

SAN BENITO COUNTY

COMMUNITY SERVICE PLAN

FOR CalWORKS PROGRAM

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This plan is submitted pursuant to state statute and Section 42-700 of the Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP).

A. SUMMARY

CalWORKS community service is a temporary and transitional training activity intended to provide the participant with general and specific job skills that can lead to unsubsidized employment. Community services activities will be limited to the public and private nonprofit sector and will comply with the nondisplacement provisions in MPP Section 42-720. Community service activities are provided for the benefit of the recipient, not for the benefit of the activity provider.

B. AGENCIES INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING

This Community Service Plan was developed by the San Benito County Health and Human Services Agency in conjunction with the Private Industry Council and the partners of the local One Stop Career Center. The following were present and/or assisted during the planning process: Employment Development Department, Gavilan College, County Office of Education, South County ROP, San Benito High School, Anzar High School, Green Thumb, Veteran's Employment Services, Economic Development Corporation, Small Business Development Center, Growth & Opportunity, Inc. (child care resource and referral), Community Services & Workforce Development (JTPA/WIA), State Department of Rehabilitation, Plumbers & Steamfitters Local Union 393, and local private sector employers.

The public, including recipients of aid, attended a public forum to discuss the development of community service activities in the CalWORKS program. In addition, Service Employees International Union Local 817, which represents local County employees, was consulted during the planning process and had no grievances regarding CalWORKS community service activities.

The San Benito County Health and Human Services Agency will be the sole administrator of the CalWORKS Community Services program.

C. COMMUNITY NEEDS TO BE MET

The following are current needs identified within the public and private nonprofit sector for San Benito County. Community service positions will include support for nutrition programs, clerical support for public agencies, public grounds and facilities maintenance, teachers' aides, community recreation programs, childcare providers, and support for charitable agencies and projects. Additional needs will be continually assessed with corresponding job titles to be added as needed.

Participants will learn and/or reinforce general good worker habits including punctuality, attendance, calling in when sick, getting along with co-workers, arranging reliable transportation and childcare, following instructions, and working under supervision.

Participants will also learn and/or reinforce specific job skills during their community service placement. Skills to be used will vary depending on the agency and the community service job title. For example, clerical support workers may learn skills in answering telephones, taking messages, typing, using computers, and filing.

D. DEVELOPING COMMUNITY SERVICE PLACEMENTS

The county will utilize senior Employment and Training Worker staff, under the supervision of the Employment and Training Supervisor to develop and maintain community service placements. The County of San Benito will be asked to take the lead in endorsing the concept of community service and in encouraging and assisting individual County Departments in developing slots. In addition, San Benito County has two cities and numerous State and Federal offices as well as local private nonprofit agencies that will be contacted in order to develop placements. The County will also be considering the establishment of a non-profit corporation to develop and provide community service placements to the broader community.

Staff will negotiate placement agreements with participating agencies and entities. The individual agencies will be expected to provide supervision and training on a daily basis. The county will provide on-going support to the worksite agency to assist in resolving any problems that may arise. CalWORKS Case Managers, with the support of the senior Employment and Training Worker staff, will be responsible for providing day-to-day client assistance and monitoring during community service.

CalWORKS participants may develop their own individual community service placement. However, the placement will be denied if it is inconsistent with the individual's welfare-to-work plan or does not conform to State statute, regulations, or policies governing community service. Participants will not be required to develop their own community service placements.

The key goal will be to create meaningful placements. It will be necessary to include language within each placement agreement that specifies the job skills to be learned and practiced by participants, and the means by which the receiving entity will provide those skills and experiences.

E. CalWORKS CLIENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community service activities will be provided for CalWORKS recipients who have completed the 18 or 24-month time limit period and who cannot find unsubsidized employment sufficient to meet the minimum hours of participation required. The County will certify that no jobs are available for the individual within the local labor market. Definition of “no jobs available” is that the participant has made and continues to make every reasonable effort to become employed and has not refused an offer of employment without good cause.

