

COUNTY NAME:

LAKE

CalWORKs County Plan Addendum

Date Submitted to California Department of Social Services:

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I hereby certify that County Board of Supervisors was briefed regarding the contents of this Plan addendum prior to submittal.



County Welfare Director's
Signature

Carol J. Huchingson

Printed Name

01/16/07

Briefing Date

This plan addendum is submitted pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Section 10534.

**CalWORKs COUNTY PLAN ADDENDUM PER ACL # 06-46
MAY 1007**

FOR LAKE COUNTY

1) County Goals

After reviewing the county's existing CalWORKs County Plan, please provide a general description of how the county will meet the goals defined in Welfare and Institutions (W&I) Code Section 10540, while taking into consideration the work participation requirements of the federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005.

The goals of W&I Code Section 10540 are the following:

- 1) Reduce child poverty in the State;*
- 2) Reduce dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; reduce out-of-wedlock births; and encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families;*
- 3) Meet the requirements of federal law while avoiding unanticipated outcomes that negatively affect child well-being, the demand for county general assistance, or the number of families affected by domestic violence.*

Lake County Department of Social Services (LCDSS) has reviewed the existing CalWORKs County Plan, the caseload reduction that has occurred, our WPR in comparison to the state average, and our ranking in the "Counties Employed Rates" attachment to ACL 06-42. (Please see attachments) Based on these, we believe the existing County Plan has served Lake County citizens well and our desire is to continue the services as outlined in this plan. With that said, we recognize that there is always room for improvement and we do have some additional and enhanced services planned that are described in this document.

These combined services will generate outcomes that are expected to increase our Work Participation Rate (WPR). The addition of different case types to the "universe" of cases counted for the WPR is problematic because there is no historical data or experience in working with these populations, making it impossible to predict when LCDSS will reach the required 50% WPR. Employment and training services need to be delivered over time with a review of the findings for these groups of participants before any meaningful predictions can be forecast for an increase in the WPR. LCDSS does have changes in processes planned that will provide a minimal level of increase in WPR with the cases we have experience providing WtW services to and we anticipate that the addition of services to the new populations will have some measure of success. It is estimated that the changes outlined will put the WPR for Lake County at or slightly above the 50% mark in three to five years.

A. General description of how the county will meet the goals of W&I Code 10540

Reduce child poverty in the State

Lake County population is estimated to have increased by seven percent since 2000 (per the US census) and the number of children receiving cash aid has decreased 47%. It is recognized that this is not a sole indicator of child poverty; however it is an indicator that financial circumstances for children have improved. As stated above, LCDSS believes the existing CalWORKs Plan has served families well and significantly improved families ability to provide for their children without cash assistance. Therefore the plan is to continue providing those same services with some enhancements. The planned additions of a car loan program, facilitation of disability applications for those exempt due to disability and youth employment services will enhance our existing plan allowing families to further increase their income/earnings.

Reduce dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage; reduce out-of-wedlock births; and encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families

It is a fact that the number of adults receiving cash assistance since October 1999 has decreased by sixty percent (60%). This information is from LCDSS statistical reports submitted monthly to CDSS. Our CalWORKs process has a “work first” approach and willing applicants can be in our Job Club activity within days of approval and 30% of all applicants referred to Job club are employed during that activity.

The number of two-parent families receiving CalWORKs has decreased sixty-three percent (63%) since October 1999.

The number of pregnant teens in the county has decreased from 51.2 per 1000 teens in 2000 to 33.3 per 1000 teens in 2004, based on California Department of Health Services information.

As stated above, LCDSS believes the existing CalWORKs Plan has served families well and significantly improved parents’ ability to provide for their children without cash assistance. Therefore the plan is to continue providing those same services. The addition of youth employment services is planned to further reduce out-of-wedlock births by increasing self-worth, instilling a desire for independence through job preparation and actual work experience. The youth employment services will further encourage self reliance through an educational component explaining the benefits of work, providing independent living skills, discouraging teen pregnancy and encouraging the formation of two-parent families.

Meet the requirements of federal law while avoiding unanticipated outcomes that negatively affect child well-being, the demand for county general assistance, or the number of families affected by domestic violence.

In the year 2000 LCDSS did a point in time study of child well being and named it the Lake County Children's Report Card. LCDSS has just begun the process of doing a comparison of the current information with this previous report and the information will be available sometime in the spring of 2007. Based on currently available data, it is believed that LCDSS has not experienced any unanticipated outcomes that have negatively affected child well-being.

The County's General Relief Program has shown a decrease rather than an increase since the beginning of CalWORKs.

