

**PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW** One goal of the CalWORKs program is to help Welfare-to-Work (WTW) participants achieve economic self-sufficiency through employment, education, and/or training-related activities. This policy provides guidelines for developing and entering into a WTW plan with a participant. A WTW plan is the written agreement between a mandatory or voluntary WTW participant and the County, which documents and designates the individual's agreed-upon WTW activity assignment(s), required hours of participation, and any supportive services the County will provide. State statutes provide structured guidelines regarding the development of a written WTW plan.

**ENTERING INTO A WTW PLAN** Individuals who are required, or who volunteer, to participate in WTW activities enter into a WTW plan.

- Mandatory WTW participants must sign a WTW plan after completing assessment. (Refer to Policy 210 - Assessment)
- Individuals enrolled in Self-Initiated Programs (SIPs) are required to meet with their case manager (CM) and complete a WTW plan that is reflective of their educational program. (Refer to Policy 220 - Self Initiated Program)
- CalWORKs recipients who are exempt from mandatory WTW participation may participate voluntarily. Volunteers sign a WTW plan stating that they will finish their assigned activity. (Refer to Policy 100-F1 - Welfare-to-Work Exemptions)
- Teens ages 16 and 17 who have completed high school or its equivalent, and are not enrolled or planning to enroll in post-secondary education, vocational or technical program must sign a WTW plan.
- Teens ages 16 and 17 who have not graduated from high school, and are not regularly attending elementary, secondary, vocational, or technical school on a full-time basis must sign a WTW plan.

**Note:** WTW plans for 16 and 17 year old teens are written for the purpose of completing high school or its equivalent only. The teen may voluntarily participate in additional WTW activities, including Job Search, Job Readiness, and Assessment, but only to the extent that they do not interfere with his or her school program. (Refer to Policy 100-E4 - School Attendance, and Policy 100-F1 - Welfare-to-Work Exemptions).

- Mandatory WTW participants who have a break in aid longer than 30 days must sign a new WTW plan upon return to aid.

**Note:** WTW participants with a break in aid of less than 30 days who had an active WTW plan when they left aid will continue in their plan, if appropriate.

- Employed WTW participants who come on aid on or after January 1, 2013 must sign a WTW plan.

**Following a comprehensive discussion, a WTW plan based on the new WTW 24-Month Time Clock rules must be completed for all participants who are required to participate in WTW.**

- If the participant does not have an existing plan that meets the new participation requirements and does not respond to the County contacts to schedule for a comprehensive discussion, a WTW non-compliance process will be applied.

(Refer to Policy 240 - Good cause/Compliance/Sanction).

- If the participant has an existing plan that meets or exceeds the new participation requirements, the ISW/CM will send a new WTW plan containing the same activities and participation hours to the participant and ask him/her to sign the WTW plan and return it. The participant has 30 days from the date of the letter to contact the ISW/CM to change the WTW plan. Since the participant is meeting participation requirements, he/she would not be sanctioned for failure to return the new WTW plan and the participant's signature for the new WTW plan will be obtained at the next regularly scheduled appointment.

The WTW Plan Cover Letter (F063-41-333) is to be sent with all WTW plans that are mailed to the WTW participants. Attachment 8

The following individuals are not required to sign a WTW plan:

- Parents who have entered into a Family Reunification (FR) plan with Children and Family Services (CFS) as a result of all the children being removed from the home, and the individual's WTW activities and services are provided as part of the FR plan. A WTW case remains open in order to provide services associated with the FR plan. (Refer to Policy 403-A - CalWORKs Services to Family Reunification Parents)

## UNIVERSAL ENGAGEMENT

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All mandatory WTW participants must sign a WTW plan within Universal Engagement timeframes indicated below.

- Applicants are required to sign a WTW plan after attending assessment, but no more than 90 days from the date that their eligibility for aid is determined, or the date that they are required to participate in WTW activities.

- For individuals determined eligible on the date they apply, the 90-day period starts on the date that eligibility for aid is determined. This date shall be the date on the notice of action (NOA) that informs the individual of his/her eligibility to aid.

- For individuals not eligible on the date they apply, the 90-day period starts on the date the individual begins receiving aid, which is the same date that he/she can be required to participate in WTW activities.

- Individuals attending Job Search (JSR) within 30 days of their approval for aid (NOA date) must sign a WTW plan within 90 days of completing JSR.

- Recipients must sign a WTW plan within 90 days from the date they are required to participate in WTW activities.

- If the worker knows in advance that an individual is required to participate, the worker has 90 days from that date to develop and have the individual sign a WTW plan.

