CalWORKs County System Improvement Plan (Cal-SIP) Report

County: Ventura

Contents

Executive Summary

1. Please summarize the performance measures selected for improvement.
The VCHSA selected the OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness Rate and Engagement Rate as the priority performance measures for system improvement during the first 2021-2026 Cal-OAR cycle.

VCHSA is focusing on enhancing the Client Benefit Specialists' knowledge of the WTW program, revising the current timeframe for tasks associated with the initial WTW appointment, and identifying additional technology solutions to reduce participation barriers impacting CalWORKs families. The first goal is to increase the OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness Rate to 45% from 39% by improving 1.5% every 6 months within 2 years, for a total improvement of 6%.

Additionally, VCHSA is focusing on revising the current business process for transitioning cases from CalWORKs application to the initial WTW appointment, increasing case management time for Employment Specialists, and implementing additional case management resources. The second goal is to increase the Engagement Rate to 45% from 40% by improving 1.3% every 6 months within 2 years, for a total improvement of 5%.

We will be monitoring the progress of these measures by reviewing the Cal-OAR dashboard, gathering data using ad hoc reports developed locally by our team, CalSAWS data, case file validation, staff, and participant focus groups (in separate sessions), and surveys.

2. Please provide a comprehensive list of improvement strategies identified within the Cal-SIP.
Ventura county seeks to improve their performance by implementing the following strategies:

Goal 1: Increase OCAT/ Appraisal Completion Timeliness Rate to 45% from 39%. Review using Cal-OAR Dashboard improving by 1.5% every six months within 2 years (for a total of 6% improvement).
- *Strategy 1*: Enhance CBS staff knowledge and skills to raise applicant awareness of WTW services.
- *Strategy 2:* Revise orientation, OCAT/Appraisal, and service delivery process.
- *Strategy 3:* Implement technology solutions to reduce participation barriers impacting CalWORKs families.
- *Strategy 4:* Participants with limited digital literacy skills or who lack technology access to receive in-person WTW initial engagement services.

Goal 2: Increase Engagement Rate to 45% from 40%. Review using Cal-OAR Dashboard improving by 1.3% every 6 months within 2 years (for a total of 5% improvement).

- Strategy 1: Revise the current business process timeline from the point of CalWORKs application to WTW engagement.
- Strategy 2: Develop a standardized WTW practice to increase participant engagement. Strategy 3: Implement case management resources to improve participant engagement in services.
- Strategy 4: Increase access to job preparation services for all participants.

Introduction

The Cal-OAR is a local, data-driven program management system that facilitates continuous improvement of county CalWORKs programs by collecting, analyzing, and disseminating outcomes and best practices. As required by Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) 11523, Cal-OAR consists of three core components: performance indicators, a county CalWORKs self-assessment (Cal-CSA), and a CalWORKs system improvement plan (Cal-SIP).

The Cal-OAR continuous quality improvement (Cal-CQI) process (which includes the Cal-CSA and Cal-SIP) took place over five-year cycles. The first Cal-OAR cycle commenced on July 1, 2021, with the implementation of Cal-OAR. The Cal-SIP is the second component of the Cal-OAR CQI process. The Cal-SIP is based on the information gathered and reported from the Cal-CSA, each CWD will develop a plan for improving their CalWORKs program. The Cal-SIP will select a measure or set of measures for focused improvements and development to improve the selected performance measures while pairing each Cal-SIP goal with an equity goal and/ or strategy

1. Describe your approach to the Cal-SIP Report.
Ventura County Human Services Agency (VCHSA), Adult Family Services (AFS), and the Community Services Department (CSD) or our County Welfare Department (CWD) hereinafter referred to as VCHSA utilized the CQI tools provided by the County Department of Social Services (CDSS) and it's CalWORKs Outcomes and Accountability Review (Cal-OAR) website to plan and draft the CalWORKs System Improvement Plan (Cal-SIP) report. The CQI tools were modified to adapt to VCHSA's specific and unique needs including internal timelines, workplan, partner and collaborator identification, mapping, data analysis, and engagement processes. VCHSA approached the Cal-SIP development as an opportunity to further examine the current CalWORKs program services, service delivery system which supports efforts to comprehensively and holistically address the impacts to CalWORKs families. This effort included a focus on specific measures that we anticipate will result in improving outcomes for the current 2021-2026 Cal-OAR CQI cycle. Additionally, ongoing partner and collaborative engagement activities created relationships for continuous quality improvement (CQI) and to establish an ongoing feedback system to gather additional information. VCHSA met with collaborators (internal/external) and conducted focus group interviews using CQI tools and obtained input from our VCHSA Cal-SIP workgroup to develop strategies and action steps to identify the goals for improving the OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness and Engagement Rates. Our VCHSA Cal-SIP workgroup met weekly to identify issues, develop strategies to overcome these challenges, and to inform the development of the Cal-SIP.

