

**County of Orange Social Services Agency
Family Self-Sufficiency**

Program/Area: CalWORKs/Welfare-To-Work

Title: Family Stabilization Program

Number: 407

Effective Date: 09/01/15

Status: *Signature on file*

Revision Date: 10/20/15

PURPOSE

Effective January 1, 2014, Assembly Bill (AB) 74 established the Family Stabilization (FS) component of the CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work (WTW) program. FS is designed to ensure a basic level of stability within a family prior to, or concurrently with, participation in WTW activities. Regulations require that counties inform CalWORKs applicants and recipients that short-term FS services are available to assist individuals who are experiencing a crisis or situation that destabilizes the family and impairs the participant's ability to meet WTW participation requirements.

The goal of FS is to increase participant success in the WTW program through intensive case management and the assignment of participants to additional barrier-removal services and activities.

This policy contains guidelines to be used when an individual discloses the existence of a qualifying crisis or situation..

Note: FS is available for WTW-mandated participants only. For general crisis intervention services, refer to [Policy 607.3 Intervention Services](#).

DEFINITION OF A CRISIS OR SITUATION

A qualifying crisis or situation is defined as any identified event or circumstance experienced by an adult and/or child(ren) in the Assistance Unit (AU) which:

- Destabilizes the family **and**
- Impairs the participant's ability to meet WTW participation requirements

The crisis or situation may include, but is not limited to:

- Homelessness (or risk of homelessness)
- A lack of physical or emotional safety due to domestic violence
- Untreated or undertreated behavioral needs including mental health and substance abuse
- Child-related or parenting issues
- Court-related or other legal matters

FS services should minimize the duration of instability experienced by a family during a specific crisis or situation. Smart Phones.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Any AU containing an individual who is required to participate in the WTW program with time remaining on his/her WTW 24-Month Time Clock and has a qualifying crisis or situation, may be eligible for FS services. This includes AUs in which at least one adult is:

- WTW mandatory, or
- Noncompliant, or
- Sanctioned

AUs ineligible to FS are those where all adults:

- Have exhausted their WTW 24-Month Time Clock prior to the crisis or situation
- Have exceeded their CaWORKs 48-month time limit
- Are fleeing felons
- Are non-needy caretaker relatives
- Receive Social Security Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and/or
- Are ineligible non-citizens

REFERRALS

If the participant meets the criteria for a FS referral, the Case Manager (CM) will advise the participant of FS services and encourage him/her to accept a referral.

If the participant agrees to a referral, he/she will complete the [FS Program Request \(F063-41-401\)](#). A request for FS services can also be made verbally. The CM will complete the [Family Stabilization Program Referral \(F063-41-403\)](#) to initiate a referral. There is no limit to the number of times an individual can request FS services. Each request will require a new referral, assessment, and appropriate Notice of Action (NOA).

A **referral to the Domestic Abuse Services Unit (DASU)** will take precedence over a FS referral. If the participant is in a domestic abuse crisis, the CM should offer domestic abuse services to the participant and, if the participant agrees to a referral, notify the DASU Senior Social Services Supervisor (SSSS) directly to expedite the clearance and case assignment process, which are specified in policies [402 Domestic Abuse Services](#) and [604 Domestic Abuse Services Unit \(DASU\) Operating Procedure](#).

When there is an indication of a destabilizing crisis or situation other than domestic abuse, the Intake/Continuing Employment Eligibility Specialist (IEES/CEES) will make a referral to Intervention Services following [Policy 607.3 Intervention Services](#). If the participant is WTW-mandated and a WTW CM is assigned to the case, the CM will make a preliminary screening using the [FS Program Screening Tool \(F063-41-402\)](#).

FS services are voluntary. If the participant declines services, a referral is not made. The CM will make appropriate case comments in CalWIN in accordance with the [Case Comments Resource Guide](#).

If the participant accepts services and is potentially eligible for FS services, the CM will e-mail the referral to the Intervention Services/FS Assignment Board/Clerical Designee with a cc to the CMs immediate supervisor. Refer to [FS Processing Guide](#) for additional information. The referral process is also summarized in the worker tool [FS Referral Work Flow F063-41-WT36](#).

Note: Whenever staff suspects a child(ren) in the home may be at risk due to the specific crisis or situation, a child abuse report must be made following [established procedures](#). Notify the Child Abuse Registry (CAR) by:

- Calling 1-714-940-1000 and submitting the standard [Suspected Child Abuse Report](#) (SS8572), or
- Faxing the [Suspected Child Abuse FAX Report](#) (F063-04-69) to 1-714-938-0289

SPECIALIZED UNIT FS referrals will be assigned to a specialized unit that handles cases such as DASU.

