

**County of Orange Social Services Agency
Family Self-Sufficiency Division**

Program/Area: CalWORKs/Welfare-To-Work

Title: OC Earns Program (SUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM - SEP)

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Approved:

PURPOSE

Assembly Bill (AB) 98 established a subsidized employment program. In Orange County, the subsidized employment program is called OC Earns. The OC Earns Program is a Welfare-to-Work (WTW) activity provided by ResCare Workforce Services (RWS). The OC Earns Program offers subsidized employment opportunities for eligible WTW participants to gain valuable employment skills and experience that will lead to meaningful, unsubsidized employment. Participants will have an opportunity to determine a career path, receive support and guidance, and be placed in a position where they receive a paycheck, pay taxes, and potentially qualify for the State and Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The OC Earns Program opens doors to participants who have not yet been able to obtain and/or retain employment. Participants in the OC Earns Program will receive the following six benefits:

- An improved lifestyle: Participants will have an improved lifestyle through the practice of daily work life, being responsible for maintaining work schedules, and providing for their families with stable income.
- Being more employable: Participants who are employed through OC Earns will discover they are more employable with their current employer and within the employment market by proving their skills, abilities and reliability on a daily basis.
- Learn while you earn: Participants will be paid while they learn valuable skills, qualities and abilities on the job.
- Being a role model for children and family members: Participants who are full-time employed will demonstrate responsibility and strong work ethic to their children and family members.
- Higher self-esteem: Participants who are full-time employed will have higher hopes for the future that will

increase their confidence, productivity, and overall self-esteem.

- Financial security: Participants who earn a pay check will become invested in their financial future and learn financial management skills that will contribute to their future security.

OC EARNS ACTIVITY

Participants referred to OC Earns shall not be employed or assigned to any other employment related activity including Experience Provides the Resources for Tomorrow (EXPRT), Paid Work Experience (WEX), or the Employment Preparation Program (EPP).

The OC Earns Program is a Post-Assessment WTW activity. Although OC Earns is a Post-Assessment activity, it is not a last resort activity and the participant does not have to exhaust all other activities prior to a referral to OC Earns. Referral to OC Earns is based on the results and recommendations of a vocational assessment and/or a determination by the Case Manager (CM).

Employers participating in OC Earns are public, non-profit, and for-profit businesses. The worksite employer or RWS is the employer of record and will assume all duties and responsibilities required with being the employer for participants within the program. Duties include maintaining an employee file, accepting time sheets, processing payroll, and ensuring all participants are paid in a timely manner. OC Earns participants will have access to real job training that would otherwise not be available to them.

OC Earns positions are open positions with the OC Earns employers. Employers are encouraged to retain the participant permanently after the subsidized employment 4-month period. OC Earns is counted as subsidized employment, which is a core activity.

OC Earns will focus on:

- Paid, time-limited employment – Participants are in the program for up to four months which can be extended an additional two months based on a collaborative process between the CM and RWS on a case-by-case basis if the participant needs additional training to achieve unsubsidized employment with their OC Earns employer
- Variety of employers – Participants will be hired into

subsidized positions that offer job skills training and lead to unsubsidized employment

- Life Skills and Job Search – Participants are offered workplace skills, job search, and career advancement consultation to assist them in transitioning to unsubsidized employment
- Support and supervision – Participants meet with RWS every two weeks, or as needed, to review progress (skills obtained) and plan action steps for successful completion of the program

Participants can be referred to OC Earns for less than 22/32/38 hours per week as determined by the CM if the participant is participating in concurrent activities and the total hours of each activity combined is meeting the minimum hourly participation requirements.

Both parents in a two-parent family can be referred to and participate in the OC Earns Program. For example, one parent can be referred for 32 hours per week and the other parent for the remaining hours to meet the minimum hourly participation requirements or both parents can be referred for more hours if they volunteer to participate more than 38 hours per week.

Participants may participate in the following activities in conjunction with OC Earns:

- Domestic Abuse Services
- Behavioral Health Services (BHS)
- Job Skills
- Striving Towards Elevating Personal Success (STEPS) (If the participant has not exhausted their 6 weeks per 12-month period)
- SIP (If attended Assessment)
- Department of Rehabilitation
- Vocational Training

Once a participant is placed and hired by a worksite, participants will get paid at least the California minimum wage for all hours worked during the training period. If a participant is not hired and placed at an OC Earns worksite within 30 days of the activity start date, the participant will be returned to the CM to determine the next appropriate activity.

Participants who complete his/her OC Earns assignment, obtain unsubsidized employment, and retain the employment for 30

days, may be eligible to a \$200 voucher provided by RWS. The voucher may be used at select stores to obtain items that support continued employment.

