CalWORKs 2.0 | Next Generation

Webinar 1 – Hallmarks of CalWORKs 2.0
July 19, 2017
Questions asked or comments made | Responses from Strategic Initiative Team

Question	Answer
Cal-OAR	
What is Cal-OAR?	Cal-OARs is CalWORKs Outcomes and Accountability Review, a structured local accountability system meant to drive continuous quality improvement within county CalWORKs programs. Cal-OARs was established by SB 89, the human services trailer bill recently adopted to implement the FY 2017–18 state budget.
Will Cal-OAR replace WPR?	No. WPR is a federally mandated performance measure and will continue to be tracked. Through Cal-OARs and with support from the CalWORKs Strategic Initiative, we hope to create supplemental performance measures that reflect important program goals other than meeting the WPR. For example, these may include process measures that tell us how efficiently services are being delivered and outcomes measures that capture intermediate steps on a family's path to work participation.
WPR	
If WPR does not show progress, will counties continue to be measured by it?	WPR is a federally mandated performance measure, so yes, county performance will continue to be measured by it. As a result of the Cal-OARs process, however, we will have additional measures that provide a fuller picture of the work counties are doing with families and the progress families are making.
Will discussions with the state regarding WPR include fiscal penalties for failure to meet WPR at the federal level, and how will this impact the counties?	The current federal regulatory framework includes imposition of a fiscal penalty on states that fail to meet their TANF work participation requirement. The existence of the CalWORKs Strategic Initiative and Cal-OARs does not change the federal TANF rules.
How will this relate to TANF WPR expectations and financial sanctions?	The CalWORKs Strategic Initiative and Cal-OARs are expected to support county efforts to meet WPR by delivering new tools, resources, and best

	practices for moving families forward, as well as better data that can be used to focus county improvement efforts. [See also the two responses immediately above.]
TOOLS	
Are there plans at the state level to require counties to use the new tools?	No. The CalWORKs Strategic Initiative is being sponsored by CWDA (County Welfare Directors Association), not the state. The tools being created through the initiative will be made available to counties to use as they see fit. Counties may use all, some, or none of the tools and may use them as-is or adapt them to fit the local service environment.
Is there any concern that allowing pilot counties to choose which pieces they want to pilot will skew the feasibility and effectiveness of this revamp overall? For example, county size and number of staff piloting could have an impact: If one county is using 10 staff to pilot one part of this project and other counties are not using that part (such as the CalMap), they may report something that may not be reflective of a different county client base and staffing size.	The Strategic Initiative team recognizes that California is an extremely diverse state and that counties are likely to differ in their experiences using the tools. In addition, the team feels strongly that collaboration and feedback from many different counties, many different worker types, and all levels of stakeholders are critical to the success of the final product. To that end, we have collected feedback on the tools not only from the piloting counties but also from working groups of a very large subset of counties' workers, from executive management to frontline staff. At each opportunity, the team incorporated feedback, modifying and updating the tools. The pilot counties are providing more detailed feedback, and it is possible that other counties might have somewhat different experiences with the tools. But the pilot counties were chosen to represent a diversity of potential experiences and, as a result, they vary in geography, population, density, caseload size, urbanicity, and staff size. As the tools are rolled out statewide, the initiative will also train county staff in the Learn, Innovate, Improve process, which can be used to adapt the tools for optimal use in each county's environment.
Can you share what tools of the CalWORKs 2.0 are being piloted and feedback from the pilot counties?	We will continue to pilot the tools in a few counties over the next few months. We plan to host in-person trainings for the new tools in late fall and early winter, as well as put videos on the website.

	The pilot counties are Placer, Kings, Humboldt, Fresno, and Orange. The tools currently being road tested by these counties are
	- Goal Setting Tools - The CalMAP Tool - Triage Tool - Messaging Tools - The County Self-Assessment Tool - The County Goal-Setting Guide - The County Resource Map - The Electronic Month Counter
	We will continue to use highlight videos from the road-test counties in newsletters and on the website to share their experiences.
Would an eligibility worker be using the new tools, or are they intended more for social workers or employment specialists?	Each county can determine where the tools and resources best fit into their processes. Pilot counties are using tools with a range of staff, including (but not limited to) managers, supervisors, eligibility staff, employment specialists, social workers, and counselors.
The Triage Tool looks like it asks some questions already captured in OCAT. Duplicative?	We are exploring what orientation looks like and hope to get at critical ways to engage customers right when they walk through the door. The triage tools are not designed to replace OCAT, but rather function as a quick intake assist. They take less than three to five minutes to complete and provide critical upfront information for directing clients to specialized workers (or services, depending on the county setup). This information does not need to be repeated when going through the appraisal process. It is designed help staff share information with each other so customers can be directed to activities that are meaningful to them immediately—especially when needs are high.
SERVICE SELECTION	
OCAT heavily drives our service selection for clients.	Absolutely, and the tools developed through the Strategic Initiative are not meant to replace OCAT. The hope is that the tools will help county staff take what they learn though OCAT and other client interactions and create a more realistically sequenced and integrated service plan for the client.
On slide number 27, are you recommending that clients	This slide (graphic) was intended to display a set of workforce program elements that are common

