

**County of Orange Social Services Agency
Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services Division**

Program/Area: CalWORKs/Welfare-To-Work
Title: Independent Job Search (IJS)
Number: 226
Effective Date: 6/1/2009
Approved: Signature on file

Status: Approved
Revision Date: 09/16/2022

PURPOSE

This policy provides guidelines for Case Managers (CM) to monitor participant's monthly participation when assigning Independent Job Search (IJS) as a Welfare-to-Work (WTW) activity.

INDEPENDENT JOB SEARCH ACTIVITY

IJS is a pre- or post-assessment activity. Participants assigned to IJS should be job ready; have experience interviewing; have previous work experience in their career; and can independently search and apply for job openings. The participants will independently search for job openings and complete a pre-determined number of employer contacts and job applications each day. The pre-determined minimum number of contacts and applications are:

- Three (3) employer contacts and submit at least one (1) application on days they attend a concurrent WTW activity, or
- Five (5) employer contacts and submit at least three (3) applications on days when they do not attend a concurrent WTW activity

Participants assigned to IJS are limited to four (4) consecutive weeks but may be extended by the Case Manager (CM) up to a maximum of six (6) weeks in a 12-month period. There must be a one-week break prior to the start of an extension.

After the participant has completed four (4) consecutive weeks of IJS without obtaining unsubsidized employment, the CM shall consider referring the participant to [Assessment](#) in week five (5) in conjunction with the IJS activity.

Note: If the participant has completed four (4) consecutive weeks of IJS, received a Vocational Assessment, engaged in post-Assessment activities ([Refer to WT 86 - OC CalWORKs WTW Program Flowchart](#)), and yet has still not obtained full-time unsubsidized employment, they can be referred back to IJS or other job search activities.

SHORTENING OF IJS

Four (4) weeks of IJS may be shortened for the participant when:

- IJS will interfere with participation in an approved educational activity (i.e., Self-Initiated Program (SIP), Vocational Training and Education, Adult Basic Education (ABE), English-as-Second Language (ESL))

- The participant will not benefit because they may suffer from an emotional/mental disability or substance use that will limit or preclude participation
 - A referral to [Behavioral Health Services](#), Intervention Services/[Family Stabilization](#), and/or an evaluation for a [WTW Exemption](#) would be either a concurrent, or an alternative activity for these cases
- It is determined by the CM that the participant would not benefit from participation in IJS and needs another activity instead

IJS VS. JOB SEARCH AND JOB READINESS ASSISTANCE (JSR)

IJS is a WTW activity intended for participants who need additional hours to meet their hourly work participation requirement, experience a break between activities, or are scheduled to begin an activity which is pending and need a short-term activity until the pending activity starts.

The participant should be referred to JSR instead of IJS if they can benefit from motivational workshops and/or guidance on conducting an effective job search and interview skills to obtain employment.

Refer to [Policy 204 - Job Search and Job Readiness Assistance](#) for additional information.

WTW PLAN

The determination of whether a WTW Plan will need to be signed depends on when the IJS activity will begin.

The WTW Plan may be signed up to 90 days after the completion of IJS if IJS is initiated within 30 days after the date that the individual's eligibility for aid is determined, or the date the participant is required to participate in WTW activities.

If IJS is initiated 30 days after the approval of aid, the participant would be required to sign a WTW Plan within 90 days from the date the individual's eligibility for aid was determined or the date the participant was required to participate in WTW activities.

Example: An individual is determined eligible to CalWORKs on December 1st and attends JSR from December 29th through January 26th. The county has up to 90 days from January 27th to develop, and have the individual sign, a WTW plan.

Refer to [Policy 211 - Welfare-to-Work Plan](#) for additional information.

JOB SEARCH PLAN AND WEEKLY IJS REPORT

The CM is responsible for working collaboratively with the participant to develop a [Welfare-to-Work Independent Job Search Plan \(F063-41-89\)](#). The CM will:

1. Develop an IJS Plan ([F063-41-89](#)) that is based on the participant's previous job search activities, assessment (if applicable), education/training, interests, employment goals, and any other available information, including information noted in the Appraisal Summary and Recommendations (ASR) Report from

the Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool (OCAT). The WTW IJS Plan will include:

- Additional job search skills, training and/or counseling, which the participant needs in order to obtain employment, including development of a current master job application and resume
 - Employment goals and objectives, and targeted completion dates, including specific assignments that will assist the participant in fully utilizing the IJS activity
 - Scheduled dates and times for the weekly meetings with the CM for the duration of the IJS activity. Refer to the Weekly Appointments section of this policy for additional information
2. Provide the participant with a [Weekly Independent Job Search Report \(F063-41-26\)](#), review the form's purpose and use, and instruct the participant to submit the form on a weekly basis. Ensure that the participant understands the importance of completing the form and accurately documenting job search efforts. The form will be reviewed and used:
- To verify the required number of employer contacts have been made and that the information on the report supports the number claimed
 - As a tool to generate discussion about job search efforts, strategies, and employment opportunities
 - To document required participation hours and compliance with their signed WTW Plan if applicable
3. Discuss the participant's responsibilities which include approaching potential employers without a scheduled appointment, attending scheduled job interviews, appropriately following-up with employer contacts (i.e., sending resumes with cover letters), and notifying the CM immediately when they secure employment.

