



Legislation Text

File #: 24-0633, **Version:** 1

Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) recommending the Board approve the submittal of the HHS California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) System Improvement Plan report, attached hereto as Attachment A, to the California Department of Social Services pursuant to the CalWORKs Outcomes and Accountability Review Act of 2017.

FUNDING: 100% CalWORKs Single Allocation.

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND:

The CalWORKs program helps support low-income families in California, who meet the eligibility criteria, by granting cash aid and other benefits. This program serves all 58 counties in the state and is operated locally by county welfare departments (CWDs). The purpose of CalWORKs is to provide equitable access to the services, resources and opportunities to families needing to increase resilience, achieve economic mobility, and break the cycle of poverty.

Pursuant to Senate Bill (SB) 89 (Chapter 24, Statutes of 2017) and in accordance with CDSS published All County Information Notice (ACIN) I-49-18, the Cal-OAR was established to facilitate a local accountability system that fosters continuous quality improvement (CQI) in county CalWORKs programs and service delivery by collecting, analyzing, and disseminating outcomes and best practices.

In accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) 11523, the Cal-OAR covers CalWORKs services provided to current and former CalWORKs recipients and consists of three main components: (1) performance indicators; (2) county CalWORKs self-assessment (Cal-CSA) process; and (3) county CalWORKs Cal-SIP, including a peer review component. Per WIC 11523 (1)(A)(i) and (ii), Cal-OAR must include CQI process and outcome measures and strategies within the following categories: participant engagement, service delivery, participation, employment, educational attainment, program exits and reentries, and may include other family and child well-being measures. These performance measures were developed by the CDSS, in consultation with its established Cal-OAR workgroup.

Each CWD is required to address these measures by performing their own Cal-OAR Continuous Quality Improvement (Cal-CQI) process, which includes the Cal-CSA and Cal-SIP, which shall take place over a five-year cycle. The current cycle began on July 1, 2021, with the implementation of the Cal-OAR. The Cal-SIP is the second component of the Cal-OAR CQI process, which is expected to conclude on June 30, 2026. Summaries of the Cal-OAR CQI processes, which include the Cal-CSA and Cal-SIP requirements are as follows:

County Self-Assessment Process (Cal-CSA)

As phase one of the Cal-OAR CQI process, each CWD will evaluate their CalWORKs programs' performance on the established performance indicators and will identify strengths and weaknesses of current practice and resource development. The process will also consider how local operations and systemic factors affect program outcomes and consider what areas of improvement the county would

like to focus on in their system improvement plan.

County System Improvement Plan (Cal-SIP)

As phase two of the Cal-OAR CQI process, each CWD will utilize the information gathered and research found from the phase one self-assessment process, and create a Cal-SIP, which shall serve as its "plan for improving their CalWORKs program". Through the Cal-SIP development process, CWDs shall identify a strategic focus area (or areas) based upon their Cal-CSA. The resulting Cal-SIP describes how the CWD intends to improve their CalWORKs program in the specified measure (s). Subsequently, each CWD will complete annual progress reports on the status of its Cal-SIP. As part of the Cal-SIP development, CWDs will engage in a peer review process that will focus on the CWD's selected areas for improvement and provide additional insight and technical assistance.

El Dorado County's HHS Self-Sufficiency Division, in charge of administering the County's CalWORKs program, established a Cal-OAR Workgroup to lead the Cal-SIP reporting process. Further, HHS Self-Sufficiency paired with Butte and Calaveras Counties, which are smaller in population size and considered rural counties similar to El Dorado County, to complete the required Peer Review portion of the Cal-SIP. This Peer Review experience afforded HHS the opportunity to forge a relationship with neighboring counties in the region and gain insight/best practices from its CWD peers. As an outcome to multiple community, Peer Review, and CDSS meetings to discuss its initial CQI review process, HHS Self-Sufficiency developed the attached Cal-SIP report (attachment A), to establish its primary goal which is to, "increase the engagement rate of the CalWORKs program for its Employment Services Welfare to Work (WTW) participants from 24% to 30%." Said Cal-SIP report outlines the strategies that HHS Self-Sufficiency will focus on through the remainder of the current Cal-OAR cycle through June 30, 2026.

While the goal that HHS Self-Sufficiency has selected will remain in place throughout the initial Cal-OAR cycle, strategies may be revised during the progress report phase if it is found that pivoting will yield better results. If HHS pivots, CDSS and internal leadership will be notified and when the CDSS annual required progress reports are submitted.

HHS recommends that the Board approve the proposed Cal-SIP as the goal and strategies identified in this report will support safe and healthy communities for the population that receives benefits from the CalWORKs program.

ALTERNATIVES:

Should the Board decline to approve this recommendation, HHS would not be in compliance with the state mandated Cal-OAR CQI system.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION:

None.

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

County of Butte, County of Calaveras

CAO RECOMMENDATION:

Approve as recommended.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is **no** financial impact associated with this agenda item.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

N/A

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT:

Healthy Communities

CONTACT

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