

PLUMAS COUNTY

CalWORKS Plan

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Department of Social Services/Public Guardian

Elliott Smart, Director/ Public Guardian

This plan is submitted pursuant to Section 104531 of the Welfare and Institutions

Code required by the Welfare to Work Act of 1997, AB 1542

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the passage of Federal Welfare Reform in August, 1996, Plumas County initiated planning activities necessary to implement reform at the local level. The County faced challenges with the short time frame available to prepare its plan following the passage of AB 1542 (the State implementing legislation) in August, 1997, and with the fact that planning had been delayed pending the hiring of a permanent Welfare Director in July 1997. Despite these challenges, this plan includes broad input from the community, service providers and other interested parties.

The Plumas County Plan which appears on the following pages conforms to the State plan format and addresses all plan elements. The Plumas plan's goals and objectives are in consonance with the goals and objectives identified by the California State Legislature.

The components of the Plumas County plan include:

- Identification of the collaboration needed to provide assessment, training, education and support services
- Description of partnerships with the private sector.
- Listing of welfare to work activities offered
- Description of mental health and substance abuse services
- Discussion of child care services to be provided
- Description of how victims of domestic violence will be treated

The goals and objectives of the local plan are as follows:

- (1) To assist and support California's efforts to reduce poverty among children.
- (2) To promote personal responsibility, self sufficiency, and accountability.
- (3) To reduce dependence upon government financial assistance through promoting job preparation, creation of links between recipients and employment, and job retention.
- (4) To reduce out of wedlock births, support the maintenance of two parent families and promote marriage.
- (5) To report measurable outcomes such as job retention, earnings and unsubsidized employment.
- (6) To support and assist California's efforts to foster the well being of children through adult and family responsibility, and to build collaborations that promote child health and child safety, keep children in school and in their home.
- (7) To encourage and foster efforts to secure financial support of children through child support collection and to discourage fraud.

INTRODUCTION

The Department initiated planning for welfare reform with a meeting held in Quincy, California on November 6, 1996. Representatives from organizations providing employment services, training and supportive services for public assistance recipients moving into work were invited to participate in a round table discussion of the potential impacts of welfare reform on families, employers, community based support organizations and the community. A short term strategic plan emerged from this meeting with the identification of the need to gather more information on the shape reform would take prior to moving forward.

The Department has faced several challenges in assembling the components of this plan. A leadership change occurred in the Department of Social Services in April, 1997, causing delays in initiating the local planning efforts. State delays in approving implementing legislation and the issuance of plan guidelines in September, 1997 posed additional challenges. Despite these challenges the plan represents considerable efforts to re-establish the needed collaboration with community based organizations, public organizations, other interested groups in the very short time frame that has been available since the passage of AB 1452 in August, 1997.

Part of the Department's success in fostering the continuing collaboration that has been necessary to maintain integrated Welfare-to-Work connections between local agencies is attributable to the Department's staff (and in particular, the GAIN staff). During periods when top leadership was in transition, staff maintained proactive efforts to sustain and preserve the partnerships with other service providers at the Plumas Employment and Training Center. The fostering

and preservation of these relationships enables the Department to present a comprehensive and integrated plan.

A list of the organizations and individuals who have assisted the Department with CalWORKS planning or have participated in forums and discussion groups appears as Exhibit A: Public and Community Contacts.

The Plumas County Plan in its current form is broad and contains the flexibility needed to make adjustments as the program evolves. The Social Services Department is committed to fully involving community based providers of services, employers and other interested entities in the continuing development of local responses to the implementation of welfare reform. Continuing dialogue will need to occur. The Plumas County Plan calls for public meetings to engage the dialogue necessary to test and evaluate the efficacy of Departmental welfare to work activities and to develop responses to local changes and challenges in public assistance delivery and work requirements.

In each section that follows, a brief description of the state plan requirements appears in a boxed paragraph and italics .

This is followed by a **COUNTY RESPONSE** section indicating the County's plans for meeting the requirement.

WELFARE REFORM OVERVIEW

On the following page, the Department provides a flow chart showing the elements of CalWORKS processes and how they are to be implemented in the Plumas County Department of Social Services. This system overview was designed based on the recommendations of the PDSS staff who will be implementing the internal changes necessary to put the mechanics of welfare to work in place in the department.

A. COLLABORATION WITH PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY BASED PRIVATE AGENCIES TO PROVIDE TRAINING AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

The State plan format asks the County to briefly describe how it will work with other public and private agencies to provide necessary training and support services.

COUNTY RESPONSE

1. Assessment, Job Preparation and Training

(a) Employment and Training Center (ETC)

The county's Employment and Training Center opened in April, 1996. The mission of the Employment and Training Center is to provide access to a comprehensive array of quality employment services, job related education, and training opportunities to job seekers, employers, and the community. The Center consists of a partnership among the County's employment, training, education, and support services organizations. The Department of Social Services has participated in developing the necessary collaboration with other service providers at the Center to promote "one stop" service delivery for job seekers. The County will house all CalWORKS case managers at the Center as it has GAIN staff up to now.