Note: Evaluate if the participant's Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool (OCAT) needs to be updated to determine if possible unidentified barriers may have prevented successful completion and to assist in evaluating the next WTW activity assignment. Refer to [Policy 201 Appraisal](#) for more information.

CM RESPONSIBILITIES

The CM will meet with the participant to discuss the IJS activity. During the discussion the CM will:

1. Explain the purpose and benefits of the IJS activity and obtaining unsubsidized employment to ensure it is the appropriate activity for the participant
2. Inform the participant they are expected to treat the IJS assignment as a job, adhere to assigned participation hours agreed upon in their WTW Plan, and accept any job offer(s)

3. Explain if unsubsidized employment is not obtained during the four weeks of IJS, they may be referred to Assessment, if appropriate, in week five concurrently with the IJS activity
4. Review the participant's assessment results, if available
5. Provide the [Work Opportunity Tax Credit \(WOTC\)](#) information to the participant if it was not provided during Appraisal, completion of SIP, or after a significant lapse of time from the last evaluation
6. Ensure the participant possesses a government issued identification based on [I-9 Required Documents](#) (generally a picture I.D. and original Social Security Card)
7. Collaborate with the participant to develop the IJS Plan ([F063-41-89](#)) and explain the requirements of the Weekly IJS Report ([F063-41-26](#))
8. Provide copies of the signed IJS Plan and Weekly IJS Report to the participant and virtually print into OnBase. Refer to [Filing Guide Database-Master List Table](#)
9. Complete a WTW Plan, if applicable, indicating IJS and any concurrent activities, required participation hours, and all identified supportive services
10. Refer the participant to One-Stop Centers, Resource Rooms, and other resources that could assist in locating appropriate job openings and employment opportunities
11. Evaluate the need for [Employment Support Services](#) needs (i.e., professional clothing, transportation, etc.) to be provided through the Contractor
12. Review and respond to the participant's Supportive Services needs. Communicate and make supportive services referrals to the Employment and Eligibility Specialist (EES) as needed. Refer to [Policy 301 - CalWORKs Child Care Program](#), [Policy 310 - Transportation Supportive Services](#), and [Policy 315 - Ancillary Supportive Services for more information on Supportive Services](#)
13. Enter IJS and any other activities attendance hours in CalWIN
14. Monitor the participant's attendance, progress, and potential barriers to successful completion of the assigned IJS activity
15. Conduct phone, virtual or in-person weekly appointments with the participant to follow-up on their job search progress
16. Update Case Comments

**WEEKLY
APPOINTMENT**

During weekly appointments, the CM and participant will collaboratively:

1. Review the [Weekly Independent Job Search Report \(F063-41-26\)](#) to verify the participant is completing the required number of employer contacts and

job applications, and meeting participation hours agreed upon in their WTW Plan

Note: CM will evaluate for Good Cause before initiating noncompliance if the participant fails or refuses to comply with the requirements of the IJS activity. Refer to [Policy 240 - Noncompliance Process](#) for more information

2. Discuss the participant's job-search strategies, decision-making, and potential barriers affecting the participant's achievement of their employment goals
3. Confirm supportive service needs are being met
4. Verify accuracy of hours reported by the participant on the Weekly IJS Report ([F063-41-26](#)). Note: [WT 88 - IJS Calculator](#) is an optional tool CMs may use to verify and calculate hours
5. Image the Weekly IJS Report form into OnBase. Refer to [Filing Guide Database- Master List Table](#)
6. Update Case Comments

COMPLETION OF IJS IJS activity ends when the participant obtains employment; when the IJS activity concludes; or when the participant has reached the maximum six (6) weeks in a 12-month period time limit.

REFERENCES [EAS Manual 42-711.53](#)
[Policy 100-F-1 -Welfare-to-Work Exemptions](#)
[Policy 201- Appraisal](#)
[Policy 201A - Work Opportunity Tax Credit](#)
[Policy 204 – Job Search and Job Readiness Assistance](#)
[Policy 210 - Assessment](#)
[Policy 211 – Welfare-to-Work Plan](#)
[Policy 240 - Noncompliance Process](#)
[Policy 272 – Employment Support Services](#)
[Policy 301 – CalWORKs Child Care Program](#)
[Policy 310 – Transportation Supportive Services](#)
[Policy 315 - Ancillary Supportive Services](#)
[Policy 401 - Behavioral Health Services](#)
[Policy 407 – Family Stabilization Program](#)

ATTACHMENTS [I-9 Required Documents](#)
[WT 86 - OC CalWORKs WTW Program Flowchart](#)
[WT 88 – IJS Calculator](#)

FORMS

[Weekly Independent Job Search Report \(F063-41-26\)](#)

[Welfare-to-Work Independent Job Search Plan \(F063-41-89\)](#)

OCCSSA