Evaluation of the SB 1041 Reforms to California's CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Program

Findings Regarding the Initial Policy Implementation and Outcomes

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Preface

In June 2012, Governor Jerry Brown signed the California Budget Act of 2012, which included a series of budget trailer bills, one of which—Senate Bill (SB) 1041—included significant reforms to California's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, known as CalWORKs (California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids). The reforms, effective six months later (in January 2013), included changes to work requirements and the exemption for having a young child, with the goal of engaging CalWORKs participants in more-intensive work-related activities as early as possible. The reforms also provide enhanced supports to address barriers to work, offer more flexibility in work activity options, and increase incentives to work as participants move toward self-sufficiency. To fully understand whether SB 1041 is achieving its objectives and whether there are any unintended consequences, the California legislature required an independent evaluation. Following a competitive bidding process, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) awarded the evaluation contract to the RAND Corporation, in partnership with the American Institutes for Research (AIR).

As described in the evaluation background and study design report, the evaluation design includes five components:

- The **process study** addresses questions related to SB 1041 implementation over time using data from interviews with state-level key informants, from annual interviews and focus groups in six focal counties (Alameda, Fresno, Los Angeles, Riverside, Sacramento, and Stanislaus), and from an annual All-County Survey (ACS) of welfare directors.
- The **county welfare operations impact study** relies on the information gathered from the focal counties and the ACS, as well as administrative data from county welfare offices regarding program staffing, budgets, and other matters, to assess the impact of SB 1041 on multiple dimensions of county welfare office operations.
- The participant **status study** employs CDSS welfare system administrative data to provide a series of annual snapshots of indicators for the population of CalWORKs participants.
- The participant **tracking study** likewise draws on the array of state- and county-level administrative databases to provide a series of annual summaries of the dynamics of the CalWORKs caseload.
- The participant **impact study** combines administrative data with the California Socioeconomic Survey (CalSES)—primary data collected over time for a sample of CalWORKs entrants—to investigate the impact of SB 1041 on a range of adult and child outcomes for current and former CalWORKs participants.

This first evaluation report, following the background and study design report, provides initial findings from the process study based on the first wave of the ACS and qualitative data from interviews and focus groups conducted in the six focal counties. Findings from the status and tracking studies are based on analysis of state administrative data. Initial insights on participant outcomes in terms of welfare use and employment are explored with state administrative data and nationally representative data from the Current Population Survey. Future reports will be based on further qualitative and quantitative data collection, including a second wave of the ACS, additional interviews and focus groups in the focal counties, both state- and county-level administrative data, and the first wave of CalSES.

This evaluation report should be relevant for stakeholders in the public and private sectors interested in the CalWORKs program and in the TANF program more generally. Additional background on CalWORKs and the SB 1041 reforms, as well as the evaluation design, is available in the background and study design report:

- *Evaluation of the SB 1041 Reforms to California's CalWORKs Program: Background and Study Design,* by Lynn A. Karoly, Robert Bozick, Lois M. Davis, Sami Kitmitto, Lori Turk-Bicakci, Johannes M. Bos, Aleksandra Holod, and Charles Blankenship, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-919-CDSS, 2015, available at www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR919

The evaluation is being conducted jointly in RAND's Education and Labor and Population units. At AIR, the study is housed in the Education program with staff from the Human and Social Development program and implemented in AIR's San Mateo, California, office. Additional information about RAND and AIR is available at www.rand.org and www.air.org, respectively.

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Summary

Senate Bill (SB) 1041, signed into law in June 2012, specified a package of policy changes for California's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program—known as CalWORKs (California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids)—which is overseen by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and operated by county welfare offices in the state's 58 counties. Most of the SB 1041 provisions became effective January 1, 2013, although implementation may have started later, and the law scheduled other features to be phased in over time. As part of an independent evaluation required by the SB 1041 legislation, this report provides a first look at the process of implementing the policy changes at the state and county level, the extent to which key indicators for CalWORKs participants changed between the pre– and post–SB 1041 period, and initial analyses of outcomes for families and children and their association with the SB 1041 policy changes.

SB 1041 Policy Changes to CalWORKs

The SB 1041 reforms included changes to work requirements and the exemption for having a young child, with the goal of engaging CalWORKs participants in welfare-to-work (WTW) activities as early as possible. The reforms also aimed to provide more flexibility in work activity options and increased financial incentives as participants move toward self-sufficiency. Specifically, key features of the policy change include:

- *New time clock*. The 48-month lifetime limit for CalWORKs receipt was divided into two periods: the first 24 months, when a set of flexible CalWORKs WTW services and other supports are available, and the second 24 months, when more-restrictive CalWORKs federal standards for work activities apply.
- *Nature of WTW services*. During the first 24 months of benefit receipt, there are no required core activities—those that meet federal work participation requirements, such as employment, on-the-job training, and vocational educational training—a more flexible option than under prior CalWORKs rules.
- *Work requirements for those with young children*. The weekly hours of required work were reduced from 32 hours to 20 hours for those whose youngest child is below the age of six. All other single-parent cases had a small drop in the work requirement, from 32 to 30 hours.
- *Young child exemption*. The prior temporary young child exemption—which excused one adult per family from WTW work participation requirements while caring for one child below the age of two years or two children below the age of six—was replaced by a new once-in-a-lifetime exemption from WTW requirements to care for a child from birth to

age 23 months. CalWORKs participants with a young child exemption as of December 31, 2012, were not subject to the SB 1041 WTW requirements (and the time clock would not start) until the county reengaged them (required by January 1, 2015), a process that involved communicating the policy change and initiating the WTW services component if they were no longer eligible for the young child exemption.

- *Financial work incentive*. The size of the earned income disregard (the income excluded when calculating the benefit level) was increased to $225, restoring it to the level that existed prior to cuts in 2011 in response to the Great Recession.
- *Supports for pregnant and parenting teens*. The Cal-Learn program, after suspension of the case management component, was fully restored and allowed to resume its specialized services supporting pregnant and parenting teens.

Together, the bundle of SB 1041 policy changes emphasized moving participants through CalWORKs by intensifying their engagement with WTW activities early on—in the first two years of participation—and providing flexible, meaningful work activity options and supportive services during that period designed to enhance their ability to secure stable, gainful employment.

It is important to note that three other policy changes, signed into law in June 2013 under Assembly Bill (AB) 74, were intended to support the policy objectives under SB 1041 and thus are relevant for the implementation research conducted for this evaluation. In particular, the following Early Engagement strategies were instituted to identify and address barriers to employment more rapidly:

- *Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool (OCAT)*. CDSS was charged with developing a new standardized online appraisal tool for use by county welfare departments to screen new CalWORKs WTW participants and more effectively identify and address barriers to employment.
- *Family Stabilization (FS) program*. AB 74 (2013) included provisions to identify CalWORKs WTW participants in need of intensive case management and services designed to support the family in overcoming an identified situation or crisis that would interfere with participation in WTW activities and services.
- *Expanded Subsidized Employment (ESE) program*. AB 74 added funds to expand the number of subsidized employment slots available to CalWORKs WTW participants.

Evaluation Objectives and Approach

To fully understand whether SB 1041 is achieving its objectives and whether there are any unintended consequences, RAND and AIR are conducting a multiyear evaluation with five component studies drawing on both qualitative and quantitative data: a process study to address questions related to the implementation of SB 1041; a participant status study and a participant tracking study to examine point-in-time and dynamic indicators for the CalWORKs population

both before and after the SB 1041 changes; a county welfare operations impact study to assess the consequences of SB 1041 for various aspects of county welfare office operations; and a participant impact study to investigate the effects of the SB 1041 policy changes on a range of adult and child outcomes for current and former CalWORKs WTW participants.

The evaluation is guided by a conceptual framework that, like a logic model, shows how the implementation of the policy changes links to a set of outputs and finally an array of desired impacts on child and family well-being. The evaluation framework serves to illustrate that whether the reforms achieve their intended effect will depend on a number of factors. First, as part of implementation of SB 1041, state-level officials, county welfare office administrators, and county welfare office staff must successfully communicate the new policy internally and to prospective and current CalWORKs participants. Second, some counties may need to reorganize staff or shift resources among competing priorities to successfully implement the reforms. Further, the sequential nature of the implementation steps means that the pace at which the reforms are instituted may affect how quickly changes occur in county welfare operations or in the outcomes that participants experience. Third, the reforms are expected to affect the experience of CalWORKs applicants and participants. Individuals are expected to apply for CalWORKs and, if eligible, receive assistance, develop a WTW plan, and participate in WTW activities. All of these potential implications of the SB 1041 reforms are occurring in concert with other policy changes—and many other factors, such as the state of the economy, also might affect the outcomes of interest. The analytic challenge is drawing inferences about the causal impacts of the SB 1041 reforms when these other factors are not constant. Hence, for the impact analyses conducted for this evaluation, we adopt empirical strategies to control for possible confounding factors.

This report, based on data available or collected during the first year of the evaluation, addresses four of the five evaluation components (all but the county welfare operations impact study). The primary focus in this initial report is on findings from the process study, which is based on qualitative and quantitative information collected at the state level for all 58 counties plus additional information from six focal counties where more in-depth data-gathering was conducted. The data collected and examined for the process study cover the first two and a half years of the implementation of SB 1041. Together, these rich data offer a statewide perspective on the status of implementation, as well as an in-depth view of implementation in the six focal counties, which represent 64 percent of the CalWORKs caseload. This information is extremely valuable for understanding the pace of implementation, how counties have approached the policy and process changes adopted under SB 1041, and the opportunities for addressing any challenges encountered to date.

In addition, this report includes analyses based on several other sources of data that contribute to other study components. Specifically, we analyze state administrative data to address questions pertaining to the status and tracking studies. The state-level data systems capture key indicators for CalWORKs WTW participants such as time clock status, exemptions and sanctions, and employment. We also employ the state administrative data, as well as

nationally representative survey data, to conduct analyses of the patterns in the outcomes of interest, in advance of more-rigorous impact analyses that could not be conducted with the data available for this report. These initial impact study analyses provide an early assessment of the potential impact of SB 1041 on CalWORKs participants, specifically for outcomes such as CalWORKs participation, employment, and poverty status. We stress the tentative nature of these initial findings given that the data cover just one to two years of the post–SB 1041 period, thus providing only a very short-term assessment of impact. Future evaluation reports will extend the administrative data we are able to examine and augment the primary data assembled for this report with additional waves of qualitative and quantitative data collection. These data will then support more-rigorous analyses of outcomes as part of the impact study.

In the remainder of this summary, we highlight the key findings associated with the four component studies. Table S.1 provides a high-level summary of the findings.

Experience with Implementation of SB 1041

Our findings regarding the implementation of SB 1041 are based on information gathered from the following sources:

- interviews with state-level key informants, such as representatives from CDSS and other relevant state agencies, legislative staff involved in the formulation of SB 1041, relevant associations, and other stakeholder groups
- the first wave of the All-County Survey (ACS), an online survey of the state's 58 county welfare directors where we obtained a 100 percent response rate
- key informant interviews and focus groups with caseworkers and CalWORKs participants conducted in six focal counties—Alameda, Fresno, Los Angeles, Riverside, Sacramento, and Stanislaus—which were selected to capture variation that is potentially relevant for the implementation of SB 1041, such as the geographic region of the state, the rural-to-urban continuum, the demographic makeup of the population, measures of socioeconomic status, and the state of the economy.

Triangulating across these multiple sources and perspectives, Table S.1 shows that we have findings on numerous topics related to the implementation of SB 1041. Next, we highlight the most salient findings among those listed in Table S.1.

State- and county-level stakeholders had varied views regarding the goals and objectives of SB 1041. Some state-level stakeholders were concerned that many CalWORKs WTW participants would be unprepared to meet federal work requirements after exhausting their 24-month time clock. County administrative and line staff (e.g., caseworkers, employment services specialists) also said SB 1041 was a significant change to the CalWORKs WTW program that required a number of adjustments to be made. CDSS staff emphasized that the legislation is intended to offer more flexibility to clients in their progress toward self-sufficiency.

Table S.1. Summary of Key Findings

Topic	Key Findings
Process Study Analyses	
Stakeholders' views of SB 1041	• State-level stakeholders' perspectives regarding the goals and expected impact of SB 1041 differed, with some viewing it as well motivated with the potential for positive change, while others were more concerned about potential negative consequences.
State planning for and communication regarding SB 1041	• As required by the legislation, CDSS implemented a state-level workgroup process to develop implementation guidance for SB 1041, which was characterized as positive and inclusive by stakeholders. Communication of policy with the counties occurred primarily through All County Letters (ACLs). However, the intensive and lengthy planning process contributed to the slow release of guidance to the counties, creating implementation challenges at the local level.
County planning for and communication regarding SB 1041	• Interagency or interdepartmental meetings were the primary county vehicles for communication with other agencies. Three-quarters of all county social services departments reported reaching out to individual directors or agency representatives in other county agencies to plan for or implement support services under SB 1041. • County communications with line staff occurred through memoranda and other written documents (81 percent of all counties), briefings and/or internal staff meetings (93 percent of counties), and mandatory training sessions (83 percent of counties). • County staff communicated with participants about the changes that were brought about under SB 1041 primarily through in-person discussions, phone calls, and letters.
Status of SB 1041 implementation as of June 2015	• Across the 58 counties, most have completed the reengagement of participants with the short-term young child exemption. Eighty-six percent reported having implemented the FS program countywide, and 69 percent reported they had implemented the ESE program countywide. • To increase supportive services, up to 60 percent of all the counties reported developing new or enhanced partnerships with education providers, vocational education/job training providers, domestic violence service providers, substance abuse treatment providers, and mental health service providers. • Across the focal counties, staff did not report significant reorganization of staff structures or roles in order to implement SB 1041, although they did emphasize that the reengagement process was labor intensive and SB 1041 as a whole has required a strong focus on training and support for caseworkers.
Caseworkers' and staff understanding of SB 1041	• Compared with other SB 1041 components, a higher percentage of all counties (18 percent) reported that their WTW caseworkers did not understand at all or only slightly understood the new WTW 24-month time clock; 16 percent of counties indicated their WTW caseworkers did not understand at all or only slightly understood the changes to the determination of hourly program participation. • Caseworkers who participated in focal county focus groups expressed a significant amount of confusion regarding SB 1041 and identified the WTW 24-month time clock as the most challenging component of the legislation, including the way in which time elapses (when the clock should "tick" and "untick").
CalWORKs participants' understanding of SB 1041	• According to the ACS, the WTW 24-month time clock is the SB 1041 feature that is understood the least by participants. Supervisors in 67 percent of counties reported that CalWORKs participants did not understand at all or only slightly understood the changes represented by the WTW 24-month time clock. • By comparison, 71 percent of all counties rated CalWORKs participants' understanding of the reengagement process for those who had a short-term young child exemption as moderately to very well understood. • Likewise, administrators and caseworkers in all six focal counties reported that there are still many participants who do not fully understand the implications of SB 1041, including where they land within the WTW 24-month time clock period.
Stakeholders' view of factors that can support or hinder implementation	• According to many state-level stakeholders external to CDSS, the benefits of SB 1041 will not be fully realized until the accompanying Early Engagement reforms—the OCAT, FS program, and ESE program—are fully implemented on a statewide basis. Tension between promoting SB 1041 and meeting federal Work Participation Rate (WPR) requirements was viewed as another potential barrier, a theme that was also present in the focal county discussions on the topic.

Table S.1—Continued

Topic	Key Findings
Process Study Analyses (continued)	
County experiences with factors that can support or hinder implementation	• Focal counties reported that participation in the state-level workgroup process and discussions better positioned them to begin planning early for SB 1041. Implementation was challenging, given other concurrent policy changes (e.g., Medicaid expansion). • Forty-five percent of all counties indicated that existing relationships with other county agencies facilitated implementation. Interagency committees and advisory groups were rated as helpful. • Twenty-one percent of all counties reported that the *timing* of the release of state guidance on SB 1041 was a moderate or major hindrance to implementation; with smaller counties being more likely to provide this rating. Seventy-nine percent of counties reported that explaining the *complexity* of SB 1041 to participants was a moderate or major hindrance. • Given the complexity of the WTW 24-month time clock, the lack of full automation of the time clock was viewed as a hindrance to implementation, especially for smaller counties. Overall, 60 percent of all counties reported that the WTW 24-month time clock is being calculated using both an automated system (e.g., for an initial calculation) and manually (e.g., to make needed adjustments), typically by caseworkers (93 percent of counties). The latter was more common for smaller counties. • For 83 percent of all counties, caseworker supervisors reported that their WTW caseworkers understood the WTW 24-month time clock moderately well to very well. At the same time, many caseworkers in the six focal counties indicated a poor understanding of the WTW 24-month time clock. • The lag between implementation of SB 1041 and upgrading the county-level consortia administrative data systems to meet the needs of the legislation was a source of frustration for county leaders and caseworkers in the focal counties.
County perceptions of SB 1041 reforms and their impact	• With such aspects as communications with participants; matching participants to WTW activities; provision of support services (e.g., child care, substance abuse, mental health); and coordination with other organizations in the public and private sector (e.g., community colleges, vocational education, other service providers, employers, and job training), a majority of counties consistently rated SB 1041 implementation as working moderately well to very well. This positive view of implementation also held for reengagement, tracking WTW participation, information management, and design and implementation of the ESE and FS programs. • Between 45 percent and 57 percent of all counties estimated that the implementation of SB 1041 in the early years had no effect on WPR, participation in WTW activities, compliance with CalWORKs program rules, earnings, participation in CalFresh, or the number of participants receiving sanctions. At the same time, between 36 percent and 40 percent of counties reported that participation in WTW activities and enrollment in education and training programs/ community colleges were somewhat better under SB 1041.
Coordination with other public and private service providers at county level	• Three-quarters of all county social services departments reported reaching out to individual directors or agency representatives in other county agencies to plan for or implement support services under SB 1041. • Concerns voiced by service providers in the focal counties regarding SB 1041 were similar to those identified by caseworkers—that SB 1041 was complicated and difficult to understand. • Education service providers in the focal counties (e.g., CalWORKs counselors on community college campuses) also noted that they had not observed the rate of referrals to education that they had expected, given the flexibility in activities afforded by SB 1041.
State-level stakeholders' view of potential long-run impact of SB 1041	• Stakeholders in CDSS and other state-level agencies and organizations expressed the potential for SB 1041 to positively change how clients experience their initial engagement with CalWORKs, the activities available to them, and their relationships with caseworkers. However, stakeholders noted that it is still too early to determine whether or not SB 1041 will have the intended effect of helping clients to overcome their unique barriers to self-sufficiency.

Table S.1—Continued

Topic	Key Findings
Status and Tracking Studies Initial Descriptive Analyses	
Exemptions	• The percentage of participants who received at least one exemption during their first two years in the CalWORKs WTW program increased from the March 2007 entry cohort to the March 2013 entry cohort, from 44 percent to 49 percent. Annual snapshots of all WTW participants since SB 1041 became effective showed that in March of 2013, about four out of ten participants had an exemption, while in March of 2014 and March of 2015, about three out of ten participants had an exemption.
Sanctions	• The percentage of participants who received at least one sanction during their first two years in CalWORKs increased from about 12 percent for the March 2007 entry cohort to about 14 percent for the March 2013 entry cohort. Yearly snapshots since SB 1041 became effective showed that, in a given March, about one out of eight participants were currently sanctioned.
Leaving CalWORKs	• The percentage of participants who were not in the CalWORKs WTW program one year after entry changed little from the 2007 to 2013 entry cohorts (50 percent to 49 percent), while the percentage of participants who were not in the CalWORKs WTW program two years after entry increased from 64 percent for the 2007 entry cohort to 67 percent for the 2013 entry cohort.
Employment and earnings	• A larger percentage of the March 2013 entry cohort was employed for at least one quarter in their first two years after entry compared with the March 2007 entry cohort (61 percent versus 49 percent). For the March 2015 cross-section, participants' real earnings (i.e., adjusted for inflation) were about $2,300 per quarter on average, a 10-percent increase compared with the March 2013 cross-section.
Reengagement	• Among the participants who had the short-term WTW exemption for young children in December 2012, 14 percent still had this exemption in March 2014 and almost none had it in March 2015.
Impact Study Initial Descriptive Analyses	
CalWORKs receipt, employment, and earnings	• Initial estimates based on state CalWORKs administrative data that account for participant characteristics and county unemployment rates suggest that persons entering CalWORKs in the post–SB 1041 period had WTW participation rates one year after enrollment about 2 percentage points higher than similar CalWORKs WTW participants who enrolled before the reforms. This rise in WTW participation was because participants were combining employment and WTW participation more often (an increase of about 2 percentage points) rather than being employed without participating (a decrease of about 2 percentage points) compared with similar participants who started before SB 1041. • When we accounted for changes in the economy and in the demographics of CalWORKs WTW participants, the level of quarterly real earnings among CalWORKs WTW participants one year after enrollment was about $54 higher (4.2 percent) than predicted. • These findings are consistent with the increase in the earned income disregard, which was one aspect of SB 1041 that was implemented immediately.
Other outcomes	• Estimates based on the Current Population Survey (CPS) provide no indication that, in the first year after SB 1041 was implemented, outcomes for the population potentially eligible for the CalWORKs WTW program—such as income below poverty, school enrollment, or receipt of job training—have changed relative to a comparison group in other states with similar policies and demographics as California.

Delays in developing and releasing implementation guidelines resulted in implementation and training issues for county-level staff. CDSS implemented a state-level workgroup process to develop implementation guidance for SB 1041; however, the intensive planning process contributed to the slow release of guidance to the counties, creating implementation challenges at the local level. Implementation policies from the state were released slowly, and—according to county staff—often confusing or contradictory. This led to challenges in training staff on SB 1041 and to confusion among administrative and line staff in regard to the different components of SB 1041 (particularly related to calculation of the WTW

24-month time clock). Training for caseworkers on SB 1041 was described as difficult, given the continual release of state guidance to clarify components of the reforms and evolving guidance over time. The ACS indicated that for 21 percent of counties, the timing of the release of state guidance on SB 1041 was a moderate or major hindrance with respect to implementation, with smaller counties being more likely to report it being a hindrance than medium-sized or large counties. In terms of the complexity of SB 1041 reforms, 48 percent of counties reported that it was a moderate or major hindrance with respect to implementation; again, smaller counties (65 percent) were more likely to report it being a hindrance than counties with medium to large caseloads.

County administrators and caseworkers found the complexity of SB 1041 hindered its implementation. Survey results showed that 52 percent of counties reported that the complex details associated with SB 1041 were not a barrier to implementation. At the same time, 79 percent of counties reported that explaining the complexity of SB 1041 to participants posed a moderate or major hindrance. In addition, caseworkers across the focal counties described a significant amount of confusion regarding SB 1041 and identified the WTW 24-month time clock as the most challenging component of the legislation, including when the clock should "tick" and "untick." The time involved in administering the time clock was also viewed as crowding out other services. Other hindrances cited in the ACS were those affecting CalWORKs participants, such as the availability of affordable housing, job opportunities, vocational education, transportation options or resources, and line staff.

There were different views on caseworkers' understanding of SB 1041. In our focal county focus groups, caseworkers expressed significant concerns regarding the complexity of SB 1041, with a particular focus on the WTW 24-month time clock. Staff raised concerns about the adequacy of training and their supervisors' support to line staff. At the same time, when supervisors were asked on the ACS to indicate how well their caseworkers understood the WTW 24-month time clock, 83 percent of all counties indicated that the caseworkers understood the time clock moderately to very well. Compared with the other components of SB 1041, a higher percentage of counties (18 percent) reported that their WTW caseworkers did not understand at all or only slightly understood the WTW 24-month time clock; 16 percent of counties indicated their WTW caseworkers did not understand at all or only slightly understood the changes to the determination of hourly program participation due to the new averaging method for determining if a participant had met the minimum weekly hours under the 24-month time-clock plan. Relative to the other components of SB 1041, it was these two components that were most frequently identified by counties as aspects of SB 1041 for which their WTW caseworkers did not have at least a moderate understanding.

SB 1041 appears to be difficult to explain to CalWORKs WTW participants. Administrators and caseworkers in all six focal counties reported that there are still many participants who do not fully understand the implications of SB 1041, including where they land within the WTW 24-month time clock period. In fact, caseworkers said that while it was difficult

for them to understand the changes brought about under the legislation, an even greater challenge was explaining it to participants. Data from the ACS reinforces this finding—93 percent of counties reported that explaining the complexity of SB 1041 to participants was a barrier. This gap in understanding the policy changes under SB 1041 has implications for the ability of participants to select the education and training activities and other supports that will be most beneficial for them during the first 24 months of CalWORKs participation.

There were mixed views regarding the lag between implementation of SB 1041 and upgrading the county consortia administrative data systems to meet the needs of the legislation. Based on interviews and focus groups in the focal counties, this delay was a source of frustration for county leaders and caseworkers in the focal counties. At the same time, based on the ACS, county leadership in 64 percent of counties reported that lack of automation of the WTW 24-month time clock was not a hindrance in implementation. Conversely, 36 percent of counties reported that lack of automation of the WTW 24-month time clock was a minor, moderate, or major hindrance; this was especially true for smaller counties, where 50 percent indicated it was at least a minor hindrance.

The role of WPR in the implementation of SB 1041 was a concern for some state-level stakeholders and many focal county staff. Perceptions that WPR and SB 1041 represent competing agendas emerged as a major theme in the interviews with state and focal county stakeholders. State-level stakeholders, external to CDSS, were particularly worried that counties felt pressured to meet WPR, influencing the extent to which caseworkers helped participants access options available under SB 1041. This concern was reinforced by comments from caseworkers in the focal county focus groups, with many caseworkers complaining about the lack of alignment between the state and federal requirements. ACS findings showed that 29 percent of counties assessed that SB 1041 resulted in somewhat or much worse workforce participation rates—consistent with what we heard from the focus group discussions with caseworkers.

Participant Indicators in the Post–SB 1041 Period

The status and tracking study components covered in this report are based on the analysis of state administrative data covering the CalWORKs WTW population. Although deeper analysis will occur in future reports when county-level administrative data can also be examined, the state data cover key indicators for CalWORKs WTW participants before and after SB 1041 became effective. In particular, for the status study, we examined the cross-section of CalWORKs WTW participants in March 2013, March 2014, and March 2015 in order to describe how key indicators measured in the state administrative data have changed in the first two years since SB 1041 took effect. For the tracking study, we use the administrative data to follow the cohorts that entered CalWORKs in March 2007, March 2009, March 2011, and March 2013 for two years in order to contrast the experiences of cohorts that only experienced the pre–SB 1041 rules,

those that only experienced the post–SB 1041 rules, and those that transitioned through the policy change.

As part of these analyses, we addressed questions related to exemptions and sanctions, leaving CalWORKs, employment and earnings, and reengagement.

- **What percentage of WTW participants were exempt from participating in WTW requirements?** The percentage of participants who received at least one exemption during their first two years in CalWORKs increased from 44 percent for the cohort that entered in March 2007 to 49 percent for the cohort that entered in March 2013. Annual snapshots of CalWORKs WTW participants in March of 2013, 2014, and 2015 showed that in March of 2013 about four out of ten participants had an exemption, while in March of 2014 and March of 2015, about three out of ten participants had an exemption.
- **What percentage of WTW participants had a sanction?** The percentage of participants who received at least one sanction during their first two years in CalWORKs increased from about 12 percent for the March 2007 entry cohort to about 14 percent for the March 2013 entry cohort. Yearly snapshots since SB 1041 showed that in a given March, about one out of eight participants were currently sanctioned.
- **What percentage of CalWORKs WTW participants were not participating one year after entry or two years after entry?** The percentage of participants who were not in the CalWORKs WTW program one year after entry changed little from the 2007 to 2013 entry cohorts (50 percent to 49 percent), while the percentage of participants who were not in CalWORKs two years after entry increased, rising from 64 percent for the 2007 entry cohort to 67 percent for the 2013 entry cohort.
- **What is the percentage of WTW participants who were employed?** A larger percentage of the March 2013 entry cohort was employed for at least one quarter in their first two years after entry compared with the March 2007 entry cohort (61 percent versus 49 percent). In addition, the percentage of new participants who were continuously employed for their first year on WTW increased from 14 percent for the 2007 entry cohort to 17 percent for the 2013 entry cohort. Yearly snapshots after SB 1041 showed that a higher percentage of participants were employed in March 2015 compared with March 2013 (25 percent in 2013 and 31 percent in 2015).
- **How much did WTW participants who were employed earn?** For the March 2015 cross-section, employed participants earned about $2,300 per quarter on average, a 10 percent increase compared with the March 2013 cross-section.
- **How did status change from 2013 to 2015 among WTW participants who had the short-term WTW exemption for young children in December 2012?** Among the participants who had the short-term WTW exemption for young children in December 2012, 14 percent still had this exemption in March 2014 and almost none still had it in

March 2015. Slightly more than half were not participating in the CalWORKs WTW program in March 2015.

Initial Descriptive Analysis for the Impact Study

One of the goals of the SB 1041 evaluation is to assess the impact of the legislation on outcomes for adults and children participating in CalWORKs WTW. For example, state administrative data on cohorts of first-time CalWORKs WTW entrants show an increase between 2010 and 2013 in rates of employment one year after enrollment and a corresponding increase in leaving CalWORKs WTW (not participating) one year after enrolling. Administrative data on earnings also show an increase in quarterly earnings among employed CalWORKs entrants one year after enrolling. However, such changes may reflect the improved state of the economy or changing demographic patterns of the CalWORKs WTW population.

In this report, we used two strategies to control for possible confounding factors to assess potential impacts of SB 1041 on several key outcomes. In particular, the same state administrative data used for the status and tracking studies were employed in a multicohort interrupted time series design that aims to isolate changes in outcomes that can be associated with SB 1041. Given that the administrative data extend just about two years since the SB 1041 reforms became effective and because we have a limited set of control variables, these initial analyses do not support strong inferences about the impacts of the legislation. Nevertheless, they provide initial insights into the potential effects of the policy changes.

Keeping in mind these limitations, these initial analyses produce the following findings using the state administrative data:

- When we accounted for the changing economy and demographics of CalWORKs WTW participants, we found that after SB 1041 individuals were continuing to participate in CalWORKs WTW one year after entry at higher rates (2.2 percentage points higher) because those who were employed were combining work and CalWORKs WTW at higher rates than predicted (2.1 percentage points higher) rather than being "employed only" (1.9 percentage points lower).
- Using this same approach to account for changes in the economy and in the demographics of CalWORKs WTW participants, the level of quarterly real earnings among CalWORKs WTW participants one year after enrollment was about $54 higher (4.2 percent) for those who started after SB 1041 than for similar participants who entered before SB 1041.

These findings are consistent with the increase in the earnings disregard, which was one aspect of SB 1041 that was implemented immediately.

Although these effects are all statistically significant, they are very small changes and suggest that the initial effects of the SB 1041 reforms have been modest and that much of the observed trends are likely the result of favorable economic and demographic trends.

As a second approach, we exploited nationally representative survey data from the CPS to implement another strategy, the comparative case study method, to examine differences in outcomes for the population potentially eligible for CalWORKs participation in California with a synthetic control group based on a weighted combination of the same eligible population in other U.S. states. At this stage, our inferences were even more limited than the administrative data analyses, given that the CPS data available to us extend, for the most part, just to calendar year 2013, i.e., one year past the point when SB 1041 came into effect.

The analyses based on the CPS showed very small and uniformly statistically insignificant differences in various outcomes—income below poverty, employment, receipt of means-tested benefits including TANF, school enrollment, and participation in job training—between the population of female-headed families with low education and dependent children in California compared with the outcomes for the same population in a synthetic control group of other U.S. states. However, with just one year of post-reform data for most outcomes in the CPS, it is not clear whether differences will emerge when a longer time series can be examined.

Overall, given the findings from the process study indicating that the SB 1041 reforms have yet to be fully implemented across California's 58 counties, we would not necessarily expect to see strong effects on family and adult outcomes until more time has elapsed.

Implications and Next Steps

As a multiyear evaluation, this initial report with evaluation findings was not intended to lead to specific recommendations. However, a number of the findings summarized in Table S.1 are sufficiently robust, especially those from the process study, to identify important implications of the results, as well as issues that we expect to consider in the next phase of the evaluation.

WTW 24-Month Time Clock

As indicated in Table S.1, one overarching theme of the process study is that implementation of the WTW 24-month time clock has been extremely challenging for everyone involved. Determining each participant's time-clock status is currently a time-consuming combination of automated and manual processes that are difficult to implement in a consistent way, at least for caseworkers in the six focal counties, partly because caseworkers vary in their understanding of the policy changes. This means that implementation of time-clock rules may vary across counties or even across caseworkers within the same county. Although full automation may not be feasible, there may be ways to improve upon the existing automation systems in order to alleviate confusion and standardize as much of the process as possible.

In addition, there is scope for further training of supervisors and caseworkers to improve understanding of the rules (e.g., what stops and starts the clock) and to ensure greater consistency in their application when manual adjustments are required. The smaller counties in particular may benefit from such training. Counties may also gain from sharing information on best practices, although smaller counties may not have the resources needed to fully adopt practices that are working well in the larger counties, where more supports are available.

Our in-depth data collection in the six focal counties further indicated that administrators and caseworkers are concerned that the WTW 24-month time clock is not sufficiently long for barriers to stable employment and self-sufficiency to be addressed. As the evaluation continues, we expect to determine if this concern is relevant statewide by examining state and county administrative data on CalWORKs WTW participants' outcomes. Data from the CalSES will allow us to examine a broader set of adult and child outcomes for a sample of CalWORKs WTW participants who first enrolled in one of the six focal counties before and after the SB 1041 changes.