FS referrals without domestic abuse crisis will be assigned to a specialized CM, who will meet with participants to assess the crisis or situation, and provide appropriate intensive case management and FS services.

For cases with domestic abuse crisis, the DASU SSW will work with participants to determine eligibility for a Domestic Abuse Waiver (DAW) in accordance with policies [402 Domestic Abuse Services](#) and [604 Domestic Abuse Services Unit \(DASU\) Operating Procedure](#).

DASU cases that are *not eligible* for a DAW will be evaluated for eligibility to FS. The DASU SSW and specialized CM will

collaborate to provide appropriate intensive case management and FS services. Once FS services have discontinued, the case may remain with DASU for ongoing domestic abuse services as appropriate.

INTENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT

FS participants will receive intensive case management support. The specialized CM will work closely with FS participants to evaluate the extent of the family's crisis or situation in order to provide appropriate and timely services and/or referrals to County and community-based resources.

For DASU cases that receive FS services, the CM and DASU SSW will collaborate to provide necessary support and services.

The specialized CM will:

- Ensure each participant understands the FS Program and available services
- Work with the family to identify issues that impact all aided/unaided adults and children in the AU
- Schedule Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings with County and contracted partners to assess the family's crisis, and determine appropriate services and referrals

Note: An MDT meeting is encouraged as part of the initial assessment and 30-day evaluation for FS services, and is required for the 60-day evaluation.

- Develop a [Family Stabilization Case Plan](#) (F063-41-406) that assists the family to regain stability and ultimately enter into a new or concurrent WTW Plan
- Develop long-term, achievable goals to further stabilize the family's circumstances
- Assess weekly progress toward achieving the [Family Stabilization Case Plan](#) goals and make necessary changes to improve the family's success
- Provide prompt referrals to appropriate County and community-based services to address the family's crisis or situation
- Complete frequent home visits, in-person and/or telephone contact with:
 - Each family, depending on the level of need and progress in FS services and activities
 - FS providers to determine the effectiveness of assigned services and activities
- Evaluate and make appropriate referrals for supportive services including child care and transportation, and for

employment support services (Refer to [Policy 300 Series – Supportive Services](#))

- Evaluate the participant’s eligibility to [WTW exemptions](#) if he/she is not meeting the requirements of the FS Program
- Make significant efforts to engage families who are not making adequate and satisfactory progress in FS activities
- Assist FS participants to transition to full or concurrent WTW activities

FAMILY STABILIZATION SERVICES

The specialized CM will meet with the participant to assess the existence of the crisis or situation and the extent to which it limits or precludes participation in WTW activities. A determination will be made to approve or deny FS services using available information provided by the participant, with consideration given to the participation and progress in current WTW activities. The CM will complete the [Family Stabilization Assessment](#) (F063-41-404) to record findings and a determination for FS services. The CM will develop a [Family Stabilization Case Plan](#) with participants who meet the eligibility criteria. For participants who do not meet the criteria for FS, the CM will inform the participant of his/her denial via the [Family Stabilization Program Denial \(FSP2\)](#).

In light of the flexible WTW 24-Month Time Clock, FS services should be tailored to meet each family’s needs and should focus on improving the family’s domestic and economic stability, removing barriers to WTW activities, and connecting the family to additional community-based resources and support. Participants may be referred to existing services provided by the CalWORKs and WTW programs, County partners, and/or community-based organizations.

WTW participants may request FS services at any time. Services may be provided as long as the AU contains an eligible adult with remaining time on his/her WTW 24-Month Time Clock. FS services are not limited to the aided adult and should attempt to address FS issues of the children in the AU and ineligible unaided AU members as well.

FS services include, but are not limited to:

- Specialized, intensive case management
- Behavioral Health Services (BHS)
 - Mental/emotional health
 - Substance abuse
- Domestic Abuse Services
 - Case assessment and counseling

- Access to domestic abuse shelters
- Help with restraining orders
- Arrangement of in-home parenting services
- Public Health Nurse (PHN) Support
 - Whole family health assessment, education and referrals
 - Assistance with medical exemption and/or SSI application process
- Employment Support Services
 - Family basic needs
 - Housing assistance
 - Utility assistance
 - Transportation to/from activities
- Supportive services including child care and transportation assistance
- Referrals to community-based organizations
 - **Family Resource Center (FRC):** Services include, but are not limited to:
 - Emergency Assistance
 - Community Resources and Referrals
 - Family Literacy and Education
 - Child Development Activities
 - Parenting Education
 - Counseling
 - Family Economics and Self-Sufficiency

Note: The signed and completed [FRC Referral Form](#) will be faxed to the appropriate FRC Regional Hub based on the [FS Service Region map](#). Refer to the [FRC Protocol](#) for additional information.

