

**San Joaquin County
Human Services Agency
Employment Services Division**



**Employment Services
Participant Handbook**

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

The San Joaquin County Welfare-to-Work Program is also known as the Employment Services Program. All Welfare-to-Work Activities are Employment Services Activities.

The Employment Services Program was previously a work-first program, and employment was the primary goal. With the implementation of the CalWORKS 2.0 initiative, there are more options, including education and training as goals. A larger focus is now to support the well-being and success of the family as a whole.

Your employment as well as self-sufficiency are the primary goals and major focus of the program, and the Employment Services staff will:

- Provide you with important supportive services, such as childcare, transportation, and work/training related expenses.
- Guide you into jobs and/or training to learn the skills for in demand jobs in your area.
- Improve your chances of success by assisting you in resolving barriers or issues that may arise.
- Help you complete your schooling. You can obtain your high school diploma, get your GED, complete college, or receive vocational certificates.

Through the Employment Services Program, everyone wins; you gain a job and future, and employers gain a skilled workforce.

Mandatory Participants:

If you are a California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) recipient, and you are not exempt, you must participate in the Employment Services (ES) Program. You are called a “Mandatory Participant.”

Orientation:

When you start participating in Employment Services, you will go to an orientation with your Case Manager. They will complete an appraisal that will cover your work history and education, your needs for supportive services, and other information to help you determine what your Employment Services activity or activities will be.

There are many paths open to Employment Services participants. Your path may not involve every activity that is offered. Your education and work experience helps determine which activities you are offered. These activities are listed in this handbook.

Job Search:

Following Orientation, you may be assigned to Job Search activities that last up to 4 weeks. However, the Job Search activities may be longer or shorter if the county and you agree that it would be beneficial to you. The following participants will not be required to participate in Job Search activities after Appraisal, but may ask to do so:

- A person who is working or is participating in a approved Self-Initiated Program (SIP) if the job search schedule would keep him or her from working or participating in the SIP; or
- A teen parent required to participate in the Cal-Learn program or a custodial parent age 19, without a high school diploma or GED.

Assessment:

The purpose of Assessment is to put together a Welfare-to-Work Plan to help you reach your goal to become self-supporting. To do this, the assessor will look at your abilities, interests, work history, education, and need for supportive services to get the most out of job and training services offered under Employment Services; estimate your chances of getting a job given your skills and the jobs available in your area; determine any physical or mental concern you may have that limit your ability to work or participate in Employment Services activities; and list the available services that can help you finish your Welfare-to-Work Plan.

Your Welfare-to-Work Plan

Your WTW plan describes the activities you will be completing while participating in the Employment Services Program. The plan will make sure that you receive the agreed-upon services and training for as long as you are taking part in Employment Services and receiving cash aid. Your plan tells you what you must do, and what we must do, to make the Employment Services Program work for you.

Your Case Manager will help you review each of the following parts of your Welfare-to-Work Plan:

- The Welfare-to-Work Plan – *Rights And Responsibilities* tells you about Welfare-to-Work, our responsibilities, and your rights and responsibilities as a participant. This agreement applies as long as you are in the Employment Services Program.
- This Employment Services Handbook.
- The Welfare-to-Work Plan Activity Assignment tells you about your Welfare-to-Work activity. You must complete this form by choosing the activity(ies) you want to participate in, selecting the supportive services you need to help you take part in those activity(ies), and signing the form to certify that the information you provided is accurate and complete. You will complete and sign a new activity assignment each time you choose/begin a new Welfare-to-Work activity.

Read all parts of your WTW Plan, including this Employment Services Participant Handbook, carefully. If you have any questions, be sure to talk to your Case Manager.

We recognize that you may have a good reason for not signing your Plan, not taking part in activities that you agreed to, quitting a job, or reducing your earnings. Some of these reasons are related to you personally, and some are related to the assignment. You should discuss this with your Case Manager.

Employment Services Activities

- JobWORKs-SE (Subsidized Employment)
- Job Search and Job Readiness Assistance
- Employment
- Vocational Training
- High School Diploma or GED instruction for recipients without a diploma or GED.
- Adult Basic Education Directly Related to Employment
- Work Experience
- Community Services
- Work Study
- Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Domestic Violence services are available.

Hours of Participation

If you are not exempt, you will be required to participate in Employment Services activities for the hours shown in the chart below:

Single Parent AU with Child Under Six	Single Parent AU with No Child Under Six	Two Parent AU
20 hours per week	30 hours per week	35 hours per week
87 hours per month	130 hours per month	152 hours per month

Satisfactory Participation

When you sign your Welfare-to-Work Plan, you agree to go to all of your activities and complete them. You must attend your activities in accordance with your provider's established standard. You are responsible for providing attendance verification to your Case Manager by the **10th working day of every month**.

Progress is determined by your provider's established standard toward completing your assigned activities.

- ❖ **NOTE: If you believe you are unable to participate in the Employment Services Program, contact your Case Manager.**

Supportive Services

We understand that you may need more than just training and job counseling to participate successfully in the Employment Services Program. That is why we will help you arrange and/or pay for childcare, transportation, and work/training related expenses.

