



CDSS

WILL LIGHTBOURNE
DIRECTOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street • Sacramento, CA 95814 • www.cdss.ca.gov



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

January 27, 2015

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 15-09

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CALWORKS PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
ALL COUNTY WELFARE-TO-WORK COORDINATORS
ALL COUNTY REFUGEE COORDINATORS
ALL COUNTY CALFRESH SPECIALISTS
ALL COUNTY CONSORTIA PROJECT MANAGERS
ALL TRIBAL TANF ADMINISTRATORS

SUBJECT: CALIFORNIA WORK OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO KIDS
(CalWORKs) WELFARE-TO-WORK (WTW) FLOW CHANGES AS A
RESULT OF ASSEMBLY BILL (AB) 74

REFERENCE: AB 74 (CHAPTER 21, STATUTES OF 2013), SENATE BILL (SB) 1041
(CHAPTER 47, STATUTES OF 2012); WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS
CODE SECTIONS 11320 et seq., 11323.2, 11325 et seq.; MANUAL OF
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES SECTION 42-711.54; ALL COUNTY
LETTERS (ACLS) 12-67, 13-15, 13-37, 13-59, 13-68, 13-81, 14-12, AND
14-16.

The purpose of this letter is to inform County Welfare Departments (CWDs) of the changes to the up-front sequence of WTW activities, known as the WTW flow, as a result of AB 74. Effective January 1, 2014, AB 74 altered the participation sequence of appraisal, job search, and assessment, per Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) section 11320.1. This change to the WTW flow is one of the early engagement strategies implemented as a result of AB 74. Other early engagement strategies include Family Stabilization (ACL 14-12) and Expanded Subsidized Employment (ACL 13-81).

Impact of AB 74 on the WTW Flow

In most instances, the WTW flow prior to AB 74 required a test of the job market prior to an individual being evaluated for mental health, substance abuse, domestic abuse

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order
- Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- Initiated by CDSS

services, and/or provided a vocational/educational assessment. Job search and job club were used to test the job market, and would also provide additional information about whether the individual was in need of more intensive barrier removal services and/or a full assessment.

AB 74 altered the WTW flow by allowing for individuals to bypass a job market test if, through appraisal, the individual is identified as having potential barriers to employment which would warrant more in-depth barrier removal evaluation or vocational/educational assessment. These modifications are intended to enable WTW participants to better access the flexible participation and service options available through the WTW 24-Month Time Clock. They are also intended to improve CWDs ability to identify individuals who are in need of more in-depth barrier removal services, including those available through the Family Stabilization program, and to increase participants' opportunities to reach self-sufficiency through work and educational opportunities. These changes will assist CWDs efforts to improve participation in the CalWORKs program.

In order to identify individuals who would be better served by more intensive barrier removal services and/or assessment, AB 74 also required the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to develop a standardized appraisal tool to be used by all CWDs to assess an individual's strengths and barriers to work activities and to further support the individual's path towards self-sufficiency. This tool, the Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool (OCAT), will be web based and is slated for implementation statewide in the spring of 2015. For initial information regarding OCAT and its development, please see the [All County Welfare Directors Letter](#) announcing OCAT, dated May 27, 2014. Additional information regarding this tool will be forthcoming in a future ACL.

"Barrier" refers to any situation that may impair an individual's ability to participate in WTW activities. Barriers may include, but are not limited to: conditions or situations which qualify an individual for a WTW exemption, mental health or substance abuse issues, or domestic abuse situations. Whether a barrier qualifies an individual for a WTW exemption, or can be addressed through WTW activities or supportive services, is determined by the CWD.

The In-Depth Appraisal Process and Services/Activities Following Appraisal

Prior to January 1, 2014, the WTW flow began with the individual attending orientation to the WTW program and an initial appraisal. The WTW orientation and appraisal consisted of an overview of the rights and responsibilities of a CalWORKs individual, an examination of his or her employment history and job skills, and a determination of Self-Initiated Program (SIP) eligibility. Orientation and appraisal were followed by a period of job search. If full-time employment was not acquired through job search the individual

would be referred to assessment, the results of which would contribute toward the development of a WTW plan.

