COUNTY NAME: Sonoma

CalWORKs County Plan Addendum

Date Submitted to California Department of Social Services: December 22, 2006

Prepared By: Karen Fies

Contact Phone Number: (707) 565-5508

Contact Email Address: kfies@schsd.org

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

Jo A. Weber	Jo A. Weber	9/26/06
County Welfare Director's Signature	**Printed Name**	**Briefing Date**

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

1) County Goals

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

Sonoma County will address the W&I Code goals through the provision of a wide array of services aimed at meeting federal work participation rates while providing services that strengthen the family unit. Sonoma County supports the development of strong, nurturing families by providing an integrated service delivery system that links core family services to key support services (i.e., employment, substance abuse counseling and treatment, educational advancement, and others).

Employment and training services (responding to goals 1 and 2) will be coordinated with a spectrum of supportive services (responding to goals 2 and 3), including child care, transportation and ancillary services, to empower CalWORKs participants to gain the skills and experience they need while responding to individual needs regarding domestic violence, relationship services, child care, or other stressors on family and child well-being.

Sonoma County encourages clients to access continuing education services while employed, to improve their job prospects and to achieve self-sufficiency. In addition, the Sonoma County CalWORKs program has significant relationships to better serve clients including partnerships with child welfare, learning disability specialists, Workforce Investment Act services, domestic violence services, legal aide, and child care, to name a few. Collaborative partners meet on a regular basis to share successes and challenges and changes in policies and business practices.

2) Participation Improvement

Following the release of the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA), Sonoma County developed a workgroup (see Section G) comprised of a variety of stakeholders to identify and implement strategies to improve work participation rates.

Sonoma County's WPR has already seen a steady increase in its WPR over the last two years (using the standards established under the initial TANF regulations): FFY 05 = average of 10.7% WPR; FFY 06 = average of 26.7% WPR. Sonoma County anticipates that, if these rates were recalculated using the DRA's new formula calculation, these rates would be significantly reduced due to changes to WPR definitions and calculations under the DRA. Sonoma County has not historically tracked state work participation rates, but effective October 2006, Sonoma County will begin to track a state WPR based on state policies as well.

Sonoma County will determine a new state and federal WPR baseline based on the first quarter average (October 2006 – January 2007) and will increase its work participation rates based on that new baseline.

Sonoma County intends to see an overall improvement in its WPR of 5% each year over the next three years, contingent upon a minimum of sustained funding (of FY 06/07 final funding), adjusted for cost of doing business.

B. Providing up-front engagement activities

Sonoma County's major strategies for program improvement to provide up-front engagement activities as a means to increase WPR per year over the next three years are:

	Description of Strategy	Status	Anticipated Effects	% of WtW Caseload Impacted*	Determination of Success	Increase of state WPR each year	Increase of federal WPR each year
1	Review and redesign orientation	Revision of current strategy	Increased emphasis on WPR; increased participation in WtW activities in response to motivational presentation	4.8% (n=73/mo of approx. 1500 caseload)	Reduced gaps between orientation and job search or assessment	State WPR baseline based on the first quarter average (October 2006 – January 2007)	Federal WPR baseline based on the first quarter average (October 2006 – January 2007)
2	Hold orientation & appraisal same day as CalWORKs application (but not as eligibility condition)	Continuation of current strategy	Early identification of work-eligible individuals	4.8% (n=73/mo)	Eliminates gap between orientation and appraisal.		
3	Improve methods to track/record prospective job hours at intake	New strategy	Increase of WPR hours for employed participants	100% of all intakes will be impacted by improved data collection	Increase of core work activity hours at intake		
4	Provide early engagement response by contracted job search providers	New strategy	Job search provider will respond to no-shows & dropouts, including home visits	2.4% (n=36.5= 73x50%)	Higher rate of intake clients will be engaged in job search		

* Data Source: Sonoma County 10/06 WtW25

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

Sonoma County's major strategies for program improvement to achieve full engagement as a means to increase WPR per year over the next three years are:

	Description of Strategy	Status	Anticipated Effects	% of WtW Caseload Impacted*	Determination of Success	Increase of state WPR each year	Increase of federal WPR each year
1	Create an engagement unit, utilizing increased funding from the State	New strategy	Non-case carrying "strike team" will focus on engaging clients not meeting WPR	No more than 51.2% (n=769/mo: exemptions and sanctions)	Engagement of sanctioned participants and exempt participants who wish to volunteer	State WPR baseline based on the first quarter average (October 2006 – January 2007)	Federal WPR baseline based on the first quarter average (October 2006 – January 2007)
2	Create engagement reports working with Exemplar (county contract 10/06 – 12/06; CalWIN pilot county effective 12/06)	New strategy	Inform and monitor engagement	100%	Increase in rate of engagement		