Supportive Services Payments Include the Following:

Child Care:

- You can get childcare for each child in your CalWORKs assistance unit who is 12 years or younger.
- You can choose the kind of childcare you want, like childcare centers, relatives, friends, or neighbors. We cannot pay for childcare if you choose somebody in your CalWORKs assistance unit, the child's legal guardian, a parent or someone under 18 years old as the childcare provider.

Transportation Costs

Based on the least costly method of transportation for travel to and from your Employment Services activity, and for you and your children to travel to and from childcare and/or school.

This can be advanced mileage or a bus pass(es).

Work/Training Related Costs

Payment for books, tools, and special clothing you need as part of your Employment Services activity.

Post Cash Retention

We will provide case management and supportive services for up to 3 months after your cash aid ends due to employment. You may be eligible to childcare for up to 24 months. You can contact your Case Manager for more information.

Who Doesn't Have to Participate?

Exemptions:

You are exempt and do not have to participate in the Employment Services Program if you:

- Are under 16 years old and not a custodial parent, or 60 years or older.
- Are 16, 17, or 18 years old and go to school full time, unless you are in school as one of your activities or you are a custodial parent.
- Have a disability that is expected to last at least 30 days and that would keep you from working or participating in an activity, and you are either getting or trying to get the medical help you need.
- Are pregnant and have provided verification of your pregnancy.
- Are the non-parent relative caretaker of a child who is a dependent or ward of the court; or a child at risk of placement in foster care and we decide that taking care of the child keeps you from working or participating in an activity on a regular basis.
- Must stay at home to take care of someone in the household who is unable to care for

himself or herself if it keeps you from working or participating in an activity on a regular basis.

- Are the parent or other caretaker relative of a child under 6 months old, and are personally providing care for the child, with the following restrictions:
 - You may be exempt for this reason only one time during a period of continuous stay on aid under the CalWORKs program.
 - If you received this exemption before and you adopt a child under 6 months old or give birth, you may be exempt for a period of 12 weeks.
- A teen parent who is participating in the Cal-Learn Program.
- Request the one time only exemption for caring for a child who is 0-23 months old and have never been granted this before.

We may ask for proof when you claim any of the above exemptions. Your Case Manager can review your situation at any time.

Volunteers

You are eligible to volunteer in the Employment Services Program, even if you are not required to participate. You are called an “Exempt-Volunteer Participant”. Ask your case worker how you can get into Employment Services.

What Happens If You Do Not Participate?

As you know, participation in the Employment Services Program is mandatory for all non-exempt CalWORKs applicants and recipients. Exemptions are listed in the section titled “Who Doesn’t Have to Participate.” If for any reason you do not do what your plan requires, the following steps will be taken:

Cause Determination:

If you do not meet Employment Services (ES) requirements, you have the right to explain why. Contact your Case Manager to discuss your situation.

Compliance:

If you do not meet Employment Services requirements, we will send you a notice giving you 20 calendar days to meet with or call your Case Manager. You will need to offer a good reason for not doing what you are required to do or agree to sign a Compliance Plan. If you meet the requirements of the Compliance Plan, no penalties will be applied to you.

Financial Sanctions:

If you are a mandatory participant, your family's cash aid will be lowered if you fail or refuse to meet Employment Services requirements without an approved good reason and do not resolve the problem by completing and signing a Compliance Plan. Your family's cash aid will be lowered if anybody who must participate does not meet the requirements. This will happen only if the person does not have a good reason, or the person fails to complete and sign a Compliance Plan. The person who gets a financial sanction will not receive cash aid until he/she performs the activity or alternate activity he/she previously refused to perform.

If your family is a two-parent family getting cash aid because of unemployment, there are special rules for financial sanction. If a parent who must participate causes a financial sanction, both parents may lose their cash aid. The parent who did not cause the sanction can keep his or her cash aid if they continue to participate, is exempt, or has good cause for not participating.

Your Child's School Attendance:

If your child(ren) must attend school and he or she does not do so regularly (unless he or she is eligible to participate in the Cal-Learn Program), your family's cash aid will be lowered. You must show proof that your child is attending school regularly.

What You Can Do IF You Do Not Agree

There are three things you can do if you do not agree with any action taken on your case:

State Hearing: If you disagree with any county decision regarding a Welfare-to-Work penalty, your participation in the Employment Services Program, your Welfare-to-Work Plan activity, or your supportive services, you can ask for a state hearing. Your Case Manager will help you file for a state hearing if you want one. See the back of your Notice of Action for more information.

If you file for a state hearing before the penalties start, penalties will not be applied while the hearing is being decided.

Independent Assessment: If you do not agree with the results of your Assessment or Welfare-to-Work Plan, someone who is not a county representative will review your Assessment and do another one, if necessary. The results of the independent Assessment will be used to set up your Welfare-to-Work Plan.

If you have an Independent Assessment done, penalties will not be applied while you wait for the results of the review.

Formal Grievance Set by The County Board of Supervisors: This is the process adopted by the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors. Your Case Manager will tell you how this grievance process works.

If you use the formal grievance process, you must continue to meet your requirements and penalties will not be applied while the grievance is being decided.

Notes