



# COUNTY OF VENTURA HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

Barry L. Zimmerman  
Director

September 27, 2019

The Administration for Children and Families  
Office of Family Assistance  
Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation  
ACF TANF Data Innovation Project  
TANF Data Collaborative Pilot Initiative

Dear Review Committee:

The County of Ventura Human Services Agency is pleased to submit the enclosed self-nomination letter to participate in the TANF Data Collaborative (TDC) Pilot.

We are committed to adopting and sustaining effective data strategies to drive business process and value opportunities to build our capacity to collect, analyze, report on, and use data in support of these efforts. We look forward to working with you to better serve the vulnerable populations in Ventura County through improved data-driven decision-making made possible with this pilot.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. Should you have any questions, please free to call me at 805-477-5301 or Delfina Becerra, for our Adult and Family Services Department, at 805-477-5357 or email her at [Delfina.Becerra@Ventura.org](mailto:Delfina.Becerra@Ventura.org).

Sincerely,



Barry L. Zimmerman  
Director

Enclosure(s)

Dear TANF Data Collaborative Pilot Initiative Review Committee,

The County of Ventura Human Services Agency (HSA) administers the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program, which is California's version of the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. In Ventura County, approximately 1 in 4 of the more than 800,000 residents participates in an HSA program, including CalWORKs, to receive supportive services and/or cash benefits. During any given month of 2018, there were at least 9,000 CalWORKs participants.

HSA is committed to adopting and sustaining effective data strategies to drive business process. To be selected as a TANF Data Collaborative Pilot Initiative Site would provide HSA the opportunity to further strengthen data-driven approaches to providing service to community members participating in Agency programs.

**Goals/projects well aligned with TANF Data Collaborative goals**

The CalWORKs program provides families with minor children temporary financial assistance and resources, as well as support as they re-enter the workforce. Case managers provide referrals to resources that assist families with securing basic needs such as appropriate and permanent housing, access to food, and health care. Leveraging support from programs outside HSA, families are educated about community resources like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to maximize the number of people who take advantage of such resources and are informed about assistance programs such as Supplemental

Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance, if individuals are eligible. Unless exempt, adults in CalWORKs families are required to participate in the Welfare-to-Work (WTW) program. WTW participants learn job skills and how to find work through various approved activities.

The target population for the proposed project are the WTW participants. Families live across the county and are from diverse backgrounds. At any given point in time, the entire WTW population, including those who may be exempt or noncompliant, is around 3,000 adults depending on the time period. Individuals participate in various job skills training and employment activities. Services that are contracted out include provisions regarding data collection, project support, and performance measure management. All employment services programs provide relevant work training that lead to full-time long-term employment at a living wage. To better understand what contributes to achievement of self-sufficiency for County of Ventura WTW families, the target population is further divided into participants who successfully completed or are currently enrolled in a variety of employment services and job training programs. The target outcome for this project is self-sufficiency, operationalized as:

- Working in stable employment at a living wage
- Living in appropriate, affordable housing
- Maintaining food security
- Access to and utilization of affordable healthcare

Each of these indicators is also a driving factor in families moving up out of poverty. By achieving self-sufficiency through securing employment, housing, nutrition and health care, long-term pathways to upward social mobility are reinforced.

As part of the regular course of business, HSA records client needs and barriers, actions taken to resolve those challenges, and changes in the status of those issues. As applicable to each case, the short-term outcomes of interest are the initial acquisition of the self-sufficiency indicators. Long-term outcomes will look at the ability of families to maintain success in each of those areas beyond initial services with HSA. Initial employment is a critical measure of short-term success, with long-term, full-time, employment at a living wage supporting continued positive outcomes.

There is a direct economic impact for participating families as they gain self-sufficiency. Gainful employment obviously comes with improved socioeconomic standing. Research additionally demonstrates that children who are raised in poverty tend to live in poverty as adults. Through adult success in finding steady work at a living wage, the children also have improved odds of maintaining a stable income as adults. With reduced financial burden, families are also able to access additional educational and cultural experiences that were otherwise unaffordable. This contributes to a sense of overall wellness and connectedness to the community which in turn produce a social benefit not just for the participating families but also to local residents.

