

**Senate Bill 1041 Implementation  
Field Monitoring  
Visit Summary**

**Humboldt County**

**Visit Date: July 30, 2014**

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
Welfare to Work Division  
Todd R. Bland, Deputy Director

**Humboldt County**  
Senate Bill (SB) 1041 Implementation  
Field Monitoring Visit Summary

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**Executive Summary**

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**Purpose of Field Monitoring Visit**

The purpose of Senate Bill (SB) 1041 Implementation Field Monitoring Visit is to obtain information regarding the county's progress in implementing program changes enacted by SB 1041 (Chapter 47, Statutes of 2012).

**Scope of Field Monitoring Visit**

Specifically, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) will review how each County Welfare Department (CWD) implemented SB 1041 program changes including, but not limited to:

- New Welfare to Work (WTW) participation requirements;
- WTW 24-Month Time Clock;
- Reengagement of the former short-term young child exempt population (Assembly Bill [AB] 4X 4 group);
- CWD staff knowledge of SB 1041 changes;
- Training provided to staff in order to implement these changes; and
- Any pertinent data related to these program changes that are available.

**Goals of Field Monitoring Visit**

The CDSS' goals are to ensure that SB 1041 is 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) WTW program exist throughout the state. If such issues exist, they will be addressed by the CalWORKs Program Oversight Workgroup.

**County Visit General Information**

The one-day field visit was performed in Humboldt County on Wednesday, July 30, 2014 at the Humboldt County Office in Eureka, CA. The field visit team included two managers and an analyst from the CDSS, Welfare-to-Work Division, CalWORKs Employment and Eligibility Branch along with Humboldt County Director of Social Services, the Deputy Director, CalWORKs Program Manager and various Administrator and Analyst staff. The field visit consisted of a kick-off meeting, close-out meeting, staff interviews, and case management observations with county staff.

Humboldt County comprises the Eureka-Arcata-Fortuna metropolitan area in California. Humboldt County area produces approximately twenty percent of the total volume and thirty percent of the total value of all forest products produced in California. The major employers within the area consist of hospitals, education, greenhouses, forestry consulting and government agencies.

## **Implementation Strategies**

Humboldt County developed detailed SB 1041 training materials as information was provided by the CDSS. County staff prepared training materials and provided training to staff in various types of meeting settings that included, but was not limited to, All Staff Meeting, Weekly Staff Meeting, Unit Meetings, question and answer (Q & A) etc. Various implementation strategies, such as, quality reviews were conducted to ensure accuracy and compliance with regulations, county policy and All County Letters (ACL) and All County Information Notices (ACIN) provided by the CDSS were also utilized for training purposes.

Humboldt County developed in January 11, 2013 an updated training guide entitled "CalWORKs Welfare-To-Work Guide." The training guide provided county participants with guidance and an understanding of the new SB 1041 requirements associated with the WtW 24-Month Time Clock, CalWORKs 48-month time clock, in addition to information on various resources and services to assist participants in preparation for gainful employment.

The CalWORKs Welfare-To-Work Guide's is construction in a user friendly layout that allows participants to follow along on WtW program requirements without feeling intimidated by information provided. The guide includes, but is not limited to;

- Participation Requirements
- Time Limits (CalWORKs 48-Month and WtW 24-Month Clock)
- Supportive Services; and
- Transitional Benefits When Cash Aid Ends

## **Key Recommendations**

Humboldt County may want to evaluate internal non-compliance procedures in order to determine if enhanced pre-sanction services are warranted to intervene with clients early to avoid them entering into sanction status. Potential option include implementation of home visit process to evaluate noncompliant/or sanctioned client(s) to determine why they are not in compliance with their WtW plan and WtW program requirements.

Humboldt County may want to review client staging area within main county office where intake services are held in order to determine if it is adequate for client privacy or if a more suitable private client area can be arranged to ensure client privacy during potential sensitive integral discussions.

## **Acknowledgments**

The CDSS thanks Humboldt County Social Services Agency for hosting the field monitoring visit. The CDSS appreciates the open collaboration with CWD staff to ensure the continued success of the CalWORKs program.

## Field Monitoring Visit Summary

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### Introduction

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#### **Goals of Field Monitoring Visit**

The CDSS' goals are to ensure that SB 1041 is 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. If such issues exist, they will be addressed by the CalWORKs Program Oversight Workgroup.