CalWORKs WTW Participants' Understanding of SB 1041

The ACS and focal county work underscored that the complexity of SB 1041 made it challenging for caseworkers to understand SB 1041 and to explain to participants what it was and what it meant for them. The focus groups with CalWORKs WTW participants further reinforced the point that participants themselves really do not understand SB 1041, including such key aspects as the WTW 24-month time clock, as well as what strategy they should take in terms of deciding how best to utilize core and noncore options and the one-time young child exemption. Although lack of understanding of program rules under CalWORKs or other programs is not a new phenomenon, these findings suggest that there is a need for simpler and more-detailed guidance that caseworkers and participants can follow. For CalWORKs WTW participants who are at the end of their WTW 24-month time clock, consideration could be given to adjusting or resetting their clock so that they have the opportunity to fully understand (and act upon) the implications of different options.

Potential Process Improvements

Recommendations offered during the focal county site visits focused on improving processes for caseworkers, which might ultimately make implementation easier and more understandable for all. In some cases, these processes were already being applied with good results in at least one of the focal counties and could therefore serve as models of best practice to test out and disseminate to other counties. In other cases, the recommended process change has yet to be implemented, so initial pilot testing of the process change may be warranted. One recommendation, for example, was improvement of the WTW 2 form. For another example, administrators and caseworkers in one county advocated a specialized unit to track and manage participants' time on aid.

Work Participation Rate

Our work in the focal counties identified a tension between needing to meet the WPR and allowing CalWORKs WTW participants to pursue the choices available to them under SB 1041. It is unclear the extent to which pressures felt by the counties regarding the WPR are influencing whether caseworkers encourage and support participants to take advantage of the flexibility SB 1041 offers, when those choices may not help the county meet the WPR. As part of the ongoing evaluation, we will continue to assess the extent to which concern over potential federal penalties associated with the WPR is deterring counties from fully supporting the options under SB 1041.

Early Engagement Activities

These initial evaluation findings also have implications for the set of Early Engagement activities associated with SB 1041. In particular, as a more comprehensive appraisal tool, OCAT may identify more barriers and service needs as it is rolled out in mid-2015 and beyond. A concern is whether the counties will have sufficient services and capacity to meet the identified needs through the FS program and how processes will need to be modified as a result. As the evaluation continues, the evaluation team will explore if referrals to FS have increased and perspectives on why that may be the case, as well as how the social service system is responding to any changes in demand. Likewise, given that the ESE program is relatively new and that there is some variation in the way it is being implemented across the counties, it may be helpful for counties to learn from one another about their program models and strategies to expand the number and range of employers participating.

Ultimately, the full effect of the SB 1041 reforms may not be realized until OCAT is fully operational and the other Early Engagement activities are at scale. In other words, while January 1, 2013, was the effective date of the legislation, it is not reasonable to expect that all aspects of the SB 1041 policy changes would be in effect as of that date. This points to the value of the ongoing evaluation but also the need to acknowledge that the timing of the implementation of SB 1041 and supporting activities will not always align with the January 1, 2013, effective date of most of the legislation's policy changes.

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Abbreviations

AB	Assembly Bill
ACIN	All County Information Notices
ACL	All County Letter
ACS	All-County Survey
AFDC	Aid to Families with Dependent Children
AIR	American Institutes for Research
BLS	Bureau of Labor Statistics
C-IV	Consortium-IV
CalSES	California Socioeconomic Survey
CalWIN	Welfare Client Data System Consortia
CalWORKs	California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids
CDSS	California Department of Social Services
CIN	Client Identification Number
CPHS	(California) Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CPS	Current Population Survey
CWD	county welfare department
CWDA	County Welfare Directors Association
DHHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
DSS	Department of Social Services
EDD	Employment Development Department
ESE	Expanded Subsidized Employment (program)
FS	Family Stabilization (program)
GAIN	Greater Avenues for Independence
GEARS	GAIN Employment and Reporting System
GED	general educational development
LEADER	Los Angeles Eligibility, Automated Determination, Evaluation and Reporting
MEDS	Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System
MRC	meaningful robust conversations
MVL	master variable list
OCAT	Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool
OWRA	Online Work Readiness Assessment
PRWORA	Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act
RADEP	Research and Development Enterprise Project

SAWS	Statewide Automated Welfare System
SB	Senate Bill
SRG	(RAND) Survey Research Group
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
WDTIP	Welfare Data Tracking Implementation Project
WPR	Work Participation Rate
WTW	welfare-to-work

1. Introduction

Senate Bill (SB) 1041, enacted as part of the California Budget Act of 2012 (Chapter 47, 2012 Statutes), contained significant changes to the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program, most of which became effective January 1, 2013. CalWORKs is California's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, a central component of the safety net that provides cash aid for low-income families with children. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) provides oversight and administration of CalWORKs, while county welfare offices in the state's 58 counties operate the program.

The SB 1041 policy changes included modifications to the requirements for work under CalWORKs, the types of eligible work activities, the time clock that governs the work requirements, and the exemption for a young child—all with the goal of engaging CalWORKs participants in welfare-to-work (WTW) activities as early as possible, while also providing enhanced supports to address barriers to work and to offer more flexibility in work activity options as well as increased incentives for work as participants move toward self-sufficiency. The California legislature included a provision in the bill for an independent evaluation to determine if SB 1041 achieves its objectives and if there are any unintended consequences.

The goal of the SB 1041 evaluation is to understand how the reforms were implemented; how the changes affected the number and composition of CalWORKs participants and their experience with program services; and the effects of the reforms on families and children, as well as the operations of county welfare offices, the primary agents responsible for implementing and monitoring the program. Broadly, the multiyear SB 1041 evaluation is designed to address the following overarching questions by the completion of the study:

- Has SB 1041 provided greater flexibility in the services and activities available to CalWORKs participants?
- Has SB 1041 helped remove barriers to participants' employment?
- Has SB 1041 affected participants' transitions at the 25-month mark?
- Has SB 1041 accelerated participants' paths to self-sufficiency?
- Has SB 1041 affected California's TANF annual work participation rates?
- How have the changes affected CalWORKs and related programs at the county level?
- Has SB 1041 improved the well-being of participating children and their families?
- What improvements to the CalWORKs program are recommended?

This report is the first of three annual reports that will provide findings from the evaluation components. Given the available data and the stage of evaluation, this report focuses on addressing a set of supporting questions that will contribute to our ability to answer the overarching study questions by the end of the evaluation.

As described later in this chapter and more fully in the evaluation background and study design report (Karoly et al., 2015), the evaluation consists of five component studies: a process study to address questions related to the implementation of SB 1041; a participant status study and a participant tracking study to examine point-in-time and dynamic indicators for the CalWORKs population both before and after the SB 1041 changes; a county welfare operations impact study to assess the consequences of SB 1041 for various aspects of county welfare office operations; and a participant impact study to investigate the effects of the SB 1041 policy changes on a range of adult and child outcomes for current and former CalWORKs WTW participants.

The primary focus in this initial report is on findings from the process study, drawing on information gathered from interviews with state-level key informants; from the first wave of the All-County Survey (ACS), an online survey of the state's 58 county welfare directors; and from interviews and focus groups conducted in six focal counties (Alameda, Fresno, Los Angeles, Riverside, Sacramento, and Stanislaus). These quantitative and qualitative data, collected and examined for the process study, cover the first two and a half years of the implementation of SB 1041. Together, these rich data offer a statewide perspective on the status of implementation, as well as an in-depth view of implementation in the six focal counties, which represent 64 percent of the CalWORKs caseload. This information is extremely valuable for understanding the pace of implementation, how counties have approached the policy and process changes adopted under SB 1041, and the opportunities for addressing any challenges encountered to date.

In addition, this report includes analyses based on several additional sources of data that contribute to other study components. Specifically, we analyze state administrative data to address questions pertaining to the status and tracking studies. The state-level data systems capture key indicators for CalWORKs WTW participants such as time clock status, exemptions and sanctions, and employment. (Other aspects of program participation, such as the types of WTW activities CalWORKs participants engage in, are captured in county-level data systems that were not yet available for analysis but will be examined in future reports.) We also employ the state administrative data, as well as nationally representative survey data, to provide a first assessment of the potential impact of SB 1041 on CalWORKs WTW participants, specifically for outcomes such as CalWORKs participation, employment, and poverty status.

We stress the tentative nature of the impact study findings given that the data cover just one to two years of the post–SB 1041 period, thus providing only a very short-term assessment of potential impact. Future evaluation reports will extend the administrative data we are able to examine and augment the primary data assembled for this report with additional waves of qualitative and quantitative data collection. These data will then support more rigorous analyses of outcomes as part of the impact study.

In the remainder of this introductory chapter, we provide relevant background information for the evaluation, specifically an overview of the SB 1041 policy changes and an overview of the evaluation framework and approach. These sections update information provided in the

evaluation background and study design report (Karoly et al., 2015). We conclude this chapter with a road map for the remainder of the report.

Overview of SB 1041 Policy Changes

Prior to the SB 1041 reforms, the CalWORKs program was subject to a number of policy reforms as a result of shifting state priorities, federal policy action, and the Great Recession of 2007–2009.[1] These changes affected such features as benefit levels (which increased periodically until the Great Recession and then declined), work requirements (made stricter in 2004), the lifetime time limit for benefit receipt (reduced from 60 months to 48 months as of 2011), exemptions from work requirements for adults with a young child in the assistance unit[2] (with a more generous allowance as of 2009), and the financial incentives to work (made less generous in 2011).

Key Provisions of SB 1041

As summarized in Table 1.1, the SB 1041 legislation (2012) affected a number of key features of CalWORKs.[3] Most provisions became effective January 1, 2013, although implementation may have started later and other features in the law were scheduled to be phased in over time.

Adult Lifetime Limit and Time Clock

The first two rows of Table 1.1 summarize the changes in two key CalWORKs features: the adult lifetime time limit and the initiation of the new WTW 24-month time clock. Under SB 1041, the lifetime limit for CalWORKs receipts remained at 48 months (the time limit adopted in 2011 legislation), but support was divided into two periods: the first 24 months, when a set of flexible CalWORKs WTW services and activities apply, and a second 24 months, when the more restrictive CalWORKs federal standards for work activities requirements apply. For participants who may need more time to complete educational goals or resolve barriers to employment, counties may grant a six-month extension of the CalWORKs 24-month time clock.

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[1] This section draws heavily on the discussion in Karoly et al. (2015) of the SB 1041 legislation and related policy changes relevant for the evaluation. Karoly et al. also provide a history of earlier reforms to the CalWORKs program.

[2] The assistance unit consists of the co-residing family members who are determined to be eligible for CalWORKs. The assistance unit will not necessarily include all family members who are living together.

[3] Some features of the CalWORKs program did not change under SB 1041. These include the structure of sanctions for noncompliance, the family cap (i.e., no increase in the monthly benefit when a new child is added to the assistance unit), and the provision for child-only benefits to continue after the adult or adults in the assistance unit reach their lifetime time limit.

Table 1.1. Overview of Key SB 1041 Policy Changes Effective January 1, 2013

Policy	Pre–SB 1041	Post–SB 1041
Adult lifetime time limit	48 cumulative lifetime months of CalWORKs WTW assistance, services, and activities	48 months of support in two periods: • 24 months of CalWORKs WTW services and activities • 24 months of CalWORKs federal standards for work activities. Counties may extend the WTW 24-month time clock by up to six months for a target of 20 percent of participants between months 24 and 48 of aid.
Time-clock initiation	Not applicable	• Those starting the program on or after January 1, 2013, are subject to the SB 1041 time-clock structure. • Those in the program prior to January 1, 2013, with fewer than 24 months accumulated are subject to the 24-month CalWORKs WTW time clock, followed by the CalWORKs federal standards until the 48-month lifetime limit is reached. • Those in the program prior to January 1, 2013, with more than 24 months accumulated are subject to the 24-month CalWORKs WTW time clock until the 48-month lifetime limit is reached.
Weekly total work requirements	• Single parent: 32 hours • Two parent: 35 hours	• Single parent with child younger than age six: 20 hours. • Single parent with no child younger than age six: 30 hours. • Two parents: 35 hours.
Weekly core work requirements	20 hours of the weekly work requirement of 32 hours (for a single parent) or 35 hours (for two parents) have to be in core activities	• No core requirement during the CalWORKs WTW 24-month service period. • During the 24-month CalWORKs federal standards period, 20 hours of the weekly work requirement for single parents and 30 hours of the weekly work requirement for two parents have to be in core activities, which include employment, on-the-job training, and vocational educational training.
Young child exemption	Short-term exemption: One adult per family excused from WTW activities if caring for one child under two years of age or two children under six years of age	• One lifetime exemption: One adult per family excused from WTW activities if caring for child under two years of age. • Adults exempt from the pre–SB 1041 young child exemption rules were not required to participate until the county reengaged them. Counties had until January 1, 2015, to complete the reengagement process.
Earned income deduction	$112 disregard plus 50 percent of the remaining earned income	Effective October 1, 2013: $225 disregard plus 50 percent of the remaining earned income.
Cal-Learn	Program case management component suspended	Program fully restored on April 1, 2013: Pregnant/parenting teens were no longer under WTW rules but under special Cal-Learn rules.
Income verification	Quarterly verification of income for eligibility	Phased in from April 2013 to October 2013: New income verification system implemented with: • Semiannual income verification for cases headed by an adult. • Annual income verification for child only cases.

SOURCE: Based on Karoly et al., 2015, Table 2.3.
NOTE: All changes are effective as of January 1, 2013, except as noted.

This extension can be applied for a target of 20 percent of participants who have spent between 24 and 48 months on aid.[4]

After January 1, 2013, the WTW 24-month time clock stops for participants with any of the following conditions: a WTW exemption applies or the participant has a good-cause determination that excuses noncompliance in WTW activities (e.g., illness or disability, lack of transportation), is under sanction, is developing a WTW plan, is participating in job search, meets federal work participation requirements, is eligible for Cal-Learn, has a domestic abuse waiver, or has a prior temporary exemption for caring for a young child and has not yet been reengaged (we discuss this condition further below).

The new 24-month CalWORKs WTW time clock is embedded within the preexisting CalWORKs 48-month time limit. As described more fully in Appendix A, the two clocks differ in the approved activities under each time period, in the way in which time elapses or "ticks" under each clock, how exemptions and extensions are handled, and when the clocks expire. Implementing the 24-month clock, in particular, involves an automated system combined with manual revision. The complexity of the time clocks, detailed in Appendix A, will be a recurring theme in this report.

These provisions of SB 1041, as well as those discussed below, applied fully to those enrolling in CalWORKs for the first time after January 1, 2013, and to those transitioning from the pre–SB 1041 rules. Thus, both new and continuing participants after January 1, 2013, have a 24-month period to engage in more-flexible WTW activities. However, those already enrolled in CalWORKs as of 2013 with more than 24 months of cumulative aid will likely reach their 48-month lifetime limit before exhausting the 24 months of flexible WTW activities.

Requirements for Work and Related Activities

CalWORKs participants subject to the work requirements are required to participate for a minimum number of hours in work or other related activities. As shown in the third row of Table 1.1, SB 1041 reduced the required hours of work from 32 hours to 20 hours for those whose youngest child is less than age six. All other single-parent cases had a small drop in the work requirement, from 32 to 30 hours. There was no change in the required hours of work for two-parent cases (35 hours).

In addition to changing the hours of required work, SB 1041 modified the set of allowable activities that meet the work participation requirement (see the fourth row of Table 1.1). During the first 24 months of benefit receipt, there are no required core activities, a more flexible option

[4] Beginning in 2015, on a semiannual basis, CDSS has provided counties with a targeted number of assistance units for the exemption in the upcoming six-month period based on 20 percent of the cases estimated to be potentially eligible (i.e., cases where all adult members will be subject to the WTW 24-month time clock within the six-month period and they will still have time remaining on the CalWORKs 48-month time limit during the six-month period). The targets provided in December and June cover the following January-to-June and July-to-December periods, respectively.

than under prior CalWORKs rules. During this initial 24-month period, allowable activities include unsubsidized employment, subsidized employment, unpaid work experience, vocational education, job search and job readiness training, mental health and substance abuse treatment, domestic violence services, adult basic education, and secondary school or a general educational development (GED) course.

After the WTW 24-month time clock is reached, CalWORKs participants are subject to CalWORKs' federal standards for work activities—which are less flexible, either because of restrictions in duration for some activities (e.g., vocational education is limited to 12 months and mental health or substance abuse treatment to six weeks per year) or because of restrictions in intensity for others (e.g., attending secondary school is allowed only if at least 20 hours are spent in core activities, such as unsubsidized or subsidized employment). In particular, under federal TANF rules, the following activities are considered "core": unsubsidized employment, subsidized employment, work experience, community service, vocational education (up to 12 months), on-the-job training, job search and job readiness training (six weeks per year; it may include mental health and substance abuse treatment), and providing child care to a community service program participant. The following activities are considered "noncore": job skills training directly related to employment, education directly related to employment, and satisfactory attendance at a secondary school or course leading to a GED.

Young Child Exemption

Under SB 1041, the prior temporary young child exemption instituted as part of Assembly Bill (AB) X4 4 (2009) was replaced by a new once-in-a-lifetime exemption from WTW requirements to care for a child from birth to age 23 months (see the fifth row of Table 1.1). Months while the exemption is in effect do not count against the new WTW 24-month time clock, or against the CalWORKs 48-month time limit. This exemption is at the discretion of the participant: In other words, a participant eligible for this exemption as of January 1, 2013, may reserve the exemption for the caregiving of a future child or may exercise the exemption for the current child at a later date. In two-parent assistance units, one parent at a time is eligible for the exemption and the parents may alternate which parent is exempt.

CalWORKs participants with a young child exemption as of December 31, 2012, were not subject to the SB 1041 WTW requirements (and the time clock would not start) until the county reengaged them. Reengagement involved initiating contact with CalWORKs participants who had the exemption, communicating the change in the policy, and initiating the WTW services component if they no longer remained eligible for an exemption (see Appendix A for additional detail). Counties had until January 1, 2015, to reengage participants with a pre–2013 young child exemption. This affected nearly 60,000 CalWORKs participants (about 18 percent of the caseload) as of December 2012.

Other Provisions

SB 1041 included several other provisions that are also summarized in Table 1.1.

- *Financial work incentive*. The fixed component of the earned income disregard was restored to $225, the level that existed prior to cuts in 2011 in response to the Great Recession (see the sixth row in Table 1.1).
- *Supports for pregnant and parenting teens*. The Cal-Learn program, after a suspension of case management services, was reinstated and allowed to resume its specialized case management and support activities for pregnant and parenting teens (see the seventh row in Table 1.1).
- *Income verification*. In an effort to reduce the burden on CalWORKs participants and county welfare offices, the prior quarterly income verification system under CalWORKs (and CalFresh, the name for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in California) was replaced by a semiannual reporting system that was designated for implementation between April 1 and October 1 of 2013 (see the last row of Table 1.1). For child-only cases (exclusive of WTW-sanctioned cases), income verification shifted from quarterly to annually.

Bundle of Policy Changes

Together, the bundle of SB 1041 policy changes emphasized moving participants through CalWORKs by intensifying their engagement with WTW activities early on—in the first two years of participation—and providing flexible, meaningful work activity options and supportive services during that period designed to enhance their ability to secure stable, gainful employment. The elimination of a requirement for core activities during the first 24 months provides participants the potential to engage in a range of activities that could include human capital investments through education or training. The reduction in the weekly work requirement for single-parent participants with a child under the age of six provides additional accommodation for families with younger children. The return to the higher earned income disregard in place prior to 2011 provides a greater financial incentive to increase earnings. Finally, the full restoration of the Cal-Learn program reinstated the set of specialized and supportive services for pregnant and parenting teens.

During the debate over the SB 1041 provisions, supporters viewed the package of policy changes as retaining the successful features of the CalWORKs program (including those in place prior to the cuts prompted by the budget crisis), such as relatively generous financial incentives and the range of WTW supports. Child and family advocates called attention to its more-restrictive features, such as the shift after the first 24 months of assistance to the more-limited work-related activities that qualify under federal TANF rules and the new one-time limit on the use of the young child exemption. The mandate for an evaluation of SB 1041, included in the

legislation, provides an opportunity to document the process of implementing the policy changes and to assess the resulting consequences in terms of both intended and unintended consequences.

Other Related Policy Changes

Three other policy changes, signed into law as part of the June 2013 budget bills for the 2013–2014 state fiscal year (specifically under AB 74, Chapter 21, 2013), were intended to support the policy objectives under SB 1041 and thus are referenced in the context of the research conducted for this evaluation. In particular, the following strategies were instituted to identify and address barriers to employment more rapidly and are commonly referred to as Early Engagement activities. (For more detail on each component, see Appendix A.)

- *Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool (OCAT)*. CDSS was charged with developing a new standardized online appraisal tool for use by county welfare departments to screen new CalWORKs WTW participants and to identify and address barriers to employment more effectively. The development of the tool, a modification of the federal Online Work Readiness Assessment (OWRA), was announced in May 2014 (CDSS, 2014e). The tool was tested in several counties in summer 2014 and statewide implementation was expected by fall 2015. Following the implementation of AB 74, OCAT will be used when WTW participants come in for their initial appraisals. The OCAT summary appraisal will thus be available earlier in the intake process for identifying barriers, addressing identified needs, making referrals to supportive services, and developing each client's individualized WTW plan.
- *Family Stabilization (FS) program*. AB 74 included provisions to identify CalWORKs WTW participants in need of intensive case management and services designed to support the family in overcoming an identified situation or crisis that would interfere with participation in WTW activities and services. The destabilizing conditions include homelessness, domestic violence, and untreated or undertreated mental health or substance abuse problems. Services may be provided for up to six months; months with FS program support do not count toward the 24-month time clock. Counties were required to submit a written FS plan by March 31, 2014, to participate in the program (CDSS, 2014b).
- *Expanded Subsidized Employment (ESE) program*. AB 74 added funds for county welfare departments to expand the number of subsidized employment placements for CalWORKs WTW participants, with the expectation that the program could add 8,250 monthly placements by June 2014. Participants are eligible for a six-month ESE placement, with possible extensions in three-month increments for a total of 12 months of subsidized employment if the added time would increase the likelihood of the participant obtaining unsubsidized employment with the employer or of the participant obtaining

skills and experience relevant for unsubsidized employment in a specific field. As with the FS programs, counties were required to submit an ESE plan in order to access the additional funds (CDSS, 2013c).

Changes to other social programs that are intertwined with CalWORKs continued as well, since SB 1041 went into effect. Two key competing priorities for counties included the rollout of provisions for subsidized health insurance coverage under the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the realignment of the corrections system (AB 109), which could add to the service requirements at the local level. Such concurrent policy reforms to CalWORKs and other aspects of the safety net make it even more challenging to isolate and measure the effects of the specific SB 1041 reform.

SB 1041 and the Work Participation Rate

A central component of the federal TANF program is the work participation rate (WPR). Federal law requires states to meet a specific WPR or face a penalty by losing a portion of their TANF grant allocation. Specifically, the WPR requirements mandate that 50 percent of work-eligible (i.e., nonexempt) cash assistance program participants be engaged in work for a set number of hours per week (averaged monthly) depending on family type. There is a separate 90-percent WPR requirement for two-parent families, which have a 35-hour weekly requirement; single parents with children ages six and older are required to work 30 hours per week, and single parents with children under the age of six must work for 20 hours per week.

WPR requirements are fulfilled by participating in federally defined "core" activities (e.g., subsidized or unsubsidized employment, work experience, on-the-job training) or a combination of "core" and "noncore" activities (e.g., adult basic education, job skills training, education). Participation in noncore activities is contingent upon engaging in core activities for at least 20 hours per week (30 hours for two-parent families) (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2015). State TANF programs (e.g., CalWORKs federal) can reduce WPR requirements by getting a caseload reduction credit, based on the extent to which the caseload has declined relative to 2005 for reasons other than eligibility changes (Schott and Pavetti, 2013; Brown and Derr, 2015).[5] If a state program is unable to meet its WPR, it may experience financial penalties equal to an initial 5-percent cut in its TANF block grant, an additional 2-percent cut for each subsequent year, and up to a maximum of 21 percent (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [DHHS], 2013; Reed and Karpilow, 2010). Each year from 2008 to 2011, California failed to achieve its WPR, and the state entered into a corrective compliance plan for fiscal year

[5] The rationale for this credit is that as more employable welfare participants leave the rolls, those who remain have a more difficult time, on average, finding and keeping employment.

2015 that requires the state to meet WPR to avoid a penalty (DHHS, 2013).[6] The federal government approved California's plan in June 2014 and the state will avoid losing hundreds of millions of dollars in federal penalties if the state's WPR is at least 50 percent in federal fiscal year 2015.

While California has historically not met the federal WPR and is in danger of financial sanctions if they do not meet these requirements, SB 1041 modified the CalWORKs program to allow work-eligible individuals to participate in activities that do not count toward the WPR. Specifically, SB 1041 eliminated the core/noncore hourly requirement such that CalWORKs participants can now choose to engage in noncore activities for 100 percent of their hourly requirement for a period of 24 cumulative months. This flexibility is intended to offer participants the opportunity to address barriers to employment, and provide services and supports to facilitate entry or retention in the workforce (CDSS, 2014d). The CalWORKs participants who engage in these activities are referred to as WTW participants.

Other Relevant Background for the SB 1041 Evaluation

Before describing our approach to the evaluation of SB 1041, we briefly place the CalWORKs program in the context of the TANF program more generally, review CalWORKs caseload trends, and highlight relevant prior research.

CalWORKs in the National Context

When CalWORKs was first established following the 1996 federal reforms under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), California's program relied more on incentives than on disincentives to comply with TANF requirements regarding eligibility, benefits levels, financial work incentives, time limits, work activities, and sanctions. As a result, California's TANF program was one of the more generous among the states. Indeed, as discussed in more detail in Karoly et al. (2015), where a comparison of state TANF policies is provided, California continues to have one of the highest income thresholds to qualify for TANF receipt—whether measured in absolute terms or relative to state median income—and California maintains relatively high benefit levels, both in absolute terms and relative to state median income for families led by a single mother. With the restoration of the $225 earned income disregard in SB 1041, California also has one of the most generous financial work incentives. In terms of work requirements, SB 1041 eliminated the core requirement during the first 24 months on aid in order to give participants more flexibility to participate in noncore activities, such as education and job skills training that can contribute to achieving economic self-sufficiency. This change aligned CalWORKs policy with that of many states that do not require a minimum of

[6] California was determined to be WPR noncompliant in federal fiscal year 2011 and a penalty of $246.1 million was imposed. A reasonable cause claim for penalty relief was submitted to the Administration for Children and Families in August 2014 (CDSS, 2015d).

participation hours to be spent on core activities (such as employment, on-the-job training, vocational educational training, and community service). Further, California is one of three states that exempt adults with a child as old as 24 months or even older; most other states allow no exemption or only until the child is 12 months old.[7] California is also one of the few states where the maximum sanction affects only the aid received by the adults in the assistance unit, as compared with other states where a full-family sanction or case closure applies.

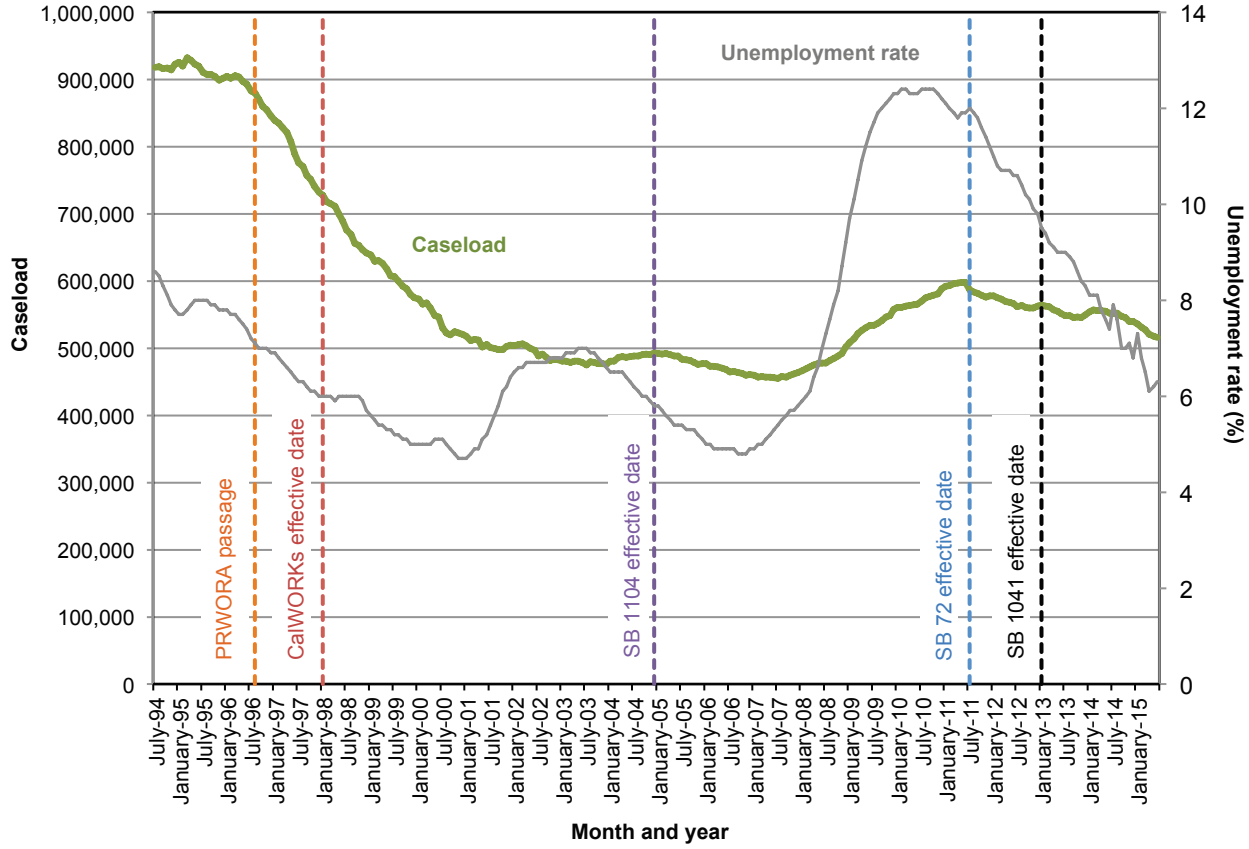
However, the reforms in 2011 and 2013 placed California among the more restrictive states on the length of the time limit. Notably, the majority of states apply the full federal 60-month time limit. At 48 months, California's time limit policy, in effect since the SB 72 reform in 2011, makes it one of the more restrictive states. At the same time, California is one of three states providing TANF benefits indefinitely for children in need after the adult participant reaches the time limit.

CalWORKs Caseload Trends

As background for this report, we briefly trace the trends in the CalWORKs caseload since July 1994 (the start of the state fiscal year), in the pre-TANF era. California's caseload peaked in March 1995 at about 932,000 when the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program was in effect (Figure 1.1). A combination of factors—earlier reforms under AFDC designed to reduce the caseload, the replacement of AFDC with TANF, a strong economy, and favorable demographic trends, among others—helped drive caseloads downward to about 455,000 by July 2007, less than half the AFDC-era peak. Plotted against the state unemployment rate, there is a clear cyclical pattern in the caseload trend. Indeed, the caseload increased again with the Great Recession, reaching nearly 600,000 cases by June 2011. Since that time, the caseload has been fluctuating around a downward trajectory. When SB 1041 became effective in January 2013, the caseload stood at 564,000. As of June 2015, the caseload had fallen further, to about 515,000, consistent with the improving state economy as reflected in the declining unemployment rate, but still above the low point in 2007.

[7] Vermont has an exemption for children up to 24 months; Alabama has an exemption that applies up to 36 months. See Appendix A in Karoly et al. (2015).

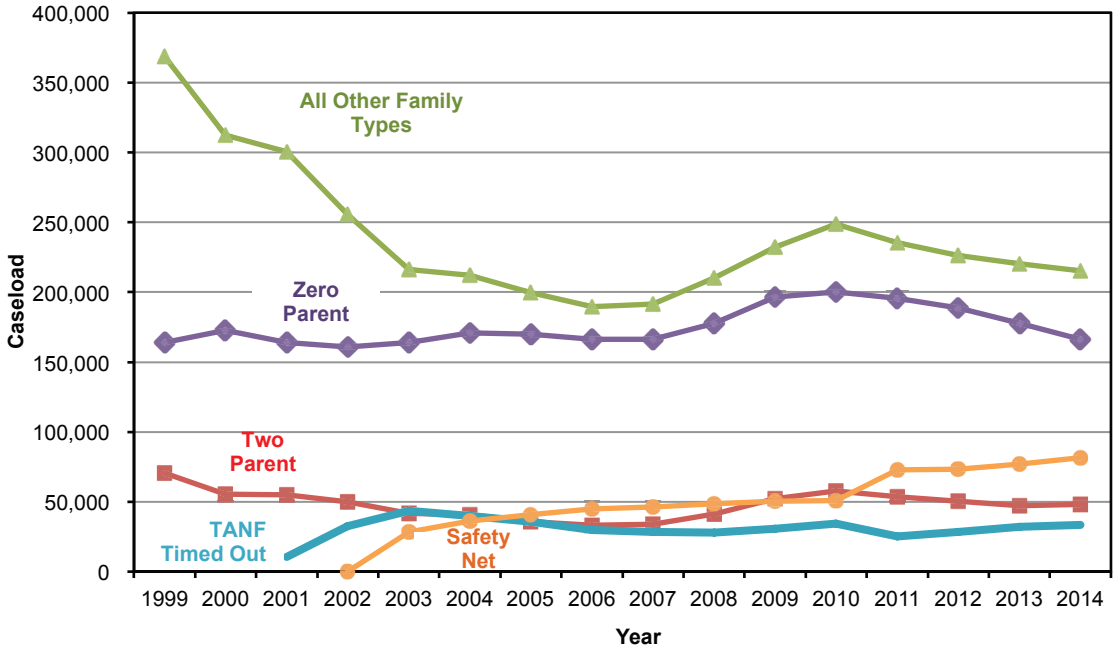
Figure 1.1. California Monthly Caseload and Monthly Unemployment Rate: State Fiscal Years 1995 to 2015



SOURCE: CDSS (2015).
NOTE: Data cover July 1994 to June 2015.