The number of CalWORKs referrals for domestic abuse has decreased at a similar rate as the overall CalWORKs caseload has decreased.

2) Participation Improvement

Please describe what immediate and long-range actions the county will take to improve the federal work participation rate(WPR) among CalWORKs applicants and recipients. At a minimum, describe how the county will address increased participation in the areas listed below. When responding provide a detailed description of the policy or strategy in each program area, the anticipated outcome that will result in program improvements, the percentage of families affected, and how success will be determined. Please note that if a county is already using a particular strategy that is successful, a description of that strategy is sufficient.

B. Providing up-front engagement activities

Lake County has been providing up-front engagement activities by strongly encouraging applicants to attend orientation/appraisal within 10 days of the application date. This activity is available every Monday – Thursday at 9 a.m. and other times by special arrangement. Orientation/appraisal is conducted by the same Welfare-to-Work contractor that facilitates the Job Club/Job search activity and provides all post assessment case management services. Through our up-front process the contractor is able to get acquainted with the participants and the participants get to meet the staff. Contract staff give them a tour of the facility, explain the requirements, while stressing the benefits of participating. Applicants/recipients seeking a medical exemption can pick up a CW 61 form to request exemption from Welfare-to-Work at the orientation. Our hope is that if they participate in the orientation and gain an understanding of what participating can do for them, they will be more likely to want to participate. Our Behavioral Health counselors attend orientation to explain their ability to assist with barriers involving substance abuse and mental health. The Behavior Health Counselors are co-located full time and Domestic Abuse Counselors part-time within the LCDSS. This allows the CalWORKs staff to make an immediate contact for clients identified as having these barriers to employment.

For most new recipients job club followed by job search is the first activity. A new Job Club begins every Monday, so the most anyone has to wait is a few days. Of the recipients who are referred to Job Club, thirty two (32%) percent obtain employment through this activity. Of those employed sixty five (65%) percent maintain their employment beyond two months.

For those participants not employed through the Job Club/Job Search process, county staff perform the testing for assessment on the last day of this activity. The tests are scored and follow up appointments are made to review the results with team meetings to sign the Welfare-to-Work plan typically happening within thirty days for those who show for scheduled appointments and sixty days for those who have to be rescheduled one or more times.

Ninety percent of our clients who fail to participate, do so in the beginning and the activity is job club and job search. They fail to attend and then are sanctioned. A review of the statistics indicates that about one third of those referred find employment. So if everyone referred attended, our WPR would increase. LCDSS has CalWORKs Social Workers, Employment and

Training Workers and contract staff who make home visits in an attempt to engage these recipients into work activities and to verify they still reside in the county. Past history with home visiting has shown that six percent of the families have moved without notifying LCDSS of their whereabouts.

LCDSS plans to decrease the caseload sizes which will provide the opportunity for the Integrated Caseworkers to have more contacts with the recipients. Some of the additional staff will be assigned to intake so that staff can focus more on motivating applicants to fully understand the benefits of participation and the consequences of not participating. This increase in staff numbers will be through filling existing vacancies and increased focus on staff retention. All CalWORKs recipients (100%) will benefit from their caseworkers having a reduced caseload.

LCDSS has received budget approval to place a “lead” worker in each CalWORKs unit to assist the supervisors in monitoring and recognizing staff productivity. This was designed to help motivate our staff so that they see how their individual efforts are assisting clients to get jobs and become self-sufficient. The plan includes visual monthly tracking by workers as to numbers of clients contacted, became employed, left aid due to employment and moved to job retention. The plan also includes updates at unit and all staff meetings with the numbers demonstrating our successes.

It is anticipated that we can reduce our “no show” rate to Job Club/Job Search by thirty percent with the increased focus on job services at the time of initial application. Participation prior to application approval is voluntary and supportive services are provided for those who choose to participate prior to case granting. Success will be measured by comparing the current number of people attending versus referred (41% last 6 quarters) and the numbers attending versus referred in months following implementation of the changes (is estimated to be 53% or better.)_Since approximately ninety percent of our sanctioned recipients have their sanction occur at Job Club/Job Search it is estimated that a thirty percent increase in this activity will result in a substantial reduction in the number of clients who are sanctioned from this activity. An average of 60% of our CalWORKs applicants are referred to Job Club/Job Search each month.

Additionally, LCDSS has been under-utilizing the Diversion program for several years. A new policy is being developed to address the availability of Diversion Services at each CalWORKs intake. This will not improve the WPR, but if applicants can receive services or one short term lump sum payment which will enable them to not depend on the system for future monthly benefits, we have really helped them move down the road to self-sufficiency and it will help with the caseload reduction credit. All applicants or 100% will be provided information regarding the diversion program.