#### **County Visit General Information**

The one-day field visit was performed in Humboldt County on Tuesday, July 9, 2013 at the South County Self-Sufficiency Center in Hayward, CA. The field visit team included three managers from the CDSS, Welfare-to-Work Division, CalWORKs Employment and Eligibility Branch along with Humboldt County's Agency Director, CalWORKs Program Specialist and two Employment Counselors. The field visit consisted on a kick-off meeting, close-out meeting, staff interviews, and case management observations with county staff. General information includes, but is not limited to:

- Intake staff screening application for immediate need or expedite services, scheduling appointments, screening for crisis and scheduling orientation conducted every Friday along appraisals.
- Eligibility services and WtW services located in separate office areas, but in same location
- Regional call center hours of operations performed from:(Mon.-Sat., 7:30-9:00 PM)

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## Background and Data

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### Humboldt At-a-glance

Total Caseload.....	1,745
<small>(Source: CalWORKs Cash Grant Caseload Movement Report CA 237 CW Line Item 8a-June 2014)</small>	
WTW Enrollees.....	685
<small>(Source: CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Monthly Activity Report WTW 25/25A Line Item 1-June 2014)</small>	
Mandatory Participants (enrollees + sanctioned + non-compliance).....	1,033
<small>(Source: CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Monthly Activity Report WTW 25/25A Line Items 1, 3A, and 31- June 2014)</small>	
Reengagement Plan Received.....	Yes
Beginning Date of Reengagement.....	January 28, 2013
Consortium System.....	C-IV

### Data/Statistics:

- 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: 648
- 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: 164
- Sanctions that were cured as a result of SB 1041: None
- How many former short-term young child exemption clients have been reengaged: 255
- How many WtW plans have changed as a result of SB 1041 implementation: Approximately 5 -10 percent
- Clients that have used the new once in a lifetime young child exemption: 327
- Other statistics that the county is keeping related to SB 1041 implementation:
  - ❖ Humboldt County also utilizes track process for WPR for cases sampled illustrated by month/year

### Summary of Documents provided by Humboldt County:

- Humboldt County's Reengagement Sequencing Plan
- CalWORKs Welfare-To-Work Guidebook (1/11/2013 version)
- Multiple Assistance Center (MAC): Transitional Housing Program for Homeless (03/22/2013)
- Hit the Career Bullseye with Targets of Opportunity: Economic Development

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## County Administrator and Caseworker Interviews

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The CDSS Field Monitoring Team used the county administrator and caseworker interview tools released in ACIN I-42-13 to interview the county administrator and case workers in-person regarding SB 1041 implementation. The interview tools were provided to the county administrator and caseworkers in advance of the visit. The administrator interview panel consisted of four CDSS staff with one county administrator. The caseworker interviews were conducted by two CDSS staff members with one caseworker.

### **General Comments**

*During the time of the one day county visit, WTW caseworkers maintained approximately 90 continuing cases per worker. The county performs a promising practice of client interaction by providing a "soft handoff" of clients from one county worker to the next, this personal touch avoid clients becoming lost and/or confused within the county office environment and also allows for personal connection between clients and county staff.*

### **Summary of Observations**

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

##### **For clients with Less than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit**

Humboldt County began comprehensive discussions with clients who had less than or equal to 24 months left on their CalWORKs time limit on January 1, 2013. Clients that had less than 24 months left on their clock in totaled 164. Humboldt County mailed the CW 2205 on November 9, 2012 to clients impacted. The county made contact with clients beyond the CW 2205 by sending appointment letters, providing follow up phone calls and conducting in-person interviews. New applicants receive the CW 2205 starting October 17, 2012.

Clients with 24 months or less remaining on CalWORKs were opting to lower their hourly requirements. Clients responded positively to the flexibility of the new program rules and the opportunity to put more focus on their education. Many clients working full time chose to continue to do so.

##### **For clients with more than 24 months left on their CalWORKs 48-month time limit**

Humboldt County began comprehensive discussions with clients who had more than 24 months left on their CalWORKs time limit during the same time as those with less than 24 months on their CalWORKs time limit, January 1, 2013. Clients that had more than 24 months left on their clock in totaled 648.

##### **Clients who failed to attend SB 1041 appointments:**

Clients who failed to attend their scheduled SB 1041 appointment were sent appointment letters to attend a scheduled appointment. Clients also received follow up phone calls also as part of the process to get clients who failed to attend their SB 1041 appointment engaged. If clients did not respond to keeping appointments and were not participating, the non-compliance process was started.

#### **New Young Child Exemption**

There were some client cases that chose the new exemption. During the time of the one day visit, Humboldt County reported 327 clients received the new young child exemption.

## **The new WTW Activity Plan/Form (WTW) 2**

In the interim before the new WTW 2 form was made available to counties, Humboldt County used the WTW 2 available on the CDSS website.

### ***General Comments***

*Some county workers interviewed noted that the many clients felt that the new WTW 2 was too confusing for them to understand and contained too many pages. County works expressed that some clients were perplexed with the same activities being listed on both sides of the form under CalWORKs and Federal Work Activities.*

## **Reengagement Process**

The county's reengagement process officially began on January 28, 2013 on distribution of CW 2206.

Humboldt County's Sequencing Plan is as follows:

- **January 28, 2013**-Child and age out of exemption population
- **February 4, 2013**-Two-parent in which neither parent was participating
- **March 4, 2013**-Individuals with the least amount of time left on their 48-month CalWORKs clock

Clients who wished to participate prior to the county sequence plan timeline for reengagement were allowed to volunteer for WTW until their time approached within the reengagement plan.

