

CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work (WTW) PARTICIPANT GUIDEBOOK

— CalWORKs (California Work Opportunity & Responsibility to Kids) Program —





COUNTY of VENTURA
Human Services Agency

Our Mission

We strengthen families, support self-sufficiency, and promote safety, health and well-being.

Our Vision

All Human Services Agency program service areas operate and perform at the highest level to meet individual, family, and community needs by providing assistance, aid, protection, and help.

Table of Contents

What Clients Say About the Welfare-to-Work (WTW) Program	2
Welcome	3
We Care About Your Goals	4
Goals Deserve to Be Evaluated	4
The Purpose of the WTW Employment Program	5
Who Participates in WTW?	6
What is CalWORKs?	6
What is a WTW Plan?	6
Who Must Participate in WTW?	6
WTW 24-Month Time Clock	7
Hours of Participation in WTW	8
Who is Exempt from Participating?	9
Employment Services Activities	10
Additional WTW Activities	11
Supportive Services	12
WTW Program-Related Expenses	12
What Happens If You Do Not Participate?	13
What If You Disagree with a County Action?	14
Goal Planning	15
A Final Word	16

What Clients Say About the WTW Program

“

Throughout life, we all face obstacles that we can let defeat us, or we can conquer them. Leaving behind a domestic violence relationship and becoming a single mom were obstacles I decided early on that I was going to overcome. Overcoming requires you to go places you've never been and to do things you've never done. When you are scared and uncomfortable, you have the opportunity and you grow! I am so thankful to have been a CalWORKs WTW recipient because of all the resource they provided in my time of need. The program has been a saving grace for me. Not only did it allow me to further my education; but it also taught me the importance of deadlines, seeing things through, and self-sufficiency. The program taught me crucial skills I will carry with me throughout my lifetime.”

“

My wife and I returned to the WTW program in 2018. I left a job as an assistant manager in the restaurant industry, and was unhappy with the work hours and my inability to progress further on the job. I knew there was something out there better for me. In the WTW program I completed my GED through the Adult School and continued my education in Business Administration. While I was going to school I was also driving as an Uber and Lyft driver. I was involved in a car accident, but I didn't let that stop me from accomplishing my goals. I was committed to getting out of low-paying employment. My wife also decided to attend the WTW program and is currently applying for positions in law enforcement while actively pursuing her EMT at Community College. My hard work paid off, and I received a full-time job offer as a Payroll Specialist. I am now earning \$22.00 an hour with full benefits. I didn't let anything stand in my way, and I feel proud that I was able to overcome so many obstacles with the help of the WTW program and my Employment Specialist.”

“

I am now working full time, and I've been able to buy myself a car and am now saving for a place to live. I am hoping that in three weeks we will be able to move out of our extended family's home and find a place of our own. I am very thankful for the help I received in the WTW program, and the help and guidance my Employment Specialist provided to me.”

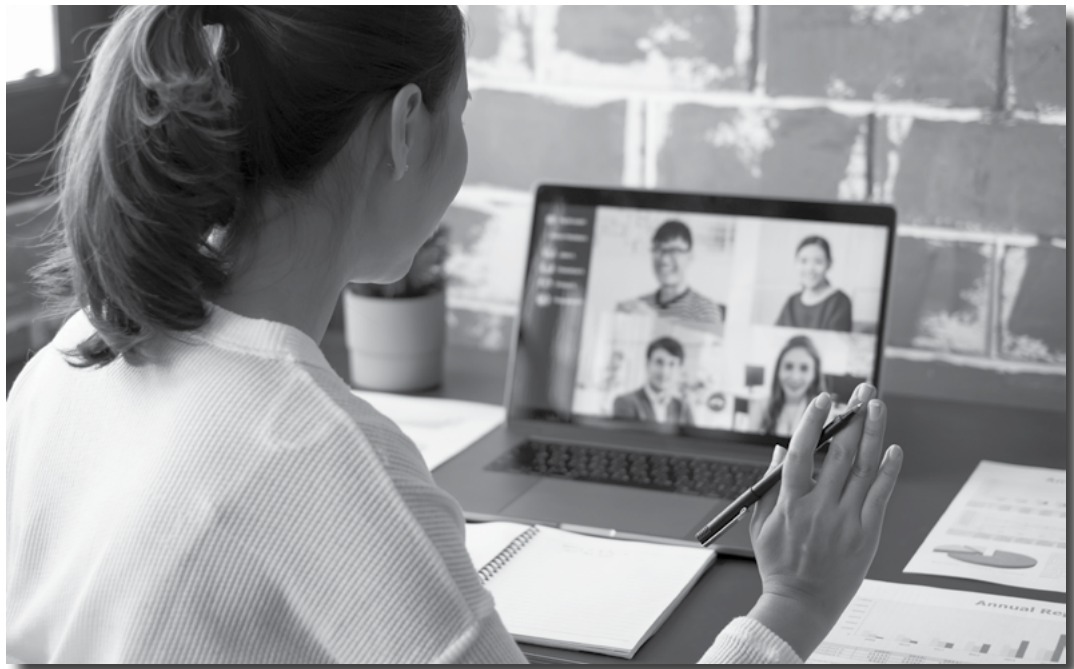
We would like to welcome you to the Adult & Family Service Department's WTW (WTW) Program!

