

# CalWORKs County System Improvement Plan (Cal-SIP) Report

County: Yolo

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# Executive Summary

## 1. Please summarize the performance measures selected for improvement.

During the first 2021-2026 Cal-OAR cycle, Engagement Rate, Sanction Rate, and First Participation Activity were chosen for system improvement. Our CWD is committed to enhancing the three chosen measures by offering and publicizing incentives to participants. We will update our incentives process to match the CalWORKs 2.0 framework and the values of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging, which means engaging participants with a trauma-informed approach and rewarding small achievements. To enhance the effectiveness of our incentive program, we will provide training sessions for our staff members. The training will cover how to inform the participants about the incentives, how to process the incentives in a timely and accurate manner, and how to align the incentives with the desired outcomes. We will utilize a combination of internal reports, the Cal-OAR Dashboard, staff, and partner feedback to keep track of our progress and modify our action steps as needed.

## 2. Please provide a comprehensive list of improvement strategies identified within the Cal-SIP.

Yolo county seeks to improve their performance by implementing the following strategies:

**Goal 1:** Increase Engagement Rate to 37% from 31%. Review using Cal-OAR Dashboard and County Ad-hoc reports improving by 1.5% every 6 months within 2 years (for a total of 6% improvement).

- Strategy 1: Increase Engagement Rate by actively promoting incentives.
- Strategy 2: Utilize best practices to reach a diverse community.

**Goal 2:** Decrease Sanction Rate to 8% from 10%. Review using Cal-OAR Dashboard and County AD-hoc reports improving by 0.5% every 6 months within 2 years (for a total of 2% improvement).

- Strategy 1: Expand participants' education in incentives that Yolo County offers.
- Strategy 2: Expand staff education and hold refresher trainings.

**Goal 3:** Increase First Activity Attendance to 76% from 74%. Review using Cal-OAR Dashboard and County Ad-hoc reports improving 0.5% every 6 months within 2 years (for a total of 2% improvement).

- Strategy 1: Increase WTW Orientation and OCAT completion timeliness rate.
- Strategy 2: Review incentive impact monthly

## Introduction

The Cal-OAR is a local, data-driven program management system that facilitates continuous improvement of county CalWORKs programs by collecting, analyzing, and disseminating outcomes and best practices. As required by Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) 11523, Cal-OAR consists of three core components: performance indicators, a county CalWORKs self-assessment (Cal-CSA), and a CalWORKs system improvement plan (Cal-SIP).

The Cal-OAR continuous quality improvement (Cal-CQI) process (which includes the Cal-CSA and Cal-SIP) will take place over five-year cycles. The first Cal-OAR cycle commenced on July 1, 2021, with the implementation of Cal-OAR. The Cal-SIP is the second component of the Cal-OAR CQI process. The Cal-SIP is based on the information gathered and reported from the Cal-CSA, each CWD will develop a plan for improving their CalWORKs program. The Cal-SIP will select a measure or set of measures for focused improvements and development to improve the selected performance measures while pairing each Cal-SIP goal with an equity goal and/ or strategy.

### 1. Describe your approach to the Cal-SIP Report

Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency, Service Centers, which will hereafter be referred to as County Welfare Department (CWD), used the tools provided by CDSS and Cal-OAR to draft the Cal-SIP report. When selecting our CWD's goals, we utilized the SMART method tool (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bound) and the Needs-Gap analysis. We collaborated with internal staff to identify areas of improvement, created timelines for process completion, established weekly meetings, connected with county liaison to establish Board of Supervisors presentation timelines, and established a peer review timeline with Contra Costa County. To ensure the relevance of the Cal-SIP, we identified partner organizations who could offer valuable feedback and collaborate in the development of the Cal-SIP. We held virtual meetings to discuss ideas for enhancing program for the mutual benefit of our participants. Our approach to the Cal-SIP is to view it as an opportunity to examine gaps in engagement strategies/processes that will focus on specific improvement measures that will yield the best results for the current Cal-OAR term.

Our CWD is committed to creating interactive information gathering strategies for current and former participants for the Cal-SIP to identify unmet participant needs. In that spirit, we are currently providing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) trainings to all staff in our Service Centers. We strive to create a racially aware and culturally responsive workforce and work environment. It is our intent to make this training mandatory on an annual basis to ensure staff are aware of the different needs of the populations we serve in our county.

