has been successful in increasing participation by addressing family health issues so that the parent's participation is not frequently interrupted. PHN services facilitate appropriate medical care for recipients, including assistance with SSI applications.
- Motivational training for all staff improves client engagement skills.
- Enhanced Job Search (EJS) is an activity targeted for participants who have lost employment. EJS provides intensive job search services for a maximum of 2 weeks to assist these participants in quickly reentering the workforce.
- Employer mediation for job retention is offered, with participant consent, which focuses on the availability of additional work hours to maintain or increase employment.
- Monthly team meetings are held at all staff position levels and include CalWORKs administrative staff and service partners as needed, to discuss issues and best practices.

New and/or potential Policies/Strategies:

- Revise mandated contact policy for CMs to include scheduled telephone and home calls for participants not fully engaged and have attendance problems. This policy will include pre-appointment contacts to minimize “no shows”. WTW cases will be monitored to ensure contacts with WTW participants have been made to identify possible barriers and keep participants motivated.
- Utilize a “Keep in Touch Kit” (KIT) that includes helpful information for the participant as well as a means to facilitate communication with the worker.
- Evaluate mandating MDT meetings for participants who are not fully employed or fully engaged in program participation and to include the participants and service partners. This strategy may include follow-up MDTs at regular intervals until the barriers are resolved.
- Develop a worker tool that identifies available activities, activity service providers, core/non-core identifiers, activity time limits, and the County Policy references related to each activity.
- Develop and validate CalWIN Management Reports, as well as create stand-alone tools to monitor participation, engagement trends, staff performance, and assist CMs in monitoring caseloads.
- Implement Interim Job Services (IJS) that provide structured job search for participants between activities to maximize continuous engagement. Evaluate the use of a “Case Management Participation Calculator”, a case management monitoring tool that enables supervisory and management to monitor work participation at the worker level on a real time basis. The County plans to continuously evaluate this tool’s utility.
- Evaluate the need for a case planning conferencing process to include the CM, the EES, service provider partners, and the participant to address barriers and provide services that will assist participants maintain full engagement.

Expansion/Revision of current Policies/Strategies:

- Expand the current Occupational Therapy program with the County’s Health Care Agency to include:
 - Action-oriented service designed to provide experiential learning that facilitates the identification of strengths and hope
 - Healthy Relations
 - Stress Management
 - Assertive Communication
 - Organizational Skills
 - Life Skills
 - Nutrition
- Participate in the statewide CalStat workgroup to share county best practices effectively and county performance data.
- Expand staff training for County, contractor, and other partnering staff on how to communicate in the new CalWIN environment.
- Evaluate issues and share strategies for getting participants into “bridging” or “filler” activities if there is to be downtime prior to the start of new activities.
- Re-evaluate the physical workspace to enhance communication between the ISW, CM, EES, and co-located partners and thereby improve coordinated case planning and services.
- Expand current policy to provide participants with access to pre-employment services specifically designed to address their barriers to participation and full-time employment. ISWs/CMs make referrals based on specific and unique needs. Proactive anticipation of needs and barriers will result in participation that is less frequently disrupted.

- Work with the WIBs to develop more short-term, open-entry/open-exit programs.
- Expand work participation quality assurance efforts that will include enhanced case reviews with a primary focus on work participation activities. The Case Assurance Review System (CARS) is an automated case review system that was implemented in December 2006 for data collection, identification of error trends, and assessment of training needs. This system provides an enhanced method to follow-up on case management deficiencies.
- Continue and expand highly successful collaborations with the three WIBs and associated One Stop Centers. A variety of programs have been developed specifically for WTW participants including on-the-job training, paid work experience and vocational training with paid internships. The WIBs are an essential partner in identifying entry-level positions in vocations that have career growth and promotion opportunities within Orange County.
- Expand services that help participants build self-reliance and life skills that enhance their ability to manage life situations that can affect their work participation.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly? Example: The county describes how the policy benefits recipients and specifies the percent of WTW enrollees who are not participating in activities and the percent who are not fully participating that will become fully engaged in activities that meet federal and State participation requirements (separated by meeting federal and State requirements).