The CalWORKs caseload is made up of several types of assistance units (see Figure 1.2, which plots the trend in the caseload composition as of December in each year from 1999 to 2014). For purposes of this evaluation, we are primarily interested in cases headed by an adult, which excludes the child-only cases that fall into one of two categories: the Zero Parent group, (the largest) where there is no eligible parent in the assistance unit (e.g., because of immigration status or receipt of Supplemental Security Income), and the Safety Net cases, where all the adults have been removed from the assistance unit after reaching the 48-month CalWORKs time limit. Thus, our primary focus is on the All Other Families group, the Two Parent group, and the TANF Timed-Out cases (which are composed of adult members who have reached the federal TANF 60-month time limit but not the CalWORKs time limit). Together, these three subgroups have made up roughly two-thirds of the caseload since the mid-2000s.

Figure 1.2. CalWORKs Caseload by Family Type: 1999 to 2014



SOURCE: Authors' analysis of CDSS aggregate caseload data (CDSS, 2015e).
NOTE: The caseload is measured as of December each year.

Insights from Prior Research on CalWORKs and TANF

When California enacted CalWORKs in compliance with the federal PRWORA legislation, CDSS commissioned a comprehensive statewide evaluation to assess both the process of implementation and program impacts. Subsequent CalWORKs policy changes also received evaluation. In addition, the 1996 federal PRWORA reforms were preceded by a decade of experimentation with various policy changes to the AFDC program. Here, we briefly review insights of that body of research relevant for the evaluation of SB 1041.

Research on Policy Implementation

Prior research on the implementation of the initial CalWORKs program and subsequent policy changes demonstrate the importance of assessing how policy reforms are implemented at both the state and county levels, the impact on all levels of public-sector agencies directly involved in implementation and other supporting agencies, the incentives facing caseworkers and other line workers in policy implementation, and the importance of communicating policy changes to participating families. For example, the multiyear process evaluation of the transition from AFDC to CalWORKs demonstrated the complexities of implementing a major reform, including the need for time on the part of CDSS to prepare guidance in the form of All County Letters (ACLs) for counties on implementation, the need for time on the part of county welfare officials and staff to plan for the new processes and procedures required, the need for added operational

capacity in county welfare offices despite declining caseloads, and the need to coordinate with other county agencies (Zellman et al., 1999; Ebener and Klerman, 1999; Klerman and Ebener, 2001; Klerman, Zellman, et al., 2001). Data systems provide another focal point for implementation, as evidenced by evaluation research in 2003 examining the first cohorts of CalWORKs participants who were nearing their 60-month lifetime time limit (Crow et al., 2006). The complexities of tracking time on aid, accounting for exemptions and extensions, posed a challenge for state data systems and required substantial staff time and resources to verify that administrative data were accurate and make any needed adjustments. These evaluations have also served to illustrate the variation across counties in how implementation unfolds, partly because of factors such as caseload size, caseload characteristics, operational capacity, and other local conditions.

Caseworkers play an important role in policy implementation, as is evident in prior evaluation research. The need for adequate training of caseworker staff to ensure understanding of the policy changes and consistent application of new policies was a concern when CalWORKs was initially rolled out (Cox, Humphrey, and Klerman, 2001). A subsequent evaluation of CalWORKs sanction policy as of 2004 determined that sanctions were less effective than intended because caseworkers were reluctant to impose them (Klerman and Burstain, 2008). Moreover, there was sizable variation across counties in sanction implementation.

Finally, implementation studies also reveal the importance of understanding the process of policy reform from the perspective of program participants. For example, in the early stages of the implementation of CalWORKs, noncompliance was a major issue because half of the program participants were not showing up for such required activities as Job Club. During this phase, program components such as sanctions were not yet in place, counties had not fully ramped up supportive services to address barriers to participation in WTW activities, and CalWORKs participants did not always understand the new program requirements. Gaps in participants' understanding of key CalWORKs features were also evident in a survey of individuals in six counties who entered CalWORKs between February 1999 and March 2000 (Reardon, DeMartini, and Klerman, 2004). Among those receiving benefits at the time of the 2000–2001 survey, just 51 percent correctly identified the adult lifetime time limit of 60 months and only 22 percent knew that there was no time limit for children under the age of 18. Fifty-eight percent understood that benefits would not increase if a woman had another child while on aid. Even more striking, in a 2004–2005 survey of CalWORKs participants in six counties who were within six months of reaching their 60-month lifetime limit, 89 percent of respondents were aware of the time limit, but only 61 percent knew it was 60 months and an even slighter majority—53 percent—knew that the time limit did not apply to children (London and Mauldon, 2006). Forty-three percent did not know how many months of their eligibility remained and 19 percent of those who thought they knew the remaining time provided an overestimate of at least four months.

Research on Policy Impacts

In the decade prior to the passage of PRWORA, California and other states experimented with reforms to the AFDC program as part of Section 1115 waivers from DHHS. Based on both experimental evaluations and analyses of observation data using quasiexperimental designs, researchers have estimated the effects of specific policy reforms—work requirements, financial work incentives, and time limits, among others—and groups of reforms bundled together on an array of outcomes, including welfare use, employment and earnings, income and poverty, fertility and marriage, and child well-being. (For a review and synthesis of that body of research, see Grogger and Karoly, 2005.) Most relevant for the evaluation of SB 1041 is prior research on the impacts of alternative approaches to work mandates and on the earned income disregard as a financial work incentive. Based on the Grogger and Karoly (2005) synthesis, the research findings show the following:

- *Work requirements.* A common feature of state reforms prior to PRWORA was the introduction of a requirement for work or related activities. A consistent research finding from experimental studies was that such work mandates, on their own, have their intended effect of increasing employment and reducing welfare use. Although earned income rises, the effect on income is ambiguous because welfare payments decline, although most studies find little change in income or poverty. Another focus of the welfare experiments was the relative effectiveness of the "work first" strategy (i.e., job search and employment is the primary objective of WTW services) versus the human capital investment approach (i.e., job training and education are emphasized). As part of the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies evaluation, 11 WTW programs using either the work-first or human-capital strategy were evaluated using an experimental design—including Riverside County, which implemented both designs (Freedman, Friedlander, et al., 2000). While both approaches reduced welfare use, effects after five years show somewhat larger reductions for the work-first approach. The subsequent evaluation of the Los Angeles Count Jobs First GAIN (Greater Avenues for Independence) also provided support for the effectiveness of the work-first strategy (Freedman, Knab, et al., 2000).
- *Financial work incentives alone or combined with work requirements.* Increasing financial work incentives through a more generous earned income disregard, as a way to "make work pay," was another common feature of the reforms in the 1990s and most states, including California, adopted this approach under TANF. In theory, instituting financial work incentives would be expected to increase employment and earnings, but also to prolong welfare use because the incentives allow individuals to combine work and welfare for higher earnings levels. The empirical research is consistent with this prediction. When strong financial work incentives have been combined with increased work requirements, the evaluation evidence also indicates both an increase in

employment and earnings, as well as welfare use. The combined effect in the available evaluations has been increases in income, albeit modest, and reductions in poverty because of the ability to combine earned income with continued welfare payments during the transition to self-sufficiency.

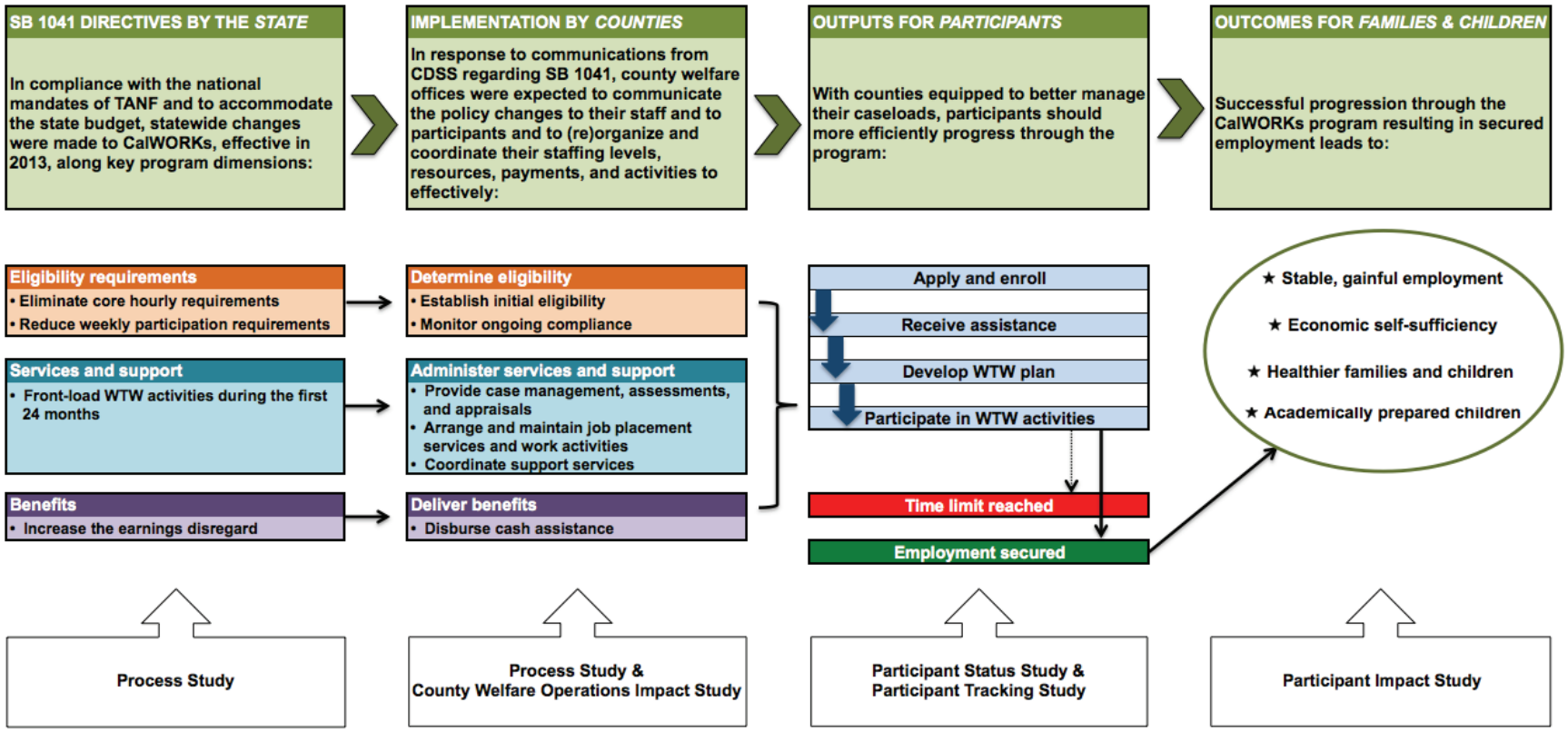
Under SB 1041, the earned income disregard doubled from $112 per month to $225 per month, the disregard in place prior to reforms in 2011. Relative to the pre–SB 1041 baseline, all else equal, we would expect an increase in employment combined with welfare use. Income may increase as well, although the effects on poverty would depend on whether any income gain was sufficient to close the gap between income in the absence of SB 1041 and the federal poverty line. However, the greater flexibility under SB 1041 in meeting work requirements during the first 24-months on aid and the reduced hours requirement for participants with a child under the age of six may introduce a countervailing effect that would serve to reduce employment. Thus, the next effect of SB 1041 on employment, earnings, income, and poverty in the first 24 months on aid is theoretically ambiguous.

The research literature has also considered the effects of other factors on welfare participation and related outcomes, with the role of the economy being one key factor that can influence the size of the caseload and the transition to self-sufficiency. Investigations of the impact of welfare reforms after PRWORA have consistently found that some of the caseload decline that followed the adoption of the 1996 federal policy was the result of the improving economy during that period. For example, results from the impact analysis following the initial implementation of CalWORKs demonstrated that the introduction of TANF in California occurred during a period when caseloads had been falling (since 1993) and the employment and earnings of welfare participants had been rising. As the economy continued to improve after CalWORKs was implemented, the policy changes that accompanied the shift from AFDC to CalWORKs could not be credited with all of the continued improvements in caseload trends and other outcomes after CalWORKs implementation (Klerman, Hotz, et al., 2003).

Evaluation Conceptual Framework and Approach

Our overall evaluation effort is guided by the conceptual framework depicted in Figure 1.3, originally presented in Karoly et al. (2015). The framework is structured like a logic model, moving from the policy change in the left column, through the implementation stage in the second column, to the outputs from the policy change, and finally to the desired impacts on child and family well-being. The top row indicates the sequence of activities, starting with the passage of SB 1041, continuing with implementation by the counties based on communication from CDSS, then engagement by participants, and concluding with the desired outcomes for children and families.

Figure 1.3. SB 1041 Evaluation Conceptual Framework



Additional details about each stage are shown in the middle blocks. For example, the legislation has components addressing eligibility requirements, services and support, and benefits. Those same domains are then the focus of implementation by counties depicted in the second column. Engagement by participants in the third column shows the steps experienced by CalWORKs WTW participants and the end result of either reaching the time limit or exiting to employment. The desired child and family outcomes are shown in the final column, including stable, gainful employment; economic self-sufficiency; healthy families and children; and academically prepared and successful children. Finally, the framework also denotes the associated study component(s) in the bottom of each stage.

The evaluation framework serves to illustrate that whether the reforms achieve their intended effect will depend on a number of factors. First, as part of implementation by the counties (top box in the second column), state-level officials, county welfare office administrators, and county welfare office staff must successfully communicate the new policy internally and to prospective and current CalWORKs participants. Second, as indicated in the same box, some counties may need to reorganize staff or shift resources among competing priorities to successfully implement the reforms. Further, the sequential nature of the implementation steps means that the pace at which the reforms are instituted may also affect how quickly changes occur in county welfare operations or in the outcomes that participants experience. Third, as illustrated by the column specific to CalWORKs participants, the reforms are expected to affect the experience of an individual applicant to CalWORKs and those individuals who qualify for benefits. Participants are expected to apply for CalWORKs and, if eligible, receive assistance, develop a WTW plan, and participate in WTW activities.

As shown in the bottom of Figure 1.3, the multiyear evaluation of SB 1041 is embodied in five study components, described briefly as follows:

- The **process study** addresses questions related to SB 1041 implementation over time using data from periodic interviews with state-level key informants, from annual interviews and focus groups in six focal counties, and from three waves of the ACS. Qualitative methods are used to document the practices, organizational changes, and policies undertaken to satisfy SB 1041; to examine the understanding of the reforms from the perspective of CalWORKs participants, caseworkers, and other county welfare office staff; and to identify any other factors that may affect SB 1041 implementation and its impacts.

- The **county welfare operations impact study** relies on information gathered from the focal counties and the ACS, as well as administrative data from county welfare offices regarding program staffing, budgets, and other matters, to assess the effects of SB 1041 on multiple dimensions of county welfare office operations. The approach uses multiple methods to isolate SB 1041 effects and rule out alternative explanations for the observed changes in county operations.

- The participant **status study** employs CDSS and county welfare system administrative data to provide an annual series of descriptive tabulations—separately for relevant participant subgroups differentially affected by SB 1041—of how participants are distributed at a point in time in terms of WTW activities, exemptions, time on aid, current recipiency, and time-limit status and extensions, among other indicators.
- The participant **tracking study** likewise draws on the array of state- and county-level administrative databases to provide a series of annual summaries of the dynamics of the CalWORKs caseload. These analyses serve to document changes in the flow of participants into, through, and out of the CalWORKs program, capturing the timing and sequence of various outcomes, such as receipt of services, participation in WTW activities, exits for employment or because of time limits, and other aspects of caseload dynamics.
- The participant **impact study** combines administrative data with primary data collected over time for a sample of welfare entrants—through the California Socioeconomic Survey (CalSES)—to investigate the effect of SB 1041 on a range of adult and child outcomes for current and former CalWORKs WTW participants, including participation in CalWORKs and other means-tested programs, employment and earnings, income and poverty, adult and child health, and other aspects of family and child well-being. To make inferences about causal effects of the SB 1041 reforms, the study uses a multicohort interrupted time series design. Nationally representative data from the Current Population Survey (CPS) are also used to compare outcomes in California with other states using a comparative case study approach with a synthetic control group.

In terms of evaluating SB 1041, it is important to recognize that other policy changes are occurring in CalWORKs as the SB 1041 reforms are implemented. There are also other factors in related policy areas and in the local economy that could influence outcomes for families and children. The analytic challenge is drawing inferences about the causal impacts of the SB 1041 reforms when these other factors are not constant. To address this challenge, as discussed in Karoly et al. (2015), the evaluation components concerned with measuring the impact of the legislation use relevant analytic and statistical techniques to control for such confounding factors. The qualitative data collection, including state- and county-level interviews, also identifies what other factors may be influencing SB 1041 implementation and impacts.

Over the multiyear investigation, each of the five study components will contribute to our ability to address the overarching study questions outlined at the start of this chapter (as shown in Table 1.2). For example, our understanding of the implications of SB 1041 for the services and activities available to CalWORKs WTW participants (the first study question) will be informed through descriptive analysis of the process of SB 1041 implementation and through analyses of the impact of the policy changes on county welfare operations and the services that counties provide. It will also be informed by descriptive analysis of state and county administrative data

recording CalWORKs participants' use of specific services and participation in specific activities, and by the impact estimates for SB 1041 based on analyses of state and county administrative data and the CalSES. In general, the process study is expected to provide descriptive insights for each of the study questions and collect the relevant information to address the first, fifth, and sixth questions related to the impact of the SB 1041 policy changes on county welfare operations. The combination of the status and tracking studies will contribute to our understanding of the first five questions covering key goals of SB 1041 with respect to CalWORKs WTW participants and their service utilization; education, training, and job search activities; benefit receipt; employment; and transitions to self-sufficiency. Finally, applying the analytic methods of the participant impact study to both administrative and survey data will allow us to address the sixth question related to CalWORKs participants' experiences and outcomes.

As noted earlier in this chapter, this evaluation report contains findings primarily related to the process study. In addition, we include results from our initial investigations pertaining to the status and tracking studies using state administrative data, as well as initial analyses in support of the participant impact study based on state administrative data and the CPS. For these quantitative analyses, in particular, the available data do not yet allow us to examine all of the outcomes listed above for these study components. Thus, at this stage in the evaluation, we do not seek to definitively address the overall study questions listed in Table 1.2. Rather, our aim is to begin to build an empirical basis for addressing those questions over the course of the multiyear evaluation. In reporting on each study component in the chapters that follow, we highlight the specific questions we are able to address given the available information and the elapse of time since the passage of SB 1041.

Table 1.2. Relationship Between Overall Study Questions and Five Study Components

Overall Study Questions	Process Study	County Welfare Operations Impact Study	Participant Status Study	Participant Tracking Study	Participant Impact Study
Has SB 1041 provided greater flexibility in the services and activities available to CalWORKs participants?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Has SB 1041 helped remove barriers to participants' employment?	✓		✓	✓	✓
Has SB 1041 affected participants' transitions at the 25-month mark?	✓		✓	✓	✓
Has SB 1041 accelerated participants' paths to self-sufficiency?	✓		✓	✓	✓
Has SB 1041 affected California's TANF annual work participation rates?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
How have the changes affected CalWORKs and related programs at the county level?	✓	✓			
Has SB 1041 improved the well-being of participating children and their families?	✓				✓

Road Map for Report

This SB 1041 evaluation report presents analyses and findings for four of the five study components, based upon data and other information available during the first year of the evaluation. Chapter Two details the sources of primary and secondary data examined in this report and the analysis methods. This includes information on the methods for conducting research and analyzing the data used for the process study, namely state-level key informant interviews; the ACS; and the focal county data collected through key informant interviews, focus groups with caseworkers, and focus groups with participants. We also provide descriptions of the state administrative data and nationally representative survey data examined in the report and the analytic methods we employ for the status and tracking studies, as well as the initial analyses for the participant impact study.

The next five chapters present evaluation findings. Chapters Three, Four, and Five cover the results of the process study, based on the analyses of the state-level key informant interviews, the tabulations from the ACS, and the additional insights from the qualitative data collected from the six focal counties, respectively. Together these data sources shed light on the pace of SB 1041 implementation, the approach counties have taken in implementing the policy changes, and the opportunities for addressing early challenges in implementation.

Chapter Six presents analyses of state administrative data to address questions specific to the status and tracking studies. Although deeper analysis will occur in future reports when county-level administrative data can also be examined, the state data cover key indicators for CalWORKs WTW participants before and after SB 1041 became effective. In particular, for the status study, we examine the cross-section of CalWORKs WTW participants in March 2013, March 2014, and March 2015 in order to describe how key indicators measured in the state administrative data have changed in the first two years since SB 1041 took effect. For the tracking study, we use the administrative data to follow the cohorts that entered CalWORKs in March 2007, March 2009, March 2011, and March 2013 for two years in order to contrast the experiences of cohorts that only experienced the pre–SB 1041 rules and those that only experienced the post–SB 1041 rules.

Chapter Seven employs the same state administrative data as Chapter Six but with the aim of measuring the changes in participant outcomes that might be associated with the SB 1041 reforms using a multicohort interrupted time series design that accounts for other factors, such as the improving economy, that might also be affecting outcomes. Given that the administrative data extend just about two years since the SB 1041 reforms became effective and because we have a limited set of control variables, these initial analyses do not support strong inferences about the impacts of the legislation. Nevertheless, they provide tentative insights into the potential effects of the policy changes. Likewise, in another initial impact analysis, we exploit nationally representative survey data to implement another strategy, the comparative case study method, to examine differences in outcomes for the population potentially eligible for

CalWORKs participation in California with a synthetic control group based on a weighted combination of the same eligible population in other U.S. states. At this stage, our inferences are even more limited than the administrative data analyses, given that the CPS data available to us extend, for the most part, just to calendar year 2013, i.e., one year past the point when SB 1041 came into effect.

We conclude the report in Chapter Eight by drawing out the implications of our findings from this evaluation report, highlighting areas where implementation issues may be addressed and offering insights into the possible effects of the SB 1041 policy changes.

A series of appendixes provide additional documentation of methods, data, and results.

2. Sources of Data and Methods

The four study components included in this report rely on multiple sources of primary and secondary data as summarized in Table 2.1. In this chapter, we provide information on each of the data sources employed for the analyses reported in Chapters Three to Seven, as well as the associated analytic methods. As shown in Table 2.1, the process study—presented in Chapters Three, Four, and Five—relies on primary data collected through state-level key informant interviews and the ACS. The process study also incorporates information from the six focal counties collected through key informant interviews, as well as focus groups with caseworkers and CalWORKs participants. Various sources of CalWORKs state administrative data provide the basis for analyses related to the status and tracking studies presented in Chapter Six. In Chapter Seven, an initial analysis for the participant impact study is conducted using both state administrative data and national survey data from the CPS.

In the remainder of this chapter, we discuss each of the data components and corresponding methods in turn, with additional technical details provided in Appendix B and Appendix C. The processes for collecting and analyzing the primary and secondary data sources described in this chapter were reviewed and approved by the California Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) and the RAND and American Institutes for Research (AIR) Institutional Review Boards.

Table 2.1. Evaluation Components and Sources of Data

Data Source	Process Study (Chapters Three, Four, and Five)	Status and Tracking Studies (Chapter Six)	Impact Study for CalWORKs Participants (Chapter Seven)
State-level key informant interviews	✓		
Survey of all county welfare directors (ACS)	✓		
Focal county key informant interviews	✓		
Focal county focus groups with caseworkers	✓		
Focal county focus groups with CalWORKs participants	✓		
State administrative data on welfare use and other outcomes		✓	✓
National survey data (CPS)			✓

State-Level Key Informant Interviews

To understand how the planning and implementation process for the SB 1041 reforms were organized and addressed, we conducted 17 state-level key informant interviews in the spring of 2015. The interviews were conducted with CDSS senior officials and staff involved in planning for and implementing SB 1041, as well as representatives from other relevant state agencies (e.g., California Department of Education and Employment Development Department [EDD]), legislative staff involved in the development of SB 1041, relevant associations (e.g., such as the County Welfare Directors Association [CWDA] and advocacy groups), and other members of the stakeholder workgroup convened by CDSS to plan for SB 1041 as detailed below. In addition, we conducted interviews with representatives from each of the three data consortia: LEADER (Los Angeles Eligibility Automated Determination, Evaluation, and Reporting), CalWIN (CalWORKs Information Network), and C-IV (Consortium-IV).[8]

Interview Topics

Table 2.2 summarizes the interview topics covered with the different types of state-level stakeholders. Our interviews with CDSS staff explored both CDSS's formal and informal roles, as well as the process of developing and planning for SB 1041. Formally, CDSS is responsible for writing the regulations and for distributing TANF monies and state CalWORKs dollars. It also has federal reporting requirements and is responsible for overseeing county programs. Furthermore, CDSS provides technical assistance and guidance to the counties to help them implement SB 1041, and it is the lead state agency in the interagency collaborations required by CalWORKs legislation and associated with SB 1041's implementation.

Our interviews with key informants in other organizations in the public and private sectors accounted for their roles in planning for and implementing the legislation. Our interviews with the three data consortia focused on the consortia's role in planning and data collection related to SB 1041 and on the current status of automation of the 24-month time clock. To understand the planning process and the implementation of SB 1041 reforms, we developed semistructured interview protocols for each set of stakeholders listed in Table 2.2.

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[8] Welfare and Institutions Code section 10823 enabled the development of a multiple county consortium as the foundation of the Statewide Automated Welfare System (SAWS) Project. The purpose of the consortium concept was to facilitate the collaboration of counties in meeting their business needs in the areas of system planning, development, implementation, operations, and maintenance. The consortium concept was intended to provide flexibility to county welfare departments while balancing choice with funding limitations. Currently SAWS is being operated through three consortia. Data for the individual counties are managed by the three consortia that comprise SAWS: Welfare Client Data System (WCDS) Consortium (which operates CalWIN), C-IV, and LEADER (California Statewide Automated Welfare System Consortium IV, undated). In September 2015, Los Angeles County began piloting a new system that would combine the LEADER and GEARS (GAIN Employment and Reporting System) systems—that system's acronym is LRS, the LEADER Replacement System. (Interview with LEADER representatives, August 6, 2015; "New Web-Based Public Assistance Eligibility System to Serve over 3.5 Million," October 7, 2015).

Table 2.2. State-Level Types of Informants and Interview Topics

Informant Type	Interview Topics
CDSS senior staff	• Development of the SB 1041 legislation and plans for implementation • How requirements were developed and transmitted to the counties • Type of technical assistance and guidance provided to counties • Reporting requirements associated with SB 1041 • Coordination with other state agencies, the federal government, and county governments
Key informants in other organizations in the public and private sectors	• Development of the SB 1041 legislation and plans for implementation • How implementation guidance was developed and transmitted to the counties • Types of technical assistance and guidance provided to counties • Reporting requirements associated with SB 1041 • Coordination with other state agencies and county welfare departments
Data consortia representatives	• Consortia's role in planning for SB 1041 or feedback requested from them from CDSS to inform the planning process • State-level reporting requirements associated with SB 1041 and what changes in data collection were needed • Resources, constraints, priorities, and challenges the consortia face in general and how SB 1041 fits into the overall priorities the consortia have • Current status of automation of the 24-month time clock and future plans

Data Collection

We partnered with CDSS to develop a list of potential key informants in each of the categories listed in Table 2.2 A CDSS representative distributed an outreach email to inform the identified key informants about the SB 1041 evaluation and to encourage their participation in an interview. The evaluation team subsequently followed up with the key informants to begin scheduling interviews in person, where feasible, or by telephone. We conducted interviews from May through July 2015 with 17 key informants (see Appendix B for a list of agencies represented by the interviewees). When a key informant was unavailable (e.g., in two instances an individual no longer was in their original position), we worked with CDSS to determine an appropriate replacement.

The interviews were conducted by two evaluation team members with one leading the discussion and the other taking notes. With respect to informed consent, we indicated that we would not share respondents' individual answers with anyone outside of the research project and that we would not identify any individuals by name in study reports. Further, if we used any quotations from the interview, we would not attribute them to any individual by name. In addition, as part of the informed consent process, we asked each interviewee if we could audio-record the interview for note-taking purposes. All of the state-level interviewees agreed to have their interviews audio-recorded.[9]

[9] Initial interviews with CDSS staff that were conducted early on were not audio-recorded. Instead, we had a list of topics we wanted to cover during the conversation and relied on notes taken during the interview.

Finally, we reviewed relevant policy documents at the state level, such as legislation, ACLs, and All County Information Notices (ACINs). This review helped inform state-level interview protocol development and supplemented key informant interview findings. They also helped provide context for the findings presented in this report.

Methods for Analyzing State-Level Interview Data

To discern broad patterns and form overall conclusions, we examined responses to individual questions across the set of state-level key informant interviews. This allowed us to identify key themes that emerged from the interviews and where there were similarities or differences in views regarding the goals of SB 1041, the planning process, the potential barriers or supports to implementation, and the expected impact on CalWORKs participants.

All-County Survey

In the first year of fielding, the SB 1041 ACS was designed to gather information from the 58 counties on their early experiences with implementing SB 1041. The survey gathered information on the following:

- status of implementation of different components of SB 1041
- organizational and administrative changes to facilitate implementation
- the context within which implementation was occurring
- barriers and facilitators to implementation
- design and implementation of the WTW time clock
- communication to CalWORKs participants about the time remaining on the WTW time clock
- the FS program and ESE program characteristics
- the level of coordination between the CalWORKs program and other service providers (such as community colleges) at the county level
- expectations and perceived outcomes with respect to SB 1041.

Survey Development and Topics

To develop the ACS questionnaire, we began with the core set of evaluation questions regarding the status of implementation of the different components of SB 1041, organized around several themes. The initial draft instrument was sent to CDSS for comments. In addition, two of the focal counties—Riverside and Stanislaus—agreed to pilot test the initial draft. We selected these two counties in order to achieve variation in terms of size of the county and of CalWORKs caseloads, and the degree of urbanicity.

The pilot test was conducted between February and March 2015. We initially sent an email request to each of the two pilot counties to participate in the test and asked that they review the

draft ACS within one week. The pilot counties were sent a hard copy of the draft instrument and were asked to return their completed ACS questionnaire to the evaluation team, along with detailed comments on the different items. We instructed them that, if necessary, they might want to complete it together with members of their management team who are responsible for case management, employment and training services, and participant outreach and communication.

After receiving the completed questionnaires, we conducted a telephone interview with each county team to debrief about the draft questionnaire. We used a cognitive interview protocol that solicited their overall feedback on the survey, the length of time it took them to complete it, whether it required multiple individuals within their agency to complete, and detailed input on each section of the survey questionnaire (see Appendix B). The cognitive interview debrief was conducted by telephone by at least two evaluation team members, with one individual leading the discussion and the other being responsible for note-taking to capture the feedback from the pilot counties. Based on the results of the cognitive interview process, we identified questions and response options that were confusing or ambiguous, along with options that were missing from the questionnaire; these were used to inform our revision process. In addition, we utilized what we had learned from the focal county interviews to inform the revision process.

Based on feedback from the two pilot counties, from CDSS, and the focal county interviews, the evaluation team revised and refined the individual items and response categories of the ACS questionnaire to minimize measurement error. The final questionnaire contains the following sections (see Appendix B):

- Implementation of SB 1041 Reforms to the CalWORKs Program in Your County
- Interagency Collaboration
- Organizational and Administrative Changes
- Questions for Supervisors About Line Staff and CalWORKs Participants
- Provision of Services to CalWORKs Participants in Your County
- Expanded Subsidized Employment and Family Stabilization Programs and the Reengagement Process
- Outcomes and Expectations.

Fielding the ACS

AIR administered the survey using Vovici, a software package used to create and administer online surveys. The survey field period began June 23, 2015, and continued through August 5, 2015. Prior to fielding the survey, CWDA and CDSS each sent a letter of support on June 2, 2015, and June 8, 2015, respectively, to the 58 county social services directors to inform them about the ACS and to encourage their participation.

At the start of the field period, AIR sent all 58 county social services directors an email invitation (using email addresses provided by CWDA) to participate in the online survey. The invitation provided background on the survey and the evaluation of SB 1041, the survey web link

and county password, and a recommendation to work with key operations staff and supervisors to complete the survey. To help facilitate this process, the email invitation included a Microsoft Word version of the survey so that county staff could share it more easily. The survey also included a set of definitions related to the survey topics to ensure uniformity and consistency of the data collected, and a link to a set of frequently asked questions and answers hosted on the RAND SB 1041 evaluation website (RAND Corporation, undated). For the two pilot counties, we prepopulated their survey responses for those few items that had not changed from the original pilot instrument and asked them to complete the new items on the survey.

