

County of Orange Social Services Agency  
Family Self-Sufficiency Division

Program/Area: CalWORKs/Welfare to Work  
Title: **Work Participation Hours and Activities**  
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**Approved:**

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**PURPOSE** This policy outlines work participation hours and activities an individual must engage in to meet the requirements of CalWORKs minimum standards (Welfare-to-Work 24-Month Time Clock), and CalWORKs federal standards.

Case Managers (CMs) are responsible for engaging CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work (WTW) participants in allowable activities, verifying that the individual is meeting required weekly hours of participation, and recording work participation hours in CalWIN case comments and Employment Services.

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**INFORMING REQUIREMENTS** When an individual applies for aid, or when a recipient's eligibility is re-determined, the CM will provide and review with the individual a copy of the [F063-41-216 Important Information About Your Welfare-to-Work Activities](#) which describes federal core and non-core activities.

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**DETERMINING ACTIVITIES AND PARTICIPATION HOURS** Determination of appropriate WTW activities will be based on the Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool (OCAT) and/or Assessment results and mutual agreement between the CM and the participant to address participation barriers. Refer to [Policy 210 Assessment](#) for information about clients who are not required to attend an assessment.

For families experiencing a crisis or situation that destabilizes the family and impairs a participant's ability to meet WTW participation requirements, the CM shall inform the applicant or recipient that short term Family Stabilization services are available to ensure a basic level of stability within a family prior to, or concurrently with, participation in WTW activities. Refer to [Policy 407 Family Stabilization](#) for more information.

Appropriate and timely referrals to Behavioral Health and Domestic Abuse programs must be processed. When these types of service needs are identified, the CM must work with the

service provider and participant to establish mutually agreed-upon WTW activities and participation hours that will count toward the mandated weekly requirement. Refer to [Policy 401 Behavioral Health Services](#) and [Policy 402 Domestic Abuse](#) for more information.

When working with WTW participants, the CM shall reinforce the concept of self-sufficiency, and enroll each individual in WTW activities appropriate to meeting his/her participation goals. Supportive service needs must be evaluated, addressed, and continuously monitored to ensure the individual's successful participation in his/her assigned activity. Refer to [Policy 315 Ancillary Supportive Services](#), [Policy 301 Child Care Eligibility](#), and [Policy 310 Transportation Supportive Services](#) for more information.

CMs have many choices when helping participants determine appropriate WTW activities. The hours of participation and choice to participate in CalWORKs federal standards or utilize months from his/her WTW 24-Month Time Clock to address barriers is documented on the [WTW 2](#) Welfare-to-Work Plan Activity Assignment.

Refer to [Policy 211 Welfare-to-Work Plan](#) and [Policy 201 Appraisal/Re-Appraisal](#) for additional information.

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## **HOURLY PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS**

Mandatory CalWORKs/WTW participants are required to participate in approved WTW activities. Effective July 1, 2014, CalWORKs hourly participation requirements are determined by an average per week during the month and are aligned with TANF federal hourly participation requirements as follows:

- A minimum average of 20 hours per week for single parents with a child under six years old,
- A minimum average of 30 hours per week for single parents without a child under six years old,
- A minimum average of 35 hours per week for two-parent families. Both parents in a two-parent family may contribute toward the weekly 35-hours requirement.

The only exception is when the participant is an exempt volunteer. Hourly participation requirements do not apply to exempt volunteers. Refer to [Policy 100-F1 WTW Exemptions](#) for more information.

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**CALWORKS  
MINIMUM  
STANDARD (WTW  
24-MONTH TIME  
CLOCK)/CALWORK  
S FEDERAL  
STANDARDS  
OVERVIEW**

CalWORKs Minimum Standard (WTW 24-Month Time Clock)

To meet CalWORKs minimum standard participation requirements, adults in a single-parent Assistance Unit (AU) are required to participate in WTW activities for a minimum average of 20 or 30 hour per week, depending on the age(s) of the child(ren). Adults in two-parent AUs, where neither adult is disabled, are required to participate a minimum average of 35 hours per week.