Under the County CalWORKS Plan, the Employment and Training Center becomes the focal point for the County's expended efforts to move public assistance recipients rapidly into work. The Center will continue its role as the prime source of integrated service delivery for job seekers.

The Center is located in East Quincy on Highway 70, the main thoroughfare through Quincy and is readily accessible by public transit. The Center's partners include staff from the following organizations and programs:

- Plumas Job Training Center (PJTC), administers JTPA programs
- Employment Development Department (EDD), Job Match Services
- Plumas County Chamber of Commerce, business/employer support
- Plumas County Dept of Social Services
- Feather River College, vocational certification, career skills
- State Vocational Rehabilitation, support for job seekers with disabilities
- Project Green Thumb, support for older workers
- Plumas County Office of Education, school to work programs

The partnership which developed this inter-organizational and integrated service delivery site anticipated the work related focus of Welfare Reform and has provided County residents with the benefits of the "one stop" concept: Access to employment, training and supportive services at a single location. Service integration assures that resources are used efficiently and without duplication to provide quality services. This concept assures the needed collaboration to meet CalWORKS goals. ETC customers, including CalWORKS participants, have immediate access to assessment services, training and job preparation, and referral to support services such as education, child care, housing and transportation.

CalWORKS case management staff located at the Employment and Training Center will conduct the initial assessments of participants referred from eligibility workers. Case managers will formulate individual Welfare-to-Work

plans for CalWORKS recipients utilizing employment histories, job readiness indicators, and current barriers as factors in decision making regarding the appropriate placement of the individual. Following development of the case plan, referrals can be made to the other ETC participating agencies as needed to meet the goals of individual plans.

(b) Employment and Training Committee

Bi-monthly meetings of key staff are held in order to develop dialogue and consensus on mutually identified concerns and problems connected with moving public assistance recipients into the work force. Employment and Training Committee representation includes staff from Feather River College, Plumas Regional Occupational Program, Vocational Rehabilitation, Plumas County Economic Development Commission, Plumas Corporation, Housing Authority, Plumas Rural Services (Child Care Resource and Referral Services), County Superintendent of Schools and Employment Development Department. These meetings promote a common vision and unified approach to the intra-organizational dynamics needed to move individuals into the work force.

(c) Plumas Job Training Center (PJTC)

Current linkages with the Plumas Job Training Center will be maintained under the County CalWORKS plan. PJTC and Department of Social Services case managers conduct joint assessments of CalWORKS participants to determine job readiness. This partnership will be strengthened as the department moves more recipients into work activities.

Employment preparation workshops are also held jointly to meet the goals of individual Welfare-to-Work plans. Where possible, CalWORKS participants will be co-enrolled with PJTC to maximize resources available to the client and reduce duplication of effort.

A review of the capacity of the local PJTC resources indicates that capability exists to accept the additional participants expected to be generated from CalWORKS referrals. PJTC also conducts independent assessments, job preparation services, OJT and paid work experience programs.

(d) Employment Development Department: The Department contracts with the Employment Development Department to perform job development activities. These activities include conducting job clubs (job search workshops), supervised job search, negotiating and monitoring OJT slots and specific job development with employers for CalWORKS participants. EDD lists job openings provided by employers and also meets with local employers to assess their needs and develop jobs for public assistance recipients as well as other job seekers. In addition, EDD can provide extensive data on local, regional, and state-wide labor market needs.

(e) Plumas-Sierra Vocational Rehabilitation: The Department intends to continue its relationship with State Vocational Rehabilitation Services to meet the needs of CalWORKS participants who are disabled. Individuals with medical barriers to finding employment may be assigned to Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Vocational Rehabilitation can perform independent assessments which may rapidly overcome barriers to employment. Vocational Rehabilitation can also

pay for supportive services to assist with the Welfare-to-Work plan. Vocational Rehabilitation counselors will work closely with the DSS case managers to help develop a plan which is tailored to individuals whose needs are best served in this component of the plan.

(f) **Federal Welfare to Work (WtW) Grant Program:** Federal WtW funds have been received under contract by the Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium (NORTEC). NORTEC administers Job Training Partnership Act funds for a service delivery area which includes Plumas County. NORTEC and its organizational subsidiary, the Plumas Job Training Center, Incorporated (PJTC), are major partners in the delivery of one-stop job training and Welfare-to-Work services in Quincy.

It is understood that there is some confusion in distinguishing between DOL's WtW grant program and the CalWORKS WTW program. To help differentiate between these two programs, PJTC has decided to identify the DOL program in Plumas County as "Work First". The CalWORKS program is identified as "Welfare to Work".

Initial eligibility for "hard to employ" who fit the first category of "Work First" services (i.e. received aid for a period of 30 months or more) is performed by County Benefits Assistance Counselors as a part of CalWORKS eligibility determination. Eligibility for Work First services for individuals fitting the second category (i.e. characteristics of long term welfare dependency) is determined by Welfare-to-Work case managers. In either case, the Welfare-to-Work case manager makes the referral to Work First.

