

## WELFARE-TO-WORK Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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### 1. WHAT IS WELFARE-TO-WORK (WTW)?

Welfare-to-Work is the Employment Program of the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids Program (CalWORKs). If you are a CalWORKs recipient and able-bodied, you must participate in WTW activities to continue to receive cash aid.

The Goal of WTW is to help you get the best job you can as soon as possible, and to keep that job!

### 2. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO BE REFERRED TO WELFARE-TO-WORK?

To be referred and participate in Welfare-to-Work is important because the law now limits the amount of time you can receive CalWORKs and requires that, while you are receiving cash aid, you must be either working or taking part in WTW activities every week. See weekly participation hour requirements listed in #6.

### 3. INTRODUCTION TO WELFARE REFORM AND WELFARE-TO-WORK

- The Federal Government has set its requirements for Welfare Reform:
- The new assistance program is called TANF, which means Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.
- TANF is **temporary**.
- Every state will have its own plan for TANF.
- California's Program is called CalWORKS (CW).

#### **4. WHAT ARE THE TIME LIMITS?**

- You can only receive cash aid in California for a total lifetime limit of 48 months;
- Effective January 1, 2013 a new 24-Month Time Clock has been created for Welfare-to-Work during which non-exempt CW recipients can participate in various work and education related activities and receive the necessary supportive services to become employed and self-sufficient. See #6.
- Once the WTW 24-Month Time Clock is exhausted, in order to continue receiving CalWORKs, WTW participants will be required to meet federal work standards. See #6

#### **5. THE COUNTY WILL DECIDE IF YOU MUST PARTICIPATE IN WELFARE-TO-WORK**

If you are a California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) recipient, and you are not exempt, you must take part in WTW.

##### **IF YOU ARE A MANDATORY PARTICIPANT, YOU ARE REQUIRED TO:**

- Keep appointments made by YOUR WTW case manager
- Not quit your job or lower your earnings
- Attend and take part in your WTW assignment
- Make satisfactory progress in your WTW assignment and provide proof of your progress when required

#### **6. WELFARE-TO-WORK PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS**

<b>WTW family type</b>	<b>During WTW 24-Month Time clock</b>	<b>After WTW 24-Month Time clock is exhausted</b>
Single parent with child under 6	20 hours no core activities	20 hours all 20 in core activities
Single parent with <u>no</u> child under 6	30 hours no core activities	30 hours, of which 20 in core activities
Two-parent families	Combined 35 hours, no core activities	Combined 35 hours, 30 in core activities
Two-parent families (with one parent disabled)	Non-disabled parent: 20 or 30 hours (depend on child's age) with no core activities	Non-disabled parent: 20 or 30 hours (depend on child's age), of which 20 in core activities

- You will be assigned each week WTW activities for the required 20/30/35 weekly hours, depending on your family type. See #6.
- If you get a job and are not working for your required weekly hours (20/30/35), you will be asked to add other WTW activities to make sure you are meeting your weekly participation requirements.
- A volunteer is someone who is exempt from participating in WTW and does not have to participate in WTW at this time, but wants to get a job and become self-sufficient

- Based on your circumstances, your case worker will determine if you qualify for any exemptions and will request you to provide supporting documentation

**When you start working**, you may be eligible for an Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). EITC is a tax credit for low income working families.

**When you get a fulltime job**, Welfare-to-Work will help you keep that job and, if you want, we will work with you to get a better job.

**In addition, CalWORKs requires you to:**

Support yourself and your family and take personal responsibility for yourself and your children by:

- Making sure your children have all their childhood immunizations
- Making sure your children go to school every day
- Maintaining a drug free home

## **7. WELFARE-TO-WORK ACTIVITIES**

As soon as your application for cash aid has been granted, you will be scheduled for a WTW Intake and Appraisal appointment. You are required to come to your WTW appointments.