## **2. Briefly describe past and current system improvement efforts.**

Our CWD previously applied early engagement efforts into the WTW process. This involved organizing a daily back-up calendar to have a case manager available to meet with participants immediately after they completed their eligibility intake appointments. This was an opportunity to introduce participants to the WTW program and its benefits, and to let them know that they would soon hear from their case manager who would guide them through the process. Another strategy was to have a dedicated case manager who would conduct all Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool (OCAT) assessments before participants were assigned to a case manager to create a WTW plan. An Intensive Case Management team was established to support our most vulnerable families as they work together to resolve family crisis before transitioning the adults to employment directed activities. We also piloted CalWORKs 2.0 framework which included having all staff complete a mandatory series of family engagement trainings administered by the University of Davis, California and integrating CalWORKs 2.0 tools into our service delivery methods.

Currently, all case managers are responsible for conducting Orientation/OCAT appraisals for participants on their caseloads. Our CWD created alternative access platforms for participants to engage in services remotely through Google applications, a Virtual Employment Center, and other online learning tools such Cell-Ed and Metrix Learning. We followed CDSS guidelines to implement COVID-19 WTW flexibilities by adapting our services to meet the diverse needs of our participants and will continue using them to support our participants. For instance, workshops and job search assistance were made virtually available to participants on a case-by-case basis. Our CWD now operates on a hybrid system combining face-to-face and virtual options for participants to ensure everyone can access our services, regardless of their personal circumstances.

## **3. Briefly describe the success or failure of those efforts at improving service delivery or programmatic outcomes.**

Our CWD did not obtain sufficient internal data to evaluate the effectiveness of the early engagement strategy. The single OCAT case manager strategy had some benefits, according to staff feedback. Staff reported a positive impact on the case manager's ability to focus on engaging participants on a more interpersonal level since the primary focus was shifted away from meeting documentation requirements. However, staff also noted this strategy created a silo which impacted their opportunity to learn the OCAT process and limited rapport building opportunities with participants. The ICM team's involvement enabled WTW Case Managers to devote more time to helping work-ready participants, while participants with significant barriers received comprehensive wrap-around services. The CalWORKs 2.0 Pilot Team faced staff turnover issues that prevented our CWD from evaluating the pilot's outcomes. Implementation of hybrid options had some positive effects on initial engagement; however, these options did not necessarily translate to higher participation rates overall as participants did not stay engaged. Our Cal-CSA pointed to the need to explore options to maintain participants' engagement for longer periods and to encourage them to complete the activities.

#### **4. An overview of the CWD's organizational vision and mission (optional).**

Our CWD envisions a Yolo County where everyone is healthy, safe, and vibrant where all have the opportunity to thrive, and the environment is protected for future generations. Our mission is to make a difference by enhancing the quality of life in our community. As Yolo County employees, we uphold our core values of service, performance, integrity, responsibility, innovation, and teamwork. We recognize this is a great place to live and work. We are committed to doing right by others through public service and maintaining the trust of our residents and peers. Together, we will continue to foster a healthy, supportive, and professional environment, striving always for excellence.

# **Section 1: Measures for Improvement and Strategies**

## **Part 1: Measure and Goal Narrative**

### **1. Describe the reason for selecting the measure or programmatic grouping of measures.**

Our CWD selected Engagement Rate, Sanction Rate, and First Activity Attendance Rate as a grouping of measures for improvement. The intent is to impact all measures by utilizing incentives as a driving force to increase participation. We believe that in engaging participants via the use of incentives, sanction rates will decrease, curing sanctions will drive Orientation/Appraisal timeliness, and first activity engagement rates will increase work participation rates overall. We anticipate that by promoting incentives at different points of contact with participants and subsequent education of available supportive services, participants will be open to participation opportunities in approved Welfare to Work (WTW) activities. Staff will receive incentive refresher training to ensure they are adequately informing and educating participants on available incentives. To account for equity, the Cal-OAR team will review disaggregated engagement rate, sanction rate, and first activity participation rate data on a quarterly basis to ensure similar performance measure outcomes are achieved for subpopulations by spoken language as compared to the aggregate county rate overall.

### **2. Do partners and collaborators agree this is a measure or programmatic grouping of measures that should be focused on at this time?**

Contributing partners, CommuniCare, Yolo County Children's Alliance (YCCA), and identified Service Center staff participated in a facilitated Cal-SIP design session where feedback collected indicated a need for re-evaluating engagement strategies and support educating internal staff on effectively and consistently promoting incentives.

