SSA Intranet

Work Participation Hours and Activities Policy: 202

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POLICY

This policy outlines work participation hours and activities that mandatory California Work Opportunities and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Welfare-to-Work (WTW) participants must engage in to meet California's CalWORKs WTW work participation requirements.

Initial Services Workers (ISW) and county or contracted Case Managers (CM) are responsible for engaging CalWORKs WTW participants in allowable activities, verifying that the individual is meeting required weekly hours of participation, and recording work participation hours in CalWIN.

PARTICIPATION HOURS

Mandatory CalWORKs WTW participants are required to participate in approved activities as follows:

• One-parent assistance unit (AU) – A minimum average per week of 32 hours.

• Two-parent assistance unit (AU) – A minimum average per week of 35 hours. Both parents in a two-parent AU may contribute toward the weekly 35-hour requirement if at least one parent participates for a minimum average of 20 hours per week.

Registered Domestic Partners (RDPs) and Same-Sex Spouses or Step-Parents

If the RDP/same-sex spouse has not adopted the child(ren) or is not the natural parent of the child(ren), he or she is treated as a step-parent. The family would be considered a single-parent AU with a participation requirement of 32 hours per week.

• If the step-parent is aided, either parent can do the hours but the hours cannot be shared.

• If the step-parent is unaided, the aided parent must complete all the hours.

If neither adult is disabled, and if the RDP/same-sex spouse has adopted the child(ren), the family is considered a two-parent AU with a weekly participation requirement of 35 hours per week. These hours can be shared.

SPOUSE MEETING PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

In a two-parent AU, participants are required to meet 35 hours of participation, averaged weekly, in allowable WTW activities. If one parent is meeting required participation hours, the second parent is excused from WTW participation based on his or her spouse meeting participation. The second parent's excused status must be tracked in CalWIN as "Spouse Meeting Participation".

Note: In CalWIN the second parent's Registration Status is "Exempt" (Refer to CalWIN Resource Guide "Welfare-to-Work Exempt/Non-Exempt Status") The second parent may volunteer to participate in WTW at any time.

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WTW ACTIVITIES, INFORMING REQUIREMENTS, AND CORE HOURS

CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work activities are divided into core and non-core activities. 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) (Attachment 1) which describes core and non-core activities, the core requirement, and when non-core activities can count toward the core requirement.

Core activities are employment-based and include employment, vocational training, work experience, community service, and job search. Non-core activities are based on education and self-improvement and include job skills training, education, and counseling and treatment services.

Mandatory WTW adults are required to participate 32/35 hours per week in allowable activities. At least 20 hours of the 32/35 hours must be in core activities. The remaining participation hours may be in core activities or non-core activities. In a two-parent AU both parents may share the 20-hour per week core activity requirement.

The 20-hour core activity requirement does not apply to:

- Individuals enrolled in Self-Initiated Programs (SIPs),
- Individuals who have been granted Domestic Abuse Waivers,
- Individuals receiving CalWORKs Family Reunification Services,
- 19-year old custodial parents without a high school diploma,
- Exempt individuals who voluntarily participate in the WTW program.

DETERMINING ACTIVITIES AND PARTICIPATION HOURS

Determination of appropriate WTW core and non-core activities will be based on assessment results (when available) and mutual agreement between the ISW/CM and the participant.

When working with WTW participants, the ISW/CM should reinforce the concept of self-sufficiency, and enroll each individual in WTW activities appropriate to meeting his/her participation goals. Service needs should be evaluated, addressed, and continuously monitored to ensure the individual's successful participation in his or her assigned activity.

Appropriate and timely referrals to Behavioral Health, Domestic Abuse, and Prevention Services programs must be processed. When these types of service needs are identified, the ISW/CM must work with the service provider and participant to establish mutually agreed-upon WTW activities and participation hours that will count toward the mandated weekly requirement.

