Welfare to Work: Sanction Reductions and Reengagement Strategies

Facilitated By: Reggie Martinez, A.G.P.A.
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Family Empowerment and Engagement Division
CalWORKs Employment Bureau
Panel Introductions

Celeste Anonas, ASM I  (LA County)

Marti Hufft, Program Manager II (Humboldt County)

Rhonda Wolke, Interim Deputy Director  
(San Bernardino County)

Thana Ash, Employment Services Manager  
(San Bernardino County)
Workshop Objectives

• Share County Welfare Department promising practices that:
  ➢ Reduce Welfare to Work (WTW) sanctions
  ➢ Highlight client reengagement strategies

• Encourage ongoing sharing of promising practices

• Promote increased reductions in WTW sanctions
WTW Sanctions Framework

• **MPP 42-721.31**
  - No sanctions shall be applied for failure to comply with program requirements related to good cause.

• **MPP 42-721.41**
  - Financial sanctions shall be applied when a non-exempt welfare-to-work participant has failed or refused to comply with program requirements without good cause and compliance efforts have failed.

• **MPP 42-721.42-.421**
  - The sanctions shall not apply to an individual who is exempt from the welfare-to-work program.
WTW Sanction Curing

- MPP 42-721.48

  - Restoration of aid:
    - Client indicates desire to end the sanction
    - Client performs activity(ies) previously failed to perform or another appropriate activity (MPP 42-721.43)
    - Client demonstrates compliance in the activity(ies) and is otherwise eligible
Program Status of Welfare-to-Work Population

Data Source – WTW 25/25A
Background

- Mandatory CalWORKs participants must participate in Welfare-to-Work activities and meet State/Federal participation requirements as a condition of receiving aid.
- In 2005, LA County had one of the highest sanction rates in California.
- The GSHVO project was developed as a response to the high sanction rate.
Definition

The GSHVO project provides outreach to clients who do not comply with WTW requirements and are at-risk of incurring a financial sanction, or are already sanctioned.
Types of Outreach

• Telephone Contacts
• Sending Home Visit Appointment Letters
• Home Visits
## Resolution Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>July 2017</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Clients Outreached</td>
<td>5985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Resolutions</td>
<td>4660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution Rate</td>
<td>77.9%</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outreach</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phone Calls</td>
<td>4249</td>
<td>91.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Visits</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>4660</td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Project Strategies

- Each of the seven WTW Regional Offices in LA County has a designated GSHVO unit, comprised of an average of eight WTW workers and one supervisor.

- The supervisor distributes a list of non-compliant clients daily.

- Workers begin outreach by calling clients on their lists three separate times, at different times of the day.

- If telephone attempts are unsuccessful, the Home Visit Compliance Appointment Letter is mailed out.
Home Visit Appointment Letter (GN 6326)

This appointment letter is sent to clients who are currently in non-compliance.
Home Visit Appointment Letter (GN 6327)

This appointment letter is sent to clients who are already sanctioned.
Home Visits

- Home Visits are conducted by GSHVO workers.
- If a client does not respond to telephone calls and does not contact the GSHVO worker after receiving the Home Visit Appointment letter, the worker will proceed with the home visit.
Additional Outreach Activities

• Upon successfully contacting clients, GSHVO workers provide information on the CalWORKs WTW requirements and the benefits of participating in the WTW program.

• They assist in addressing any barriers to encourage participation.

• They provide the same outreach activities to clients who have been sanctioned for 90 days or more.

• They monitor cases until the non-compliance is resolved, or until the client incurs a sanction or goes back to a sanction status.
Q&A, LA County

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• Department of Health and Human Services
  • Integrated
    • Social Services
    • Mental Health
    • Public Health

• CalWORKs Division
  • Eligibility
    • Housing Support Program – Housing Action Program
  • Welfare to Work
    • Family Stabilization
    • Linkages
    • Subsidized Employment

• Staff
  • Integrated Case Worker
  • Eligibility Worker
  • Employment Training Worker
  • Vocational Counselor
CalWORKs
One Program – One Team

Eligibility and Welfare to Work
• Continuous Communication
• Application
  • One Worker
• Ongoing
  • Eligibility
  • WTW
Re-engaging Sanctioned Customers

Eligibility Redetermination Interviews

- Report ran mid-month for Sanctioned customers with Redetermination in the following month
- List provided to Eligibility and WTW
- Eligibility notifies WTW of Redetermination interview
- WTW attends Redetermination interview
- WTW and Eligibility team together on benefits of participating in WTW.
Challenges

• Rescheduled or missed appointments
• Cure plans agreed to and then not completed
• Rural challenges
Successes

• Fewer appointments
• New customer issues identified
• Appropriate activities assigned
• Increased aid amount
• Engagement
• Opportunity
Lessons Learned & Next Steps

- Staff communication and coordination
- Continuous Improvement
- Training
Q&A, Humboldt County

Marti Hufft, Program Manager II
(707) 268-3460
MHufft@co.humboldt.ca.us
Sanction Reduction and Reengagement Strategies

Rhonda Wolke  
Interim Deputy Director

Thana Ash  
Employment Services Manager

12/05/2017
Collaboration with Eligibility staff

- All Transitional Assistance Department (TAD) staff refer sanctioned customers to an Employment Services Specialist (ESS) during any type of contact with the customer.

