

Placer County Department of Human Services

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| EFFECTIVE DATE: 08/01/10 REVISION DATE: 1/16/2019 | TITLE: Draft Self-Initiated Program (SIP) | PROGRAM: ES |
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| Definition | <p>A Self-Initiated Program is an activity in which a participant may continue in an undergraduate degree or certificate program that leads to self-supporting employment. The participant must maintain satisfactory progress in the educational activity in order to continue in the plan. If the participant does not continue satisfactorily, the participant must participate in Employment Services activities in accordance with Section 42-711.5.</p> |
| References | <p>References: EAS 42-708.72, 42-716.6, AB 1811 ACL 18-115, ACL 14-47, ACL 04-41 ACIN I-47-08, ACIN I-84-06</p> |
| Participant Requirements | <p>Each <u>potential</u> SIP participant must complete an application packet and meet the following requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The participant must be enrolled, meaning he/she has applied for and been accepted into a degree or certificate program prior to his/her first Appraisal after January 1, 1998 or the date he or she would have been appraised if he or she had not failed, without good cause, to appear for the appraisal appointment. He or she must be making satisfactory progress in that program, and the County Welfare Department (CWD) determines the program is likely to lead to self-sufficiency. A participant who possesses a baccalaureate degree will not be eligible unless he or she is pursuing a California regular classroom teaching credential at an accredited institution. 2) The participant is given a SIP packet at orientation in order to begin the determination of their self-initiated program application. At appraisal, an appointment is set to have the participant return within 30 days to provide all documentation necessary to determine the approval or denial of the SIP application. 3) The participant must complete the Self-Initiated Program Application (P-54 P-54a, VTR 54b) and provide the following supporting documentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ transcripts ▪ copy of grades ▪ attendance ▪ local labor market connection, agreed upon by the CWD and local education agencies or providers ▪ their career goals |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ an educational plan, (P-61) or private school contract showing scheduled classes. The school must be accredited, and the websites to confirm this are: https://www.wscuc.org/institutions or https://www.bppe.ca.gov/. <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;">4) According to EAS Manual Section 42.711.54, the SIP applicant must be making satisfactory progress, as determined by the provider, and that continuing in the program must be likely to lead to self-supporting employment. The Client Services Counselor must assess the above. <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;">5) The participant must provide proof of their progress to the Client Services Counselor. They are required to provide to their Client Services Counselors monthly attendance and progress verified by each institution. Attendance is tracked by the P-224. Grades and progress reports are provided at intervals (semester, modules, for example) designated by each institution. The expectation is that the participant earns a C grade or higher and that 2.0 cumulative grade point average is considered acceptable progress. The participant must let the Client Services Counselor know right away when they drop a class or change their schedule to ensure that all classes taken are requirements for their respective major. <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;">6) The participant must meet the 20, 30, or 35 hour participation criteria, but not the 20 hour core and non-core requirement during the WTW 24-Month Time Clock. Participants will be assigned to additional activities to supplement hours if needed. These additional hours of participation will be written into the Employment Services Plan. NOTE: In a two-parent family where both parents are participating in a SIP, both parents must participate 30 hours a week unless one parent is an exempt volunteer. The participant must participate in other approved activities during an educational break, according to EAS Manual Section 42.711.547. For approvable SIPs, an assessment is not necessary to be placed in a Work Experience (WEX) position. Their assigned WEX site should be tied to and compliment their career choice. A related work site will provide the client with an opportunity to enhance their knowledge, develop a skill set related to the career choice and increase their ability to be competitive in the labor market. 7) Within 30 calendar days, all necessary supporting documents and the SIP application packet is to be given to the supervisor for review. If the participant has failed to provide all necessary documents to determine a SIP approval, the Client Services Counselor will deny the SIP application and send a Notice with the denial reason additional appropriate information for Fair Hearing rights and an assessment will need to be completed. |
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| Client Services Counselor Requirements | <p>1) At appraisal, Client Services Counselors must set a 30-day appointment for the client to return with the SIP application and all supportive documents.</p> <p>2) Review the supporting documents including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SIP Program Application: P-54 P-54a, and VTR 54b ▪ Transcripts, grades and attendance ▪ Educational plan, and/or P-61, showing schedule of classes and completion date of the course of study, including the degree or credential they are trying to achieve. ▪ Assessment results for English and Math, if attending a Community College. ▪ Statement of labor market connection: three employers who would hire them with the skills they acquire, proving that the course of study will lead to the clients becoming self-supporting. ▪ Three job titles that the student could compete for once graduated. ▪ A one paragraph summary of their goals. ▪ A completed WTW 8 addressing use of Student Financial Aid to meet support service needs. <p>3) Upon receiving the information above, within the 30 day deadline, the Client Services Counselor must update CalWin, including the Education screen, Assessment scores, the Employment Services Plan (WTW2), and send the supporting documentation to Document imaging to be filed under the WTW School/VTR section. Case comments should outline the information received above.</p> <p>Reminder: Client Services Counselors also must confirm that the school is accredited.</p> <p>4) For participants whose course of study is not on the State list, the CWD shall determine if their program leads to employment. The participant shall be allowed to continue in the program up to the time period specified under EAS Manual Section 42-716.11, if the participant demonstrates to the CWD that the program will lead to self-supporting employment. Documentation must be included in the employment services plan. Additionally, the CWD shall inform the recipient <u>in writing</u> of the process by which the recipient may demonstrate that a program not on the list of approved SIPs will lead to self-supporting employment. Page 4 of the SIP Application is what the participant must complete in order for their course of study not on the list of approvable SIPs to be considered. (42-711.543) The labor market link can be provided to the participant: www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/ and an assessment is recommended to help the client find an approvable major/course of study.</p> |
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Client Services Counselor Requirements

