

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

12860 CROSSROADS PARKWAY SOUTH · CITY OF INDUSTRY, CALIFORNIA 91746
Tel (562) 908-8400 · Fax (562) 908-0459



BRYCE YOKOMIZO
Director

LISA NUÑEZ
Chief Deputy



Board of Supervisors
GLORIA MOLINA
First District

YVONNE B. BURKE
Second District

ZEV YAROS AVSKY
Third District

DON KNABE
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTO IOVICH
Fifth District

August 31, 2006

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Bryce Yokomizo, Director

**SUBJECT: CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE - SERVICE INTEGRATION
BRANCH, CalWORKs PROGRAM EVALUATION RESEARCH
REPORTS**

In compliance to your 1998 instruction to DPSS to implement the CalWORKs Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan to measure the effectiveness of CalWORKs and its impact on families and communities, enclosed are four reports recently released by the Service Integration Branch of the Chief Administrative Office (CAO-SIB):

- "Results from the GAIN Sanctions Home Visit Outreach Pilot Project"
- "The Cal-Learn Program in the County of Los Angeles: Process and Barriers"
- "An Impact Evaluation of the Welfare-to-Work Provisions of California Senate Bill 1104"
- Research Brief, Number 1 "The Changing CalWORKs Case-Type Composition in the County of Los Angeles, 2002 to 2005."

The above reports are part of DPSS' current Program Evaluation Research agreement with CAO-SIB for the purpose of conducting research and evaluation of CalWORKs programs administered by DPSS. These projects were initiated by DPSS as components of the FY 2005-2006 research agenda.

Along with the reports, I am providing you with a brief summary of each report highlighting key findings and recommendations. Our Department will evaluate how the new information from these studies can best be implemented.

BY:bjw

Enclosures

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE - SERVICE INTEGRATION BRANCH
“RESULTS FROM THE GAIN SANCTIONS
HOME VISIT OUTREACH PILOT PROJECT”

The pilot project, implemented in July 2004, was a result of recommendations that the Commission for Public Social Services made to DPSS which involved making interventions in the form of phone calls or home visits to Welfare-to-Work participants who are at risk of being sanctioned. DPSS commissioned the CAO-SIB to conduct the evaluation of the pilot project.

The pilot project was designed to help prevent sanctions among GAIN participants with or without a history of specialized supportive services needs. The pilot was additionally designed to enable sanctioned participants to return to compliance and engage in Welfare-to-Work activities including specialized supportive service utilization, while the second phase of the pilot provided outreach services to participants who did not have a history of utilizing specialized supportive services. The outreach intervention involved sending a letter to the non-compliant participants and then, if necessary, following up with a telephone call in an effort to rectify the non-compliance issue.

Key Findings:

- ❖ *The pilot program helped prevent sanctions among non-compliant participants with no history of specialized supportive service usage.*
- ❖ *The outreach efforts did not help non-compliant and sanctioned participants to avoid sanctions or return to compliance. However, frequent and/or ongoing engagement in specialized supportive services made participants more likely to resolve non-compliance issues within three months.*
- ❖ *The outreach effort promoted higher rates of Welfare-to-Work participation, both for participants with a history of specialized supportive services usage and participants without such history.*
- ❖ *The outreach efforts encouraged participants to engage in specialized supportive services, regardless of their past histories of using these services.*
- ❖ *The outreach efforts did not lower recurrence rates for non-compliance and sanctions.*

Key Recommendations:

- ❖ *DPSS should re-assess the outreach effort for non-compliant participants since the majority of them return to compliance on their own.*
- ❖ *All non-compliant participants with specialized supportive services needs should be visited by specialized GAIN Services Workers.*
- ❖ *The Department should consider conducting focus groups to learn why non-compliant participants experience repeated non-compliance incidents.*

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE – SERVICE INTEGRATION BRANCH
“CAL-LEARN PROGRAM IN THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES:
PROCESS AND BARRIERS”

This report is the first of a two-part evaluation of the Cal-Learn program in the County of Los Angeles. Cal-Learn is a mandatory statewide program for pregnant and parenting teens in families participating in the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program.

The report provides an evaluation of the Cal-Learn process in the County of Los Angeles and focuses on the person-level and program-level barriers that impede the progress participants were able to make in school. The main sources of data used in the report were focus group interviews with Cal-Learn case managers and program directors at the Adolescent Family Life Programs (AFLP) agencies, GAIN Services Workers (GSWs) at DPSS, as well as responses to a short survey conducted with case managers.