LCDSS believes that until there is some history with the new requirements for participation and the new categories of families that count towards the WPR we will take a very conservative “guess-timate” of how much we can realistically increase our WPR. LCDSS has consistently maintained a higher WPR than the state of California as a whole. We believe this shows that we have operated a good WtW program for our county. Even so, our participation rate has been as high as 42% but typically is just above or just below 30%. If through the activities listed above,

we increase the number participating by 2 - 5% each year in the next three years, we will only increase our average WPR to 32-35%.

C. Achieving full engagement by individuals who are required to participate, and who are partially participating, not participating or are between activities.

LCDSS plans to provide motivational interviewing training to the CalWORKs Integrated Caseworkers and partner agency staff. This training is expected to assist the workers in getting the applicants/recipients to understand how participating can help them meet their own goals in life. It is expected that increasing our contacts with clients and utilizing the new methods learned through this training will decrease the number of people requesting exemptions and the number in the sanction process. The implementation phase will begin January 2007 therefore there is no expected measurable increase in participants from these new practices in the fiscal year 06-07. There should be a small increase possibly as much as 5% in the fiscal year 07-08, but as the workers gain skill in these techniques through practice there will be a greater increase in the number participating in fiscal year 08-09.

Lake County Community Colleges are working to improve their ability to provide work study for CalWORKs students. This should increase the hours for those students participating, but not likely for the total number of hours required. However our number of students is small and we do not believe this will have a statistically significant impact on the WPR.

Supervisors will be monitoring the caseload WPR of each of their individual workers. Best practices will be gleaned from those with higher rates of engagement and those practices will be trained to all workers. After the training, supervisors will monitor to ensure these practices are followed and to capture the increase in WPR made by each worker. Success will be measured by the increase in the number of clients participating the required number of hours and by the number of clients who acquire and maintain full time jobs. It is estimated that by the end of the second full year of implementing this change (June 2009,) a net increase of clients required to participate actually engaged as required, would be no less than 10%.

D. Providing activities to encourage participation and to prevent families from going into sanction status

LCDSS believes that the motivational interviewing already described in C will encourage participation as well as the change in focus during the initial application process. Our Welfare-to-Work contractor plans to continue monthly family focus activities that have demonstrated the ability to get families out into the community to get involved in learning things that will help them to become self-sufficient. The contractor has had the fire department, coast guard, PGE and Housing Assistance to name a few as guest presenters at these family night activities. There are always activities for the children who attend. This type of event improves the relationships between the recipients/participants and the contractor, which also increases the motivation to participate in the work activities.

LCDSS is planning to increase the mileage reimbursement rate to the same level that county employees receive for the use of their own cars for work. This will increase the current rate by

\$.05 per mile. A auto loan program is being developed and may be implemented to remove one of the transportation barriers. LCDSS is in the process of issuing a Request for Proposal for auto repair, in an attempt to lower the total costs for these types of supportive service payments. Multiple requests for car repair have been turned down because the cost of the repair is far more than the value of the car needing to be repaired. This leaves the “would-be” participant with few options. Our Welfare-to-Work contractor is in the process of developing the particulars for the auto loan program, and will administer it when approved by the County Board of Supervisors. The tentative plan is for the participant to be able to buy a car that has a value low enough to maintain eligibility, (yet strong enough to provide reliable service for some time) and successfully make payments on it. It is not the desire to overwhelm them with debt, but provide them with dependable transportation.

Success for this section would be monitored the same as outlined above in Section C. The measurement factors would be number of participants utilizing the mileage reimbursement and auto loan program and the number of families sanctioned in comparison to the previous quarter and quarters previous to implementation. The percentage of CalWORKs families affected by the caseworkers receiving the motivational interviewing will be 100% and the increase in mileage will be all those with the ability to drive their own vehicles.

E. Reengaging noncompliant or sanctioned individuals

LCDSS will be adding one additional Employment and Training Worker III who will work exclusively with long term sanctioned clients in an attempt to engage or re-engage them in work activities. With the filled Integrated Caseworker positions, all workers will have reduced caseloads and be directed to have minimal twice monthly contact with recipients. If they are unable to contact by phone, they will do a mailing and request that the client make contact. Our Welfare-to-Work contractor will also be increasing the contacts they have with post assessment clients assigned to them. It is our plan that this increase in contact will allow staff to find out about new barriers and work towards solving them before work activities are affected.