Behavioral Health Services:

Behavioral health and substance abuse services are available to FS participants through a partnership with the Health Care Agency (HCA). BHS Regional Coordinators and contracted providers are available to provide an assessment of the participant's untreated or undertreated behavioral health needs and the appropriate level of treatment and rehabilitation. Refer to [Policy 401 Behavioral Health Services](#) for additional information.

Domestic Abuse Services:

A DASU referral takes precedence over a FS referral. However, if domestic abuse issues are discovered during the time the participants receive FS services, domestic abuse services will be available to FS participants and will be provided by the DASU

SSW following current business process specified in [Policy 402 Domestic Abuse Services](#) and [Policy 604 Domestic Abuse Services Unit \(DASU\) Operating Procedure](#).

Public Health Nurse Support:

Public health nursing services are available to FS participants through a partnership with HCA and will be provided by PHNs collocated at each CalWORKs regional office. Refer to [Policy 229 CalWORKs Public Health Nurses](#) for additional information.

Employment Support Services:

Employment support services are available to FS participants through an agreement with ResCare Workforce Services (RWS). FS participants may receive employment support services up to the limits specified in [Policy 272 Employment Support Services](#). Participants may require assistance with:

- Family basic needs including food vouchers, diapers, and formula
- Housing assistance if they are homeless or facing eviction; services may include emergency motel vouchers, eviction assistance, or shelter services
- Transportation needs including gas cards, van transportation, emergency cab fares, and automotive repairs

Note: Per [Policy 315 Ancillary Supportive Services](#), ancillary requests for car repairs are not covered. Automotive repairs are only available through a referral to RWS up to the limit specified in [Policy 272 Employment Support Services](#).

**IDENTIFICATION
AND
DOCUMENTATION**

Details regarding the participant's crisis or situation may be considered sensitive information. A participant should be advised that answering questions about the crisis or situation is voluntary and the information being requested is intended to assist him/her in becoming self-sufficient while promoting the family's well-being. The participant's statement may be sufficient to identify a crisis or situation. Under no circumstance will staff contact any person deemed by the participant to be unsafe to contact for the purpose of corroborating or refuting the participant's statement.

For participants who experience a crisis or situation that includes homelessness, or the risk of homelessness, supporting documentation may be requested to determine the type of housing assistance needed. (e.g. eviction assistance, emergency

motel payment, etc...)

Supporting documentation will be requested only if the CM has a reasonable basis for determining that documentation is needed, or the participant is not credible. Reasons for requesting additional documentation must be thoroughly narrated in the case record and approved by the specialized unit supervisor. Supporting documentation includes, but is not limited to:

- Eviction notices
- School documents for child-related matters
- Police, court, legal, medical, or other professional records
- A statement from someone who has knowledge of the circumstances
- Sworn statement from the participant
- Current or recent participation in Intervention Services (Refer to [Policy 607.3 Intervention Services](#) for additional information)

INFORMING REQUIREMENTS

Individuals must be informed that FS services are available both verbally and in writing, at application, during development of the WTW Plan, at annual redetermination (RRR), and when appropriate during the Case Manager's monthly contact.

Individuals should be informed that the WTW 24-Month Time Clock and hourly participation requirements may be waived for up to six cumulative months if the individual is approved for, and participates in, FS services. Additionally, current WTW Plans may be ended or modified to accommodate the participant's ability to participate.

When appropriate, WTW sanctioned individuals will be informed of FS services by the CEES as part of his/her ongoing reengagement effort. If the sanctioned individual agrees to FS services and meets the program eligibility criteria, he/she must sign the [Plan to Stop a Welfare-to-Work Sanction \(WTW 29\)](#) in order to stop the sanction. Refer to [Policy 240 Good Cause/Compliance/Sanction](#) for additional information.

The [Family Stabilization Program Brochure \(F063-41-400\)](#) provides general information about the FS Program and services that are available to assist the participant and family. The brochure will be included in the application and RRR packets. The brochure will be shared with participants during the WTW Orientation/Appraisal, and during the discussion of a crisis or situation that impairs the individual's ability to participate in WTW

activities.