Community service activities may also be provided for recipients who have not completed the 18 or 24-month time limit period and are not meeting the minimum required hours of participation with unsubsidized employment. The need for community service will be determined by the individual’s CalWORKS assessment and will be reflected in the individual’s welfare-to-work plan.

CalWORKS recipients in one of the above categories who have completed assessment and are not currently employed will be referred to the Resources Unit for placement into community service. A senior Employment and Training Worker will interview the recipient to determine the type of placement needed to assist the individual in reaching his or her training goals. The individual will be referred to a worksite supervisor for an interview. If it appears to be a good match, the placement will be confirmed and the appropriate paperwork will be completed.

Participants in community service, as well as the worksites, will be monitored on a periodic basis. The welfare-to-work plan will be revised as necessary to ensure that the community service placement continues to be consistent with the participant’s plan and is effective in preparing the participant to obtain employment. Changes in placements as well as additional placements will be considered as needed.

F. DURATION OF PLACEMENTS

The duration of community service placements will be determined primarily by the estimated length of time needed for the CalWORKS participant to obtain the job skills specified for that position. The average duration of the initial placement will be three to six months but may be extended up to a year.

The county will identify the job skill(s) to be developed or enhanced at the time of the participant’s assignment to the community service activity. The county will monitor and review the placement as necessary to determine the participant’s progress toward the training goal. The duration of the placement may be extended if it is determined to be beneficial for the participant to continue at that site.

CalWORKS participants may be placed into more than one worksite, either concurrently or sequentially. If one worksite cannot offer the full number of hours of training to a participant, the participant may be placed into multiple worksites. However, the total number of hours worked in all worksites may not exceed the required number of hours of CalWORKS participation for that individual.

And, if after completion of an initial placement, it is determined that a subsequent placement in a different worksite would be beneficial to the participant in gaining additional needed skills, he/she may be placed in another position.

CalWORKS participants will continue to be assisted in their job search efforts for unsubsidized work throughout the duration of their participation in community service activities.

G. SUPPORTIVE EFFORTS

If a participant is already meeting the required hours of participation in community service and/or unsubsidized employment, then he/she may voluntarily participate in additional activities. The county will provide job search assistance, and referrals to education and training. Additional hours spent in optional activities will not count toward meeting the individual's work participation requirement. Additional activities, to the extent possible, should be consistent with the participant's welfare-to-work plan.

H. COORDINATION AND PARTICIPATION WITH OTHER WELFARE-TO-WORK ACTIVITIES

In reference to ACL 99-111, clients may participate in other work activities for the number of hours equal to the difference between the hours of participation in community service and the minimum number of total required hours of participation in CalWORKS. Instruction and/or training that is required for, or relevant to, the specific community service activity may be considered part of the participant's community service placement. For example, an individual who is performing clerical support activities may be allowed to attend computer-training classes.

Additional welfare-to-work activities may be considered part of an individual's community service assignment and must be relevant to the specific community service assignment. Individuals will not be routinely required to participate in other activities while participating in community service.

Individuals who must participate in substance abuse treatment and/or mental health counseling and/or domestic abuse services in order to participate in their assigned community service activity will have these hours of participation count toward meeting the work requirement. Any services that are required for participation in community service will be included in the individual's welfare-to-work plan.

I. HOURS OF PARTICIPATION

Clients will participate in community service activities for the minimum number of hours specified for all participants unless fewer hours of community service participation are required by federal law.

Individuals may be required to participate in other work activities, including job search, up to the number of hours equal to the hours required for all participants under CalWORKS regulations.

J. SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Child care as a supportive service will be provided to participants in community service activities. Other supportive services that are necessary for the recipient to participate in community services, such as transportation, ancillary expenses, and personal counseling will be provided as needed for each individual. Alternative funding sources for supportive services will be explored as is appropriate.

K. SANCTIONS

If a CalWORKS recipient is required to participate in community service activities and fails, without good cause, to participate, he or she will be sanctioned in accordance with MPP Sections 42-711.94, and 42-721.2