

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO



HHSA

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

**CALIFORNIA WORK OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO KIDS
(CALWORKS)
READY, SET, WORK! DIVERSION DEMONSTRATION PROJECT**

First Quarter Status Report
November 2010 – January 2011

March 22, 2011

**California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs)
Ready, Set, WORK (RSW!)
Diversion Demonstration Project**

Background

The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency's (HHSA) Ready, Set, WORK! CalWORKs Diversion Demonstration Project offers CalWORKs applicants an alternative to dependence on public assistance. It provides short term supportive services and intensive job search activities designed to move work-ready applicants into work.

In June 2008, the Board of Supervisors authorized the County to request a State waiver to pilot the Ready, Set, WORK! (RSW!) Diversion Demonstration Project.

On April 27, 2010, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) approved a three-year waiver for the County to pilot RSW!. The waiver allows RSW! to provide:

- Performance-based diversion payments to address an episode of need and to move recipients towards work. Traditional diversion payments are up-front, lump sum payments without incentives to get a job.
- Stage 1 Child Care to participate in RSW!. Stage 1 Child Care services are not available for traditional diversion participants.

Effective November 1, 2010, RSW! is being piloted for six months in the Northeast and North Inland Family Resource Centers (FRCs), located in the Central and North Inland Regions respectively. If successful, it will be extended through the end of the three-year waiver period ending in May 2013.

Eligibility staff from the Northeast and North Inland FRCs screen new CalWORKs applicants and refer them to Arbor Education & Training (E&T), the Welfare-to-Work (WTW) contractor for the Central and North Regions, for evaluation and enrollment into RSW! as appropriate. Arbor E&T has RSW! staff co-located in these two FRCs and provides the supportive services and intensive job search. Required activities include:

- RSW! Orientation
- RSW! Employment Preparation Classroom Curriculum
- RSW! Supervised Job Search

RSW! Objectives

There are two key objectives for RSW!:

- Diversion - Assist the most job-ready CalWORKs applicants to get a job and not enter the CalWORKs Program
- Employment - Provide intensive job search activities so work-ready adults are more likely to have increased advancement opportunities or full time employment

It is anticipated that RSW! participants will also:

- Find work more quickly and be less likely to need CalWORKs assistance
- Leave the program in better financial condition
- Not receive long-term CalWORKs benefits, resulting in cost savings to the County
- Be more likely to meet the County's federal Work Participant Rate (WPR) should they enter CalWORKs

Key Indicators of Performance

Applicants may volunteer to be screened for RSW! to evaluate work readiness and to detect barriers to employment; eligible candidates will be offered participation in RSW! in lieu of CalWORKs aid. RSW! will be evaluated to measure participants who successfully complete RSW! and participants who unsuccessfully leave RSW! based on the following performance indicators:

- Number of CalWORKs applicants during the demonstration period
- Number of applicants screened for RSW!
- Number of applicants offered RSW!
- Number applicants who enter RSW!
- Number of participants who successfully leave RSW! due to employment
- Number of RSW! participants with more employment hours at the end of the RSW! period, as compared to when they entered
- Number of RSW! employed full time (32 hours a week) as calculated by the state minimum wage
- Number of former RSW! participants in CalWORKs/WTW meeting the federal WPR
- Number of participants who leave RSW! due to unsuccessful completion of benchmark activities
- Number of participants who leave RSW! due to unsuccessful completion of benchmark activities and enter CalWORKs
- Number of participants who leave RSW! and enter CalWORKs within the RSW! period
- Number of employed participants who leave RSW! and enter CalWORKs
- Number of participants who leave RSW! and enter CalWORKs within 3, 6, 9 and 12 months
- Pre-RSW! and Post-RSW! participant surveys on the possible impact RSW! has on the participant's employability and family's financial situation
- Cost savings to County

Statistical Data

The following table provides a summary of various RSW! outcomes during the first three months of inception for both pilot FRCs combined:

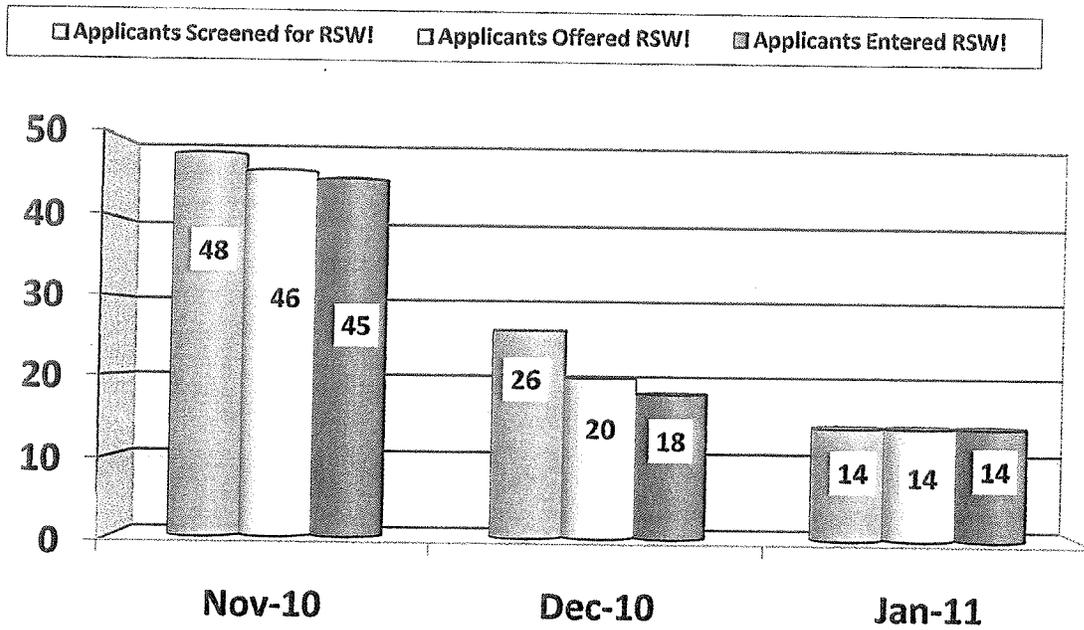
Data Element	November 2010	December 2010	January 2011	Total
Number of CalWORKs applicants during the reporting period	697	710	786	2,193
Number of applicants screened for RSW! ¹	48	26	14	88
Number of applicants offered RSW!	46	20	14	80
Number applicants who enter RSW!	45	18	14	77
Number of participants who successfully leave RSW! due to employment	0	0	0	0
Number of RSW! participants with more employment hours at the end of RSW! period as compared to when they entered	N/A ²	N/A ²	N/A ²	N/A ²
Number of RSW! employed full time (working at least 32 hours a week in the report month) as calculated by the state minimum wage	4	5	13	22
Number of RSW! employed part time (working 31 hours per week or less in the report month) as calculated by the state minimum wage	2	2	4	8
Number of former RSW! participants in CalWORKs/WTW meeting the federal WPR	N/A ³	N/A ³	N/A ³	N/A ³
Number of participants who leave RSW! due to unsuccessful completion of benchmark activities	2	3	8	13
Number of participants who leave RSW! due to unsuccessful completion of benchmark activities and enter CalWORKs	0	0	0	0
Number of participants who leave RSW! and enter CalWORKs within RSW! period	0	0	0	0
Number of employed participants who leave RSW! and enter CalWORKs	0	0	0	0
Number of participants who leave RSW! and enter CalWORKs within 3, 6, 9 and 12 months	0	0	0	0
Pre-RSW! and Post-RSW! participant surveys on the possible impact RSW! has on the participant's employability and family's financial situation	Pre: 40 Post: 0	Pre: 19 Post: 1	Pre: 14 Post: 7	Pre: 73 Post: 8
Cost savings to County	[Will be provided in final report]			

¹ Applicants may volunteer to be screened for RSW! to evaluate work readiness and to detect barriers to employment; eligible candidates are offered participation in RSW!.

² RSW! period for clients enrolled in 11/2010 is still in progress.

³ No former RSW! participants enrolled in CalWORKs/WTW during first 3 months of RSW!.

