

**Senate Bill 1041 Implementation
CalWORKs County Review Session Summary**

Alpine

November 17, 2015

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Welfare to Work Division
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Introduction

Purpose of County Review Session

The purpose of the Senate Bill (SB) 1041 Implementation County Review Session is to obtain information regarding the county's ongoing progress in implementing program changes enacted by SB 1041 (Chapter 47, Statutes of 2012). In addition to benefits and challenges associated with SB 1041, Assembly Bill (AB) 74 (Chapter 21, Statutes of 2013) requiring the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to develop and implement an appraisal tool to be used by all County Welfare Departments (CWD) to assess client's strengths and barriers. This new in-depth Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool (OCAT) plays an integral role in identifying client service needs.

Scope of County Review Session

Specifically, the CDSS will determine how each CWD implemented SB 1041 program changes and AB 74 OCAT processes, including but not limited to:

- Welfare to Work (WTW) participation requirements;
- Post WTW 24-Month Time Clock services;
- Training methods provided to staff in order to implement SB 1041 changes;
- Data outcomes related to SB 1041 program changes;
- Family Stabilization Program;
- Expanded Subsidized Employment Program; and
- Implementation of Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool (OCAT).

Goals of County Review Session

The CDSS' goals of the Review Session are to ensure that SB 1041 was implemented correctly by each CWD, to gather and share promising practices in regards to implementation amongst all CWDs throughout the state, and to determine whether systematic or program issues relating to the integration of SB 1041 changes into the existing California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) and WTW program exist throughout the state. The CDSS will also assess the CWD implementation processes associated with OCAT as a result of AB 74. If any issues exist, they will be addressed by the CalWORKs Program Oversight Workgroup.

County Review Session General Information

A County Review Session was held on Tuesday, November 17, 2015, via a teleconference call. The county review team included five staff from the CDSS, WTW Division, CalWORKs Employment and Eligibility Branch, and Alpine County's Director and Workforce Development and Eligibility Specialist (WDES). At the time of the County Review Session, Alpine County had promoted a caseworker to their one vacant CalWORKs WDES position. This WDES handles Employment responsibilities and Workforce Investment duties. The Integrated Caseworker (ICW) handles all Eligibility Programs, including CalWORKs. The first point of contact for an applicant seeking CalWORKs aid generally occurs with the county ICW or with clerical staff if the ICW is not available.

Applicants receive an appointment to return for their upfront engagement interview to determine eligibility for CalWORKs and/or other forms of aid which the applicant may qualify (e.g. CalFresh, Medi-Cal, Covered California, etc.).

Alpine County Health and Human Services Agency provides services at two locations: Alpine Health and Human Services and a satellite office in Bear Valley which is approximately 61 miles from the main office. The Alpine Health and Human Services Agency is composed of several social service divisions including, but not limited to:

- CalWORKs/CalFresh/Medi-Cal;
- In-Home Support Services;
- Child Protective Services;
- Public Health;
- Family Medical Clinic; and
- Employment Career Center.

Additionally, client referrals are made to agencies providing support in Behavioral Health, Mental Health, and Domestic Violence assistance as necessary.

Alpine County supports a Health and Wellness Coalition with a mission to “build strong community partnerships promoting healthy living through outreach, advocacy, and education”. The coalition is made up of community members and collaborative partners in health, education, social, environmental, recreational, and business organization and agencies who are interested in improving the health of residents in Alpine County. Alpine County management and staff attend these meetings on a monthly basis based on work schedule availability, and a Health and Wellness Coalition brochure is available to promote and clarify the purpose of the Coalition to the community. Alpine Threads, a newsletter publication, is published quarterly and focuses on a variety of areas pertaining to community and family in Alpine County (i.e., upcoming events in the county, job center, Connections Parenting Services, information on Live Violence Free, a variety of health topics, etc.).

Alpine County has a disproportionate number of Medi-Cal/CalFresh/CalWORKs cases due to a large number of clients receiving Tribal TANF versus CalWORKs. Twenty-five percent of Alpine County’s population is Native American.

Demographic Area and Economy

Alpine County maintains its distinction as the smallest county, by population, and ranks 8th smallest of California’s 58 counties. As of the 2010 Census, Alpine has approximately 1,175 residents. Employment in the public sector represents approximately 31 percent, while approximately 68 percent of the total employment in the county is in the services sector. The services sector within Alpine County is dominated by Kirkwood Mountain Resort which employs approximately 700 people during the winter season and approximately 150 people in the summer months. The services sector (largely recreation services) is forecast to add 114 jobs by 2018, representing 90 percent of net job creation in the county. Most of the county’s income is derived from visitors in the tourism communities of Lake Tahoe and Western Nevada for outdoor

recreation throughout the year. The economic forecast for Alpine County between 2013 and 2018 is expected to average 2.3 percent per year in employment growth resulting in a total of approximately 126 new jobs.