In this WTW Guidebook, you will learn how you and your Employment Specialist will work together to help you and your family achieve self-sufficiency and opportunities through employment.

WTW was designed with you in mind. It is not just another government program. It is much more than that. WTW Employment Specialist staff will be with you every step of the way, providing you with important supportive services you will need to be successful, such as childcare, transportation needs, and work or training-related expenses.

We care about your goals. Establishing employment, career, and life goals will provide you a roadmap to the future you see for yourself and your family. You are not alone in this journey. We will help you identify your family's strengths, needs, and employment goals, and work with you to develop a WTW Plan to meet these goals.

If you still have questions after having read this WTW Guidebook, please feel free to discuss concerns with your Employment Specialist. They are here to help you achieve your employment goals.



We are here to support your success!

We Care About Your Goals

Goal planning helps you create a guided path to success. Let's think about what that means to you:

GOAL:	What do I want to do?	_____
	Why do I want to do it?	_____
PLAN:	How will I do it? When? Where?	_____
	What might get in my way?	_____
	How can I overcome challenges?	_____
DO:	What small steps will I take?	_____
	Who will I check in with?	_____
	How will I reward myself?	_____

Goals Deserve to Be Evaluated

Evaluating goals helps assure you are on track to meet your goals. Let's see what this means to you:

REVIEW:	How did it go?	_____
REVISE:	Have my goals changed?	_____
	What could I do differently?	_____

*Your Employment Specialist is here to assist you
as you achieve the goals you set for yourself.*

The Purpose of the WTW Employment Program

The County of Ventura WTW (WTW) Program is designed to help you prepare for work and find a job, or a better job. Finding a job, or a better job, means you will have more money for your family, serve as a positive role model for your children, increase your self-confidence, and build a stronger future for you and your family.



Supportive services are also available to assist you during your participation. These services include childcare, transportation assistance, and work or training-related expenses.

We can help you get the job you need to be self-sufficient. We will help you identify your employment goals, strengths, and skills that you will need to help you get a job in today's workforce.

We can also help you improve your chances of getting a job within an industry, business or public employer in your area. We have connections throughout the County that can assist you on the road to success.

Through WTW, everyone wins.

Who Participates in WTW?

What is CalWORKs?

The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Program represents one of the State's major efforts to assist low-income families, specifically families with children, by providing a monthly cash grant to assist families in meeting their basic needs. Adults enrolled in CalWORKs are limited to a lifetime maximum of 48 months of assistance. Once adults reach this limit, the children in the case may continue to receive cash assistance. Adults receiving CalWORKs are generally required to participate in the WTW Program to meet participation requirements.



What is a WTW Plan?

Your WTW Plan is a plan of action that will identify your employment goals and define the steps needed to meet those goals. As part of the planning process, you will work closely with your Employment Specialist to develop your WTW Plan and identify the resources available to you that you will need to successfully meet your employment goals.

Who Must Participate in WTW?

If you are a CalWORKs recipient, and you are not exempt from participating, you will be required to participate in WTW. You are considered a mandatory participant in our program while you receive cash assistance for yourself.

As a mandatory participant in our program you will:

- Sign a WTW Plan.
- Meet all program requirements.
- Not quit your job or lower your earnings.
- Provide proof of satisfactory progress in your assigned activity or activities when your Employment Specialist asks you for verification.

Remember, we are here to help you on the road to success. An Employment Specialist will work with you to provide additional guidance while you navigate through various activities on the path to a better future for you and your family.

WTW 24-Month Time Clock

Several years ago, the State of California implemented the 24-Month Time Clock (separate from the CalWORKs 48-month lifetime limit). This Time Clock refers to a total 24-month lifetime period where you may participate in any approved WTW activity, if it is consistent with your Appraisal/Assessment.

You will be notified in writing when your clock starts, stops, is due to end, and has expired.