### **3. Describe any anticipated interactions with other measures.**

All measures are interrelated. For the measures selected, decreasing Sanction Rates will result in increased Engagement Rates and overall First Activity Attendance Rates; these increases should result in increased Work Participation Rates. For non-selected measures, our CWD anticipates that increasing On-line CalWORKs Appraisal Tool (OCAT) /Appraisal Timeliness rate will positively impact First Activity Attendance rate, Orientation Attendance rate and Phase 2 measures such as OCAT/Appraisal to Next Activity Timeliness rate, Ancillary Services Access rate, and Transportation Provision Timeliness rate.

### **4. Describe how the CWD will track performance measure improvement.**

Our CWD will monitor performance measures via the use of internal CalSAWS reports, county internal participant surveys, and Cal-OAR team meetings to monitor participation trends. We will be using the Cal-OAR data dashboard to monitor changes in participation rates for the selected measures to determine if incentives need to be changed on a semi-annual basis. We will develop and disseminate internal surveys to

find out participant knowledge of incentives available and if incentives influenced attendance and completion of activities. Data will be collected and tracked. Our CWD will send out surveys to participants on a periodic basis via e-mail blasts. The Cal-OAR team will host regular meetings to discuss the development of ongoing improvements/strategies to increase engagement and first activity participation and decrease sanction rates. The Cal-OAR team will hold periodic meetings with selected internal staff, community partners, and peer review county for purposes of developing the Cal-SIP report.

## Part 2: Goal-level Descriptions

**Goal 1:** Increase Engagement Rate to 37% from 31%. Review using Cal-OAR Dashboard and County Ad hoc reports, improving by 1.5% every 6 months within 2 years (for a total of a 6.0% improvement)

- **Strategy 1:** Increase Engagement Rate by actively promoting incentives
- **Strategy 2:** Utilize best practices to reach a diverse community

### 1. Explain the reasoning or methodology which was used to determine this goal.

According to the Cal-OAR dashboard, Yolo County has a higher engagement rate than the state average. Our CWD believes that this is related to our decision not to apply blanket good cause during the Public Health Emergency (PHE). We expect that other counties will resume engaging their participants soon, which will raise the state average and affect our relative performance. We value participant engagement as a crucial factor for achieving positive outcomes and impacts for both the participants and the program. Therefore, our CWD is taking the steps to prepare for the possible effects of the current situation, even though our rates are favorable. To help identify and address any gaps or disparities in the engagement rate for different subpopulations compared to the county average, the Cal-OAR team will monitor and analyze the engagement rate data by spoken language quarterly.

### 2. What led the CWD to these improvement strategies?

Our CWD has a higher sanction rate than the state average, which indicates that we need to improve our engagement strategies. Our solution is to launch a strong campaign of incentives that can appeal to and keep the participants interested in our activities. We want to reward and acknowledge their efforts and create a positive and motivating environment that encourages engagement and participation. Our CWD recognizes the diversity and dynamism of our communities, and we strive to engage them with dignity and respect. We aim to adopt a racial equity and inclusion perspective in our engagement practices, so that we can listen to and address the needs and goals of all our participants. During the pandemic, we saw a need to revise our business process to allow more flexibility and create a more dynamic work environment that can meet the challenges of participants.

### 3. Discuss any research or literature that supports the strategies chosen. Cite reference(s), if applicable.

We gained valuable insights and guidance from reviewing historical articles that explored engagement strategies in public assistance programs. The articles referenced below helped us to select and implement the strategies that best suited our goals and context.

*References:*

1. Pavetti, L., & Stanley, M. (2016). *Using Incentives to Increase Engagement and Persistence in Two-Generation Programs: A Review of the Literature with Key Insights. Family Income Support – Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Building Better Programs.*
2. Bachani Di Giovanna, P. (2021). *Engaging Marginalized Communities: Challenges and Best Practices. ICMA, PM Magazines - Article.*
3. Vu, C.M., Anthony, E.K., Austin, M.J. (2009). *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services. Alliance for Children and Families, www.FamiliesInSociety.org*

**4. Describe the roles of each partner and collaborator in implementing the selected strategies.**

Support in engagement efforts from eligibility and upfront employment services staff are critical to the success of our strategies since they are often the initial point of contact for our participants. Our partners and collaborators play a crucial role in our incentive promotion strategy. They help us convey the value and opportunities of our programs to the participant as well as providing them with relevant information about the incentives that we provide to motivate participation and engagement. Our CWD, in partnership with Team Equity, strives to help staff develop competencies and awareness to engage our participants effectively through a series of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) trainings.

