

PLUMAS COUNTY

CalWORKs County Plan Addendum

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Prepared By:

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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

Elliott Smart
Printed Name

January 9, 2007
Briefing Date

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

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.

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

Plumas County assures that all participants are aware of all community-based and public services that their families may be eligible to. In this way, we maximize efforts to assist them in their goal of participation in work activity and eventual self-sufficiency.

The case managers and eligibility workers review all possible services the applicants or recipients may be eligible for at intake and recertification including child care, employment services (EDD & WIA), Veterans Affairs (VA), free lunch programs, Head Start, Women, Infants and Children (WIC), housing assistance, educational programs, and behavioral health services (substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence).

We work with the food banks located throughout the county to assure that our clients can get emergency assistance as needed. We also work with our local Salvation Army and our Plumas Crisis Intervention & Resource Center (PCIRC). They work with our clients who are in crisis and provide rental assistance, gas vouchers and emergency food when their CalWORKs grant and food stamps cannot meet all their needs.

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

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy).

Plumas County is currently discussing WTW activities at the intake appointment. The WTW 1 is signed and the client is referred to orientation immediately upon granting the WTW case. Typically, there is sufficient capacity so that clients do not wait for orientation sessions. If there is a problem with a recipient attending an orientation, the case manager will offer an individual orientation to accommodate the client.

If a client is sanctioned when the family comes into intake, we immediately refer that client to the case manager who handles sanctions to provide the opportunity, on a voluntary basis, for the curing process to begin immediately. Other family members are aided immediately, if eligible.

We recently expanded the office hours at our One-Stop Center so the case managers for CalWORKs are available from 7:00am to 5:30pm to accommodate our WTW participants. This has proved helpful for our working population and our students. This gives the participants easier access to the case managers and avoids delays in getting activity agreements and WTW plans signed. It is hoped that this will increase our federal WPR and therefore increase our state participation.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly?

Discussing the WTW activities at the first appointment will enable the case manager and the participant to identify any barriers or problems with participation. Potential barriers to participation can be identified sooner and dealt with so that sanctioned individuals are able to begin curing their sanctions at an earlier date.

On an average, we currently schedule 10 orientations a month. We have a 50% no show rate. By doing one-on-one orientations we feel that we can decrease the no-show rate to 35-40%.

How will success be determined (quantitative and qualitative assessment of effects)?

We are a very small county and most of our quantitative assessments are made by simple manual counts of attendance. The Employment Training Workers (ETW) enter the attendance and no-shows in ISAWS WTW. We will be able to immediately note any change in our attendance. The case managers meet weekly with their supervisor and they will be able to discuss attendance and be able to evaluate their strategies for reengagement.

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

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy).

Plumas County has restructured the WTW unit and now has a senior case manager who handles the CalWORKs sanctioned individuals. The case manager has been sending out flyers and making telephone calls attempting to reengage the non-participating individuals. A spreadsheet is being kept, noting the dates the flyers are sent, the telephone calls made, etc. This will help us evaluate the success of this strategy.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly?

We have an average of 25 sanctioned cases each month. We anticipate reengaging 5 cases. This would decrease our sanctioned rate by 20%.

How will success be determined (quantitative and or qualitative assessment of effects)?

We are a small county with only 3 Employment & Training Workers. We get weekly attendance reports from our providers regarding Community Service attendance. We are able to do early intervention for those who are not participating. The WTW unit meets weekly to review the cases and note any problems or progress with the participants. Early Engagement, Reengagement and Sanction Reduction are all intermingled. Quantitative assessments are made by a simple review of the weekly statistics.

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

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy).

We are in the process of implementing a policy that will require a case manager to attempt a home visit on all families before a sanction is implemented. It is anticipated that the home visits will enable the case manager to discuss the sanction process and assess more closely any barriers or problems to participation, therefore avoiding the sanction.

Our local WIA offers weekly life skills classes to the community and we refer our participants to these classes. We feel if CalWORKs participants attend the life skills classes, they will develop some coping skills which will increase their ability to obtain and retain employment. The life skills classes are open to the public. We have found that when CalWORKs participants are co-enrolled with participants who have a connection to the labor market they develop a more positive attitude towards employment and are likely to be more successful.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly?