**WTW 24-MONTH
TIME CLOCK AND
PARTICIPATION**

The following CalWORKs/WTW program requirements will be temporarily waived for FS Program participants for up to six cumulative months:

- WTW 24-Month Time Clock, and
- 22/32/38 hourly participation requirements

Refer to Policies [207 WTW 24-Month Time Clock](#) and [202 Work Participation Hours](#) for additional information.

**FAMILY
STABILIZATION
CASE PLANS**

Individuals who have been approved for FS services must sign a [Family Stabilization Case Plan \(F063-41-406\)](#). Failure to sign or comply with the plan will result in the participant's timely discontinuance from the FS Program, reinstatement in the WTW program, and the requirement to sign a new WTW Plan.

The specialized CM will develop a [Family Stabilization Case Plan](#) with the participant. The plan must take into account family circumstances and must identify the participant's most appropriate path to family stability and resolution of the specific crisis or situation. The plan goals, services, and activities should enable the participant to move toward engagement in WTW activities. Participation in WTW activities should be encouraged to the fullest extent of the individual's abilities, which will be based on the individual assessment completed by the CM, and re-evaluated during monthly meetings between the participant and the CM.

The CM will work with the participant to develop a plan that:

- Assesses the stability of the family's living situation, physical and emotional health, and safety
- Provides intensive case management and referrals to appropriate services to assist the family
- Identifies supportive services needed for FS plan activities
- Reduces the chance of reoccurring crises
- Enhances the family's ability to resolve issues, and
- Monitors each family's progress toward making the necessary changes to improve the crisis or situation

The CM will schedule MDT meetings when appropriate to develop or strengthen a [Family Stabilization Case Plan](#). During the MDT, the specialized unit team and County partners will review the family's strengths, barriers, and goals, and summarize actions needed to assist the family in meeting the goals outlined in the

plan. Refer to [Policy 228 Multi-Disciplinary Team](#) for additional information. An MDT meeting is encouraged as part of the initial assessment and 30-day evaluation, and is required for the 60-day evaluation process.

Welfare-to-Work Plans

[Welfare-to-Work Plans](#) (WTW 2) for FS participants will be ended or modified as necessary to reflect the individual's ability to participate in WTW activities. A WTW Plan may be signed if the CM determines that the individual is able to participate in concurrent WTW activities. WTW Plans will only indicate the concurrent WTW activities to which the participant is assigned, hours of participation, and supportive service needs. Refer to [Policy 211 Welfare-to-Work Plan](#) for additional information.

DURATION OF SERVICES

FS services are intended to be short-term. The duration of services will vary depending on the types of services received and the family's specific crisis or situation. Participation in the FS Program will be reviewed every 30 days to determine if the participant continues to meet program eligibility criteria. The 30-day evaluation process will include a review by the specialized unit supervisor, who will monitor the effectiveness of the plan and services, and will ensure consistency in policy application.

An MDT meeting is encouraged as part of the initial assessment and 30-day evaluation for FS services to evaluate whether participation in the FS Program will be extended or the participant's situation is stable enough to allow engagement in concurrent or full WTW activities.

An MDT meeting is required for the 60-day evaluation process. Additionally, when the participant continues to meet the program criteria after 60 days, extending the services will require approval from the Social Services Supervisor II (SSSII).

ENDING FAMILY STABILIZATION SERVICES

When making a determination to end FS services, the CM will consider all available information including, but not limited to, the family's safety and stability, the participant's progress in assigned FS services and activities, and the degree to which the crisis or situation may continue to impact the participant's ability to meet WTW requirements.

A timely [Family Stabilization Program Change \(FSP3\)](#) must be sent when participation in the FS Program is being discontinued. The effective date entered on the NOA is the last day of the month in which the adequate and timely notice is mailed.

Upon discontinuance of FS services, a new WTW Plan must be developed with the participant who must now meet WTW requirements, unless otherwise exempt. Refer to [Policy 211 Welfare-to-Work Plan](#) for additional information.

Noncompliance with Family Stabilization Case Plan

When a participant fails or refuses to comply with the requirements of the [Family Stabilization Case Plan](#), or is not making progress towards achieving the goals specified in the plan, the CM should explore whether the participant is eligible to a WTW exemption. Refer to [Policy 100-F1 Welfare-to-Work Exemptions](#) for additional information.