- If the worker does not know in advance, and the participation status change is discovered/reported timely (within 30 days of the change) the worker has 90 days from the date of discovery to develop and have the individual sign a WTW plan. If the status change is not discovered/reported timely (over 30 days) the worker has 90 days from the 30th day after the change to develop and have the individual sign a WTW plan.

- Participants who are enrolled in JSR must adhere to the following guidelines when signing a WTW plan:

- A WTW plan may be signed up to 90 days after the completion of JSR, if JSR is initiated within 30 days after the date that the individuals eligibility for aid is determined, or the date the participant is required to participate in WTW activities. JSR is considered to be "initiated" when an individual begins attending an allowable job search activity

**Note:** The 90-day period does not include time that an individual spends in good cause, compliance, and curing processes, including the participation time in activities to end a sanction.

The 90-day period also excludes time between a Learning Disability Evaluation (LDE) appointment and the date the County receives the final report, up to 90 days. After the final report is received by the County, or on the 91<sup>st</sup> day, the 90-day period resumes.

See Attachment 1 for specific examples of Universal Engagement.

## **DEVELOPING THE WTW PLAN**

The CalWORKs WTW program offers a broad range of employment and educational activities, behavioral health services, and other necessary activities to help participants achieve self-sufficiency. Initial Services Workers (ISWs) or CMs should use the following guidelines when working with participants to develop a WTW plan:

- **Assessment results** – Assessment results should be reviewed with the participant and used as a guide to create the WTW plan, but should not exclusively dictate which activities he/she must attend.
- **Personal goals** – Participants should be encouraged to share their personal goals and preferences. The participant’s aspirations, skill base, and activity availability should be considered when selecting appropriate activities.
- **Strength-based approach** – Emphasis should be placed on a strength-based approach that includes assisting participants in identifying their strengths, prioritizing needs, and developing the skills they already possess to create goals that are realistic and attainable.
- **Education** – If the ISW/CM determines that basic literacy, math, English as a Second Language (ESL), or a high school diploma/GED are necessary to remove barriers to employment, the participant will be assigned to participate in Adult Basic Education (ABE). Participants must maintain satisfactory progress in all educational activities.
- **Appropriate activities** – Participants should be encouraged to engage in work activities, however, if participation in barrier-removal activities such as Domestic Abuse, Mental Health or Substance Abuse Services is indicated, these activities and their assigned hours must be noted in the WTW plan.
- **Supportive Services** – Necessary supportive services are to be addressed and offered to assist participants in attending assigned WTW activities.
- **Comprehensive Discussion** – A comprehensive discussion should be completed that covers:
  - The participation flexibility during the WTW 24-Month Time Clock period, including the elimination of the core and non-core hourly requirements and the scope of activities that participants may participate in;
  - The change in the number of hours participants required to participate in WTW (when applicable);
  - The participants ability to change his/her participation in WTW based on the new rules (hours or activities, or both);
  - The criteria for WTW exemptions;
  - The conditions that allow a month not to count toward the WTW 24-Month Time Clock; and
  - The post WTW 24-Month Time Clock participation requirements.(Refer to Policy 207 – WTW 24-Month Time Clock)
- **16 and 17 year old teens** – WTW plans for 16 and 17 year old teens are written for the purpose of completing high school or its equivalent only. The teen may voluntarily participate in additional WTW activities, including Job Search, Job Readiness, and Assessment, but only to the extent that they do not interfere with his or her school program.

## **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

Occasionally, individuals have barriers that, unless addressed, may interfere with the success of their WTW plan. Circumstances that should be discussed with the participant include, but are not limited to:

- Learning disability, mental health or substance abuse issues – If there is a concern that a learning disability, mental health or substance abuse issue exists which will impair an individual’s ability to obtain or retain employment, or participate in WTW activities, an appropriate evaluation and assessment should be completed. Assessment results will be incorporated into the WTW plan to reflect appropriate activities and reasonable accommodations. (Refer to Policy 210-A – Learning Disability Screening and Evaluations, and Policy 401 – Behavioral Health Services)
- Domestic abuse – Individuals must be informed that services are available to assist current or past victims of domestic abuse. If the individual discloses the existence of domestic abuse and agrees to receive services, the WTW plan will be developed to reflect appropriate domestic abuse activities. (Refer to Policy 402 – Domestic Abuse Services)
- Child’s school attendance – School attendance is compulsory for all children in the Assistance Unit. Any participation required of the parent by the school to ensure the child’s attendance will be included in the WTW plan.

