

Linkages Has Taken Root

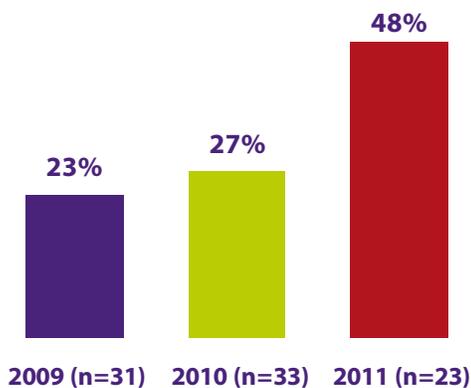
Highlights from the Spring 2011 Final Linkages Survey

Linkages Is Here to Stay in Many Counties

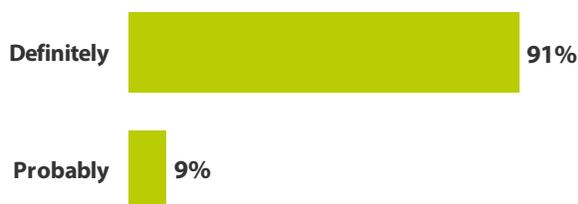
As the federal grant for the Statewide Linkages Project draws to a close this year, Linkages advocates and hard-working staff at the county and state levels alike can take credit for making substantial—and sustainable—systems changes to bring about county Child Welfare and CalWORKs collaboration in many California counties. A full 61 percent of respondents on the Final Survey (n=23) reported that Linkages is now fully implemented in their counties. Another 22 percent reported that most Linkages policies and practices are in place.

The past year has also seen a jump in the percentage of respondents who see Linkages as “business as usual” (see chart at right), although the numbers of participating counties have also declined somewhat, so 2011 results reflect counties that are more dedicated to putting Linkages in place.

Counties Report Linkages is “Business as Usual”



County Expectations That Their Linkages Initiatives Will Continue Beyond This Year (n=23)



Additionally, among all responding counties, the overwhelming majority are confident that Linkages will continue to be practiced beyond the completion of the federal grant. The chart at left shows that over 90 percent state that Linkages will “definitely” continue, and the remainder state it will “probably” continue.

What Drives Linkages Success?

Strong leadership and good working relationships between programs are key to county-level Linkages success. Out of a list of eight factors, county respondents have identified the five in the box at right as the most important for Linkages success. These five factors have consistently been rated “Very Important” by more than two thirds of respondents during the past three years.

Top 5 Factors Important for Linkages Success

- Clear communication between Child Welfare and CalWORKs staff.
- Strong leadership in favor of Linkages.
- Likelihood that families will be better off with Linkages.
- Compatible procedures between Child Welfare and CalWORKs.
- Workplace culture of willingness to try new things.

One important factor in counties' successful pursuit of Linkages is the likelihood that families will be better off— and evidence indicates that Linkages families are indeed benefiting from the initiative, according to respondents. The chart below shows that all reporting Linkages counties state that Linkages has improved the system for families, and over half of those say that the system is now *much* better.

Counties Report That Linkages Has Improved the System for Families (n=23)

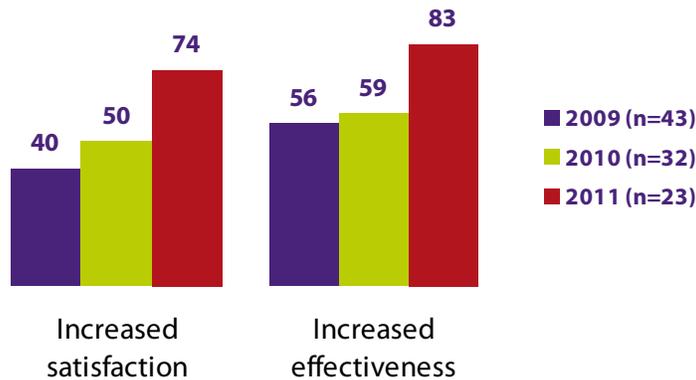


Furthermore, a full 61 percent of responding counties estimate that Linkages families have fewer substantiated recurrences of maltreatment and more Linkages parents resolve their CalWORKs sanctions.

Linkages also benefits county staff. Over the last few years, county

respondents have reported increases in staff job satisfaction and job effectiveness, as shown in the figure below.

Linkages Coordinators Report Increasing Job Satisfaction and Effectiveness of Staff Due to Linkages (Percent)



About the Survey

The Final Survey was an online survey sent to Linkages coordinators in all active Linkages counties in spring 2011. The survey followed up on previous Implementation Surveys and Organizational Change Surveys, drawing questions from both and asking additional questions regarding sustainability and lessons learned. Responses were received from 23 out of 26 active Linkages counties (88 percent).

For additional results from the 2011 Final Survey, visit the County Linkage Tools: Evaluation link in the Documents section of the Linkages intranet site. Any questions? Please contact Katherine Lee at 530-757-8420 or klee@harderco.com.