Due to the co-location of both the Welfare-to-Work case managers and staff assigned to deliver services through the Federal WtW Grant program, services are closely coordinated and integrated to assure that services are focused only on the hardest to employ and that there is no duplication of effort. Because of co-location, there is seamless referral of eligible participants for services funded through Federal WtW funds.

(2) Education

The Department of Social Services has already developed strong alliances with local educational resources. The schools have been continuing participants in the local Employment and Training committee and have helped to forge the commitments to collaborative efforts focused on education and training geared to securing rapid employment.

(a) Plumas County Office of Education (PCOE): The Adult Education program has been used to provide basic education skills for current GAIN participants earning GED certificates. PCOE also operates the School-to-Work program. The academic program includes School to Work units which incorporate real world experience into the curriculum.

The Department of Social Services intends to continue to utilize the County Office of Education to meet the educational needs of recipients, where continuing education and school to work best serve the interests of achieving self sufficiency. We also intend to explore areas of mutual concern such as the role counseling and school nursing can play in family interventions aimed at resolving problems that are an issue in individual Welfare-to-Work plans.

(b) **Plumas Regional Occupation Program:** The regional occupation program provides vocational programs in nursing (LVN, CNA), Food Services, and other job skills training and certification programs. The Department intends to continue its productive relationship with ROP as we have found that the training provided through this program has yielded considerable success in moving recipients rapidly into work.

(c) **Feather River Community College:** The college has committed to developing resources which will assist the county in generating Welfare-to-Work activities. Among these activities they have included adding to available counselling services and increasing on-site child care.

The college has expressed a willingness to engage in a dialogue aimed at adding components to the offered curriculum which focus on the student who may not be pursuing matriculation with an AA degree. The College will also use CalWORKS funding to enhance the work study program and services to students with disabilities. This focus becomes critical in assuring that Feather River College continues to be a resource for CalWORKS recipients who are approved for participation in an educational plan.

While the relationship with Feather River College is still developing, we believe that the college administration is committed to being a partner with the county in serving the interests of CalWORKS recipients.

(d) **Adult Literacy Program:** CalWORKS participants will be referred to the County Adult Literacy Program to help enhance basic education skills and work towards a GED.

(3) Supportive Services

(a) Child Care: Plumas Rural Services A strong child care services component is critical to successful Welfare-to-Work plans. An employed individual with young children must have available, safe, reliable and affordable child care in order to maintain their employment. The department has a close working relationship with Plumas Rural Services, Inc. This organization is the primary contractor for Dept. of Education Child Care Programs and for Child Care programs which have been administered by the Department of Social Services.

The Plumas County plan has been developed in conjunction with the Plumas Rural Services program. The plan calls for all stages of child care services to be administered by contract. The department is currently developing mechanisms in conjunction with PRS to secure these services.

(b) Transportation: Plumas County Transit System: In anticipation of the transportation needs which would generate out of Welfare-to-Work activities, the Department of Social Services developed a contractual agreement with the Plumas County Transit System which enables public assistance recipients involved in work related activities to use the transit services without cost. Under the current agreement the County Transit Service provides no cost transportation to recipients, giving them priority status in meeting their transportation needs. The Department's CalWORKS plan calls for continued use of this arrangement to assure that transportation is not a barrier to seeking and accepting work.

The Director of the Department of Social Services is a member of the Plumas Transportation Advisory Council. Through the Director's participation, the

Department has the means to assure that transportation services in the county adequately address the needs and concerns of persons served via CalWORKS programs.

(c) **Mental Health: Plumas County Mental Health.** The Department of Social Services is located in the Plumas County Courthouse Annex. Co-located at this facility is the Department of Mental Health. The two Departments work closely in matters connected with crossover clients. Collaborative arrangements already exist which enable cooperation toward meeting employment goals for persons whose employment capacity may be impaired due to mental health conditions. In addition to the treatment component which is a feature of this plan, the County Mental Health Department encourages community service work activities as a part of treatment services.

CalWORKS recipients whose employment capacity may be limited or impaired due to a mental health condition shall be required to participate in a treatment program to meet their welfare to work participation requirements. The plan assumes that there will be sufficient resources through the County Mental Health Department to fully meet the needs of persons who are determined to be in need of mental health treatment services.

Inasmuch as the Departments of Mental Health and Social Services are co-located in the same facility, case staffing and consultations regarding individual clients and case plans can be conducted easily. The plan calls for such consultations on a regular basis as client needs dictate.

The Plumas County Department of Mental Health will provide training to CalWORKS case managers and to eligibility workers on recognizing signs and

symptoms of mental health conditions which may function as a barrier to employment.

(d) Substance Abuse Treatment Services: Plumas County Alcohol and Drug Treatment Program. The Department of Social Services is located across from the Plumas County Alcohol and Drug Treatment Services Program, thereby affording clients easy access to available treatment services. The Department plan calls for eligibility workers and CalWORKS case managers to receive training in identifying persons with alcohol and/or drug problems. CalWORKS case management staff will conduct substance abuse assessments. The Plumas County plan provides that at any time that it's determined that substance abuse may be contributing to a participant's inability to comply with Welfare-to-Work requirements, they may be referred to the County Alcohol and Drug program.