The proposed project will evaluate the impact of existing employment programs for the County of Ventura CalWORKs participants as they work towards self-sufficiency. A match of CalWORKs client data with larger federal datasets will provide the opportunity to analyze the relationship between successfully (or not successfully) completing an employment services program with individual, household and community variables and determining their impact on both short- and long-term self-sufficiency outcomes. Using historical data, the project will review outcomes for participants who completed employment preparation programs during the past three years through the end of the grant period. A review of the program outcomes will identify best practices for long-term success and provide opportunities to modify current programs to eliminate unsuccessful strategies. Research findings will be used in the development of targeted strategies for specific neighborhoods. Using Community-level data, such as ZIP code and Census tract information, will enable implementation that is tailored to specific communities.

The proposed project will provide access to longitudinal data that is currently not available under our existing sources. Current self-sufficiency related outcomes can only be measured for participants that remain active in the CalWORKs program or remain on aid. However, outcomes for participants that move out-of-state or become ineligible due to increased earnings are not able to be tracked and no longer known to the reporting systems. Additionally, any self-reported participant data gathered after exiting the CalWORKs

program is unreliable and not as accurate as data contained within federal data systems. Information gathered as a result of the proposed project will be immediately applied to current employment programs. Best practices and effective strategies will be immediately actionable to maximize the benefit to all CalWORKs participants.

### **Access to TANF and employment data**

The Human Services Agency is the sole entity responsible for the eligibility determination and distribution of benefits for the TANF program in Ventura County. This allows for full and unfettered access to both individual and case-level data including earned and unearned income, employment information such as employer name, pay frequency, start and end dates of jobs, and demographic information on all household members. All unemployed persons applying for aid must, as a condition of eligibility, apply for Unemployment Insurance Benefits. When the benefit is approved or denied by the Employment Development Department (EDD), the information is recorded in the eligibility determination system and electronic copies of proof of receipt or denial are stored in the e-case system. Additionally, HSA receives New Hire Reports that contain the hire date and name and address of employers of clients who obtain employment reported to EDD.

The County of Ventura is one of 18 California counties currently utilizing the CalWIN (California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids Information Network) system for benefit eligibility determination and employment services

case management. CalWIN allows near real-time access to the data that is captured and stored in the system. The CalWIN Consortium provides replicated data to our local reporting servers on a fifteen-minute cycle daily and we have a team of three technical report developers that have access to the reporting servers with the ability of creating both ad hoc reports and data views that support data visualizations utilized in our environment. We currently use Structured Query Language (SQL), Oracle Business Intelligence, and Microsoft Power Business Intelligence to create strategic and operational ad hoc reports and data visualization tools for our Agency.

HSA took a leadership role in the development of the CalWIN application and business intelligence tools that are in use by all 18 participating counties. In 2006 the Ventura County project leadership for the CalWIN application was honored by the Center for Digital Government with its prestigious "Best of California Award for Demonstrated Excellence in Project Delivery".

CalWORKs client information includes but is not limited to: demographics, household composition, employment and school data. This data is used to streamline and correctly issue monthly TANF and other benefits. The information is also used by Employment Services staff working with CalWORKs clients to provide the guidance and tools needed to acquire employment. The data in the system can be accessed at the individual or case level which allows identification of trends needed to positively drive business process changes that will result in improvement in service delivery to our families.

## **Demonstrated interest and commitment**

### Leadership commitment

HSA has several roles across departments that are dedicated full-time to the use of data to evaluate programs and many more positions that at least part-time are expected to collect, analyze, interpret, and report on data to better understand and improve specific business processes.

The County of Ventura adopted the Lean Six Sigma business methodology – a continuous process improvement approach which emphasizes data-driven strategies. HSA initiated improvement projects throughout all Agency departments including the CalWORKs program. For each Lean Six Sigma event, a member of the Executive Team is identified as a Sponsor to help ensure outcomes receives Agency support and a Deputy Director acts as a Champion to ensure immediate implementation of the new process.

Through stakeholder presentations and participation in community forums, HSA provides opportunities to develop a variety of projects that seek to improve resources for the community, inform current business practice and identify promising practices to improve well-being outcomes for families we serve.