Key Findings:

- ❖ *Housing instability, including homelessness, is a barrier to program participation for a significant proportion of Cal-Learn teens.*
- ❖ *Case managers at AFLP agencies and GSWs speaking in focus group interviews were generally in agreement that GSW caseloads for Cal-Learn are overwhelmingly large. Case managers and GSWs suggested that overwhelming caseloads are a barrier to effective communication and coordination between the two parties.*
- ❖ *In the Cal-Learn case manager survey, 70 percent of the respondents agreed “strongly”, and 21.7 percent agreed “somewhat” that approval time for transportation and childcare should be streamlined to eliminate delays.*
- ❖ *More than 9 out of 10 respondents to the AFLP Cal-Learn case manager survey agreed “strongly” that school districts need to become more familiar with Cal-Learn and its requirements.*

Key Recommendations:

- ❖ *The AFLP agencies and DPSS should jointly consider enhancing the steps the Cal-Learn takes to reduce housing instability for Cal-Learn teens.*
- ❖ *Given evidence of housing instability, DPSS should consider requiring Cal-Learn teens to provide a real residential address in their official records, even if the address is not the permanent place where they live.*
- ❖ *DPSS should avoid any plans to further trim the number of GSWs working on Cal-Learn and, if possible, consider committing additional GSWs to the program so as to return GSW caseloads to the levels they were at in 2000.*
- ❖ *DPSS may wish to ask the school districts to appoint a liaison or contact person who could assist DPSS and AFLP agencies with resolving complications and with outreach efforts.*

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE – SERVICE INTEGRATION BRANCH
“AN IMPACT EVALUATION OF THE WELFARE-TO-WORK PROVISIONS OF CALIFORNIA
SENATE BILL 1104”

This study evaluated the provisions of Senate Bill (SB) 1104 affecting the Welfare-to-Work process in the County of Los Angeles' GAIN Program. SB 1104 was implemented on December 1, 2004 and requires all Welfare-to-Work participants to have a Welfare-to-Work Plan signed within 90 days of approval of a CalWORKs participant's eligibility.

The impact of SB 1104 was evaluated by tracking and comparing two entry cohorts of CalWORKs participants, one entering before the implementation of SB 1104 (from January through June 2004), and the other entering after the implementation of SB 1104 (from January through June 2005).

Key Findings:

- ❖ *Less than half of the participants in both the pre- and post-SB 1104 cohorts completed Orientation and Appraisal (OAP).*
- ❖ *More than half the participants who completed Orientation in each cohort moved on to Job Club. Only 6 percent from the 2004 cohort and 7 percent from the 2005 cohort completed Job Club.*
- ❖ *The average duration in the assigned pool was almost five days less for the 2005 cohort compared with the 2004 cohort.*
- ❖ *Participants signed Welfare-to-Work plans more quickly after SB 1104.*
- ❖ *The largest difference between the two cohorts is the proportion of participants who were not engaged in another GAIN activity after completing a step, i.e., those were unaccounted for in any activity. This proportion dropped from 30 percent in 2004 to 20.5 percent in 2005.*

Key Recommendations:

- ❖ *Conduct a systematic investigation of participants who begin but do not complete the Welfare-to-Work process.*
- ❖ *Introduce additional measures that would motivate a larger proportion of GAIN participants to sign Welfare-to-Work Plans.*
- ❖ *Boost efforts to shorten delays in the Welfare-to-Work process, especially those that impede participation in, and completion of, OAP and Job Club.*
- ❖ *Examine why so many participants continue to remain in the “unassigned pool” for lengthy periods of time.*
- ❖ *Target Spanish-speaking participants to find out what language-related issues and other obstacles impede them from signing Welfare-to-Work Plans.*

**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE - SERVICE INTEGRATION BRANCH,
RESEARCH BRIEF, NUMBER 1
“THE CHANGING CalWORKs CASE-TYPE COMPOSITION IN
THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, 2002 TO 2005”**

The research brief examines changes that have occurred in the proportion of case types within Los Angeles County’s overall CalWORKs caseload since 2002, the last year before CalWORKs participants began to reach five-year time limits on cash assistance.

Key Findings:

- ❖ *From August 2002 to February 2006, the proportion of cases with unaided adults increased steadily in both the County of Los Angeles and the State of California. Over this four-year period in the State, the percentage of cases with unaided adults rose from 40 percent to 49 percent, while in the County of Los Angeles this percentage increased from 47 percent to 63 percent.*
- ❖ *The growth of timed-out cases has been higher in the County of Los Angeles. By February 2006, the share of safety-net (timed-out) cases was almost 11 percent of the caseload. However, in the rest of the State the share of safety-net cases was merely 5 percent of the overall caseload.*
- ❖ *In California, policies designed to facilitate the transition from welfare dependency to labor market participation have re-shaped the compositions of the State’s CalWORKs caseload, increasing the proportion of unaided adult cases by almost 10 percent between 2002 and 2006. The data indicates that almost two-thirds of the County’s CalWORKs caseload consisted of child-only cases by February 2006.*
- ❖ *The analysis conducted for this brief indicates that, at least in the County of Los Angeles, the 60-month time limit on cash assistance, more than any other welfare reform program feature, is responsible for transforming the CalWORKs caseload composition over time.*

Key Recommendations:

- ❖ *The growing proportion of child-only cases in the County of Los Angeles suggests that DPSS should place increasing focus on the services provided to children, particularly in timed-out CalWORKs households.*
- ❖ *Policymakers should closely examine what the growing proportion of child-only cases means in terms of household incomes. Have incomes dropped significantly as adults have either timed off aid or become otherwise ineligible for cash assistance? Or, alternatively, do time-out adults tend to make successful transitions to the labor market, thereby replacing welfare assistance with earnings derived through work and employment?*
- ❖ *Policymakers should consider whether CalWORKs has sufficient mechanisms in place to ease the transition for families moving from aided adult status to child-only status.*