Some of Alpine County's greatest challenges are with the lack of available housing, child care, and transportation services, especially with clients at their Bear Valley satellite office. Very little affordable housing is available in the county. Section 8 programs that allow private landlords to rent apartments and homes at fair market rates to qualified low-income tenants are not available within the county and can add to higher rents for small housing, when available. Limited housing and high cost within the area often force multiple families to live under one roof, especially in the Tribal Community of Alpine County. Licensed child care is also very limited in Alpine County. Transportation services are limited and insufficient to meet the needs of most families and children in Alpine County. The lack of public transportation and the long driving distances to get to various services make it difficult to access social services and employment, even for those with private transportation options.

Implementation Strategies

Alpine County's implementation strategy consisted of reviewing CDSS' All County Letters (ACLs), All County Information Notices (ACINs), and ongoing communication with key staff on case-specific issues related to understanding and applying SB 1041 requirements. During the County Review Session, it was noted that in-house training materials for the implementation of SB 1041 and OCAT was developed based on the CDSS ACLs and ACINs. Alpine County utilized ACLs and ACINs as actual training tools for staff. Additional collaboration with local counties (e.g., Mono and El Dorado) took place throughout the implementation process.

Some of Alpine's Key Successes included:

- Attendance and participation in County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), County Advisory Team (CAT), and Self-Sufficiency meetings. Participating in these meetings increased the knowledge and understanding of SB 1041 requirements and strategies needed.
- Regular meetings with staff provided a good avenue for the sharing of knowledge and general information on SB 1041 requirements and further explained and/or clarified information provided by the CDSS' ACLs and ACINs.
- As a county with a small monthly client caseload of approximately five cases (per the November 2015 STAT 45 report), Alpine's ICWs are afforded an opportunity to engage clients more closely to determine their needs and challenges.
- Capability to identify child and family needs of each client, the county WDES provides both Welfare to Work services and Workforce Investment and Opportunities to clients.
- The county has a communication process in place to notify clients of possible sanctions by sending letters, making phone calls, and/or home visits should the need arise. Alpine County has not sanctioned any clients in their county for over two years.

- Alpine County partners with Live Violence Free, a Community Based Organization (CBO) on domestic violence. This organization provides emergency shelter, transitional housing, advocacy and/or accompaniment through medical and legal proceedings, a 24-hour hotline and crisis intervention, emergency clothing, food and transportation, and other service provider referrals.
- Alpine County has fostered and maintained a good working relationship through its partnerships with Lake Tahoe Community College (LTCC) and Western Nevada Community College. A CalWORKs liaison is available at LTCC to support their client needs and help improve the education experience.
- A One-Stop Business and Career Center within Alpine County is available for county residents. The Connections One-Stop Center offers comprehensive career and employer services designed to support job seekers, employers, and entrepreneurs. During the time of the County Review Session, it was noted that staff at the One-Stop Center provided assistance to a woman who completed nursing school and is now employed as a Registered Nurse.

Acknowledgments

The CDSS thanks the Alpine County Department of Health and Human Agency for working with CDSS in the scheduling of the teleconference session. The CDSS appreciates the open collaboration with CWD staff to ensure the continued success of the CalWORKs program.

Background and Data

Alpine at-a-glance

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| Total Caseload | 5 |
| (Source: CalWORKs Cash Grant Caseload Movement Report [CA 237 CW] Line Item 8a- November 2015) | |
| WTW Enrollees | 2 |
| (Source: CalWORKs WTW Monthly Activity Report [WTW 25/25A] Line Item 1- November 2015) | |
| Mandatory Participants (enrollees + sanctioned + non-compliance) | 2 |
| (Source: CalWORKs WTW Monthly Activity Report [WTW 25/25A] Line Item 1, 3A, and 31- November 2015) | |

Summary of documents obtained for Alpine County’s teleconference session:

- Live Violence Free is a program which assists in promoting a violence-free community through education and advocacy and addresses topics such as domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse. It was founded in 1977 and provides prevention and outreach programs to children, teenagers, and adults in the community. A coordinator is available at the county for assistance and there is a 24-hour crisis line available.

Live Violence Free is the only provider of domestic violence and sexual assault services from South Lake Tahoe west to Kyburz, CA, north to Placer County, CA and east to Douglas County, NV, and is the only provider in all of Alpine County.

- Behavioral Health Services are available to all residents in Alpine County regardless of ability to pay. Comprehensive mental health and substance abuse services available include: outpatient family and individual mental health counseling, individual substance abuse treatment counseling, outpatient groups for mental health, alcohol and drug issues, inpatient mental health treatment options, psychiatric consultation for medications, inpatient treat and/or detoxification for substance use, and community-based prevention and early-intervention programs.

County Administrator and Caseworker Dialogue

The CDSS County Review Team used updated county administrator and caseworker interview tools following those released in ACIN I-42-13 regarding SB 1041 implementation. These tools were provided to Alpine County in advance of the County Review Process Teleconference Call.

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

Transitioning Clients

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

- As of January 1, 2013, Alpine County had one client with more than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit that had their comprehensive discussion. Additionally, the county had one client with less than or equal to 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit that had their comprehensive discussion.