While the plan assumes that there will be sufficient treatment resources within the County Alcohol and Drug program to fully serve those persons identified in CalWORKS as having such barriers, the Department feels that this must be monitored very closely. The potential exists for the demand for this resource to exceed its capability to respond.

(e) Victims of Domestic Violence: Plumas County Family Violence Coalition. The Department of Social Services has developed a close working relationship with the Family Violence Coalition. The Director of the Department of Social Services has become a member of the Coalition and has participated in developing the local protocols for victims of domestic violence. A copy of the protocol appears as Exhibit B: Family Violence.

Several local organizations exist which provide services to victims of domestic violence including County Victim/Witness Program, Plumas Rural Services-Domestic Violence Services, Plumas Crisis Intervention and Resource Center, the County Public Health Department, County Sheriff, Child Protective Services and Adult Protective Services operated by the County Department of Social Services.

The County's plan calls for eligibility workers and CalWORKS case managers to receive training in identifying signs indicating a potential victim of a domestic violence situation. The plan includes training on services available through local community based service organizations.

When appropriate, CalWORKS recipients claiming a barrier to employment due to domestic violence situations will be referred in accordance with agency protocol to the appropriate entity. The plan assumes close coordination with the community based organizations serving victims of domestic violence to assure that appropriate follow up is in place and that sanctions for failure to participate in work requirements are not unfairly imposed due to abusive situations.

REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The State plan format asks whether the County has a Refugee Employment Services Plan.

COUNTY RESPONSE

Refugee Employment Services. Plumas County does not offer refugee employment services.

B. PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO IDENTIFY JOBS

The State plan format asks for a description of the County's partnership with the private sector including employers, employer associations, the faith community, and the central labor councils and how those partnerships will identify jobs for CalWORKS program recipients.

COUNTY RESPONSE

The Department of Social Services works closely with the business community and with other entities which promote economic and business development through the existing GAIN program. The associations will be strengthened as the Department moves public assistance recipients into the labor force through CalWORKS. Specific plans for strengthening these relationships are outlined below.

(1) Employment and Training Committee The Department has been a member of the county wide Employment and Training Committee for the last decade and has worked closely with the Committee for implementation of the GAIN Program. The group meets monthly and has carried out a variety of cooperative projects. The Committee's role will be expanded under CalWORKS. The Department will seek to expand the Committee to include more private sector representation (through the addition of members from each of the four local Chambers of Commerce) as well as ongoing representation from the Board of Supervisors. This

expanded committee will serve as the Job Creation Task Force under AB 1542 and thus will be responsible for development and oversight of the Job Creation Plan.

Current members of the Committee include the Social Services Department, Employment Development Department, Plumas Job Training Center, Plumas Corporation, Feather River College, Plumas County Office of Education (ROP), Health Department, Department of Rehabilitation, County Community Development Commission, and Plumas Rural Services (Child Care Resource and Referral).

(2) Plumas Corporation and the Local Chambers of Commerce. Plumas Corporation carries out the functions of the County Chamber of Commerce and is the lead economic development organization in the County. Plumas Corporation works closely with the Employment and Training Committee and the four local chambers of commerce in the County (Chester/Lake Almanor, Indian Valley, Quincy Main Street, and Eastern Plumas). These local chambers represent most of the businesses in the County and carry out promotional and business assistance activities. Plumas Corporation activities include business loan packaging and infrastructure development (with County Community Development Commission). The Board of Supervisors has authorized and funded Plumas Corporation to significantly expand business attraction activities in 1998 and these will be coordinated with CalWORKS wherever possible. Plumas Corporation will develop the Job Creation Plan in 1998, under the aegis of the Employment and Training Committee and the County Board of Supervisors.

(3) Employment Development Department/ Workforce Development Team

The Department contracts with the Employment Development Department to perform job development activities. EDD represents the department on the county Workforce Development Team. This group meets with local employers to assess their needs and develops jobs for public assistance recipients and other job seekers.

The Workforce Development Team includes representation from PJTC, EDD, Plumas County Office of Education, and the Public Health Department (Computers in our Future program) as well as other partners within the Employment and Training Center. The Team has adopted the following mission statement: The Workforce Development Team is an innovative group of representatives from the Employment and Training Center linking employer's needs with partner services for the economic health of the community.

Representatives from the team meet individually with employers, make public presentations at service organizations such as Rotary, Soroptimist and the Chambers of Commerce. This allows the team the ability to educate the employers on the various programs and services that are available to them and to also identify the needs of the employers. The team sponsors workshops and seminars based on employer needs and requests.

The team is also developing a partnership with private sector employers to identify job opportunities and job analysis. This will serve as a training development outline for CalWORKS participants. The Workforce Development Team will play an important role in fostering a relationship with private employers and educating them about CalWORKS and Welfare Reform.