2. Briefly describe past and current system improvement efforts.
VCHSA's efforts to improve our system delivery included providing staff development resources to serve clients using a Trauma Informed Care (TIC) training, Cornerstone, and information about local workforce and career pathway opportunities. This information remains available online or at two of our America's Job Centers of California (AJCCs) co-located with our CalWORKs program. Although this organizational strategy was designed to enhance our CalWORKs participants' ability to access career and employment opportunities, based on Cal-CSA report, Hispanic females with limited digital literacy and English language skills were sanctioned at a higher rate due to difficulty participating in the WTW program. VCHSA created a Digital Literacy Program (DLP) designed to enhance participants' skills to engage in a variety of virtual services. Combined with this effort, the initial engagement process connected multiple services to quickly engage participants in the program and included in-person tutoring with bilingual staff. VCHSA's efforts to improve the current delivery system for English language learner participants with limited digital literacy was to provide access to the DLP with the intent to enhance their engagement in the WTW program. We will develop outreach materials and adjust the DLP to address the needs of the English language learners requiring additional targeted support to participate in the WTW program and increase participation rate.

3. Briefly describe the success or failure of those efforts at improving service delivery or programmatic outcomes.
The VCHSA successfully implemented the DLP to improve service delivery and program outcomes. The VCHSA's effort to address this gap was by launching a Digital Literacy Program (DLP). This was designed to improve WTW participant engagement by providing participants' basic computer skills necessary to participate in various WTW virtual services. The success of this effort was assessed by gathering information on the change to participants' hours that we tracked in CalWIN and by obtaining participant feedback and adjusting the services as necessary to support their needs. The challenges encounter in the DLP was associated with individuals who dropped out of the DLP after only one session or those who demonstrated limited English Language skills, low educational attainment levels or who were unable to participate. Overall, the DLP effort improved participant engagement outcomes because we removed the technology barrier, provided basic skills training, and the technology tools to access services. This system improvement effort successfully influenced the outcome of our participation rate.

4. An overview of the CWD's organizational vision and mission (optional).
VCHSA's mission statement is "working together in every community to offer support, hope and opportunity for improved well-being. Our vision is "Empowered and thriving communities where all have opportunities for better futures."

Section 1: Measures for Improvement and Strategies

Part 1: Measure and Goal Narrative

1. Describe the reason for selecting the measure or programmatic grouping of measures.

Ventura County Human Services Agency (VCHSA) identified the OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness and engagement Rate measures as opportunities to enhance access to the WTW program. The strategies that improve current participants' WTW engagement may also improve participant engagement in the program and improve our Sanction Resolution Rate. Our collective resources within the CWD combined with collaborating partners will be leveraged to support and encourage engagement and access to barrier removal services. These resources and partnerships will be strengthened to increase overall participant engagement during the CalWORKs application and through the initial WTW appointment.

2. Do partners and collaborators agree this is a measure or programmatic grouping of measures that should be focused on at this time?

Partners and collaborators provided direct feedback and an overview of the program metrics for each of the selected priority measures. The feedback was obtained in-person, virtually, and through surveys conducted at the end of our meetings. The partners and collaborators agreed with the selection of both the OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness and Engagement Rates as the measures that will improve services for our participants. Our internal collaborators (internal staff) also acknowledged and agreed with the selection of the two measures as they potentially improve outcomes for our families.

3. Describe any anticipated interactions with other measures.

The OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness and Engagement Rates will improve the subsequent measures and lead to participants successfully engaged in the WTW program. Although all measures directly or indirectly influence each other, by improving the service delivery system and increasing the Engagement Rate, this may increase the Sanction Resolution Rate and improve participants' engagement in approved WTW activities. By increasing engagement, participants will enter into services designed to increase access to barrier removal assistance, increase access to education, skills, and opportunities for employment in high wage and demand occupations.

4. Describe how the CWD will track performance measure improvement.

We will track performance through the use of State CDSS reports, ad hoc reports, and surveys. The CWD will implement a monitoring process designed to evaluate the progress at 30, 60, and 90-day intervals and meet quarterly to evaluate the progress made towards achieving our set goal. Pending the outcome of the analysis, we will adjust as necessary to develop any additional action steps or revise the process as necessary to achieve our SMART goals.

Part 2: Goal-level Descriptions

Goal 1: Increase OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness Rate to 45% from 39%. Review using Cal-OAR Dashboard by improving by 1.5 % every 6 months within 2 years (for a total of 6.0 % improvement)

- *Strategy 1:* Enhance CBS staff knowledge and skills to raise applicant awareness of WTW services.
- *Strategy 2:* Revise orientation, OCAT/Appraisal, and service delivery process.
- *Strategy 3:* Implement technology solutions to reduce participation barriers impacting CalWORKs families.
- *Strategy 4:* Participants with limited digital literacy skills or who lack technology access to receive in-person WTW initial engagement services.