With respect to informed consent, counties were told that their agency's participation in the survey was completely voluntary—that they may choose not to participate or decline to answer any question. Further, they were told that the information their agency provided would be kept confidential. The research team would not share their responses with anyone outside of the research project, including CDSS and would not identify any individuals by name in study reports. Further, we noted that we would report the survey results in the aggregate.

One week following the initial email invitation, AIR sent the first set of reminder emails to the county social services directors. Two weeks after the initial invitation, AIR telephoned those directors who had not yet responded or opened the survey link. AIR continued to make personalized phone calls and send personalized reminder emails to encourage participation through the close of the survey. Ninety-one percent of counties completed the survey within the scheduled four-week time frame. We provided additional time for several counties and then closed the survey on August 5, 2015. All 58 counties participated, resulting in a 100-percent response rate.

Methods for Analyzing the ACS

The descriptive analysis of the ACS enabled us to summarize (1) the implementation status of key components of the legislation across the 58 counties; (2) organizational changes made to accommodate SB 1041 reforms; (3) coordination and communication at the county level; (4) factors that served as facilitators or hindrances in the implementation process and detailed discussion of the WTW 24-month time clock; (5) counties' assessment of caseworkers' and CalWORKs participants' understanding of the different components of SB 1041; (6) status of the FS and ESE programs; (7) counties' assessment of which reengagement strategies were effective; (8) counties' views regarding how SB 1041 has affected various outcomes and how well different components are working; and (9) counties' recommendations for improving SB 1041 and their information needs.

Our descriptive analyses consist of tabulations (or charts) of the survey responses, with results presented for all 58 counties and then for counties classified into three groups according to the size of their total CalWORKs caseload as of March 2015 (CDSS, 2015e) as follows:

- small counties, those with a caseload up to and including 999 (20 counties)

- medium-sized counties, those with a caseload of 1,000 to 4,999 (20 counties)
- large counties, those with a caseload of 5,000 or more (18 counties).

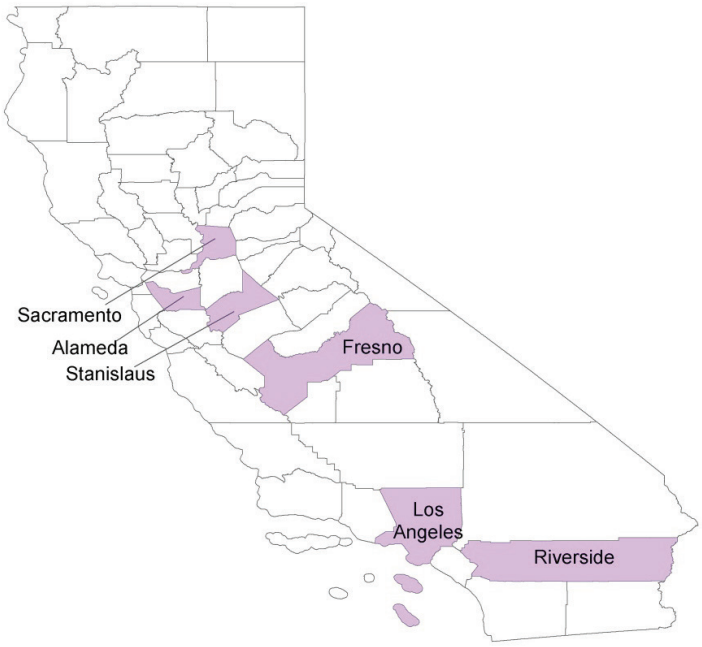
Because this is a census of all 58 counties (i.e., we are surveying the entire population of counties in California), we do not calculate inferential statistics.

Respondents sometimes added information to the "other" category that could be coded as a previously listed response. In these cases, we recoded responses for consistency. For a few items where respondents could select responses along a range, we collapsed response categories at the upper end of the scale (e.g., moderately well and very well) or lower end of the scale to present the results. In addition, for various questions, respondents were asked to provide comments to explain their selection of the "other" response option (e.g., other factors that hindered implementation) or to describe their response (e.g., communication strategies) in more detail. We analyzed those open-ended written comments and include representative quotes in the narrative.

Focal County Qualitative Data

The focal county in-depth data collection occurred in six counties: Alameda, Fresno, Los Angeles, Riverside, Sacramento, and Stanislaus. Figure 2.1 provides a map to show the geographic location of the focal counties, which were selected to capture variation that is potentially relevant for the implementation of SB 1041, such as the geographic region of the state, degree of urbanicity, demographic makeup of the population, measures of socioeconomic status, and the state of the economy. Counties were also selected such that, together, they would capture a sizable share of the CalWORKs caseload.

Figure 2.1. Map of Six Focal Counties for SB 1041 Evaluation



This variation is illustrated in Table 2.3. Key geographic, demographic, economic, and caseload characteristics are summarized for the six focal counties and for California as a whole. Together, the counties represent medium and large urbanized counties in the northern, central, and southern parts of the state and display variation in the demographic and socioeconomic make-up of their populations. The six counties account for 64 percent of the CalWORKs caseload and participants, ranging from a low of about 11,000 assistance units in Stanislaus County to 176,300 assistance units in Los Angeles County as of January 2015.

There are three components to the focal county data collection and analysis: county-level key informant interviews, focus groups with caseworkers, and focus groups with CalWORKs participants. For the focal county work, RAND took the lead in conducting the key informant interviews and caseworker focus groups in Los Angeles, Sacramento, and Riverside counties. AIR took the lead in conducting the key informant interviews and caseworker focus groups in Alameda, Stanislaus, and Fresno counties. RAND's Survey Research Group (SRG) was responsible for recruiting and conducting the participant focus groups in all of the six focal counties.

In this first wave of data collection, spanning the time from February 2015 to August 2015, the content of the interviews and focus groups focused on counties' experiences with planning for and implementing SB 1041 within the first several years following its passage. We summarize the data collection methods used for each component, followed by a final section that describes our approach to analyze the resulting qualitative data.

County-Level Key Informant Interviews

The county-level key informant interviews were conducted in the six focal counties between February and June of 2015. Table 2.4 lists the different types of informants and the target number of interviewees per informant type, as well as the list of topics discussed. At county welfare offices, individuals in various positions were interviewed, including county directors or deputy directors of welfare services; administrative personnel (e.g., directors of the CalWORKs program, WTW program, and CalFresh; budget director; director of programs and services; personnel director; director of finance/fiscal operations; and director of information technology); relevant supervisors (e.g., of eligibility staff or WTW caseworkers); and eligibility and caseworker staff, among other personnel. Interviewees also included senior officials in other affected county agencies (e.g., mental health services agencies, child welfare agencies, and education and training providers), and directors or other key staff at other service providers (e.g., community colleges, community-based organizations).

Table 2.3. Characteristics of Focal Counties and California as a Whole

Characteristics	Alameda	Fresno	Los Angeles	Riverside	Sacramento	Stanislaus	California
Geographic region	San Francisco Bay Area, East Bay	Central Valley (south)	Southern California, Greater Los Angeles	Southern California, Inland Empire	Central Valley (north)	San Joaquin Valley (north)	–
Urban-rural classification	Large central metro	Medium metro	Large central metro	Large central metro	Large central metro	Medium metro	–
Percentage of population in urban areas	99.6	89.2	99.4	95.4	97.9	92.0	95.0
Population							
Total persons	1,594,569	972,297	10,136,559	2,308,441	1,470,912	528,157	38,714,725
Percentage of state population	4.1	2.5	26.2	6.0	3.8	1.4	100.0
Race or ethnic composition							
Percentage non-Hispanic white	32.6	30.6	26.6	37.1	46.3	44.1	38.3
Percentage non-Hispanic black	11.1	4.7	7.9	5.9	9.8	2.3	5.6
Percentage Asian	27.9	9.8	14.1	6.2	15.2	5.4	13.7
Percentage Hispanic/Latino	22.7	51.9	48.4	47.4	22.5	44.1	38.6
Percentage other	5.6	3.0	2.9	3.4	6.2	4.1	3.8
Education level, persons ages 25 and older							
Percentage less than high school diploma	13.1	26.4	22.5	19.4	13.2	21.6	17.9
Percentage bachelor's degree or more	42.8	19.7	30.3	20.7	28.9	17.0	31.7
Percentage of single-parent female-headed households	20.5	31.0	27.4	22.0	28.6	23.9	23.9
Median household income	$77,214	$43,423	$55,746	$57,006	$55,842	$51,084	$61,933
Percentage of persons below poverty	12.5	27.7	18.7	17.1	18.2	18.0	16.4
Unemployment rate	5.9	11.6	8.3	8.2	7.3	11.2	7.5
CalWORKs caseload							
Total cases (assistance units)	16,886	27,338	167,276	31,826	31,362	11,028	541,366
Percentage of state caseload	3.1	5.0	42.0	5.9	5.8	2.1	100.0
Total persons on aid	35,986	70,747	394,249	79,364	76,271	27,407	1,301,288
Percentage of state participants	3.2	6.3	34.9	7.0	6.7	2.4	100.0
CalWORKs caseload composition							
Percentage two parent	6.2	11.1	6.5	9.9	12.8	12.2	8.8
Percentage all other families	40.1	35.1	41.0	43.5	34.6	36.8	39.4
Percentage no parent	27.7	27.3	34.2	27.9	21.8	27.6	30.7
Percentage Safety Net	20.5	20.7	13.1	13.7	24.7	15.8	15.2
Percentage TANF timed out	5.9	6.4	5.4	5.5	6.5	8.2	6.3

SOURCES: California Department of Finance, 2015; CDSS, 2015e; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), undated; U.S. Census Bureau, undated.
NOTE: Urban population is for 2010. Population counts and shares are for January 1, 2015. The demographic, education, income, and poverty measures are for 2014. The unemployment rate is the 2014 annual average. The CalWORKs caseload counts and characteristics are for January 2015. – = not applicable.

Table 2.4. County-Level Types of Informants and Interview Topics

Informant Type	Approximate Number per County	Interview Topics
County directors/deputy directors of welfare services	1–2	• Informant's overview of the key components of SB 1041 • How state communicated these changes to the informant's agency • Overall status of implementation • If their county changed the way it does business (including interactions with other agencies and service providers) to implement SB 1041 • Type of organizational changes needed, if any • Views regarding strengths and weaknesses of the SB 1041 changes to CalWORKs (what is working, what is not) • Views regarding the impact on county operations and on CalWORKs participants • Other major policy changes that occurred at the state level or county level during this same time period that may have had implications for SB 1041 implementation
Administrative personnel and relevant supervisors[a]	6–8	• Informant's understanding of the key components of SB 1041 • How SB 1041 changes to CalWORKs were communicated to informant • Planning undertaken and status of implementation of the different components of SB 1041 • How the informant's county changed the way it does business, if any (e.g., reorganize, create cross-functional units, create new staff positions, redefine staff roles, create internal databases or tracking systems) • What policies needed to be developed or revised to implement SB 1041 • Type of coordination activities undertaken with other county agencies and service providers • How SB 1041 changes to CalWORKs were communicated to staff • Type of training provided to supervisors, eligibility staff, and WTW caseworkers • How well staff understood those changes • Views regarding what is working well/what is not • Views regarding impact on county operations and CalWORKs participants • Suggestions for improving SB 1041 • Other major policy changes that occurred at the state level or county level during this same time period that may have had implications for SB 1041 implementation
Eligibility staff, CalWORKs program specialists, WTW coordinators, and experienced caseworker staff	3–5	• Informant's understanding of the key components of SB 1041 • How SB 1041 changes to CalWORKs were communicated to informant • How, if at all, SB 1041 affected informant's jobs and responsibilities • Training they received; how they communicated those changes to CalWORKs participants • Views regarding what is working well, what is not working well • Views regarding which elements of SB 1041 CalWORKs participants understand well; what elements are confusing • Views regarding impact on CalWORKs participants • Suggestions for improving SB 1041

Table 2.4—Continued

Informant Type	Approx. Number per County	Interview Topics
Staff from other county agencies[b]	5–7	• Role of their agency in coordinating with county welfare offices and/or providing services to CalWORKs participants • How SB 1041 changes to CalWORKs were communicated to informant • What type of planning, if any, they were involved in • What the SB 1041 changes to CalWORKs meant for their agency and clients • Type of coordination with county welfare and among agencies needed to implement SB 1041 • Views regarding impact on their services and operations and impact on their clients
Staff from other service providers[c]	3–4	• Role of organization in providing services to CalWORKs participants • How SB 1041 changes to CalWORKs were communicated to informant • What effect, if any, it had on their operations and services • Whether they participated in planning for SB 1041's implementation at the county or state level • How well their staff and clients understand the SB 1041 changes • Views regarding impact on services and CalWORKs participants

[a] Includes directors of the CalWORKs program, WTW program, and CalFresh; budget director; director of programs and services; personnel director; director of finance/ fiscal operations; director of information technology; and supervisors of eligibility staff or WTW caseworkers.
[b] Includes mental health services agencies, child welfare agencies, and education and training providers.
[c] Includes, for example, community colleges and other community-based organizations.

As indicated in Table 2.4, our aim was to conduct 18 to 26 interviews per county depending on how the individual county was structured and the number of key stakeholders in each category. For the six focal counties, we conducted interviews with a total of 155 individuals, with some taking place as group interviews. In five instances, a caseworker who participated in a group interview also participated in a caseworker focus group. We created a standardized protocol to guide our interviews and to collect information on the topics listed in Table 2.4 (see Appendix B).

We worked with each county's designated contact to identify the personnel to be interviewed and to schedule the initial three-day site visit. The county-level key informant interviews were conducted in person and augmented with telephone follow-ups to clarify information or to interview welfare staff or other county agency staff and service providers who were not available at the time of each site visit. The interviews were conducted by two evaluation team members, with one serving as lead interviewer and the other as note-taker.

As part of the informed consent protocol, interviewees were informed that we would use the information from the interviews for research purposes only. We would protect the confidentiality of their information and not disclose their identity, although the focal counties will be identified by name in study reports. We also noted that we would be taking detailed notes but would destroy all information that identifies the interviewees at the end of the study. We also requested

permission to audio-record each interview for note-taking purposes. All of the interviewees agreed to have the discussions audio-recorded. We did not transcribe these audio-recordings; instead, we listened to them to fill in any gaps in our notes or where we were uncertain as to what was said. We also conducted follow-up phone calls where necessary to fill in our understanding of an issue, to complete several interviews for which the time period allocated did not permit a full discussion, or to talk with individuals who were unable to participate in the scheduled in-person interview.

For each focal county, we also gathered and reviewed relevant documentation related to the design and implementation of SB 1041, such as organizational charts, departmental plans and policies, planning documents, formal interagency agreements, progress reports, and other relevant information. Written documentation was used to augment the information gained from the interviews.

Caseworker Focus Groups

We conducted two caseworker focus groups per focal county to examine their understanding of the SB 1041 changes, perceptions of operational changes at the county level, and perspective on how SB 1041 affects their work and experience with CalWORKs participants. Specifically, the caseworker focus group protocol covered the following topics (see Appendix B):

- understanding of SB 1041 changes to the CalWORKs program
- how county welfare supervisors communicated these changes to caseworkers
- what training, if any, they received
- what organizational changes or redefining of staff roles occurred
- how SB 1041 affected caseloads and responsibilities
- what has changed in regard to client reporting requirements
- views regarding CalWORKs participants' understanding of the new rules and what are their support needs
- views regarding factors that facilitated or hindered caseworkers' implementation of these new rules
- views regarding what has worked well with SB 1041's implementation and what challenges have been presented
- suggestions for improving SB 1041.

In recruiting for the focus groups, our specific eligibility criteria were that a caseworker had a WTW caseload and had been a caseworker for one year or more to ensure at least some experience with implementing SB 1041. In a few instances, we had to relax this criterion and invite caseworkers with less than a year of experience in order to obtain a sufficient pool of caseworkers from which to recruit. We focused on WTW caseworkers rather than eligibility staff.

Our goal was to schedule 10 to 12 caseworkers per focus group with the expectation that eight to ten would actually participate. To schedule the 10 to 12 caseworkers per focus group, we needed a pool of approximately 35 to 40 candidates per focus group. To obtain the candidate pool, we requested from the county welfare agency the names and contact information of the caseworkers currently assigned to their two largest CalWORKs program offices. In several instances, we had to expand the list of caseworkers to other offices within a county in order to recruit a sufficient number of caseworkers for the two focus groups. We then emailed recruitment letters to the caseworkers explaining the purpose of the evaluation and the focus group and requesting that they reply to the email if interested in participating. We also emphasized that their participation was completely voluntary and that the information they and others shared during the focus group would not be shared with anyone outside of the evaluation team.

The caseworker focus groups were held between February and July 2015. Table 2.5 summarizes for each focal county the number of caseworkers contacted, the number who participated, and the participation rate.[10] The number of participants in the focus groups ranged from six to 15 caseworkers, with a total of 118 caseworkers participating in these discussions across the six focal counties.

Each caseworker focus group session followed a written protocol and the sessions ran approximately 90 minutes. A researcher with experience in conducting focus groups facilitated

Table 2.5. Number of Caseworkers Who Were Contacted and Participated in the Focus Groups, by County

County	Number Contacted	Number Participated	Percentage Participated
Alameda	56	17	30
Fresno	50	23	46
Los Angeles	134	14	10
Riverside	55	23	42
Sacramento	88	23	26
Stanislaus	31	18	58
Total	414	118	29

[10] The participation rate in Los Angeles County was lower than that of the other counties for several reasons. The geographic expanse of the county and the fact that the focus groups were held at a central location may have been a disincentive for caseworkers to participate in the focus group discussions due to distance they would have had to travel. (In the next round of data collection, we will aim to hold the focus groups in several locations to minimize this problem.) In addition, one of the focus groups was scheduled on the same day that OCAT training was scheduled, which also affected caseworkers' ability to participate. Unfortunately, we did not know about this scheduling conflict in advance. Lastly, many caseworkers responded to our email invitation indicating they were not interested in participating.

the caseworker focus group discussions in each county, with the other evaluation team member(s) serving as note-takers.[11] We did not provide an incentive payment to the caseworkers as they were participating in their official capacity as government employees. However, we did provide light refreshments to thank them for their time.

With respect to informed consent, we informed the focus group participants that the information from the discussion would be used for research purposes only. We would protect the confidentiality of the information and, although the focal counties would be identified by name in the project's reports, no information would be included that could be used to identify any of the individual participants. We also indicated that we would not share any information they provided during the focus groups with anyone outside of the research team in a way that could identify the individual caseworker. We also requested that focus group participants protect the confidentiality of others in the group. Lastly, informed consent included a statement that their participation in the focus group was completely voluntary and they could decide to stop participating at any time and for any reason. Their decision to participate in the focus group (or not) would not be shared with their employer or with CDSS and would not affect their employment in any way.

Participant Focus Groups

We conducted focus groups with CalWORKs participants to learn about their understanding of the SB 1041 changes, their perceptions of operational changes at the county level, and their perceptions of how SB 1041 affects their work and their CalWORKs experience with the participants. Specifically, the participant focus group protocol included the following topics (see Appendix B):

- overview of the benefits or services individuals are currently receiving under the CalWORKs program
- awareness and understanding of SB 1041 changes in WTW requirements, of differences between the CalWORKs and TANF program requirements, of the new time clocks, of the exemptions
- how participants learned about these changes; how the changes were communicated to them by their caseworkers
- of the range of activities they could participate in, which were most important to them
- in what areas SB 1041 affects their work requirements, status, reporting requirements
- views regarding overall effect of these changes on their own situation.

As most of the focal counties are quite large geographically, we identified in each county the two county welfare offices with the largest CalWORKs caseloads and drew a catchment area

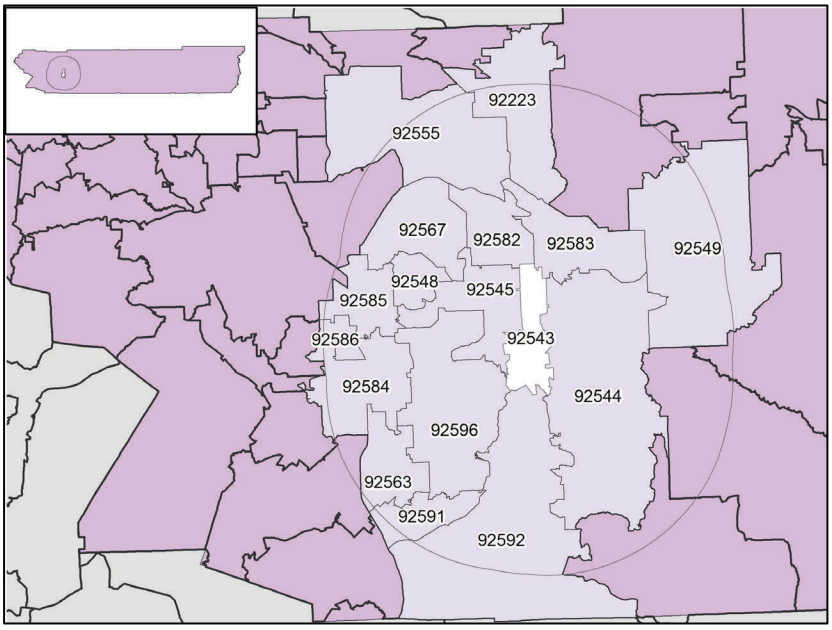
[11] Our research protocol approved by the CPHS and the RAND and AIR Institutional Review Boards did not allow us to audio-record the caseworker focus group discussions, so we relied on our typewritten notes.

around those offices of 12 miles. CalWORKs participants were then sampled from the zip codes within that catchment area to minimize the travel distance for participating focus group members. Figure 2.2 shows the zip code list from Riverside's Hemet Office as an example. If a zip code was associated with the list for both target offices within a county, we assigned that zip code to the closest office.

The exception was Fresno, a rural county where the county welfare offices are located within the same zip code. CalWORKs participants for one focus group were recruited using the same method employed in the other five counties (i.e., from zip codes within 12 miles of the office). Participants for the second focus group were recruited from zip codes that were 12 to 20 miles from the office, in order to ensure we were also drawing cases from the more rural areas of the county. We referred to the first of these two groups as the "inner ring" and the second as the "outer ring."

We conducted focus groups in both English and Spanish. In this initial round of focus groups, we elected to conduct all of the focus groups in English in four of the focal counties (Alameda, Fresno, Sacramento, and Stanislaus) and to conduct one focus group in Spanish and one focus group in English in Los Angeles and Riverside counties. In this way, we could learn if there were differences between the experiences of English-speaking versus Spanish-speaking CalWORKs participants that we may want to explore further in subsequent years of data collection.

Figure 2.2. Map of Eligible Zip Codes for Recruiting Focus Group Participants in Riverside's Hemet Office



NOTE: The selected county welfare office is in the unshaded zip code (92543); the additional areas within the 12-mile radius from which focus group participants were sampled are shaded in light purple and marked with their zip codes.

CalWORKs participants were eligible for recruitment for a focus group session if: (1) they were within the designated zip codes (or mile radius) and (2) they had at least ten months remaining in their WTW 24-month time clock as of September 2014. The second criterion ensured that the focus groups participants were still active in the CalWORKs program, as this group would have relevant experience under SB 1041.[12] For the focus groups conducted in Spanish in Los Angeles and Riverside counties, we also purposefully sampled cases where Spanish was indicated as their primary language.[13]

Our goal was to recruit about 12 CalWORKs participants for each of two focus groups per county, with the expectation that eight to ten individuals would actually participate. Thus, initially for each county, we drew a sample of 60 participants per focus group for recruitment purposes. However, we learned that records for a number of individuals had incomplete information or missing or disconnected telephone numbers. Thus, we had to draw a larger sample of 100 participants per focus group per county in order to achieve the target number for each of the focus groups. In total, we drew a sample of 1,024 CalWORKs participants from the Welfare Data Tracking Implementation Project (WDTIP) file (described further below) from which to recruit the focus group participants (State of California, 2014). We then requested from each of the focal counties the name, address, and telephone number of the sampled CalWORKs participants who met our criteria.

Table 2.6 shows the location and date for each participant focus group and the language of the session. The table also summarizes the number of participants sampled per focus group, the number in the sample that were contacted for recruitment purposes, the number contacted that met our eligibility criteria, the number of eligible participants scheduled for each focus group, and the number that actually participated. Overall, 12 focus groups were conducted (two per county) between June and August 2015, with ten focus groups conducted in English and two in Spanish. Of the 1,250 CalWORKs participants drawn from the WDTIP file, 1,176 had at least one telephone number listed that could be used to contact them. Of these individuals, 1,024 were contacted at least once to screen for eligibility using a questionnaire that determined if they met the eligibility criteria and that they would be able to attend the scheduled focus group in their county. Of those contacted, 733 were eligible for recruitment (i.e., they had an active telephone number, they had been or were receiving CalWORKs benefits, and they spoke the target language for the focus group). Of the 733 eligible individuals, 126 agreed to participate in a focus group and were scheduled for one of the focus groups in their respective counties. Of the 126 individuals who agreed to participate in a focus group, 93 attended the focus group sessions.

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[12] We selected September 2014 because CDSS informed us that reliability of the data increases after three months of elapsed time. Therefore, at the time of drawing the sample, we determined that the most recent month that contained reliable information about participants was September 2014.

[13] Because Riverside County had drawn the initial sample for us, we were unable to go back and draw additional cases to get a target of 100 cases to recruit from. Thus, we had a smaller sample of 44 cases to recruit from for the Spanish focus groups in Riverside County.

Table 2.6. Summary of Participant Focus Group Recruitment and Participation

County–Location (Date)	Focus Group Language	Number of Participants				
		Sampled[a]	Contacted	Eligible	Scheduled	Attended
Alameda–Oakland (July 2015)	English	199	121	88	10	6
Alameda–Hayward (July 2015)	English	100	99	77	11	10
Fresno–Inner Ring (July 2015)	English	94	94	46	11	6
Fresno–Outer Ring/West Fresno Regional Center (July 2015)	English	92	92	47	10	7
Los Angeles–Region IV Central, Main Office (Los Angeles) (August 2015)	Spanish	68	68	54	9	7
Los Angeles–Region III San Gabriel Valley, Main Office (El Monte) (August 2015)	English	100	82	71	11	8
Riverside–Jurupa Office (August 2015)	Spanish	31	31	19	7	6
Riverside–Hemet Office (August 2015)	English	79	79	66	13	10
Sacramento–Bowling Green (June 2015)	English	101	91	61	10	8
Sacramento–North Highlands (June 2015)	English	100	76	54	13	9
Stanislaus–Turlock (June 2015)	English	97	96	74	10	8
Stanislaus–Modesto (June 2015)	English	106	95	76	11	8
Total		1,167	1,024	733	126	93

[a] Number of CalWORKs participants sampled consists of those sampled and with at least one phone number provided. In total, 1,250 participants were sampled but 83 participants did not have a phone number in their record.

Table 2.7 summarizes the reasons why the contacted participants were not eligible. In particular, of the 1,024 participants who were contacted at least once, 291 participants (28 percent) did not meet the following eligibility criteria for inclusion in the focus group: 276 participants (27 percent) did not have an active phone number (e.g., the phone number(s) on record had been disconnected or were no longer in service); 11 participants (1 percent) did not speak the language in which the focus group was being conducted; and four participants (less than 1 percent) indicated that they did not receive CalWORKs benefits.

Table 2.8 summarizes the reasons why those eligible were not scheduled for a focus group. Specifically, of the 733 participants eligible for a focus group, 607 participants (83 percent) were not scheduled for one of the focus groups for the following reasons: 433 participants (59 percent) were contacted by phone (e.g., SRG left multiple telephone voice messages) but did not return the recruitment calls; 133 participants (18 percent) had listed a telephone number that did not belong to them; and 41 participants (6 percent) refused to participate because of scheduling conflicts or because they were not interested in participating.

Table 2.7. Reasons Contacted CalWORKs Participants Were Not Eligible for a Focus Group

Reason	Count	Percentage of Those Contacted for a Focus Group (N=1,024)
Phone numbers disconnected or not in service	276	27.0
Unable to speak focus group language	11	1.1
Reported not having received CalWORKs benefits	4	0.4
Total not eligible	**291**	**28.4**

NOTE: Percentages for the subcomponents may not add to the total because of rounding.

Table 2.8. Reasons Eligible CalWORKs Participants Were Not Scheduled for a Focus Group

Reason	Count	Percentage of Those Eligible for a Focus Group (N=733)
Left telephone voice messages with no response back	433	59.1
Number did not belong to respondent	133	18.1
Refused (e.g., schedule conflicts and/or not interested in attending)	41	5.6
Total not contacted	607	82.8

NOTE: Percentages for the subcomponents may not add to the total because of rounding.

Table 2.9 summarizes the self-reported characteristics of the 93 CalWORKs participants who participated in the focus groups.[14] Across the six focal counties, 83 percent of focus group participants were female. The average participant was 32 years old; ages ranged from 20 to 57 years. About 26 percent of participants were married, 11 percent were living with a partner, 25 percent were separated or divorced, and the remaining 39 percent had never been married. In terms of educational attainment, 46 percent had some college education or a two-year degree, 16 percent had a high school degree or GED, and 21 percent had some high school education but had not graduated. About 10 percent had less than a high school education, while about 6 percent had four-year college degrees or higher. Participants were diverse in terms of race or ethnicity, with 52 percent identifying as Hispanic or Latino, while 47 percent reported being white and 17 percent African American. Other groups represented included American Indian and Alaska Natives, Asians, and those in other racial groups. In terms of country of origin, 73 percent reported that they were born in the United States and 21 percent reported another country. English was the main language spoken by 75 percent of the focus group participants. The majority (61 percent) had been in the CalWORKs program for one to three years. Another

[14] Appendix B compares key demographic characteristics, as recorded in WDTIP, for the 1,167 CalWORKs participants sampled for the focus groups, the 733 eligible participants, and the 93 participants who attended a focus group session. A test of the difference in the characteristics of those eligible versus those who attended showed no significant difference in the representativeness of those attending a focus group based on sex, race or ethnicity, participant age, the age of the youngest child, and two- versus one-parent case type. The share of Spanish-speaking cases among the focus group attendees was somewhat higher than the eligible group (18 percent versus 11 percent) which reflects the additional effort to recruit Spanish-speaking CalWORKs participants for the two focus groups conducted in Spanish.

Table 2.9. CalWORKs 2015 Focus Group Participants' Self-Reported Characteristics, Overall and by County

Characteristic	Participant Counts by County and Overall (Except as Noted)							Percentage Distribution
	Alameda	Fresno	Los Angeles	Riverside	Sacramento	Stanislaus	Total	
Sex								
Female	15	10	10	12	15	15	77	82.8
Male	1	3	5	4	2	1	16	17.2
Age								
Range (in years)	24–50	22–41	26–52	21–57	21–49	20–44	20–57	–
Mean (in years)	29	28	41	36	31	29	32	–
Marital status								
Married	2	5	4	7	5	1	24	25.8
Living with partner	1	3	1	1	1	3	10	10.8
Separated/divorced	3	1	5	3	5	6	23	24.7
Never married	10	4	5	5	6	6	36	38.7
Education level								
5th grade or less	1	1	2	1	0	1	6	6.5
8th grade or less	1	1	4	2	0	1	9	9.8
Some high school, but did not graduate	2	3	4	7	2	2	20	21.5
High school graduate/GED	1	3	0	3	4	4	15	16.1
Some college or two-year degree	9	5	6	4	10	9	43	46.2
Four-year college degree or higher	3	1	1	0	1	0	6	6.4
Race								
Hispanic or Latino	3	6	13	12	5	9	48	51.6
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	1	2	2	1	1	7	7.5
Asian	1	0	0	0	3	0	4	4.3
Black or African American	5	4	1	1	5	0	16	17.2
White	7	6	4	10	6	11	44	47.3
Two or more races	0	1	1	0	1	1	4	4.3
Other	1	0	2	0	0	0	3	3.2
Not reported	2	1	5	3	1	3	15	16.1
Country of origin								
United States	12	12	9	11	13	11	68	73.1
Other	4	0	3	4	4	5	20	21.5
Not reported	0	1	3	1	0	0	5	5.4
Main language								
English	13	13	7	10	15	12	70	75.3
Spanish	0	0	6	5	0	0	11	11.8
Both English and Spanish	1	0	2	1	0	4	8	8.6
Other	2	0	0	0	2	0	4	4.3
Time in CalWORKs								
Less than one year	0	1	1	0	0	3	5	5.4
One to three years	7	8	10	13	11	8	57	61.3
More than three years	9	4	4	3	6	5	31	33.3
N	16	13	15	16	17	16	93	100.0

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. – = not applicable.

33 percent had participated for more than three years, while the remaining 5 percent had participated for less than a year.

Except for Los Angeles County, where a location in the community was used, the focus groups were conducted in a conference room made available by the focal county welfare departments.[15] The session began with a review of the consent protocol to make sure participants understood and to see if they had any questions before proceeding. The consent protocol indicated that participation in the focus group was completely voluntary and that focus group members could stop participating at any time and for any reason. There would be no penalties or loss of benefits to which they would otherwise be entitled if they chose not to participate or chose to stop their participation once they had started. In addition, we noted that neither their caseworker nor any other welfare staff nor CDSS would know if an individual decided to participate or not. We also indicated that the information from the focus group discussion was for research purposes only. We would protect the confidentiality of their information and would not share their responses with anyone else outside of the research project, nor identify any individuals by name in our study reports. Permission was also requested to audio-record the focus group discussion, and all participants in all sessions agreed.