progress in the following order: Education, Job Readiness, Work Experience, Subsidized Employment, and then Employment?	across TANF programs (in California and nationwide). Although the order listed may be the sequence of progression for some customers, the team is not suggesting that all clients follow that order or that following any specific order is necessary for success.
TIMECLOCK	
It was mentioned that client progress may take longer. Is there any discussion regarding the 24-month WTW clock and allowing the full 48 months for WTW participation to maximize client progress?	It is within the scope of the CalWORKs Strategic Initiative to recommend policy changes that would help further CalWORKs' program goals. The initial audience for those recommendations would be the CWDA Board of Directors.
DATA	
Are you looking to provide a link from OCAT to CalWIN?	There are plans at the state level to integrate OCAT data into SAWS. This work is progressing in parallel to, not as part of, the Strategic Initiative.
GOAL ACHIEVEMENT	
I feel that a lack of soft skills is one of the greatest barriers our customers have. Is it possible for a county to incorporate a soft skills learning program and classes as a WTW activity?	Yes. Many counties already incorporate soft skills training into their menu of job readiness and WTW activities. We will talk about this in greater depth during the next webinar on goal achievement. We hope to demonstrate how these skills can be and will be built throughout the program by integrating the goal achievement framework, regardless of what the specific program offering might be.
WEBSITE AND WEBINARS	
Will all of the Q&As be placed on the website for us to view later?	Yes.
What is the website where I can view the video where Placer County highlights their experience using these tools?	This is on www.CalWORKsNextGen.org. "CalWORKs Stories" page
Is there a website where we can preview these new tools that have been developed?	As CalWORKs 2.0 tools complete the vetting process in the road-test counties and are finalized, they will become available along with informational and instructional material at www.CalWORKsNextGen.org.
COMMENTS	
Participants must have choices about what they want to engage in, so that they can meet their goals.	Comment
This webinar was great, and the promise of change and	Comment

improvement of this program is very exciting. Thank you! Looking forward to more.	
Since goal setting is such an important component, I believe that a Goal Setting curriculum and class should be created so that customers could spend some focused time learning to create goals and plan out goal execution. This would give them a skill that they could use not just for themselves but also for their families and children.	Comment
Tools that help staff better interact and engage their participants may help develop a relationship that may increase or develop trust. These are critical in engagement.	Comment
Ultimately, we would hope it [CalWORKs 2.0] would increase WPR in the long term. In the short term, it would enhance a worker's ability to engage meaningfully with a participant and support them where they are.	Comment
OTHER	
I'm concerned with the idea that some counties have not been focusing on client goals and being intentional about service delivery. If they aren't being intentional, then what have they been doing?	The Strategic Initiative is working to enhance counties' existing practices—in particular, to provide tools and training to counties so they can do more comprehensive goal setting with clients in the face of the mounting responsibilities that are competing for staff time. The goal-setting process, when fully implemented, should make interactions with participants more focused, take less time, and achieve a better match of participant activities with their current circumstances.
If this is new and innovative, why is so much of the info in the resource library old and outdated?	The "literature from the field" included in the resource library is a comprehensive listing of literature from the past decade or more from the workforce, poverty, and TANF literature. The more up-to-date resources are in the "promising practices" section of the resource library.

	It is important to recognize that as current, innovative research, is applied to new fields (for example, using novel psychology research in the TANF space or with people living in poverty), more research, time, and understanding will naturally occur as efforts progress. For this reason, it is always a good idea to remain observant and continue to validate assumptions through ongoing tracking and evaluation as new applications for innovative research are explored.
I would like to take a reflection into looking more into the WTW sanctioned population. We have had the conception that these individuals are not doing anything valuable that leads towards self-sufficiency. But I am wondering if some of these clients may be doing something worthy in WTW plan development?	Thinking more intentionally about whether and how to track, engage, or reengage the sanctioned population is part of our ongoing work with CWDA, counties, and other state stakeholders. The Strategic Initiative will present recommendations for working with sanctioned clients as the work unfolds. Perhaps, as the question suggests, one opportunity is to consider a broader range of activities that might be worthy for consideration in meeting hours or achieving a WTW plan.
Will you be providing or discussing a statewide case management system for employment services?	This has not been a topic of conversation to date, but the Strategic Initiative team will pass this suggestion along to CWDA.
Concerns are that all of these tools and resources are a separate tracking process and resource. Integrating these into OCAT and the Consortia systems we already use would be easier to train and integrate into the work counties are already doing.	Minimizing county administrative burden is an important objective of the Strategic Initiative, and the project team is committed to creating tools and resources that can be easily integrated into county practice. It would be premature to recommend integration of the tools into OCAT or SAWS until they have been finalized, rolled out statewide, and tested for a period of time by the counties. At the appropriate time, the project team intends to make recommendations about automation to CWDA.