Refer to worker tool [F063-41-WT42 Subsidized Employment Programs Comparison Chart](#) for a comparison of the different subsidized employment programs.

TIME LIMIT

Participants may be referred to OC Earns for up to four months, with a possible 2-month extension at the discretion of the CM and ResCare. Participants are limited to a maximum total of six months in the OC Earns activity; unless the participant meets an exception that would benefit the participant for being referred for a second time. Some of the exceptions to the six month lifetime limit include layoffs and company closures. In the event these situations occur, the CM shall submit a referral to RWS for OC Earns with an explanation of why the participant would benefit from a second placement in OC Earns. RWS and FSS Program will evaluate the requests for another 4-month OC Earns placement.

JOB SEARCH READINESS (JSR)

RWS will identify participants in their fourth week of JSR who may make good candidates for OC Earns and contact the assigned CM to discuss options. This additional outreach by RWS is intended to close the gap between activities. Participants who have attended Assessment would begin the OC Earns activity the week following completion of JSR. Participants who have not attended Assessment would begin the new activity the week following their Assessment.

REFERRALS

WTW participants can participate in OC Earns through a referral to RWS for the OC Earns activity. To refer to OC Earns, the CM will complete the [F063-41-251 Job Services/Supportive Services Referral](#) form. The [F063-41-420 Attendance and Outcome Report \(AOR\)](#) will be used by RWS to communicate attendance and progress to the CM on a monthly basis and to communicate the final outcome. Regular communication is encouraged between RWS and the CM.

RWS TALENT DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST

A [RWS Talent Development Specialist](#) is available to answer questions related to any RWS activity and to assist the CM in determining whether or not a participant is an appropriate candidate for the OC Earns Program. If appropriate, the Talent Development Specialists will also work with the CM to transition individuals who have been successfully participating in EXPRT, into the OC Earns Program.

CASE MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES

The CM will meet with the participant to discuss the OC Earns

activity. During the discussion, the CM will:

1. Explain the purpose and benefits of the OC Earns activity to ensure it is the appropriate activity for the participant; utilize the [OC Earns Program flyer](#) as a guide.
2. Review the participant's assessment results.
3. Review and respond to the participant's Supportive Services needs. Communicate and make supportive services referrals to the Intake Employment Eligibility Specialist (IEES)/Continuing Employment Eligibility Specialist (CEES) as needed. Communicate with the participant to ensure supportive services are established (i.e. child care provider is selected and child is registered) prior to the OC Earns start date.

Refer to [Policy 301 Child Care](#), [Policy 310 Transportation Supportive Services](#), and [Policy 315 Ancillary Supportive Services](#) for more information on supportive services.

4. Ensure the participant possesses government issued identification (based on I-9 required documents, generally a picture I.D. and original Social Security Card).
 5. Complete the [F063-41-251 Job Services/Employment Support Services Referral](#) form for OC Earns indicating the assigned hours per week and length of activity. Include any Employment Support Services needs in the referral. Refer to [Policy 272 Employment Support Services](#) for more information.
 6. Email the completed referral (with a copy of the participant's assessment results, if appropriate) as an attachment to the appropriate RWS Outlook mailbox (Rescare North, Rescare South, Rescare East, Rescare West).
 7. Complete a WTW 2 Welfare-to-Work Plan Activity Assignment which indicates OC Earns and any concurrent WTW activities, required participation hours, and all identified Supportive Services.
- [WTW Plan Example](#) shows a completed WTW Plan for an OC Earns participant required to participate 32 weekly hours in order to meet an average of 30 hours per week. The participant volunteers to participate 40 hours per week.

Note: If the participant works more than the minimum required hours, the WTW Plan will reflect the total actual hours the participant agreed to participate. Refer to [Policy 211 WTW Plan](#) for more information.

8. Schedule the participant to the Subsidized Employment (SEP) activity in CalWIN.
9. Collaborate with RWS to monitor the participant's attendance, participation, progress, and potential barriers to completion of the assigned OC Earns activity.

Note: Notify RWS immediately if there are any issues reported by the participant about the OC Earns placement.

10. Report any suspected fraud in the OC Earns subsidized employment via chain of command to FSS Program prior to initiating a fraud referral.
11. Enter OC Earns and other attendance hours in CalWIN and monitor the participant's attendance and progress.
12. Update CalWIN Case Comments.

**RWS
RESPONSIBILITIES**

RWS will:

1. Receive the referral for the OC Earns activity via email or fax.
2. Conduct an outreach phone call with the participant prior to his/her start date to discuss what to expect in OC Earns.
3. Provide an OC Earns Orientation to the participant to discuss the OC Earns activity and meet one-on-one with participants to evaluate their skills and placement to an existing employer worksite.
4. Consult with the CM on the hours and activity as appropriate.
5. Offer workplace and job search readiness skills development workshops to ensure that participants are ready to begin a successful OC Earns subsidized employment placement.
6. Address barriers to participation and communicate with the CM as needed.
7. Review employer expectations and hiring practices which

include job interviews.

