



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Social Services
Department No.: 044
For Agenda Of: February 27, 2024
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Time: 30 minutes
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Daniel Nielson, Social Services Director
Director(s) (805) 346-7101
Contact Info: Maria Gardner, Assistant Director, Economic Assistance &
Employment Services Branch, (805) 346-8289
SUBJECT: California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids Outcomes and
Accountability Review System Improvement Plan Report

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: N/A

As to form:

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Receive and approve Santa Barbara County's mandated California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids Outcomes and Accountability Review System Improvement Plan Report for submission to the California Department of Social Services; and
- b) Determine that the activity is not a "Project" subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review per CEQA Guideline Section 15378(b)(5), since the activity is an organizational or administrative activity of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

Summary Text:

This recommended action of receiving and approving this plan is mandated by Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 11523, the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Outcomes and Accountability Review (Cal-OAR) Act of 2017, updated in 2021, which requires counties to participate in a collaborative process with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and stakeholders to identify performance indicators, complete a self-assessment, and submit an improvement plan to CDSS. Approval of the Cal-OAR System Improvement Plan (Cal-SIP) Report will allow the Department of Social Services (DSS) to submit the final copy of the Cal-SIP Report to CDSS prior to

implementation and in effect throughout the first five-year cycle, which began on July 1, 2021 and concludes on June 30, 2026.

Background:

DSS administers various federal, state, and local means-tested government assistance programs designed to support low-income Santa Barbara County residents, such as CalWORKs. The CalWORKs program provides cash aid and supportive services to eligible families that have a child(ren) in the home. The Welfare-to-Work program serves a subset of adult CalWORKs recipients, approximately 1,200 individuals, and is targeted to help these participants reach self-sufficiency through employment and barrier removal services and supports. Participation in Welfare-to-Work is mandatory for adults to receive CalWORKs assistance, with some limited regulatory exemptions.

Established by Senate Bill 89 (Chapter 24, Statutes of 2017) and codified in Welfare and Institutions Code section 11523, the Cal-OAR was developed by the CDSS in partnership with various stakeholders to establish a local, data-driven continuous quality improvement cycle designed to deliver better participant outcomes and drive best practice replication in the Welfare-to-Work program. Implementation of the framework was temporarily delayed during the COVID-19 pandemic but resumed in July 2021.

The Cal-OAR consists of three main components: performance measures, a CalWORKs County Self-Assessment (Cal-CSA) process, and a county Cal-SIP Report informed by the self-assessment, ongoing stakeholder engagement, and peer review input. During the structured self-assessment process, completed in March 2023, strengths and weaknesses of current program practices were identified, shedding light on opportunities for process improvement. Based on information gathered, three performance measures were targeted for the Santa Barbara County Cal-SIP Report. Community partners, participants, staff, and Santa Barbara County's peer county, Ventura County, provided input on the improvement plan for the three selected measures.

Measure #1: OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness Rate

Goal: Increase OCAT/Appraisal completion timeliness rate from 23% to 40%, an increase of 74% in two years. Baseline is 23%, increasing to 31.5% by Year 1 and to 40% by Year 2 (8.5 percentage points each year).

Measure #2: First Activity Attendance Rate

Goal: Increase First Activity attendance rate from 32% to 63%, an increase of 97% in two years. Baseline is 32%, increasing to 47.5% by Year 1 and to 63% by Year 2 (15.5 percentage points each year).

Measure #3: Engagement Rate

Goal: Increase Engagement rate from 19% to 30%, an increase of 58% in two years. Baseline is 19%, increasing to 24.5 % by Year 1 and to 30% by Year 2 (5.5 percentage points each year).

For each of the targeted measures and related goals, multiple strategies and actions steps were developed and detailed in the Cal-SIP Report. The CDSS has approved the plan that is now submitted for the Board of Supervisors' (Board) consideration.

Board approval of the Cal-SIP Report is required before the implementation of the plan can begin. DSS is required to show that the department's goals are aligned with program mandates and outcome requirements and demonstrate how the overarching goals will positively impact DSS clients and that they

were developed through a diversity, equity and inclusion lens. Once approved, DSS will embark on an ambitious plan to improve department measures and strengthen department programs with an eye on improving service delivery for the families DSS serves, which is the ultimate goal and mission of our department: helping our community be safe, supported, and self-sufficient.

After implementation, the next formal check-in is with a Cal-SIP Progress Report #1 due February 21, 2025, followed by a Cal-SIP Progress Report #2 due February 27, 2026 and then the continuous quality improvement cycle begins again for the next five-year cycle of July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2031. Between these milestones, our local Cal-OAR committee will meet regularly to ensure successful implementation and oversight of our improvement plan.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Though there is no financial impact associated with participation in Cal-OAR activities, Cal-OAR provides DSS with valuable insights into CalWORKs' effectiveness, identifying areas of success and pinpointing opportunities for improvement. By analyzing data on program outcomes, DSS will be able to make informed decisions to refine CalWORKs services, ensuring they more effectively meet the needs of participants and contribute to the county's economic well-being. This feedback loop not only supports the program's primary goal of aiding families in achieving self-sufficiency but also maximizes the positive economic ripple effects throughout the community, reinforcing the program's role as a catalyst for local economic enhancement and social welfare.

The CalWORKs program has a multifaceted fiscal impact on our local economy. By providing financial assistance and welfare-to-work activities to families in need, CalWORKs directly injects resources into the community, supporting not only the beneficiary families but also local businesses where these funds are spent. This circulation of funds can stimulate economic activity, potentially leading to job creation and increased local revenue through sales taxes. Studies suggest that for every dollar disbursed through cash assistance programs, there is an additional \$1.20 to \$2.00 in economic activity generated. In addition, CalWORKs' emphasis on employment and training services contributes to the development of a more skilled workforce, indirectly fostering economic growth and stability within the county. DSS issues approximately \$2.5 million each month in CalWORKs cash assistance, which equates to approximately \$30 million annually, not including the economic activity these benefits generate when spent in the local economy. The County's required Maintenance of Effort for administration of the CalWORKs programs is \$1.8 million annually.

Special Instructions:

Please scan and email a copy of the minute order to Jose Clemente (jclemen@countyofsb.org).

Attachments:

1. Attachment 1 – Santa Barbara County CalWORKs County System Improvement Plan Report
2. Attachment 2 – PowerPoint Presentation

Authored by:

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