1. Explain the reasoning or methodology which was used to determine this goal.

Our CWD identified the OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness Rate performance measure as an opportunity to enhance services at the entry point of the program delivery system and by extension, positively influence subsequent measures such as the First Participation and Sanction Rates. By implementing strategies to streamline the process, use technology to reduce the transfer timeframe from CalWORKs Application to WTW services, enhance outreach information, and ensure barrier removal services are provided to participants, will increase the OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness Rate and the participation in WTW activities.

2. What led the CWD to these improvement strategies?

The challenges and issues identified throughout the CQI activities during the Cal-CSA phase of the Cal-OAR project led VCHSA to develop the improvement strategies identified for the OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness Rate. Our county established Cal-SIP Workgroup meetings for the purpose of informing our Cal-SIP report efforts. During these meetings, the county's dedicated Cal-OAR team facilitated CQI activities using Microsoft Teams to gather input and feedback on the OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness Rate. The workgroup participated in several collaboration activities using CQI tools (e.g., Rose, Thorn, Bud; Root Cause Analysis; Prioritization Chart; ADKAR; SMART Goals) and reviewed Cal-OAR data to identify program strategies to increase our OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness Rate.

3. Discuss any research or literature that supports the strategies chosen. Cite reference(s), if applicable.

The efforts involve the implementation of Linkages Neighbors Together (NT), a pilot project using an integrated service delivery case management approach and Trauma Informed Care approach. The coordination of services provides families access to the services they need to improve their ability to participate in WTW services and complete the OCAT/Appraisal WTW plan. The literature supporting this strategy is based on CalWORKs 2.0 and the Kaiser Permanente's Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE) that will influence the intervention of services, the development of core skills necessary to improve work and life outcomes for WTW participants. Specifically, those with limited digital literacy and English language skills to reduce the barriers and improve goal setting necessary to improve their ability to access job preparation services leading to help achieve self-sufficiency. This research will help support strategy number 3, as this will help simplify the OCAT/Appraisal process, reduce barriers for both participants, and connect them to services using supportive transition immediately after CalWORKs approval.

The research will support our efforts since our current process provides access to technology (supportive services) until after the completion of the OCAT/Appraisal, which affects participants experiencing crisis and requiring access to partner services or technology resources.

4. Describe the roles of each partner and collaborator in implementing the selected strategies.

The efforts involve the implementation of Linkages Neighbors Together (NT), a pilot project using an integrated service delivery case management approach and Trauma Informed Care approach. The coordination of services provides families access to the services they need to improve their ability to participate in WTW services and complete the OCAT/Appraisal WTW plan. The literature supporting this strategy is based on CalWORKs 2.0 and the Kaiser Permanente's Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE) that will influence the intervention of services, the development of core skills necessary to improve work and life outcomes for WTW participants. Specifically, those with limited digital literacy and English language skills to reduce the barriers and improve goal setting necessary to improve their ability to access job preparation services leading to help achieve self-sufficiency. This research will help support strategy number 3, as this will help simplify the OCAT/Appraisal process, reduce barriers for both participants, and connect them to services using supportive transition immediately after CalWORKs approval.

The research will support our efforts since our current process provides access to technology (supportive services) until after the completion of the OCAT/Appraisal, which

affects participants experiencing crisis and requiring access to partner services or technology resources.

5. Identify any staff education and training needs, and include any technical assistance needed to implement strategy and achieve goal.

We need to create WTW outreach marketing materials (e.g., videos, brochures, fact sheets) for staff and CalWORKs participants. Analyze and map the current execution of tasks associated with the OCAT/Appraisal to identify areas for improvement. Develop the necessary training materials and train staff on the revised execution process. In addition, we need to develop a roadshow to raise awareness of WTW services and the necessary change to improve the process. Lastly, we will need to train staff on various technology tools (e.g., FaceTime and MS Teams) to improve our communication in the initial engagement process.

6. Describe how the CWD plans to mitigate and/or address both known internal and external barriers to achieve this goal.

The VCHSA plans to enhance Client Benefit Specialists' (assigned to process CalWORKs applications) knowledge by providing training and refresher information about the Welfare-to-Work (WTW) program. Our approach to address internal communication barriers includes enhancing communication among staff, specifically between the two departments to improve services and support efforts to enhance the customer experience. This will be accomplished by providing staff with a Road Show which will bring awareness of the benefits associated with the WTW program. In addition, we will reinforce this information by creating online informational resources, fact sheets, and provide WTW brochures to offer participants. This initial plan addresses one of the two (2) barriers associated with this measure. An additional barrier is staff shortage which has created limited availability of time for CBS to engage participants and provide them with information about the WTW program and services during the application process. Likewise, our plan includes addressing the participant information gap about the WTW Program. The approach to mitigate this gap includes creating outreach materials to provide participants with access to services at the center(s) or through a new mobile van that will be traveling throughout designated areas with a high poverty rate in Ventura County. Engaging staff and participants using different communication modes and enhancing our outreach tools will support our local effort to mitigate both internal and external barriers that have affected our ability to engage participants in the WTW program.