**5. Identify any staff education and training needs, and include any technical assistance needed to implement strategy and achieve goal.**

The CWD will conduct regular trainings that cover the current and updated list of incentives to ensure staff are well-informed of incentives available to participants. Staff will have the option to attend the trainings virtually. The list will be revised as necessary to reflect the changing needs and preferences of participants. Incentives information will also be included in the materials that are given to participants during CalWORKs intake, recertification, and orientation (when an adult rejoins the household). Staff will remind participants about the incentives at various stages of their engagement.

As part of our commitment to increase skills in DEIB, staff will receive trainings that will enhance their knowledge and skills in these areas. These trainings are mandatory and will cover topics such as Anti-Bias and Cultural Responsiveness, Historical Trauma and Intergenerational Trauma in Yolo County and Surrounding Areas, and Trauma Informed Care and Psychological Safety in the Workplace.

**6. Describe how the CWD plans to mitigate and/or address both known internal and external barriers to achieve this goal.**

Incentives are recent resources that can be used more effectively to foster engagement. Engagement is not an isolated goal, but rather one that depends on the willingness and interest of the participants. Therefore, the CWD will consider the needs, preferences,

and motivations of the participants as it works on revising the incentives to make them more relevant and meaningful. Appealing promotional materials showcasing the activities and incentive amounts that participants can obtain by accomplishing them will be developed. The CWD will continue to evaluate and improve the incentive program by gathering feedback from employees, tracking performance indicators, and making changes as needed. The CWD would like to offer higher incentive amounts to increase participation but is presently constrained by budget limitations.

**7. Describe how your facility will continuously evaluate each action step taken to see if improvement is being achieved. (e.g., tracking tools, meetings, monitoring, etc.) Include who will be responsible for follow up and compliance.**

The Cal-OAR team members will convene regularly to evaluate the outcomes, track the progress and make any necessary adjustments to ensure effective implementation of each action step. The team will also maintain frequent communication with our partners, collaborators, and peer counties to solicit feedback and share best practices. Internal reports will be analyzed to identify trends, patterns, and areas of improvement. The team will examine the Cal-OAR Dashboard to compare it with internal reports to see if there are any discrepancies or similarities in the trends. Whether we were successful in increasing engagement rate, or if we had a decrease or no change, we will continue to develop any necessary improvements to our action steps and ensure that similar patterns are observed in subgroups by spoken language.

Strategy 1: Increase Engagement Rate by actively promoting incentives

- a) Action Step 1: Create incentive flyers
- b) Action Step 2: Add flyer to intake and orientation/appraisal packets
- c) Action Step 3: Have eligibility staff introduce incentives at intake and recertification
- d) Action Step 4: Have Employment Services Specialist (ESS)/Intensive Case Managers (ICM) emphasize incentives at Orientation/Appraisal and reiterate them at all follow up appointments

Strategy 2: Utilize best practices to reach a diverse community

- a) Action Step 1: Staff will receive county-initiated Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) trainings
- b) Action Step 2: Revise business process to allow more flexibility
- c) Action Step 3: Review disaggregated engagement rate data on a quarterly basis to ensure that engagement rate is not significantly lower for subpopulations by spoken language

**Goal 2:** Decrease Sanction Rate to 8% from 10%. Review using Cal-OAR Dashboard and County Ad hoc reports, improving by 0.5% every 6 months within 2 years (for a total of a 2.0% improvement)

- **Strategy 1:** Expand participants' education in incentives that Yolo County offers
- **Strategy 2:** Expand staff education and hold refresher trainings

**1. Explain the reasoning or methodology which was used to determine this goal.**

Our sanction rates have been higher as compared to the state average before and after the pandemic, due to low participant engagement. Our CWD noted that despite good cause flexibilities during the pandemic, families did not readily take advantage of the opportunity to cure their sanctions; hence, the sanction rate remained high compared to the state average. We expect that by revising the existing incentives business process and re-introducing the benefits of incentives to participants and staff; staff will be more apt to promote incentives and participants will be motivated to cure their sanctions. A reduction in sanctioned individuals will lead to a higher engagement rate overall. Our CWD will also monitor incentive impact on sanction rates by spoken language to assess disparities between different subpopulations compared to the county average and refine incentives to bridge any identified gaps. The Cal-OAR team will monitor incentive issuances in the aggregate/overall and disaggregate by spoken language to ensure incentive issuance is not disproportionately favoring one subpopulation compared to others.