## **COMPONENTS OF THE WTW PLAN**

The ISW/CM and participant meet to develop and sign a WTW plan. The WTW plan describes the participant’s activities during the 24-Month Time Clock (no core activity requirements) and the federal work activities (core activity requirements), supportive services the County will provide to support the assigned activities, and any other specific requirements, including participation hours. The WTW plan consists of the following forms:

- Welfare-to-Work Handbook (F063-41-115) – Provides information to new WTW participants about program requirements, activities, and services.
- Welfare-to-Work Plan Rights and Responsibilities (WTW 1) – Provides an overview of a participant’s rights and responsibilities. The ISW/CM reviews the WTW 1 with the participant and provides him/her with a copy of the completed, signed form. The form certifies that the participant understands the program and its requirements. Attachment 2
- Welfare-to-Work Plan Activity Assignment (WTW 2) – The WTW 2 includes:
  - CalWORKs WTW 24-Month Time Clock Activities (no core activity requirements) and Federal Work Activities (core activity requirements);
  - Weekly participation hours assigned to each activity and total hourly requirements;
  - Location, schedule, and participation hours of each activity; and
  - Supportive services that the County will provide.

The ISW/CM will explain that by signing the WTW 2 the participant is authorizing release of his/her information, and the WTW plan may be shared with other agencies, organizations, or activity providers. The ISW/CM reviews the WTW 2 with the participant and provides him/her with a copy of the completed, signed form. Attachment 3

When an individual applies for aid or when a recipient’s eligibility is re-determined, the ISW/CM will provide and review with the participant a copy of Important Information About Your Welfare-to-Work Activities (F063-41-216) which describes federal core and non-core activities and the core requirements. Attachment 4

For instructions on how to complete a WTW 2 Plan, refer to the following:

- Attachment 5 – WTW 2 Form with Variables – A WTW 2 form with numbered variable check boxes and fields.
- Attachment 6 – Instructions for Completing the WTW 2 – Provides guidance on how to complete a WTW 2 form.
- Attachment 7 – Description of WTW 2 Variables in CalWIN – A list of all the variable description of the WTW 2 in CalWIN.

## **PLAN LENGTH**

WTW plans will be written for the length of time that is appropriate to the activity and needs of the individual, but not to exceed 12 months. Six-month plans will be written when the individual is starting a new activity or participating in barrier-removal activities such as Domestic Abuse, Mental Health or Substance Abuse Services.

For individuals participating in a SIP or Vocational Educational Training (VTR) program, a new WTW 2 is required at the start of each school term (semester, trimester or quarter) indicating the activities, hours of participation, and supportive services consistent with that term. When developing the plan, the CM and participant will also discuss what activities will be completed during any scheduled school breaks, and that information should be clearly reflected on the new WTW 2. A new Education/Training Referral form (F063-41-05) is not required unless the school or provider has changed.

## CHANGES TO THE WTW PLAN

Participants may request changes to their WTW plan under the following circumstances:

- Initial WTW plan - The participant has 30 days from the beginning of his/her initial WTW activity to request a change or reassignment to another activity. This 30-day grace period is available only once during the participant's lifetime on CalWORKs assistance. The ISW/CM may grant the participant's request for reassignment if another activity is available and consistent with the WTW plan, and if the ISW/CM determines the other activity will readily lead to employment.
- Initial and/or subsequent WTW plan - The participant has three working days after signing the initial or subsequent plan to reconsider and request changes to the terms of the plan. A new WTW plan is required when a participant begins any new WTW activity, when a concurrent activity is being added to an existing activity, or when there is any change within the existing activity (e.g., change in participation hours, location, or activity start time). When the participant is in the process of developing a WTW plan, the 24-Month Time Clock does not tick. (Refer to Policy 207 - WTW 24-Month Time Clock)

## WTW ACTIVITIES

WTW activities may be assigned concurrently or sequentially, consistent with the participants assessment results, abilities, interests, and goals. If an activity is not immediately available the participant will be assigned to another activity such as job search and/or job readiness until the activity designated in the plan becomes available. (Refer to Policy 202 - Work Participation Hours and Activities)

## PARTICIPATION HOURS

Beginning January 1, 2013 the weekly hours of participation have been aligned with federal hourly requirements as follows:

- Single parents with a child under 6 years of age must participate in approved activities at least 20 hours per week.
- Single parents with no children under 6 years of age must participate in approved activities at least 30 hours per week.
- In a two-parent family, one or both adults must participate for a combined total of at least 35 hours per week.