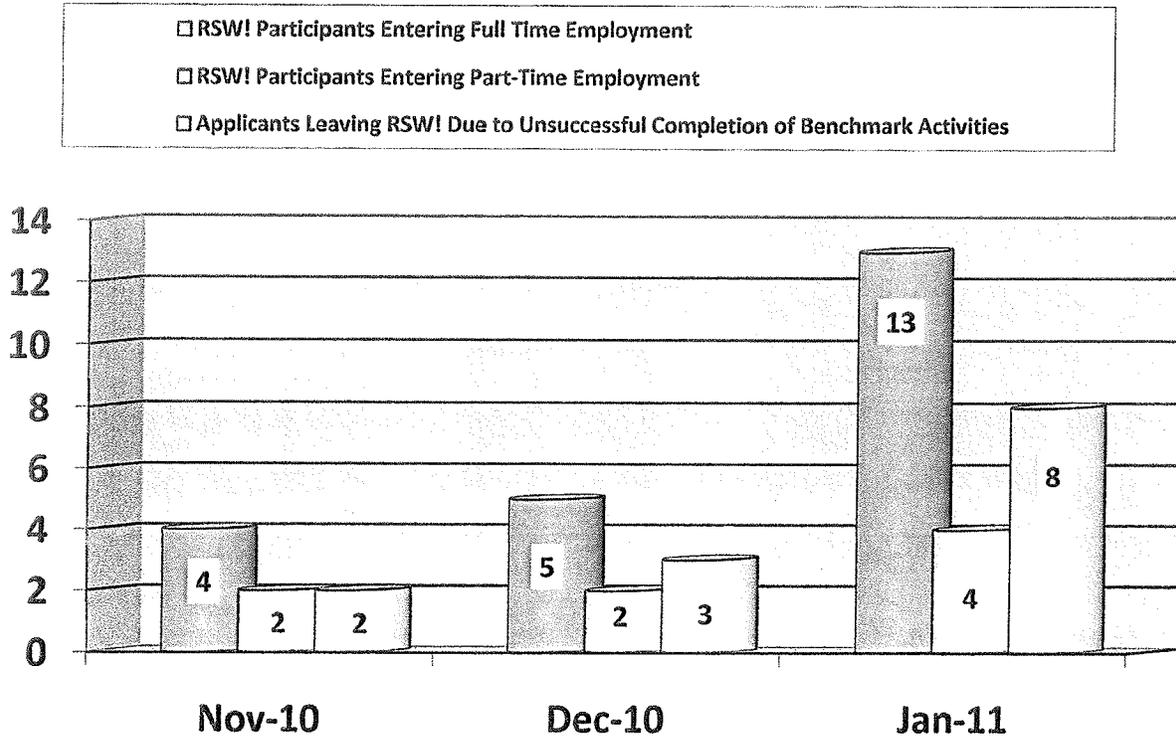
The following chart depicts the number of clients screened, offered and enrolled in RSW!:



Definitions:

- Screened for RSW! - Individuals identified by County eligibility staff as potential RSW! participants
- Offered RSW! - Individuals identified by Arbor E&T staff as eligible and offered enrollment in RSW!
- Entered RSW! - Individuals who chose to enroll in RSW!

The following chart depicts RSW! participants entering employment and exiting the program due to unsuccessful completion of required benchmark activities:



- RSW! participants obtained employment in the following local employment sectors:
 - Leisure and Hospitality (catering, housekeeper, card dealer)
 - Other Services (sales, cashier, customer service)
 - Construction (carpet technician, subcontractor)
 - Trade, Transportation and Utilities (maintenance, taxi driver)
 - Education and Health Services (care giver, instructional aide)
- The majority of participants who left RSW! did so due to failure to show to the required Orientation/Job Search classroom curriculum sessions, failure to participate in required Supervised Job Search activities and electing not to continue participating in the program.