7. Describe how your facility will continuously evaluate each action step taken to see if improvement is being achieved. (e.g., tracking tools, meetings, monitoring, etc) Include who will be responsible for follow up and compliance.

VCHSA will use a variety of tracking and monitoring tools to assess the impact and determine if we display progress towards our SMART goal for the OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness Rate. We have a dedicated Cal-OAR team that includes a program manager, administrative specialist, and Employment Specialist IVs (lead workers) who serve as subject matter experts that will be evaluating the outcomes and facilitating check-in monthly meetings with our established Cal-SIP Workgroup and Cal-OAR Steering Committee. The data will be gathered using ad hoc reports developed locally by our team, CalSAWS data, case file validation, staff, and participant focus groups (in separate sessions), and surveys. Upon implementation of our SMART goal, we will implement a monitoring process at 30, 60, and 90-day intervals and meet quarterly to evaluate the progress made towards achieving the set goal. We are planning to improve our OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness rate by 1.5 percent every six months and within two years, we expect to improve the measure by 6 percent. Pending the outcome of the analysis, we will adjust as necessary to develop any additional action steps or revise the process as necessary to achieve this goal.

Goal 2: Increase Engagement Rate to 45% from 40%. Review using Cal-OAR Dashboard improving by 1.3 % every 6 months within 2 years (for a total of 5.0% improvement.)

- *Strategy 1*: Revise the current business process timeline from the point of CalWORKs application to WTW engagement.
- *Strategy 2*: Develop a standardized WTW practice to increase participant engagement.
- *Strategy 3:* Implement case management resources to improve participant engagement in services.
- *Strategy 4:* Increase access to job preparation services for all participants.

1. Explain the reasoning or methodology which was used to determine this goal.

Our VCHSA identified the Engagement Rate as an opportunity to enhance our Welfare-To-Work (WTW) program by improving services to vulnerable families. We selected this measure using a similar method used to select the OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timelines Rate. During the Public Health Emergency (PHE), our in-person services were closed thus creating the need to transition WTW program services to either virtual or by phone. The transition to online services revealed the digital literacy divide existing in our community. For our participants with limited English Language skills combined with low educational attainment and literacy skills, the transition created barriers to access services. However, the VCHSA addressed the disparities by launching a Digital Literacy Program (DLP) to improve access for participants lacking the required tools or knowledge to participate in the WTW program virtually. The determination to focus on this measure was to enhance access of WTW services for our vulnerable population such as female, Hispanic participants who demonstrated limited English language and digital literacy skills. By enhancing our services at the initial and subsequent phase of the service delivery system, these improvements would transfer forward and positively impact subsequent measures such as the First Participation Rate, and potentially reduce the Sanction Rate while increasing the Sanction Resolution Rate. By implementing strategies to enhance our services for vulnerable participants (and those most affected by the PHE), we will be able to provide them access to services while increasing our Engagement Rate.

2. What led the CWD to these improvement strategies?

The CWD selected these strategies based on the issues identified during our CQI activities with internal and external collaborators. The issues the team identified included the increase in the no-show rate of participants referred to the WTW program after CalWORKs approval and the participant's limited awareness of the WTW program. We also reviewed internal reports regarding the Engagement Rate at the initial appointment, subsequent services, and CQI activities. During the CQI activities,

Employment Specialists voiced their difficulty engaging participants due to the number of tasks they are required to complete during the initial appointment and staff shortage. Additional analysis and mapping of the business process associated with the initial WTW appointment is required to maximize participant engagement. We also plan to implement case management training (e.g., building and maintaining rapport), provide resources such as establishing a case collaboration forum, and a best practice case conference meeting with supervisor(s) to address the needs of vulnerable families.

3. Discuss any research or literature that supports the strategies chosen. Cite reference(s), if applicable.

The approach our VCHSA implemented to increase participant engagement was to transition into a Trauma Informed Care (TIC) service delivery approach. Combined with TIC, our department also operates programs according to our core tenets which includes using a Person Centered, Principle-Based and Trauma Informed approach. This approach will improve our services by enhancing our external partner collaborator network to help participants address barriers affecting their ability to engage in WTW services while avoiding re-traumatization. The TIC, a significant focus of our service delivery system, combined with the implementation of CalWORKs 2.0 strategies, create support, trust, and reduce experiences that re-traumatize participants seeking WTW services. For families that are CalWORKs WTW, a promising practice that supports our strategies for the Engagement Rate is Linkages. The VCHSA Children & Family Services (CFS) and Adult & Family Services (AFS) departments partnered together to pilot a co-located Resource Navigator (Employment Specialist IV) position within both the CFS and CalWORKs (CW) program. The Resource Navigator (RN) acts as a liaison bridging the day-to-day operation of services provided through the Neighbors Together (NT) program. Additionally, the Resource Navigator focuses on identifying CalWORKs and other critical resources for NT families receiving Family Maintenance (FM) services to access these resources in the most expeditious way.