**Note:** Prior to January 1, 2013, a single individual must participate in approved activities at least 32 hours, averaged weekly and in a two-parent family, one or both adults must participate for a combined total of at least 35 hours, averaged weekly. If the individual chooses to participate in more than the minimum hours, the WTW plan should reflect the actual participation hours. The Additional Comments field of the WTW 2 should clearly indicate that participating in additional hours is strictly voluntary. CalWIN Case comments should also reflect reason(s) the participant chose to participate in additional hours. Hourly requirements do not apply to voluntary participants. The WTW plan reflects actual hours the voluntary participant has agreed to complete. Hourly participation requirements do not apply to teens ages 16 and 17, who have signed a WTW plan for the purpose of completing high school. **Note:** The WTW core and non-core hourly requirements are eliminated during the WTW 24-Month Time Clock period. (Refer to Policy 207 - WTW 24-Month Time Clock) Refer to Policy 202 - Work Participation Hours and Activities for additional information regarding participation hour requirements and assignment in core and non-core activities.

## SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

A description of the supportive services must be included in every WTW plan. Mandatory and voluntary WTW participants (including those who are on aid prior to January 1, 2013 and are meeting participation hours through employment and did not complete the assessment process) may receive assistance for necessary supportive services, including child care, transportation, and work or training-related expenses, to attend WTW appointments or participate in assigned activities. Participants must also be provided with a written notice of the availability of paid child care (CCP 7) when signing a WTW plan. (Refer to Policy 302 Child Care Services - Stage One)

## CM MONTHLY CONTACT

CMs are required to complete a monthly contact with each participant to ensure progress in, and compliance with, his/her WTW plan. The contact is also an opportunity for the CM to provide support, motivation, and encouragement to the participant, as well as an opportunity to identify potential barriers to the participant's successful attainment of his or her WTW goals. (Refer to Policy 201.2 - CalWORKs/Welfare-to-Work Monthly Contacts)

## NONCOMPLIANCE

A mandatory WTW participant who fails, without good cause, to participate as required in his/her assigned activity is subject to the non-compliance process, including a WTW sanction. (Refer to Policy 240 - Good Cause/Compliance/Sanction) Teens ages 16 and 17, who have not completed high school or its equivalent must comply with school attendance requirements **and** mandatory activities outlined in their WTW plan. (Refer to Policy 100-E4 - School Attendance)

## CASE COMMENTS

CalWIN case comments will detail how the plan was developed, any identified special needs, activity assignment (with specific information on CalWORKs WTW 24-Month Time Clock Activities or Federal Work Activities), hours of participation, and supportive services. ISW/CMs will also record every subsequent participant contact, including monthly contacts and receipt of progress reports.

## **CALWIN ENTRIES**

CalWIN entries must be made each time a WTW plan is developed. Refer to Welfare-to-Work Plan/Adding Activities With/Without Plan Resource Guide for detailed instructions.

## **REFERENCES**

- ACL 00-60, August 30, 2000, CalWORKs WTW Plan
- ACL 04-41, October 8, 2004, Implementation of SB 1104
- ACL 06-09, April 18, 2006, Emergency Regulations Implementing SB 1104 and SB 68
- ACL 09-46, November 10, 2009, CalWORKs Short Term Changes Implementation Guidelines
- ACL 12-67, December 21, 2012, New CalWORKs WTW 24-Month Time Clock
- ACL 13-15, March 12, 2013, Questions and Answers For the CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work (WTW) 24-Month Time Clock
- EAS Manual 40-105.5, 42-711.6, 42-712.422, and 42-719
- Policy 100-E4 - School Attendance
- Policy 100-F1 - Welfare-to-Work Exemptions
- Policy 201.2 - CalWORKs/Welfare-to-Work Monthly Contacts
- Policy 202 - Work Participation Hours and Activities
- Policy 207 - WTW 24-Month Time Clock
- Policy 210 - Assessment
- Policy 210-A - Learning Disability Screening and Evaluations
- Policy 220 - Self Initiated Program
- Policy 240 - Good Cause/Compliance/Sanction
- Policy 302 Child Care Services - Stage One
- Policy 401 - Behavioral Health Services
- Policy 402 - Domestic Abuse Services
- Policy 403-A - CalWORKs Services to Family Reunification Parents
- Welfare-to-Work Plan/Adding Activities With/Without Plan Resource Guide

## **FORMS AND ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 - Universal Engagement Examples

Attachment 2 - Welfare-to-Work Plan Rights and Responsibilities WTW 1 (12/05)

Attachment 3 - Welfare to Work Plan Activity Assignment WTW 2 (12/12)

Attachment 4 - Important Information about Your Welfare-to-Work Activities F063-41-216 (3/14)

Attachment 5 - WTW 2 Form with Variables

Attachment 6 - Instructions for Completing the WTW 2

Attachment 7 - Description of WTW 2 Variables in CalWIN

Attachment 8 - WTW Cover Letter F063-41-333