



COUNTY of VENTURA

MELISSA LIVINGSTON
Director

January 23, 2024

Board of Supervisors
County of Ventura
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

855 Partridge Drive
Ventura, CA 93003
805-477-5100

JENNIE PITTMAN
Deputy Director
Administrative Services

VICTORIA JUMP
Deputy Director
Aging & Disability Services

Subject: Approval of, and Authorization for the Human Services Agency Director to Submit, the CalWORKs System Improvement Plan to the California Department of Social Services.

DAVID SWANSON HOLLINGER
Deputy Director
Children & Family Services

MARISSA MACH
Deputy Director
Community Access & Engagement

Recommendation:

Approve, and authorize the Human Services Agency (HSA) Director to submit, the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) System Improvement Plan (Cal-SIP) to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) in compliance with State legislative requirements (Exhibit 1.)

ELAINE MARTINEZ
Deputy Director
Community Services

Fiscal/Mandates Impact:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

Discussion:

CalWORKs provides temporary cash assistance to help pay for rent, housing, food, clothing, medical care, and other expenses for families with at least one minor child in the home and offers employment-focused services such as job search assistance, job training, work or education to improve employment opportunities that lead to self-sufficiency. In Ventura County, CalWORKs serves 3,170 families with 1,776 adults who participate in an employment-focused component.

The CalWORKs Outcomes and Accountability Review (Cal-OAR) created by Senate Bill 89 was signed into law on June 27, 2017, to facilitate continuous improvement of the CalWORKs program through a process designed to collect, analyze, and disseminate outcomes and best practices. The mandate requires county human services agencies to implement local efforts to assess performance on established process and outcome measures, identify strengths and weaknesses, and develop a comprehensive system improvement plan to increase performance outcomes and improve services for CalWORKs participants. The Cal-OAR quality improvement process has several phases and takes place over five-year cycles, with the current cycle being years 2021-2026.

In conjunction with community partners, the self-assessment phase of Cal-OAR was completed in 2022. The Cal-SIP development phase began in early 2023, during which counties select measures for focused improvement. Data gathered from the self-assessment helped to identify CalWORKs families who live in neighborhoods where the poverty rate is nearly three times higher than the 8.9% average rate in Ventura County. Cal-SIP goals were developed and strategic action steps identified that are targeted to increase participant engagement, and improve communication and service delivery for these families.

The two measures identified for focused improvement include (1) Increasing the Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool (OCAT)/Appraisal Completion Timeliness Rate, and (2) Increasing the Participant Engagement Rate. These measures, in combination with staff collaboration, partner surveys, and customer satisfaction information will be evaluated on an ongoing basis during Cal-SIP implementation. The Cal-SIP approach monitors the impact of system improvement strategies on services, evaluates progress towards achieving goals, and provides information necessary to promote positive change.

Upon approval by your Board and CDSS, HSA will focus on Cal-SIP implementation and will establish strategic milestones to allow incremental change, adjusting operations as necessary to improve outcomes. The initial Cal-SIP implementation phase begins in January 2024 with the first of two annual progress reports due in February 2025 and the second in March 2026. HSA will return to your Board to provide a progress report on the outcomes achieved after the end of the first period of performance.

We ask that your Board approve, and authorize the HSA Director to submit, the CalWORKs System Improvement Plan. Your Board's approval of the Plan prior to its submission is required by CDSS.

Strategic Plan:

The CalWORKs System Improvement Plan contributes to the County's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan priority to 'Address Homelessness and Lift Up the Most Vulnerable', Goal (2) Meet/sustain basic needs and be a reliable safety net for our vulnerable populations.

This item has been reviewed by the County Executive Office, the Auditor-Controller's Office and County Counsel. If you have any questions, please contact me at 805-477-5301, or Marissa Mach, Deputy Director, Community Access & Engagement, at 805-477-5323.


Melissa Livingston
Director

Attachment:

Exhibit 1 – CalWORKs System Improvement Plan