We feel the personal contact will reduce the number of clients going into sanction by 10%. The life skills classes will enhance our participants' abilities to obtain and retain employment.

How will success be determined (quantitative and qualitative assessment of effects)?

We are a small county with only 3 Employment & Training Workers. We get weekly attendance reports from our providers regarding Community Service attendance. We are able to do early intervention for those who are not participating. The WTW unit meets weekly to review the cases and note any problems or progress with the participants. Early Engagement, Reengagement and Sanction Reduction are all intermingled. Quantitative assessments are made by a simple review of the weekly statistics.

E. Reengaging noncompliant or sanctioned individuals

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of policy/strategy).

Plumas County has restructured the WTW unit and now has a senior case manager who handles the CalWORKs sanctioned individuals. The case manager sends out flyers and makes telephone calls attempting to reengage the non-participating individuals. A spreadsheet is being kept, noting the dates the flyers are sent, the telephone calls made, etc. This will help us evaluate the success of this strategy.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly?

We anticipate reengaging 20% of our sanctioned cases (see section C).

How will success be determined (quantitative or and qualitative assessment of effects)?

We are a small county with only 3 Employment & Training Workers. We get weekly attendance reports from our providers regarding Community Service attendance. We

are able to do early intervention for those who are not participating. The WTW unit meets weekly to review the cases and note any problems or progress with the participants. Early Engagement, Reengagement and Sanction Reduction are all intermingled. Quantitative assessments are made by a simple review of the weekly statistics.

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

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy a current policy strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy):

Feather River College (our community college) is currently exploring an idea for them to create a full-time job developer. They feel that job developer could expand the number of work-study slots that would be available to our CalWORKs students. If our students are able to have more hours in work-study, they could use the work-study as core hours and extend the number of months that they could continue in their studies.

What are the anticipated effects and percentages of families affected monthly?

Students will be able to continue in their education plan for a longer period. Statistics say that the more education they attain, the more they can earn in a lifetime. This reduces recidivism. We anticipate this will affect 10% of our families.

How will success be determined (quantitative or qualitative assessment of effects)?

There should be an increase in students attaining higher paying jobs and losing their dependency on welfare programs. We will work closely with the College to monitor outcomes.

G. Please provide a description of how the county will collaborate with local agencies, including, but not limited to, local workforce investment boards, community colleges, universities and adult schools and regional occupational centers/programs that provide activities that meet federal work participation requirements and provide participants with skills that will help them achieve long-term self-sufficiency. For each individual agency, responses should include elements such as how information is shared or will be shared, ongoing or planned contracts, ongoing meetings established, etc.

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy).

CARES: CalWORKs has a monthly CARES (CalWORKs Resource Sharing) meeting with local agencies to co-case manage our CalWORKs participants. Some of the other agencies in attendance are the Employment Development Department, the Housing and Community Development Department, the Work Investment Agency, Child Protective Services, our local resource centers, County Mental Health and Feather River College. We have signed releases from our participants and bring to the table any universal participants for whom we have concerns.

Information is shared at the CARES meeting and we work together to remove barriers that may get in the way of the participant's goal for self-sufficiency. We have been able to help participants avoid eviction, work with CPS to prevent children from being removed from the home, and when we discover barriers to participation, we work with the other agencies and the participant to avoid sanctions.

Plumas County Mental Health: We contract with Plumas County Mental Health to do our Alcohol & Drug, Mental Health, and Domestic Violence screenings. They also do counseling as needed for the CalWORKs participants and their families. The goal is to identify barriers and work to overcome them. They have been instrumental in helping us place participants in activities that do not hinder their progress. There are Mental Health Counselors in all the outlying communities and one Mental Health Counselor attends our monthly CARES meeting.

Feather River College: We work closely with our community college in developing short term vocational classes that meet the TANF goals. They have off-site classes that accommodate our participants in the outlying areas. They have a dedicated CalWORKs staff member who works closely with us to assure that the students are enrolled and attending their classes. The staff member attends our CARES meeting and keeps us informed of any changes that occur in attendance, grades or enrollment of the CalWORKs students. This works well in sanction prevention. We have been able to work together on problems that occur before it gets to the sanction stage.