AB 74 requires that, beginning January 1, 2014, all new CalWORKs recipients that are required to participate will be subject to the new WTW flow specified in WIC section 11320.1 and described in this implementing ACL. The new WTW flow begins with an individual attending orientation, followed by an in-depth appraisal to assess his or her strengths. The new appraisal process includes screening for exemptions and potential barriers to employment, such as mental health or substance abuse concerns that impair the individual's ability to work. During orientation and appraisal, an individual must still be informed of the requirement to participate in allowable WTW activities and of the provision of supportive services, pursuant to WIC section 11323.2.

The new in-depth appraisal shall gather and provide information about the individual including, but not limited to, the following areas:

- Employment history, interests, and skills;
- Educational history;
- Learning disabilities;
- Housing status and stability;
- Language barriers;
- Physical and behavioral health, including, but not limited to, mental health and substance abuse issues;
- Child health and well-being;
- Criminal background that may present a barrier to employment or housing stability;
- Past or present domestic abuse issues;
- The need for supportive services; and
- Any other information that may affect an individual's ability to participate in work activities.

If the results of the appraisal indicate that the individual may face barriers that impair his or her ability to participate in work activities, the CWD shall consider the individual for a WTW exemption, or refer the individual for barrier evaluation and services (WIC sections 11325.25), as appropriate. This includes evaluation and services for learning disabilities, mental health services, substance abuse services, and/or domestic abuse services. If the individual's barriers present an immediate crisis that qualifies for family stabilization services, the individual shall be referred to the CWD's Family Stabilization Program for further evaluation. If the barrier is not an immediate crisis, or does not qualify for family stabilization, the CWD shall refer the individual to an appropriate evaluation to address the barrier. This additional evaluation must be completed before or take place concurrent to any subsequent WTW activities.

If information obtained from the appraisal indicates that the individual may qualify for an exemption from WTW or requires further WTW exemption evaluation, the CWD shall evaluate the individual accordingly. The CWDs are reminded that individuals participating in or exempt from the Cal-Learn program are not required to attend appraisal until they earn a high school diploma or equivalent (WIC section 11320.3(a)(2)).

Job search and job club may follow appraisal if the individual's appraisal identifies him or her as having minimal barriers to employment that may be addressed through job readiness activities, rather than requiring an immediate referral to assessment (WIC section 11325.22).

If information gathered during the appraisal indicates that further information is necessary in order to determine the next appropriate WTW activity (WIC section 11320.1(c)), or if assignment to job search would not benefit the individual, he or she shall be referred to an assessment. An individual that is participating in a SIP is not required to attend an assessment, unless the individual needs additional activities outside of the SIP in order to meet his or her participation requirements (WIC section 11325.23(a)(3)(C)) and the CWD determines that an assessment is necessary to assign the participant in concurrent activities.

An assessment (described in WIC section 11325.4) must evaluate an individual's skills and needs, including the following:

- Work history and an inventory of the individual's employment skills, knowledge, and abilities;
- Educational history and present educational competency level;
- The individual's need for supportive services in order to obtain the greatest benefit from employment and training services;
- An evaluation of the chances for employment given the current skills of the individual and the local labor market conditions;
- Local labor market information; and
- Physical limitations or mental conditions that limit the individual's ability for employment or participation in WTW activities.

Individuals must also develop a WTW plan that includes the WTW Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2) that describes the types of activities the individual will be participating in and the necessary supportive services the individual is requesting.

The changes described above are intended to alter the WTW flow so as to allow increased flexibility and customization to the needs of CalWORKs individuals. Together

with the increased activity flexibility provided under the WTW 24-Month Time Clock, the changes are intended to better support individuals' opportunities to reach self-sufficiency.