**2. What led the CWD to these improvement strategies?**

In reading LaDonna Pavetti and Megan Stanley's 2016 Review on Using Incentives to Increase Engagement and Persistence in Two-Generation Programs, it is noted that incentives can be used as extrinsic motivators to increase intrinsic motivation to achieve long term success so long as those incentives are right sized. Our CWD intends to track the use of incentives as a motivator for engagement and review changes over a period of time to determine the impact on overall participation. Our CWD plans to update incentive amounts to correspond with the duration of the activities. As part of our continued efforts to improve our engagement strategies, our CWD will look at adjusting incentive amounts if performance monitoring demonstrates a lack of improvement. We expect that the increased incentive amounts will motivate participants to cure their sanctions and stay engaged for longer periods of time. Our CWD will monitor changes in sanction rates by spoken language through an equity-based lens to ensure all participants are benefiting from incentives.

**3. Discuss any research or literature that supports the strategies chosen. Cite reference(s), if applicable.**

CW 2.0 research shows the benefits of using a strength-based approach, and that providing a supportive environment to participants will build trust and rapport with

participants thereby increasing engagement. CW 2.0 encourages CWD' s across the state to meet participants where they are and provides a framework for staff to initiate conversations with participants. Meeting participants where they are at and incentivizing participation in any capacity will drive engagement. LaDonna Pavetti and Megan Stanley's 2016 Review on Using Incentives to Increase Engagement and Persistence in Two-Generation Programs support our strategy. Our CWD is actively promoting Equity and Inclusion by providing DEIB trainings, the trainings will provide staff skills that can be incorporated into CalWORKs 2.0 practices.

#### **4. Describe the roles of each partner and collaborator in implementing the selected strategies.**

External and internal partners and collaborators will be essential in putting the strategies into practice. External partners will promote incentive amounts as well as the benefits of using our CWD to access services. When participants walk through the doors, partner staff will emphasize the available services and the incentives associated with completion of services. Participants will learn about incentives at multiple points of contact in the community, including our service centers, in writing, and on information boards located throughout the various partner agencies.

#### **5. Identify any staff education and training needs, and include any technical assistance needed to implement strategy and achieve goal.**

Our CWD will highlight how incentives can drive engagement and increase participation initially during induction training and as a reminder for existing staff at weekly staffing meetings as needed. Incentives will be framed with an equity informed lens that will transition to conversations to be had with participants of all subpopulations served through our CWD. Communication e-mails will be sent to supervisors for dissemination to staff, as necessary. Literature will be placed in shared files in TEAMS and our county's internal website for staff access.

#### **6. Describe how the CWD plans to mitigate and/or address both known internal and external barriers to achieve this goal.**

Our Cal-OAR team anticipates that some staff will be resistant to these proposed strategies. It will be our Cal-OAR team's responsibility to emphasize the benefits of incentives as an engagement springboard; and to create a friendly competitive environment amongst staff via staff incentives for those who have achieved the greatest change in engagement. Staff feedback and communication will be critical in making needed adjustments/improvements to the strategies; paying particular attention to the promotion of equity and inclusive language in those strategies as they are adjusted and improved.

**7. Describe how your facility will continuously evaluate each action step taken to see if improvement is being achieved. (e.g., tracking tools, meetings, monitoring, etc.) Include who will be responsible for follow up and compliance**

The Cal-OAR team is working closely with our IT Department to develop custom Ad Hoc reports to track our CWD's performance measures including the ones we aim to improve. Our Cal-OAR team plans on meeting regularly to access and review data at periodic intervals for comparison purposes and to ensure the strategies are having a positive impact on the selected measures, paying particular attention to data relating to spoken language.