## **Implementation Strategies**

As information became available from the CDSS, Humboldt County performed incremental changes to program in order to develop a detailed SB 1041 program and fulfill all regulatory requirements. With the assistance and guidance from program managers and supervisors, county analyst prepared SB 1041 training materials within the county and played an integral role in the overall implementation process.

## **WPR Strategies**

Humboldt County instituted various work participation rate (WPR) strategies within the county operations which included, but was not limited to:

- Utilization of a WPR Improvement Executive Group-representing management staff from CalWORKs, Mental Health, Public Health, Outreach Services and the Research & Development Development who meet monthly to review current strategies, review outcomes, trends to potential new strategies to further improve WPR.
- Drop-In Activity-program that offers WtW activities for clients who have breaks in their assigned activities due to current schedule.
- HumWORKs-program that staff mental health professionals dedicated to working short-term (less than 3 months) with participants with mental health, alcohol or other drugs, and/or Domestic Violence issues while participating in WtW activities with a goal to provide tools to clients while participating and contributing to improve WPR.

### **General Comments**

*The county developed and/or utilized various training material that included, but was noted limited to the CDSS policies & procedures, Q & A materials and county training materials and training aids. The county performed extensive in-house training which allowed for a smooth transition to SB 1041 requirements. During the time of the visit, the county was in the early stages of implementing procedures to allow for better management of documentation via scanning and imaging to further improving processes.*

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### **Case Reviews**

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The CDSS Field Monitoring Team reviewed five cases selected by the CWD in advance of the visit. The purpose of this component of the visit is to review how SB 1041 program changes are being integrated into case management, understand how SB 1041 policies are being operationalized by the caseworker, and better comprehend case management within the county.

There were five specific case types requested:

- Case One-a client with **less than or equal to** 24-months left on the CalWORKs 48-month time limit as of January 1, 2013;
- Case Two-a client with **more than** 24-months on the CalWORKs 48-month time limit as of January 1, 2013;
- Case Three-a new client (beginning date of aid January 1, 2013 or later);
- Case Four-a client who is sanctioned that has earnings and is curable based on the new participation requirements (may be a case actually cured since January 1, 2013 based on new participation requirements); and
- Case Five-a client that is part of the former short-term young child exemption (AB X4 4)/ reengagement population, and is currently in the process of or has been reengaged.

### **General Comments**

*Humboldt County uses the C-IV case management system. The cases shared during the visit had all received the appropriate notices and applicable benefits and supportive services. This included the issuance of the CW 2205 and CW 2208, when applicable, in addition to the use of the new WTW 2. County staff demonstrated very thorough journaling capabilities as current and historical information was easily accessed and retrieved by county staff.*



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## **Conclusion**

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### **Successes**

Humboldt County developed and utilized an extensive amount of training materials for SB 1041 implementation. Humboldt County participation and involvement as part of the County Advisory Team (CAT) resulted in the free-flow of information and input early on SB 1041 requirements, leading to collaborative and effective implementation of SB 1041 program. In-house training and, the utilization of various documents distributed by the CDSS, Q & A and various emails communications among staff on SB 1041 requirement allowed for the details of the program to be disseminated and staff trained on requirements.

Key Successes included, but were not limited to:

- Collaborative working relationship with Economic Development: Workforce Investment Board (WIB)
- Multiple Assistance Center(MAC): fostering transitional housing programs for homeless CalWORKs families
- Client flow “soft hand-off” process from eligibility services to employment allowing for more seamless transition
- Mobile WtW vehicle part of remote engagement unit to connect with clients in remote locations
- Kiosks located in main lobby for client services
- Home Works’ program for mental health
- Technology based approach on communication with clients based on preferred mode of communication e.g. text messages, emails, etc.
- Make-It-Work program covering skills and interest of client
- Flexible orientation program which include, one-on-one for clients
- Connection personally with clients for 2208 hand-off process
- Clients seen at least monthly
- Bringing in two-parent family to complete WTW plan
- Good comprehensive case comments process

### **Challenges**

Humboldt County found the implementation of significant changes to the program in such a short amount of time a challenging for the county. Additionally, caseworkers acknowledge the difficult explaining and ensuring clients understood the new WTW 2 form and the differences between the federal requirements and CalWORKs requirement as some clients expressed confusion. WTW 2.

### **Key Recommendations**

Humboldt County may want to evaluate internal non-compliance procedures in order to determine if enhanced pre-sanction services are warranted to intervene with clients early to avoid them entering into sanction status. Potential enhancement may include implementation of home visit process to evaluate noncompliant/or sanctioned client situation to determine why client(s) are not in compliance with their WtW plan and program requirements.

Humboldt County may want to review client staging area within main county office where intake services are held to determine if it is truly adequate for client privacy or if a more suitable private area can be arranged to ensure client privacy during potential sensitive client discussions. The CDSS also recommends that Humboldt County continue to pay close attention to the data which is submitted through their C-IV consortium system to the CDSS for the monthly CalWORKs Cash Grant Caseload Movement Reports (CA 237 CW), and CalWORKs WTW Monthly Activity Reports for All (Other) Families and Two Parent Families (WTW 25/25A).

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**Contact**

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