References:

Trauma-Informed Care | ACEs Aware – Take action. Save lives.

4. Describe the roles of each partner and collaborator in implementing the selected strategies.

The roles of our internal and external collaborators were crucial in identifying and implementing engagement strategies to address the access of barrier removal services for our participants. This included improving our referral process for participants requiring supportive services, education, domestic violence, or access to additional ancillary services to reduce barriers and increase engagement. This will include improving our referral form to internal/external partners, expanding the partner framework/resources, and providing staff training on the available partner services.

13

5. Identify any staff education and training needs, and include any technical assistance needed to implement strategy and achieve goal.

The additional staff training and ongoing education will be provided to bring awareness of the changes to the business process, updated referral form, and the process for accessing partner services. The VCHSA continues to explore and potentially expand the use of virtual engagement tools, specialized training for supervisors to provide guidance/coaching to staff on strategies to address participant barriers, and training on case management best practices and compassion fatigue. In addition, we will explore additional methods to implement automated referrals from CalWORKs application approval to the participant's initial WTW appointment. The county will map this process to identify the areas necessary to implement strategies that most effectively engage participants using a TIC approach such as incorporating a "warm hand-off" during the initial contact with Client Benefit Specialists (CBS) to the WTW staff. These efforts will increase the opportunity to introduce the services at the initial point of contact with a participant and increase the opportunity for staff and participants to gain an understanding of the benefits of WTW to create a positive experience and trusting relationship between the participant and staff.

6. Describe how the CWD plans to mitigate and/or address both known internal and external barriers to achieve this goal.

VCHSA plans to increase our engagement rate through a multi-pronged approach involving collaboration with internal and external partners to enhance current practice and strategies. The barriers affecting participants' ability to engage in the program is their ability to quickly access supportive services such as domestic violence counseling and access to childcare providers. VCHSA has a referral process used by staff to access contracted service providers. However, this referral process does not include a direct referral to domestic violence services. This gap creates barriers for clients to access services and participate in the WTW program. For external partners, we will mitigate the barriers by building upon our existing relationships with them to improve our referral process, including developing a universal referral form to expedite services such as domestic violence. A standardized process augments some of our current resources and services necessary to address barriers. Internal barriers will be mitigated by offering various staff development strategies to build our capacity. These strategies include internal training opportunities through our contracted providers, provider workshops, and training offered through UC Davis, online training (Cornerstone, County staff development). VCHSA supports efforts to implement these strategies to enhance staff capacity to improve the Engagement Rate. VCHSA does not have resource concerns to implement these strategies.

7. Describe how your facility will continuously evaluate each action step taken to see if improvement is being achieved. (e.g., tracking tools, meetings, monitoring, etc) Include who will be responsible for follow up and compliance

VCHSA will use a variety of tracking and monitoring tools to assess the impact and determine if we display progress towards our SMART goal for the Engagement Rate. We have a dedicated Cal-OAR team that includes a program manager, administrative specialist, and Employment Specialist IVs (lead workers) who serve as subject matter experts that will be evaluating the outcomes and facilitating check-in monthly meetings with our established Cal-SIP Workgroup and Cal-OAR Steering Committee. The data will be gathered using ad hoc reports developed locally by our team, CalSAWS data, case file validation, staff, and participant focus groups (in separate sessions), and surveys. Upon implementation of our SMART goal, we will establish a monitoring process designed to evaluate the progress at 30, 60, and 90-day intervals and meet quarterly to evaluate the progress made towards achieving the set goal. We are planning to improve our Engagement Rate by 1.3 percent every six months and within two years, we expect to improve our measure by 5 percent. Pending the outcome of the analysis, we will adjust as necessary to develop any additional action steps or revise the process as necessary to achieve this goal.

Section 2: Peer Review

Peer county/ counties selected for collaboration and consultation:

Orange County & Santa Barbara County

1. Discuss how the Peer Review process impact Cal-SIP development.

The peer review process positively impacted VCHSA's Cal-SIP development. VCHSA successfully collaborated with both Santa Barbara and Orange County and discussed improvement strategies for the Cal-SIP. For example, we were able to identify a business process shared by Santa Barbara County involving the participant initial engagement approach that may be helpful in our operations. We anticipate this business process will improve our OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness Rate which may also influence subsequent activities and our Engagement rate. In addition, during our Peer Review process with Orange County, we were provided with insight into their idea of automating case assignment from CalWORKs approval to WTW services which is something VCHSA is also considering/exploring. The peer review process provided VCHSA the opportunity to gain insight and obtain additional technical tools from other counties experiencing similar circumstances which also supplemented the technical assistance obtained from CDSS.