CalWORKs Federal Standards

To meet CalWORKs federal standards and have months not count toward the WTW 24-Month Time Clock, adults have to meet the same minimum average participation requirements (20/30/35), as well as a minimum core requirement average of 20 hours per week for single-parent AUs and an average of 30 hours per week for two-parent AUs where neither adult is disabled.

[Worker Tool 44](#) Hourly Participation Requirements for CalWORKs Families summarizes the average number of hours per week a CalWORKs family is required to participate in WTW activities.

For additional information about federal participation requirements and the WTW 24-Month Time Clock refer to [Policy 203 Work Participation – Federal Review Process](#) and [Policy 207 WTW 24-Month Time Clock](#)

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**WELFARE TO  
WORK  
PARTICIPATION  
SCENARIOS**

Single-Parent AU with Excluded Second Parent in the Home

An AU in which two natural or adoptive parents are living in the home, where one is aided and the other is ineligible (such as ineligible undocumented noncitizen or fleeing felon) is considered a single-parent AU for determining CalWORKs minimum standard participation requirements during the WTW 24-month Time Clock period.

- If the AU includes a child under six, the participation requirement is an average of 20 hours per week when using the WTW 24-Month Time Clock
- If the AU does not include a child under six, the participation requirement is an average of 30 hours per week.

In order to meet CalWORKs federal standards, aided parents in a

single-parent AU who live with an unaided parent must participate an average of 30 hours per week, of which an average of 20 hours per week must be in core activities.

#### Single-Parent AU with a Second Timed Out Parent in the Home

In cases where one parent is timed out and the other parent remains in the AU and continues to receive cash aid, the parent remaining in the AU must meet the CalWORKs 35-hours per week requirement.

Whether the parent remaining in the AU utilizes the WTW 24-Month Time Clock or meets the CalWORKs federal standard, he or she must participate a minimum average of 35 hours per week to comply with the CalWORKs minimum participation requirement for a two-parent AU.

Note: If verified documentation is received showing the timed out parent is working or otherwise involved in a federally allowable activity, the hours must be combined with the aided parent's participation hours solely to determine if CalWORKs federal standards are met and have months not count toward the aided parent's WTW 24-Month Time Clock.

#### Families with an Aided Parent and a Sanctioned or Removed from Aid Parent Living in the Home

When one parent in a two-parent AU is sanctioned/removed from aid, the aided parent must participate to meet the minimum average 35-hour per week requirement alone, or be subject to his or her own WTW sanction/removal from aid. A CalWORKs client in good standing may not combine hours with a sanctioned/removed from aid parent to meet CalWORKs federal standards, unless the sanctioned/removed from aid parent enters into a plan to cure the sanction/removal from aid and he or she successfully completes the plan. If the plan is completed, hours in the plan would be combined with hours of the parent in good standing for purposes of meeting CalWORKs federal standards only. Once the sanction/removal from aid is cured, the parents may combine participation hours to meet the CalWORKs minimum standard or CalWORKs federal standard participation requirements.

#### Two-Parent AUs

Families that include two aided natural or adoptive parents are considered to be two-parent AUs, in which the adults may be

required to participate an average of 35 hours per week to comply with CalWORKs participation requirements. The 35 hours may be shared between the two aided parents. To meet CalWORKs federal standards and have months not count toward the WTW 24-month Time Clock, aided parents living in a two-parent AU must participate an average of 35 hours per week, of which an average of 30 must be in core activities. There is no minimum number of core hours that one parent must fulfill when sharing hours.

In a two-parent AU that includes a parent who is exempt for a reason other than a disability, the 35-hour participation requirement can be shared when the exempt parent is volunteering to participate.

If an exempt parent's exemption is based on a disability, the mandatory parent is required to participate the applicable number of single-parent hours (average of 20 or 30) based on the age of the children when utilizing the WTW 24-month Time Clock, or an average of 30 hours per week, with a minimum core requirement average of 20 hours per week to meet CalWORKs federal standards.