New and expanded strategies will benefit participants and increase work participation in Orange County by providing specialized case management services that support full engagement. Currently there are approximately 5,023 WTW enrollees in Orange County, which is 80% of the CalWORKs adult population. These strategies will benefit WTW participants as they provide personal and direct support to the participants and their families.

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

Example: The county describes the percent by which the county's federal WPR and State participation level will be increased by full engagement of partially participating recipients and non-participating recipients. The county describes the percent increase for each group of recipients, separately, by year, over three years (beginning with this year). If the county cannot identify the percentage increase to its WPR for an individual policy/strategy because of overlap with another policy/strategy, the WPR impact can be combined with other strategies in Section H below.

Orange County will monitor:

- The rate of case management errors identified through CARS case reviews. The desired trend is a decrease.
- The CalWORKs Work Participation Rate (see Section H for details). The desired trend is an increase.
- The Federal Work Participation Rate. The desired trend is an increase.

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

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

describes a new strategy that after an instance of noncompliance, individuals will meet with a worker who specializes in identifying and resolving barriers to nonparticipation (substance abuse, child care problems, etc.) and will work with individuals to develop strategies to maintain participation.

Orange County's Plan Addendum supports meeting the requirements of the CalWORKs Program through a review of current strategies and development of new strategies that will result in program enhancements that improve work participation outcomes. The following policies and strategies have been identified as continuing to promote, expand, and/or develop to prevent families from going into sanction.

Current policies/strategies that have proven effective:

- The Job Services contract includes a performance mandate that 70% of employed participants maintain employment for at least 90 days. Through their contacts with participants who have obtained employment, the contracted Job Services provider will continue to identify participants with potential participation issues before non-compliance occurs.
- The Retention Services program offers employer mediation and facilitated discussion, with participant consent, about the availability of additional work hours to meet or maintain participation.
- SSA will continue the current practice of using mental health, domestic abuse, pre-employment, learning disabilities assessments, evaluations, and services to engage participants and assist them in identifying and removing barriers to participation and prevent families from going into sanction status.
- EESs are trained in motivation, interactions skills, and strength-based practices to target participants at risk of sanction and provide constant and consistent information about participation and the impact of sanctions.
- The ISW service delivery model provides a continuum of contact and communication and promotes cooperation and participation through the first phase of the participant's WTW activities.
- EESs and CMs are co-located, which enhances communication on any issues that may lead to non-compliance. Either worker may make a home visit and both may participate in MDT meetings convened to identify and resolve barriers to participation, identify the participant's strengths, and then build on these strengths to develop strategies that maintain participation.
- The PHNs provide an array of health services that include identification of issues, provider access, and treatment follow-up.
- Orange County implemented the use of a Prevention Services Screening Tool for the CalWORKs population. This tool identifies the levels of risk potential for future child maltreatment. If family issues are addressed before the situation escalates into a child welfare services case, the parent is better prepared to participate in WTW and less likely to be non-compliant.
- Coordinated case planning is initiated for clients who are served by both CalWORKs and Children and Family Services (CFS). Family stability issues are identified and addressed, and coordinated case plans are developed. The families can cooperate with WTW while complying with the requirements of the CFS service plan.
- Highly successful collaborations have been developed with the three WIBs and associated One-Stop Centers. A variety of programs have been developed specifically for WTW participants including: on-the-job training, paid work experience, and vocational training with paid internships. The WIBs are an essential partner in identifying entry-level positions in vocations that provide career growth and promotional opportunities.

