

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

**Tulare County**

**October 29, 2013**

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

**Tulare 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 the 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] X4 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) and WTW program exist throughout the state.

**County Visit General Information**

The one-day field visit was performed in Tulare County on Tuesday, October 29, 2013 at the Tulare County Health and Human Services Department Agency in Porterville, CA. The field visit team included two CDSS staff along with the county's Workforce Services Specialists, TulareWORKs Deputy Director, Unit Manager, and Program Specialist II and four case workers. The field visit consisted of a kick-off meeting, close-out meeting, staff interviews, and case management observations with county staff.

## **Implementation Strategies**

Tulare County held training in two phases to implement SB 1041 changes, the first a centralized training for supervisors and team leads and the second consisting of workgroups with case workers and staff in each county office. Training sessions and workgroups were held following the release of the CDSS All County Letter (ACL) 12-67, between December 2012 and January 2013. The trainings were half-day sessions that included a PowerPoint presentation and covered several SB 1041 implementation topics including, the WTW 24-Month Time Clock, reengagement, the new young child exemption, participation hours, informing notices, self-initiated programs, the Welfare to Work Plan Activity Assignment Sheet (WTW 2), tracking of the WTW 24-Month Time Clock and county tools and methods of distributing information to staff.

In addition to the training sessions, staff was provided information through TulareWORKS Employment Services memoranda, and the CDSS implementing ACLs and question and answers (Q&A's). Information was issued to staff beginning November 13, 2012, and continued throughout the year.

Tulare County conducted training on the SB 1041 CalWORKs and Welfare to Work Program Changes. This training including information on the following topics:

- The WTW 24-Month Time Clock.
- Alignment of State and Federal Participation Hours.
- New Young Child Exemption.
- Reengagement.

Training materials were provided to the CDSS and aligned with SB 1041 implementation instructions issued by the CDSS. The training material was based on the training material provided by the CDSS through ACL Notice I-08-13.

## **Successes**

Tulare County implemented SB 1041 using several different methods. In preparation, the County conducted workgroups with county staff which began prior to implementation. These workgroups helped inform the implementation process in Tulare County. Following the workgroups, several information delivery methods were used including comprehensive staff training, regional office workgroups, and memorandums to help inform staff of the changes related to SB 1041.

Tulare County regularly meets with community partners including, but not limited to, the three Community-Based Organizations under contract with Tulare County to provide job search and job readiness services, subsidized employment placements and work experience coordination, as well as community colleges. For example, TulareWORKS staff meets quarterly with community colleges to collaborate and monitor the administration of education activities for clients and the provision of needed books and supplies made available to clients under a standing purchase order at each college.

Tulare County has implemented a new task-based model under which eligibility functions and clients not participating in Welfare to Work are managed by non-case-carrying workers that maintain regular contact with clients based on required due dates. These cases are pooled using a system in which non-case-carrying workers will initiate case contact or action for purposes such as eligibility documentation requirements, annual redetermination, or reminders to cure a sanction. Client cases assigned to Welfare to Work are assigned a case worker who works with individual clients to develop the WTW Plan, assigns activities, ensures provision of supportive services and makes referrals to the Specialized Needs Unit for services as needed. Under the task-based model Tulare County has successfully improved efficiency in the processing and management of cases, based on the level of contact required, while freeing up case-carrying Welfare to Work workers to more effectively assist families engaged in Welfare to Work. In addition, the task-based model has alleviated difficulties associated with Tulare County's historically high rate of county worker turnover, as a significant portion of its caseload is no longer assigned to individual workers. Tulare County maintains a very low sanction rate of around 4 percent, largely due to the county's sanction policy. In TulareWORKs, clients who participate at any level remain in good standing and only become sanctioned if their participation hours fall to zero. This has allowed Tulare to continue working with, and providing needed services to, clients who are making progress toward, but are not meeting the minimum hourly requirements of CalWORKs.

### **Key Recommendations**

- Continue to strategize regarding ways to fully engage TulareWORKs clients to the minimum standards of CalWORKs and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to improve the county's work participation rate (WPR).
- Utilize funding available for enhanced subsidized employment, as well as look for other opportunities, to engage clients in work and increase the WPR.
- Make use of funding for family stabilization services to support the effectiveness of TulareWORKs' Specialized Needs Unit and the amelioration of clients' barriers to full engagement, employment and self-sufficiency.

### **Acknowledgments**

The CDSS thanks Tulare County for hosting the field monitoring visit. The CDSS appreciates the open collaboration with Tulare County staff to ensure the continued success of the CalWORKs program.

## Field Monitoring Visit Summary

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### Introduction

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#### Purpose of Field Monitoring Visit

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#### 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:

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- 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) and WTW program exist throughout the state. If such issues exist, they will be addressed by the SB 1041 Oversight Workgroup.