(4) **Faith Community** Individual contacts have been made with the churches and will continue to be made as the plan is implemented. The Department currently has representation on Boards governing programs provided by the churches such as the Community Assistance Network. We see this representation as integral in implementing CalWORKS and will use it as a vehicle to foster continuing relationships with and support from the faith community in developing the support structure necessary to maintain employment.

(5) **Temporary Job Creation Services Program**. This program also provides temporary job services. Many of these jobs are at the higher end of the wage scale. The program requires that when such temporary jobs are provided that prevailing wage is paid. Some of these jobs develop into regular employment.

(6) **Organized Labor**. Because of the County's small size, organized labor is, for the most part represented by regional based leadership located in urban areas outside of the County. Organized labor is represented on the Employment and Training Committee through the Private Industry Council and Workforce Development Team.

The Department will be keeping organized labor informed about our CalWORKS planning and we will be inviting representatives to participate in activities connected with job identification and development as the plan is implemented.

C. LOCAL LABOR MARKET NEEDS

The State plan format requests a brief description of the means the county will use to identify local labor market needs.

COUNTY RESPONSE

Plumas County's main center of population is the unincorporated community of Quincy, with just over 5,000 residents. The County's small size and its proximity to other more urban communities dictates a regional based labor market needs assessment in order to determine the availability of jobs and the appropriateness of education and training programs supporting Welfare-to-Work. Labor market needs for urban centers which include Chico (about 90 miles from Quincy), Reno (about 80 miles from Quincy) and Susanville will be included in the assessment of employment availability and job training needs.

The Department believes that a regional approach to identifying needs in the labor market will provide the best guide for delivering broad based Welfare-to-Work services in a manner designed to focus on realistic employment opportunities. The urban centers located to the east and west are within easy driving distance, making relocation to those areas a reasonable alternative for those seeking employment.

The Employment Development Department (EDD), provides the Department with ready access to regional labor market needs. This enables the Department to identify specific occupational needs and target our planning accordingly.

Recently, Plumas County received grant funding for an innovative program called Computers in Our Future. The Department also has the use of a bank of computer terminals at the Plumas Employment and Training Center through a project called SHARE. SHARE is a job match tool which uses a Statewide database available on local computers to assist our CalWORKS recipients in finding jobs. Computers available at the Employment and Training Center can be used to produce resumes, provide recipients with basic skills in computer use and can even be used as a means of locating work as recipients become adept at using the Internet to seek employment.

D. WELFARE TO WORK ACTIVITIES

The State plan format includes a checklist of Welfare-to-Work activities that are allowed by State law. The plan format requests that activities that will be offered be indicated by an "x" in the boxes below.

COUNTY RESPONSE

The County plans to offer a the range of Welfare-to-Work activities indicated below:

- o Unsubsidized employment
- o Subsidized private sector employment
- o Subsidized public sector employment
- o Work Experience
- o On the Job Training
- o Grant-based OJT
- o Vocational Education and Training
- o Education related to employment
- o Adult Basic Education (BE, GED, ESL)
- o Work Study
- o Self Employment
- o Community Service
- o Job Search and Job Readiness Assistance
- o Job Skills related to employment
- o Supported Work
- o Transitional Employment
- o Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services tied to welfare to work activities
- o Domestic Violence Services

E. SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT SERVICES

The State plan format requests a description of how the welfare department and the County Alcohol and Drug program will collaborate and utilize new funds available to ensure effective delivery of substance abuse services. Additionally, the following is requested:

[X] Certify that the County's substance abuse treatment services will include at least the following: evaluation, case management, substance abuse treatment, and employment counseling and the provision of community service jobs.

COUNTY RESPONSE

The Department has initiated contacts with the Plumas County Alcohol and Drug Treatment Services program. This is the only provider of Alcohol and Drug Treatment Services in the community. The Department is negotiating an agreement which will assure that new funding provided for alcohol and drug treatment will be used to provide evaluation and assessment of referred individuals. Where appropriate, individualized services may be provided, however most of the public assistance recipients referred will participate in group counseling sessions in order to promote and support behaviors that will facilitate moving these individuals rapidly into work.

Case managers and eligibility workers will be trained on recognizing signs of substance abuse. Training will also be provided to case managers on using a simple screening tool to identify persons who should be referred to the County program. (The tool has been developed in cooperation with the County Mental Health Department. The screening tool for substance abuse appears as Exhibit D in the attachments to the plan).

The Agency will conduct an initial assessment of each potential participant to determine any barriers or exemptions from participation. Any participant which indicates they have a substance abuse problem or who is screened as having a problem shall be referred to Plumas County Alcohol and Drug Treatment Program for evaluation and assessment. An individualized welfare to work plan will be developed for this individual in conjunction with the Drug and Alcohol staff.

The Department is concerned that sufficient funding may not exist to provide necessary services to all of the assistance recipients who will need services under this component of the program. As the plan is implemented, close monitoring will need to be in place to determine that this component is properly funded.

The Department expects to have an interagency MOU in place covering the services to be provided using these funds. The MOU will become an addendum to this plan at the time that it is adopted.