New and/or potential Policies/Strategies:

Upon the release of Federal TANF Reauthorization regulations, SSA has organized and convened a range of participation workgroups to evaluate effectiveness and development of new policies and practices. The Engagement/Re-engagement Workgroup is comprised of various levels of administrative and line staff to assist in:

- Enhancing current practices
- Identifying participation gaps for participants
- Evaluating the sanction process
- Determining best practices for re-engagement of sanctioned individuals
- Identifying bridging activities to maintain participation
- Identifying participants with potential participation (attendance/progress) barriers before there is WTW non-compliance
- Developing enhanced tools for tracking sanctioned individuals at the Regional Office, work unit, and caseworker levels in support of identifying training needs, increasing the skill level for the workers, and improving participant engagement.

Expansion/Revision of current Policies/Strategies:

- Expand Job Retention services and work closer with post-aid individuals to help them retain full time employment for at least 90 days.
- Expand current use of the Intensive Case Management Pilot project administered by a contracted Case Management provider. The pilot includes designated, non-case carrying staff who provide intensive outreach to non-compliant/sanctioned individuals. This intensive outreach will assist in the re-engagement of long-term sanctioned individuals and identification of participants with potential participation attendance/progress problems before there is WTW non-compliance.
- Enhance the MDT process to identify participation issues and prevent participants from going into sanction status. MDTs promote strength-based practices to address participation, cooperation, and barriers to employment.
- Enhance ways to communicate more effectively and quickly between County staff and service partners through the establishment of a participation workgroup

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly? Example: The county describes how recipients will benefit from the new policy and identifies the percentage by which the county's sanction rate will be reduced.

Anticipated effects include the proactive identification and resolution of participation barriers, an increase in communication between WTW CMs and participants for focusing on issues that could lead to non-compliance, development of best practices for re-engagement of sanctioned individuals, and identification of bridging activities to maintain participation. Orange County anticipates program improvement in providing activities to encourage participation and to prevent families from going into sanction status for approximately 5,023 WTW enrollees in Orange County, which is 80% of the CalWORKs adult population.

How will success be determined (quantitative and qualitative assessment of effects)? Example: The county describes the percent by which sanction prevention will increase the county's federal WPR and State participation levels, by year, over three years (beginning with this year). The county also describes how it will measure the benefits to recipients in terms of barrier removal services. If the county cannot identify the percentage increase to its WPR for an individual policy/strategy because of overlap with another policy/strategy, the WPR impact can be combined with other strategies in Section H below.

Orange County will determine success by helping participants obtain and maintain employment and remain fully engaged in work-related activities. CalWIN Management Reports and other data sources will be developed to identify and monitor partial participation and downtime. Orange County anticipates participants will increase their understanding of the WTW program and the impact of financial sanctions, thereby reducing the incidences of sanction and increasing work participation.

Orange County will monitor:

- The percent of mandatory WTW participants in non-compliance status. The desired trend is a decrease.
- The percent of mandatory WTW participants in sanction status. The desired trend is a decrease.
- CalWORKs Work Participation Rate (see Section H for details). The desired trend is an increase.
- Federal Work Participation Rate. The desired trend is an increase.
- Job retention rates for aided individuals at 90 days and 180 day. The desired trend is an increase.
- The number of recipients referred to and engaged with the PHNs, Behavioral Health Services, Domestic Abuse Services and Prevention Services. The desired trends are increases.

E. Reengaging noncompliant or sanctioned individuals

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy). Example: A county describes a home visiting program that focuses on re-engaging sanctioned recipients in WTW and removing barriers to participation.

Orange County's Plan Addendum supports meeting the requirements of the CalWORKs Program through a review of current strategies and development of new strategies that will result in program enhancements that improve work participation outcomes. The following policies and strategies have been identified as continuing to promote, expand, and/or develop to accomplish the reengagement of noncompliant or sanctioned individuals

Current Policies/Strategies that have proven effective:

- Diversity in WTW activities and ongoing communication play a key role in helping participants become re-motivated and enhances interest in the benefits of the WTW Program.
- When participants are noncompliant and face a reduction in their grant, the EES and CM work together with the participant to address barriers and seek participant cooperation and engagement.

