

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

Colusa

December 16, 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 progress in implementing program changes enacted by SB 1041 (Chapter 47, Statutes of 2012). In addition to benefits and challenges associated with Assembly Bill (AB) 74 (Chapter 21, Statutes of 2013) requiring California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to develop and implement an appraisal tool to be used by all County Welfare Department (CWD) to assess an individual's strengths and barriers. This new in-depth Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool (OCAT), plays an integral role in identifying services and resources needed by clients.

Scope of County Review Session

Specifically, the CDSS will review 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;
- 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 (ESE);
- Implementation of Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool

Goals of County Review Session

The CDSS' goals are to ensure that SB 1041 was being implemented correctly by each CWD, to gather promising practices in regards to implementation, to share these promising practices (when able) 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. Also to assess CWD implementation processes associated with OCAT as result of AB 74. If such issues exist, they will be addressed by the CalWORKs Program Oversight Workgroup.

County Review Session General Information

A County Review Session was performed via conference call on Wednesday, December 16, 2015, at CDSS. The County Review Session team included four staff from the CDSS, WTW Division, CalWORKs Employment Bureau along with Colusa County's Eligibility Program Manager II, Health & Human Services Supervisor (HHS), Staff Services Analyst II (SSA), and an Employment & Training Worker I (ETW). The County Review Session consisted of a kick-off discussion, administrator interview, county case worker interview, and close-out with county staff.

During the time of the review session Colusa County management indicated that Eligibility and Employment staff work together and all workers are cross-trained, except for WTW. All staff perform CalWORKs intake; once eligible for cash aid and granted, clients are set up for the WTW program. Colusa County ETW schedules a one-on-one appointment for orientation and an OCAT appraisal takes between one and a half hours to two hours to complete. OCAT appraisals for two-parent families have separate appointments within county.

Colusa County Health and Human Services Agency currently provides services at one location in Colusa, CA, but plans are underway to co-locate with the Colusa County One Stop in February 2016. Co-locating with the Colusa One Stop will help ensure all services are available to their WTW participants at one facility. Colusa County's staff will work alongside Colusa County One Stop staff providing all components of the WTW program, including access to CalWORKs, CalFRESH, and Medical benefits. The Colusa One Stop is composed of several services including, but not limited to:

- Job Searches and Job Search Workshops
- Job Service Information
- Resume Preparation
- On-the-Job Training
- Typing Tutorial and Certificates
- Work Experience Program
- Vocational Skills Training
- Basic Skills Assessment
- Career Advice
- College Courses and Enrollment Information

Demographic Area and Economy

Based on Colusa County Economic & Demographic Profile of 2009-2010, Colusa County's population consists of approximately 23,350 residents and is comprised largely of a large agriculture workforce. The Colusa County Casino also provides a number of jobs for the locals, but specifics on total numbers were not known at the time of the County Review Session. Colusa County is also the leading rice producing county in California. The county also depends on almonds, wheat, English walnuts, and processing tomatoes as staple agriculture commodities. There is limited public transportation available within Colusa County; local routes within the surrounding area do exist. Colusa County Transit provides 1-2 days/week of coverage. In order to utilize the county transit service, residents must schedule a ride in advance through the main Transit office. Sacramento, CA consists of the majority of the employment opportunities for locals.

Implementation Strategies

Colusa County's implementation strategy for SB 1041 consisted of following the guidelines from various All County Letters (ACLs) and All County Information Notices (ACINs) related to SB 1041 and conducting monthly team meetings in an effort to ensure a consistent understanding of the SB 1041 requirements was established.

Other ongoing trainings provided by county management were to review case management services as well as partnership collaborative meetings on a monthly basis with the Colusa One Stop. During the time of the county session, the county provided insight on program challenges due to changes in staffing. In addition to recent changes in staffing, open vacancies in Colusa County existed. During the time of the county session, the county had one caseworker that managed the WTW caseload.

Some of Colusa's Key Successes Included:

- Enthusiasm demonstrated and shared under new leadership starting December 2015 and ongoing direction from the Program Manager II and the ETW staff.
- During time of county session, county was rebuilding their WTW program along with a partnership with their local Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) One Stop (Colusa One Stop) to deliver enhanced program services to clients.
- Establishment of successful partnerships with services such as: Child Protective Services, Colusa Children's Office of Education, Impact Thrift, Woodland Community College, Department of Rehabilitation, Behavioral Health, Learning Disability Evaluator, etc.
- Monthly team meetings implemented to provide a good avenue for sharing knowledge and general information to staff on SB 1041 requirements and further explaining and/or clarifying information provided by the CDSS via ACL and/or ACIN. Colusa County utilized ACL and ACIN as actual training tools for staff.
- Colusa County collaborates with their local community partners. Colusa County's partner agency, Colusa One Stop regularly sends a staff member to the Chamber of Commerce meetings, thus allowing for first hand insight on local economy information and future proposed changes within the county. The Colusa County Chamber of Commerce maintains vast amounts of tourism information, as well as resource information to enhance business opportunities in Colusa County.
- During time of county session, county plans on sending their ETW I staff to future County Advisory Team (CAT) meetings to attend and participate, thus allow for increase awareness and insight on CDSS policies and changes, if any on the horizon.
- Colusa County has a CalWORKs liaison located at their local Woodland Community College, which also attends the monthly meetings for program updates. A CalWORKs liaison is available at Woodland Community College to support their client needs and help improve the education experience.

Acknowledgments

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

Background and Data

Colusa at-a-glance

Total Caseload	171
(Source: CalWORKs Cash Grant Caseload Movement Report [CA 237 CW] Line Item 8a-July 2015)	
WTW Enrollees	39
(Source: CalWORKs WTW Monthly Activity Report [WTW 25/25A] Line Item 1-July 2015)	
Mandatory Participants (enrollees + sanctioned + non-compliance)	72
(Source: CalWORKs WTW Monthly Activity Report [WTW 25/25A] Line Item 1, 3A, and 31-July 2015)	
Reengagement Plan Received	Yes
Beginning Date of Reengagement	January 2013
Consortium System	C-IV

Data/Statistics Available at Time of County Review Session:

- Clients who had more than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit as of January 1, 2013, that have had their comprehensive discussion totaled: **21**
- Clients who had less than or equal to 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit as of January 1, 2013, that have had their comprehensive discussion totaled: **9**
- Sanctions that were cured as a result of SB 1041 totaled: **4**
- Former short-term young child exempt clients (Assembly Bill [AB] X4 4) that have been reengaged totaled: **13**
- WTW plans that have changed as a result of SB 1041 implementation totaled: **0**
- Clients that have used the new once in a lifetime young child exemption totaled: **6**

Summary of Documents provided by Colusa County during County Review Session:

- Colusa County Health & Human Services Organization Chart: Document display staff members within the Colusa County Health & Human Services Office.
- AB 74 County Welfare Department Family Stabilization (FS) Plan: The FS plan describes Colusa County FS Plan. (Ex: How clients will be informed of the program, how clients will be able to request participation, how Colusa County will determine eligibility for clients, etc.)
- Colusa One Stop CalWORKs WTW Team Summary Sheet: Summary sheet covering areas that include, but not limited to; CalWORKs Program Services, WTW Program Services, Partnership Collaborations, etc.

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. Also, those released on OCAT, ACL 15-09 and ACL 15-43. These tools were provided to Colusa County in advance of the County Review Process Teleconference Call. The interview panel consisted of four CDSS staff and four Colusa County staff. The interviews were conducted by one team of four CDSS staff members, and one single CDSS staff member interviewing one Colusa County administrative worker and one caseworker.

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, Colusa County had 21 clients with more than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit that had their comprehensive discussion. Additionally, the county had 9 clients 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

- Colusa County's actions towards clients who were unresponsive to county contact varied depending on the client specific case situation. The county will attempt phone contact with the client who fails to attend the appointment. If the client is reached, the appointment will be rescheduled. If the county is unsuccessful in reaching the client by phone, the non-compliance process begins and a Notice of Action (NA) 840 along with a WTW 27 is sent to the client with a scheduled conciliation/good cause determination appointment. Home visits will be made if necessary, but due to low staffing, this is not an automatic response to a client failing to attend an appointment. If the client either contacts the county with good cause or attends the scheduled conciliation appointment and signs a compliance plan then the sanction does not begin; however, if the client does not provide good cause nor attend the conciliation appointment an NA 840 is sent to the client and the sanction will be imposed.

New Young Child Exemption

- During the time of the county sessions, Colusa County had some client choose to take the New Young Child Exemption. In addition, some clients chose to preserve their exemption for future use. During the time of session, Colusa County noted 6 clients who utilized their once in a lifetime exemption.

Post WTW 24- Month Time Clock

- During time of County Review Session, no clients in Colusa County had exhausted their WTW 24-Month Time Clock since implementation of SB 1041; therefore, no extensions have been granted.

Family Stabilization

- Colusa County is currently not using their Family Stabilization funding, but is committed to utilizing their funding once they start enrolling participants into the program.

Expanded Subsidized Employment

- 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, Colusa County stated they do not currently have an ESE program. Colusa County used to run the Subsidized Employment program, but stopped due to funding and lack of knowledge from their Fiscal team on how to run the program. Moving forward, Colusa County will begin working with the Colusa One Stop for the use of local labor markets.

