

Workforce Development Division	Welfare-to-Work Handbook
Section 75-9: CalWORKs Social Work Services	Effective: 3/18/10

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I. Introduction

Many clients face barriers that hinder their success in the course of enrolling in CalWORKs to fulfill the requirements of a Welfare to Work (WtW) Plan. Clients who do have WtW Plans, but are not in compliance with them, are subject to sanction.

CalWORKs Social Work Services were created in mid-2000 primarily to address the needs of these "pre-sanction" clients after standard procedures performed by the intake or case-carrying worker proved ineffective. In addition to assisting these clients to overcome their barriers, CalWORKs social workers provide support to clients who may be struggling with other problems, for example, clients who are already sanctioned, who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless, who need furniture, or who have unique child care, medical or housing needs, whose children's GPA falls below 2.00, have truancy problems, or who have need for SSI application assistance.

Within the CalWORKs Social Work Services Unit, five of ten Social Workers are outstationed - two at the Career Link Center, 3120 Mission Street, and three at the Southeast Career Center, 1800 Oakdale Avenue. Besides having Workers at two outstations, the Units also maintain a first-floor presence at 170 Otis Street. The Duty Worker, who also acts as the ADA Worker, works out of an office on the first floor and is available to consult with other CalWORKs workers and with clients, and to intervene in emergency situations.

The Supervisors participates as Linkages Case Conference Coordinators, a process which brings together parents and providers to discuss mutual concerns and develop a single plan that will satisfy both CalWORKs/PAES and Family and Children's Services (F&CS) requirements.

II. References

A. Cross-references to Other Sections of This Handbook

Section 73-8: Community Service

Section 75-3: Confidentiality and Code of Ethics

Section 75-8: Crossover Cases with CalWORKs and Family and Children's Services

Section 76-1: Compliance Protocol

B. CalWORKs Program Information Memos

PIM #00-18: New School Verification Requirements

III. Policy

A. Availability of Social Work Services

Social work services are provided on site at 170 Otis Street and at the Career Link and Southeast Career Centers. This assures that clients will receive information and referral services necessary to address any barriers to the successful completion of their plans. All locations are open with social work services available 40 hours a week. Social Workers also make home visits as well as visits to clients and children at work sites or schools or other community locations. They work with both children and adults on an individual basis and with nuclear and extended families. Beginning at the intake stage, services are available to all CalWORKs (and some PAES) recipients, whether or not they are participants in Welfare to Work.

B. Language Needs

Spanish and Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin) Social Workers are available. Three of the workers in the Unit hold bilingual waivers; the Spanish bilingual Worker is stationed at the Career Link Center.

C. Services Available through Social Work Services

When a case-carrying worker's resources are exhausted and a client still is noncompliant, that worker refers the case to the Social Work Services Unit. The primary role of the Social Worker is to interview and assess these "pre-sanction" clients, and to engage them in developing and carrying out steps to bring them into compliance with their WtW plans.

In addition to bringing a client into WtW compliance, other Social Work Services include:

- Interviewing clients at risk of eviction
- Interviewing clients at risk of penalty as a result of child truancy
- Assessing, formulating and developing service plans for client needs to include developing client goals and a plan of action
- Conducting interviews in home, at school or at other community locations convenient to clients
- Providing a Duty Worker of the day to support crisis intervention and emergency social work intervention
- Providing feedback on assigned cases to the worker who referred the case to the Social Work Services Unit
- Providing information and referrals for clients regarding appropriate community services
- Consulting with CalWORKs staff and contracted providers regarding appropriate referral resources for client needs
- Facilitating the coordination of services with public, private and not-for-profit community agencies
- Initiating and facilitating case conferences between clients, workers and/or staff from service provider agencies
- Meeting with a sanctioned client and his/her ES when the client comes in for renewal or to pick up a check if the client is a drop-in. If the client has an appointment, the ES may call the Social Work Unit to arrange this service.
- Facilitating collaboration between CalWORKs/PAES and F&CS in DHS Linkages cases
- Participating in Linkages Case Coordination meetings on crossover cases
- Providing transportation for clients to support community referrals

- Acting as liaisons between clients, CalWORKs workers and staff from certain shelters for homeless families
- Networking with school officials and juvenile probation officers to address the issues of children with problems at school, as well as attending and following up after SARB hearings regarding truancy.