2. Discuss steps taken to conduct peer review.

We communicated with other counties prior to submission of the Cal-CSA, the counties included Orange, Santa Barbara, and Riverside. The initial outreach received by VCHSA was from Orange County where we served as both the peer and host county. We scheduled four (4) meetings where we reviewed Cal-CSA data focused on our two priority measures, OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness and Engagement Rates. We also reviewed the next steps involving the Cal-SIP report and best practice opportunities to improve our services. The host county provided an agenda, documents for review, and additional information recommended in the Peer Review toolkit. For Santa Barbara County we participated as the host county in which we provided an agenda, planning documents, and a list of questions involving our challenges. Subsequently, Santa Barbara was the host county and scheduled an in-person meeting to discuss the Cal-CSA findings identified for their county. Except for one meeting with Santa Barbara, all other Peer Review meetings were held virtually with both Orange and Santa Barbara counties.

3. Briefly summarize observations and action items from Peer Review process.

The Peer Review partners provided written feedback on the OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness and Engagement Rates. The process provided insight and recommendations involving our Initial Engagement strategies that may be considered

`for review and implemented to improve our OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness Rate and impact our ability to improve subsequent Engagement Rate. The feedback included information to revise our Orientation process and add participant stories and testimonials presented in plain language. It included establishing a Workgroup to monitor this measure and provide ongoing improvement recommendations (e.g., How to deal with common engagement barriers, create contests for improving staff moral; develop desk guides and refresher training). The feedback for the OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness Rate included best practice strategies to improve the process of scheduling the appraisal after orientation, building connections between various teams to encourage staff buy-in, and offer opportunities for staff to share feedback regarding Cal-OAR implementation.

Section 3: Target Measure Summary

Goal 1: Increase OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness Rate to 45% from 39%. Review using Cal-OAR Dashboard by improving by 1.5 % every 6 months within 2 years (for a total of 6.0 % improvement)

Performance Measure: OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness Rate

Baseline Result: 39%

Cal-SIP Start Time: 02/01/2024	**Progress Report #1:** 02/21/2025	**Progress Report #2:** 03/27/2026	**Cycle End Date:** 06/30/2026

Strategies and Actions:

Strategy 1: Enhance CBS staff knowledge and skills to raise applicant awareness of WTW services.

Action Step 1: Provide participants with applicable resources and support services upon approval of CalWORKs application to increase OCAT/Appraisal participation.

Action Step 2: Develop Road Shows to raise awareness of the WTW program benefits.

Action Step 3: Create WTW outreach materials (video, brochures, HSANet website links, participant success stories, fact sheets) for ES, CBS, and CalWORKs participants to raise awareness of the benefits of the WTW program.

Strategy 2: Revise orientation, OCAT/Appraisal, and service delivery process.

Action Step 1: Analyze and map the current service delivery of tasks associated with the OCAT/Appraisal to identify areas for improvement

Action Step 2: Provide staff training and transfer of learning opportunities on the revised initial engagement process.

Action Step 3: Provide staff training and transfer of learning opportunities on the revised initial engagement process.

Strategy 3: Implement technology solutions to reduce participation barriers impacting CalWORKs families.

Action Step 1: Evaluate participants' technology needs upon approval of CalWORKs application and prior to the scheduled OCAT/Appraisal appointment to increase participation in initial engagement services.

Action Step 2: Develop staff "How to" technology guides (e.g., MS Teams, FaceTime, scan using cell phone) to improve initial engagement for participants.

Strategy 4: Participants with limited digital literacy skills or who lack technology access to receive in-person WTW initial engagement services.

Action Step 1: Training for Employment Specialists on best practice for in-person services including home visits to enhance OCAT/Appraisal attendance.

Action Step 2: On a quarterly basis, review disaggregated OCAT/Appraisal Completion rate to identify underlying trends for Hispanic female participants participating in Welfare-To-Work activities.

Tracking Improvement: VCHSA will use a variety of tracking and monitoring tools to assess the impact and determine if we display progress towards our SMART goal for the OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness Rate. We have a dedicated Cal-OAR team that includes a program manager, administrative specialist, and Employment Specialist IVs (lead workers) who serve as subject matter experts that will be evaluating the outcomes and facilitating check-in monthly meetings with our established Cal-SIP Workgroup and Cal-OAR Steering Committee. The data will be gathered using ad hoc reports developed locally by our team, CalSAWS data, case file validation, staff, and participant focus groups (in separate sessions), and surveys. Upon implementation of our SMART goal, we will implement a monitoring process at 30, 60, and 90-day intervals and meet quarterly to evaluate the progress made towards achieving the set goal. We are planning to improve our OCAT/Appraisal Completion Timeliness rate by 1.5 percent every six months and within two years, we expect to improve the measure by 6 percent. Pending the outcome of the analysis, we will adjust as necessary to develop any additional action steps or revise the process as necessary to achieve this goal.

Goal 2: Increase Engagement Rate to 45% from 40%. Review using Cal-OAR Dashboard improving by 1.3 % every 6 months within 2 years (for a total of 5.0% improvement.)

