

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

Program/Area: CalWORKS/Welfare-To-Work
Title: Subsidized Employment Programs
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PURPOSE This policy provides an overview of the Subsidized Employment Programs to assist Case Managers (CMs) in developing Welfare-to-Work (WTW) Plans that support participants in gaining employment experience while earning subsidized wages.

SUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT Subsidized Employment (SE) is a post-assessment WTW activity that provides a paid employment opportunity in which the participant's partial or full wages and/or training costs are reimbursed to employers through a government subsidy. Orange County has a contracted provider to administer the SE activities.

The goal of SE is to provide participants with marketable job experience and job skills that lead to long-term self-sufficient employment. Through placements in private, public, and non-profit organizations, participants gain paid work experience, develop valuable workplace competencies, and build a professional network. This opportunity not only provides immediate access to employment and earnings but also enhances employability and career prospects beyond the subsidized employment period.

- Private – For-profit privately-owned businesses, including retail, manufacturing, and private counseling (e.g., Target, Western Dental & Orthodontics, Pep Boys Auto Services & Tires)
- Public – Government jobs (e.g., Social Services Agency, Health Care Agency, Community Resources, Waste and Recycling, Public Works, Parks)
- Non-Profit – Includes community based, faith-based, not-for-profit, and charitable organizations (e.g., American Red Cross, The Salvation Army, YMCA, Habitat for Humanity, Boys & Girls Club of America)

Public Subsidized Employment Program (PSEP) and Work Experience (WEX) are the two programs offered under SE. Both programs offer subsidized paid employment opportunities. However, WEX focuses on placements within the private sector, while PSEP provides opportunities in public sector worksites.

At the end of the activity, it is expected that the worksite employer will hire the participant into unsubsidized employment as a regular employee. The contractor will assist the participant with job search for unsubsidized employment if the participant is not hired by the worksite employer at the end of the subsidized

employment period. The job search period for PSEP participants is **60 days** and for WEX participants is **30 days**.

Refer to Worker Tool (WT) 42 – Subsidized Employment Programs Comparison Chart, which outlines similarities and differences between the programs and Worker Tool (WT) 90 – CalSAWS Activities for additional information on entering WTW activities in CalSAWS.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Participants to be referred to SE include those who:

- Are WTW mandatory or voluntary participants.
- Have sufficient Time on Aid (TOA) of six (6) months
- Have not exceeded the 52-week cumulative SE lifetime limit
- Have not secured unsubsidized employment that meets the minimum required hours of WTW participation
- Completed the Assessment and are deemed suitable for the activity based on the assessment results
- Are job-ready and have original I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification documents
- Have supportive services in place
- Are ready to start **within three (3) business days** from the referral date
- Have not been previously terminated from the SE program for non-attendance, misconduct, or performance issues

TIME LIMIT

Participation in SE is limited to a lifetime maximum of 52 weeks. Initial placement is six (6) months with the option of two (2) extensions that can be utilized in three (3) month increments.

Participant will participate in a pre-placement activity provided by the contractor prior to being placed or starting the program. Pre-placement activity hours will be granted for participation prior to being placed at the worksite.

- Pre-placement activity hours **do not count** towards the SE time limit.
- SE 52-week time limit count begins when the participant is placed and starts at a worksite.

Extensions

When a participant completes their initial SE assignment and has not reached the maximum SE 52-week time limit, the CM will evaluate if an extension would increase their opportunity to obtain unsubsidized employment.

CM grants up to two (2) additional three-month extensions when the participant meets all requirements:

- Has not exceeded the SE time limit.
- Has sufficient TOA remaining to participate in SE extension.
- Will be more likely to obtain unsubsidized employment with the additional experience gained through the extension.

- Will obtain specific skills and experience relevant for unsubsidized employment in a particular field.

When all requirements are met and the SE extension is approved, the CM will:

- Complete a new WTW plan.
- Notify the contractor that the SE extension has been granted with the new End Date.
- Complete a CalSAWS Journal Entry to justify the SE activity extension, and whether it is a first or second extension approval.

When the SE extension request is denied, the CM will:

- Collaborate with the participant to determine another appropriate activity.
- Notify the contractor of the extension request's outcome.
- Complete a CalSAWS Journal Entry to document extension denial.

REFERRAL PROCESS

When it is determined that the participant meets the eligibility criteria for SE activities, the CM will:

- Consult with the participant to determine which Contracted Provider location is most convenient for the participant.
- Complete *Sections I, II, and III* of the Referral to Contracted Provider for Vocational Training and/or Subsidized Employment Programs - F063-41-322.
 - Attach the “*Assessment Test Results and Interpretation*” section of the Employment Readiness Assessment (ERA) report and send it via secure email to the contractor.
- Provide a copy of the referral form to the participant.
- Image all documents to Hyland Perceptive Experience (HPE).
- Complete a CalSAWS Journal Entry indicating referral criteria was met and referral sent along with the ERA report.