D. Limits on Services

While Social Workers provide information, referral, consultation and some transportation services, they do not provide services that clients are expected to complete themselves. For example, Social Workers may provide transportation to help a client make and feel comfortable at an initial contact with a therapist; they do not provide ongoing weekly transportation for a client to meet regularly with a therapist.

IV. Process for Obtaining Social Work Services

The following section represents a general guide to the processing of all referrals to the Unit. However, flexibility and the ability to respond quickly to client needs are two of the most important characteristics of the Social Work Services Unit response process. Each client is unique and the referrals made to the Unit are made only on difficult cases or after normal CalWORKs ES/EW procedures have not been effective. Because of this, many of the Unit's cases have special circumstances and require creative solutions, so it is possible that in some cases departures may be made from this process.

A. Access to Social Work Services

All CalWORKs (and some PAES) clients are eligible to be referred to the Social Work Services Unit. PAES clients are usually former CalWORKs clients whose children have been removed from, but are expected to return to, their custody. Clients are eligible to receive services whether or not they are participants in WtW. This includes CalWORKs intake clients, persons exempt from WtW, other households not required to participate in WtW, and clients engaged in the post-aid job retention services period.

B. Referral Process

Social Work Services are accessed through a referral from a CalWORKs Employment Specialist (ES) or Eligibility Worker (EW). Although any provider involved with a client/family can suggest that such a referral be made, the ES/EW must complete the on-line CalWORKs Social Work Services Referral Form (7045 CW).

Once completed, this form is forwarded to the Supervisor of the Social Work Services Unit. As soon as the Supervisor accepts a referral, it is assigned to a Social Worker. The "assigned" referral form is given immediately to the Unit Clerk. The Clerk keeps the original referral form and makes a copy of it to constitute a Social Work file folder for the case. Copies of these are included in the Social Work file folder. The assigned Social Worker receives the Social Work file folder within 24 hours of the case being assigned by the Supervisor.

C. Initial Contact

Upon receiving the case file, the Social Worker immediately contacts the ES/EW. This allows the workers to review the case together and it gives the Social Worker a chance to supplement the information already in the referral. If the client has not been informed about the referral, the Social Worker will ask the referring worker to inform the client that a referral

to the Social Work Services Unit has been made and that a Social Worker will be contacting him or her.

Within 48 hours of discussing the case with the referring worker, the Social Worker contacts (or attempts to make contact with) the client. This contact can be made by phone or by a face-to-face visit with the client at a DHS office, in the field, or at the client's home.

- If the Social Worker leaves a phone message for the client, with a person or on a message machine, and does not hear from the client within 24 hours, a home visit will be made/attempted.
- In cases, where telephone contact is not possible, the Social Worker will immediately send a letter to the client and/or make/attempt a home visit within 48 hours of discussing the case with the referring worker. In the case of a homeless client with no possible phone contact, the Social Worker will arrange to have a letter attached to a client's check.
- If a home visit is attempted and the client is not at home, the Social Worker will leave an envelope for the client containing a brief written note introducing him/herself and asking the client to contact him/her. Also
- included will be the Social Worker's card, and (if appropriate) a DHS no postage-needed return envelope for the client to use to send back to the Worker any appropriate paper work, e.g., a child's report card, a DHS form, etc.
- In some cases, contact with a client is not possible, or clients will inform the Social Worker that they do not want Social Work intervention. If continued attempts to work with a client are unsuccessful over a period of two to three months, the case will be closed.

D. Intake

Once contact is made with an agreeable client, the process of actual social work intervention begins with a social work intake interview. Depending upon clients' needs and their willingness and ability to cooperate with the Worker, the manner and direction in which a case develops will vary. Regardless, the goal of the Worker is to engage the client to develop goals and follow through on a plan to achieve them.

E. Intervention

After investigating a case, the Worker considers the availability of various options available to and appropriate for a particular client and likely discusses these with the referring worker and contracted or community providers. After such considerations, it is common for a Social Worker to make certain referrals and recommendations for action for a client, sometimes providing transportation to assure that a critical appointment is kept. However, whether success is achieved is primarily the responsibility of the client.

F. Feedback to Referring ES/EW Worker

Regular feedback in person or by telephone or email is provided to the referring worker on an as-needed basis. A written Progress Report (7046 CW) on developments in Social Work cases is provided to the referring worker on a 3-month basis, with the due date for a report being on the day of the third month the case was accepted by the Unit Supervisor.