2. Plan for Mental Health Services:

The State plan format requests a brief description of how the Welfare Department and the County Department of Mental Health will collaborate and utilize new funds available to provide effective mental health services. In addition the following is requested:

[X] Certify that the county will provide at least the following services: assessment, case management, treatment and rehabilitation services, identification of substance abuse problems, and a process for identifying individuals with severe mental disabilities.

COUNTY RESPONSE

The Department will utilize County Mental Health Services for support services offered under this part of the plan. The Department's discussions with the Mental Health Director and his staff indicate that existing services will be sufficient to accommodate the persons to be referred to Mental Health because of suspected barriers to employment due to a Mental Health disability. Plumas County Department of Mental Health has agreed to provide assessment, case management, treatment and rehabilitation services, identification of substance abuse problems and a process for identifying individuals with severe mental disabilities.

CalWORKS case managers will initially assess all participants for potential barriers to participation in welfare to work activities. Those participants indicating they have a barrier to services linked to a mental health problem shall be referred

to mental health for assessment. Agency staff will utilize a formal referral process which requires mental health treatment as a condition of participation in their welfare to work activity. The treatment may be offered as the sole activity or be provided in concert with the participants assigned CalWORKS activity.

An interagency MOU will be developed covering the services to be provided under this component of the plan. Once approved, this MOU will become an addendum to the Plumas County plan.

F. MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AVAILABLE AFTER TIME LIMITS

The State plan format asks the County to briefly describe how the extent to which and the manner in which the County will make mental health services available to recipients who have exceeded the 18 or 24 month time limit.

COUNTY RESPONSE

The Department recognizes that participants may require mental health services after they have exhausted their public assistance time limit. The Department will establish protocols with the assistance of the County Mental Health Department and through the County LIFEBOAT project to assure that reasonable access to such services is available.

G. CHILD CARE AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

The State plan format requests a brief description from Counties regarding how child care services will be provided to CalWORKS participants. A description is requested regarding how the county will determine that a parent may be exempt when providing care for a child six months of age or younger. The state plan format asks for a brief description of the criteria to be used to determine the period of time a parent or other relative will be exempt considering the availability of infant child care, local labor market conditions, and other factors. Also requested is information on how the parent may contact the Resource and Referral agency. Finally, the plan asks how the County will assure that lack of transportation is not a barrier to achieving Welfare-to-Work goals.

COUNTY RESPONSE

The two most significant barriers to employment are safe and adequate child care and reliable transportation. The department has taken proactive steps to assure that unavailability of child care or transportation do not function as an impediment to moving County residents rapidly into work. In this section of the plan, we describe the current and future plans for assuring that child care and transportation are available.

(1) Child Care

(a) The Department plans to contract for Stage One child care. It is the Department's goal to create a client friendly system which facilitates connections

with the local child care resource and referral agency, Plumas Rural Services, and which enables clients to move through child care stages without disrupting or burdening their Welfare to Work activities. The Department also intends to facilitate early connections with the local child care resource and referral agency either as a function of the contract for Stage One care or through direct referrals to that resource. At the time this plan was assembled, a contractual arrangement was not yet in place. The Department expects to have an agreement in place by the end of April. When the contract is in place it will be included as an addendum to this plan.

The Department's preliminary assessment of the potential need for child care services suggests that there will be sufficient availability of most types of child care to meet the needs of CalWORKS participants. The Department has been advised to expect that early in the implementation of the Plumas County CalWORKS plan a shortage may occur of availability of child care for children up to 1 year of age. The Department has been further advised that there may also be a shortage of care during non-traditional hours for all ages.

In view of the above, Plumas County will provide a one-time exemption from work participation for the parent of a child under six months of age. Extension of the exemption period will be allowed on a case by case basis for up to 12 months after the birth or adoption of a child upon consideration of the unavailability of necessary supportive services or other issues that make it too difficult to participate in Welfare-to-Work activities.

Of additional children are born to a participant who has previously use the infant exemption, the participant will receive a 12 week exemption. Extension of the exemption period will be allowed on a case by case vasis for up to six months

after the birth or adoption of a child upon consideration of the unavailability of necessary supportive services or other issues that make it difficult to participate in Welfare-to-Work activities.

Training for child care providers is available through the community college system. The local resource and referral agency is also seeking grant funding to expand the availability of child care for infants. Consequently, the Department expects that as CalWORKS is implemented that the shortage of child care for young children will be transitory.

The Department will evaluate the status of child care after the plan is operational for six months to determine whether child care availability is a problem. We will also monitor the the number of exemptions which have been extended. The Department will use this information to determine whether a modification of the plan in regard to exemptions is appropriate.

(2) Transportation: The Director of the Department of Social Services is a member of the Plumas Transportation Advisory Council. Through the Director's participation, the Department has the means to assure that transportation services in the county adequately address the needs and concerns of persons served via CalWORKS programs.

In anticipation of the transportation needs which would generate from Welfare-to-Work activities, the Department of Social Services developed a contractual agreement with the Plumas County Transit System which will enable CalWORKS participants to use the Plumas County Transit System without cost. The County has a well developed public transit service which meets the needs of residents in many of the outlying areas of the County. Participants who reside in

areas served by the transit system will receive bus passes at no cost giving them priority status in meeting their transportation needs.