- 5) If the client has not changed to an approvable course of study at an accredited school in the time period allowed, the client will be required to participate in another ES approvable activity for their 20, 30 or 35 hours per week. If they do not participate, a compliance review is initiated.
- 6) Client Services Counselors must complete a WTW 2 form to show:
 - a. The number of hours required for classroom (including online), supervised and unsupervised study time, laboratory, or internship activities.
 - b. Client Services Counselors must include additional activities so that the participant meets their 20/30/35 hour obligation. They can fill hours with any approvable ES activity. In a two parent household, when one parent is exempt, the participant must participate 35 hours per week in SIP or concurrent ES activities.
 - c. The Client Services Counselor must list what the participant will be doing during educational breaks and the time frame of those breaks. Client Services Counselors must list supportive services provided if the participant is not using financial aid to cover expenses.
- 7) Regarding hours of participation:
 - a. When entering in CalWIN, a SIP should be designated as a Post-Secondary Education. The Welfare-To-Work 2 (WTW2) form should be checked as a SIP and not held to Core/Non-Core hours during the WTW 24-Month Time Clock.
 - b. For SIP participants, remember to keep the distinction that a client is a SIP and meets the criteria, especially if a client goes off aid, or transfers to a new worker.
 - c. For E2lite reporting purposes, SIP participation should be reported as Vocational Education and Training for the first 12 months, then reported as Education Related to Employment (if participant has no GED) or Job Skills Training Related to Employment thereafter.
- 8) Concurrent or prerequisite classes:
 - a) Any education activities, including those required by an individual's assessment or other activities on the Education plan must also be included in the WTW plan.
 - b) Classes that **are not** required by the client's program or the education provider are not required to be included in the WTW plan.
 - c) If the course is combined into the client's WTW plan, then supportive services shall be provided by the CWD for that additional course.
 - d) If the client needs to complete courses **required** by the program along with elective courses required by the institution for the certificate, degree, or graduation requirements the WTW plan shall be written to include all required classes.