At the time of the focus group session, we asked participants to complete a brief demographic survey (the results of which are summarized in Table 2.9). The sessions, facilitated by experienced SRG staff, ran about 90 minutes on average and were conducted in English or Spanish (as noted in Table 2.6). At each focus group discussion, at least one note-taker was also present to capture the information on a laptop computer. We had the audio-recordings of the focus groups transcribed to augment the notes taken and to verify accuracy. A cash gift of $75 was provided to each focus group participant to thank them for their participation and a light lunch was also provided.

Methods for Analyzing Focal County Qualitative Data

As we did with the state-level key informant interviews, we examined the information gathered in the focal counties through key informant interviews and focus groups using qualitative methods to identify key themes, discern broad conclusions, and where there was variation across different stakeholders. In other words, unlike the ACS, we did not calculate summary statistics based on the interviews or focus groups.

To analyze the qualitative interview data, we used NVivo software to support coding and data analysis. Data were entered by interview question into this cross-platform, qualitative data management and analysis package and then coded using key analytical categories driven by the research questions. Using the software, we generated reports that allow sorting, reducing, and indexing of the data, as well as elaborating on the nature of each coded mention. This approach allowed for a systematic process of categorizing the data through reduction, organization, and

[15] In Los Angeles County, RAND's SRG was able to identify a community location to hold the focus groups.

connection. The method supports exploration and the discovery of categorical relationships derived directly from the data and encourages sensitivity to emergent patterns and contrasts within (e.g., by interview respondent type) and across the focal counties.

To analyze the CalWORKs caseworker and participant focus group data we: (1) identified general "themes" through review of notes and transcripts, highlighting relevant quotes and identified where there were differences in perspectives; and (2) summarized patterns of qualitative findings within and across counties. For CalWORKs caseworkers, themes identified were related to the training that caseworkers had received on SB 1041 changes to CalWORKs, how well they understood those changes, how SB 1041 affected their caseloads and responsibilities, how those changes were communicated to participants, how SB 1041 affected their interactions with participants, their views of how well participants understand the 24-month time clock and other related changes, their views regarding factors that facilitated or hindered their implementation of the new rules, and suggestions for improving SB 1041. For CalWORKs participants, themes identified were related to participants' understanding of the SB 1041 changes to CalWORKs, how it affects their activities and ability to access services and to meet WTW requirements, how helpful their caseworker has been in steering them through the new requirements, and their perceptions of their likely future course.

State Administrative Data

The initial descriptive analyses for the status and tracking studies reported in Chapter Six and the initial descriptive analyses for the impact study reported in Chapter Seven draw from state administrative data maintained by CDSS.[16] We begin with a description of the administrative data sources and how the data were prepared for analysis. We then detail how we defined the population of interest and the cohorts we analyze. A final section describes the analytic approach for findings reported in Chapters Six and Seven.

Data Sources and Preparation for Analysis

As summarized in Table 2.10, the individual-level databases maintained at the state level include WDTIP (referenced earlier in the context of sampling for the focal county CalWORKs participant focus groups), a statewide welfare time-on-aid tracking and reporting system; the Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System (MEDS); and the EDD Base Wage Match.[17] For each data source, the table lists the population covered, the unit of analysis and frequency, and the data constructs.

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[16] In future reports, in addition to state administrative data, we expect to report on individual-level data from the three statewide consortia: CalWIN, C-IV, and LEADER. These data will add such information as participants' use of services, enrollment in education programs, and reasons for discontinuing in CalWORKs.

17 We draw from restricted access state administrative data that were made available as part of the SB 1041 evaluation. In future reports, we expect to report on additional data from EDD with information on unemployment insurance.

Table 2.10. Sources of State Administrative Data

Data Source	Coverage	Unit Level/ Frequency	Data Constructs
Welfare Data Tracking Implementation Project (WDTIP)	Adult TANF/CalWORKs WTW participants since 1998	Individual level/ monthly	Time clock, program participation, exemptions, sanctions
Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System (MEDS) Longitudinal Database and Monthly Extract Files	All AFDC/TANF/ CalWORKs participants since 1998	Individual level/ monthly	Demographics, county codes
Employment Development Department (EDD) Base Wage Match	All CalWORKs adults since 2006	Individual level/ quarterly	Employment, earnings

Most of the information used to address the evaluation's research questions came from WDTIP, including information related to participating in CalWORKs, such as becoming sanctioned or exempted from participation, and exiting the program. WDTIP also tracks cumulative time toward the WTW 24-month and CalWORKs 48-month time-on-aid clocks.

To form a more complete record for each CalWORKs participant, we merged information from the MEDS and EDD to WDTIP data. Data from MEDS provided information about participant sex, age, race or ethnicity, and primary language. We used these data to describe the population and to examine group differences based on demographic characteristics. Data from EDD provides information about the employment and earnings of CalWORKs participants while they are participating in CalWORKs, as well as before and after.[18] We used these data to assess employment longevity and consistency and level of earnings. Appendix C contains additional information about each data source and a description of the data preparation, merging (conducted using anonymized identifiers rather than actual Social Security and Client Identification Numbers), and quality control processes.

Population and Analytic Framework

Our population framework for the status, tracking, and impact studies included adults who were in the CalWORKs WTW program and were eligible to work, including those who may have been sanctioned, either prior to or after SB 1041 implementation. We use the term "CalWORKs WTW participant" to identify this population.[19] We used WDTIP to establish the main study

[18] The EDD data provide information on employment and earnings for workers covered by unemployment insurance. Nationally, the unemployment insurance data system is estimated to cover about 93 percent of the wage and salary component of national income (BLS, 2015b). Uncovered sectors include self-employment, some agricultural workers, and the informal sector (i.e., individuals working for cash). Estimates suggest that unemployment insurance administrative data underreport self-reported employment among welfare leavers by 10–20 percent (Isaacs and Lyon, 2000). Other estimates for the welfare-eligible population indicate that wages, when they are reported in the unemployment insurance data, may be understated by 11 to 14 percent (Hotz and Scholz, 2001).

[19] CalWORKs WTW participants are members of cases. A CalWORKs case includes all members of the same family and counts them as one "unit" rather than separate individuals. This report focuses on the experiences and outcomes of the adult individuals in CalWORKs cases.

population and added demographic information from MEDS.[20] Appendix C provides more details about how we derived the study population.

We analyzed different clusters of participants for the initial status, tracking, and impact studies. The status study analysis included cross-sectional snapshots of all CalWORKs WTW participants in March of 2013, 2014, and 2015, the period after SB 1041 was instituted, in order to gain perspective on a cross-section of participants at regular intervals after the policy change. As snapshots, each point-in-time cross-section included participants who started in CalWORKs before and after the policy change. Since WTW participants may experience CalWORKs differently depending on when they entered the program, we divided the snapshot population into two groups of participants, those who began participating in CalWORKs WTW before January 2013 and continued after the policy change and those who first participated in CalWORKs WTW in January 2013 or later. By examining the findings for participants who only experienced CalWORKs WTW under the SB 1041 reforms, we may gain insight to the long-term "steady state" outcomes of the SB 1041 reforms. The status study cross-sections combined included 958,365 participants.

The status study figures in Chapter Six show the three status cross-sections defined as follows:

- *status cross-section 2013:* All CalWORKs WTW participants in March 2013
- *status cross-section 2014:* All CalWORKs WTW participants in March 2014
- *status cross-section 2015*: All CalWORKs WTW participants in March 2015.

The status study analyses also show the following groups within each cross-section:

- *all participants:* All CalWORKs WTW participants in March of each year
- *transitional group:* CalWORKs WTW participants who started the CalWORKs WTW program before SB 1041 began and continued after January 2013
- *post–SB group:* CalWORKs WTW participants who started the CalWORKs WTW program for the first time in January 2013 or later.

The tracking study analysis included four CalWORKs participant entry cohorts—those who started in the CalWORKs WTW program for the first time in March of 2007, 2009, 2011, and 2013—to dynamically assess groups of CalWORKs WTW participants across time.[21] We followed each entering cohort for two years. The 2007, 2009, and 2011 cohorts were assessed for two-year periods before SB 1041 began, while the 2013 cohort was assessed for the two-year

[20] During the planning stage for this evaluation, we expected to derive the study population from the MEDS data. However, WDTIP is the main record of participation in CalWORKs WTW and contains the majority of the information required for this report, which makes it preferable over MEDS for deriving the study population.

[21] By "first time," we mean that the participant was not an adult participant in the CalWORKs WTW program since January 1998 because 1998 is the earliest year for which we have reliable data.

period after SB 1041 began.[22] We assessed, for example, whether participants received exemptions, left CalWORKs WTW, and/or became employed during that time.[23] In this analysis, we followed participants for two years because this period is the earliest that participants could reach the 24-month CalWORKs WTW time limit under SB 1041. The tracked entry cohorts combined included 38,131 participants.

The tracking study figures in Chapter Six show findings for the four cohorts defined as follows:

- *tracked entry cohort 2007:* First-time CalWORKs WTW participants in March 2007
- *tracked entry cohort 2009:* First-time CalWORKs WTW participants in March 2009
- *tracked entry cohort 2011:* First-time CalWORKs WTW participants in March 2011
- *tracked entry cohort 2013:* First-time CalWORKs WTW participants in March 2013 (only experienced CalWORKs WTW after SB 1041 took effect).

The initial impact study analysis, presented in Chapter Seven through a series of figures, shows outcomes for 16 quarterly cohorts defined as follows:

- *Initial impact study analysis Cohorts 2010 through 2013:* First-time CalWORKs WTW participants in each of four quarters. The four 2013 cohorts only experienced CalWORKs WTW after SB 1041 took effect.

These cohorts thus include first-time CalWORKs WTW participants from 2010 through 2013 who started in Quarter 1 (January through March), Quarter 2 (April through June), Quarter 3 (July through September), or Quarter 4 (October through December). Each quarter-year forms a cohort. The data analyzed included information on 416,144 participants entering CalWORKs WTW.[24]

In the status, tracking, and impact studies, we categorized participants and examined their outcomes based on whether they first participated in CalWORKs WTW before or after the SB 1041 reforms became effective in January 2013. This division allowed us to compare whether the outcomes of participants who experienced both old and new policies and procedures differed from those of participants who only experienced SB 1041 policies and procedures. However, an important consideration in this distinction is the pace of implementation of the reforms. The appropriateness of using January 2013 as an analytical cut point depends on the

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[22] We placed a participant into a cohort for the impact analysis if he or she began in the CalWORKs WTW program in March of a given year and did not participate in the program between January 1998 and February of a given year. For example, participants in Cohort 2007 started in the program in March 2007 and did not participate in the program between January 1998 and February 2007.

[23] We examined time on aid, exemptions, sanctions, discontinuances, and employment for eight yearly cohorts from 2006 to 2013. We did not find notable differences across the cohorts so we show findings in this report for Cohorts 2007, 2009, 2011, and 2013.

[24] The population frame for the impact analysis is based on WDTIP, but unlike the status and tracking study, it only retains individuals who also have a record in MEDS. WDTIP contained 482,177 new participants in this time frame. We matched participants in WDTIP to entries in MEDS for 416,144 (86 percent) of the participants.

extent to which SB 1041 was actually implemented, as intended, by that time. As will be discussed in Chapters Four and Five, the initial implementation of SB 1041 appeared to be uneven, given delays in clear, consistent implementation guidance from the state and with Early Engagement lagging behind. An alternative approach would be to separate the population at a later point of "full implementation," but it may be difficult to establish that date with certainty. For future reports, we will explore to what extent the evaluation findings are sensitive to when the pre–SB 1041 versus post–SB 1041 periods are defined.

Analytic Approach for State Administrative Data

Administrative data contains information on all CalWORKs WTW participants. Since this is population data, analyses do not require tests of significance. Analyses presented in Chapter Six are descriptive. Figures are based on counts or averages, and the denominator is "all cohort participants," unless otherwise noted.

Analyses in Chapter Seven offer a first glimpse of the changes in participants' participation and employment outcomes that might be associated with SB 1041. This analysis assesses the association between SB 1041 and CalWORKs WTW participants' employment, CalWORKs participation, and other measures of economic status by comparing the outcomes of individuals who participated in CalWORKs WTW after SB 1041 went into effect with the outcomes of individuals who participated in CalWORKs WTW before SB 1041 was put into effect. Such comparisons will not necessarily provide an unbiased estimate of the effects of the policy change because demographic and economic factors other than SB 1041 may have influenced the outcomes of CalWORKs WTW participants and may also have changed who participated in CalWORKs WTW in the first place. As California's economy and demographics change, the observed outcomes for participants will change *regardless of any changes due to SB 1041*.

To isolate the changes in outcomes that can reasonably be associated with SB 1041, we used a statistical regression model to account for specific economic and demographic factors other than SB 1041. This analysis, known as interrupted time series analysis, used a regression model to compare the pre– and post–SB 1041 outcomes of different cohorts of CalWORKs WTW participants *as if* the observable characteristics of the participants and local economies were the same. The specific regression model used in this report accounted for: participant sex, age, race or ethnicity, and primary language; the age of the youngest child and number of children in the case at participants' entry into CalWORKs; and, the county of participation and that county's unemployment rate.[25]

Because EDD collects employment and income data quarterly, the monthly WDTIP and MEDS data for each participant were aggregated to corresponding quarters. The quarters for each participant were indexed relative to the CalWORKs enrollment quarter (e.g., first quarter

[25] The regression models included county fixed effects to account for differences across counties that do not change over time and quarter fixed effects to account for seasonality in outcomes.

after enrollment, second quarter after enrollment). Information on these first-time participants was tracked for up to one year (four quarters) after entry. The available data allowed us to track four quarterly entry cohorts that started in 2013, after SB 1041, and to compare their first-year outcomes with those of the 12 pre–SB 1041 quarterly entry cohorts that stared in 2010, 2011, and 2012.

We conducted analyses on three sets of outcomes. We first analyzed whether, in the fourth quarter after entering, the participant was in CalWORKs and whether the participant was employed.[26] These two categories are not mutually exclusive as many CalWORKs WTW participants are both in the program and employed at the same time. Second, to explore the results in more detail, we categorized and analyzed outcomes using four mutually exclusive indicators: whether the participant was in CalWORKs only, employed only, both in CalWORKs and employed, or neither. Third, we analyzed total real earnings in a quarter (i.e., earnings adjusted for inflation and expressed in first quarter 2013 dollars).[27]

In future years of the evaluation of SB 1041, we will conduct status, tracking, and impact analyses using county CalWORKs administrative data obtained from the three county consortia, which provide detailed information on outcomes and participant characteristics. Because WDTIP does not contain the full range of information that we eventually plan to use in this evaluation, the results should be viewed as tentative and interpreted with caution. For example, in the initial impact analysis, we are attempting to account for factors other than SB 1041, but we cannot yet conclude that any estimated impacts are *due to* SB 1041.

Nationally Representative Survey Data

To complement our analyses of state administrative data, we also analyzed data from the CPS to assess the impact of the SB 1041 policy change on single-parent female-headed families in California. We briefly describe the CPS and its advantages for our analysis and then detail our analytic approach.

Current Population Survey Data

The CPS is a nationally representative monthly survey of approximately 60,000 households in 792 sample areas across the United States that provides a wide range of information on population characteristics and the state of the U.S. labor force. The CPS is the data source used to calculate the nation's unemployment rate; as such, it is the gold standard for collecting data on

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[26] Because outcomes were analyzed at the quarter level, "in CalWORKs WTW" in a quarter was defined as being in CalWORKs WTW in at least one month during the quarter.

[27] The classification variables as well as earnings were analyzed using a linear regression model. Even though the classification variables are binary outcomes, the analysis here is descriptive and not causal so a linear regression model, also known as a linear probability model for binary outcomes, was used to generate results to ease interpretability.

employment—a critical indicator of economic self-sufficiency for families participating in the CalWORKs program. The U.S. Census Bureau, using a scientifically selected national sample of residential housing units with coverage in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, conducts the survey for the BLS. For analyses reported in Chapter Seven, we take advantage of the national coverage in the data to make comparisons between single parents living in California and single parents living in other states that are similar to California in terms of their sociodemographic composition and TANF policies.

The CPS has four features that make it valuable for assessing the effects of SB 1041. First, as a large national study intended to produce state-level estimates, it is possible to make valid comparisons of California residents with residents of other states. Second, the CPS includes measures of outcomes that are important for gauging the success of CalWORKs, including family economic resources, labor force participation, public assistance receipt, and school enrollment. Third, the CPS collects information from families in a systematic fashion over time, allowing us to track outcomes in the years prior to and following the implementation of SB 1041. Fourth, in contrast to the administrative data, which are limited to individuals who apply for and receive CalWORKs benefits, the CPS data allow us to examine outcomes for the entire population potentially eligible for CalWORKs. In this way, we capture the implications of SB 1041 for the population at risk of CalWORKs participation, which will include those who are eligible but do not enroll in the program.

Analytic Approach for CPS

In our analysis of the CPS, we use a comparative case study design to compare outcomes of CalWORKs WTW eligible families in California with outcomes of families in other states in the years immediately after SB 1041 was put into effect. In comparing families in California with families in other states, we are able to get a sense of how the CalWORKs WTW program stacks up against other state TANF programs. Direct comparisons with other states can be misleading, however, as California is unique in terms of its size, population, and state welfare policies. To make meaningful comparisons, we employed a synthetic comparison group methodology, which allowed us to compare families in California with families in *states that are most similar to California* in terms of their sociodemographic composition and the rules and benefits of their state TANF programs. Families in these similar states act as a synthetic comparison group against which we could compare specific outcomes of CalWORKs WTW-eligible families in California.

To undertake this analysis, we used up to 11 years of data from the CPS. We used data spanning 2005 through 2012 to assess trends in outcomes prior to SB 1041 and data from 2013 up through early 2015 to assess trends in outcomes in the first few years following the launch of SB 1041. We measured outcomes starting in 2005 following the passage of SB 1104 (2004), which tightened the CalWORKs participation requirement to mandate 20 hours of defined "core work" activities out of the 32 hours required for single parents (where previously there was no

requirement for core activities in the first 18 to 24 months).[28] Data from the March CPS (covering 2005 to 2015) are used to examine one outcome measured for the current month (unemployment status), as well as several measures collected with reference to the prior calendar year available in the March CPS annual supplement (covering 2005 to 2013), including poverty status, receipt of public assistance in general and TANF receipt in particular, and annual weeks worked full time. Data from the October CPS (covering 2005 to 2014) are used to examine current school enrollment and participation in job training.

The CPS does not contain direct information on eligibility for or participation in CalWORKs, and thus can only show how those in California who are most likely to require cash assistance compare with similar individuals in other states. We selected all female-headed families in the CPS with one or more children under the age of 18 living in the state of California as our "treatment group" because they are the primary target population for the CalWORKs WTW program. To further limit our treatment group to those that were most likely to require financial assistance from the CalWORKs WTW program, we eliminated those where the female head had a bachelor's degree or higher.[29] Across the 11 years of our analysis, 12,876 female-headed families in California met our criteria, approximately 1,170 in each year. For ease of expression, we refer to these families as our California treatment group.

Our comparison group was a purposefully selected group of states that have populations and welfare policies similar to California. For a state to be eligible for inclusion in our synthetic comparison group, it needed to be similar to California in several ways (see Table F.8 for sources):

- racial and ethnic composition of the population, measured by the percentage of adults who identified as Hispanic, African American, white, Asian, and other
- nativity, measured by the percentage of adults who are foreign-born
- educational attainment, measured by the percentage of adults with a bachelor's degree
- age, measured by the percentage of the population under the age of 18
- poverty, measured by the percentage of families living below the poverty line
- family structure, measured by the percentage of families led by a single parent and the percentage of births to unmarried women
- unemployment, measured by the unemployment rate
- the maximum monthly income threshold for eligibility in the state's TANF program
- the maximum monthly financial benefit from the state's TANF program
- the maximum number of months allowed on the state's TANF program.

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[28] See Karoly et al. (2015) for additional information on the history of policy changes since CalWORKs was implemented in 1998.

[29] As the CPS lacks direct measures of welfare participation, we follow the approach taken by other analysts who have used the CPS to study the effects of welfare policies by focusing on outcomes among female-headed household with children under the age 18 (Grogger, 2003; Matsudaira and Blank, 2014).

Using these state-level variables for each year, we selected states for inclusion in the comparison group and constructed weights for these states to maximize the comparison group's similarity with California in terms of the pre–SB 1041 outcomes of interest, as well as the population and policy measures listed above.[30] Because our central interest is in assessing the effects of the implementation of SB 1041, we reviewed the states selected by our weighting algorithm to ensure that there were no major substantive changes to their policies throughout our period of observation that would contaminate our estimated differences between them and California. The result is a comparison group composed of states that can be interpreted as approximately similar to California in both population and policy environment. More-detailed information on the comparison group selection process and the accompanying weighting scheme is included in Appendix F.

In our analysis, we plotted the trend line in outcomes for California and the weighted trend line in outcomes for the comparison group states. We compared the difference between California's trend line and the comparison group's trend line post–SB 1041. To make inferences about the magnitude of the observed post–SB 1041 differences between California and the comparison group, we used a placebo test approach outlined by Abadie, Diamond, and Hainmueller (2010). Specifically, we applied the synthetic comparison group approach to every state in the sample and compared the resulting differences with the observed difference between California and the comparison group. Hence, every state acted as a "placebo." We considered this observed difference to be of statistical significance if it was below the 2.5th percentile or above the 97.5th percentile of the placebo comparison distribution. This is conceptually akin to a two-tailed test of significance with a threshold of $p < 0.05$. If California outperforms the comparison group states in the post–SB 1041 years on our outcomes of interest using this placebo test, this would provide suggestive evidence that the SB 1041 policy changes may have contributed to changes in the outcomes of female-headed families in California.

[30] Technically, all states were included in the comparison group, but states that were *more similar* to California were given *more weight* and states that were *less similar* to California in the pre–SB 1041 years were given *less weight*. In our analyses, the majority of states were given a weight of 0 (and thus did not contribute to trends in the comparison group) as they were too different from California on our measures of sociodemographic composition and state welfare policy parameters. Note that the comparison group states change for each analysis that we present because the states are in part selected on how similar they are to California on the outcome of interest. To accommodate this variability, we use different states for the comparison group for each separate comparison.

3. State-Level Perspectives on Initial Implementation of SB 1041

As part of the process study, we gathered information from key informants in relevant government agencies, as well as other stakeholders with a state-level perspective to understand, at a high level, how these stakeholders viewed the context and background in which SB 1041 was developed, how the policy changes were planned and communicated, and what factors affected implementation. As detailed in Chapter Two (and summarized in the text box at right), we conducted interviews in the spring of 2015 with CDSS staff as well as representatives from key organizations involved with the planning, implementation, or both of SB 1041 for a total of 17 interviews.

Chapter Three Methods

- Based on key informant interviews conducted with 17 state-level officials in the public and private sectors in spring 2015.
- Topics focused on context and background for SB 1041, how the policy changes were planned and communicated, and factors affecting implementation.
- Analyzed using qualitative methods.
- See Chapter Two for more detail on data and methods.

Our analyses aimed to address the following questions, which we have listed with a preview of our findings:

- *How did stakeholders at the state level view the goals and objectives of SB 1041?* Stakeholders' perspectives regarding the goals and expected impact of SB 1041 differed: Some viewed it as well-motivated with the potential for positive change while others were more concerned about potential negative consequences. These differing views contributed to the intense nature of the negotiations over the proposed legislation. In addition, our conversations at the state level revealed a fundamental difference in how different stakeholders understood the CalWORKs WTW 24-month time clock component of SB 1041.
- *How did the state plan for SB 1041 and communicate the changes brought about by it?* As required by the legislation, CDSS implemented a state-level workgroup process to develop implementation guidance for SB 1041, which was characterized as positive and inclusive by stakeholders. Communication of policy with the counties occurred primarily through ACLs. However, the intensive and lengthy planning process contributed to the slow release of guidance to the counties, creating implementation challenges at the local level.
- *According to state-level stakeholders, what factors have hindered or facilitated initial implementation of SB 1041?*According to many stakeholders external to CDSS, the benefits of SB 1041 will not be fully realized until the accompanying Early Engagement

reforms—the OCAT, FS program, and ESE program (discussed in Chapter One and Appendix A)—are fully implemented on a statewide basis. In addition, state stakeholders described tension between promoting SB 1041 and meeting federal WPR requirements.

- *From the perspective of state-level stakeholders, what is the potential long-term impact of SB 1041?* Interview respondents (both within CDSS and external to the department) discussed the potential for SB 1041 to positively change how clients experience CalWORKs in terms of their initial engagement with the program, the activities available to them, and their relationships with caseworkers. However, respondents noted that it is still too early to determine whether SB 1041 will have the intended effect of helping clients to overcome their unique barriers to self-sufficiency.

Next, we provide a detailed discussion of the interview findings organized by a series of key themes. Note that in the discussion, interview respondents from CDSS are identified as such (e.g., "CDSS administrators" or "CDSS staff"), whereas the term "state stakeholder" is used to refer to representatives from statewide organizations other than CDSS (e.g., welfare advocacy groups, California Community College Chancellor's Office, Legislative Analyst's Office, and legislative staff).

Understanding of the Goals of SB 1041

In the January 2012 budget proposal, the Brown administration proposed to significantly redesign the structure of CalWORKs to provide budget savings. In particular, the revised program would reduce caseloads and focus resources on those families that are meeting work requirements. Specifically, the proposal created three groups in the program: CalWORKs Basic, CalWORKs Plus, and Child Maintenance (Public Policy Institute of California, March 2012). CalWORKs Basic would provide WTW services to families for up to 24 months, rather than 48 months. The CalWORKs Plus program would include families with eligible parents who are working a substantial number of hours before they reach their 48-month limit in the program. WTW services would be focused on these two groups, and there would be a slight increase in cash assistance to families in CalWORKs Plus. All other families would be placed in the third level, the Child Maintenance program—here parents would be ineligible for aid, grants to children would be reduced, and child care services would no longer be available.

State stakeholders reported that many state legislators viewed these proposed changes as a reduction in the safety net available to low-income families in California in the form of reduction in grant amounts and in the time available for adult participants to receive benefits (Legislative Analyst's Office, February 22, 2012). The legislature subsequently rejected the Governor's proposed redesign and entered into an intense and rushed negotiation process with the administration and CDSS. The ultimate package of changes incorporated in SB 1041 is the result of those negotiations. A history of cuts to CalWORKs explains some of the negative reaction to

the administration's initial proposal to change aspects of the program. For example, in 2011, the lifetime limit on aid was reduced from 60 to 48 months. One state stakeholder noted that in response to the introduction of the CalWORKs WTW 24-month time clock, a central component of SB 1041, the legislature viewed it as a strategy to reduce the grant program yet again. While many state stakeholders we spoke with appreciated the flexibility offered to clients through SB 1041—namely the elimination of "core" activities within the 24-month time clock period—other state stakeholders were concerned that many CalWORKs WTW participants would be unprepared to meet federal work requirements after exhausting their 24-month time clock and would fall off aid as a result.

In contrast, CDSS staff with whom we spoke as part of our 2015 interviews did not consider SB 1041, in the words of one administrator, as a "major sea change" to the CalWORKs program. Instead, they viewed the legislation as a mechanism to more effectively help participants overcome barriers to self-sufficiency through early and intensive engagement and provision of flexible and individualized supportive services. One CDSS respondent described the general vision for the legislation:

> There should be a period where we say [to participants], "What is it you want to do with your life and that will get you out of poverty, and how can we support you?" Our hope was that that would mean . . . an increase in meaningful conversations between the workers and the clients about what they want in their lives and, very critically, about what their barriers are.

Specific SB 1041 goals identified by CDSS administrators included the following:

- increased flexibility in the WTW flow (e.g., clients are not automatically moved into employment training and job search before assessment of their strengths and challenges)
- improvement in referral processes to supporting services, including reduction in wait times for clients
- increased use of supportive services (e.g., mental health and substance abuse)
- increased participation in education activities.

Although CDSS administrators and some other state stakeholders with whom we spoke did not view SB 1041 as a dramatic change in the program, both groups recognized the varying opinions about the legislation. Interview respondents reported: "There seems to be this feeling in the air like it's a bad thing. It's somehow a reduction of the program," and "People believe that participants will be kicked off at the end of 24 months, rather than facing a change in participation requirements."

The SB 1041 time clock was a topic where the perspectives of different stakeholders particularly varied. When a client exhausts his or her CalWORKs WTW 24-month time clock, some state stakeholders characterized it as an abrupt (and possibly premature) termination of services, placing the client at risk of sanction for failure to meet federal TANF requirements. For other state stakeholders, as well as CDSS staff, the end of the initial CalWORKs WTW 24-

month time period simply marked a return to federal TANF participation requirements that already existed prior to SB 1041.

State-Level Planning Process and Communication Regarding SB 1041

CDSS staff and state stakeholders noted that CDSS supported an iterative workgroup process to craft SB 1041 guidance. There was broad agreement among respondents that CDSS's process to develop guidance for supporting implementation of SB 1041 was useful and productive. Participants in the workgroup included advocacy groups (Western Center on Law and Poverty, California Welfare Rights Organization), the County Welfare Directors Association, legislative staff, the California Community College Chancellor's Office, county representatives, and CDSS staff. As one state stakeholder noted, "the people who needed to be at the table were there."

The CDSS workgroup process was praised for its inclusiveness and detailed focus on implementation. Although perceptions about the impact of SB 1041 varied among those with whom we spoke at the state level, the majority of informants acknowledged that the legislation was complicated and as such, the workgroup intentionally and carefully vetted implementation guidance to "get it right." As a result, state stakeholders and CDSS staff recognized that information was released slowly to counties and many issues required extended clarification.

Implementation of SB 1041 began on January 1, 2013, while counties were still seeking out clarification about the details of the legislation from CDSS—a cause of concern for several state-level stakeholders. Incremental changes to the regulations and data systems,[31] as well as clarification on previously issued guidance, meant that county staff had to review previous cases and make corrections to WTW plans as appropriate. This theme——counties' uncertainty about initial guidance released by the state as they began to implement SB 1041 reforms—was also expressed by respondents to the ACS (discussed in Chapter Four) and echoed many times by participants in the focal county interviews (discussed in Chapter Five).

Factors Affecting the Initial Implementation of SB 1041

In discussing the factors that could support or hinder implementation of SB 1041, two topics received the most attention: the implementation of Early Engagement components and the WPR requirements.

[31] The policy reforms created under SB 1041 required significant changes to the data systems that counties used to track CalWORKs participants. California's counties are grouped into three consortia, each of which uses a different data system—LEADER, Cal-WIN, and C-IV. Representatives from all three consortia participated in the state SB 1041 workgroup process to develop guidance for counties and to change the data systems to meet the needs of the new legislation. The main challenge, as identified by staff across the three consortia, was the automation of the 24-month time clock, for a variety of reasons.

Implementation of Early Engagement Components

SB 1041 was negotiated by legislators with the promise of several additional programs intended to support clients under the new reforms. Known as Early Engagement, this package of supports (discussed in Chapter One)— the OCAT, FS program, and ESE program—was designed to identify and address individual client barriers, provide intensive services for those who need them, and support expanded employment opportunities. Many with whom we spoke—both CDSS staff and other state stakeholders—viewed Early Engagement as critical to the successful implementation of SB 1041. However, these programs (established under AB 74, 2013) were not implemented in the same time frame as SB 1041—and, in fact, were not fully implemented in most counties until recently.[32]

When discussing Early Engagement, stakeholders placed the most emphasis on the importance of the OCAT, identifying it as critical to ensuring that the CalWORKs WTW 24-month time clock instituted through SB 1041 does not have a negative impact on participants. A state stakeholder characterized the OCAT as

> the key to knowing better than we now know what a family needs or wants, and the key to assessing in a broad and holistic way a family's strengths and needs . . . once we've done that, then we can, within 24 months, put a much better, more tailored, more family-focused package of services together.

This respondent went on to say that it was difficult to "imagine that we're going to see that vision of a fully actualized SB 1041 implementation at the ground level until the OCAT is at that level [fully actualized]."

Other components of Early Engagement include the FS program, which as of January 1, 2014, provides intensive case management and services to a subset of CalWORKs participants with particularly challenging family situations. Family Stabilization services are designed to ensure a basic level of stability within a family prior to, or concurrent with, participation in WTW activities. State stakeholders were optimistic about the promise of the FS program, although they acknowledged it is still too early to gauge its impact.

The ESE program is the third component of Early Engagement, a new CalWORKs WTW activity in which a participant's employer is partially or wholly reimbursed for wages, training costs, or both. ESE is intended to increase the number of subsidized employers and cannot be used to fund or supplement AB 98, the original Subsidized Employment program (CDSS, 2013c). Through ESE, state stakeholders hope, as reflected in the comments of one respondent, to grow a "community of employers" who are available and willing to help connect CalWORKs participants to the workforce. Eventually, ESE is expected to improve unsubsidized employment outcomes for clients.