ISWs and CMs have many choices when helping participants determine appropriate WTW activities. Hours of participation in core and non-core WTW activities are documented on the WTW 2, Welfare-to-Work Plan Activity Assignment. To assist in this process, the Welfare-to-Work Plan Activity Worksheet (F063-41-227) (Attachment 2) was developed. This mandatory tool assists in assigning participants to the appropriate number of participation hours in WTW core and non-core activities. For additional information, refer to Policy 211 – Welfare-to-Work Plan.

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CORE ACTIVITIES

Core activities are employment-based and include employment, vocational training, work experience, community service, and job search.
Allowable WTW core activities are:

- Unsubsidized Employment
- Job Search/Job Readiness Assistance
- Interim Job Search
- Unpaid Work Experience
- Vocational Education and Training (VTR)

As a core activity, Vocational Education and Training is limited to a cumulative total of 12 months during an individual's 60-month time on aid. For WTW plans signed before 12-1-04, time spent in VTR does not count toward this limit

- Work Study
- Subsidized Employment (public and/or private)
- On-the-Job Training
- Self-employment
- Community Service
- Providing Child Care

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NON-CORE ACTIVITIES

Non-core activities are based on education and self-improvement and include job skills training, education, and counseling and treatment services.
Allowable WTW non-core activities are:
• Adult Basic Education
• Job skills training directly related to employment
• Education directly related to employment
• Satisfactory progress in a secondary school or course of study leading to a GED
• Mental Health Services
• Substance Abuse Services
• Domestic Abuse Services
• Children and Family Services
• Prevention Services
• English as a Second Language
• Vocational Education and Training

After a participant has engaged in 12 cumulative months of Vocational Education and Training as a core activity, the activity designation changes to non-core

• Participation required of the parent by a school to ensure the child's attendance
• Other activities necessary to assist the individual in obtaining unsubsidized employment

NON-CORE ACTIVITIES THAT MAY BE COUNTED TOWARD THE CORE REQUIREMENT

Some non-core activities can count toward the core hour requirement when certain conditions are met. If an individual is assigned to non-core activities and the hours exceed the allowable 12/15 non-core hours, the ISW/CM must evaluate the activity to determine if the excess hours can count toward the core hour requirement.
Excess hours of participation in Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse Services, Domestic Abuse Services, Children and Family Services, and/or Prevention Services, can be counted as core hours when the county determines that participation is necessary for the individual to participate in core activities.
Excess hours of participation in Adult Basic Education, Job Skills Training, satisfactory progress in a secondary school or course of study leading to a GED, and/or education directly leading to employment, can be counted as core hours when the program meets all of the following criteria:
• The program leads to a self-supporting job,
• The participant is making satisfactory progress,
• The participant does not have a Bachelor's degree, unless s/he is pursuing a California regular classroom teaching credential, and,
• The program is on the county list of approved programs that will lead to employment. For additional information refer to the following policies:

Policy 221-A - Orange County List of Community College Providers and Programs

Policy 221-B - Orange County List of Approved ROPs and Programs

Policy 221-C - Orange County List of Approved Adult Basic Education Providers and Programs

Allowable non-core activities that may count toward core activities are:
• Adult Basic Education
• Job skills training directly related to employment
• Education directly related to employment
• Satisfactory progress in a secondary school or course of study leading to a GED
• Mental Health Services
• Substance Abuse Services
• Domestic Abuse Services
• Children and Family Services
• Prevention Services

Example 1:
Mom in a one-parent AU must participate in at least 20 hours of core activities per week. The balance of her 32-hour weekly requirement (12 hours) can be spent in core or non-core activities. The CM and participant agree that 8 hours of Substance Abuse Services, and 10 hours of Mental Health Services (18 hours total) are necessary for Mom to participate in her core activity. Because only 12 of the 18 hours of treatment services can be accomplished as non-core hours, the remaining 6 hours spent in Substance Abuse Services are counted as core hours. She must participate for 14 additional hours in a core activity to meet her 32-hour per week participation requirement.