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Client Services Counselor Requirements

On-Line Classes:

See Policy on On-Line courses.

Supportive Services

Tuition and school fees in the nature of tuition are not ancillary expenses.

The county is not obligated to pay these costs when a person or entity, other than the county or county authorized entity, contracts for the training (42-750.114 (a)).

After approval as a SIP, the participant must be reimbursed for allowable supportive services incurred prior to signing an employment services plan when the expense meets all of the following conditions:

- The expense was incurred after the beginning date of aid.
(Child care reimbursement is limited to the later of the beginning date of aid or 30 days prior to services being requested)
- The expense was necessary for participation during the academic period or term (semester or quarter) in which the SIP is approved.
- The expense is determined eligible under CalWORKs regulations.
- The expense was an unreimbursed out-of-pocket cost.

*Supportive service expenses that are incurred prior to the beginning date of aid, even if the expenses were actually paid for after the beginning date of aid, should not be reimbursed. All County Letter No. 08-36 for Camacho v. Allenby Lawsuit <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/lettersnotices/PG1458.htm>

Necessary supportive services include, but are not limited to, ancillary, books, lab or materials fees, transportation, and child care services. A participant has the option to request and receive advance payments for supportive services and are required to provide proof of support services purchases.

NOTE: Participants should check with their educational institution for any supportive services that they can access to help them be successful.

Placer County will not pay for books twice when classes are dropped or retaken in a subsequent semester. Only books and materials that are mandatory will be paid. Any books and materials that are optional are not reimbursable.

Placer County HHS will not pay for computers, cable or internet access fees to access courses. Colleges and local libraries provide these services free of charge.

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**Client Services
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Good Cause

Per EAS 42-713 A participant shall be excused from participation in welfare-to-work activities for good cause in accordance with Section 42-713.2, when the CWD determines there is a condition or other circumstance that temporarily prevents, or significantly impairs, the individual's ability to be regularly employed or to participate in welfare-to-work activities.

.11 The county shall review the continuing validity of the good cause determination as necessary, but at least every three months.

.12 The participant shall cooperate with the county and provide information, including written documentation, as required to complete the review.

***Any person whose previously approved SIP is interrupted for reasons that meet the good cause criteria in Section 42-713.2 may resume participation in the same program if the participant maintained good standing in the program while participating and the SIP continues to meet the approval criteria.

Volunteer Defined and Volunteer VTR Status

"Volunteer" means a CalWORKs applicant or recipient or Employment Services customer who is not required to participate in the Welfare-to-Work Program that chooses to participate in an approved Welfare-to-Work activity.

A person who is entitled to an exemption and is volunteering in an education or training program may, if otherwise qualified, be approved as a SIP when their exemption ends.

Verifying Participation

Clients are required to provide verification of satisfactory participation, (P-224) including additional documents, must be documented as part of a WTW plan prior to a client signing his or her plan. CWDs are reminded that CalWORKs clients are not required to seek additional verification of activities, if such verification would force disclosure of information that is confidential. The CalWORKs Coordinator or their college Client Services Counselor will verify hours for participants attending Sierra College and other community colleges. It is the client's responsibility to provide written verification of participation when attending another school (for example: MTI, Western Career, etc.). If the school is willing to sign the P-224 that will be accepted, if not, then another verification will need to be provided. If the school or institution cannot or will not provide verification of attendance hours, the activity is not eligible to be part of the participant's ES Plan.

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Ending a SIP

An individual participating in a SIP can voluntarily choose to end his or her SIP at any time before the program is completed. If the individual indicates an interest in ending the SIP, the county should discuss what other welfare-to-work plan options the individual may have, including whether an assessment would be necessary. When necessary, an assessment pursuant to Section 42-711.55 must be conducted prior to the individual choosing to end his or her SIP in order for the individual to make an informed decision about the activities that would replace the SIP hours in his or her welfare-to-work plan. This discussion must be documented in the individual's case file.