Performance Measure: Engagement Rate

Baseline Result: 40%

Cal-SIP Start Time: 02/01/2024	Progress Report #1: 02/21/2025	Progress Report #2: 03/27/2026	Cycle End Date: 06/30/2026

Strategies and Actions:

Strategy 1: Revise the current business process timeline from the point of CalWORKs application to WTW engagement.

Action Step 1: Map the current process and the future state to improve communication and increase participant engagement.

Action Step 2: Implement a warm hand-off process from CalWORKs approval to WTW engagement services.

Action Step 3: Create a universal referral form and explore Unite Us platform to improve participants' access to barrier removal services.

Strategy 2: Develop a standardized WTW practice to increase participant engagement.

Action Step 1: Create a comprehensive partner referral system to enhance the participants' access to barrier removal services.

Action Step 2: Training on partner services that are available for participants.

Action Step 3: Analyze the business process associated with Orientation (WTW forms), OCAT/Appraisal, Assessment (WTW 2 plan), Go Plan Do Review, supportive services, incentives, and referrals to maximize participant engagement.

Strategy 3: Implement case management resources to improve participant engagement in services.

Action Step 1: Create a time-certain case collaboration forum to address the highest needs for vulnerable WTW families.

Action Step 2: Establish an internal time-certain best practice case conference with supervisor to assist families towards success.

Action Step 3: Identify compassion fatigue resources for ES staff managing caseloads (e.g., Building and maintaining rapport, Emotional Resilience, Nurturing Self-Care, Secondary Trauma, Self-Care Management, and mental health workshops).

Strategy 4: Increase access to job preparation services for all participants.

Action Step 1: WTW participants with limited ability and access to job readiness services to receive additional in-person assistance for job preparation services.

Action Step 2: On a quarterly basis, review disaggregated Engagement Rate to identify underlying trends for Hispanic females referred to any WTW activity.

Tracking Improvement: VCHSA will use a variety of tracking and monitoring tools to assess the impact and determine if we display progress towards our SMART goal for the Engagement Rate. We have a dedicated Cal-OAR team that includes a program manager, administrative specialist, and Employment Specialist IVs (lead workers) who serve as subject matter experts that will be evaluating the outcomes and facilitating check-in monthly meetings with our established Cal-SIP Workgroup and Cal-OAR Steering Committee. The data will be gathered using ad hoc reports developed locally by our team, CalSAWS data, case file validation, staff, and participant focus groups (in separate sessions), and surveys. Upon implementation of our SMART goal, we will establish a monitoring process designed to evaluate the progress at 30, 60, and 90-day intervals and meet quarterly to evaluate the progress made towards achieving the set goal. We are planning to improve our Engagement Rate by 1.3 percent every six months and within two years, we expect to improve our measure by 5 percent. Pending the outcome of the analysis, we will adjust as necessary to develop any additional action steps or revise the process as necessary to achieve this goal.

Appendix B: Cal-OAR Team and Partners and Collaborators

Below serves as a template to be included as Appendix B in the Cal-OAR Cal-CSA and Cal- SIP reports. Additional information can be found in ACL 19-108 and the Partner and Collaborator Engagement Toolkit on our Cal-OAR website. This also includes analysis tools, budgeting and planning tools, engagement tools, and overcoming obstacles tools in engaging your partners and collaborators.

LIST OF PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS AND THEIR ROLE IN ENGAGEMENT

The CWD shall list the Cal-OAR team members and partner and collaborators, affiliation, and a brief description of their participation in the Cal-CSA and Cal-SIP reports. This is the team that worked collaboratively throughout the CQI cycle.

County Cal-OAR Team Members	Title	Level of Participation/Description
Leann Mastrella	Division Manager	Division Manager, Facilitation, Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP Review
Nancy Ambriz	Program Manager	Cal-OAR Project Manager, Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP Activities and Report development
Roberto Moneda	Administrative Specialist III	Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP coordination, CQI activities, report development
Juan Amezcua	Employment Specialist IV	Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP coordination, CQI activities, report development
Yenira Luna	Employment Specialist IV	Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP coordination, CQI activities, report development
Alejandra Varela-Guerra	Program Assistant	Cal-OAR administrative support during CQI meetings

Other staff, group, local/relevant partners, and/or consultation	Title	Level of Participation/Description
Marissa Mach	Ventura County – CAE Deputy Director	Cal-OAR Steering Committee, Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP Review
Jaimé Duncan	Ventura County – CAE Division Manager	Cal-OAR Steering Committee, Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP CQI activities and report input
Jesse Hernandez	Ventura County – CSD Division Manager	Cal-OAR Steering Committee, Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP CQI activities and report input
Delfina Becerra	Ventura County – CAE Administrative Specialist II	Cal-OAR Steering Committee, Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP CQI activities and report input
Cynthia Alonzo	Ventura County – CAE Program Analyst	Cal-OAR Steering Committee, Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP CQI activities and report input
Francine Ortiz	Ventura County – CAE Administrative Specialist III	Cal-OAR Steering Committee, Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP CQI activities and report input
Christina Rayos	Ventura County – CSD Program Analyst	Cal-OAR Steering Committee, Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP CQI activities and report input