Strategy 1: Expand participants' education in incentives that Yolo County offers

- a) Action Step 1: Attach incentive flyers to sanction letter that is mailed out to participants
- b) Action Step 2: Have ESS/ICM contact participant via telephone to inform participants about available incentives and benefits of participating
- c) Action Step 3: Implementing pre-sanction home-visits to educate participants on incentives

Strategy 2: Expand staff education and hold refresher trainings

- Action Step 1: Have supervisors review incentives business process with staff and urge staff to promote incentives
- Action Step 2: Monitor incentive issuances overall by spoken language to ensure incentive issuance is not disproportionately favoring one subpopulation compared to others
- Action Step 3: Have staff go through mandatory CW 2.0 Refresher trainings

**Goal 3:** Increase First Activity Attendance Rate to 76% from 74%. Review using Cal-OAR Dashboard and County Ad hoc reports, improving by 0.5% every 6 months within 2 years

- **Strategy 1:** Increase WTW Orientation and OCAT completion timeliness rate
- **Strategy 2:** Review incentive impact monthly

**1. Explain the reasoning or methodology which was used to determine this goal.**

As we strive to improve engagement rates and decrease sanction rates, we must first be able to get our participants to complete orientation/appraisal timely in order to increase first participation activity rate. Although our first activity participation rate is currently higher than the state average, our CWD believes that this measure is the starting point for raising our engagement rate. Our Cal-OAR team will evaluate first activity attendance rate data in order to gain a better knowledge of our participants subpopulations. The purpose of this analysis is to determine whether or not the attendance rate is considerably lower for subpopulations based on spoken language in comparison to the overall county rate.

**2. What led the CWD to these improvement strategies?**

To meet our CWD's goal of increasing engagement rates while simultaneously reducing sanction rates, it is essential that we quickly engage participants to actively partake in their first WTW plan activity. Incentivizing completion of orientation/appraisal would increase the likelihood of participants attending subsequent activities; the Cal-OAR team will monitor progress by reviewing incentive reports on a monthly basis.

**3. Discuss any research or literature that supports the strategies chosen. Cite reference(s), if applicable.**

Our CWD's efforts to promote incentives could serve as an effective strategy to increase participation and engagement. According to the cited literature below, implementing higher-value rewards helps to keep participants motivated and achieve long-term goals. Furthermore, studies have shown that providing incentives immediately after completing a task enhances confidence and a sense of self-efficacy (Pavetti & Stanley, 2016).

*References*

*Pavetti, L. & Stanley, M (2016, December). Using Incentives to Increase Engagement and Persistence in Two-Generation Programs. Retrieved August 14, 2023.*  
*<https://buildingbetterprograms.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Incentives-Literature-Review-Final1.pdf>*

**4. Describe the roles of each partner and collaborator in implementing the selected strategies.**

The goal of the CWD is to enhance the use of resources and implement efficient management strategies in order to prioritize the prompt completion of Orientation/Appraisals. In addition to the timely execution of planning and conducting appraisals, our internal partners play a vital role in promoting the practice of reminding participants about the wide variety of incentives available. We welcome constructive feedback from our collaborators and partners, and we will invite them to attend regular meetings with the Cal-OAR team to elicit feedback.

**5. Identify any staff education and training needs, and include any technical assistance needed to implement strategy and achieve goal.**

Additional staff training and continuing education on the types of incentives accessible to participants will be provided. Our CWD will provide staff with refresher trainings on existing procedures for issuing incentives and the various options available to participants. We will monitor and revise the list of incentives as necessary. Our CWD will move forward with incorporating DEIB trainings into the delivery of program services to better support participants from a trauma-informed lens.

**6. Describe how the CWD plans to mitigate and/or address both known internal and external barriers to achieve this goal.**

Our Cal-OAR team and IT collaborated to develop an internal CWES Onboarding report that captures newly approved CalWORKs cases. The report provides a summary count and percentage of the orientations assigned during the prior month and the time elapsed between case assignment and orientation assignment. The purpose of this report is to keep leadership informed of which cases must be completed in a timely manner in order to increase our first activity participation rate. By ensuring timely completion of appraisals and effectively communicating incentives, we anticipate that our participants will be encouraged to engage in their WTW activity plan.

**7. Describe how your facility will continuously evaluate each action step taken to see if improvement is being achieved. (e.g., tracking tools, meetings, monitoring, etc.) Include who will be responsible for follow up and compliance**

Our Cal-OAR team will continuously monitor and analyze the rate of first participation activity measure in a methodical manner. The Cal-OAR team has established analysts and coordinators who are responsible for leading regular check-in sessions. These meetings provide a platform for staff members to provide updates and receive guidance. The analysts and coordinators assigned to this task will utilize the internal CWES Onboarding report to assess our progress in achieving the objective of enhancing first participation activity rates. In addition to analyzing the CWES Onboarding report, the Cal-OAR team will look at data for first activity attendance rates for subpopulations by

spoken language to ensure that specific subpopulations are not being overlooked. The Cal-OAR team will also utilize this period to reassess the incentive amounts and evaluate for any adjustments needed.