Child Care Services

- Colusa County currently only has two families accessing child care services. Colusa County indicates there are more two-parent family households within county, and therefore there isn't much of a need for child care services.

OCAT Implementation

- Colusa County participated in the OCAT training provided by CDSS as well as participated on calls in regards to the OCAT tool. Participants were scheduled to attend their OCAT Appraisal utilizing the tool at the beginning of October 2015. During the time of review session, Colusa County was in the process of making changes to their WTW flow. Within Colusa County, their intentions are to have the OCAT Appraisal scheduled and completed within five days after the CalWORKs case has been granted. OCAT Appraisals last anywhere from one hour and a half to two hours for completion.

During the OCAT appointment, clients are placed in a private area to ensure confidentiality. In the case where the parent has to bring their children to their appraisal appointment, Colusa County provides an area for the children to play games and read books. Colusa County does not turn the parent away due to the lack of childcare. Appointments are rescheduled as needed.

Conclusion

Successes

Colusa County's new leadership and commitment to building upon the foundation of existing CalWORKs services contributed significantly to the implementation of SB 1041 requirements within the county. Colusa County took on the SB 1041 complexity and implementation by providing staff with training through program monthly team meetings and provided copies of ACLs regarding SB 1041. Colusa County also attends CDSS' CAT meetings to stay informed about CDSS policies and changes, if any on the horizon. County updated the WTW Handbook in 2013 that included, but was not limited to, SB 1041 changes.

The county maintained monthly team meetings to share and disseminate information to staff on SB 1041 requirements. Colusa County employs an “open door” communication policy between employment and eligibility workers. Monthly team meetings are led by supervisors and often incorporate workers from the Colusa One Stop and their local CalWORKs liaison from the Woodland Community College. Monthly team meetings are to review current case load status, program implementation changes, and any questions from case workers. Colusa County’s partner agency Colusa One Stop regularly attends the Chamber of Commerce meetings, thus allowing for first hand insight on how to enhance business opportunities within their county. Collaborations and working relationships with businesses lead to improved opportunities for clients. Due to Colusa County being such a small county, it has allowed for Colusa County to foster and maintain a more intimate and great working relationship with their clients. This has also contributed to Colusa County being able to better service the needs of their clients.

The restructuring of the county’s collaborative relationship with the Colusa One Stop will help provide additional employment services to WTW participants. With the new location, Colusa County’s staff with Colusa One Stop staff will ensure all services are available to the WTW participants at one facility. Colusa County alongside with Colusa One Stop has partnered collaborations with: Child Protective Services, Colusa Children’s Office of Education, Impact Thrift, Woodland Community College, Employment Development Department, Department of Rehabilitation, Behavioral Health, Learning Disability Evaluator, etc. Partnering up with these entities will help ensure the clients have access to services needed to help achieve self-sufficiency.

Challenges

The SB 1041 changes created new challenges for Colusa County as the details and new requirements of CalWORKs were confusing and overwhelming for the limited amount of staff within the county. High staff turnover created challenges during implementation. Prior to December 2015, the CalWORKs/WTW Team consisted of retired staff, with the exception of one staff that moved to Eligibility. Additional challenges for the county included a supervisor being replaced as well as one ETW staff. With the staff limitations, it was difficult to ensure that all staff was successfully trained and able to implement all the changes in a timely manner. During the county session, Colusa County did indicate the desire to bring on new staff.

Colusa County did mention some challenges with the OCAT implementation. The challenges associated with the OCAT tool were due to lack of staffing and being able to schedule the appraisal appointment timely. Colusa County also shared that some of the services OCAT offers are not attainable or available in their county (i.e., homeless shelters).

Colusa County expressed challenges with the WTW program, including SB 1041 changes due to the lack of staffing, and turnover rate. During the time of the county session, Colusa County currently had one WTW caseworker representing the entire WTW caseload, and 11 current open vacancies. Colusa County intends on filling these vacancies eventually.

Key Recommendations

As Colusa County continues to gain progress on SB 1041 changes, the county should continue to attend trainings and connect with nearby counties for assistance on tracking clients on the 24-Month Time Clock. The CDSS will continue to provide support and technical assistance when possible to any reference materials that may further benefit the county in their SB 1041 implementation efforts.

Colusa County is also encouraged to continue its collaborative relationships and partnerships with other agencies, local organizations, and educational institutions as a means to best serve clients and leverage local and regional resources. The CDSS encourages the county to expand additional programs in their WTW program, including ESE, to provide additional work opportunities in the county as well as assisting clients with an opportunity to gain work experience.

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