Elizabeth Chavez	Ventura County – CSD Program Analyst	Cal-OAR Steering Committee, Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP CQI activities and report input
Luis De La Torre	Ventura County – CAE Program Manager	Cal-OAR Steering Committee, Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP CQI activities and report input
Rosio Guilin	Ventura County – CAE Program Manager	Cal-OAR Steering Committee, Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP CQI activities and report input
Joseph Krasno	Ventura County – CAE Employment Specialist Supervisor	Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP CQI activities, Cal-OAR Workgroup
Regina Mora	Ventura County – CAE Employment Specialist Supervisor	Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP CQI activities, Cal-OAR Workgroup
Ana Caravantes	Ventura County – CAE Employment Specialist Supervisor	Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP CQI activities, Cal-OAR Workgroup
Karla Smith	Ventura County – CSD Client Benefit Supervisor	Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP CQI activities, Cal-OAR Workgroup
Lily Hernandez	Ventura County – CSD Client Benefit Supervisor	Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP CQI activities, Cal-OAR Workgroup
Anacani Rodriguez	Ventura County – CAE Employment Specialist IV	Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP CQI activities, Cal-OAR Workgroup
Brenda Ortiz	Ventura County – CAE Employment Specialist IV	Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP CQI activities, Cal-OAR Workgroup
Virginia Rios	Ventura County – CSD Client Benefit Specialist IV	Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP CQI activities, Cal-OAR Workgroup
Retha Meurs	Ventura County – CSD Client Benefit Specialist III	Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP CQI activities, Cal-OAR Workgroup
Alejandro Pavano	Ventura County – CAE Employment Specialist II	Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP CQI activities, Cal-OAR Workgroup
Luis Medina	Ventura County – CAE Employment Specialist II	Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP CQI activities, Cal-OAR Workgroup

Required Partners and Collaborators	Affiliation/Organization	Level of Participation/Description
Childcare Provider	Child Development Resources	Cal-OAR Meetings, CQI Participation, Surveys
Ventura County Behavioral Health	Ventura County	Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP Meetings, Surveys, Cal-SIP CQI activities
Ventura County Public Health	Ventura County	Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP Meetings, Surveys, Cal-SIP CQI activities
*WIOA Career Services	Ventura County/WIOA Services	Cal-OAR/Cal-CSA Meetings
Partner	Goodwill Industries of Ventura & Santa Barbara	Cal-OAR, Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP CQI activities
*Education	Oxnard Community College	Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP Meetings, Surveys, Cal-SIP CQI activities
*Education	Ventura Community College	Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP Meetings, Surveys, Cal-SIP CQI activities
*Education	Moorpark Community College	Cal-CSA/Cal-SIP Meetings, Surveys, Cal-SIP CQI activities

*Includes county staff that are not a part of your county's Cal-OAR team but were involved in the partner and collaborator phase.
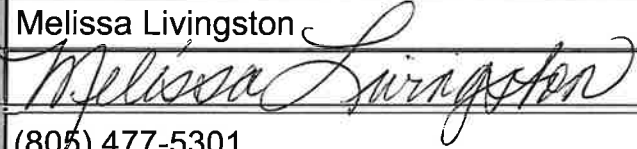
INDICATE WHETHER ALL THE REQUIRED PARTICIPANTS WERE INVOLVED IN THE REPORT DEVELOPMENT.

Did all the required local partners and collaborators participate in the development of the Cal-CSA and Cal-SIP? (This includes county CalWORKs administrators, supervisors, caseworkers, current and former CalWORKs clients, and county human services agency partners.)	Yes/No; If No, please explain the circumstances as to why the required partners were not able to participate.
(Yes/No) **Yes**	(If No, please explain)

The Appendix can be used to capture additional detailed information not already captured in the Cal-CSA report.

CAL-OAR REPORT SIGNATURE

For submittal of: ☐ Cal-CSA ☑ Cal-SIP ☐ Cal-SIP Progress Report

County	County of Ventura
Submission Date	January 26, 2024
Cal-CQI Cycle	2021-2026 Cycle
County Welfare Director	
Name	Melissa Livingston
Signature	*Melissa Livingston*
Phone Number	(805) 477-5301

Board of Supervisors (BOS) Representative Signature – For Cal-SIP Approval Only

BOS Approval Date	January 23, 2024
Name	Kelly Long
Title/Position	Chair, Board of Supervisors
Signature	*Kelly Long*

Contact Information

County Cal-OAR Contact	Name and Title	Nancy Ambriz, Program Manager
	Phone & E-mail	(805)415-3921; Nancy.Ambriz@ventura.org

Sign, scan, and submit the Signature Sheet along with the Cal-OAR Report to your county's SFT site.