HSA believes the sharing of information, within legal and ethical guidelines, fosters mutual understanding and partnerships to effect change. As appropriate, outcomes from the pilot will be made accessible through at least the following platforms:



- HSA public website (vchsa.org) - where other reports and data are posted as a part of routine business.
- HSA intranet – to educate staff across the agency on data-driven changes to core programs and inspire commitment to the implementation of new strategies.
- Stakeholder Presentations – to provide real-time communication and education to improve and increase upward social mobility opportunities.
- Community Stakeholder Groups where the public as well as leadership from County agencies, schools, cities and community-based organizations are present facilitated by the HSA Community Liaison and Communications Team.

Application of project results will extend beyond the conclusion of the award period by initiating further research and program improvement opportunities. Indicators identified as having the most influence on self-sufficiency outcomes will be studied in other community populations to develop self-sufficiency interventions that are most effective with other vulnerable populations. This includes, but is not limited to, ongoing data-sharing, program/regional partnerships and analysis with:

- Child Welfare Family Preservation team to share financial resource information as part of prevention/early intervention strategies intended to stabilize the home environment.

- Public Health Maternal, Child & Adolescent Health program to develop effective outreach and retention strategies for at-risk moms who could benefit from financial and employment support - especially young, single mothers who, according to research, face additional barriers to upward social mobility.
- County Welfare Directors Association to share best practices to support families transitioning to self-sufficiency.
- Southern Area Consortium of Human Services
- American Public Human Services Association
- CalWIN Consortium Counties to enable broad application in counties that provide similar resources to analogous populations

As part of a demonstration of our commitment to this project and data-driven efforts, staff communicated intent to apply for this pilot opportunity to the State and received support for going forward with the nomination.

#### Current uses of data

HSA has created both internal and external performance dashboards to display program data and community demographics. Interactive visualizations available on our HSA website (<https://www.ventura.org/human-services-agency/program-performance-data/>) support the review of program statistics across time. Additional visualizations and detailed reports are available to HSA staff via internal sharing and the HSA intranet. The work required as part of the TDC pilot opportunity will be distributed across a cross-functional team consisting

of CalWORKs/WTW case managers, business technology staff, and administrative analysts. See Attachment A for an example and walkthrough of the publicly available CalWORKs program data dashboard (<https://www.ventura.org/human-services-agency/calworks-data/>).

#### Members of pilot team

Members of the pilot team will be inter-disciplinary across technical, analytic, and TANF-related programmatic disciplines with representation from executive leadership and senior management. This cross-functional team will have the subject matter expertise necessary to participate in a meaningful way in pilot activities and have the required support from leadership to protect the team's time and support their efforts as a TDC pilot site. Specifically, the pilot team members will include the following roles:

- *Director of Ventura County Human Services Agency:* Acts as Sponsor for the pilot activities at the executive level and across the Agency; will help ensure the lessons learned and any scalable processes established through this pilot project have the support to be shared and implemented in other areas of the Agency.
- *Deputy Director for Adult and Family Services:* Acts as the Champion for pilot activities in the department where the local TANF program sits; will help ensure that barriers encountered by staff during the pilot project are addressed and removed appropriately and timely; lessons learned and scalable processes are shared throughout the department and with

partner agencies so they may be implemented in other settings to support data-driven decision-making.

- *CalWORKs/TANF Administrative Specialist*: Acts as the Pilot Coordinator and will be the primary point of contact for the project; as the local TANF administrator overseeing TANF policy and with operational familiarity with local TANF and employment data to manage TANF programs, will contribute subject matter expertise that helps guides and maximizes the utility of Pilot team's efforts. Participates in the Applied Data Analytics Training to increase the capacity for data-driven decision-making.
- *Employment Services Program Manager*: Acts as subject matter expert contributing information on how data is currently collected, both electronically and manually, how it is used now to inform employment services operations and business practices, and how data could be used in the future.
- *Analytical Support/Analyst*: Acts as a resource and support within the site team to define the data project scope, reporting, analysis, and evaluation. Collaborates with the Pilot Coordinator and other technical support staff to communicate findings and results of analyses to internal and external stakeholders. Participates in the Applied Data Analytics Training to provide analytical support and accomplish data projects.
- *Technical Support*: Acts as a resource and support within the site team to support the collection and pulling of data to make it available for analysis,

reporting, and evaluation. Collaborates with the Pilot Coordinator and Analysts to ensure the necessary and correct data are provided.