Strategy 1: Increase WTW Orientation and OCAT completion timeliness rate

- a) Action Step 1: Refactor CWES On-Boarding Report to capture the time elapsed between case assignment and when Orientation/OCAT was completed
- b) Action Step 2: Educate participants on additional incentive types
- c) Action Step 3: Add incentive information to program web page
- d) Action Step 4: Review First Activity Attendance rate by spoken language

Strategy 2: Review incentive impact monthly

- a) Action Step 1: Review incentive impact data to determine effectiveness and if incentive amounts need to be increased
- b) Action Step 2: Increase incentive amounts as needed (ex: every 6 months, every year, etc.)
- c) Action Step 3: Administer internal county customer surveys via email blasts
- d) Action Step 4: Collect partner and collaborator feedback

## **Section 2: Peer Review**

### **Peer county/ counties selected for collaboration and consultation:**

Contra Costa

#### **1. Discuss how the Peer Review process impact Cal-SIP development.**

Our CWD's Cal-SIP development was enhanced by the peer review process. We had the chance to interact with Contra Costa County and gain insight from their improvement strategies in the Cal-SIP. Contra Costa shared some of their effective practices to reduce sanctions and increase engagement rates in their county. For instance, they organized Sanction Clinics on Saturdays to re-engage their sanctioned participants, which resulted in lower sanction rates for their county. They also introduced the STEP UP program, which improved Work Participation Rates, and they shared their county's business process on incentive issuances.

#### **2. Discuss steps taken to conduct peer review.**

Our CWD initiated a virtual peer review process with Contra Costa County, a peer county, using Microsoft Teams as the platform. We started with monthly meetings, but soon realized that we could benefit from more frequent interactions. We decided to meet weekly and take turns as the "host" and "peer" county to review our Cal-SIP reports and exchange our county's business practices. We presented our Welfare-to-Work procedure and goals to Contra Costa County and explained why we chose them.

#### **3. Briefly summarize observations and action items from Peer Review process.**

Our CWD received valuable feedback from Contra Costa County on our aim, goals and areas for improvement. Through the peer reviews, we discovered a business process that we adopted and integrated into one of our strategies for increasing engagement and decreasing sanction rates. These suggestions included posting the incentive flyer on our county website or county Facebook when we are done creating it. We learned that Contra Costa County reviews their county's incentive amounts each year to see whether they need to increase the cash amount on incentive as inflation and the cost-of-living increase. Our Cal-OAR team found this information beneficial because we have not revised or adjusted our incentives post implementation. We found that our business practices were similar to Contra Costa County's, even though they are a larger county than ours. Our CWD thought this was an advantage, as we could learn from a slightly bigger county that might have different strategies and methods for serving participants.

## Section 3: Target Measure Summary

**Goal 1:** Increase Engagement Rate to 37% from 31%. Review using Cal-OAR Dashboard and County Ad hoc reports, improving by 1.5% every 6 months within 2 years (for a total of a 6.0% improvement)

**Performance Measure:** Engagement Rate

**Baseline Result:** 31%

<b>Cal-SIP Start Time:</b> 02/01/2024	<b>Progress Report #1:</b> 02/21/2025	<b>Progress Report #2:</b> 03/27/2026	<b>Cycle End Date:</b> 06/30/2026
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### Strategies and Actions:

#### Strategy 1: Increase Engagement Rate by actively promoting incentives

- *Action Step 1:* Create incentive flyers
- *Action Step 2:* Add flyer to intake and orientation/appraisal packets
- *Action Step 3:* Have eligibility staff introduce incentives at intake and recertification
- *Action Step 4:* Have Employment Services Specialist (ESS)/Intensive Case Managers (ICM) emphasize incentives at Orientation/Appraisal and reiterate them at all follow up appointments

#### Strategy 2: Utilize best practices to reach a diverse community

- *Action Step 1:* Staff will receive county-initiated Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) trainings
- *Action Step 2:* Revise business process to allow more flexibility
- *Action Step 3:* Review disaggregated engagement rate data on a quarterly basis to ensure that engagement rate is not significantly lower for subpopulations by spoken language

### Tracking Improvement:

The Cal-OAR team members will convene regularly to evaluate the outcomes, track the progress and make any necessary adjustments to ensure effective implementation of each action step. The team will also maintain frequent communication with our partners, collaborators, and peer counties to solicit feedback and share best practices. Internal reports will be analyzed to identify trends, patterns, and areas of improvement. The team will examine the Cal-OAR Dashboard to compare it with internal reports to see if there are any discrepancies or similarities in the trends. Whether we were successful in increasing engagement rate, or if we had a decrease or no change, we will continue to develop any necessary improvements to our action steps and ensure that similar patterns are observed in subgroups by spoken language.