- Sanctioned participants are assigned to an EES who continues to determine eligibility and provide constant and consistent information about sanction and cure options. The EES has the primary responsibility to begin a re-engagement dialogue and a CM is assigned to work with the client at the point the client opts to cure the sanction.

New and/or potential Policies/Strategies:

- Implement a process change to assign sanction cases to specialized CMs.
- Create new strategies and policy to emphasize the necessary steps needed to engage the individual and facilitate curing the sanctions, including:
 - A re-engagement contact script for CMs.
 - A WTW informational flyer providing sanctioned individual with information about curing sanctions and the benefits of participating in WTW
 - Increase phone and mail contact
 - Increase home contacts
 - Expand home calls to include a Job Services and Retention Services contractor to provide information on employment support services
 - Increase supervisor monitoring of activities on sanctioned cases
 - Target long-term sanctioned participants who may not be aware of the range of available services and regulations repealing durational sanctions
- Evaluate the use of “Mini MDTs” with selected CalWORKs staff and partners, but without the participant. The expectation is that Mini MDTs will be less formal than standard MDT meetings and will be used on an ad-hoc basis for addressing issues of participants with less critical problems.
- Develop enhanced tools for tracking sanctioned individuals at the Regional Office, work unit, and caseworker levels. This will identify training needs, increase the skill level of workers, thereby improving participant engagement.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly? Example: The county describes the percentage by which its sanction rate will be reduced, the percentage of sanctioned individuals that may be identified as meeting a WTW exemption, etc. The county also describes how identification of barriers and the provision of services will assist the family in meeting WTW requirements and achieving self-sufficiency.

The new re-engagement strategies and protocols for the CMs will reduce the number of sanctioned individuals and the duration of persons on sanction. Management tools, targeted case reviews, and other monitoring tools will be developed to track re-engagement. New and expanded strategies of specialized CM services to sanctioned participants and Safety Net cases are expected to increase the individual’s understanding of the WTW program’s requirements and benefits. It is anticipated that this will encourage participation and increase engagement. Orange County anticipates increases in the work participation rate by re-engaging noncompliant or sanctioned individuals. Currently there are approximately 5,023 WTW enrollees in Orange County. Of these enrollees, approximately 843 (17%) are sanctioned.

How will success be determined (quantitative and qualitative assessment of effects)? Example: The county describes the percentage by which a reduction in its sanction rate will increase the county’s federal WPR and its State work participation levels, by year, over three years (beginning with this year), and how the county will measure the benefits to recipients in terms of barrier removal services. If the county cannot identify

the percentage increase to its WPR for an individual policy/strategy because of overlap with another policy/strategy, the WPR impact can be combined with other strategies in Section H below.

- Orange County will continue to promote the goal of self-sufficiency among sanctioned individuals and help re-engage participants in WTW activities to reduce dependency on CalWORKs and increase the percentage of cases that are engaged in WTW activities.
- Orange County expects to add sanctioned individuals to the CM caseloads. This will increase the focus on sanctioned individuals through the use of home calls, re-engagement discussions during annual redeterminations, as well as other developing strategies.

Orange County will monitor:

- The percent of mandatory WTW participants in non-compliance status. The desired trend is a decrease.
- The percent of mandatory WTW participants in sanction status. The desired trend is a decrease.
- CalWORKs Work Participation Rate (see Section H for details). The desired trend is an increase
- Federal Work Participation Rate. The desired trend is an increase.