- Eligibility Workers (EWs) refer employed sanctioned customers to Welfare-to-Work (WTW) staff whenever a change is reported (SAR7 or mid-period).
  - The ESS explains the benefits of curing the sanction and encourages participation to meet the Work Participation Rate (WPR).

- Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) are available in TAD office lobbies to assist walk-in WTW customers, including sanctioned customers.
  - The CSR:
    ✓ Discusses the benefits of the WTW program to encourage participation.
    ✓ Explains activities and services of the WTW program.
    ✓ Is a valuable part of the engagement team.
Collaboration with Eligibility staff

(Continued)

- Sanctioned customers in the office for a Re-Evaluation (RE) or to reapply for CalWORKs are referred directly to the WTW CSR in the lobby to begin the sanction cure process.
  - This is beneficial to the county and to the customer, because a customer is less likely to return to the office at a later time to cure his/her sanction.

- When new employment is reported/recorded for any customer, C-IV generates an automated Task.
  - The Task notifies staff when an employment has been entered in C-IV, then an ESS attempts to contact the customer to initiate a sanction cure plan.
Sanction Cure Marketing

A county developed brochure Think of the Possibilities (WTW 411EE) is given to CalWORKs applicants at application, and to CalWORKs recipients at Semi-Annual Reporting (SAR) and annual RE.

The WTW 411EE:
• Defines what TAD/WTW is and what the WTW program offers.
• Identifies who is eligible to participate with WTW.
• Outlines WTW opportunities.
• Provides information about what is available to the customer after gaining employment.
• Discusses time limits associated with the WTW program.
Transitional Assistance Department

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Address</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29 Palms</td>
<td>73629 Sun Valley Dr, Twentynine Palms, CA 92277</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adelanto</td>
<td>10975 Rancho Rd, Adelanto, CA 92301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barstow</td>
<td>1000 E. Main Street, Barstow, CA 92311</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colton</td>
<td>1900 W. Valley Blvd., Colton, CA 92324</td>
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<tr>
<td>Del Rosa</td>
<td>1685 E. Highland Ave, San Bernardino, CA 92404</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fontana</td>
<td>7977 Sierra Ave, Fontana, CA 92335</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hesperia</td>
<td>9005 9th Ave, Hesperia, CA 92345</td>
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<tr>
<td>Needles</td>
<td>1590 E. Broadway St, Needles, CA 92353</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>1647 E. Holt Blvd, Ontario, CA 91761</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ontario MediCall Office</td>
<td>1627 E. Holt Blvd, Ontario, CA 91761</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rancho Cucamonga</td>
<td>10825 Arrow Rd, Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730</td>
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<tr>
<td>Redlands</td>
<td>1811 W. Lugonia Ave, Redlands, CA 92374</td>
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<td>Rialto</td>
<td>1175 W. Foothill Blvd, Rialto, CA 92376</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Bernardino</td>
<td>255 East Fourth Street, San Bernardino, CA 92415</td>
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<td>San Bernardino</td>
<td>2050 N. Massachusetts, San Bernardino, CA 92415</td>
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<td>Victorville</td>
<td>15010 Palmdale Road, Victorville, CA 92392</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yucaipa</td>
<td>32563 Yucaipa Blvd, Yucaipa, CA 92399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yucaipa Valley</td>
<td>56357 Pinto Trail, Yucaipa, CA 92399</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To inquire about your benefits, please call our Customer Service Center: 1-877-410-9829
To apply for benefits, please visit: www.C4Yourself.com

Our Mission
The mission of the Transitional Assistance Department is to enhance the quality of life in the communities we serve by assisting individuals and families as they transition to self-sufficiency. We provide our services accurately and efficiently, with a high emphasis on integrity, respect and customer services.

THINK OF THE POSSIBILITIES...

Welfare-to-Work (WTW) Program

WTW 411 EE (12/16)
The possibility of you finding a job has never been easier! Let us show you what TAD/WTW can do for you.

What is TAD/WTW?
TAD/WTW is San Bernardino County’s exciting WTW program geared towards helping you prepare for work, find a job, become self-supporting, and build a better future for yourself and your family.

What can we do for YOU?
TAD/WTW is a program designed with you in mind and can help you:
• Get the skills you need to become employed or get a better job
• Find a job with private industries, businesses, or public employers in your area
• Become a role model for your children
• Feel good about yourself
• Pay your:
  - Child Care
  - Transportation
  - Work Expenses (work boots, tools, work clothes)
  - Training/school expenses (books supplies)

Who is eligible to participate?
The County will decide if you are eligible to participate in TAD/WTW when:
• You apply for or receive CalWORKs.
• Your eligibility for CalWORKs is redetermined.
• You have a change in your participation status.
Note: If you are not required to participate, you can volunteer in the TAD/WTW program.