8. Introduce the participant to the employer and schedule a job interview.
9. Conduct an initial site visit prior to approving an OC Earns employer and if approved conduct quarterly worksite visits for active OC Earns employers.
10. Obtain a completed OC Earns Training Plan from the OC Earns employer prior to the start date of the OC Earns placement period.
11. Provide the approved OC Earns worksite employers with the [F063-41-345 Displacement Poster](#).
12. Ensure the OC Earns worksite employer provides sick pay if appropriate.
13. Monitor the participant's attendance and progress directly with the worksite supervisor.
14. Work with the participant and employer to conduct monthly evaluations, image the evaluations into OnBase and communicate with the CM as appropriate.
15. Discuss the participant's progress and performance with the OC Earns worksite supervisor twice a month.
16. Meet every two weeks, or as needed, with the participant to discuss action steps needed to successfully complete the OC Earns activity.
17. Ensure participants are paid in a timely manner.
18. Submit the [F063-41-420 Attendance and Outcome Report \(AOR\)](#) to the CM by the 5th business day of the following month for regular attendance and/or within 3 business days when the activity ends. The AOR will include a daily record of attendance and at the end of the activity the final outcome will be included.

Note: RWS will communicate participation concerns to the CM immediately.

19. Report any suspected fraud in the OC Earns subsidized employment to the FSS Program Manager immediately.
20. Complete CalWIN Case Comments that include, but are not limited to: attendance, absences, and outcome.

RWS will utilize the current employer database to develop OC Earns subsidized employment opportunities and continue to develop new subsidized employment opportunities in employment sectors that offer participants a clear career ladder, an opportunity for continued unsubsidized employment and an opportunity for advancement.

TREATMENT OF INCOME

Income received from the OC Earns subsidized employment is counted as earned income.

If a CalWORKs family is discontinued from CalWORKs due to income and reapplies within three calendar months of the subsidized employment ending, the family shall be considered current recipients for the purposes of CalWORKs eligibility income and work requirements. The recipient earned income disregards will apply rather than the applicant \$90 income disregard. Additionally, the 100-hour work rule will not apply when establishing deprivation based on unemployment. If the individual applies for CalWORKs after this three month period has passed, he/she shall be considered an applicant and the 100-hour work rule will apply when establishing deprivation based on unemployment.

Refer to [Policy 100-B2 Treatment of Income](#) and [Policy 100-D1 CalWORKs Deprivation](#) for more information.

Note: Participants discontinued from CalWORKs due to over income from the OC Earns subsidized employment are still eligible to continue their participation in the OC Earns subsidized employment until the end of their placement; however, the participants are not eligible to Employment Support Services administered by RWS after CalWORKs is discontinued. Participants may be eligible for post-aid child care if the post-aid child care eligibility criteria are met. Refer to [Policy 301 Child Care Eligibility and Application Process](#) and [Policy 303 Child Care Stage 2 and 3 Referral and Tracking](#) for more information. If a participant's CalWORKs discontinues due to any other reason, the participant will be discontinued from the OC Earns subsidized employment placement.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

The employer of record is responsible to provide Worker's Compensation coverage for OC Earns participants.

Worksite supervisors will handle any claims for Workers' Compensation and notify RWS when a claim is filed. RWS will submit a Special Incident Report (SIR) and notify FSS Program.

ATTACHMENTS

[F063-41-251 Job Services/Employment Support Services Referral](#)

[F063-41-345 Displacement Poster](#)

[F063-41-420 Attendance and Outcome Report \(AOR\)](#)

[F063-41-WT20 Description of Programs Offered by RWS](#)

[F063-41-WT42 Subsidized Employment Programs Comparison Chart](#)

[OC Earns Program Flyer – English](#)

[OC Earns Program Flyer – Spanish](#)

[OC Earns Program Flyer – Vietnamese](#)

[RWS Talent Development Specialist](#)

[WTW Plan Example](#)

REFERENCES

ACL 11-32, 11-58, 12-29, 16-17

ACIN I-22-13, I-33-13

EAS Manual 41-440, 42-701, 42-716.7

[Policy 100-B2 Treatment of Income](#)

[Policy 100-D1 CalWORKs Deprivation](#)

[Policy 211 WTW Plan](#)

[Policy 272 Employment Support Services](#)

[Policy 301 Child Care](#)

[Policy 303 Child Care Stage 2 and 3 Referral and Tracking](#)

[Policy 310 Transportation Supportive Services](#)

[Policy 315 Ancillary Supportive Services](#)