Regional Occupation Program/Adult Schools: We have a list of classes that ROP offers in each of the communities. They have vocational classes including, but not limited to, construction, automotive, and computer classes. These are offered at the individual community high school, and when applicable, these classes are incorporated into the WTW plan. There is also a Culinary Arts program offered through the local community college and we have enrolled students in this course. There is currently no adult education in the county because of funding. The ROP classes that are offered at the local high schools are available to any person who wishes to enroll in the classes.

Alliance for Workforce Development: We are co-located with the WIA in the Workforce Connection One-Stop Center. We contract with Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) for transportation and community service. They operate the local transit system. We give bus passes to our participants to enable them to participate in WTW activities and in unsubsidized employment. We will provide bus passes up to one year after they go off CalWORKs.

We contract with AFWD to administer our community service program. They are responsible for developing worksites, placing participants in worksites and monitoring the placements. We work closely with them to assure that our participants are participating in the appropriate number of hours. We are co-located so it is easy for the AFWD staff to walk over to the WTW Employment & Training Worker and let them know immediately if there is a problem. This immediate response helps prevent sanctions before they are imposed. They assign a case manager to attend our monthly CARES meeting.

Plumas Rural Services: We contract with Plumas Rural Services to administer Stage 1, 2 and 3 child care. We have developed a referral system that allows us to refer applicants to PRS before they have to be put into a work component so that they can begin to start making arrangements for child care. This allows us to put participants into components sooner. We have close contact with PRS and they let us know immediately if there is a problem with child care so it can be dealt with immediately. They also attend the monthly CARES meeting and their input is very valuable.

Housing and Community Development Department: We have a representative from Housing at our group orientation. They bring brochures and discuss housing and energy assistance programs that may be available to our clients. We work closely with their agency to assist our clients in getting housing certificates. We have an immediate turnaround on income verification to expedite their applications. They also attend our monthly CARES meeting.

Child Protective Services: Safety of our children is very important to this agency. CalWORKs works closely with Child Protective Services to assure that the children are safe and that their needs are being met. We have a representative on the county Child Abuse Council and they have a designated CPS worker who attends our monthly CARES meeting.

Other resources: We also work closely with the local food banks and resource and referral centers to help meet the needs of our participants.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly?

It is anticipated that with our collaboration with the above agencies, we will prevent participants from entering sanction and will increase participation with the help of our partners.

How will success be determined (quantitative or and qualitative assessment of effects)?

We are a small county and have an excellent working relationship with our partners. We get immediate feedback from our partner agencies and are able to address barriers promptly and avoid participants going into sanction.

The WTW unit meets weekly to review the cases and note any problems or progress with the participants. Early Engagement, Reengagement and Sanction Reduction are all intermingled. Quantitative assessments are made by a simple review of the weekly statistics.

3) 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).

H. Plan to measure quarterly progress

Measures of quarterly progress:

Quantitative assessment will be determined by a simple count of Attendance Reports. We send each client a monthly attendance report that asks what their hours are for unsubsidized employment, school, volunteer work, and to assess any changes they may have. This, along with their quarterly QR-7, will be used to compute their participation hours. We will tabulate their hours monthly and will be able to track the progress our participants are making. We will use this to target any participant who does not meet their requirements. The participation hours are entered on the SAWS WTW program and when participation increases it will show on our WTW Stat 30 report.

Projected impact on county's federal WPR:

We project an improvement on the county's federal WPR of 10% by January, 2008, with an increase of 3% per year for the next succeeding two years; i.e., through January, 2010.

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	\$394,901	\$244,198	
WTW Employment	\$373,380	\$910,575	Additional funding will be used

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Services			to implement strategies described in this plan.
CalWORKs Child Care	\$166,459	\$163,011	
Cal-Learn	\$ 10,803	\$ 6,781	
CalWORKs Funded Mental Health Services	\$ 63,277	\$ 63,078	
CalWORKs Funded Substance Abuse Services	\$ 42,919	\$ 42,446	