The lag between the implementation of Early Engagement and SB 1041 was a sore point for

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[32] Responses to the ACS administered in the spring of 2015 show that 69 percent of counties indicated they had an ESE program and 86 percent reported they offer Family Stabilization (see Chapter Four).

many state stakeholders with whom we spoke. Several expressed concern that Early Engagement was not implemented at the same time as SB 1041 and that it has not been rolled out at the same pace across all 58 counties. Given that the OCAT, FS program, and ESE program took longer to become fully operational, depending on the county,[33] it was believed that many CalWORKs participants who are now close to timing out on their 24-month time clock did not receive the supports under Early Engagement that they should have had access to, or did not receive access to the supports early enough to fully benefit from the 24-month window to reach their self-sufficiency goals.

WPR Requirements

One of the factors that drove the development of SB 1041, according to a CDSS administrator, is the federal WPR requirement. As noted in Chapter One, a central component of the transition to TANF in 1996 was the introduction of WPR, which mandates that at least 50 percent of TANF cash assistance participants in a state must be engaged in work for 30 hours per week per month, or 20 hours for single parents with children under the age of six. State programs that are unable to meet the WPR may experience financial penalties. Each county contributes to California's overall WPR. If a federal penalty is enforced and a county is found to have contributed to the state's low WPR, they must contribute proportionally to the penalty payment from their county and general funds. California is one of 13 states and two territories that did not meet its target in 2012. To date, states have not paid their full WPR penalties, but given the financial risk, it remains a powerful motivator (Center for Law and Social Policy, 2015).

Despite the fact that SB 1041 allows more CalWORKs participants to engage in noncore activities during their first 24 months on aid, most CDSS staff argue that SB 1041 will benefit the state's WPR in the long term by helping to reduce participants' barriers to employment and helping them make a more effective and lasting connection to the workforce. According to CDSS, the legislation allows CalWORKs participants to benefit from more flexibility in work requirements and access to services, so that they are better positioned in the long run to meet federal requirements sooner within their period on aid—thus helping California to meet the target WPR.

At the same time, the participation requirements in SB 1041 do not align with WPR. If a client chooses to meet his or her CalWORKs participation requirements with noncore activities, those activities do not contribute toward meeting the WPR. A CDSS staff member explained,

> There's some recognition that, perhaps in the short run, SB 1041 would maybe be a detriment to meeting WPR requirements. But over the course of time, people will be better positioned, more people will be meeting the WPR and it'll help us avoid the really significant penalties.

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[33] Specifically, five "early user" counties began using the OCAT in 2014, which was updated and then subsequently pilot-tested in five "pilot counties." FS and ESE were rolled out and expected to be fully implemented statewide in state fiscal years 2014–2015 (CDSS, May 1, 2014).

This misalignment between federal TANF requirements and SB 1041 was of concern to state stakeholders, including welfare advocates, and also to the majority of caseworkers in the focal counties, as will be discussed in Chapter Five. Several state stakeholders reported that some counties may be encouraging participants to meet the federal TANF requirements, rather than the more-flexible requirements written into SB 1041, "because they want to get their WPR rate at their county level up so that they are not liable. They're trying to help the state to [avoid] those penalties."

State stakeholders noted that the perceived competition between SB 1041 and WPR is hindering implementation of SB 1041. A state-level respondent explained, "The diversity and multiplicity of expectations [counties face] and the extent to which some of them work at cross purposes makes this very, very challenging." A welfare advocate said,

> You're dealing with a WTW program where counties are told that they have to meet the WPR, and the WPR means that 50 percent of the people would have to be meeting [and] doing core hours. And if they don't meet the WPR the counties could be penalized. The state gets penalized, the counties will be penalized . . . there's an inherent conflict over here of flexibility and meeting the Welfare-to-Work participation rates and nobody's addressed that."

Discussions with state stakeholders (and county staff) suggests that the state has not clearly communicated how counties should prioritize SB 1041 versus WPR. That is, it is unclear whether counties should be working to meet federal requirements or to help clients take advantage of SB 1041 if it is in their best interest toward self-sufficiency. A state stakeholder said,

> I think just for counties it's that mixed message: Are we supposed to be "work first"? Are we supposed to try and meet the WPR? Are we supposed to encourage people to meet federal [requirements] when they're able? Or are we supposed to say, "No, you'll get a better job if you don't meet federal for a while." That's the key mixed message—the county is being told, "If this person could use a work plan that is not consistent with WPR to help them in the long run, give it to them. But, oh, by the way we're not meeting WPR, and you're liable if your county contributes." I think it's hard for the counties to come to terms with those messages.

This issue clearly played out in our discussions with focal county caseworkers and is explored in detail in Chapter Five.

Perceptions Regarding the Potential Long-Term Impact of SB 1041

Several state stakeholders and CDSS staff discussed the potential of SB 1041 to have a positive effect on how clients experience CalWORKs in terms of their initial engagement with the program, the activities available to them (including expanded educational opportunities), and their relationships with caseworkers. For example, prior to SB 1041, most clients moved first through what is known as Job Club—a group setting to build the capacity of clients to search for

employment—followed by the actual job search, and then assessment. Under SB 1041, clients do not have to participate in Job Club and job search before assessment—counties can conduct a more expanded orientation with clients or refer them to Family Stabilization, as appropriate. SB 1041 provides flexibility in clients' initial engagement with the program.

In addition, the state stakeholders and CDSS staff explained that OCAT is designed to provide an in-depth assessment of clients' strengths and needs and to identify appropriate services to meet those needs. To leverage the potential of the OCAT, caseworkers must engage with clients in a way that may be more intensive and meaningful than has been done previously and partner with them to develop an individualized WTW plan—one that might focus on the pursuit of a degree or certification, as opposed to an immediate search for employment. This shift will require ongoing retraining to support caseworkers to help meet this new vision of CalWORKs.

It is important to note that changing large public social systems such as CalWORKs takes time. In California, the welfare system is a county-administered system and implemented by staff across 58 county welfare offices, each of which maintains significant local governance authority, as well as relationships with community-based partners such as community colleges and other service providers. One state-level stakeholder said,

> The reality is, the culture or the infrastructure of the CalWORKs program had taken so many backward steps during the recession [reference to budget cuts to the WTW program and corresponding increase in exemptions], as did our partner agencies that are going to deliver all of these more flexible services, that the time it's going to take to really implement in terms of the broader definition—changing the culture, training your staff, integrating your services, reconnecting with and expanding the capacity of your community-based agencies and other service partners—we have a ways to go.

SB 1041 represents a shift toward an integrated system in which county services are integrated and responsive to the needs of clients—as described by one state stakeholder, it will mean "taking all of those pieces and weaving them together into a sensible, holistic whole. It's exciting. It's definitely what we need to be doing."

4. Initial Implementation of SB 1041 at the County Level: Results from the ACS

The SB 1041 ACS was designed to gather information about the experiences of all 58 counties in planning for and implementing these reforms. More specifically, as summarized in the text box to the right (and detailed in Chapter Two), the survey obtained information about the status of implementation of different components of SB 1041, the organizational and administrative changes to facilitate implementation, the context within which implementation was occurring, barriers and facilitators to implementation, the design and implementation of the WTW time clocks, the way in which time remaining is communicated to CalWORKs participants, the FS and ESE programs, and the level of coordination between the CalWORKs program and other service providers (such as community colleges) at the county level. The survey provides information for these topics as of approximately July 2015.

Chapter Four Methods

- Based on analysis of ACS administered in June–July 2015; all 58 counties responded.
- Topics focused on aspects of planning for and implementing SB 1041.
- Analyzed using descriptive data methods reported in tables and charts.
- Results are reported in total and for counties stratified into three groups—small, medium, and large—based on CalWORKs caseload size: up to 999 assistance units; 1,000 to 4,999 assistance units; and 5,000 or more assistance units, respectively.
- See Chapter Two for more detail on data and methods.

This chapter addresses the following questions associated with the process study. (We also preview the key findings from the survey.)

- *What is the status of implementation of SB 1041 reforms to CalWORKs as of June 2015?* Overall, most counties have completed the reengagement of participants with the short-term, young child exemption. With respect to the Early Engagement components, 86 percent of counties reported having implemented the FS program countywide and 69 percent reported they had implemented the ESE program countywide. To prepare for implementing SB 1041 support services, up to 60 percent of all the counties developed new or enhanced partnerships with education providers, vocational education/job training providers, domestic violence service providers, substance abuse treatment providers, and mental health service providers.
- *How did counties communicate the changes brought about by SB 1041 to other county agencies and service providers and to line staff (e.g., caseworkers, employment services specialists)?* With respect to coordination activities, three-quarters of all county social services departments reported reaching out to individual directors or agency

representatives in other county agencies to plan for or implement support services under SB 1041. Counties communicated SB 1041's changes to the CalWORKs program to other county agencies predominantly via interagency or interdepartmental meetings. Counties communicated these changes to line staff by a variety of means, including memoranda and other written documents (81 percent), briefings and/or internal staff meetings (93 percent), and mandatory training sessions (83 percent).

- *How well did county staff understand those changes?* Supervisors were asked to indicate how well their WTW caseworkers understood the different components of SB 1041 (e.g., determination of the CalWORKs WTW 24-month time clock, changes to required hours of participation, changes to the determination of hourly program participation). Overall, 83 percent of counties reported that their WTW caseworkers understood moderately well to very well the 24-month time clock. At the same time, 18 percent of counties reported that their WTW caseworkers did not understand at all or only slightly understood the 24-month time clock. Sixteen percent of counties indicated their WTW caseworkers did not understand at all or only slightly understood the changes to the determination of hourly program participation. Relative to the other components of SB 1041, these are the two components for which the prevalence was highest of counties indicating that their WTW caseworkers did not have as strong an understanding.
- *How well did CalWORKs participants understand those changes?* Supervisors in 67 percent of counties reported that CalWORKs participants did not understand at all or only slightly understood the changes represented by the 24-month time clock. On the other hand, they rated higher CalWORKs participants' understanding of other components of SB 1041: 66 percent of counties indicated that participants understood the new WTW participation requirements moderately to very well; 77 percent assessed that CalWORKs participants understood moderately to very well the increase in choices with respect to the activities they could participate in during the 24-month time clock period; 71 percent rated CalWORKs participants' understanding of the reengagement process for those that had short-term, young child exemptions as moderate to very well, and 48 percent rated participants' understanding of the new one-time young child exemption as moderate to very well.
- *What factors facilitated or hindered initial implementation of SB 1041?* Forty-five percent of counties reported that existing relationships with other county agencies facilitated implementation. Counties also pointed toward interagency committees and advisory groups that were very helpful in implementing reforms. Twenty-one percent of counties reported that the *timing* of the release of state guidance on SB 1041 was a moderate to major hindrance; smaller counties were more likely to report it being a moderate to major hindrance than medium-sized or large counties. Seventy-nine percent

of counties reported that explaining the *complexity* of SB 1041 to participants was a moderate or major hindrance.

- *What are counties' assessment of the effects of SB 1041 on key outcomes and how well are SB 1041 reforms and related mandates working at the county level?* Between 45 percent and 57 percent of counties estimated that the implementation of SB 1041 in the early years had no effect on WPR, participation in WTW activities, compliance with CalWORKs program rules, earnings, participation in CalFresh, or the number of participants receiving sanctions. At the same time, between 36 and 40 percent of counties reported that participation in WTW activities and enrollment in education and training programs/community colleges was somewhat better under SB 1041. In addition, 78 percent of counties indicated that communication of the new rules was working moderately well to very well, despite earlier survey responses citing the challenges of communicating the new rules to CalWORKs participants. Also, 85 percent of counties indicated that matching CalWORKs participants with appropriate WTW activities was working moderately well to very well.
- *What are the key challenges facing counties?* The lack of full automation of the 24-month time clock was viewed as a minor, moderate, or major hindrance to implementation by 36 percent of counties; this was especially true for smaller counties, where 50 percent indicated this to be the case. Overall, 60 percent of all counties reported that the 24-month time clock is currently being calculated using both an automated system and manually. Counties with larger CalWORKs caseloads were more likely to use a combination of automated and manual calculation than counties with smaller or medium-sized caseloads, many of which primarily relied on manual calculation. Caseworkers play an important role in the calculation of how much time is left on the CalWORKs participants' 24-month time clock. Ninety-three percent of counties indicated WTW caseworkers were responsible for doing so on a monthly basis for their caseloads. Yet, this was the component most counties reported that their WTW caseworkers did not understand well. Thirty-seven counties provided written recommendations for improving SB 1041—the majority of recommendations centered on the need for clearer guidance on and suggested improvements to the 24-month time clock.

In the rest of this chapter, we detail findings specific to the research questions above. We begin with an overview of the status of implementation of SB 1041's components, including organizational changes made, communication activities, and factors affecting implementation. We then present findings specific to the 24-month time clock, including how it is being calculated, whether lack of automation of its calculation was viewed as a hindrance to implementation, who is responsible for calculating how much time a CalWORKs participant has left on the 24-month time clock, and supervisors' assessment of how well caseworkers and participants understood the 24-month time clock, to the required hours of participation, and to

the determination of hourly program participation. Next, we present findings on counties' assessment of caseworkers' and participants' understanding of the other components of SB 1041. We also discuss survey results related to Early Engagement activities (ESE and FS programs) and on the effectiveness of different reengagement strategies for individuals. We conclude with counties' views regarding the impact of SB 1041 on the CalWORKs program and on participant outcomes, and the effectiveness of SB 1041 reforms and related mandates at the county level. Lastly, we summarize counties' feedback on their information needs and suggestions for improving SB 1041. Appendix D presents additional survey results regarding the provision of and capacity to provide services related to employment, education and training, and supportive services.

Status of Implementation of SB 1041's Components

The 58 counties were asked to report on the current stage of implementation of the components of SB 1041 reforms to the CalWORKs program in their county, including the status of related programs (the FS and ESE programs). Note that status of the implementation of the 24-month time clock and related mandates is reported separately below.

Fifty-six counties (97 percent) reported that they had completed the countywide reengagement of the short-term, young child exemption population (Table 4.1). With respect to the Early Engagement components, 86 percent of counties reported that they had implemented the FS program countywide and 69 percent reported they had implemented the ESE program countywide.[34] With respect to developing new or enhanced partnerships, 57 percent to 60 percent of all counties reported that they had done so with education providers, vocational education/job training providers, domestic violence service providers, substance abuse treatment providers, and mental health service providers. Large counties were more likely (72 percent to 78 percent) to develop new or enhanced partnerships with these providers than small or medium-sized counties.

Organizational Changes Resulting from SB 1041

The counties were asked whether in 2013 and/or 2014, their county's social services department had implemented any of the organizational or administrative changes shown in Figure 4.1 in response to SB 1041 or to related legislation.[35] Among all counties (black bars), 55 percent indicated they created new units (e.g., specialized case management or reengagement units) (Figure 4.1). This varied by size of county: 55 percent of medium-sized and 83 percent of large

[34] Note that the denominator is all 58 counties. If we use the 57 counties that reported they had an FS program as the denominator, 93 percent of counties with an FS program reported they had *implemented it countywide*. Likewise, if we use 43 counties that reported they had an ESE program as the denominator, 88 percent (40 out 43) of counties with an ESE program reported they had *implemented it countywide*.

[35] Related legislation includes AB 74, which established the FS and ESE programs.

Table 4.1. Status of Implementation of SB 1041 Components and Related Mandates by June 2015: All Counties and by County Caseload Size

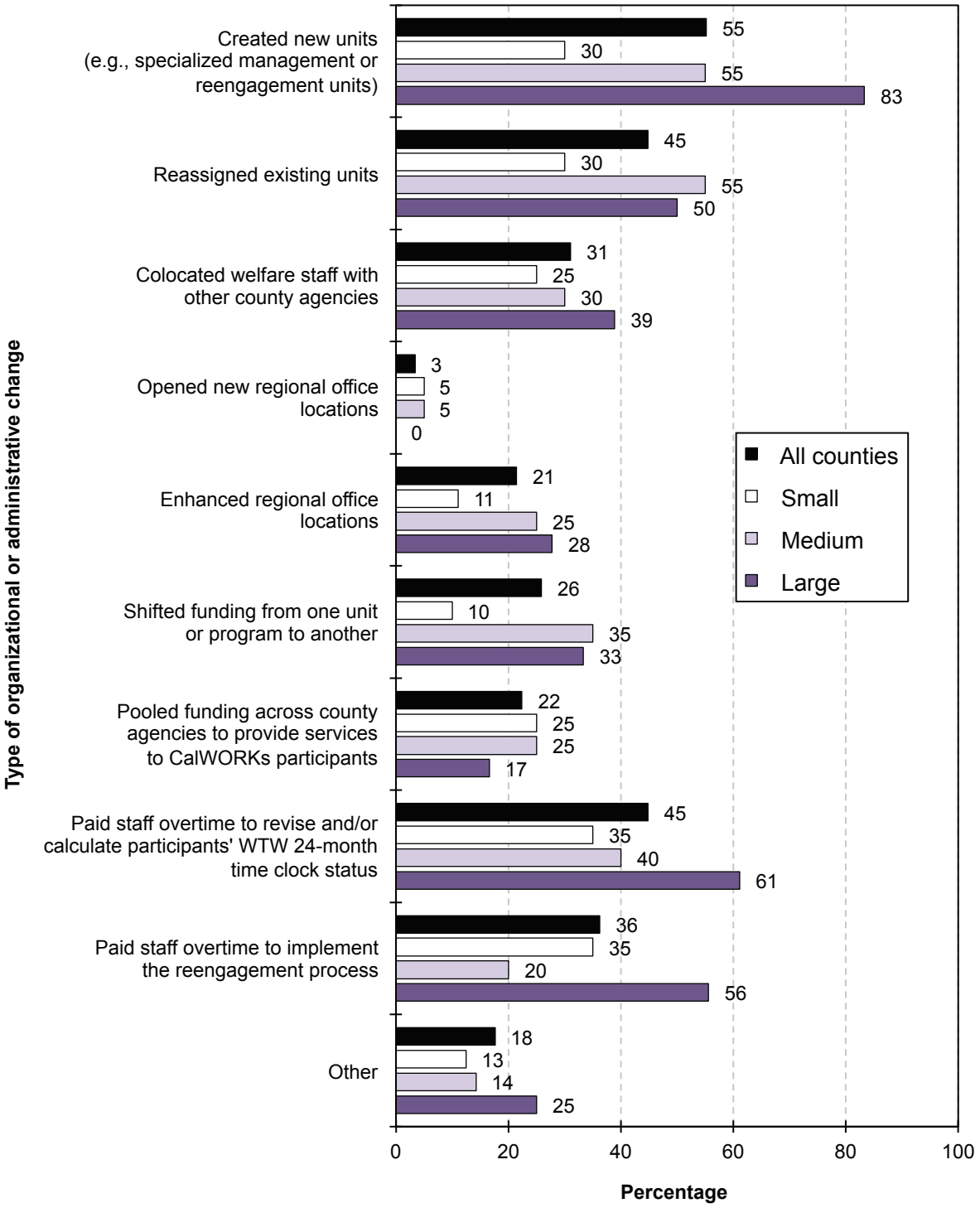
Program Component	Number of Responding Counties in Total	County Has Program Component Implemented			
		All Counties	Small Counties	Medium Counties	Large Counties
Reengagement of AB X4 4 short-term young child exemption population					
Number	58	56	19	19	18
Percentage		97%	95%	95%	100%
New/enhanced partnerships with education providers (e.g., community colleges)					
Number	58	35	11	11	13
Percentage		60%	55%	55%	72%
New/enhanced partnerships with vocational education/job training providers					
Number	58	33	10	10	13
Percentage		57%	50%	50%	72%
New/enhanced partnerships with domestic violence service providers					
Number	57	33	9	10	14
Percentage		58%	45%	53%	78%
New/enhanced partnerships with substance abuse treatment providers					
Number	58	34	9	11	14
Percentage		59%	45%	55%	78%
New/enhanced partnerships with mental health services					
Number	56	33	8	11	14
Percentage		59%	42%	58%	78%
ESE program					
Number	58	40	10	13	17
Percentage		69%	50%	65%	94%
FS program					
Number	58	50	17	18	15
Percentage		86%	85%	90%	83%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Counties were instructed to mark one answer per program component (not shown, the other options were "not planned/designed," "program planning/design in progress," "piloted in selected districts/regional offices." We report here the results for the option "program component implemented countywide by June 2015." Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.

counties indicated they had done so, compared with only 30 percent of small counties. Forty-five percent reassigned existing units, with medium-sized and large counties more likely to have done so than small counties.

With respect to staffing changes, 45 percent of counties paid staff overtime to revise and/or calculate participants' 24-month time clock status, and 36 percent paid staff overtime to implement the reengagement process (Figure 4.1). Large counties, in particular, were more likely to pay staff overtime for these two activities than medium-sized or small counties. One county reported hiring additional staff to conduct the reengagement process. Also, 31 percent of

Figure 4.1. Organizational or Administrative Changes in Response to SB 1041 or Related Legislation: All Counties and by County Caseload Size



SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: N=58 counties. Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Counties were instructed to mark all that apply.

counties colocated welfare staff with other county agencies to implement SB 1041 and related legislation.

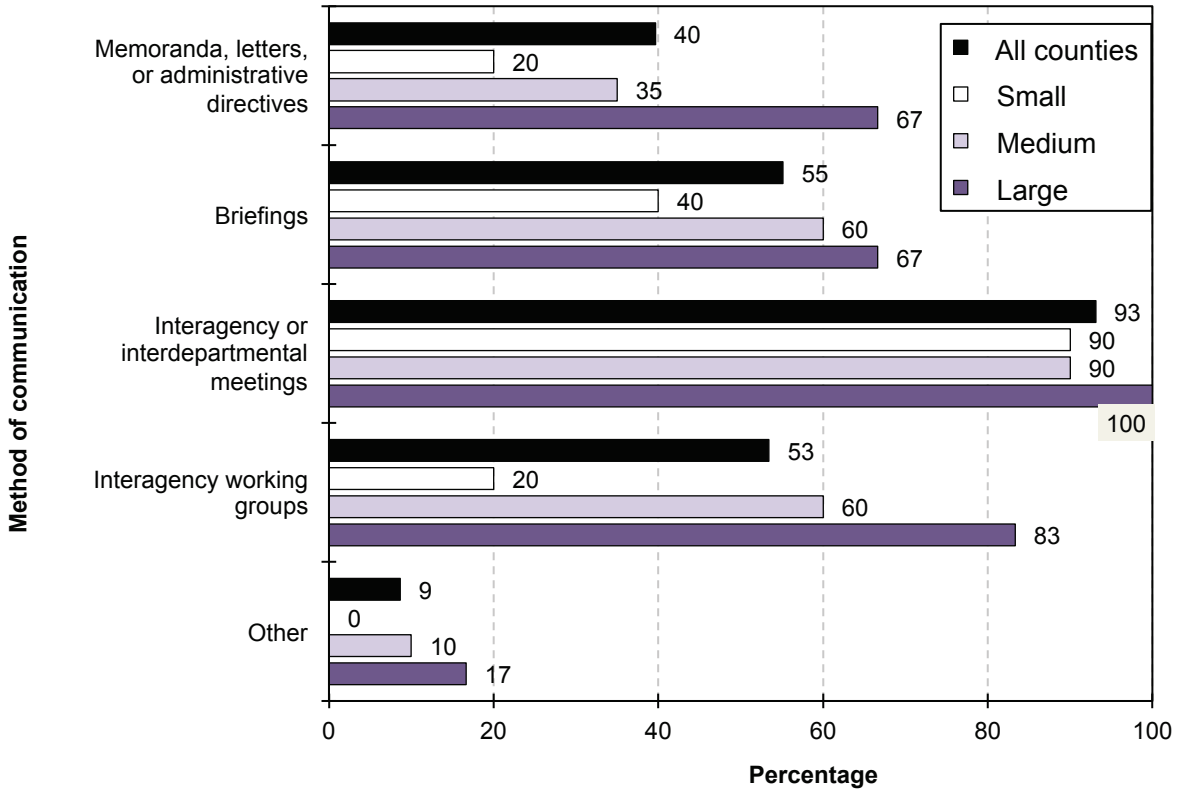
Only two counties (one small and one medium-sized) indicated that they opened new regional office locations, whereas 21 percent of counties indicated they enhanced regional office locations in response to SB 1041 and related legislation.

With respect to funding, 26 percent of counties reported shifting funding from one unit or program to another and 22 percent reported pooling funding across county agencies to provide services to CalWORKs participants under SB 1041 and its related mandates (Figure 4.1). Large counties were more likely to shift funding from one unit or program to another but less likely than the other sized counties to pool funding from across county agencies.

Communication Regarding SB 1041

We asked the counties how they communicated SB 1041's changes to the CalWORKs program to other county agencies. The predominant way was via interagency or interdepartmental meetings (Figure 4.2). Fifty-five percent of counties also reported they did so via briefings, and

Figure 4.2. County Communication of SB 1040's Changes: All Counties and by County Caseload Size



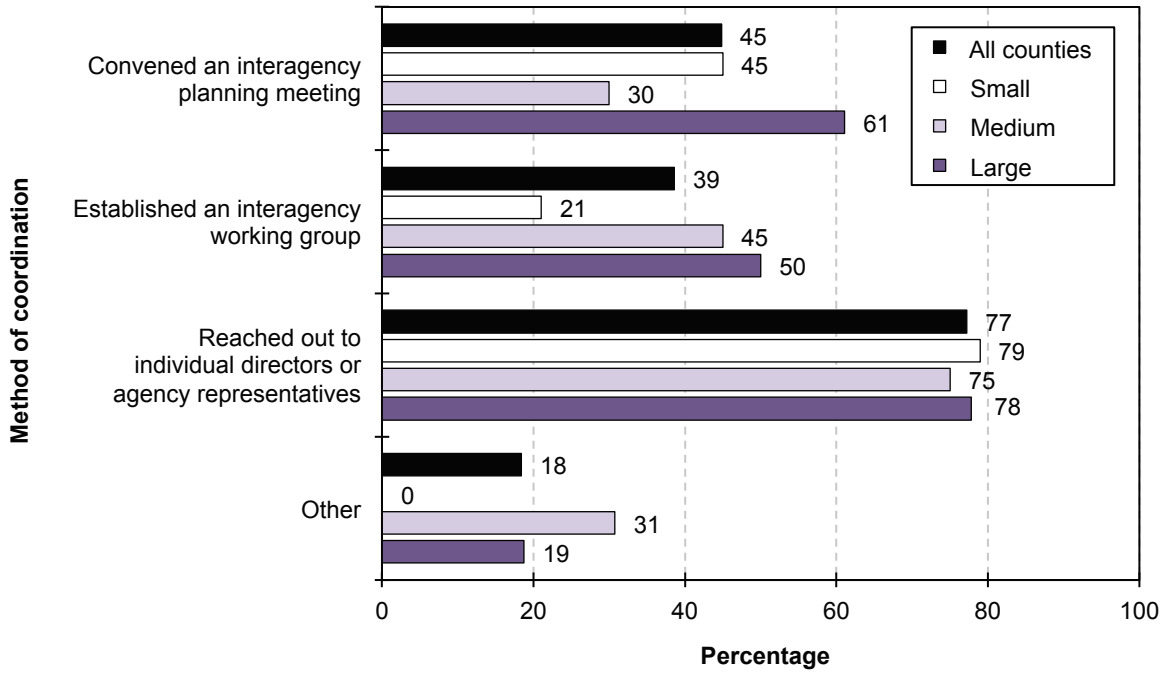
SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: N=58 counties. Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Counties were instructed to mark all

that apply.

53 percent via interagency working groups. Forty percent of counties utilized memoranda, letters, or administrative directives to communicate about the changes to the CalWORKs program as a result of SB 1041. With respect to the use of briefings, interagency working groups, and written communication, we see a distinct difference by county size. Counties with medium-sized and large caseloads were more likely to use these mechanisms than smaller counties.

We also asked what coordination activities county social services departments had undertaken since the passage of SB 1041 in June 2012 with other county agencies to plan for or to implement CalWORKs support services (e.g., housing, child care, mental health, drug treatment, domestic violence services). Three-quarters of county social services departments reported reaching out to individual directors or agency representatives in other county agencies to plan for or implement support services under SB 1041 (Figure 4.3). In addition, 45 percent convened an interagency planning meeting and 39 percent established an interagency working group.

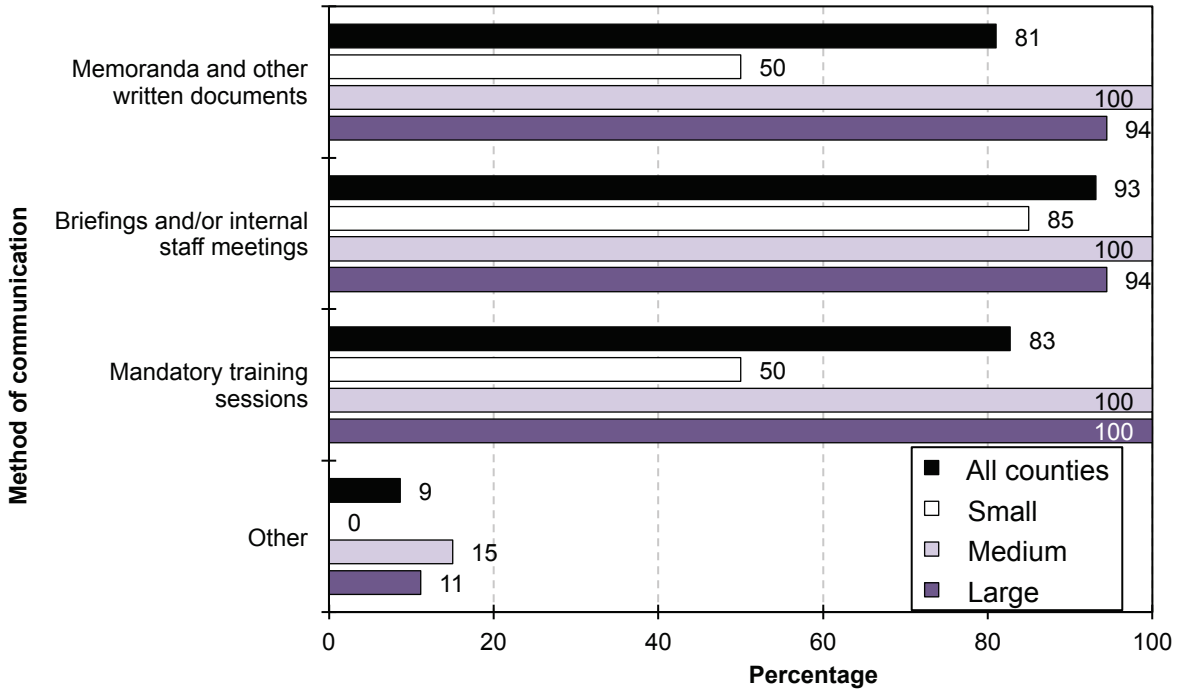
Figure 4.3. Coordination Activities County Social Services Departments Undertook to Plan for or Implement SB 1041: All Counties and by County Caseload Size



SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: N=58 counties. Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Counties were instructed to mark all that apply.

Several questions in the ACS were directed to supervisors of line staff. One question concerned how their department communicated SB 1041 changes to line staff in the program. Supervisors communicated these changes to line staff using a variety of means, including memoranda and other written documents (81 percent of counties), briefings and/or internal staff meetings (93 percent of counties), and mandatory training sessions (83 percent of counties) (Figure 4.4). Counties with smaller caseloads were less likely to utilize memoranda and other written documents and mandatory training sessions than the two groups of counties with larger caseloads.

Figure 4.4. Communication of SB 1041's Changes by Supervisors to CalWORKs Line Staff: All Counties and by County Caseload Size



SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: N=58 counties. Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Counties were instructed to mark all that apply.

Factors Affecting the Initial Implementation of SB 1041

As noted in Chapter Three, the guidance from CDSS evolved over time, and as will be discussed in Chapter Five, the focal counties reported that the *timing* of the release of state guidance made it challenging to implement the different components of SB 1041. In the ACS, we gathered information from all 58 counties about which factors affected the initial implementation of SB 1041. With respect to the 58 counties, 55 percent reported that the timing of the state's guidance was not a hindrance in terms of implementation (Table 4.2). However, 45 percent of

Table 4.2. Whether Timing of State Guidance on SB 1041 to Counties Hindered Implementation: All Counties and by County Caseload Size

Group and Indicator	Did Not Hinder	Minor Hindrance	Moderate Hindrance	Major Hindrance	Total
All counties					
Number	32	14	5	7	58
Percentage distribution	55%	24%	9%	12%	100%
Small counties					
Number	7	5	1	7	20
Percentage distribution	35%	25%	5%	35%	100%
Medium counties					
Number	13	5	2	0	20
Percentage distribution	65%	25%	10%	0%	100%
Large counties					
Number	12	4	2	0	18
Percentage distribution	67%	22%	11%	0%	100%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Counties were instructed to mark one answer on the Likert scale. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.

counties reported it was a hindrance; with smaller counties being more likely to report this than medium-sized to large counties. This result may be driven partly by the fact that smaller counties were less likely to have participated in the state workgroup planning process.

In terms of the *complexity* of SB 1041 reforms, 52 percent of counties reported that it was not a hindrance in terms of implementation (Table 4.3). However, 48 percent of counties reported it

Table 4.3. Whether Complexity of SB 1041 Reforms Hindered Implementation: All Counties and by County Caseload Size

Group and Indicator	Did Not Hinder	Minor Hindrance	Moderate Hindrance	Major Hindrance	Total
All counties					
Number	30	21	5	2	58
Percentage distribution	52%	36%	9%	3%	100%
Small counties					
Number	7	8	3	2	20
Percentage distribution	35%	40%	15%	10%	100%
Medium-sized counties					
Number	11	8	1	0	20
Percentage distribution	55%	40%	5%	0%	100%
Large counties					
Number	12	5	1	0	18
Percentage distribution	67%	28%	6%	0%	100%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Counties were instructed to mark one answer on the Likert scale. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.

was at least a minor hindrance to implementation; smaller counties were more likely to report this (65 percent) than counties with medium to large caseloads (45 percent and 33 percent, respectively).