As described here, there are a number of possible paths that an individual may follow once appraisal is complete (WIC section 11320.1). Examples of possible sequences are listed in the attached document (Attachment 1).

Counties are reminded that necessary supportive services must be provided in order for individuals to participate in the WTW process, including orientation, appraisal, job search, and assessment. Possible supportive services include, but are not limited to, transportation to and from CWD offices, and child care during orientation, appraisal, or assessment appointments.

Impact of the WTW Flow on the WTW 24-Month Time Clock

CWDs are reminded that months cannot count toward an individual's WTW 24-Month Time Clock until the individual's WTW plan is signed. Activities agreed to prior to the WTW plan development and signing (e.g. orientation, appraisal or job search) are not considered an individual's WTW plan for the purposes of the WTW 24-Month Time Clock. In most cases, the WTW plan would not be signed until an individual has completed an assessment. For employed individuals, SIP Participants, and other individuals not required to attend assessment or who may opt out of assessment, an assessment is not required prior to signing a WTW plan in order to begin counting months toward the individual's WTW 24-Month Time Clock.

CWDs are reminded that a WTW plan must be completed within 90 days of the date the individual's eligibility for aid is determined, or the date he or she is required to participate in WTW (WIC section 11325.21). If job search, family stabilization, or substance abuse, mental health, or domestic violence services, as discussed above, begin within 30 days of the individual's eligibility for aid being determined, then the 90 day time period does not begin until after the service or activity ends. If the individual is referred to substance abuse, mental health, or domestic violence services, the individual must also be referred to a concurrent assessment if the services would last longer than four consecutive weeks.

The Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool

AB 74 (WIC section 11325.2) required the CDSS to develop a standardized appraisal tool, in consultation with stakeholders. The OCAT is the resulting tool that will be distributed statewide in the spring of 2015. Further information regarding OCAT

All County Letter No. 15-09
Page Six

statewide implementation will be provided in a subsequent ACL. Concurrent with the distribution of OCAT, mandatory training for CWDs will be provided for administration of the tool. This mandatory training will include skill-building components, including, at a minimum, rapport building and interviewing techniques. Additional information regarding this training will be forthcoming under separate cover.

If you have questions, please contact your CDSS CalWORKs Employment Bureau county consultant or call the Employment Bureau at (916) 654-2137.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

TODD R. BLAND
Deputy Director
Welfare to Work Division

Attachment

EXAMPLES OF POTENTIAL WELFARE-TO-WORK (WTW) FLOW SEQUENCES

The following are examples of WTW flow sequences, based on the potential circumstances of individuals required to participate in WTW (or exempt from participation and choosing to volunteer). All examples below begin after an individual has completed his or her appraisal.

Employed at the Time of Appraisal

If an individual is already employed and requires additional hours to meet WTW participation requirements, then he or she may proceed to job search and/or an assessment as appropriate. CWDs are reminded that all requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1041, as detailed in ACL 12-67 and follow-up Question and Answer ACLs (ACLs 13-15, 13-37, 13-59, 13-68, and 14-16), must be followed. If at any time the individual requests or requires barrier removal services, learning disability screening, additional training, or family stabilization activities, he or she would be referred to appropriate assessments or service providers as soon as administratively possible.

Self-Initiated Program

Self-Initiated Programs (SIPs) are determined at appraisal. For individuals that are enrolled in qualifying education or training programs at appraisal (MPP section 42-711.54 and WIC section 11325.23), the determination of a SIP would occur at appraisal. In this case, if the individual does not need additional activities (MPP section 42-711.544 and WIC section 11325.23(a)(3)(C)), the WTW plan would be signed at the conclusion of the individual's appraisal and participation would begin immediately. If the individual does require additional activities, and the CWD determines an assessment is necessary to assign the individual to concurrent activities, an assessment would follow the appraisal before a WTW plan is signed. If at any time the individual requests or requires barrier removal services, learning disability screening, or family stabilization activities, he or she would be referred to appropriate assessments or service providers as soon as administratively possible.