#### Pregnant Woman Only (PWO)

CalWORKs Assistance Units (AUs) consisting solely of a pregnant woman who is eligible to CalWORKs in her second or third trimester of pregnancy is referred to as a Pregnant Woman Only (PWO).

Pregnant woman age 19 or over, with no other eligible children in the home, is eligible to receive CalWORKs and pregnancy special needs in the second trimester of pregnancy. Similar to other Welfare-to-Work (WTW) participants, pregnant women who are eligible to CalWORKs are subject to WTW participation requirements, unless exempt. Refer to [Policy 100-F1 WTW Exemptions](#) for more information.

#### CalWORKs Minimum Standards for PWOs

For the purpose of meeting CalWORKs minimum standards, the participation requirement for a PWO is aligned with the participation requirement for a single-parent AU with a child under six. Unless qualified for a WTW exemption, the PWO has an average weekly participation requirement of 20 hours.

#### CalWORKs Federal Standards for PWOs

In order for a PWO to meet the CalWORKs federal standard, she

must participate an average of 30 hours weekly, 20 of which must be in core activities unless she is exempt from WTW.

The other parent living in the home with a PWO is excluded from the AU; therefore, the other parent cannot contribute any hours to the PWO's participation requirement under either CalWORKs minimum standards or CalWORKs federal standard. For this reason, in no case can there be a two-parent PWO subject to the 35- hours participation requirement.

A PWO is subject to the noncompliance process and may be sanctioned for failure to meet participation requirements. A PWO who is subject to noncompliance must be given the opportunity to demonstrate good cause for failure to meet WTW participation requirements and be evaluated for a possible exemption from WTW.

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**HOW TO  
DETERMINE  
WHETHER THE  
FAMILY MET  
THE HOURLY  
PARTICIPATION  
REQUIREMENT  
S**

The methodology used to calculate the average number of hours per week in the month depends on whether the client's WTW plan is designed to utilize the WTW 24-Month Time Clock or to meet the minimum hourly CalWORKs federal standards requirement.

- WTW 24-Month Time Clock – Add up the total number of participation hours in all WTW activities for the month, divide the total by 4.33, and then round to the nearest whole number.
- CalWORKs federal standards – Add the total number of participation hours in each WTW activity for the month, divide each sum by 4.33, and then round to the nearest whole number. This will yield the average number of hours for each activity in the month. Add the total average number of hours for each activity in the month to determine the total average of core and overall hours per week in the month.

[F063-41-418 Worksheet to Calculate the Average Number of Participation Hours per Week](#) was developed to assist CMs with determining whether the family met the minimum hourly participation requirements. The worksheet is optional and may be imaged into OnBase following the imaging filing guide to support the CMs determination.

Examples:

[Example 1](#) WTW plan average of 20 hours per week

[Example 2](#) WTW plan average of 30 hours per week

**GOOD CAUSE/  
HOLIDAYS**

Good Cause for not participating in WTW activities can be granted when appropriate and on a case-by-case basis. Refer to [Policy 240 Good Cause/Compliance/Sanction](#).

Unless participants have Good Cause, they must participate during scheduled activity breaks lasting more than one week, according to the terms of their WTW Plan.

Good Cause is allowed for school appointments, medical appointments for a parent or a child, caseworker appointments, breakdown in transportation and/or child care arrangements and other similar situations.

Documentation of the reason the absence was granted as Good Cause and verification of all Good Cause absences must be maintained in the case file and narrated in CalWIN Case Comments. In addition to Good Cause, scheduled hours in unpaid activities can be counted as actual hours on the day of, or the observed day of, the following state holidays:

1. New Year's Day
2. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
3. President's Day (Washington's Birthday)
4. Memorial Day
5. Independence Day
6. Labor Day
7. Veteran's Day
8. Thanksgiving Day
9. Day after Thanksgiving Day
10. Christmas Day

In order to count the Good Cause absence/holidays as actual hours of participation, the participant must have been scheduled to participate in a countable unpaid work activity for the period of the absence that is reported as participation.