	Description of Strategy	Status	Anticipated Effects	% of WtW Caseload Impacted*	Determination of Success	Increase of state WPR each year	Increase of federal WPR each year
3	Improve methods to track and record attendance, including the development of a universal attendance form	Expansion of current strategy	Capture more of existing countable hours	48.9% (n=734 participants are WtW engaged)	Increase hours of attendance	State WPR baseline based on the first quarter average (October 2006 – January 2007)	Federal WPR baseline based on the first quarter average (October 2006 – January 2007)
4	Establish an open entry/open access (drop-in) community service activity	New strategy	Provide fast access to core hours	7.3% (n=110: 20% of sanctions + 25% voc ed	Increase of core work activity hours and reduced gaps		
5	Create client incentives (gift cards) to encourage engagement, utilizing additional funding from the State	New strategy	Reward client participation towards meeting WPR	20.0% (estimate)	Increased WPR due to positive reinforcement		
6	Develop and implement bridge activities. Short-term workshops would be offered at One-Stop or community college.	New strategy	Provide activities to clients between activities	4.9% (n=73: 10% of 734= in WtW activities	Increase in attendance		
7	Increase work study at community college	Expansion of current strategy	Provide additional hours / slots	3.8 – 4.5 % (n=58)	Increase in core activity hours		

* Data Source: Sonoma County 10/06 WtW25

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

In addition to the strategies listed above to engage participants, Sonoma County's strategies for program improvement to provide activities to encourage participation and to prevent families from going into sanction status as a means to increase WPR per year over the next three years are:

	Description of Strategy	Status	Anticipated Effects/ Benefits	% Reduction of Sanction Rate*	Determination of Success/ Barrier Removal	Increase of state WPR each year	Increase of federal WPR each year
1	Design an effective home visit intervention	New strategy	Encourage participation and reduce instances or duration of sanctions	10 – 20 %	Engagement of sanctioned participants; provide services for barriers	State WPR baseline based on the first quarter average (October 2006 – January 2007)	Federal WPR baseline based on the first quarter average (October 2006 – January 2007)
2	Review and revise sanction information, including brochures and letters, so that clients better understand what a sanction means	Revision of current strategy	Clients will be better informed of participation requirements; sanction process	5 – 10 %	Decrease in rate of clients who do not understand the sanction process		

	Description of Strategy	Status	Anticipated Effects/ Benefits	% Reduction of Sanction Rate*	Determination of Success/ Barrier Removal	Increase of state WPR each year	Increase of federal WPR each year
3	Increase the use of multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs) to encourage participation	Expansion of current strategy	Clients will be able to overcome barriers to participation	2 – 5%	Clients who participate in MDTs will increase their participation	State WPR baseline based on the first quarter average (October 2006 – January 2007)	Federal WPR baseline based on the first quarter average (October 2006 – January 2007)

* The current sanction rate is 27% (407/1500). *Data Source: Sonoma County 10/06 WtW25*

E. Reengaging noncompliant or sanctioned individuals

Sonoma County's major strategies for program improvement in the category of reengaging noncompliant or sanctioned individuals as a means to increase WPR per year over the next three years are:

	Description of Strategy	Status	Anticipated Effects/ Benefits	% Reduction of Sanction Rate	Determination of Success/ Barrier Removal	Increase of state WPR each year	Increase of federal WPR each year
1	Design and effective home visit activity	New strategy	Encourage participation and reduce duration of sanctions	10 – 20 %	Engagement of sanctioned participants; provide services	State WPR baseline based on the first quarter average (October 2006 – January 2007)	Federal WPR baseline based on the first quarter average (October 2006 – January 2007)
2	Create sanction clinics (voluntary, biweekly groups to inform clients on what they need to cure sanction) WtW staff are on-call to see clients who attend	New strategy	Provide consistent, quick response to clients	5 – 10 %	Increase in rate of engagement; curing sanctions		
3	Establish an open entry/open access (drop-in) community service activity	New strategy	Provide fast access to an activity to cure sanctions	5 – 10 %	Increase in rate of engagement; ability to quickly cure sanctions		
4	Prioritize and review each sanction case to reengage client, including conducting a tape match with community college to identify sanctioned clients who are students (ensuring confidentiality according to regulations)	New strategy	Reengage sanctioned clients, especially those already engaged in activities	5 – 10 %	Reengage current sanctioned clients; explain benefits of participation		

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

Sonoma County's major strategies for program improvement in other activities as a means to increase WPR per year over the next three years are:

	Description of Strategy	Status	Anticipated Effects	% of WtW Caseload Impacted	Determination of Success	Increase of state WPR each year	Increase of federal WPR each year
1	Create a WPR workgroup (refer to Section G)	New strategy	Stakeholders participate in designing/ implementing new WPR strategies	100%	Completion of goals and objectives		
2	Develop marketing materials and tools for participants	New strategy	Provide materials (including a website) targeted to clients	100%	Use of printed material and hits on website to engage participants		
3	Clean-up data (i.e., CalWIN conversion data on sanctioned cases)	Continuation of current strategy	Identify and correct errors in data	100%	Improved data		
4	Provide SSI advocacy	Expansion of current strategy	Assist potential SSI clients to receive SSI	< 5%	Appropriate clients will receive SSI and be excluded from WPR calculation		
5	Revise staff policies and procedures	Continuation of current strategy	Provide documentation and training to staff on new DRA requirements	100%	Increased knowledge of WPR requirements		

G. Collaboration

As mentioned above, Sonoma County developed a Work Participation Rate Workgroup to design, review and implement strategies to improve its WPR. The 23-member workgroup comprises the following individuals:

- Employment services supervisors and line staff
- CalWORKs eligibility supervisors and line staff
- Managers representing county employment services and CalWORKs eligibility
- Community college managers and counselors
- Workforce Investment Board Interim Director
- Clerical supervisor
- Fiscal/management information supervisor and manager
- Management from Sonoma County's employment services contracted provider
- Mental health counselors
- Fair hearing manager
- Fraud

The workgroup developed all of the matrices in this document, which includes the description of all strategies, the anticipated effects of the strategies, the percentage of WtW caseloads impacted, and the determinations of success with each strategy.

The workgroup has been meeting every two weeks since August 2006. It has established a matrix of goals and objectives and has prioritized the goals and strategies listed above. From the onset of the workgroup, its members knew that they represented their particular areas and have been encouraged to share the workgroup information at unit, regional and other meetings, and time is set aside at the beginning of each workgroup agenda to listen to feedback and suggestions from the prior workgroup meeting.

In addition to the workgroup mentioned above, additional partner agencies meet with staff from the County of Sonoma to discuss work activities, funding, training and/or employment issues. Examples of these partner agencies include:

- Community-based organizations
- Adult education
- Agencies that work with disabled individuals (physical and learning disabilities)
- Private education institutions
- Transportation agencies

Note: ROP programs are offered at local high schools in Sonoma County and do not enroll adults at this time.

3) Plan to measure quarterly progress

H. Plan to measure quarterly progress

Sonoma County plans to measure its progress no less than quarterly through a variety of tools:

- WtW25

  The WtW25 will provide a benchmark to track progress in implementing the strategies listed above. For example, Sonoma County will be able to see if the numbers of participants have increased in community service as a result of the implementation of our new open access community service program.

- WtW30 (or equivalent)

  The WtW30 data will establish a new baseline (based on DRA regulations) and will illustrate increases in WPR as a result of the new strategies listed above.

- Engagement Report

  Sonoma County has a contract with Exemplar which has designed an engagement report to show the rate of engagement of the Sonoma County WtW participants. In addition to indicating a pattern of increased engagement, the report has helped to identify incorrect CalWIN data which we have been able to correct as a result of the detailed back-up data reports. Effective 12/06, Sonoma County will participate as CDSS's engagement report pilot county, representing all CalWIN counties.

- Access Databases

  Sonoma County is developing a series of Access databases to track specific information beyond the capacity of CalWIN. For example, Sonoma County has a database to track the participation and success of its sanction clinics. Separate databases will also be established to track progress in Sonoma County's new engagement unit – sanctioned participants that have been reengaged, exempt clients who have volunteered to participate, etc.

Projected impact on county's federal WPR:

Sonoma County intends to see an overall improvement in its WPR of 5% each year over the next three years, contingent upon minimum sustained funding (of FY 06/07 final funding), adjusted for cost of doing business.

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	$ 3,853,073	$ 4,692,162	Additional funding is being used to add one eligibility worker position which will help increase WPR by reducing individual intake caseloads, allowing workers who process intake applications to move clients more rapidly into employment activities.
WTW Employment Services	$ 8,936,696	$ 9,166,869	Funding will be used to identify and implement strategies that will improve WPR. Sonoma County is adding positions to develop an engagement unit. In addition, funding is being used to expand contracted WtW activities and build informative WPR data reports.
CalWORKs Child Care	$ 2,194,068	$ 2,121,755	N/A*
Cal-Learn	$ 330,382	$ 159,635	N/A
CalWORKs Funded Mental Health Services	$ 389,792	$ 389,792	N/A
CalWORKs Funded Substance Abuse Services	$ 352,092	$ 358,323	N/A

* Note: Sonoma County's child care usage has increased, and as a result, the county will be requesting additional child care funding from the child care reserve.