If the participant is not found to be exempt from WTW, the CM will discontinue the participant from FS program using the [Family Stabilization Program Change \(FSP3\)](#) after exhausting reasonable attempts to assist the participant via intensive case management. The determination will be made in consultation among the CM, CEES, SSW (when appropriate), and Supervisor.

Cases discontinued from FS services will be transferred from the specialized unit CM to a WTW CM.

PARTICIPATION AND DOCUMENTATION

Attendance and progress in FS services and activities will be documented on the [Family Stabilization Case Plan](#). Participation hours for concurrent WTW activities are documented on the WTW Plan. Enter actual, documented hours specific to FS and/or other concurrent WTW activities in CalWIN in accordance with the [Participation Tracking Resource Guide](#).

The FS participant shall:

- Provide details and, when appropriate, documentation of the crisis or situation that enable the CM to determine the appropriate level of services
- Comply with the [Family Stabilization Case Plan](#)
- Meet with the CM monthly for a face-to-face meeting

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Individuals who are approved for the FS Program are eligible to receive all supportive services necessary to comply with the terms of their [Family Stabilization Case Plan](#) and/or WTW Plan (Refer to [Policy 300 Series – Supportive Services](#)). Actual supportive services are based on need and participation hours, and must be re-evaluated whenever a new [Family Stabilization Case Plan](#) and/or WTW Plan are developed.

**COMMUNICATION,
CASE COMMENTS,
& CALWIN
ENTRIES**

The specialized CM will complete frequent contact with the participant, including a minimum of one weekly contact and one monthly face-to-face meeting, to:

- monitor progress and participation in assigned FS services
- maximize service delivery
- facilitate communication

The meeting and appropriate communication will be documented in CalWIN Case Comments and on the [Family Stabilization Case Plan](#).

CalWIN Case Comments must be updated to reflect information obtained during participant contacts including, but not limited to:

- Cooperation and progress toward achieving FS goals
- Information specific to the FS services and activities including attendance and supportive services provided
- Other identified needs and completed referrals

Sensitive details of the crisis or situation are not to be shared or recorded. Any disclosures that may assist the CEES, CM, and/or SSA partners in providing services to the participants should be managed professionally, on a “need to know” basis.

The CalWIN Data Collection and Employment Services subsystems must be updated to reflect FS referrals, new or revised FS and WTW Plans, and any changes to an individual’s services, activities, attendance, or participation hours. Refer to the [Family Stabilization Resource Guide](#) for instruction on initiating a FS request, creating the FS Plan, generating appropriate NOAs, and issuing separate supportive services in CalWIN.

All Family Stabilization forms will be virtually printed into the FS Acco of the WTW/Employment Services case.

FORMS

1. [F063-41-400: Family Stabilization Program Brochure](#)
2. [F063-41-401: Family Stabilization Program Request](#)
3. [F063-41-402: Family Stabilization Program Screening Tool](#)
4. [F063-41-403: Family Stabilization Program Referral](#)
5. [F063-41-404: Family Stabilization Program Assessment](#)
6. [F063-41-406: Family Stabilization Case Plan](#)
7. [Family Stabilization Q&A and Examples](#)
8. [Family Stabilization Referral Work Flow](#)
9. [FSP 2: Family Stabilization Program Denial Notice](#)

10. [FSP 3: Family Stabilization Program Change](#)
11. [WTW 2: Welfare-to-Work Plan](#)
12. [WTW 29: Plan to Stop a Welfare-to-Work Sanction](#)

POLICIES

[Policy 100: F1 Welfare-to-Work Exemptions](#)
[Policy 202: Work Participation Hours](#)
[Policy 207: WTW 24-Month Time Clock](#)
[Policy 211: Welfare-to-Work Plan](#)
[Policy 228: Multi-Disciplinary Team](#)
[Policy 229: CalWORKs Public Health Nurses](#)
[Policy 240: Good Cause/Compliance/Sanction](#)
[Policy 272: Employment Support Services](#)
[Policy 401: Behavioral Health Services](#)
[Policy 402: Domestic Abuse Services](#)
[Policy 607.3: Intervention Services](#)
[Policy 604: Domestic Abuse Services Unit \(DASU\) Operating Procedure](#)
[Processing Guide: Family Stabilization](#)
[Resource Guide: Family Stabilization](#)

REFERENCES

ACIN I-02-14: CalWORKs Program - Requirements for Adequate Notices
ACIN I-64-15: CalWORKs Program - Q&As for Family Stabilization Program
ACL 14-12: CalWORKs Family Stabilization Program