Excluding the ten allowable state holidays, excused absences are limited to 80 hours in any 12-month period, with no more than 16 hours occurring in a single month during the preceding 12 month period.

Holiday hours in paid activities will be allowed only if participant is paid for these hours.

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**REGISTERED DOMESTIC PARTNER (RDPs) AND SAME-SEX SPOUSES OR STEP-PARENTS** If the RDP/same-sex spouse has not adopted the child(ren) or is not the natural parent of the child(ren), he/she is treated as a step-parent. The family would be considered a single-parent AU with a participation requirement of an average of 20 hours per week if there is a child under six years old or an average of 30 hours per week if there is not a child under six years old.

- If the step-parent is aided, either parent can complete the hours but the hours cannot be shared,
- If the step-parent is unaided, the aided parent must complete all of the required hours.

If neither adult is disabled, and if the RDP/same-sex spouse has adopted the child(ren), the family is considered a two-parent AU with an average weekly participation requirement of 35 hours per week. These hours can be shared.

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**SPOUSE MEETING PARTICIPATION (SMP) REQUIREMENTS**

In a two-parent AU, participants are required to meet 35 hours of participation, averaged weekly, in allowable WTW activities. If one parent is meeting required participation hours, the second parent is excused from WTW participation based on his/her spouse meeting participation. The second parent's excused status must be tracked in CalWIN as "Spouse Meeting Participation" (SMP).

**Note:** In CalWIN the second parent's Registration Status is "Exempt" (Refer to CalWIN Resource Guide "[Welfare-to-Work Exempt/Non-Exempt Status](#)") The second parent may volunteer to participate in WTW at any time.

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**WTW ACTIVITIES**

Participants must be informed of their requirement to participate in available WTW activities including the mandated hours of participation. They will be informed of their rights and responsibilities, including but not limited to, the consequences of a failure or refusal to participate in their assigned WTW activity(ies), and the criteria for successful completion of the program.

Participants shall provide information about their employment history, education, skills, the need for supportive services, and any other relevant information via the [F063-41-03 Self-Appraisal Form](#) in order to assign WTW activities appropriately, thus enabling the participant to



become self-sufficient.

CalWORKs WTW activities include, but may not be limited to:

- Unsubsidized Employment
- Self-Employment
- Subsidized Employment (Public and/or Private)
- Expanded Subsidized Employment (Public or Private)
- Work Study
- Work Experience
- Vocational Education
- Job Search/Job Readiness Assistance
  - Mental Health Services
  - Substance Abuse Services
  - Domestic Abuse Services
- Job Skill Training Directly Related to Employment
- Education Directly Related to Employment
- Satisfactory Progress in a Secondary School or in a Course Leading to a GED
- Adult Basic Education
- Participation Required by School to Ensure Child's Attendance
- Other Activities Necessary to Assist in Obtaining Employment

Refer to [Policy 201 Appraisal/Re-Appraisal, WT 15-WTW Activities Worker Tool](#), [WT 33-WTW Activities Matrix](#) for additional information.

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## **CHILD CARE AS EMPLOYMENT**

Child Care as employment is work that is compensated by the employer at least at the state minimum wage.

The minimum wage requirement only applies to license-exempt individuals who provide care in their own homes, or in the home of the parent. Providing child care, in this case, is considered valid unsubsidized employment.

There are no state statutes or regulations that prohibit providing child care by a recipient from being an allowable WTW activity when he/she is earning at least the state minimum wage.

However, providing child care in one's home is unlikely to provide the skills necessary to obtain self-sufficiency. If a participant wishes to work with children and his/her OCAT or Assessment determines that this is appropriate, he/she

should participate in child development classes, gain work experience in a licensed child care facility, etc. as part of his/her WTW Plan.

If the participant does not earn at least the state minimum wage, the activity would not fit the definition of employment, and therefore, would not be an allowable WTW activity.

