

County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) CalWORKs Program Guide

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Background:

State regulations require that individuals participating in a Self-Initiated Plan (SIP) or Vocational Education (VTR) must be enrolled in a program that is related to demand occupations with the fastest growth and with the most job openings and it is likely to lead to self-supporting employment.

Policy:

A. Evaluation and Approval Criteria:

- A SIP can be approved if the program:
 1. Leads to an undergraduate degree/certificate or a California regular teaching credential;
 2. Is approved or exempted by the Council for Private Post-secondary and Vocational Education, or accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges;
 3. Is on the current list of occupations with the fastest growth and with the most job openings ([EDD-San Diego County Labor Market Information](#)); or
 4. Will lead to self-supporting employment as demonstrated by the participant, if program is not on the list described above.
- Participants may only be evaluated for SIP once in their lifetime on CalWORKs.
- A SIP evaluation and determination is completed at the time of the initial appraisal or at any time, if evaluation was not previously completed due to administrative error. In this case, the ECM will complete a SIP evaluation based on circumstances present at the time SIP evaluation should have been first made (e.g. Enrollment status, good standings, program the participant was enrolled at the time participant should have been appraised and evaluated for SIP)
- Students are considered to have an approved Self-Initiated Program (SIP) if they are:
 - Enrolled on the date the appraisal was initially scheduled (if not attended without good cause) or actually completed
 - Meeting conditions imposed by the institution offering the program to maintain current enrollment status
 - Making satisfactory progress
- A participant who was enrolled in education or vocational education-training program that does **not** meet the SIP requirements will be allowed to continue the program until the next educational quarter or semester break. See [10-005.E.5](#) for Job Search exclusions.
- Any person whose previously approved SIP is interrupted with “good cause” may resume participation in the same program if he/she maintained good standing while participating in the program and the SIP continues to meet the approval criteria.
- A 19 year old teen parent not in Cal-Learn, who is enrolled in an approved SIP when referred to WTW, shall not be required to obtain a high school diploma/GED and may continue in SIP.
- Any individual who possesses a baccalaureate degree will not be eligible to participate in a SIP unless pursuing a California teaching credential program in a college or university.
- The SIP participant may be eligible to supportive services ([10-010.A-Childcare](#), [10-01.B Transportation](#), [10-011.C Ancillary](#)) if he/she selects not to use financial aid to cover such expenses

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- If a SIP participant signs form [WTW8](#) indicating that financial aid will be used to cover expenses that can be paid by CalWORKs/Welfare-To-Work, supportive services may be denied or reduced to avoid duplicate payments.

B. Additional Provisions ([All County Letter 14-47 SIP Q&As](#)):

1. A SIP request cannot be approved if an individual is enrolled in a community college at the time of appraisal but has not been accepted into a degree or certificate program, has not declared a major and maintained current enrollment. The participant may continue in a non-approved program only until the next education break or still transfer into an approvable program.
2. Non-credit study time **cannot** be included as part of a SIP, unless the individual receives academic credit for the study.
3. Exempt individuals who volunteer to participate in WTW may qualify for SIPs if they did not complete an Appraisal or were not enrolled in a SIP prior to becoming exempt.
4. Program length is not a SIP eligibility criteria
5. The minimum weekly participation requirement for a SIP is based on the participant's family type. Two-parent families are allowed to split the 35-hour per week work participation requirement. If both parents qualify for SIPs, they each have a 30-hour per week participation requirement. If only one parent is in a SIP, that parent has an individual requirement of 30 hours each week. Parent # 2 is required to participate at least 5 hours per week to meet 2-parent family participation requirements ([10-003.A](#))
6. An individual participating in SIPs is not required to take summer classes if not required or offered by the academic program. The student must participate during the summer break in WTW activities based on the individual's assessment and required weekly hours. All changes to the required activities must be documented in the individual's WTW plan, and done sufficiently in advance that the individual can make any necessary changes to their transportation, child care or other necessary services.
7. An individual who has completed an associate degree or certificate program may transfer to a university to continue his or her education in the same field if the county determines that further education is necessary to obtain a job. However, the program would be a SIP only if it is part of a structured education plan (e.g. Associate Degree for Transfer Program)
8. Financial aid cannot be used for WTW supportive services unless the SIP participant voluntarily signs a "Student Financial Aid Statement Welfare to Work Supportive Services"
9. Unless they are exempt/volunteer, individuals in a SIP are subject to the Welfare-to-Work 24-Month Time Clock requirements.
10. A SIP cannot be denied if its length extends beyond the individual's WTW 24-Month Clock.
11. If the SIP participant has exhausted his or her Welfare-to-Work 24-Month Time Clock, and does not receive an extension, **he or she may continue in the approved SIP, but will also be required to meet CalWORKs federal standards in order to be CW eligible.**

Procedure: [10-015.A SIP Processing Guide](#), [10-015.A SIP CDSS Q&As \(Appendix\)](#)

Impact/s:

None to other programs

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Program Affected:

CalWORKs/ Welfare-To-Work

References:

- [All County Letter 14-47](#)
- [All County Letter 12-69](#)
- [All County Letter 99-32](#)
- [Welfare and Institutions Code Section 11325.23](#)

Sunset Date:

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by January 20, 2018

Approval for Release:

January 20, 2015