Recipients who are in a “pending sanction” status (about 12% of post assessment recipients) will be referred to a newly developed process involving a CalWORKs Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT). This team will be comprised of the CalWORKs contractors and partners. The MDT meetings will include the recipient. Recipients will be allowed one re-scheduled appointment if they call ahead, otherwise the partners will conduct the meeting without them. One of the purposes will be to have the partners explain what their role can be to assist the client to become self-sufficient and develop a plan. (This approach will start as a trial to determine feasibility.)

There is a reality to our long term sanction clients that we have learned from case demographic assessment. This reality is long term sanction clients in Lake County not only know that they are being sanctioned, they have made a conscious choice to take the sanction. There is other income into the home either from an SSI spouse or child, or another unrelated adult bringing money into the home. The family is comfortable with this level of income and lifestyle. They do not want to make changes. At this point in time it is an unrealistic expectation that LCDSS can do anything to “motivate” them to participate.

A reduction in the number of cases sanctioned will be the success indicator for this category. As mentioned already, under the current California CalWORKs structure for TANF where the family continues to receive assistance for the children when the parent willfully refuses to participate, it will be very difficult to engage these parents. Based on our experiences to date we anticipate being able to lift sanctions on 8 clients per year (2 per quarter) through the processes outlined in Section E.

F. Other activities designed to increase the county's federal WPR

LCDSS believes that many exempt clients in Lake County could be moved into participation or determined eligible for social security and/or SSI. LCDSS plans to contract with our Welfare-to-Work contractor to facilitate disability applications. To assist in this process and also to help case manage the exempt population, the services of a public health nurse will be utilized. The PHN will serve as a liaison between LCDSS staff, the clients and the medical profession , providing a true assessment of the capabilities these clients do have, focusing on their strengths and what they realistically might be able to do; rather than repeatedly being exempted for health reasons.

All other activities designed to increase the WPR in the next one to three years have been listed in other sections in this document. However, LCDSS through our Welfare-to-Work contractor, is in the development stage of a youth employment program. Many of our CalWORKs families do not have one or more parents working in the home. Therefore these youth have no one to model the so called soft skills and that work is necessary or even important. This program is not designed to increase the WPR in this year or the next and will most likely not be measurable. But LCDSS believes it is an important thing to do in order to divert these youth from adult welfare dependency. This youth employment program will serve youth through paid and unpaid work experience and workshop activities to assist them with job search and job retention. In addition it will teach budgeting and other independent and self-sufficiency skills. The details of the program operation are still in the development stage

Success will be determined by a decrease in the number of cases with an adult receiving a medical exemption. It is estimated the processes outlined in Section F will reduce the number of clients receiving a medical exemption and for those receiving an exemption, reduce the length of time the exemption persists for the individual by 5% each year beginning in fiscal year 07-08. An average of 87 participants are under a medical exemption each month, which is about 22% of our cases required to participate in WtW activities.

G. Description of how the county will collaborate with local agencies.

LCDSS and our Welfare-to-Work contractor participate in the local One-Stop. At the beginning of the operation of the One-Stop a universal referral form and release of information form were created along with procedures to facilitate the sharing of information. These forms and procedures remain in place. The mission of the One-Stop is to “Connect individuals, business and organizations to services and resources that meet their economic, employment and educational needs.

The One-Stop is comprised of Workforce Investment Act programs, California LCDSS of Rehabilitation, North Bay Veterans Workforce Services, Goodwill Industries of the Redwood Empire, People Services, Lake County Office of Education Adult Services (which includes the county Regional Occupational Program,) EDD, Mendocino and Yuba Community Colleges, California Human Development Corporation and Lake County Community Action Agency.

Managers from these entities meet no less than quarterly to work out issues for collectively providing services to the citizens of Lake County. Line staff meet no less than bi-monthly to work out the day to day issues of delivering these services in a coordinated and professional manner.

LCDSS, through our WtW contractor is partnering with the One Stop to assist with maintaining One Stop services at the south end of the county. Depending upon where people live in the county, it could be as much as a 90 mile drive (roundtrip) from their home to the main One Stop in Lakeport. With reduced funding over the past couple of years, many agencies have not been able to maintain full time staffing at the southern One Stop satellite office in Clearlake. The new partnership will allow one full time receptionist and then office space for different partnering agencies to utilize on a rotational basis for client contact.