For those persons who do not have access to the transit service, the Department will reimburse actual mileage at the rate of \$ 0.31 per mile which is the same reimbursement rate for county employees.

H. COMMUNITY SERVICE PLAN

The State plan format asks for a brief description of the local plan for providing community service activities. The County is asked to include a description of the process that will be used to determine where community services assignments will be located, and the agencies/entities that will be responsible for project development, fiscal administration, and case management services. If it is not known at this time, the County may provide the specific details of the Community Service Plan as an addendum.

COUNTY RESPONSE

The Department of Social Services operates a very active community services work experience program which provides participants with the opportunity to build skills and behaviors that prepare them for entry into the work force. The Department has developed a variety of work site opportunities which include maintenance of public lands and roadways, education and literacy, clerical support, mentoring and child care.

The Department's plan includes continuing the active development of community work experience sites as a part of case management activities. Under this plan, CalWORKS case managers will work with the community in order to develop the needed agreements to assure that sufficient work sites are available.

The Department recognizes that at the point in time that community service is required, options for moving a CalWORKS recipient rapidly into work may have been fully explored. Therefore community service work assignments will not necessarily provide activities that are connected with the recipient's specific employment goal. Instead, the sites will be provided to promote community improvement as the first order of priority. Therefore, the Department will first consider those requests which include community improvement as a feature of the assignment.

The Department of Social Services will be responsible for the fiscal administration and case management of all community work experience assignments. Organizations which participate in the community work experience program will be responsible for assisting the Department with the case management activities by monitoring attendance, reporting on participant progress, and by notifying the Department when a participant is not making adequate progress so that the CalWORKS case manager can determine whether a sanction is appropriate for non participation.

L. WORKING WITH VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The State plan format asks the County to briefly describe how the County will provide training for those county workers who will be responsible for working with CalWORKS recipients who are victims of domestic violence. The plan format asks for a description of the criteria that will be used by Plumas County for determining good cause to waive program requirements for victims of domestic violence and what approach the County will take to deal with recipients who are identified in this way.

COUNTY RESPONSE

Absent a state protocol for providing temporary waivers of Welfare-to-Work requirements for victims of domestic violence, the County has, as a part of its planning efforts, worked with the local Family Violence Coalition to establish a local protocol for providing such waivers. The Family Violence Coalition has utilized this opportunity to create a strong statement of zero tolerance for domestic violence and to express that good social policy should lean toward this goal utilizing whatever means are available to promote connections to interventive services. Therefore, the local protocol strongly encourages (but does not require) the victim to pursue linkages to local service providers: The County Victim Witness Program, Plumas Crisis Intervention and Resource Center, the County District Attorney, Sheriff, Public Health and County Mental Health. A copy of the protocol appears as Exhibit B: Family Violence .

Recipients requesting a waiver of sanction and temporary exemption from program requirements will be assessed by case management staff and where appropriate, offered a temporary waiver and referred to counselling and other interventive services for follow up assessment. Absent other means of verifying family violence is functioning as a barrier to participation in Welfare-to-Work activities, a CalWORKS participant's statement shall be considered sufficient to offer a temporary waiver.

Participants receiving temporary waiver of sanctions will be strongly encouraged to attend counselling, follow up with law enforcement and with other service providers unless it is determined by the case manager that such activities will lead to further risk to the family. Case Managers will monitor the progress made by such individuals in order to ascertain the appropriateness of continued exclusion from program requirements.

County plans are to provide all first line staff with appropriate training in dealing with victims of domestic violence. The Department is planning a four hour training program for all staff. The focus of the training will be on victimology, and the services available to victims. The training will be videotaped so that it will be available to new staff.

(J) PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES TO MEET LOCALLY ESTABLISHED OBJECTIVES

The State plan format asks the County to indicate whether there were any local program outcome objectives identified during the CalWORKS plan development process and how the County proposes to track those outcomes.

COUNTY RESPONSE

Local objectives are in consonance with the goals of the State welfare reform plan. During the course of the community input provided in connection with assembling this plan requests were made for the inclusion of three additional objectives:

(1) To promote economic development and activities necessary to encourage job development in the community.

(2) To minimize unnecessary adverse consequences of welfare reform to the senior community.

(3) Enhanced local efforts to detect and prevent fraud particularly in program components directed at diversion.

Goals (1) and (3) are in consonance with State established program goals and objectives. Goal (2) will be monitored by the County to assure that no adverse consequences occur. The County plans to continue to meet with advocates for seniors including the Plumas County Commission on Aging to monitor this issue.

(K) PUBLIC INPUT TO THE COUNTY PLAN

The State plan format asks for a description of the means the county used to obtain broad public input in the development of the CalWORKS plan.

COUNTY RESPONSE

The Plumas County Plan has been developed with the maximum amount of public input feasible. The DSS Director made public presentations to community groups, educational institutions, community service providers and others in preparation for assembling the plan.