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

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

Current Policies/Strategies that have proven effective:

- A participation workgroup comprised of representatives from each CalWORKs/WTW Regional Office, CalWORKs Program Administration, and SSA Administrative Services Research Unit met over a three-year period (8/02-9/05) to develop participation improvement strategies. The CMs and ISWs completed a comprehensive survey about participants, activities, non-compliance, and other program elements. The survey provided the foundation for an action plan that generated some of the strategies and activities included in this document. The survey also validated the value of existing programs and provided important input on program priorities as related to participation.
- Participants have access to pre-employment services specifically designed for addressing the barriers to participation and full-time employment. Referrals are made to service partners based on participants' specific and unique needs. By proactively identifying and addressing participant needs and barriers, participation is disrupted less frequently.
- Proactive and frequent contacts with participants identify potential problems and participation barriers rather than waiting for participant-initiated contact.
- Participants are recognized for their accomplishments. For example, the Job Services provider hosts an annual "Champions" celebration for approximately 15 participants who are recognized in a formal ceremony attended by these participants, their families, CMs, Agency directors, partners and other service providers.
- The "Work Pays" premise is promoted and Job Services provider offers financial counseling, tax assistance services, and emphasizes the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Each year an increasing number of participants use these services and the total dollar amount of tax refunds has significantly increased annually.

- Collaboration with the PHNs has been successful in increasing participation. Identifying health problems and then providing health resources to address the family health issues help participants become engaged and maintain participation.
- CalWORKs social workers collaborate with child welfare services social workers on mutual clients. Family stability issues are identified and addressed and coordinated case plans are developed. Many of these families would otherwise be non-compliant with WTW requirements while they dealt with their CFS child welfare case plan requirements.
- The Job Services provider maintains a continuum of participant services from Orientation and up-front job developer services in the Employment Resource Rooms through JSR, pre-retention job search, and employment retention. This seamless continuity provides consistency of message to the participant. The provider also becomes more familiar with the participant and is thereby more effective in anticipating and addressing participant barriers.
- Job Services utilizes peer-to-peer presentations and mentoring/support so successful participants can serve as a role model for new participants.
- The staff receive training that is consistent with the motivational training provided to participants through JSR. This reinforces the message provided to the participants and enhances partnering and communication between the CM and the Job Services provider.
- Medical exemptions are submitted to a contracted third party to validate the exemption based on the medical evidence used to complete the CA61. This eliminates unfounded exemptions and allows individuals who may otherwise have been identified as exempt to receive employment services and participate in WTW activities.
- Caseload size is maintained at a staffing goal of 67 participants per CM, which enables staff to actively work with each participant.
- Cases reviewed for federal work participation rates are identified for case management problems and returned to staff for necessary corrective action.

New and/or potential Policies/Strategies:

- Evaluate the Intensive Case Management Pilot project to determine if intensive, comprehensive, and sustained services to participants are making a difference in engaging noncompliant and sanctioned individuals.
- Discuss work participation strategies and outcomes with all CalWORKs Managers as a standing agenda item at monthly meetings. Program expectations and work participation information will be communicated monthly to all Regional Offices for dissemination to County staff and partners.
- Develop staff recognition options to celebrate work participation improvement.

Expansion/Revision of current Policies/Strategies:

- Evaluate the utilization of a specialized worker to conduct more frequent face-to-face contacts. Current policy requires CMs to monitor each participant's progress in assigned activities through monthly contacts. The contacts are to be face-to-face at least two times per year and field visits are encouraged.
- Utilize the strategies identified in 2006 off-site strategic planning meetings that were conducted in anticipation of new regulations impacting participation requirements and the need for enhanced engagement strategies. The workgroup's current focus is on:
 - Monthly Contacts and Documentation
 - Job Expectations/Case reviews/Evaluations
 - Engagement/Re-engagement/Activities/Best Practices
 - MDT/Case Conferencing
 - Communication

- Caseload Management
- Job Developers
- Child Care
- Incorporate results of a staff survey conducted previously to evaluate key issues as they relate to participation.
- Reevaluate business processes to streamline assessment scheduling and report receipt. A two-day comprehensive assessment is completed on participants who are not full-time employed after JSR. The assessment report detailing the participant's current capabilities, limitations, and employment potential is reviewed by the CM and participant to develop an appropriate WTW plan. The process of scheduling the assessment and receiving the assessment report can create WTW downtime.
- Revise the timeline for referrals to Assessment. The Job Services provider currently makes a referral to Assessment at completion of the four-to-six weeks of JSR for participants who have not found full-time employment. This policy will be revised so that the Job Services provider makes the Assessment referral after three weeks of JSR. It is anticipated that downtime between the end of JSR and the scheduling of the Assessment will be minimized.
- Evaluate the current policy to assign most participants into JSR. This policy will be evaluated for increasing appropriate diversions of participants from JSR and assigning them instead to Assessment and scheduling vocational training as the up-front engagement activity.