LCDSS continues to have separate and regular meetings with all agencies that have CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work contracts. This includes Alcohol and Other Drug Services and Mental Health, who together provide staff for Behavioral Health Services. These staff are co-located in our building full time. A community based organization (CBO) provides Domestic Abuse services for CalWORKs applicants and recipients, with staff who are co-located on a part-time basis. The Welfare-to-Work contractor providing employment services attends. Lake County Office of Education provides lice eradication services in the schools under contract with LCDSS because children were missing too much school due to head lice. If we add new contracts for other services, they will be asked to attend this meeting as well.

These partnering agencies from the One-Stop and contractors would be the ones to make up the members of the MDT. LCDSS desires to add a part time Public Health Nurse to the team to provide prospective on health needs that may be a barrier to participation and self-sufficiency. Referrals to MDT could be made by any partner. It would be LCDSS staff who would arrange the MDT meetings, and provide the space. The referring party or LCDSS Integrated Caseworker would be responsible to initiate the invitation to the recipient to attend. As mentioned previously, one of the intents of this approach is to provide the recipient with a clear picture of what each agency can provide in the way of support, barrier identification and services to move them down the road to a job and self-sufficiency.

A new collaboration planned is youth services. The current Welfare-to-Work contractor for employment services is developing a proposal. This program will collaborate with the existing WIA youth services staff to greatly increase the number of youth in Lake County receiving employment services. As mentioned, this program will provide both unpaid and paid work experience, as well as workshop style instruction. Phase I will target CalWORKs youth that have no working adult in the home to model behavior required to be successful as a working head of household. LCDSS will also partner with the Independent Living Skills Program to include appropriate foster youth in this program to assist in the development of their self-sufficiency skills. Phase II would be any youth in a CalWORKs assistance unit aged sixteen (16) to nineteen (19.) Phase II is dependent on funding and the ability to get Lake County businesses on board to provide the job placements for the youth.

Success for these old and new strategies will be determined by clients cooperation with their WtW plan after their participation in the MDT meetings and for the youth services, by those served not making application for CalWORKs assistance once they have reached the age of eighteen and beyond. Approximately 20% of our recipients are sanctioned with half of those long term. Therefore we are expecting about 10% of our recipients to be invited to attend the MDT meetings.

H. Plan to measure quarterly progress

Please describe how the county will measure the extent to which cumulative policies or strategies in the Plan addendum are successful, and how the county will measure progress on a quarterly basis (for example, participation rate of a specific population, sanction rate, orientation show rate, etc.) In addition, include the projected cumulative impact the county's policies or strategies will likely have on the county's federal work participation rate for each year of the next three years (for example, current rate of X will be increased to Y.)

LCDSS has a new plan to have each individual caseworker monitor their caseload WPR, sanctioned and exemption rate, number employed but still eligible, number gaining employment and number leaving aid due to employment. This will be verified by the supervisors and system reports. LCDSS has been utilizing a similar monitoring system currently in use by the Other Program Assistance (OPA) Division to monitor the State Performance Standards in Medi-Cal. This system has generated positive results. These results are reported quarterly to the Director for review and further direction.

LCDSS experience in meeting the State Performance Standards in Medi-Cal helped us develop processes to identify individual worker best practices. These practices were then broken down by the supervisors/trainers, then training developed and delivered. Results of these efforts have been continually monitored, re-evaluated and practices changed where needed to meet/maintain the goals.

This monitoring will be used to recognize and motivate staff. Recognition "ceremonies" are being developed to further motivate staff to assist the recipients with their increased participation.

As previously mentioned, Lake County has maintained an average WPR of 30%. If we are able to increase the number of participants as outlined above each year for the next three years, we will be at 51.6 percent. But as stated in the beginning, there are many unknowns with the addition of safety net and other case types to the "universe" of cases counting toward the WPR.

4) Funding

Describe how the county has spent and plans to utilize single allocation and other funding for the county's CalWORKs program. This section will help explain to county and State stakeholders how increased funding will be used.

Program Component	Fiscal Year 2005-06 Actual Expenditures	Fiscal Year 2006-07 Budgeted Amount	Description of how additional funding provided in Fiscal Year 2006-07 will be used
CalWORKs Eligibility Administration	944,606	1,342,981	Additional staffing as outlined in narrative
WTW Employment Services	2,118,702	2,759,843	Additional staffing for ETW III and WtW contractor staff
CalWORKs Child Care	458,250	650,000	Increased cost per child
Cal-Learn	59,724	71,960	Increased cost
CalWORKs Funded Mental Health Services	175,784	179,564	Increased cost
CalWORKs Funded Substance Abuse Services	212,376	210,034	Increased cost
Other		6,000	training
Other		34,093	Public health nurse (part time)