Table 4.4 addresses a series of other potential implementation challenges. Among all counties, 79 percent reported that explaining the complexity of SB 1041 to participants was a moderate or major hindrance. Seventy-six percent of counties reported that availability of

Table 4.4. Whether Issues Hindered Implementation: All Counties and by County Caseload Size

Issues	Number of Responding Counties in Total	County Rated Issue as a Moderate or Major Hindrance			
		All Counties	Small Counties	Medium Counties	Large Counties
Availability of job opportunities for CalWORKs participants					
Number	58	41	17	13	11
Percentage		71%	85%	65%	61%
Availability of educational opportunities for CalWORKs participants					
Number	58	18	12	3	3
Percentage		31%	60%	15%	17%
Availability of vocational education or on the job training opportunities for CalWORKs participants					
Number	58	22	14	5	3
Percentage		38%	70%	25%	17%
Availability of financial resources for CalWORKs participants					
Number	58	13	5	4	4
Percentage		22%	25%	20%	22%
Availability of child care services for CalWORKs participants					
Number	58	8	5	3	0
Percentage		14%	25%	15%	0%
Availability of affordable housing for CalWORKs participants					
Number	58	44	17	15	12
Percentage		76%	85%	75%	67%
Availability of transportation options or transportation resources for CalWORKs participants					
Number	58	25	12	10	3
Percentage		43%	60%	50%	17%
Competition with other state/federal mandates (e.g., Medi-Cal expansion)					
Number	58	26	9	10	7
Percentage		45%	45%	50%	39%
Availability of line staff (e.g., caseworkers, employment services specialists) who work with and/or counsel WTW participants					
Number	58	33	12	13	8
Percentage		57%	60%	65%	44%

Table 4.4—Continued

Issues	Number of Responding Counties in Total	County Rated Issue as a Moderate or Major Hindrance			
		All Counties	Small Counties	Medium Counties	Large Counties
Explaining the complexity of SB 1041 to participants					
Number	58	46	13	16	17
Percentage		79%	65%	80%	94%
Prior staff reductions/freezes in staff and/or funding					
Number	58	18	4	8	6
Percentage		31%	20%	40%	33%
Other					
Number	40	12	2	5	5
Percentage		21%	10%	25%	28%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator. Appendix Table D.1 provides results for responses across the full Likert scale.

affordable housing for CalWORKs participants and 71 percent of counties reported that availability of job opportunities for CalWORKs participants was a moderate or major hindrance. Fifty-seven percent of counties reported that availability of line staff who work with and/or counsel WTW participants was a major or moderate hindrance to implementation. Forty-three percent cited availability of transportation options or transportation resources for CalWORKs participants and 38 percent reported availability of vocational education or on-the-job training opportunities as being moderate to major hindrances. In addition, 45 percent of counties reported that competition with other state/federal mandates (e.g., Medi-Cal expansion) was a hindrance to implementation. Fewer counties reported that availability of financial resources for CalWORKs participants (22 percent of counties) and prior staff reductions/freezes in staff and/or funding (31 percent of counties) were a hindrance with respect to implementation of SB 1041 reforms. Somewhat surprisingly, only 14 percent of counties reported that availability of child care services for CalWORKs participants was a moderate or major hindrance to implementation.

With respect to facilitators, we asked the counties whether existing relationships or partnerships with various types of organizations facilitated or not the implementation of SB 1041 reforms in their county. Overall, 45 percent of counties indicated that existing relationships with other county agencies such as mental health, behavioral health, child support services, housing agency, etc., were a moderate or major facilitator for putting into place the changes to the CalWORKs program that SB 1041 represented (Table 4.5). Counties also pointed to interagency committees and advisory groups as being very helpful in implementing reforms. For example, one county commented that

Table 4.5. Whether Existing Relationships or Partnerships with Organizations or Providers Facilitated Implementation: All Counties and by County Caseload Size

Organization or Provider	Number of Responding Counties in Total	County Rated Partnership as a Moderate or Major Facilitator			
		All Counties	Small Counties	Medium Counties	Large Counties
Other county agencies (e.g., mental health, behavioral health, child support services, housing agency)					
Number	58	26	6	8	12
Percentage		45%	30%	40%	67%
Educational providers (e.g., community colleges)					
Number	58	18	4	7	7
Percentage		31%	20%	35%	39%
Vocational education or on the job training providers					
Number	58	16	5	4	7
Percentage		28%	25%	20%	39%
Employment services or job placement providers					
Number	57	27	8	9	10
Percentage		47%	40%	45%	56%
Community organizations and/or welfare advocacy organizations					
Number	58	13	2	4	7
Percentage		22%	10%	20%	39%
State organizations (e.g., CDSS, CWDA)					
Number	58	31	7	13	11
Percentage		53%	35%	65%	61%
Other					
Number	38	4	1	0	3
Percentage		7%	5%	0%	16%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator. Appendix Table D.2 provides results for responses across the full Likert scale.

> The CalWORKs County Advisory Team and CalWORKs Policy Committee were both major facilitators for the implementation of SB 1041. These groups provided a forum where counties could learn from each other and obtain critical policy and procedural clarification from CDSS.

With respect to service providers, 31 percent of counties reported that existing relationships or partnerships with educational providers such as community colleges facilitated implementation of SB 1041 (Table 4.5). In addition, 47 percent of counties cited existing relationships or partnerships with employment services or job placement providers and 28 percent of counties cited relationships or partnerships with vocational education or on-the-job training providers as being facilitators; medium-sized and large counties, in particular, reported that these relationships were important facilitators. With respect to community organizations, 22 percent of counties indicated that existing relationships with community organizations, welfare advocacy

organizations, or both also facilitated implementation of SB 1041 reforms, with large counties particularly noting the role of these organizations. In the write-in comments for this item in the questionnaire, one large county noted, "Our county has strong collaboration with internal and external community partners."

Fifty-three percent of counties also reported that existing relationships with state organizations such as CDSS and the CWDA facilitated implementation of the SB 1041 reforms (Table 4.5). Thirty counties cited the CWDA in their write-in comments as playing a critical role in facilitating implementation:

- A small county commented, "CWDA has helped [us] to understand the requirements and expectations of these changes."
- A large county commented, "The CWDA worked as an advocate for county issues and concerns regarding implementation of SB 1041 program components." A medium-sized county commented,

  > CWDA was instrumental in connecting our agency with others also implementing programs. They also facilitated discussions with the State and legislative analysts, and provided excellent updated information and strategy discussions at CWDA meetings. Most recently, they facilitated a webinar on WPR that included ideas for Subsidized Employment programs.

- In addition, the counties cited CDSS as being an important facilitator and said CDSS worked closely with CWDA in that process. As explained by one medium-sized county, "CWDA and CDSS worked in partnership to provide necessary guidance to counties in the implementation of SB 1041."

CalWORKs WTW 24-Month Time Clock

The 58 counties were asked how the 24-month time clock is being calculated within their county. Sixty percent of all counties indicated that it was being calculated both using an automated system and manually (Table 4.6).

Counties with larger CalWORKs caseloads were more likely to use a combination of automated and manual calculation than counties with smaller or medium-sized caseloads, many of which primarily relied on manual calculation. Twenty-five percent of small counties and 15 percent of medium-sized counties indicated that they relied solely on manual calculation of the 24-month time clock.

Sixty-four percent of all counties reported that lack of automation of the 24-month time clock was not a hindrance in implementation (Table 4.7). Conversely, 37 percent of counties reported that lack of automation of the 24-month time clock was a minor, moderate, or major hindrance; this was especially true for smaller counties, where 50 percent indicated it was at least a minor barrier.

Table 4.6. System Used for Calculating 24-Month Time Clock: All Counties and by County Caseload Size

Group and Indicator	Manual	Automated	Both	Total
All counties				
Number	10	13	35	58
Percentage distribution	17%	22%	60%	100%
Small counties				
Number	5	6	9	20
Percentage distribution	25%	30%	45%	100%
Medium-sized counties				
Number	3	6	11	20
Percentage distribution	15%	30%	55%	100%
Large counties				
Number	2	1	15	18
Percentage distribution	11%	6%	83%	100%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Counties were instructed to mark one answer. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.

The caseworkers play an important role in the calculation of how much time CalWORKs participants have left on their 24-month time clocks. In terms of who is responsible for calculating the 24-month time clocks in their county, 93 percent of counties indicated WTW caseworkers were responsible for doing so on a monthly basis for their caseloads (Figure 4.5). Overall, 19 percent of counties indicated that supervisors of caseworker staff calculate or reconcile participants' time clocks on a monthly basis. Four counties (7 percent) indicated that a

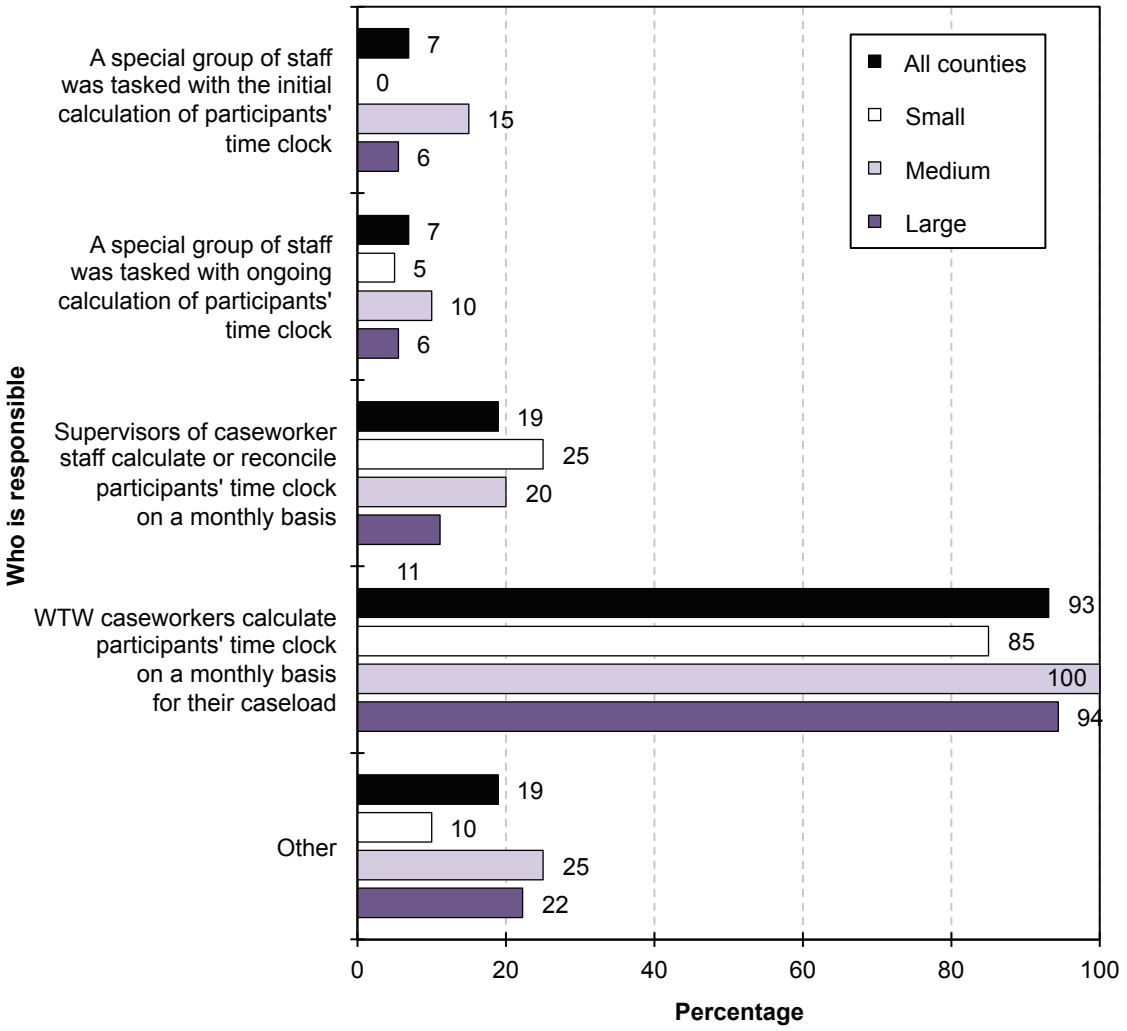
Table 4.7. Whether Lack of Automation of the CalWORKs WTW 24-Month Time Clock Hindered Implementation: All Counties and by County Caseload Size

Group and Indicator	Did Not Hinder	Minor Hindrance	Moderate Hindrance	Major Hindrance	Not Applicable	Total
All counties						
Number	37	9	8	4	0	58
Percentage distribution	64%	16%	14%	7%	0%	100%
Small counties						
Number	10	3	3	4	0	20
Percentage distribution	50%	15%	15%	20%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties						
Number	13	3	4	0	0	20
Percentage distribution	65%	15%	20%	0%	0%	100%
Large counties						
Number	14	3	1	0	0	18
Percentage distribution	78%	17%	6%	0%	0%	100%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Counties were instructed to mark one answer on the Likert scale. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.

special group of staff was tasked with the *initial calculation* of participants' time clocks and 7 percent indicated that a special group of staff was tasked with *ongoing calculation* of participants' time clocks.[36]

Figure 4.5. Who Is Responsible for Calculating How Much Time CalWORKs Participants Have Left on Their 24-Month Time Clock: All Counties and by County Caseload Size



SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: N=58 counties. Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Respondents were instructed to mark all that apply.

[36] Three counties reported using a special group of staff for both the initial calculation of the time clock and the ongoing calculation of the time clock. One county reported using only the first approach and another county reported using only the second approach.

Supervisors were asked to indicate how well their WTW caseworkers understood three key features of SB 1041: determination of the WTW 24-month time clock, changes to the required hours of participation due to the SB 1041 reforms, and changes to the determination of hourly program participation due to the new averaging method.[37] Among all counties, 18 percent reported that their WTW caseworkers did not understand or only slightly understood the 24-month time clock (Table 4.8). Fifteen percent of counties indicated their WTW caseworkers did not understand or only slightly understood the changes to the determination of hourly program participation due to the new averaging method. In contrast, all but one county indicated that their WTW caseworkers understood the changes to the required hours of participation at least moderately well to very well. Relative to the other components of SB 1041 reported in Tables 4.8 and 4.10 (discussed later), it was these two components—the 24-month time clock and changes to the determination of hourly program participation—that were most frequently identified by counties as aspects of SB 1041 for which their WTW caseworkers did not have at least a moderate understanding.

Table 4.8. Supervisors' Assessment of How Well WTW Caseworkers Understand Three Key SB 1041 Policy Changes: All Counties and by County Caseload Size

Policy Change	Not at All Well	Slightly Well	Moderately Well	Very Well	Not Applicable	Total
Determination of a client's WTW 24-month time clock						
All counties						
Number	1	9	39	9	0	58
Percentage distribution	2%	16%	67%	16%	0%	100%
Small counties						
Number	1	2	15	2	0	20
Percentage distribution	5%	10%	75%	10%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties						
Number	0	3	11	6	0	20
Percentage distribution	0%	15%	55%	30%	0%	100%
Large counties						
Number	0	4	13	1	0	18
Percentage distribution	0%	22%	72%	6%	0%	100%

[37] Prior to November 2014, caseworkers were instructed to simply count up the total number of noncore participation hours in CalWORKs activities that a case had completed to determine if a client had met the minimum weekly hours under the 24-month time-clock plan. If a CalWORKs participant had completed at least 20 hours each week of the month, then he or she met the requirements. Under new direction from CDSS (released in November 2014), caseworkers were to use an averaging methodology to determine if a client was meeting the minimum weekly hours under the 24-month time-clock plan. The weekly average is calculated by adding the total number of participation hours in all CalWORKs activities for the month, dividing by 4.33, then rounding to the nearest whole number (CDSS, November 14, 2014h). See Appendix A for more detail.

Table 4.8—Continued

Policy Change	Not at All Well	Slightly Well	Moderately Well	Very Well	Not Applicable	Total
Changes to the required hours of participation						
All counties						
Number	0	1	24	33	0	58
Percentage distribution	0%	2%	41%	57%	0%	100%
Small counties						
Number	0	0	8	12	0	20
Percentage distribution	0%	0%	40%	60%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties						
Number	0	0	6	14	0	20
Percentage distribution	0%	0%	30%	70%	0%	100%
Large counties						
Number	0	1	10	7	0	18
Percentage distribution	0%	6%	56%	39%	0%	100%
Changes to the determination of hourly program participation due to the new averaging method						
All counties						
Number	2	7	27	22	0	58
Percentage distribution	3%	12%	47%	38%	0%	100%
Small counties						
Number	2	1	11	6	0	20
Percentage distribution	10%	5%	55%	30%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties						
Number	0	4	9	7	0	20
Percentage distribution	0%	20%	45%	35%	0%	100%
Large counties						
Number	0	2	7	9	0	18
Percentage distribution	0%	11%	39%	50%	0%	100%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Counties were instructed to mark one answer on the Likert scale per policy change. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.

In comparison, counties indicated that CalWORKs participants' understanding of the WTW 24-month time clock was even weaker. Supervisors in 67 percent of all counties reported that CalWORKs participants did not understand at all or only slightly the changes represented by the 24-month time clock (Table 4.9), an issue that holds regardless of county size.

Understanding of Other Components of SB 1041

Supervisors were asked to assess the understanding of other components of SB 1041, for both caseworkers and participants. In the tables that follow, because we report responses across the full Likert scale, we have tabulated the totals across all counties. See Appendix D for the results disaggregated by county size.

Table 4.9. Supervisors' Assessment of How Well CalWORKs Participants Understand the 24-Month Time Clock: All Counties and by County Caseload Size

Policy Change	Not at All Well	Slightly Well	Moderately Well	Very Well	Not Applicable	Total
All counties						
Number	14	25	16	3	0	58
Percent	24%	43%	28%	5%	0%	100%
Small counties						
Number	7	7	5	1	0	20
Percentage distribution	35%	35%	25%	5%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties						
Number	4	9	6	1	0	20
Percentage distribution	20%	45%	30%	5%	0%	100%
Large counties						
Number	3	9	5	1	0	18
Percentage distribution	17%	50%	28%	6%	0%	100%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Counties were instructed to mark one answer on the Likert scale. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.

WTW Caseworkers' Understanding of Other SB 1041 Components

Compared with the findings in Table 4.8, supervisors reported that WTW caseworkers have a stronger understanding of the other components of SB 1041 and related supports. Nearly all counties reported that WTW caseworkers understood moderately well or very well the enhanced educational flexibility, that there are more choices now in WTW activities, the new one-time young child exemption, and the reengagement process (Table 4.10). Similarly, most counties reported that WTW caseworkers understood the ESE and FS programs moderately to very well.

WTW Participants' Understanding of Other SB 1041 Components

Earlier we noted that supervisors in 67 percent of the counties reported that they believed CalWORKs participants did not understand at all or only slightly understood the changes represented by the 24-month time clock (Table 4.9). Table 4.11 records the results of supervisors' assessments of how well CalWORKs participants understand the other components of SB 1041.

Table 4.10. Supervisors' Assessment of How Well WTW Caseworkers Understand Other SB 1041 Changes and Related Supports: All Counties

Policy Change	Not at All Well	Slightly Well	Moderately Well	Very Well	Not Applicable	Total
Enhanced educational flexibility						
Number	0	1	39	18	0	58
Percentage distribution	0%	2%	67%	31%	0%	100%
There are more choices now in WTW activities						
Number	0	1	23	33	1	58
Percentage distribution	0%	2%	40%	57%	2%	100%
New one-time young child exemption						
Number	0	0	12	46	0	58
Percentage distribution	0%	0%	21%	79%	0%	100%
Reengagement process (AB X4 4)						
Number	0	2	22	34	0	58
Percentage distribution	0%	3%	38%	59%	0%	100%
ESE program						
Number	0	4	24	22	8	58
Percentage distribution	0%	7%	41%	38%	14%	100%
FS program						
Number	0	9	28	20	1	58
Percentage distribution	0%	16%	48%	34%	2%	100%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Counties were instructed to mark one answer on the Likert scale per policy change. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator. Appendix Table D.3 provides results separately for small, medium, and large counties.

With respect to the new WTW participation requirements, 66 percent of counties indicated that participants understood them moderately well to very well (Table 4.11). Seventy-three percent of supervisors in counties assessed that CalWORKs participants understood moderately well to very well the increase in choices with respect to the activities they can participate in during the 24-month time-clock period. Seventy-one percent indicated that CalWORKs participants understood the reengagement process for those who had a short-term, young child exemption moderately well to very well and 83 percent suggested that participants understood the new one-time young child exemption moderately well to very well. As noted earlier, supervisors rated CalWORKs participants' understanding of the 24-month time clock far lower, with only one-third assessing that participants understood the process moderately to very well.

Table 4.11. Supervisors' Assessment of How Well CalWORKs Participants Understand SB 1041 Changes: All Counties

SB 1041 Component	Not at All Well	Slightly Well	Moderately Well	Very Well	Not Applicable	Total
New WTW participation requirements						
Number	2	17	31	7	0	57
Percentage distribution	4%	30%	54%	12%	0%	100%
Increase in choices with respect to the activities they can participate in during the 24-month time clock period						
Number	3	12	31	10	0	56
Percentage distribution	5%	21%	55%	18%	0%	100%
Reengagement process for those who had short-term young child exemption (AB X4 4)						
Number	4	10	25	16	3	58
Percentage distribution	7%	17%	43%	28%	5%	100%
New one-time young child exemption						
Number	1	9	21	27	0	58
Percentage distribution	2%	16%	36%	47%	0%	100%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Counties were instructed to mark one answer on the Likert scale per component. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator. Appendix Table D.4 provides results separately for small, medium, and large counties.

Early Engagement Activities

The Early Engagement activities include the ESE and FS programs, both established under AB 74 (see Chapter One). Below we present results for questions in the ACS related to both programs.

Expanded Subsidized Employment (ESE) Program

Seventy-four percent of all counties indicated that they were participating in the ESE program at the time of the survey (Table 4.12). Nine percent indicated that they had opted out of the program and 17 percent responded that they were planning to or were in the process of developing a program. By size of county, smaller counties were less likely to be participating in the ESE program (55 percent) compared with medium-sized or large counties where the participation rate was 75 percent and 94 percent, respectively. Among the nine counties with small caseloads and no ESE program, six reported that they were planning to or were in the process of developing a program for their county.

Table 4.12. Participation in the ESE Program: All Counties and by County Caseload Size

Group and Indicator	Yes	No, Opted Out	No, but Planning to Join	Total
All counties				
Number	43	5	10	58
Percentage distribution	74%	9%	17%	100%
Small counties				
Number	11	3	6	20
Percentage distribution	55%	15%	30%	100%
Medium-sized counties				
Number	15	2	3	20
Percentage distribution	75%	10%	15%	100%
Large counties				
Number	17	0	1	18
Percentage distribution	94%	0%	6%	100%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Counties were instructed to mark one answer. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.

Of the 43 counties that were participating in the ESE program at the time of the survey, 58 percent contracted out services for their ESE program, instead of having their county welfare department directly responsible for implementing those services (Table 4.13). Among the smaller counties, 36 percent contracted out services for their ESE program, a lower rate than medium-sized counties (53 percent) and large counties (76 percent).

Table 4.13. Among Counties with an ESE Program, Those That Contract Out ESE Services: Overall and by County Caseload Size

Group and Indicator	Contracts Out ESE Program	Does Not Contract Out ESE Program	Total
Overall			
Number	25	18	43
Percentage distribution	58%	42%	100%
Small counties			
Number	4	7	11
Percentage distribution	36%	64%	100%
Medium-sized counties			
Number	8	7	15
Percentage distribution	53%	47%	100%
Large counties			
Number	13	4	17
Percentage distribution	76%	24%	100%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Analysis is for the 43 counties that have an ESE program. Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Counties were instructed to mark one answer. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.

Table 4.14 reports the programs offered by the 43 counties that have an ESE program. For those counties with ESE programs, nine out of ten offered ESE participants paid work experiences with private for-profit organizations, the business sector, or private nonprofit agencies (Table 4.14). Sixty-five percent of counties offered participants exempt from WTW volunteer opportunities in the county's ESE program. Job Club was not a part of many of the ESE programs, with only 40 percent of counties indicating this was the case and the large counties, in particular, less likely to include Job Club as part of their programs.

Table 4.14. Among Counties with an ESE Program, Program Options Offered: Overall and by County Caseload Size

Program Option Offered	Number of Responding Counties	County Has ESE Program Option Listed			
		Overall	Small Counties	Medium Counties	Large Counties
Paid work experience with county and local government agencies					
Number	43	30	7	13	10
Percentage		70%	64%	87%	59%
Paid work experience with private for-profit organizations or the business sector					
Number	43	39	9	15	15
Percentage		91%	82%	100%	88%
Paid work experiences with private nonprofit agencies					
Number	43	39	9	15	15
Percentage		91%	82%	100%	88%
Job Club					
Number	43	17	5	7	5
Percentage		40%	45%	47%	29%
Participants exempt from WTW are offered volunteer opportunities in the ESE program					
Number	43	28	5	10	13
Percentage		65%	45%	67%	76%
Other					
Number	43	6	1	1	4
Percentage		14%	9%	7%	24%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Analysis is for the 43 counties that have an ESE program. Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Counties were instructed to mark all that apply. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.

Family Stabilization (FS) Program

Overall, 57 of the 58 counties (98 percent) reported that they had an FS program at the time of our 2015 survey (results not shown). Table 4.15 shows the types of services the counties with an FS program offered. All of the counties with an FS program reported increasing the level and/or intensity of case management and 96 percent indicated they offered treatment of family members of CalWORKs participants (Table 4.15). With respect to treatment services, 93 percent offer

substance abuse counseling and treatment and 70 percent offer day treatment, nonmedical outpatient drug-free treatment, or residential treatment for FS program participants. Small counties in particular seem to have more resource constraints compared to other-sized counties to successfully implement the FS program (e.g., small counties are less likely than other counties to have offered transitional housing, rehabilitative services, and intensive drug treatment as part of this program). With respect to meeting housing needs, 82 percent of counties with FS programs indicated they offered emergency shelter and 72 percent offered movement to transitional housing.

Table 4.15. Services Currently Offered as Part of the FS Program: Overall and by County Caseload Size

Program Service Offered	Number of Responding Counties	County Has FS Program Service			
		Overall	Small Counties	Medium Counties	Large Counties
Increased level and/or intensity of case management					
Number	57	57	19	20	18
Percentage		100%	100%	100%	100%
Treatment of family members of CalWORKs participants					
Number	56	54	17	20	17
Percentage		96%	89%	100%	100%
Intensive day treatment, nonmedical outpatient drug free treatment, or residential treatment					
Number	57	40	10	16	14
Percentage		70%	53%	80%	78%
Emergency shelter					
Number	56	46	15	17	14
Percentage		82%	83%	85%	78%
Movement to transitional housing					
Number	57	41	11	15	15
Percentage		72%	58%	75%	83%
Rehabilitative services					
Number	57	35	10	12	13
Percentage		61%	53%	60%	72%
Substance abuse counseling/treatment					
Number	57	53	16	19	18
Percentage		93%	84%	95%	100%
Other					
Number	42	27	5	11	11
Percentage		64%	56%	65%	69%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Analysis is for the 57 counties that have an FS program. Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Counties were instructed to mark Yes or No or Don't Know for each program service listed. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.

Table 4.16 tabulates the staffing changes counties reported making in order to accommodate the FS program. Among all counties, 70 percent reassigned caseworkers to the FS program, 44 percent hired additional caseworkers, and 35 percent created a new unit to manage the FS program (Table 4.16). Large and medium-sized counties were much more likely than small counties to make these changes. Forty percent of the small counties indicated they made other changes to accommodate the FS program, with the open-ended responses referencing allotting more time for intensive case management and contracting with their county's superintendent of schools office to provide FS case management through family resource centers. Twenty-three percent of medium-sized counties indicated they had made other changes to accommodate the FS program including contracting with other county agencies to provide case management services for the FS program, contracting with an outside provider to administer the program and provide intensive case management, expanding services and hiring another social worker, and hiring a social worker supervisor and manager to support intensive case manager units. Lastly, 38 percent of large counties indicated that additional changes included hiring public health staff, hiring behavioral health staff to address mental health and substance abuse treatment needs and provide coordinated case planning, and hiring social workers and social worker managers for the FS program. In general, small counties indicated a number of constraints in supporting the FS program.

Table 4.16. Staffing Changes Made Specifically to Accommodate the FS Program: Overall and by County Caseload Size

Type of Staffing Change	Number of Responding Counties	County Made Staffing Change			
		Overall	Small Counties	Medium Counties	Large Counties
Hired additional caseworkers					
Number	57	25	4	11	10
Percentage		44%	21%	55%	56%
Reassigned caseworkers to work with the FS program					
Number	57	40	9	15	16
Percentage		70%	47%	75%	89%
Created a new unit to manage the FS program					
Number	57	20	2	5	13
Percentage		35%	11%	25%	72%
Other					
Number	36	12	4	3	5
Percentage		33%	40%	23%	38%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Analysis is for the 57 counties that have an FS program. Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Counties were instructed to mark Yes or No for each type of staffing change listed. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.

Reengagement Strategies That Counties Identified as Being Effective

Counties were required to complete the reengagement of exempt individuals by December 31, 2014. We asked them which of a list of strategies that their county social services department used were considered particularly effective. Overall, 97 percent of counties reported that meeting with exempt individuals by phone or in person was particularly effective in reengaging them (Table 4.17). Eighty-three percent also reported that letters sent to exempt individuals were effective. For example, a medium-sized county explained,

> In our county we found it most effective to make phone calls to participants to fully and slowly describe the changes and new options, and offered to come to them to explain more about the program.

Another medium-sized county noted, "We implemented phone call reminders to every participant prior to their reengagement appointment." A large county reported,

> Our county utilized a staggered sequencing process that involved collaboration between CalWORKs ETs [employment transition] and WTW caseworkers. Customers reengaged, requested the new young child exemption or met other exemption criteria. All customers were reengaged prior to the December 2014 deadline.

Another large county commented, "We did all of the above strategies but the initial show rate was lower compared to after beginning the noncompliance process. During the noncompliance process, clients tend to show up when informed of their grant being impacted."

Table 4.17. Counties' Assessment of Effective Reengagement Strategies for Exempt Individuals: All Counties and by County Caseload Size

		County Rated Strategy as Effective			
Reengagement Strategy	**All Counties**	**Overall**	**Small Counties**	**Medium Counties**	**Large Counties**
Letters sent to the exempt individual					
Number	58	83%	80%	85%	83%
Percentage		48	16	17	15
Meeting with exempt individuals by phone or in-person					
Number	58	97%	100%	100%	89%
Percentage		56	20	20	16
Incentives that were offered					
Number	58	5%	15%	0%	0%
Percentage		3	3	0	0
Other					
Number	58	10%	0%	15%	17%
Percentage		6	0	3	3

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Analysis is for all 58 counties. Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Counties were instructed to mark all that apply. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.

A third large county explained,

> CSA [County Self-Assessment] specialists conducted group orientations on four Saturdays to reengage our customers. Customers had a one-on-one appraisal and were informed of the 24-month time clock, CalWORKs time clock, difference between federal and state participation hours, exemptions, identifying barriers and strengths. Child care staff provided information and completed necessary paperwork needed to receive services. Those who were unable to attend the group sessions were given appointments to meet with the case manager individually.

Few indicated that incentives offered were effective. Written comments by counties illustrated the types of incentives offered. A small county reported offering, "help with transportation costs, child care, personalized assistance in getting a job (purchasing interview clothes, haircuts)." Another small county offered ". . . gift cards for attending initial orientation to the WTW program." A third small county wrote they offered "education services and child care services."

Counties' Views Regarding Impact of SB 1041 on CalWORKs Program and Participant Outcomes

We asked counties for their assessment as to what extent implementation of SB 1041 has affected different outcomes for the CalWORKs program and for participants in their county. It is important to keep in mind that the survey was conducted in the late spring/early summer of 2015 and that these results represent their assessments for the early years of SB 1041 implementation. Between 45 percent and 57 percent of counties estimated that the implementation of SB 1041 had no effect (i.e., they marked "about the same") on work participation rates, participation in WTW activities, compliance with CalWORKs program rules, earnings, participation in CalFresh, and the number of participants receiving sanctions (Table 4.18). At the same time, 29 percent of counties indicated that SB 1041 resulted in somewhat worse or much worse workforce participation rates—consistent with what we heard from the focus group discussions with caseworkers reported in Chapter Five. Seventeen percent of counties rated compliance with CalWORKs program rules was somewhat worse under SB 1041 and 24 percent of counties rated the number of participants receiving sanctions was somewhat worse.

On the positive side, 36 percent of counties recorded that participation in WTW activities under SB 1041 was somewhat better and 40 percent indicated earnings was somewhat better as well (Table 4.18). With respect to education and vocational training activities, 40 percent of counties reported that enrollment in education and training programs/community colleges was somewhat better; 33 percent reported that the length of time CalWORKs participants spend in educational activities was also somewhat better; and 22 percent reported that persistence of CalWORKs participants in education/training activities was somewhat better.