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**CAL-LEARN**

Pregnant or parenting teens under the age of 19, who are enrolled in the Cal-Learn program, are required to attend full-time school programs that will lead to a high school diploma or its equivalent. Refer to [Policy 260 Cal-Learn/WTW Roles](#) for additional information.

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**SELF-INITIATED PROGRAMS**

Participants enrolled in Self-Initiated Programs (SIPs) are required to complete a minimum average of 20/30/35 hours per week in WTW activities.

In a Two-Parent Family, when both participants are in a SIP, each person must participate an average of 30 hours per week in allowable hours. They cannot split hours as in other situations.

Refer to [Policy 220 Self-Initiated Programs](#) for additional information.

During the evaluation process for SIP eligibility the CM should track potential SIP participants as Pre-SIP, pending final activity approval.

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**TRACKING PARTICIPATION HOURS AND CASE DOCUMENTATION**

Attendance and satisfactory progress in WTW activities must be verified monthly, by the tenth business day of the following month, or according to the requirements within each WTW activity.

Activity status, attendance, case updates and all client contacts must be recorded in CalWIN on a regular and/or monthly basis. Refer to [CalWIN Resource Guide "Participation Tracking"](#) for instructions on how to enter a WTW participant's hours of participation and track his/her progress in core and non-core activities.

The [F063-41-211 Employment Services Communication Document](#) is used to capture new information or changes that

occur during a WTW participant's employment or educational activity assignment.

- When the CM becomes aware of any changes in employment or education, the F063-a- 41-211 must be completed and forwarded to the Intake Employment & Eligibility Specialist/Continuing Employment Specialist (IEES/CEES). The IEES/CEES is responsible for entering the changes in the CalWIN Data Collection subsystem.
- When the IEES/CEES becomes aware of any changes in employment or education, the F063-a- 41-211 must be completed and forwarded to the CM who will take appropriate action based on the new information. The IEES/CEES is responsible for entering the changes in the CalWIN Data Collection subsystem.
- Actions taken by the CM/IEES/CEES must also be narrated in CalWIN case comments.

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## REFERENCES

ACL 09-05; 09-05E; 09-07; 12-69; 12-67; 14-80; 16-21

[Policy 100-F1 WTW Exemptions](#)

[Policy 201 Appraisal/Re-Appraisal](#)

[Policy 203 Work Participation – Federal Review Process](#)

[Policy 207 WTW 24-Month Time Clock](#)

[Policy 210 Assessment](#)

[Policy 211 Welfare-to-Work Plan](#)

[Policy 220 Self-Initiated Programs](#)

[Policy 240 Good Cause/Compliance/Sanction](#)

[Policy 260 Cal-Learn/WTW Roles](#)

[Policy 301 Child Care Eligibility](#)

[Policy 310 Transportation](#)

[Policy 315 Ancillary](#)

[Policy 401 Behavioral Health Services](#)

[Policy 402 Domestic Abuse](#)

[Policy 407 Family Stabilization Program](#)

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**ATTACHMENTS**

[Worker Tool 15 WTW Activities Worker Tool](#)

[Worker Tool 33 WTW Activities Matrix](#)

[Worker Tool 44 Hourly Participation Requirements for CalWORKs Families](#)

[Example 1](#) - WTW plan for individual required to participate a minimum average of 20 hours per week.

[Example 2](#) - WTW plan for individual required to participate a minimum average of 30 hours per week.

[Example 3](#) - WTW plan for individual required to participate a minimum average of 35 hours per week.

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**FORMS**

[\(F063-41-03\) Self-Appraisal Form](#)

[\(F063-41-216\) Important Information About Your Welfare-to-Work Activities](#)

[\(F063-41-418\) Worksheet to Calculate the Average Number of Participation Hours per Week](#)

[\(F063-41-211\) Employment Services Communication Document](#)

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**RESOURCE GUIDES**

[CalWIN Resource Guide "Participation Tracking"](#)

[CalWIN Resource Guide "Welfare-to-Work Exempt/Non-Exempt Status"](#)