Each parent in a two-parent family will have their own 24-month clock.

If a mandatory WTW parent fails to meet participation requirements, the excused parent will become subject to WTW participation requirements and the 24-Month Clock.



Key Points to Remember

- Participants in WTW will have more flexibility with activities during the 24-month Time Clock period. At the end of the 24-month period, there are limitations to the activities in which you may participate.
- Months on your Time Clock will begin the following month after you sign a WTW Plan.
- After the 24 months has been exhausted, participants can still be eligible to CalWORKs, if they have CalWORKs months remaining and meet all participation requirements of the WTW program.



*Speak to your Employment Specialist for more information.
Your Employment Specialist will review your case and meet with
you both during, and when your 24-Month Clock is due to expire.*

Hours of Participation in WTW

Participation hours are based on federal and state regulations, abilities, and individual family situations. Your weekly participation hours serve as if it were employment. Just like an employer establishes a weekly work schedule, so will the WTW program. Your Employment Specialist will assist you with establishing a weekly work schedule and will inform you on how many hours each week will need to be spent in WTW activities. It will be your responsibility to work or participate during your assigned hours. All changes in your weekly scheduled hours must be shared with your Employment Specialist, who will connect with you to modify your WTW Plan. The minimum number of hours of participation are listed below.

Single-Parent Families with a Child under 6 Years Old - 20 Hours a Week (minimum)

If you are the adult in a one-parent CalWORKs case and you have a child under the age of 6 and you are not exempt, you will be required to participate in your assigned WTW activity or activities for at least 20 hours per week.

Single-Parent Families with No Child under 6 Years Old - 30 Hours a Week (minimum)

If you are the adult in a one-parent CalWORKs case and you have no children under the age of 6 and you are not exempt, you will be required to participate in your assigned WTW activity or activities for at least 30 hours per week.

Two-Parent Families, 35 Hours a Week (minimum)

If you are an adult in a two-parent CalWORKs case and you are not exempt, one or both parents must participate in assigned WTW activities for at least 35 hours per week.

One parent must participate a minimum of 20 hours per week, if both parents are sharing the responsibility for meeting the 35-hour participation requirement. Both parents must participate until they meet the 35-hour requirement, at which time one of the parents can maintain the 35 hours a week, or both can share the required hours between them.

Core Hours

Once you have exhausted your 24-Month Time Clock, at least 20 hours of your weekly hours must be in core employment-related activities. Your Employment Specialist will talk to you about the type of work activity that is best for you.

Participating in More Than One Activity at a Time

You may be required to participate in more than one activity at the same time, to bring you up to your required hours of participation. These activities are designed with you in mind, as we prepare you for work and assist you with becoming job-ready. You and your Employment Specialist will work together to discuss your options and prepare you as you work toward your employment goals.



Who is Exempt from Participating?

We recognize that participants may have a good reason for not participating in the WTW Program. Some of the reasons you may be exempt may include:

- You are under 16 years old and not a custodial parent, or 60 years of age or older.
- You are 16, 17, or 18 years old and go to school (not college) full-time, unless you are in school as one of your WTW activities or you are a custodial parent.
- You have a disability that is expected to last at least 30 days, and it would keep you from working or participating in a WTW activity, and you are either getting or trying to get the medical help you need.
- You are pregnant and your doctor states that you cannot work or participate in WTW activities. This exemption does not apply if you are a teen parent required to participate in the Cal-Learn program.
- You are a non-parent relative caretaker of a child who is a dependent or ward of the court, or of a child at risk of placement in foster care, and we decide that taking care of the child keeps you from working or participating in a WTW activity.
- You must stay at home to take care of someone in the household who is unable to care for himself or herself if it keeps you from working or participating in a WTW activity. This exemption does not apply if you are a teen parent required to participate in the Cal-Learn program.
- You are a parent or other relative caretaker of a child six months or younger.
- Care of a child 0-23 months of age: This is a once-in-a-lifetime exemption, and it must be pre-approved by the Eligibility Worker assigned to your CalWORKs case.
- Victim of Domestic Violence: This exemption is subject to specific circumstances. Please speak to your Employment Specialist if you need additional details and assistance.



We may ask for verification when claiming any of the above exemptions. Your Employment Services worker is available to review your situation with you at any time during your participation in the WTW program if you have questions regarding your participation.

Employment Services Activities

There are many paths open to WTW participants. Your path may not involve every activity in the WTW program; however, we will explore all options that fit your needs while you participate in the program.