Client Testimonials

RSW! participants have provided testimonials reflecting positive experiences with the program. Excerpts from these testimonials are as follows:

- "This program has helped me a lot...helped me to find a job again and become independent and be able to help my family again."
- "I didn't want to be on welfare and this was an alternative...I started my job search. Within the first hour after submitting my resumes I got a phone call for an interview...I went for my interview getting hired on the spot...With hard work and determination you can do the same."
- "I learned how to make an email address and also learned good tips for job interviews...I was also provided with childcare that helped out a lot. Me and my family were about to get evicted out of our home and RSW provided us with the money to move into a better home right away. RSW has been a big help to me and my family in several different ways."

Assessment and Overall Effectiveness - First Quarter

Findings for the first quarter, from 11/01/2010 to 01/31/2011, of the RSW! program indicate that:

- Screenings by eligibility staff at the Family Resource Centers are effectively identifying appropriate participants for RSW!
- Work-ready participants prefer the work supports and intensive job search activities provided by RSW! as an alternative to dependence on public assistance
- A significant number of participants became employed within the first three months of the program

These findings are significant given the high unemployment rates experienced in San Diego during the months of November 2010, December 2010, and January 2011 (10.4%, 10.6%, and 10.1% respectively). The following data illustrates these findings:

- 91 % (80 of 88) of the CalWORKs applicants referred by FRC staff to Arbor E&T Case Managers as potential RSW! candidates were identified as appropriate candidates with no significant barriers to employment
- 96% (77 of 80) of CalWORKs applicants who were offered the opportunity to participate in RSW! agreed to participate in lieu of receiving CalWORKs assistance
- 39% (30 of 77) of RSW! participants gained employment within the first three months of the program
 - 29% (22 of 77) of RSW! participants gained full time employment within the first three months of the program
 - 10% (8 of 77) of RSW! participants gained part time employment within the first three months of the program

- 17% (13 of 77) of RSW! participants were discontinued due to unsuccessful completion of benchmark activities within the first three months of the program
- 0% (0 of 13) of RSW! participants that left RSW! due to unsuccessful completion of benchmark activities reapplied for CalWORKs assistance during the first three months of the program
- 100% (77 of 77) of RSW! participants were diverted from the CalWORKs program during the first three months of the program

Best Practices

San Diego County HHSA and Arbor E&T staff identified various practices during the first three months of implementation that contributed to the effectiveness of RSW!. These included:

- Provision of comprehensive training to FRC and Arbor E&T staff through multiple training sessions to accommodate staff schedules
- Collaboration between CalWORKs Program staff and HHSA's training center, The Knowledge Center, to combine program and training expertise
- The co-location of Arbor E&T staff at participating FRCs fostered closer working relationships between County eligibility and contracted employment staff, enabled the warm hand-off of potential RSW! candidates, and thereby encouraged RSW! participation
- The relationships and collaborative processes that Arbor E&T developed with FRCs and One-Stop Career Centers aided in RSW! implementation
- Weekly status check conference calls between CalWORKs Program, FRCs and Arbor E&T during the first two months of implementation and monthly check-ins thereafter helped identify issues and best practices, as well as strengthen communication between all RSW! team members

Lessons Learned

The implementation of the RSW! program has been fairly smooth and very few issues have been encountered. Lessons learned during the first three months of implementation include:

- The RSW! screening process is very important, as clients with significant employment barriers, such as domestic violence, mental health, and alcohol or other drugs, are better served under the CalWORKs/MTW program, as RSW! is designed for the most work-ready participants
- The RSW! Discontinuance Notice of Action was revised to include discontinuance due to participant ineligibility resulting from improper RSW! evaluation or lack of client disclosure and to include information about recoupment of overpayments for participants who become noncompliant or are subsequently determined to be ineligible for RSW!

- The need for FRCs to continually refine their internal monitoring processes to ensure that CalWORKs applicants are screened for potential RSW! eligibility. FRCs have strengthened their methods for reconciling the number of daily CalWORKs intake appointments and the number of submitted RSW! referral forms.

Moving Forward

San Diego County will continue to pilot RSW!, monitor program performance measures and refine the program in the final quarter. Staff from the two participating FRCs and Arbor E&T will continue to work closely and promote RSW! as an alternate diversion program for appropriate work-ready applicants. A final program evaluation report will be produced in June 2011, following the completion of the six-month pilot period in May 2011.