Clients who failed to attend SB 1041 appointments

- Alpine County stated they did not have any challenges with non-compliance leading to client sanctions during the time of the teleconference session. Although they have not sanctioned any clients in their county for over two years, they do have a sanction process in place for non-compliance. This non-compliance process includes as-needed communications, notifying clients of potential sanction by letter, contacting them by phone, and making home visits, as warranted.

New Young Child Exemption

- Alpine County stated they had no clients who chose to take the New Young Child Exemption.

Post WTW 24-Month Time Clock

- During the time of the County Review Session, no clients in Alpine County had exhausted their WTW 24-Month Time Clock since implementation of SB 1041; therefore, no Extensions have been requested and/or granted.

Family Stabilization

Alpine County has a Family Stabilization Plan and services are available and provided as needed.

Expanded Subsidized Employment (ESE)

The ESE Program was implemented as a result of the passage of Assembly Bill 74 and is one part of the CDSS WTW Early Engagement Strategies. During the time of the County Review Session, Alpine County stated they do not currently have an ESE program; however, the county co-enrolls clients in the Workforce Investment Program. Additionally, no funds have been claimed for ESE in Alpine County, and the county indicated that they would be reaching out to CDSS in the future for assistance with ESE implementation.

OCAT Implementation

During the roll out of the OCAT per ACL 15-09 and ACL 15-43, OCAT training was provided to the WDES; however, during the time of the County Review Session, the county stated they had not had any new CalWORKs clients since the implementation of the OCAT tool. The WDES who was trained resigned and the county requested OCAT training for their newly promoted WDES as it becomes available.

Child Care Services

Alpine County has limited child care opportunities for its clients due to the lack of child care agencies available in the county. The county has one full-time child care provider; however, there are no child care services available for children under three and in the summer months. Families needing child care usually rely on family, friends, neighbors, or unlicensed day care providers. During the time of this review there was only one client utilizing child care; therefore, there is no take-up rate for Alpine County.

Conclusion

Successes

Alpine County Director's participation at the CWDA conference, Self-Sufficiency meetings and CAT meetings were additional avenues that contributed to the county's upfront understanding of the SB 1041 changes. This participation also allowed management to further strategize on SB 1041 implementation within the county. The county management maintained regular meetings to share and disseminate information to staff on SB 1041 requirements.

Alpine County stated they have a very low turnover rate amongst staff compared to other counties and Social Workers generally remain at the county for a long period of time. Consistency among staff helps to sustain CalWORKs knowledge within the county and encourages positive interactions and trust with clients.

Alpine County's monthly caseload size of approximately five cases enables the county ICWs an opportunity to easily manage their cases and provide an intensive case review process upon engagement. Although the county does not have a formal home visiting program, ICWs can make home visits to their clients, as needed. Alpine County has been successful in limiting non-compliance leading to potential sanctions due to their ability to have and maintain close relationships with clients. No sanctions have been issued in over two years.

Alpine County partners with outside CBOs, such as Live Violence Free, that provides a number of emergency services and referrals to clients. The county also has a good working relationship with its two local colleges, LTCC and Western Nevada Community Colleges, which promotes helping clients with their education goals.

The Connections One-Stop Center in Alpine County is a resource available for all residents and offers comprehensive career and employer services to assist job seekers, employers, and entrepreneurs.

Challenges

Alpine County's small population and rural area leads to few opportunities. The lack of available, affordable housing in Alpine County for clients is a challenge, particularly with no Section 8 housing offered within the area. Child care services for clients are very limited, especially for children under the age of three, and there are no child care services available in the summer. Families needing child care services must usually rely on neighbors or unlicensed day care situations which can be unreliable and stressful for all involved. Alpine County has a Dial-A-Ride program available for the general public and persons needing transportation assistance; however, this service is limited to Monday through Wednesday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, on Thursdays by appointment only, and does not include service in the Bear Valley area. There is no WDES staff currently trained in OCAT at Alpine County.

Key Recommendations

Alpine County should continue developing and implementing policies and procedures with staff to meet SB 1041 compliance requirements. The CDSS encourages the county to expand additional programs in their WTW program, including expanded subsidized employment, to provide additional work opportunities in the county. Alpine County should consider evaluating the need for additional transportation aides, or pursue other strategies, to assist clients with limited public transportation to reach services and activities (especially for those in Bear Valley and/or other remote areas). The CDSS recommends the county continue to reach out to the community through their Alpine Threads publication, and work with schools and/or other public agencies to leverage new child care start-up opportunities in the county. In addition, the CDSS encourages the county to continue its outreach efforts with other counties who may have promising practices that could benefit Alpine County's remaining SB 1041 implementation plans. Alpine County should take advantage of OCAT training for staff once it becomes available. ICF, International, the CDSS' OCAT technical assistance vendor, is currently in contact with Alpine County in order to assess the support needed for the county to successfully implement OCAT.

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