After you get a job
You may still be eligible for Child Care after you get a job and are off cash aid.
You may also be eligible to receive other benefits such as:
• Medi-Cal
• CalFresh

Time limit
It is important for you to find a job and become self-supporting because each adult can only receive a cumulative total of 48 months (4 years) of cash aid. The four year time limit includes time spent on aid in different counties, and/or states. Don’t let your time run out without participating in TAD/WTW!

Welfare-to-Work opportunities
The following is a list of opportunities offered by TAD/WTW:
• Activities to gain Employment
• On-the-Job Training (OJT)
• Work Experience
• Community Service
• Work Study
• Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment
• Vocational Education and Training
• Job Readiness Assistance/Job Search
• Secondary Education, Adult Basic Education or GED
• Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Domestic Abuse Services
• Job Networking

Do you know
If you are working, it is possible you can continue to receive part of your CalWORKs grant, along with your earnings. For more information, contact any one of the TAD offices located throughout the county (see other side for office information).
An informational flyer Welfare-to-Work Sanctions (WTW 412) was developed to mail to sanctioned customers.

The WTW 412:
• Advises the customer his/her case has a WTW sanction reducing the CW benefits.
• Informs the customer of the benefits of participating with WTW and the services offered.
• Provides examples of a sanctioned household versus a WTW active household receiving full benefits.
• Outlines activities the customer can participate in to meet his/her required participation hours.
• Details the initial steps involved in curing their sanction.
• Provides TAD office locations and phone numbers.
Welfare-to-Work Sanctions

Your Welfare-to-Work (WTW) sanction is costing you hundreds of dollars a month in potential benefit.

You currently have a WTW sanction applied to your case. This means that your CalWORKs cash aid has been reduced because of an issue with your WTW participation. You may also have a reduction in your CalFresh benefits.

Does it really pay to participate in WTW? **YES!**
You may be eligible to hundreds of dollars more per month in various benefits while you participate!!!

Example:
Jane is a single parent with two children, ages 6 and 8. Below are the benefits she may receive while she has a WTW sanction, and when she is actively participating in WTW activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum Cash Aid Amount</th>
<th>Actively Participating in WTW Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$541 per month</td>
<td>$670 per month</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transportation Assistance</th>
<th>Gas Cards, bus pass, or mileage reimbursement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not eligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child Care Expenses</th>
<th>Paid for while participating in WTW activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only for some employers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work/School Ancillary Expenses</th>
<th>Paid for while participating in WTW activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not eligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What activities can you participate in?
Recent changes in State regulations have created more activities that will count towards your participation requirement. Activities now include:

- Employment
- Job Readiness Workshop and Job Search
- Vocational Education and Training programs
- Adult Basic Education and GED Training
- Community Service Training
- Work Experience (WEX) activities
- Work Study at local community colleges
- Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Domestic Violence Services

Actual benefits are determined on a case-by-case basis. Your Eligibility Worker (EW) will be able to accurately determine your benefits.

How can you remove your sanction?
An Employment Services Specialist (ESS) will guide you in the process of curing your sanction. You can go to any Transitional Assistance Department office during normal business hours (8:30 to 4:30, Monday through Friday). See the reverse side for office locations and phone numbers.

WTW ESS (510) 631-5041

Transitional Assistance
Sanction Cure Plans

Whenever possible, a Plan to Meet Welfare-to-Work Rules and Get My Cash Aid Back (WTW 29) is discussed and agreed upon over the phone in lieu of a face-to-face meeting.

Once the WTW 29 is agreed upon, the ESS will:
• Mail the WTW 29 to the customer.
• Cure the sanction and restore aid effective the 1st of the following month after the signed WTW 29 and Welfare-to-Work Plan – Activity Assignment (WTW 2) is received.

This is beneficial to the customer and saves the customer time.
Participation

Customers are encouraged to participate in concurrent activities to complement and enhance skills used in their current employment. A wide array of contracted activities are made available to customers, including:

• Vocational Education (Voc/Ed) programs,
• Family Stabilization (FS),
• Work Experience (WEX),
• CalWORKs Subsidized Employment Program (CSEP), or
• CalWORKs Youth Employment Program (CYEP).
Home Calls

Home calls are completed, when possible, to explain the benefits of participation to employed sanctioned customers. During the home call the ESS ensures the customer is aware of the supportive services available when they participate in WTW.

Supportive Services include, but are not limited to:
• Transportation
• Child Care
• Ancillary expenses

Communication is key. Many times customers fall into sanction without attending Orientation, often times they are unaware of the WTW benefits available to them.
Q&A, San Bernardino County

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• Thana Ash, Employment Services Manager
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  tash@hss.sbcounty.gov
Open Discussion