Example 1	Core hours	Non-core hours that count as core hours	Non-core hours	Hours of participation
Mental Health			10	10
Substance Abuse		6	2	8
Core WTW Activity	14			14
Total hours of participation				32

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Example 2:
Dad in a two-parent AU must participate in at least 20 hours of core activities per week. The balance of his 35-hour weekly requirement (15 hours) can be spent in core or non-core activities. The CM and participant agree that Dad needs 20 hours per week in a job-skills training program which will assist him in obtaining a self-supporting job as an office clerk. Because only 15 of the necessary 20 hours of the training program can be accomplished as non-core hours, the remaining 5 hours are counted as core hours. He must participate for 15 additional hours in a core activity to meet his 35-hour per week participation requirement.

Example 2	Core hours	Non-core hours that count as core hours	Non-core hours	Hours of participation
Job Skill Training		5	15	20
Core WTW Activity	15			15
Total hours of participation				35

Example 3:
Mom in a one-parent AU must participate in at least 20 hours of core activities per week. The balance of her 32-hour weekly requirement (12 hours) can be spent in core or non-core activities. The CM and participant agree that Mom needs 20 hours per week in a job-skills training program which will assist her in obtaining a self-supporting job as mechanical draftsman. 8 hours of Substance Abuse treatment is also necessary for her to participate in her core activity. Because only 12 of the 28 hours of training and treatment services can be accomplished as non-core hours, the remaining 16 hours in these activities are counted as core hours. She must participate for 4 additional hours in another core activity to meet her 32-hour per week participation requirement.

Example 3	Core hours	Non-core hours that count as core hours	Non-core hours	Hours of participation
Job Skills Training		16	4	20
Substance Abuse			8	8
Core WTW Activity	4			4
Total hours of participation				32

Example 4:
Both parents in a two-parent AU can contribute toward the 35-hour requirement if one parent participates at least 20 hours, averaged weekly. The CM and participants agree that Dad needs 20 hours of education directly related to employment. It has also been determined that 1 hour of Mental Health Services is necessary for Dad to participate in his core activity. Because only 15 of the necessary hours in these activities can be accomplished as non-core hours, the remaining 6 hours are counted toward the family's 20-hour core requirement. He and mom have chosen to share the remaining 14 hours by participating in additional core WTW activities.

Example 4	Core hours	Non-core hours that count as core hours	Non-core hours	Hours of participation
Education Related to Employment *(Dad)*		6	14	20
Mental Health Services *(Dad)*			1	1
Core WTW Activity *(Dad)*	4			4
Core WTW Activity *(Mom)*	10			10
Total hours of participation				35

SELF-INITIATED PROGRAMS

Participants enrolled in Self-Initiated Programs (SIPs) are required to complete 32/35 hours per week in WTW activities but do not have to meet the 20-hour requirement in core activities. In a two-parent AU, if both parents are SIPs, **each** parent must participate 32 hours per week in WTW activities. (See Policy 220 – Self-Initiated Programs)
During the evaluation process for SIP eligibility the ISW should track potential SIP participants as Pre-SIP, pending final activity approval by the CM.

ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION/ TRAINING

Participation in Vocational Education and Training can only count as a core activity for a cumulative total of 12 months during an individual's 60-month time on aid limit. Any month in which the individual participates at least 20 hours, averaged weekly, in employment, subsidized employment (public/private), work experience, on-the-job training, work study, self-employment, community service, or job search/job readiness, and a concurrent vocational education and training activity, will not count toward the 12-month limit.
If the client continues to participate in a Vocational Education and Training activity after it has been counted as a core activity for 12 cumulative months, then no hours spent in any non-core activity can count toward the core hour requirement.

CHILD CARE AS EMPLOYMENT

Child Care as employment is work that is compensated by the employer at least at the state minimum wage.
The minimum wage requirement only applies to license-exempt individuals who provide care in their own homes, or in the home of the parent. Providing child care, in this case, is considered valid unsubsidized employment. There are no state statutes or regulations that prohibit providing child care by a recipient from being an allowable WTW activity when s/he is earning at least the state minimum wage.
If the participant does not earn at least the state minimum wage, the activity would not fit the definition of employment, and therefore, would not be an allowable WTW activity. WTW activities are intended to assist individuals in finding work that leads toward economic self-sufficiency. Looking after a child in one's home is unlikely to provide the skills necessary to obtain self-sufficiency. If a participant wishes to work with children and his/her assessment determines that this is appropriate, he/she should participate in child development classes, gain work experience in a licensed child care facility, etc. as part of his/ her WTW plan.
The hourly state minimum wage is:

- $8.00 effective 1/1/08.