Much depends on your job and education history. Remember, the purpose of WTW is to help you prepare for work and find a job so you can support yourself and your family. We will assist you as you work to meet these goals. The activities that WTW offers are described below.

Appraisal

When you start participating in WTW, your Employment Specialist will connect with you to complete your appraisal. During appraisal, you and your Employment Specialist will review your work history, family dynamics, your personal career goals, housing, transportation, mental health, substance abuse, education, and any other circumstances that could hamper your success in achieving self-sufficiency as well as, your need for supportive services and other important information to help you both decide what your WTW activity or activities should be.

Job Readiness

- Job Club, where you will learn how to uncover the *hidden* job market, discover what job skills you have, write a resume, and understand how to present yourself in an interview.
- Supervised Job Search, where you will have the help of an experienced Employment Specialist to find the job that will start you on the way to a career, which may include access to job orders, and referrals to employers.
- Unsupervised Job Search, where you will independently search for a job and report your progress to your Employment Specialist.
- Job Placement, where you will receive referrals to jobs.
- Job Development, where you will look for a job by working one-on-one with an experienced employment placement specialist.
- Employment Counseling, where an Employment Specialist will help you decide what your reasonable and realistic job goals should be, based on your skills and abilities.
- Additional resources may be available to access job services, free of charge. Speak to your Employment Specialist for additional information.

Assessment

During Assessment, participants and their Employment Specialist will work together to develop a WTW Plan. The plan will identify employment and the steps needed to help in reaching those goals. The WTW Plan will also specify the details of the activity, such as days, hours and locations, along with the supportive services needed to succeed in the agreed upon WTW Plan.

Special Services and Referrals

During Appraisal, and at other times during your participation, we will work with you, providing services based on your individual needs. If we offer you screening or services for special circumstances such as learning styles, family stabilization, housing programs, or referrals to other partners, we hope you will accept them. These services can help you on your road to success. These services can also address any challenges you might encounter that could hamper or delay your success while you participate in our program.

Additional WTW Activities

Unsubsidized Employment

This activity is a job in which only your employer pays your salary.

Subsidized Employment

This activity is a job with a private, or public employer where the employer gets money to help pay your salary.

Work Experience

This activity in a work setting will enable you to gain vital knowledge and work experience to help you get a paying job.

Community Service

This activity is also in a work setting that will enable you to gain knowledge and the experience you need to help you get a paying job, while providing a service to others.

Work Study

This activity is work in a college setting while you take college courses.

Adult Basic Education

This activity includes education that will help you improve your reading and math skills and, perhaps, get a GED or high school diploma.

Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment

This activity will help you gain job skills that prepare you for work.

Vocational Training

This activity is short-term training designed to teach you a job that you can do for a private employer.

Job Search and Job Readiness Assistance

This activity teaches you how to find work and gives you a chance to look for work with the help of employment counselors.

Education Directly Related to Employment

This is a school activity in which you will learn job skills that will help you get or keep a job.

Adult Basic Education

This is a short-term school activity to help you get a High School Diploma or GED.

Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Domestic Violence Services

This activity provides you with counseling to get through the difficult times in your life and to help you get yourself on the road to finding work. These services are available at no cost to you.



Supportive Services

Supportive services are designed to help with extra expenses that may be incurred while participating in the WTW Program. Talk with your Employment Specialist for assistance and additional information. Supportive services may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Transportation: The Employment Services worker will address transportation needs with you. WTW can potentially pay for bus passes or reimburse you for mileage to and from pre-approved WTW activities. Discuss transportation needs with your Employment Specialist. Additional requirements for assistance will be addressed when you meet with your Specialist.

Child Care: We know that the cost of child care may be a concern when you are participating in the WTW program. Ventura County's Child Care program, administered by Child Development Resources, can help you with childcare costs while you attend an approved WTW activity and/or while you are employed. Your Employment Specialist will assist you with a referral to these services.



WTW Housing Support: Stable housing is critical to the well-being of your family and to assure your participation in WTW activities are not hampered by lack of stable housing. We understand the challenges families may face with lack of stable housing. Families who are currently homeless or have a court-ordered eviction notice may apply for the CalWORKs Housing Support Program. This program offers intensive case management to help families find suitable housing. Resources and funding may be available in addition to case management services.

WTW Program-Related Expenses

The WTW Program can pay for work or training-related costs for items such as books, tools, and clothing that are needed for success in approved WTW activities. Be sure to let your Employment Specialist know immediately if assistance is needed with these expenses. Approval for these requests can take several business days. Please remember not to make any purchases without receiving prior approval from your assigned Employment Specialist to avoid challenges if not approved for these services.