During your Appraisal, your Employment Case Manager will look over the following areas:

- Your Work History and Education,
- Your Need for Supportive Services, and
- Other information to help you to develop your WTW plan

There are many paths open to WTW participants. Your path may not involve every activity in WTW because a lot depends on your education and job history. The purpose of Welfare-to-Work is to HELP YOU PREPARE FOR WORK AND FIND A JOB so that you can support yourself and your family.

A roadblock to success in getting a job and becoming self-sufficient is Substance Abuse. Earlier we talked about your Personal Responsibility to yourselves and your families. One of those responsibilities is maintaining a drug free home and this is a major part of CalWORKs and San Diego County's WTW Program.

At the Appraisal, you will be given a Simple Screening Instrument for Substance Abuse. This is an initial test or an indicator. You will talk to someone about the test results. Taking the test and being referred to someone who is an expert in this field **does not** mean you have a Substance Abuse Problem.

Also a Learning Disability screening tool is available to each participant to identify learning disability or other co-existing conditions (i.e substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, and other disabilities) and the need for related services.

### **EMPLOYER TAX CREDITS**

**Do you know that employers can receive federal or state tax credits when they hire WTW participants? Your WTW Employment Case Manager will tell you how these tax credits can help you get a job.**

WTW gets many calls from employers who have job openings, and want to hire Welfare-to-Work participants.

## **8. WELFARE TO WORK ENROLLMENT**

To complete your enrollment in WTW, you will need to complete the following forms:

- Personal Responsibility Agreement
- The Participant Profile, which is used to help match Welfare-to-Work participants to certain jobs based on work experience, skills, and abilities

Each participant will receive a Welfare-to-Work Handbook which explains your Responsibilities and Rights while you are a participant in the Welfare-to-Work Program. Make sure you read all parts of the handbook so that you understand the program.

If you have any questions, please ask us to explain.

Welfare-to-Work is the program that will give you the tools you need to become self-sufficient through employment.

It will be your choice on how well you do. You now have Choices and Responsibilities.

One of those responsibilities is that you will attend and participate in your Welfare-to-Work assignment. If you don't do what you agree to do, there are consequences and you can lose your cash aid.

## **9. WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DO NOT PARTICIPATE?**

If for any reason, you do not do what Welfare-to-Work requires, the following steps will be taken:

- You have the chance to explain why you did not meet WTW requirements. The county will decide if you had a good reason.
- Your family's cash aid will be lowered if:
  - You fail or refuse to meet WTW requirements without a good reason, and
  - You do not resolve the problem by signing and completing a plan to do what you are required.

If your family is a two-parent family getting cash aid, there are special rules for financial sanctions.

When a parent who must participate in WTW, does not participate and causes a financial sanction, both parents will lose their cash aid.

- The parent who did not cause the sanction can keep his or her cash aid if he or she takes part in W2W, is exempt, or has good cause for not participating.

### **SANCTIONS**

- If you are sanctioned, your family's cash aid will be lowered until you do what WTW requires.
- If you are sanctioned, you may cure your sanction at any time, regardless of the number of times you have been sanctioned.
- You may contact a WTW office and request to cure your sanction without having to wait a minimum sanction period.

If you do not agree with the county's decisions regarding your WTW requirements, you have the right to a State Hearing or Formal Grievance.

## **10. SUPPORTIVE SERVICES**

When you are enrolled in Welfare-to-Work, you are eligible for assistance with Welfare-to-Work related support services, such as transportation, child care, and other expenses.

### **Child Care**

Immediately following your WTW Intake Appraisal, you will begin your participation in CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Activities for your required hours (20/30/35) per week.

You have the freedom to choose your own child care provider. If you are unable to find a child care provider, help is available by calling:

- YMCA Childcare Resource Service at 1-800-481-2151

When you call, you will be given phone numbers for licensed child centers and family day care homes. This is a referral service only. You will need to discuss your child care plans when you meet with your Employment Case Manager.

**NOW IS THE TIME TO PLAN FOR YOUR FUTURE.  
IF YOU WAIT, IT WILL BE TOO LATE.**