EXAMPLE: If a case is accepted on July 23rd, the assigned Social Worker's Progress Reports are due on the 23rd of every month following, until the case is closed in the Unit.

In the Progress Report, the referring worker is updated on the case status and is provided with comments and an account of the next steps the Worker intends to take. All Progress Reports are reviewed by the Unit Supervisor before they are forwarded to the referring worker.

G. Case Status

A Unit case can have one of three statuses: Open, Inactive or Closed. Open: Initially, cases have an Open status. This indicates that the case is being worked on actively by the Worker and that Progress Reports will be filed monthly. In cases where a client succeeds and the Worker feels s/he will continue to do so, the case will be considered "resolved" and will be closed insofar as social work intervention is concerned.

In some cases, it becomes apparent that clients have barriers to participation that they are either unwilling or unable to address. In those cases, it sometimes occurs that the investment of social work intervention has reached a point of diminishing returns.

EXAMPLE: Some clients struggle with issues of substance abuse, mental health, or homelessness that hinder their communication with a Social Worker. Often these clients do not respond to repeated attempts to contact them by phone or in writing; or, though they may agree to home visits or office appointments with a Social Worker, the result is repeated cancellations and/or "no shows" on the part of the client.

The usual practice for the Social Worker in such instances is to continue attempts to contact and work with the client for two to three months. If, after this time, working with the client appears to be impossible, the Social Worker will send a "final appeal" letter to the client (or have one attached to his/her check if the client is homeless). This letter reiterates to the client the Social Worker's desire to work with him/her and offers the client one final opportunity to contact the Social Worker - either by phone or through a no-postage-needed business reply envelope enclosed with the letter. If there is no reply from the client, the Social Worker, ES/EW and the Social Work Supervisor will discuss the case. If no feasible alternatives for additional interventions can be determined, consideration will be given to closing it in the Unit.

Closed: The goal of the Social Worker is to carry a case until the reason for its referral is resolved. In some situations, cases will be closed because clients are discontinued from CalWORKs, move out of county, or continue to fail and eventually withdraw from participation in a plan. In some instances, a client refuses Unit services; if this occurs repeatedly, the case will be closed. In general, cases will remain open in the Unit as long as clients show some interest in participation and the Social Worker feels it is reasonable to hope for success.

V. Linkages Case Conferences: Social Work Unit Involvement

A Multi-Disciplinary Team consists of any appropriate workers/providers for a referred client/family, along with several regular consultants who sit on all MDTs. Thus, every Team includes the appropriate ES/EW (or PAES worker) and his/her Supervisor, and the appropriate Child Welfare Worker (CWW) and his/her supervisor. In addition, if a CalWORKs Social Worker is already associated with the case, that worker is a member of

the Team; if no Social Worker has been assigned to the case, a Social Work representative to serve at the MDT Meeting is appointed by the Social Work Services Unit Supervisor.

The standing members who serve on all MDTs include representatives from PAES, Westside Community Mental Health, W.O.M.A.N., Inc., Public Health (DHS RN), and a DHS Psychiatric Consultant. In addition, the FIRST program provides a substance abuse consultant in cases where substance abuse is an issue.

A. Access to the Linkages Case Conference

The LCC process is available to any DHS Linkages Case, and all linked cases must be considered for possible referral to an LCC. By definition, a case is a "linked case" if it is active in both CalWORKs/PAES and F&CS. A client's case is eligible to be referred for an LCC meeting whether or not the client is a participant in WtW. This includes CalWORKs intake clients, persons exempt from WtW, other households not required to participate in WtW and clients engaged in the post-aid job retention services period. PAES involvement in the Linkages process usually occurs when clients' children have been removed from, but are expected to be returned to, their custody.

B. Referral Process

The LCC process is begun when the Linkages Coordinator identifies linked cases and invites staff to an LCC.

VI. Forms

Form#	Form Name	Purpose	Language
7045CW (11/00)	CalWORKs Social Work Services Referral	Form for ES or EW to request intervention from CalWORKs Social Workers.	English Only
7046CW (12/01)	CalWORKs Social Work Services Progress Report Form	CalWORKs Social Worker reports on service status and/or progress.	English Only

Note: State forms can also be found on the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Website at: <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/cdssweb/PG19.htm>.

If a specific form or language translation of the form is not linked, please click on this link: [HSA CalWORKs Forms on-line](#). Please note that some forms may not be available in language translation at this time. Please check appropriate shelves for related forms.