Over 100 copies of the draft plan were distributed for review. The draft was distributed to agencies with whom the Department has developed a collaborative relationship and to the members of the Employment and Training Committee. The draft was also made available to the County Board of Supervisors, community based organizations and churches. A copy was also available in each branch of the public library and at the county Welfare Department. The draft plan included a form to enable reviewers to provide comments and feedback to the Department.

The Department held a community forum on December 3, 1997, to solicit input, comments and questions regarding the draft plan. Staff from the Department of Social Services received number of questions regarding the impacts of Welfare Reform on businesses, the elderly and health care providers.

A list of the organizations and individuals who assisted the Department with planning CalWORKS or who provided comments or input to the draft plan appears as Exhibit A: Public and Community Contacts. All public input has been considered in assembling the county plan.

(L) SOURCE AND EXPENDITURES OF FUNDS

The State plan format requests estimated expenditures and source of funds. Forms were provided in the State plan format to capture this information.

COUNTY RESPONSE

The requested information has been completed and appears as Exhibit C: County Plan Budget.

(M) ASSISTING FAMILIES TRANSITIONING OFF AID

The State plan format asks how the county will work with families transitioning off aid due to expiration of time limits and due to employment.

COUNTY RESPONSE

The county will link individuals who become employed to sources of continuing child care. We will perform post employment follow-up with former recipients to assure that they are actively engaged in job retention activities. The services of the Employment and Training Center continue to be available to recipients after their connection with CalWORKS has ended.

For those whose time limits expire, we will make referrals to other social services agencies as appropriate.

(N) JOB CREATION

The state plan guidelines ask for a description of the efforts that have been undertaken, or will be undertaken relating to the job creation plan.

COUNTY RESPONSE

The Department of Social Services plans to work in conjunction with Plumas Corporation to prepare an application for funding available from the Job Creation Investment Fund in accordance with Chapter 1.12 of part 6.7 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code. Preliminary discussions have been held with Plumas Corporation regarding application for these funds.

The County Board of Supervisors has also made a budget appropriation to Plumas Corporation to assist with attracting business enterprise to the area. It is likely that such new businesses would create jobs which may be available to CalWORKS participants.

The Workforce Development Team is actively engaged in efforts to work with employers in creating jobs, promoting training and support for job creation.

(O) OTHER ELEMENTS

The State Plan guidelines ask the County to provide a description of any pilot projects that the County will pursue.

COUNTY RESPONSE

The County will not be proposing any pilot projects at the present time as part of its initial CalWORKS plan. The County will submit an addendum to the plan in the future should we decide to pursue a pilot project.

(P) COMPLIANCE WITH REQUIREMENTS OF CalWORKS

Under CalWORKS, counties are required to enroll single parent families in Welfare-to-Work activities for a minimum of 20 hours per week beginning January 1, 1998, 26 hours per week beginning July 1, 1998, and 32 hours per week beginning July 1, 1999.

Prior to July 1, 1999, counties have the option to require adults in single parent assistance units to participate up to 32 hours per week. The state plan format asks whether the county intend to exercise that option.

COUNTY RESPONSE

Plumas County will require adults in single parent families, who are not otherwise exempt from the Welfare-to-Work requirements, to participate in Welfare-to-Work activities a minimum of 26 hours per week effective January 1, 1998.

(O) INTERACTION WITH AMERICAN INDIAN TRIBES

The state plan guidelines ask for a description of the discussions that have occurred with respect to administration for the Federally recognized American Indian Tribes located with the county. The description should include whether the county will administer the program or whether the tribe will administer the program or both.

COUNTY RESPONSE

The Federally recognized American Indian Tribe located within Plumas County is the Greenville Rancheria. Copies of the draft county plan were made available to the Roundhouse Council and to the California Indian Manpower Consortium (CIMC) inviting comment and input to the planning process. The Department has been advised that all Welfare-to-Work matters regarding the Greenville Rancheria would need to be directed to the California Indian Manpower Consortium (CIMC).

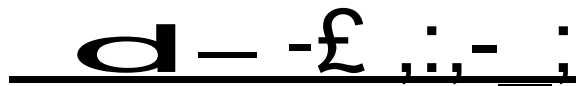
The Department has made initial contacts with the CIMC and has received an understanding that CIMC will continue to operate Welfare-to-Work programs for a consortium of Northern Tribes. We will continue to work with the Rancheria and with the CIMC as this issue develops in order to assure that the full range of Welfare-to-Work services are available to members of the Rancheria who are receiving financial assistance through Federal TANF funds.

CERTIFICATION

THIS PLAN HAS BEEN DEVELOPED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE APPROPRIATE FEDERAL, STATE AND COUNTY LAWS AND REGULATIONS. THE TERMS OF THIS PLAN, INCLUDING ALL CERTIFICATIONS WITHIN THIS PLAN, AND ALL APPLICABLE LAWS AND REGULATIONS WILL BE FOLLOWED DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION OF THIS PLAN.



Elliott P. Smart, Director
Plumas County Department
of Social Services



Phillip Bresci Chair
Plumas County
Board of Supervisors