### **Current data analytic capacity**

#### Use of TANF data beyond compliance/reporting

TANF data is routinely used by CalWORKs management and staff to better understand the impact of programs and how to improve upon outcomes. A number of these efforts require manual collecting of data from narrative sources. Such efforts include:

- Creating profiles of what a typical caseload consists by looking at trends in demographics.
- Track Family Stabilization Data regarding Domestic Violence, Mental Health, Homelessness, Drug and Alcohol Abuse to understand what challenges exist for CalWORKs families and how they are being addressed.
- Appraisal and PrEP (Professional Employment Preparation) Attendance Rate for each office to determine how many clients, including those who are Sanctioned, show for their appointments. The PrEP program is a 4-week job readiness workshop that consists of career planning services to prepare individuals to enter the workforce. An offer to cure a sanction is made by attending their Appraisal Appointment and future attendance continues to be monitored.

- Referrals to Expanded Subsidized Employment that will provide participants an opportunity to utilize their job skills in current job openings that can result in full-time unsubsidized earnings potential.
- E2Lite Sample Analysis is performed on a random sample of cases pulled each month by the State of California that shows the current Work Participation Rate for each county. A review is completed of the sample to determine if participants met the federal required hours of participation for the month as well as, the type of activity. The results may allow us to make changes to our business process or enhance programs.
- Public Health Referrals report provides an overview of the type of Public Health services being provided to those currently enrolled in Family Stabilization services.
- The Weekly Contact Report provides data on the Employment Specialists' weekly contact with each participant to improve the chances of keeping clients on track and engaged with the WTW program.

Automated, interactive dashboards are also available to management to support their efforts of ongoing program improvement and evaluation. Data from CalWIN is visualized and displays participation engagement by population (ex. Families with a child under 6/over 6) over time.

**HSA looks forward to participating in the TDC Pilot Initiative and we thank you for your consideration.**

Sincerely,

County of Ventura Human Services Agency,

TANF Data Collaborative Pilot Initiative Site Team Applicants

**For additional information about this application, please contact:**

Delfina Bercerra, Administrative Specialist

County of Ventura Human Services Agency

855 Partridge Drive Ventura, California 93003

805-477-5357, [Delfina.Becerra@Ventura.org](mailto:Delfina.Becerra@Ventura.org)

## Attachment A

CalWORKs  
dashboard on  
vchsa.org\*

\* <https://www.ventura.org/human-services-agency/calworks-data/>



COUNTY OF VENTURA  
HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

Child/Adult Abuse & Neglect Hotline: (805) 654-3200

HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY ABOUT HSA HSA SERVICES HOW DO I? PARTNERS & PROVIDERS EVENT CALENDAR HSA ALERT CONTACT HSA

The **CalWORKs (California Work Opportunity & Responsibility to Kids)** program can provide cash assistance to families with children. Certain adults in the program are required to participate in welfare-to-work activities, such as looking for a job, attending job training, working, or furthering their education, which will improve their chances for long-term employment and self-sufficiency. CalWORKs employment specialists help parents develop and achieve career goals, and assist with child care referrals so parents can work. CalWORKs participants are automatically eligible for Medi-Cal and may qualify for CalFresh benefits.

Learn more about the program here: [CalWORKs](#)

In cases of a family emergency, such as no food, a medical emergency or facing homelessness, a household that is qualified for CalWORKs may be eligible to receive a special payment of up to \$200 for *Immediate Need* (learn more [here](#)).

The graph to the right shows both the total number of applications received by HSA and how many of those were submitted as *Immediate Need*.

The County provides a response to an *Immediate Need* application within one day. Other applications are processed within 45 days.

Note: Timeliness data is available from April 2016 to present.

CalWORKs participants who are not exempt participate in the Welfare-to-Work program. Participants work with an Employment Services worker to prepare for work and find a job, or a better job. Participants may be able to receive supportive services such as childcare, transportation, and work or training-related expenses.

The purpose of the Welfare-to-Work program is to support participants as they prepare for work and find a job so they can support themselves and their family.

### Welfare-to-Work Client Story

Ava is determined to make her own way to a better life for herself and three young kids. At 23 years old, she had not yet finished high school, did not have a car, and was unemployed. It only took two months of being enrolled in Welfare-to-Work for Ava to earn her high school diploma and take the next step towards long-term stability by joining the Job Readiness Program. With support from CalWORKs, Ava completed an Administrative Assistant Certificate and 90-day paid internship which helped her get driving lessons, a driver's license and buy her own car! Prepared to succeed, Ava found stable employment and is now pursuing an Associates of Science Degree. CalWORKs provided the support Ava needed to capitalize on her own motivation and strength to achieve her goals.

