

Solano County
Local Workforce Plan PY 2017-21 – Two Year Modifications

Partnership Agreement with CalFresh and Human Service Agencies

Braiding Resources and Coordinating Service Delivery

HHS contracts with Goodwill Industries of the Greater East Bay (Goodwill) and the Solano County Department of Probation (Probation) to provide services for CalFresh recipients utilizing the 50% federal reimbursement from CalFresh Employment and Training (E&T). The WDB will work with these two contractors to coordinate service delivery where available.

HHS has had difficulty in identifying community-based organizations and other partners to engage in contractual relationships for CalFresh E&T funding in Solano County. According to a report completed by Applied Survey Research (ASR) in 2016, the county's community-based organizations are heavily reliant on government funding. Solano County is the most under-resourced of the nine Bay area counties, with less than 1% (equating to \$3 per capita) of all grant funds in the Bay area going to Solano County. As such, local organizations and agencies largely do not have non-federal match to support CalFresh E&T services, which limits the CalFresh E&T services available in the county.

Individuals receiving public assistance are a priority population under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (ACT). Of the 433 individuals served by the WDB through WIOA Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) in FY2018, 107 individuals (or 25% of participants) received CalFresh assistance. This provides a considerable opportunity to braid resources and coordinate service delivery. Where available, the WDB will include CalFresh recipients in sector pathway programs offered in the region. This population will have access to supportive services as necessary to increase their success and retention in programs.

Partnering for CalFresh Subsects

The WDB works with Probation where appropriate to leverage services and partner on individuals served through their Centers for Positive Change to align services. Centers for Positive Change provide similar services to the WIOA Title I services. The WDB will conduct outreach to the Centers for Positive Change for any sector pathway programs or special initiatives implemented through WIOA funding.

Workforce Services Available

HHS began contracting with Probation in 2016, leveraging Probation's Centers for Positive Change that provide job readiness, education, and supportive services. Probation leverages AB109 funds to meet the non-federal match required for E&T reimbursement. Probation's services are provided through a contract with Leaders in Community Alternatives (LCA), a community-based organization based in Oakland. For individuals engaged in Centers for Positive Change and receiving CalFresh assistance, HHS subsidizes the training and workforce services. HHS added an Outstation Worker on site who screens and enrolls probationers that may benefit from CalFresh assistance. The limitation in this contract is that only individuals engaged with Probation are eligible for these services – HHS cannot refer CalFresh recipients to these services directly.

HHS engaged a new CalFresh E&T contract in 2018 with Goodwill to serve public assistance recipients who are receiving both CalFresh and General Assistance. Goodwill provided the non-federal cash match through their charitable giving funds. Goodwill provides transitional job assistance to individuals referred from HHS, in addition to job coaching.

These two contracts provide needed workforce services to eligible CalFresh participants. The WDB and HHS through the local planning process will augment the quantity of workforce services provided to this population by addressing the gaps in populations served. Currently, if a CalFresh recipient is neither a General Assistance recipient nor serving probation, there are no workforce services available to them. The WDB will build HHS CalFresh staff's knowledge of AJCC and WDB services available to their population to aid in referrals. The WDB will also utilize its Road to Employment initiative to bring basic job search and workforce assistance to the general CalFresh population. Road to Employment is an initiative that brings AJCC services into the community in order to increase the accessibility of WIOA services. The WDB will partner with HHS to bring Road to Employment to the HHS location in Vallejo during times of CalFresh orientations to maximize service delivery. Through Road to Employment, CalFresh recipients can receive support filling out applications, receive job leads, gain information on other workforce and supportive services, and gain general guidance that can support their employment success.

Integration in Sector Pathway Programs

Per funding availability, the WDB will work with partners to create sector pathway programs that are inclusive of targeted populations, including CalFresh recipients. The WDB will include HHS in program development and identify appropriate pathway programs based on industry need and job seekers interest and aptitude. For any sector pathway program that the WDB creates, staff will ensure outreach efforts include promotion and dissemination among CalFresh recipients and HHS CalFresh E&T contractors. For any individual participating in sector pathway programs, the WDB will offer supportive services based on the needs of the individual.

Supportive Services

An important element of providing workforce services for low-income individuals, including CalFresh recipients, is inclusion of wrap-around and supportive services to aid in program completion and success. At the stakeholder engagement session, partners discussed the need for a holistic approach to working with CalFresh recipients and other low-income individuals. The WDB will work with the partners to develop effective ways to include elements such as essential skills training, motivation, resilience, and job coaching aspects into programming. The WDB will utilize the best practices employed by WDB's CalWORKS program to support program completion for CalFresh recipients.

Retention and Progressing into Livable Wage Careers

In order to effectively serve individuals receiving CalFresh, the WDB and its partners must take into consideration the "Cliff Effect," which is the financial struggle created once an individual loses their public assistance benefits. The WDB and HHS believe that addressing the Cliff Effect is a required component to supporting CalFresh recipients progress into livable wage careers and retain employment. Addressing the Cliff Effect requires strong retention services to help CalFresh recipients make the mentality shift from poverty and to provide a transition safety net for individuals. In the next two years, HHS and the WDB will partner to research the Cliff Effect in Solano County and develop strategies for addressing the negative effects of moving off of public assistance.

HHS, the WDB, and stakeholders also identified a need to support individuals beyond entry-level employment and to provide retention services for CalFresh recipients once employed. The WDB will continue WIOA retention services currently utilized and will explore with partners additional ways to provide retention services post placement. New strategies could include promoting and augment supportive service delivery post-placement and adding new retention service options.