**Goal 2:** Decrease Sanction Rate to 8% from 10%. Review using Cal-OAR Dashboard and County Ad hoc reports, improving by 0.5% every 6 months within 2 years (for a total of a 2.0% improvement)

**Performance Measure:** Sanction Rate

**Baseline Result:** 10%

<b>Cal-SIP Start</b> Time: 02/01/2024	<b>Progress Report</b> #1: 02/21/2025	<b>Progress Report #2:</b> 03/27/2026	<b>Cycle End Date:</b> 06/30/2026
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**Strategies and Actions:**

Strategy 1: Expand participants' education in incentives that Yolo County offers

- *Action Step 1:* Attach incentive flyers to sanction letter that is mailed out to participants
- *Action Step 2:* Have ESS/ICM contact participant via telephone to inform participants about available incentives and benefits of participating
- *Action Step 3:* Implementing pre-sanction home-visits to educate participants on incentives

Strategy 2: Expand staff education and hold refresher trainings

- *Action Step 1:* Have supervisors review incentives business process with staff and urge staff to promote incentives
- *Action Step 2:* Monitor incentive issuances overall by spoken language to ensure incentive issuance is not disproportionately favoring one subpopulation compared to others
- *Action Step 3:* Have staff go through mandatory CW 2.0 Refresher trainings

**Tracking Improvement:**

The Cal-OAR team is working closely with our IT Department to develop custom Ad Hoc reports to track our CWD's performance measures including the ones we aim to improve. Our Cal-OAR team plans on meeting regularly to access and review data at periodic intervals for comparison purposes and to ensure the strategies are having a positive impact on the selected measures, paying particular attention to data relating to spoken language.

**Goal 3:** Increase First Activity Attendance Rate to 76% from 74%. Review using Cal-OAR Dashboard and County Ad hoc reports, improving by 0.5% every 6 months within 2 years

**Performance Measure: First Activity Attendance Rate**

**Baseline Result: 74%**

<b>Cal-SIP Start</b> Time: 02/01/2024	<b>Progress Report</b> #1: 02/21/2025	<b>Progress Report #2:</b> 03/27/2026	<b>Cycle End Date:</b> 06/30/2026
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**Strategies and Actions:**

Strategy 1: Increase WTW Orientation and OCAT completion timeliness rate

- *Action Step 1:* Refactor CWES On-Boarding Report to capture the time elapsed between case assignment and when Orientation/OCAT was completed
- *Action Step 2:* Have ESS/ICM contact participant via telephone to inform participants about available incentives and benefits of participating
- *Action Step 2:* Educate participants on additional incentive types
- *Action Step 3:* Add incentive information to program web page
- *Action Step 4:* Review First Activity Attendance rate by spoken language

Strategy 2: Review incentive impact monthly

- *Action Step 1:* Review incentive impact data to determine effectiveness and if incentive amounts need to be increased
- *Action Step 2:* Increase incentive amounts as needed (ex: every 6 months, every year, etc.)
- *Action Step 3:* Administer internal county customer surveys via email blasts
- *Action Step 4:* Collect partner and collaborator feedback

**Tracking Improvement:**

Our Cal-OAR team will continuously monitor and analyze the rate of first participation activity measure in a methodical manner. The Cal-OAR team has established analysts and coordinators who are responsible for leading regular check-in sessions. These meetings provide a platform for staff members to provide updates and receive guidance. The analysts and coordinators assigned to this task will utilize the internal CWES Onboarding report to assess our progress in achieving the objective of enhancing first participation activity rates. In addition to analyzing the CWES Onboarding report, the Cal-OAR team will look at data for first activity attendance rates for subpopulations by spoken language to ensure that specific subpopulations are not being overlooked. The Cal-OAR team will also utilize this period to reassess the incentive amounts and evaluate for any adjustments needed.