19-year Old without a High School Diploma or Equivalent

In the case of a 19-year old participant without a high school diploma or equivalent, he or she is only required to participate to earn a diploma or equivalent (WIC section 11320.3(d)). In this case, the individual would not be required to attend an assessment, and the WTW plan would be developed from his or her appraisal. If at any time the individual requests or requires barrier removal services, learning disability screening, or

EXAMPLES OF POTENTIAL WELFARE-TO-WORK (WTW) FLOW SEQUENCES

family stabilization activities, he or she would be referred to appropriate assessments or service providers as soon as administratively possible.

Job Search Does Not Benefit Individual

If the CWD determines that job club and/or job search would not benefit an individual until he or she obtains further education or barrier removal services, then an individual may be immediately referred to an assessment to develop an education-focused WTW plan, or to further evaluation for potential barriers. For example, if the individual requires additional English as a Second Language (ESL) classes before he or she can join the workforce. In this case, the individual would forego job club/job search to be assessed and an ESL focused WTW plan developed. If at any time the individual requests or requires barrier removal services, learning disability screening, or family stabilization activities, he or she would be referred to appropriate assessments or service providers as soon as administratively possible.

Family Stabilization

While an individual may receive family stabilization services at any point in time, individuals may require these services during or after appraisal. In these circumstances, a family stabilization plan would be developed for the individual in place of or concurrent with a regular WTW plan. For circumstances in which it is appropriate that both a family stabilization plan and WTW plan be developed concurrently, counties are reminded that the WTW plan can only be signed after assessment. Up to six cumulative months of family stabilization activities will not count towards an individual's WTW 24-Month Time Clock if the individual meets good cause criteria, as described in ACL 14-12. Further information on family stabilization can be found in ACL 14-12.

Mental Health, Substance Abuse and/or Domestic Abuse Services

If an individual's appraisal indicated a need for mental health, substance abuse, or domestic abuse services, he or she would immediately be assigned to these activities as part of the new WTW flow. The individual may be referred to an assessment if additional activities or more in-depth evaluations are necessary, or if the services would last longer than four consecutive weeks. The individual may attend job search or job club, or other appropriate activities to develop a new WTW plan, either after completion of the mental health, substance abuse, or domestic abuse services, or concurrent to those activities.

EXAMPLES OF POTENTIAL WELFARE-TO-WORK (WTW) FLOW SEQUENCESExempt at Appraisal and Volunteering to Participate

If an individual was exempt and wished to volunteer, he or she would still attend orientation and appraisal, in order to understand the rights and responsibilities for participants. Once the appraisal of the individual's barriers to employment is complete, the individual's WTW plan would be developed based on the volunteer's goals and the extent he or she is able to participate. This may or may not include job search and assessment, as appropriate; however job search and assessment are not mandatory components for exempt volunteers. If at any time the individual requests or requires barrier removal services, learning disability screening, or family stabilization activities, he or she would be referred to appropriate assessments or service providers as soon as administratively possible.

Learning Disabilities

The offer of a learning disabilities screening must be made at appraisal. If the individual accepts (i.e., does not waive) the learning disabilities screening or the individual requests a screening at a later date, the CWD shall immediately perform a screening, or refer the individual directly to the appropriate learning disabilities evaluation. A referral to an evaluation may be required based on the screening, or if the screening is unavailable in the individual's primary language. Time between the date a learning disability evaluation appointment is scheduled and the CWD receives the final report, up to a maximum of 90 days, does not count towards the 90-day time limit to develop a WTW plan. Once a report has been received, or on the 91st day if the final report has not been received, the CWD shall continue to develop the individual's WTW plan, taking into account the needs of the individual as outlined in the report, if applicable.