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

The expectation is that these activities and strategies will result in increased client engagement, reduced rates of persons entering sanction, and reduced numbers of persons currently in sanction status. Currently there are approximately 5,023 WTW enrollees in Orange County. Of these enrollees, approximately 843 (17%) are sanctioned and 350 (7%) are in noncompliance per month.

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

Orange County will monitor:

- The percent of mandatory WTW participants in non-compliance status. The desired trend is a decrease.
- The percent of mandatory WTW participants in sanction status. The desired trend is a decrease.
- CalWORKs Work Participation Rate (see Section H for details). The desired trend is an increase
- Federal Work Participation Rate. The desired trend is an increase.
- Job retention rates for aided individuals at 90 days and 180 day. The desired trend is an increase.
- The number of recipients referred to and engaged with the PHNs, Behavioral Health Services, Domestic Abuse Services, and Prevention Services. The desired trends are increases.

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

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

promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy). Example: The county describes how it will collaborate with local community colleges to expand the availability of short-term vocational educational programs and increase the number of work study placements for recipients.

Orange County's goal is to continue and develop collaborations with local agencies, including, but not limited to, local WIBs, community colleges and universities, adult schools and Regional Occupational Programs (ROPs) that provide WTW activities and provide participants with skills that facilitate long-term self-sufficiency. Orange County has implemented successful collaboration with the local WIBs, community colleges, and Child Care organizations such as the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) and Children's Home Society (CHS).

Current Policies/Strategies that have proven effective:

Collaboration with the local WIBs:

The County maintains highly successful collaborations with the three WIBs and associated One Stop Centers. A variety of programs have been developed specifically for WTW participants including: On-the-job training, paid work experience, and vocational training with paid internships. The WIBs are an essential partner in identifying entry-level positions in vocations that promote growth and promotional opportunities. Collaborative meetings with the WIBs identified ideas for enhancing their services via flyers to promote their available training programs. Staff presentations are also conducted at local CalWORKs Regional Offices to educate/re-educate staff regarding available WIB services and programs.

Meetings were convened with the WIBs to evaluate TANF Reauthorization and potential effects on WIB programs and services. Ideas generated from the meeting include:

- Increase referrals for WIB services
- Create more short-term, open-entry/open-exit programs and then promote these to participants
- Communicate participant successes
- Redesign the WIBs' Community Service (CS) activity to improve, redefine, and re-market this activity
- Review the characteristics of our WTW participants to identify and address unmet needs
- Identify engagement strategies for the second non-mandatory adult in Two-Parent families
- Update the list of demand occupations more frequently
- Discuss intended outcome measures related to engagement and participation
- Explore other funding sources to serve WTW participants (i.e. Workforce Investment Act).
- Explore revising the distribution of funds among the WIBs to increase impact on CalWORKs populations
- Discuss the utilization of CalWORKs slots as opposed to WIA slots
- Explore collaborations between the WIBs and other entities/providers
- Share best practices in case management
- Identify efforts to reach two-parent households and sanctioned individuals
- Work with each WIB to identify strategies for the specific CalWORKs population for that region

Child Care - Collaboration workgroup:

Established with CalWORKs administrative and line staff, OCDE, and CHS, this workgroup evaluates current policies, protocols and best practices so that CalWORKs Stage One Child Care and Alternative Payment Provider services are as seamless as possible. As a result of this workgroup's efforts, current practices have been developed to enhance child care processes by:

- Streamlining the Stage One to Stage Two referral process

- Development of a new methodology for tracking Stage Two and Three referrals
- Creation of a process to identify and resolve referral problems in a timely manner

New and/or potential Policies/Strategies:

Orange County Community College/Adult Education Partner Meeting:

Recently established meetings were initiated to provide an overview of TANF Reauthorization and its potential effects on community colleges. Ideas discussed included:

- Focus on work-study development and strategies
- Work with colleges to offer on-line classes, tutorials, and certification programs
- Re-visit non-credited supervised study time as a countable participation activity
- Establish County staff liaisons at the Regional Offices to work with the schools.
- Enhance communication with Educational Providers and County staff via regularly scheduled meetings with staff

Expansion/Revision of current Policies/Strategies:

Regional Occupational Programs (ROP):

Collaborations with education providers will be expanded to include ROP Programs. SSA will convene meetings to provide an overview of TANF Reauthorization and its potential effects on the ROPs. Ideas to be discussed include:

- Enabling CMs to work more closely with the ROPs during the signing of the ROPs' annual plans
- Providing CMs with information regarding short-term trainings available at the ROPs
- Keeping the contract Assessment provider informed of current open entry/open exit, short-term activities available through the ROPs
- Keeping the contract Job Services provider informed of ROPs' short-term open-entry/open-exit activities to identify participants who may be diverted from JSR into an ROP activity
- Working with the community colleges to provide:
 - Expanded adult education opportunities
 - Remedial education for college readiness
 - Bridging activities between semesters or during semester breaks to reduce downtime

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly? Example: The county describes how recipients will benefit through increased availability of vocational education and work study programs in terms of obtaining skills needed to obtain employment that will lead to self-sufficiency, increasing recipients' income while on aid, increasing the percentage of recipients participating in federally allowable activities, etc.

Orange County anticipates that collaborative efforts will assist in providing participants with employable skills for achieving long-term self-sufficiency. Increased collaboration with partners, contractors, and education providers will:

- Enhance communication between County staff and partners to reduce participation problems and downtime.
- Enhance availability of vocational education to assist participants in obtaining marketable skills to obtain employment that will lead to self-sufficiency.
- Increase participant's income through work-study programs while on aid.
- Increase the percentage of participants in WTW activities.

Approximately 34% of WTW participants are actively participating in allowable activities through the WIBs, community colleges, and ROPs.

How will success be determined (quantitative and qualitative assessment of effects)? Example: The county describes the percentage by which the county's federal WPR and its State participation levels will increase by year over three years (beginning with this year). The county also describes the amount by which a recipient's annual earnings are expected to increase, the number of families that will leave aid due to employment annually, etc. If the county cannot identify the percentage increase to its WPR for an individual policy/strategy because of overlap with another policy/strategy, the WPR impact can be combined with other strategies in Section H below.

Collaboration strategies will continue to be developed and refined, resulting in increased work participation.

Orange County will Monitor:

- The number of referrals to WIB and ROP programs. The desired trend is an increase.
- Child Care usage and the employment rate among CalWORKs participants. The desired trend is an increase.
- CalWORKs Work Participation Rate (see Section H for details). The desired trend is an increase.
- Federal Work Participation Rate. The desired trend is an increase.

H) Plan to measure quarterly progress

Measures of quarterly progress:

Orange County will measure the following outcomes on at least a quarterly basis:

1. CalWORKs Work Participation Rate

- The result of CalWORKs regulation and program design inconsistencies with federal regulations is a negative impact on achieving the federal work participation rates. It is compelling for Orange County to establish a performance measure that is relevant to the rules under which the CalWORKs program is governed. For purposes of the CalWORKs Plan Addendum, this measure is called the CalWORKs Work Participation Rate.
- The CalWORKs Participation Rate divides the number of aided adults who are non-exempt from WTW participation (required to participate under W & I Code 11320.3) plus the number of adults sanctioned for more than three of the last 12 months; and who are participating in allowable WTW activities under W & I Code 11322.4 for the hourly requirement established by W & I Code 11322.8; Divided by total number of aided adults who are non-exempt from WTW participation (required to participate under W & I Code 11320.3) plus the number of adults sanctioned for more than three of the last 12 months
- Orange County's CalWORKs Work Participation Rate monthly average for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2006 is 67.4% for all countable families.