#### County Visit General Information

The one-day field visit was performed in Tulare County on Tuesday, October 29, 2013, at the Tulare County Health and Human Services Department Agency in Porterville, CA. The field visit team included two CDSS staff along with the county's Workforce Services Specialists, TulareWORKs Deputy Director, Unit Manager, and Program Specialist II and three case workers. The field visit consisted of a kick-off meeting, close-out meeting, staff interviews, and case management observations with county staff.

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## Background and Data

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### Tulare County at-a-glance

Total Caseload.....	15,421
(Source: CalWORKs Cash Grant Caseload Movement Report CA 237 CW Line Item 8-April 2014)	
WTW Enrollees.....	6,155
(Source: CalWORKs Welfare to Work Monthly Activity Report WTW 25/25A Line Item 1-April 2014)	
Mandatory Participants (enrollees + sanctioned + non-compliance).....	6,940
(Source: CalWORKs Welfare to Work Monthly Activity Report WTW 25/25A Line Item 1, 3A, and 31- April 2014)	
Reengagement Plan Received.....	Yes
Beginning Date of Reengagement.....	July 1, 2013
Consortium	
System.....	CalWIN

### Summary of Documents provided by Tulare County

- Tulare Caseload charts showing: numbers of WTW Plans signed by participants, numbers of exempt clients by district, numbers of sanctioned clients by month, numbers of clients registered as non-compliant in CalWIN, numbers of clients referred to TulareWORKs Special Needs Unit (SNU) compared by year, and numbers of clients referred to the SNU by month.
- Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency informing notices to clients regarding the SB 1041 changes, including notices informing clients about the new WTW 24-Month Time Clock, that clients with 24 months or less on the WTW 24-Month Time Clock will have months count on the WTW 24-Month Time Clock beginning January 1, 2013, and that sanctioned clients may have their sanctioned cured due to the new hourly requirements.
- TulareWORKs memoranda regarding SB 1041 implementation.
- Tulare County's Assembly Bill (AB) X4 4 Short-Term Exemption County Reengagement Sequencing plan and associated TulareWORKs memorandum to staff and notice to clients.
- Training session PowerPoint presentation slides.

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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 All County Information Notice (ACIN) I-42-13 to interview the county administrator and case workers in-person regarding SB 1041 implementation. The tool was provided to county administrators and caseworkers in advance of the visit. The administrator interview panel consisted of two CDSS staff with four county administrators. The caseworker interviews were conducted by one CDSS staff member interviewing each caseworker.

## Summary of Observations

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

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

Tulare County issued the initial county WTW 24-Month Time Clock General Informing Notice (CW 2205) on November 29, 2012, with a second issuance of the notice in December 2012. Following the issuance of this notice, the county began comprehensive discussions with clients via phone, mail or in person beginning January of 2013, and plans to complete all discussions by October 31, 2013. New and existing clients continue to receive the comprehensive discussion. The county tracked the completion of the comprehensive discussions using ad-hoc tools and manual reviews. County staff is instructed to include documentation of the comprehensive discussion in the case file and CalWIN system.

In general, clients are not choosing to lower their hours and/or change their activities. Clients who were working frequently chose not to reduce their hours. However, clients that choose to engage in education opt to use the WTW 24-Month Time Clock and 12-months allowed for vocational education under CalWORKs federal standards rather than engage in a self-initiated program (SIP).

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

Clients meeting new participation requirements who failed to respond to the county's request to discuss the SB 1041 changes received additional contact(s) by the Employment Specialists. Tulare County used several methods of outreach including letters and phone calls to the clients as well as setting up formal appointments. The county continues to outreach to this population and expected completion of the discussion to occur shortly after the time of the visit. These clients are sent an informing notice with an option to request an appointment. The WTW Plan Activity Assignment Sheet (WTW 2) is sent to clients that are meeting minimum participation requirements with a request that they sign the plan within 30 days. Additional information is provided to unresponsive clients who are not meeting minimum requirements, including the Welfare to Work 24-Month Time Clock Notice (WTW 38) and any necessary follow-up calls. The non-compliance process is initiated when appropriate.

#### ***General Comments***

*Tulare County has recently implemented a task-based model of administering human services. Under the task-based model, CalWORKs eligibility and CalFresh are handled by non-case carrying county workers who process applications on a flow basis and take case action based on due dates. Non-case carrying workers operate Tulare County's centralized call center and online application process. Welfare to Work exempt and sanction cases who are unresponsive are referred to the non-case carrying workers for routine contact, such as noticing and annual redetermination.*

*Once determined eligible, CalWORKs cases are assigned to case-carrying employment services workers for administration of Welfare to Work services.*

*Each employment services worker handles approximately 150 client cases. Clients who have significant barriers to employment such as mental health, substance abuse, or domestic abuse issues as well as clients who enter the non-compliance process are referred to the specialized needs unit (SNU) for specialized services.*

### **New Young Child Exemption**

Tulare County had 175 clients choose to take the new once in a lifetime young child exemption. Some clients chose to preserve this one time exemption to use in the future. Clients that chose the new once in a lifetime young child exemption were offered the opportunity to volunteer to participate.