What Happens If You Do Not Participate?

Participation in WTW is mandatory for all able-bodied CalWORKs applicants and recipients. Your Employment Services worker is dedicated to your successful completion in our program and will reach out to you to provide guidance, assistance and possibly a change in activities, depending on the reason you have for not participating. However, if after attempts to work with you have been exhausted, and if participation in the WTW Program drops or stops, the following steps may occur:

Cause Determination

If you do not meet WTW requirements, you have the right to explain why. The County will decide if it is a good reason. (See the section titled, [Who Is Exempt from Participating](#))

If you have a good reason for not doing what WTW requires, your Employment Specialist may try to help you so that you can meet WTW requirements. If changes cannot be made so that you are able to meet program requirements, and it was determined you had good cause, you will not be required to participate in WTW temporarily.

Compliance Plan

If you do not meet WTW requirements, we will send you a notice. You will have 20 calendar days, after the date of the notice, to contact your Employment Specialist to give a good reason for not doing what is required, or to agree to sign a compliance plan to do what is required, if you do not have a good reason. If you meet the requirements of the plan, no penalties will be applied.

Financial Sanctions

If you are a mandatory participant (see the section titled, [Who Must Participate?](#)), your family's cash aid will be lowered if you fail or refuse to meet WTW requirements without a good reason and do not resolve the problem by signing and completing a compliance plan.

Financial Penalties

Your family's cash aid will be lowered if anybody who must participate does not meet WTW requirements. This financial sanction will happen only if the person does not have a good reason, or they fail to sign or complete a compliance plan. The person who gets a financial sanction will not receive cash aid until they come back, agree to participate, and meet program requirements.

Note: A sanction can be stopped (cured) at any time, if you agree to participate and comply with what the WTW program requires of you. Speak to your Employment Specialist for more information. We are here to help.



What If You Disagree with a County Action?

State Hearing

If you disagree with any county decision regarding a WTW penalty, your WTW status (standing), your WTW activity, or your WTW supportive services, you can ask for a State Hearing.

Your Employment Specialist will help you file for a State Hearing if you want one. The WTW Hearing Rights Form on the back of your Notice of Action you will receive explains the hearing rules. Requests for a copy of the form can be made at any time.



Goal Planning

We recognize reaching your goals is important to you. Goal setting involves the development of an action plan to motivate and guide you toward a goal. Goal planning also helps with personal development and time management, which are important tools you will take with you to build success at home and at work.

With practice and regular reviews with your Employment Specialist, we will assist you to develop a plan to reach your goals, along with actions and steps to Do, Review, and Revise your goal, or develop a new plan if necessary.



My Employment Specialist is:

A Final Word

We wrote this WTW Guidebook to show you how the WTW employment program can work for you, so you and your family can benefit the most from this program.

This guidebook should answer many of the questions you have about your rights and responsibilities, your individual WTW Plan, what activities are available to you, and what you can do if you disagree with any action taken.

If you still have questions, please be sure to ask your Employment Specialist. Our CalWORKs WTW staff is here to help you and your family become self-sufficient and reach your goals.

Remember – The goal of the WTW program is to help you on the road to success by assisting you to prepare for work and find a job and career, so you can support yourself and your family. Together we can make this happen.



Let's celebrate your success!

You can do it! We can help.



COUNTY of VENTURA
Human Services Agency

America's JobCenter
*of California*SM

Locations*

America's Job Center – Oxnard

2901 N. Ventura Road, 3rd Floor, Oxnard | 805-204-5100
Resource Room | 805-204-5171

America's Job Center Affiliate – East County

2900 N. Madera Road, Simi Valley | 805-955-2282

Ventura Community Service Center – Resource Room

4651 Telephone Road, #200, Ventura | 805-654-3434

Santa Clara Valley Community Service Center – Resource Room

725 E. Main Street, #100, Santa Paula | 805-933-8315

Fillmore Community Service Center – Resource Room

828 Ventura Street, Suite 200, Fillmore | 805-524-8666

Moorpark Community Service Center – Resource Room

(Ruben Castro Human Services Center)

612B Spring Road, Suite 301, Moorpark | 805-523-5444

Thousand Oaks Community Service Center – Resource Room


80 E. Hillcrest Drive, Suite 200, Thousand Oaks | 805-449-7320

888-472-4463

www.vchsa.org

TTY 800-735-2922 or 711

*Availability for in-person services may vary. Please contact your local Center by phone for additional information.

For information 24 hours/day, 7 days/week
about community resources near you:  **Call 211**
Help Starts Here