2. CalWORKs Engagement Rate

- In October 2006, staff from the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) presented the document, "Statewide Engagement Data from the WTW 25 & 25A", which includes a "Participation" data element. For purposes of the CalWORKs Plan Addendum, this measure is called the CalWORKs Engagement Rate.

- The CDSS methodology utilizes data from state-required WTW 25 Monthly Activity Reports to determine the percentage of WTW enrollees who are participating in CalWORKs WTW activities.
- The CalWORKs Engagement Rate is an appropriate WTW measure that is directly relevant to county compliance with CalWORKs rules as established in the W & I Code.
- In the second quarter of 2006, Orange County ranked in the top third of the State with an Engagement Rate of 86.2%.

3. Federal Work Participation Rate

- Orange County's Federal Work Participation Rate monthly average for FFY 2006 is 41.1% for the all-family rate.
- Consistent with CDSS direction, Orange County has not calculated a separate rate for two-parent families. It is understood that a separate rate for two-parent families will be required beginning FFY 2007.

Projected impact on County's federal WPR:

- Some significant inconsistencies between CalWORKs and Federal regulations are newly established in the Federal Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) of 2005, and are effective in FFY 2007.
- The most significant impact on the Federal Work Participation rate is the provision related to the definition of "Work Eligible Adult". In All County Letter 06-46, CDSS recognizes the scope of the negative impact as follows: "With the new populations included in the WPR, the Department estimates the State's FFY 2005 all families WPR would be reduced to approximately 23 percent." This is a reduction of 4.9 percentage points from the current State-estimated WPR of 27.9%.
- It is understood that this estimated reduction does not consider mitigation resulting from additional funding and county initiatives designed to improve work participation. However, it is also understood that the use of additional funding and the implementation of new initiatives are limited to CalWORKs rules and do not impact the fundamental inconsistencies with Federal regulations.
- Considering these factors, for Orange County it is estimated that the immediate impact will be a decrease of 3 percentage points in the first quarter of FFY 2007. However, the State's estimate for California is an immediate decrease of 4.9 percentage points.
- Subsequent to this immediate impact caused by factors out of the County's control, it is expected that focused efforts and implementation of new service strategies will result in a trend reversal and increases to the Federal Work Participation Rate.
- Due to the divergent rules, it is difficult to estimate the result of CalWORKs WTW improvement on the Federal Work Participation Rate. However, it can be anticipated that the rate of improvement will be somewhat less than the direct result on the CalWORKs Participation Rate. After the first quarter of FFY 2007 (which will serve as the baseline), it is anticipated that the Federal Work Participation Rate will increase by:
 - 3% by the end of FFY 2007
 - 6% by the end of FFY 2008
 - 10% by the end of FFY 2009

4) Funding

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

Program Component	Fiscal Year 2005-06 Actual Expenditures	Fiscal Year 2006-07 Budgeted Amount	Description of how additional funding provided in Fiscal Year 2006-07 will be used
CalWORKs Eligibility Administration	\$35,286,320	\$36,973,347	
WTW Employment Services	\$39,971,036	\$41,882,038	Approximately \$4,235,000 to expand contracted services to implement work participation improvement strategies, including Case Management, Job Services, Vocational Education, and Public Health Nurses
CalWORKs Child Care	\$11,600,961	\$12,814,776	Approximately \$1,265,000 to fund anticipated increases in child care usage resulting from increased participation in WTW activities
Cal-Learn	\$663,123	\$641,743	
CalWORKs Funded Mental Health Services	\$3,137,170	\$2,368,639	
CalWORKs Funded Substance Abuse Services	\$1,168,013	\$1,558,856	
Other			
Other			