CASE MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES

The CM will:

- Review SE benefits with the participant, including the differences in the private vs public sector.
- Ensure participant meets all eligibility criteria in the [Eligibility Criteria](#) section.
- Ensure participant is ready and able to attend a SE orientation **within three (3) business days** of sending the referral and begin the program once orientation is completed.
- Enter appropriate SE activity in CalSAWS.
- Send the Referral to Contracted Provider for Vocational Training and/or Subsidized Employment Programs - F063-41-322.
 - Attach a copy of the assessment results with the referral when submitting the referral to the contractor.
- Upon receipt of the VT/PSEP/WEX Attendance Report – F063-41-380:
 - Enter attendance hours in CalSAWS

- Image attendance report in HPE
- Complete a CalSAWS Journal Entry to document any pre-placement hours, activity hours, and SE weeks used and remaining.
- **Within 1 business day** of contractor contacting CM regarding barriers or attendance/progress issues, the CM will:
 - Collaborate with contractor to resolve barrier issues
 - Evaluate for Good Cause (GC)
 - If no GC exists, request the case to be returned and initiate noncompliance process.
 - Initiate noncompliance process for cases returned due to no show, attendance, termination, or misconduct issues.
- Coordinate with the contractor to:
 - Assist participants with resolving issues as they arise.
 - Ensure participants are attending as required
 - Report any participation changes
- Evaluate and determine if an SE extension is appropriate, following guidelines in the [Time Limit](#) section above.
- Collaborate with the participant and the contractor at least two weeks prior to the current SE assignment end date.
- Provide at least **two-week notification** to the contractor when a CalWORKs case is scheduled to close. CM will:
 - Notify the participant of the activity ending earlier than expected.
 - Request the participant to be returned to CM.
 - Close SE activity in CalSAWS.
 - Complete a CalSAWS Journal Entry to document the two-week notification to the contractor, return of the participant to CM request, and actions taken to close the activity in CalSAWS.
- CM must immediately notify the contractor when a participant reports an injury that occurred during the SE activity.

CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Contractor will:

- Screen referral for completeness, ensure the referred participant has not reached the SE time limit, and that supportive services are in place.
- Determine if the referral is valid or if the participant is not suitable for the program **within two (2) business days from the referral date** to return the referral to CM.
- Engage the participant immediately upon receipt of referral.
- Provide one-on-one SE orientation **within three (3) business days from referral date.**
- Offer workplace and Employment Readiness workshops to participants during the pre-placement period.
- Introduce participants to employers and schedule job interviews.
- **Within 14 business days from referral date:**
 - Update CM on referral status by filling out *Section IV-Contractor Response* on the SE referral form F063-41-322.

- Contact CM to inform on SE program placement and proposed start and end date.
 - Complete a CalSAWS Journal Entry to document referral status.
- Contact FSS-AS Operations and Policy Team (OPT) **by the 30th calendar day** if the participant **has not been placed** to request approval for the participant to continue in the SE program.
- Ensure pre-placement hours are not counted towards SE 52-week time limit.
- Identify and resolve barriers and/or attendance issues and inform CM **within one (1) business day of discovery**.
- Contractor will contact CM to determine if:
 - Good Cause (GC) exists, or
 - GC does not exist; the participant will be returned to CM for noncompliance.
- Report pre-placement hours, placement hours, and SE time limit used and remaining to CM via the VT/PSEP/WEX Attendance Report – F063-41-380 **by the 10th calendar day of the following month**.
- Communicate with the participant every **two (2) weeks**, or more as needed, to monitor and document participants' progress. Communication should include, but not be limited to:
 - Tracking progress and reviewing attendance records to ensure the participant is actively participating.
 - Additional training needs.
 - Identifying and addressing participation barriers to successfully complete the SE program.
- Assist participant during job search to obtain unsubsidized employment **within 30 days for WEX and 60 days for PSEP** if the worksite employer did not hire the participant.

CALWORKS CASE CLOSURE - DUE TO SE INCOME

When the CalWORKs case closes due to overincome caused by SE income, the participant may continue in SE placement until the end of the approved placement period.

The CM will notify the contractor that the case is closing and to send the VT/PSEP/WEX Attendance Report – F063-41-380 to OPT.

OPT SSSI will:

- Complete a CalSAWS Journal Entry to document activity hours, and SE weeks used and remaining.
- Image attendance report form F063-41-380 into HPE.

REFERENCES

- Policy 200 – WTW Program Overview, Activities and Participation
- Policy 210 – Assessment
- Policy 211 – Welfare-To-Work Plan
- Policy 240 - Noncompliance
- Policy 301 – CalWORKs Stage One Child Care Program
- Policy 310 – Transportation Supportive Services
- Policy 315 – Ancillary Supportive Services

ATTACHMENTS

- Referral to Contracted Provider for Vocational Training and/or Subsidized Employment Programs – F063-41-322
- VT/PSEP/WEX Attendance Report – F063-41-380
- WT 42 – Subsidized Employment Programs Comparison Chart
- WT 90 – CalSAWS Activities