### **Clients with Good Cause for Lack of Supportive Services**

Tulare County did not experience a shortage in supportive services resources resulting in the provision of good cause to CalWORKs recipients.

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

The new Welfare to Work Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2) form was made available via the CDSS website December of 2012. Tulare County utilizes a form fillable soft copy of the WTW2 from the CDSS website. Employment services workers utilize the soft copy (form fillable) version of the WTW 2 issued from CDSS rather than complete the WTW Plan in an automated fashion. In general, county staff used the WTW 2 as a tool to explain the activities available under the WTW 24-Month Time Clock and the CalWORKs Federal Standards. In addition to the WTW 2, county staff uses the CalWORKs Employment/Self-Sufficiency Plan to identify goals and plans to meet those goals in the areas of employment, education, physical and mental health, family and housing, transportation and other goals as identified.

#### ***General Comments***

*Tulare County felt that the WTW 2 is effective as a guide during a client's SB 1041 comprehensive discussion. Some concerns were expressed about the complexity (left and right sides) and length of the WTW 2 form. In general, the detail in the WTW 2 form and the supportive services page were found to be helpful.*

### **Reengagement Process**

Tulare County began reengaging all AB X4 4 clients on July 1, 2013. Tulare County's Sequencing Plan is as follows:

- **July 2013**-Clients with zero participation hours.
- **January 2014**- Clients partially participating voluntarily.
- **July 2014**-Clients fully participating voluntarily.

The reengagement process for Tulare County includes the following:



- The county sent the CW 2206 to short-term exempt clients informing them of the need to reengage and provided a date for a reengagement orientation. The orientation provided information on the new SB 1041 rules, including the new WTW 24-Month Time Clock and the new young child exemption.
- In addition to the notices, Tulare County used phone calls to contact clients who did not attend the reengagement orientation. Clients who failed to respond to both notices and county phone calls enter the non-compliance process.
- The reengagement orientation sessions included only clients in the reengagement process.

### **Implementation Strategies**

Tulare County held training in two phases to implement SB 1041 changes, the first a centralized training for supervisors and team leads and the second consisting of workgroups with case workers and staff in each county office. Training sessions and workgroups were held following the release of the CDSS ACL 12-67. The trainings covered several SB 1041 implementation topics including, the WTW 24-Month Time Clock, reengagement, the new young child exemption, participation hours, informing notices, self-initiated programs, the Welfare to Work Plan Activity Assignment Sheet (WTW 2), tracking of the WTW 24-Month Time Clock and county tools and methods of distributing information to staff.

In addition to the training sessions, staff was provided information through TulareWORKs Employment Services memoranda, and the CDSS implementing ACLs and Q&As. Information was issued to staff beginning November 13, 2012, and continued throughout the year. This included additional trainings for supervisors and team leads (Q&A and ACL's). Tulare County conducted the SB 1041 CalWORKs and WTW program changes following the CDSS' issuance of ACL 12-67. This training including information on the following topics:

- The WTW 24-Month Time Clock.
- Alignment of State and Federal Participation Hours.
- New Young Child Exemption.
- Reengagement.

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### **Case Reviews**

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The CDSS Field Monitoring Team reviewed five cases selected by Tulare County 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 and 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**

*Tulare County uses the CalWIN case management system. The following is a summary of the case findings:*

- Noticing Requirements: All noticing requirements were met including the New Rules for CalWORKs Welfare to Work Activities Informing Notice (CW 2205) and Your Welfare to Work (WTW) 24-Month Time Clock Notice (CW 2208).
- Comprehensive discussions and additional outreach: All required comprehensive discussions are projected to be completed by October 31, 2013.
- Learning Disability Screening was offered to all five cases reviewed. Four out of five cases waived the screening and one case received the screening.
- Welfare to Work Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2)
  - All case files with plans developed on or after January 2013, used the WTW 2.
  - All plans were complete and included supportive services to be provided to the clients.
- New Young Child: One case reviewed chose to take the new young child exemption and all requirements were met.

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## **Conclusion**

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### **Challenges**

Tulare County has done an excellent job in the implementation of SB 1041 changes with little difficulty or cause for concern. However, the timelines for implementation and pace of CDSS guidance were issues for all counties. Beyond SB 1041 implementation, Tulare County currently achieves a low federal WPR, which has declined from 25 percent in 2011 to around 18 percent in 2013.

### **Key Recommendations**

Tulare County should continue to strategize regarding ways to fully engage TulareWORKs clients to the minimum standards of CalWORKs and TANF to improve the county's WPR. The CDSS recommends that Tulare County utilize funding available for enhanced subsidized employment, as well as look for other opportunities, to engage clients in work and increase the WPR. Additionally, the CDSS recommends utilization of funding for family stabilization services to support the effectiveness of TulareWORKs' Specialized Needs Unit and the amelioration of clients' barriers to full engagement, employment and self-sufficiency.

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**Contact**

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