

Solano County
Local Plan PY 17-21 – Two Year Modifications

Partnership Agreement with the California Department of Child Support Services

Existing Workforce and Education Program Partnerships

The Solano County Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) and the Workforce Development Board (WDB) of Solano County have been partnering organically since the fall of 2017. The existing partnership has focused on providing America’s Job Centers of California (AJCC) comprehensive service delivery for noncustodial parents (hitherto referred to as “parents ordered to pay child support”) to facilitate successful labor market outcomes. Any parent ordered to pay child support that is interested and eligible in WIOA Title I Career or Training Services may receive supportive services as part of service delivery to support job retention.

To provide a more comprehensive provision of services to parents ordered to pay child support, the WDB must focus efforts on services once enrolled in the WIOA Title I program. The WDB has begun this process by tracking parents ordered to pay child support from AJCC services through Title I services. To date, eligibility criteria for Title I services has created no negative impact on the WDB’s ability to provide workforce services. Given the data on Solano’s DCSS population, neither the WDB nor DCSS foresees any challenges in the population’s ability to meet WIOA Title I criteria. Of Solano’s parents ordered to pay child support, 43% are unemployed or underemployed. In addition, child support payments may be considered in determining low-income status for WIOA Title I eligibility. As such, the WDB anticipates the large majority of individuals referred will meet the low-income status for the WIOA Adult program.

While there have not been current obstacles to providing services to parents ordered to pay child support, services have to date primarily been given through AJCC services only. The WDB has not focused targeted outreach efforts to recruiting and enrolling DCSS clientele in WIOA Title I services. Part of the challenge has merely been identifying the section of the population that could best use WDB services, and then determining effective ways to outreach to the population. As the WDB and DCSS take steps to further the partnership, both agencies anticipate engaging and recruiting the targeted population will be difficult, as it is a population that does not tend to be engaged in services.

There have been no obstacles to date to meaningfully engage with DCSS in serving the population, but there are currently no community organizations that support parents ordered to pay child support in Solano County. Therefore, the biggest obstacle to engaging local partnerships is a lack of population-serving organizations. The WDB and DCSS will work with local government agencies and general community organizations to focus attention on this population.

Through stakeholder engagement sessions and partnership discussions as part of the planning process, the WDB and DCSS have identified a number of ways to increase and improve workforce service delivery to Solano’s parents ordered to pay child support. The WDB and DCSS have brainstormed additional tools that can be explored to motivate and support participation in services, including compromise of arrears, waiving of interest on child support payments, and joint outreach efforts to DCSS cases living in Solano County. Legal restraints to compromise of arrears initiatives include limitations on compromises – compromises would only be available for parents paying government-owed child support; it would also require DCSS to receive permission from the state to enact. Currently, DCSS is waiving interest of child

support payments for some non-welfare parents as “step up” orders; this is currently only done through DCSS staff negotiating with the custodial parent on waiving of interest.

Plans for Building Successful Partnerships or Scaling up Existing Successful Partnerships

The WDB and DCSS with other stakeholders have plans in the next two years to augment the current partnership between the two agencies. The WDB will build upon its current AJCC partnership and work closer with the Child Support/Family Courts to enhance the “seek work” order, where the courts require parents ordered to pay child support who are unemployed to visit the WDB. The WDB will also expand the partnership with DCSS to focus more on enrolled WIOA Title I clients, providing more intensive career and training services to parents.

The WDB is supporting new partnerships between DCSS and justice-involved stakeholders in the county (such as the Sheriff’s Office, community-based organization Leaders in Community Alternatives, and the Solano County Probation Department) to coordinate workforce service delivery and mitigate barriers to employment associated with child support payments. The WDB will explore a closer partnership with disability partners, such as community-based organization Dreamcatchers, to coordinate workforce service delivery for parents ordered to pay child support who also have a disability. The WDB and DCSS will also explore how best to identify and serve underemployed parents who are ordered to pay child support.

It is important to bring awareness and education to parents ordered to pay child support on options to modify their child support payments and the resources available to help set them up for success, in order to reduce the buildup of arrears and improve retention in programs. As part of this awareness and education, the WDB will work with DCSS to provide information sessions and/or information sharing for those who may need information on the child support process. The WDB will provide information in the AJCCs, add information on child support to their website, add a segment to the orientations, and ensure applicable enrolled Title I clients receive information pertaining to child support payment options. In order to facilitate this, the WDB is adding a question on the WIOA application regarding child support payments to better track and support parents ordered to pay child support.

The WDB will also work with disability stakeholders to provide benefits counseling for disabled parents ordered to pay child support. This will help the individual better understand their income needs and how their income will affect both their disability and child support payments. The WDB will also work with disability stakeholders as needed to help advocate for the individual on child support payments.

Local partners; including DCSS, Solano County Health and Social Services, education providers, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders; will work to improve coordination of services for parents ordered to pay child support. The first step is merely to increase communication among stakeholders. Helping each stakeholder understand the complicated child support process is key to braiding resources and coordinating services. The WDB will also leverage its internet-based referral system, Community Pro, to create linkages in service delivery around the individual. This will support an effective referral process, support participant document sharing, and track outcomes.

To the knowledge of both the WDB and DCSS, there are no community-based organizations currently focused on parents ordered to pay child support. However, the WDB will leverage its partnerships with general community-based organizations and training providers in the area to identify any parents

ordered to pay child support within their clientele base and will explore opportunities to more closely connect services for participants.

The WDB and DCSS have created a referral process and forms to track this population within the AJCC. DCSS clients are referred either directly from DCSS or from the Solano County Superior Court through a “seek work” order. Parents complete the Authorization to Release Confidential Information form to ensure appropriate information sharing. For parents referred from Superior Court, staff utilize a customized job search checklist to track their job search activities. Staff date and initial each activity once completed, which the parent can take back to Superior Court for compliance purposes. Every month, WDB staff share activity status of parents ordered to pay child support with DCSS.

Incentives to Increase the Success of Parental Participation in Local Workforce Programs

The WDB and DCSS have discussed numerous tools and incentives that DCSS can provide to parents ordered to pay child support to promote and sustain their participation in workforce development education training programs. The partners will build upon their current successful referral program and explore use of Community Pro to electronically refer individuals to each other.

DCSS has already implemented a number of tools to encourage sustained program participation. DCSS reduces the fee for reinstating a driver’s license for parents engaged with the WDB. The “seek work” order encourages participants to maintain engagement with the WDB as well.

Both the WDB and DCSS are committed to creating a new milestone-based arrears program in the next two years. There are current models of compromise of arrears programs throughout the country. The partners will identify the milestones in WIOA Title I that will trigger a compromise of arrears, as well as identify the percentage of arrears to be compromised.