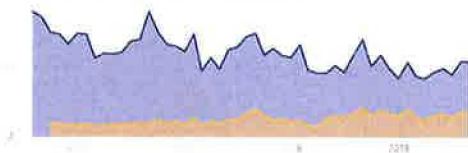
Learn more about earning a high school diploma and other adult education programs here: [Ventura Adult and Continuing Education](#)

Reporting Month (Type in the dates or move the brackets to select the time period)

7/31/2015 8/31/2019

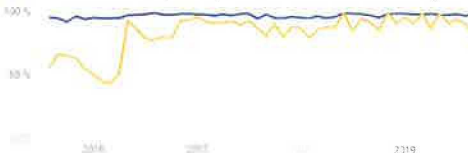
### Applications Received

Received Applications Total Immediate Need Applications Received



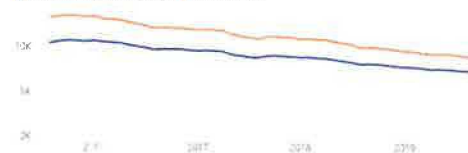
### Applications Processed Timely

% of Applications Processed Timely % of Applications with Immediate Need Processed Timely



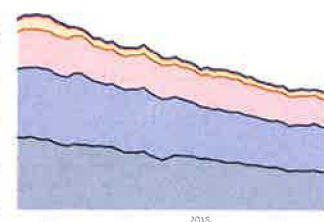
### Participants

Participants 17 years and younger Participants Total



### Welfare-to-Work

Registered  
Enrolled  
Sanction  
Noncompliance  
Caring Sanction  
Deferred Good Cause  
Post-Aid Services



2 people make up the average CalWORKs household

Each month the average household receives

\$521 in cash aid.





## Attachment A

### Walkthrough of dashboard: Examples of interactive features

#### Welfare-to-Work Client Story

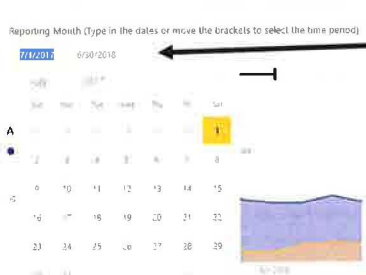
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Learn more about earning a high school diploma and other adult education programs here: [Ventura Adult and Continuing Education](#)



Hovering a computer mouse over parts of the graph will bring up detailed information about the data.

2 people make up the average CalWORKs household



Date ranges can be customized by the person viewing the visualization. Associated graphs will adjust on the fly.

Select the Program(s) you are interested in

CalWORKs

Select the Area(s) you are interested in

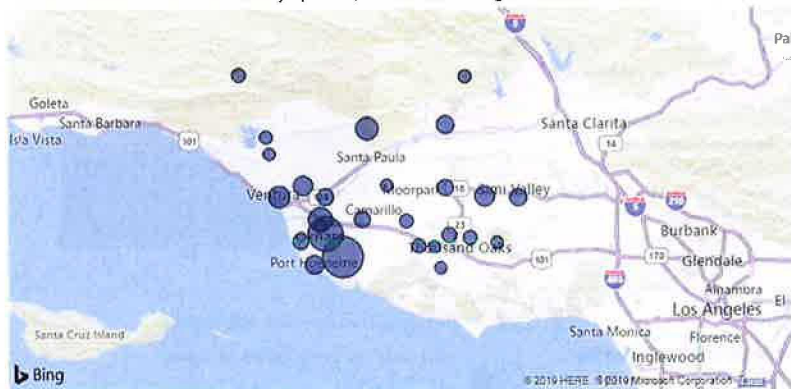
All

Drop down boxes allow easy and immediate filtering of visualizations to focus on subsets of data.

Reporting Month (Type in the dates or move the brackets to select the time period)

7/31/2015 8/31/2019

Count of cases for all months selected by zip code (Hover on a circle to get information about that area)



Maps can be zoomed in and out on to focus on particular areas. Hovering a mouse on presented data will bring up details.

This CalWORKs map is available at <https://www.ventura.org/human-services-agency/hsa-benefit-program-by-city-data/>