CAL-LEARN

Pregnant or parenting teens under the age of 18, who are enrolled in the Cal-Learn program, are required to attend full-time school programs that will lead to a high school diploma or its equivalent, such as a certificate of General Education Development (GED). (See Policy 260 – Cal-Learn and Welfare-to-Work)

MID-QUARTER CHANGES IN A TWO-PARENT AU

In a two-parent AU in which deprivation is based on unemployment, if the WTW participant leaves the home in the middle of the Quarterly Reporting/Prospective Budgeting (QR/PB) cycle, the family's situation must be reviewed for WTW participation. The ISW/CM must attempt to contact the absent parent to determine if he/she is still meeting participation requirements, or if the sanction process should be initiated. WTW participation of the remaining parent must also be evaluated, along with any new or additional supportive service needs. Refer to CalWIN Resource Guide "CalWORKs QR/PB" for additional information regarding QR/PB and WTW participation requirements.

TRACKING PARTICIPATION HOURS AND CASE DOCUMENTATION

Attendance and satisfactory progress in WTW activities must be verified monthly, by the tenth business day of the following month, or according to the requirements within each WTW activity. To ensure accurate documentation of WTW participation and full engagement of mandatory adults, timely and consistent communication between the OSW and CM is essential. Activity status, attendance, case updates and all client contacts must be recorded in CalWIN on a regular and/or monthly basis. Refer to CalWIN Resource Guide "Participation Tracking" for instructions on how to enter a WTW participant's hours of participation and track his/her progress in core and non-core activities.
The Employment Services Communication Document (F063-41-211) (Attachment 3) is used to capture new information or changes that occur during a WTW participant's employment or education activity assignment.

- When the CM becomes aware of any changes in employment or education, a 41-211 must be completed and forwarded to the OSW. The OSW is responsible for entering the changes in the CalWIN Data Collection subsystem.
- When the OSW becomes aware of any changes in employment or education, a 41-211 must be completed and forwarded to the CM who will take appropriate action based on the new information. The OSW is responsible for entering the changes in the CalWIN Data Collection subsystem.
- Actions taken by the CM/OSW must also be narrated in CalWIN case comments.

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REFERENCES

- ACL 09-05E Correction To All County Letter (ACL) 09-05 (California Work Opportunity and Responsibility To Kids (CalWORKs) Information Regarding California Registered Domestic Partners (RDPs) and Same-Sex Spouses)
- ACL 09-05 California Work Opportunity and Responsibility To Kids (CalWORKs) Information Regarding California Registered Domestic Partners (RDPs) and Same-Sex Spouses
- ACL 06-09, 4-18-06, Implementation of Senate Bill (SB) 1801 and SB 68
- ACL 04-44, 10-14-04, Quarterly Reporting/Prospective Budgeting and WTW Participation
- ACL 04-41, 10-8-04, Implementation of SB 1104
- EAS 42-711
- Policy 211 – Welfare-to-Work Plan.
- Policy 220 – Self-Initiated Programs
- Policy 221-A - Orange County List of Community College Providers and Programs
- Policy 221-B - Orange County List of Approved ROPs and Programs
- Policy 221-C - Orange County List of Approved Adult Basic Education Providers and Programs
- Policy 260 – Cal-Learn and Welfare-to-Work)
- CalWIN Resource Guide “Welfare-to-Work Exempt/Non-Exempt Status”
- CalWIN Resource Guide “CalWORKs QR/PB”
- CalWIN Resource Guide “Participation Tracking”

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 -- Important Information About Your Welfare-to-Work Activities (F063-41-216)
Attachment 2 -- Welfare-to-Work Plan Activity Worksheet (F063-41-227)
Attachment 3 – Employment Services Communication Document (F063-41-211)

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