Table 4.18. Counties' Assessment of the Effect of SB 1041's Implementation on Outcomes: All Counties

Outcomes	Much Worse	Somewhat Worse	About the Same	Somewhat Better	Much Better	Not Applicable	Total
WPR							
Number	3	14	26	14	1	0	58
Percentage distribution	5%	24%	45%	24%	2%	0%	100%
Participation in WTW activities							
Number	0	5	30	21	2	0	58
Percentage distribution	0%	9%	52%	36%	3%	0%	100%
Enrollment in education and training programs/ community colleges							
Number	0	1	32	23	1	0	57
Percentage distribution	0%	2%	56%	40%	2%	0%	100%
Length of time CalWORKs participants spend in educational activities							
Number	0	4	32	19	3	0	58
Percentage distribution	0%	7%	55%	33%	5%	0%	100%
Persistence of CalWORKs participants in education/ training activities							
Number	0	1	42	13	1	1	58
Percentage distribution	0%	2%	72%	22%	2%	2%	100%
Compliance with CalWORKs program rules							
Number	0	10	32	15	1	0	58
Percentage distribution	0%	17%	55%	26%	2%	0%	100%
Number of participants receiving sanctions							
Number	0	14	29	14	1	0	58
Percentage distribution	0%	24%	50%	24%	2%	0%	100%
Participation in CalFresh							
Number	0	1	33	6	1	17	58
Percentage distribution	0%	2%	57%	10%	2%	29%	100%
Earnings							
Number	0	1	31	23	2	1	58
Percentage distribution	0%	2%	53%	40%	3%	2%	100%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Counties were instructed to mark one answer per outcome. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to each outcome as the denominator. Appendix Table D.5 provides results separately for small, medium, and large counties.

Counties' Views Regarding the Effectiveness of SB 1041 Reforms and Related Mandates at County Level

We asked counties their opinion of how well various aspects of the SB 1041 reforms to CalWORKs and related mandates were working in their county. Note that for some aspects of

SB 1041, such as the FS program, it may be still too early to tell. Because we report responses across the full Likert scale, we have tabulated the totals across all counties in Table 4.19. Again, Appendix D presents the results disaggregated by county size.

Somewhat surprising given counties' earlier indications of the challenges in communicating the new rules to CalWORKs participants, 78 percent of counties indicated that communication of the new rules was working moderately well to very well (Table 4.19). Also, 85 percent of counties indicated that matching CalWORKs participants with appropriate WTW activities was working moderately well to very well.

With respect to coordination with community colleges and vocational education providers, the majority of counties indicated this aspect was also working moderately well to very well (Table 4.19). Two-thirds of counties indicated that coordination with other county agencies to provide supportive services was working moderately well to very well.

With respect to the provision of mental health and/or substance abuse treatment services, 85 percent of counties reported this was working moderately well to very well (Table 4.19). Eighty-six percent responded with the top two ratings for the provision of supportive services. Seventy-nine percent and 85 percent of counties, respectively, reported that working with nonprofit service providers and with employers and job training providers was going moderately well to very well.

Table 4.19. Counties' Assessment of How Well Aspects of SB 1041 and Related Mandates Are Working: All Counties

Aspects of SB 1041 and Related Mandates	Not at All Well	Slightly Well	Moderately Well	Very Well	Not Applicable	Total
Communication of new CalWORKs program rules to CalWORKs participants						
Number	1	11	34	11	1	58
Percentage distribution	2%	19%	59%	19%	2%	100%
Matching CalWORKs participants with appropriate WTW activities						
Number	1	7	37	12	1	58
Percentage distribution	2%	12%	64%	21%	2%	100%
Provision of supportive services (e.g., child care, domestic violence, housing assistance)						
Number	1	5	19	31	2	58
Percentage distribution	2%	9%	33%	53%	3%	100%
Provision of mental health and/or substance abuse services						
Number	2	5	26	23	2	58
Percentage distribution	3%	9%	45%	40%	3%	100%
Coordination with community colleges						
Number	0	7	28	20	3	58
Percentage distribution	0%	12%	48%	34%	5%	100%

Table 4.19—Continued

Aspects of SB 1041 and Related Mandates	Not at All Well	Slightly Well	Moderately Well	Very Well	Not Applicable	Total
Coordination with vocational education providers						
Number	1	6	32	11	8	58
Percentage distribution	2%	10%	55%	19%	14%	100%
Coordination with other county agencies to provide supportive services						
Number	0	6	18	21	13	58
Percentage distribution	0%	10%	31%	36%	22%	100%
Working with nonprofit service providers						
Number	0	7	28	18	5	58
Percentage distribution	0%	12%	48%	31%	9%	100%
Working with employers and job training providers						
Number	0	7	27	22	2	58
Percentage distribution	0%	12%	47%	38%	3%	100%
Reengagement strategy for clients with the short-term, young child exemption (AB X4 4)						
Number	0	9	18	26	4	57
Percentage distribution	0%	16%	32%	46%	7%	100%
Tracking WTW participation of CalWORKs participants						
Number	5	14	27	9	2	57
Percentage distribution	9%	25%	47%	16%	4%	100%
Improving information management of the CalWORKs program						
Number	5	18	24	7	4	58
Percentage distribution	9%	31%	41%	12%	7%	100%
Design and implementation of the ESE program						
Number	1	6	20	23	8	58
Percentage distribution	2%	10%	34%	40%	14%	100%
Design and implementation of the FS program						
Number	0	4	30	23	1	58
Percentage distribution	0%	7%	52%	40%	2%	100%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Counties were instructed to mark one answer per outcome. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator. Appendix Table D.6 provides results separately for small, medium, and large counties.

A majority of all counties rated the design and implementation of the ESE and FS programs as working moderately well to very well (Table 4.19). Seventy-eight percent of counties also rated the reengagement of participants with the short-term young child exemption as having worked relatively well.

Two areas that counties flagged as working less well were tracking WTW participation of CalWORKs participants and improving information management of the CalWORKs program. Thirty-four percent of counties reported tracking WTW participation of CalWORKs participants

as working not at all well or only slightly well and 40 percent reported improving information management of the CalWORKs program as working not at all well or only slightly well (Table 4.19).

Counties' Additional Information Needs and Suggestions for Improving SB 1041

In a final section of the ACS, counties were asked about any information needs they had. Overall, 17 percent of counties expressed an interest in additional information, with small counties (25 percent) in particular indicating such a need (compared with 17 percent of large counties and 10 percent of medium-sized counties). Eight counties provided written comments about their information needs. In addition, counties were asked for their recommendations for improving SB 1041 and for any comments they had on different aspects of SB 1041. Thirty-seven of the counties provided written recommendations.

Tables 4.20–4.23 summarize, by size of county, the feedback we received regarding counties' information needs and their recommendations for improving SB 1041. We grouped the counties' comments as follows:

- 24-month time clock (Table 4.20)
- Early Engagement activities (Table 4.21)
- Aligning federal TANF and state requirements (Table 4.22)
- Pace of implementation and other comments (Table 4.23).

The majority of the comments focused on the challenges of calculating the 24-month time clock, concerns about clients' understanding of it, and aligning the 24-month and 48-month time-on-aid clocks (Table 4.20).

Table 4.20. Counties' Information Needs and Recommendations for Improving SB 1041: 24-Month Time Clock

ACS Open-Ended Comments
Small Counties
• The 24-month clock tracking and how it will help counties and not hinder counties from meeting WPR.*
• It is our hope that the county will receive more information on 24-month clock management aspect related to support service and participation.*
• 24-month time clock implementation and tracking in C-IV.*
• If the state keeps the 24-month clock there should not be various reasons to stop a clock. An exemption should be the only reason to stop someone's 24-month clock.
• While the increased flexibility of the 24-month clock is appreciated, allow that flexibility for all participants for the duration of their time on aid (removing both a client barrier and the administrative burden of tracking yet another clock)--remove the clock, keep the flexibility.
• One issue that we have not fully resolved is around 24-month tracking. There are at least three people each month ensuring each and every case is being tracked appropriately. If it were possible to develop an electronic system to tick the clock if clients are using the 24-month clock versus looking at each case and unticking the 24-month clock, that would be more efficient. The 24-month clock has proven to be counterproductive to our county moving toward meeting WPR.
• Remove the WTW 24-month requirements and provide WTW employment services throughout the 48 months of TANF cash assistance.
• SB 1041 is difficult for calculation of 24 months, based off of the one of three different types of hours a client can participate in to count or not count a month. This should be streamlined to assist clients to better understand when their month will count and when it will not. It would be nice to have received or to receive some statewide training on the 24-month clock to ensure clocks are being calculated consistently. Have counties share best practices, especially smaller counties—as large counties often have best practices, however, smaller counties are unable to implement these strategies due to smaller resources. Consider reviewing the Intercounty transfer process and sharing of 24-month time clock information.
• Comprehensive training on the 24-month time clock for small counties is needed.
• Eliminate the WTW 24-month time clock.
Medium-Sized Counties
• Clearer guidance on what flexibility counties have with the extension criteria for WTW 24 months.*
• Adding functionality in C-IV to track the clock so this manual task does not take away vital interaction time between case managers and participants.
• Eliminate the 24-month limit for WTW services. Most families only receive assistance for two to three years. Time spent on the complexities of tracking 24 months could be better spent on direct participant services.
• Minimize the number of time clock extensions available for the 24-month time clock and just create a generic good-cause extension criteria. Creating numerous extension criteria reduces the effectiveness of the 24-month time clock.
• Recommend removal of the 24-month time clock, which is confusing for staff to implement and has resulted in considerably more work required. There is little flexibility as intended in activity choices. We recommend reverting back to the 48-month time clock.
• Lastly, we request better tracking and guidelines in regard to 24-month time clock extensions. This population has proven very difficult to track and identify for both the state and our neighboring counties.
• Perhaps a CDSS/County workgroup on WTW 24-month extension practices?
• There have been many issues with CalWIN in regard to the accuracy in tracking of the WTW 24-month time clock, which has resulted in workers having to manually check every case. This can delay proper notice to families to inform them that they will be exhausting their clock soon.
• Improved automation around the WTW 24-month would benefit caseworkers and participants.
• Automation of 24-month time clock tracking.

Table 4.20—Continued

ACS Open-Ended Comments
Medium-Sized Counties
• Remove the 24-month time clock limit as it does not give all clients enough time to move through barriers. Barriers tend to repeat such as MHS [mental health services] and AODS [alcohol and other drug services], which can pose a problem in a client meeting hours after 24 months.
• State-participation hours need to meet federal requirements (monthly average divided by 4.33). Eliminate the 24-month clock to allow SB 1041 flexibility of CalWORKs 48-month clock. Changing 48-month clock back to 60 months would be helpful.
• The WTW 24-month time clock is extremely difficult. In theory it appeared to be beneficial to the client but has not proven itself as such upon implementation. Since individuals who are using their 24-month clock have the option to request extensions to the clock, it would be easier to establish parameters for being allowed not to meet core hours for the duration of an individual's 48-month time clock (once in a lifetime). Once these parameters are no longer met, the individual must meet normal participation requirement.
Large Counties
• Our county has not received instruction on how and when to discontinue customers who have reached their 24th month and are not meeting CalWORKs federal standards. In addition, we are waiting for instruction on how to treat customers who regain eligibility when they start meeting CalWORKs federal standards after they are discontinued for not meeting CalWORKs federal standards after reaching the 24th month.*
• Post WTW 24-month time clock direction and clarifications.*
• How to equitably and efficiently reconcile the WTW 24-month clock, along with the extension of the clock, without adequate automation.*
• Remove the 24-month clock. The tracking of the clock is confusing, cumbersome, and labor intensive, resulting in taking the focus away from working with clients to obtain employment [and putting it on] data processing and paperwork.
• Create a less complex set of rules to track and tick/untick months the WTW 24-month clock. Make the automation of the WTW 24-month clock TOP PRIORITY across all consortia.
• Full automation of the WTW 24-month time clock.
• Automation in C-IV that supports SB 1041. Simplify the 24-month time clock calculation by limiting the number of exceptions and/or by providing a hierarchy to exceptions.
• Eliminate the WTW 24-month time clock created by SB 1041; with the addition of the extenders, it creates a very confusing scenario for clients when working with them to develop/continue in WTW plans that best serve their needs.
• Incorporate full automation into SAWS (C-IV) of the 24-month tracking.
• We would seek consideration to suspend or eliminate the WTW 24-month time clock until an efficient automated system can be ensured. The lack of automation creates many problems including but not limited to confusion for participants receiving incorrect NOAs [Notices of Action] and other issues.
• Eliminate the WTW 24-month time clock. Align the CalWORKs 48-month time of aid clock to that of the 60-month TANF clock.
• Repeal the clock.
• Suspension of the WTW 24-month clock and bring back the core and noncore WTW activities. This will assist counties and the state to improve the WPR.
• The WTW time clock is still evolving, suspension of the clock until all kinks are ironed out would benefit the customer, counties, and the state.

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Bulleted items are recommendations unless followed by an asterisk, in which case they are an information need.

Table 4.21. Counties' Information Needs and Recommendations for Improving SB 1041: Aligning Federal and State Requirements

ACS Open-Ended Comments
Medium-Sized Counties
• Change WPR rules; under the 24-month time limit regulations, clients can choose activities that do not meet federal WPR.
Large Counties
• Align with the federal regulations for WPR. Raise the number of hours clients are required to participate to assist in meeting WPR or allow credit for partial participation.
• The best thing that happened with the implementation of SB 1041 was the alignment of participation hours between the state and federal, ESE, and FS.
• Instead of having differences between federal and state participation requirements, aligning completely with the federal rule would make the requirements easier to understand for staff and customers.
• Aligning federal TANF and state requirements helps to reduce administrative costs and improve efficiency.
• To change state regulations to be in alignment with federal WPR requirements to promote a better understanding of the WTW program and how it can benefit the families that we serve in our county.
• Alignment of federal and state WPR rules would be an exceptional enhancement and eliminate confusion.
• Completely align the CalWORKs federal standards to TANF regulations.
• Completely align CDSS regulations with SB 1041 (W & I Code) statutory language.
• Align WTW participation to the federal work participation requirements, and allow an emphasis in education, on-the-job training, and employment to truly prepare participants for self-sufficiency and ultimately improve the WPR.

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTES: Bulleted items are recommendations. There were no comments from small counties in this category.

Table 4.22. Counties' Information Needs and Recommendations for Improving SB 1041: Early Engagement Activities

ACS Open-Ended Comments
Small Counties
• It is our hope that the county will receive additional guidance on ESE, FS (including creating a whole family focus).*
• Future of FS and if funding will increase.*
• Our county was not one of the counties selected to participate in the CalWORKs Housing Support program. We have experienced a significant shortfall with respect to being able to assist families to obtain and maintain affordable housing. While we utilize some of our FS funds to assist in this area, we are quite limited in terms of being able to provide these families with long-term resolution to housing issues. It is our humble opinion that a housing component is absolutely critical, along with ESE and FS, in terms of assisting families in resolving those significant barriers toward employment.
• Simplify subsidized employment, making ESE the only subsidized employment program. Support housing programs and expand to all counties. Continue to FS.
Medium-Sized Counties
• Have one subsidized employment eligibility criteria, funding, and tracking process. This will allow more staff time to focus on direct participant services.
• We recommend additional ESE funding and options, and housing funds.
• The implementation of OCAT will also need to be looked at in relation to SB 1041 and FS, and provides an opportunity to focus on a package of services to create consistency in the customer experience with WTW.
• It would be helpful if all ESE funding and SE funding could be calculated as one larger allocation. It would also be great if we received more funding to support the family stabilization program specifically, as our agency is not just a housing program; we have case-managed services and support staff and lack funds to provide specific services like housing, rehab, etc.
• Having housing funds imbedded into FS monies would be very beneficial. In 2014, 20 counties received grants for Rapid Rehousing. Many of these counties have tied the Rapid Rehousing program to the FS program. Those counties that were not funded through this grant were left to offer housing through their limited Family Stabilization allocation and the existing Homeless Assistance Program. Statewide, the income-to-rent ratio is dismal. Due to the lack of affordable housing, some counties are only able to offer occasional Band-aids to the homeless population.
Large Counties
• Combining AB 98 and AB 74 funding for subsidized employment would help to avoid confusion in program reporting.
• The lack of affordable and sustainable housing has been an exceptional challenge. Need to do more for those who are on the verge of losing housing. Transportation for customers who live in rural areas is still a challenge.
• Clarify ESE. Eliminate the new young child exemption, and reroute these parents with young children to Family Stabilization.
• If additional funding for FS and ESE were available, more participants could be served, thus enabling them to better improve on the barriers that were disrupting the household and allow the participants to be successful in preparing for self-sufficiency.

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTES: Bulleted items are recommendations unless followed by an asterisk, in which case they are an information need. California's subsidized employment structure was created under AB 98 (2007) and expanded by SB 72 (2011). AB 74 (2013) created the ESE program in California expanding subsidized employment opportunities for CalWORKs clients in California.

Table 4.23. Counties' Information Needs and Recommendations for Improving SB 1041: Pace of Implementation and Other Comments

ACS Open-Ended Comments
Small Counties
• Also, clients were not given an opportunity to fully embrace the changes. We trained the staff; however, the same attention was not made available to clients because the state wanted the program implemented by a certain time. We did change our materials and provided face-to-face opportunities for clients to be informed and ask questions.
• Actually, we're drowning in information; it's time and administrative resources we need.
Medium-Sized Counties
• Most of what was problematic with SB 1041 is behind us. The 'Comprehensive Conversations' that were envisioned were unrealistic, as expecting recipients to understand what staff had difficulty understanding was unfair. State directives that came out months later, or not at all, were very frustrating, particularly when counties took steps forward, only to be directed back. Consequently, other counties were hesitant to say so.
• Our county would like to recommend that for policy changes as significant as SB 1041 and associated policies such as AB 74, the implementation should be better coordinated and done in collaboration with our automated systems. We found it very difficult to implement these changes when our only method of tracking was manual spreadsheets done in association with our existing practices within our automated systems. Also, due to the rushed efforts by our automated systems, many of the changes that have been implemented do not work properly. In addition, we would like to recommend the timely issuance of CDSS regulation in response to state legislation. The majority of the directions provided by CDSS in regard to SB 1041 and AB 74 were issued either close to or after the requested date of implementation.
• The WTW 2 has not been updated to reflect the new work participation requirements from a weekly minimum to an average, which is causing confusion to clients. There hasn't been much information regarding SIPs [System Improvement Plans] and SB 1041, and the information provided in one ACL and one Q&A on the 0–23 young child exemption was not sufficient to understand all the complexities of these regulations.
Large Counties
• Clear explanation of vision and goals of SB 1041 reforms.*
• Allow counties the ability to implement each regulatory reform/change incrementally and as automation allows. Allow enough time for implementation. SB 1041 released the initial ACL in December 2012 with an expected implementation date of January 1, 2013. This was an unrealistic expectation placed on counties and their staff and created a hardship on staff that has made it difficult to recover from. Also, ACLs should be clear in direction and released in a timely manner as close to the implementation date as possible. Receiving clarifying ACLs two years into a regulatory change created confusion for staff and clients.
• Change all forms from legalistic jargon to client-friendly; family strengths–focused materials.
• Hold on additional program modifications; counties need to be given time to work out issues in the current program components before any additional regulatory changes are made.

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Bulleted items are recommendations unless followed by an asterisk, in which case they are an information need.

5. A Six-County Perspective on Initial Implementation of SB 1041

This chapter presents findings from the site visits conducted with the six focal counties—Alameda, Fresno, Los Angeles, Riverside, Sacramento, and Stanislaus. The focal county findings complement the information gathered through the state-level key informant interviews and the ACS completed by all 58 counties. As described more fully in Chapter Two (and summarized in the text box to the right), the focal county key informant interviews, and the focus groups with caseworkers and CalWORKs participants, were designed to provide a more in-depth view of many of the same topics covered in Chapters Three and Four. Although the focal counties were selected to capture important variation across the counties in California, the results are not necessarily representative of the experiences across all counties. Nevertheless, the ability to explore topics related to the early implementation of SB 1041 with more specificity and for stakeholders not included in the other process study components (e.g., caseworkers and CalWORKs participants) provides a richer perspective on experiences with SB 1041 to date.

Chapter Five Methods

- Based on analysis of qualitative data collected for six focal counties: Alameda, Fresno, Los Angeles, Riverside, Sacramento, and Stanislaus, primarily during the spring and summer of 2015.
- Data collection included key informant interviews, caseworker focus groups, and participant focus groups.
- Analyzed using qualitative methods.
- See Chapter Two for more detail on data and methods.

In particular, we consider the following questions in this chapter and highlight the key findings from our data collection efforts in the six focal counties:

- *How did the counties communicate the SB 1041 changes to the staff? How did county staff understand those changes?* The most common method used to share SB 1041 policies on a statewide basis was the release of ACLs, including periodic clarifications to previously released ACLs. County welfare departments took the lead on training their staff to implement the new rules and regulations brought about under SB 1041, using a variety of mechanisms, such as written policy guidance, internal and external training events, supervision from managers of line staff, and internal meetings. Caseworkers who participated in our focal county focus groups described a significant amount of confusion regarding SB 1041 and identified the 24-month time clock as the most challenging component of the legislation, including when the clock should "tick" and "untick." This finding is in contrast to the ACS results presented in Chapter Four where WTW supervisors in 83 percent of counties reported that their WTW caseworkers understood the 24-month time clock moderately well to very well.

- *Do CalWORKs participants understand the changes brought about by SB 1041? How did county staff communicate this information?* County staff communicated to participants about the changes that were brought about under SB 1041 through in-person discussions, phone calls, and letters. Administrators and caseworkers in all six focal counties reported that there are still many participants who do not fully understand the implications of SB 1041, including where they land within the 24-month time clock period.
- *How did the counties change the way they do business in order to implement SB 1041? Did they reorganize, create cross-functional units or new staff positions, or redefine staff roles?* Across the focal counties, staff did not report significant reorganization of staff structures or roles in order to implement SB 1041, although they did emphasize that the reengagement process was labor intensive and SB 1041 as a whole has required a strong focus on training and support for caseworkers. In regard to factors that facilitated implementation of the legislation, focal counties reported that participation in the state-level workgroup process and discussions better positioned them to begin planning early for SB 1041. In addition, counties that maintained a dedicated workgroup to focus on clients' time on aid, within the 24-month time clock, fared better in this regard.
- *What factors facilitated or hindered implementation, and what adjustments were made to address identified challenges?* Focal county staff identified many barriers to implementation of SB 1041. For example, SB 1041 occurred at a time when counties were dealing with many other changes, namely Medicaid expansion, which limited the capacity of county welfare offices to plan, train, and implement SB 1041, including the initial intensive reengagement efforts of participants. Implementation policies from the state were released slowly, and—according to county staff—were often confusing or contradictory. This led to challenges in training and to confusion among staff in regard to SB 1041. Training for caseworkers on SB 1041 was described as difficult, given the continual release of state guidance to clarify components of the reforms. The lag between implementation of SB 1041 and upgrading the consortia data systems to meet the needs of the legislation was a source of frustration for county leaders and caseworkers. In addition, the perceived tension between WPR and SB 1041 appeared to be a driver in how caseworkers interacted with CalWORKs participants, influencing the extent to which participants were aware of and encouraged to take advantage of the options available to them under the new legislation.
- *How did counties coordinate with other public and private service providers in providing necessary services to CalWORKs applicants and to current and former participants?* Our focal county data collection included interviews with service providers associated with CalWORKs—relationships among these organizations and county social service agencies appeared strong. Concerns voiced by service providers regarding SB 1041 were similar to those identified by caseworkers—that SB 1041 was complicated and difficult to

understand. Education service providers (e.g., CalWORKs counselors on community college campuses) also noted that they had not observed the expected rate of referrals to education that they had expected, given the flexibility in activities afforded by SB 1041.

In the remainder of this chapter, we first describe our findings regarding the initial communications about and planning for the implementation of SB 1041. We discuss dissemination of SB 1041 guidance from the state to counties, followed by county-level planning and staff training. In addition, we also describe county feedback in regard to updating data systems needed to respond to the new policy reforms.

Next, we provide a snapshot of the initial implementation of SB 1041 implementation, including the reengagement of CalWORKs participants and the use of the new young child exemption. We also summarize feedback from the focal county interviewees about one of the major structural changes to CalWORKs brought about under SB 1041: namely, the implementation of the 24-month time clock. We discuss communications about the 24-month time clock, staff training, client notification and explanations about the time clock, and interviewees' perceptions regarding the challenges and benefits of the 24-month time clock.

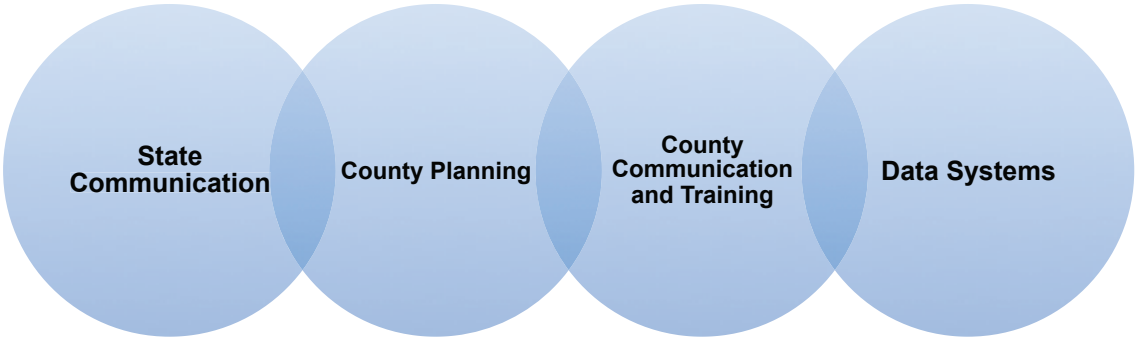
This is followed by a discussion regarding interviewee results about the WPR, including calculation of weekly participation hours, consequences of not meeting the federal WPR, perceived impact of SB 1041 on the WPR, and the tension perceived by interviewees about meeting WPR versus a work-ready approach. We also discuss welfare staff's understanding of SB 1041, as well as that of participants.

We then describe feedback regarding the Early Engagement programs brought about under SB 74 that are associated with SB 1041 (the OCAT and the FS and ESE programs). We conclude by highlighting the major implementation successes and challenges, the early impacts reportedly associated with SB 1041 as reported by the focal counties, and an initial set of recommendations to improve implementation.

Communication About and Planning for SB 1041

We begin with a discussion of the communications about and planning for SB 1041 reforms, including the dissemination of SB 1041 guidance from the state to counties, followed by county-level planning and staff training. While not an issue that was limited to the initial SB 1041 start-up period, we also describe county feedback in regard to updating data systems to respond to the new policy reforms. As illustrated in Figure 5.1, it is important to note that these stages are inter-related and often overlapping.

Figure 5.1. Communication About and Planning for SB 1041



State Communication to Counties

In the first year of the evaluation, the research team focused on how information on SB 1041 was disseminated by the state to county leadership, and then to county staff and to CalWORKs participants themselves. CDSS used a range of strategies to communicate and engage counties regarding the changes brought about through SB 1041 with county-level Department of Social Services (DSS) agencies.

The most common method used to share SB 1041 policies on a statewide basis was the release of ACLs, including periodic clarifications to previously released ACLs. Other written guidance provided by CDSS includes ACINs and County Fiscal Letters. CDSS also hosted conference calls and meetings with county staff to discuss the details of SB 1041. In addition, county leaders participate in the monthly meetings of the CWDA, a nonprofit association representing the human service directors from each county, during which SB 1041 has been a topic of discussion.

Focal county leaders and staff articulated a number of interrelated challenges regarding how the state disseminated SB 1041 guidance—most notably concerns around timing and clarity of information. SB 1041 was passed in July 2012 and counties were given only six months to prepare for implementation in January 2013. Due to the tight timeline and the intensive state-level workgroup process, delay in CDSS providing SB 1041 guidance to the counties was challenging with respect to planning and implementation at the county level. Staff from all six of the focal counties shared the difficulties inherent in receiving the information so close to SB 1041 implementation, not to mention updates well into early 2013 when changes were rolled out. In addition, county leaders described the tight time frame to train staff (and then train them on subsequent updates from the state) as a barrier to smooth rollout of the legislation.

Reflecting on the speed at which SB 1041 was implemented, county administrators and staff reported they were inundated with information from CDSS, pointing to the many ACLs released within the first year of implementation. State SB 1041 guidance was widely described by county leaders and staff as unclear or as contradicting previous information issued by CDSS. One administrator stated, “Overall, the complexity of it, and the late releases, and the updated

Q&As . . . from a supervisor's point of view, it makes it very difficult." An administrator from another county shared, "Changes in interpretation of law happened so quickly that we had to have multiple repeat trainings." Another administrator reported, "There was a one-month period, during which CDSS was coming out every other week with a change in policy." An administrator from that same county shared,

> Every time an ACL was sent out, the language was changed just a tiny bit [so that the] person reading the ACL could misinterpret it. This ACL said this—and this ACL said this . . . It sounds the same, but they added a word here, and that word changed the whole concept.

County Planning for SB 1041

The evaluation team solicited feedback from county staff about the planning process for SB 1041 implementation and whether they had sufficient time to incorporate the new policies. Five of the focal counties were involved in the CDSS workgroups to develop the policy guidance for SB 1041—they reported that as a result of their participation, they had an earlier jump, compared with other counties, in regard to planning for implementation. Several of the focal counties also said they convened steering committees or workgroups to plan for SB 1041 and/or their staff participated in state-level conference calls that began before January 2013 and involved CDSS personnel, county-level DSS staff, advocates and legislative staff. Despite the reports by counties that their participation in the state workgroup process was helpful, the tight time frame in which they were required to plan for and then implement SB 1041 was characterized as challenging by county staff. County administrators and caseworkers from all six counties stated that they had insufficient time to plan for and implement all of the various changes and programs required by SB 1041. As an administrator from one county explained, "It really was the time. We are a big ship. We couldn't turn real quickly. So having more time from the state would have made it easier." In another county, an administrator said, "Everything was pushed out late or with a very short time frame. This was definitely an issue."

County Communication and Training

County welfare departments took the lead on training their staff to implement the new rules and regulations brought about under SB 1041. Trainers used a variety of mechanisms, such as written policy guidance, internal training (tailored to caseworkers and supervisors, as well as departmentwide events), external training, supervision from managers of line staff, and internal meetings. Focal counties described their efforts to prepare staff, inform external providers, offer training, and draft county-level policy documents as they received guidance from CDSS. The initial training of staff occurred late in 2012 and into 2013 on the various elements of the legislation.

Three of the focal counties reported that they had a dedicated staff person or workgroup tasked with interpreting SB 1041 guidance from the state and sharing it with the county welfare department staff. For example, one of these counties maintained a special projects team that

included supervisors, a manager, and line staff who worked on implementation of SB 1041; they also convened a task team devoted to training, asking members to make a commitment to several days of overtime so that they were delivering a consistent message to trainees. In three of the focal counties, staff could also learn about SB 1041 components through distance learning and online tools.

Supervisors also were responsible for communicating SB 1041 to line staff, monitoring the development of WTW plans, and the calculation of the 24-month time clock. In the focal counties, supervisors described working with line staff to review and analyze real or mock cases, as well as hold "clinics" at which caseworkers could ask questions. In addition to a variety of written resources, caseworkers from several counties indicated they had developed individualized "cheat sheets" and other mnemonic tools to help them understand the details of SB 1041, particularly in regard to the 24-month time clock. These line staff also remarked on the value of informal support from peers and on-the-job training.

Building on in-house training efforts, several external organizations have provided professional development to staff on SB 1041. For example, one county referenced the CalWORKs Academy Training, which provides information on recent program changes, a review of program fundamentals, and a variety of training opportunities, including content on SB 1041. However, according to one administrator, the Academy did not have the lead time it needed to develop a curriculum and prepare training in advance of the initial roll out because detailed guidance on SB 1041 was not available before the measure was implemented. Other SB 1041 training has been provided through the University of California–Davis's Northern California Training Academy and the California Community Colleges CalWORKs Association Training Institute.

When asked to reflect on the communication and training they received regarding SB 1041, some administrators provided more positive feedback on training or reported greater levels of understanding of SB 1041 than did line staff. For example, caseworkers often appeared to be frustrated with their supervisors about the supports and resources available to them to implement the changes brought about under SB 1041 and pointed to inconsistency among supervisors regarding their own knowledge and comfort with SB 1041. The evaluation team heard complaints from caseworkers about supervisors who shared guidance on a "piecemeal" basis—consistent with comments by county leadership about the flow of information from the state.

Professional development efforts typically provided by in-house training staff were also hampered, according to focal county staff, by evolving state guidance that made it difficult to create detailed training content. A caseworker stated that the guidance they received "changed so fast that what people learned in the first training versus the last training wasn't the same thing . . . To this day, we still don't have one complete policy. . . . It's 'mix and match.'" Caseworkers expressed frustration with training in which the trainer was unable to answer their questions and with the fact that content offered conflicted with previous guidance they had received. For example, one caseworker commented,

> So those trained initially were trained differently from the next group [of caseworkers]. Policies didn't have clarification on how all the time was to be accounted for—so being trained with some vagueness and you have to [then] present it to your clients.

Data System Changes

The policy reforms created under SB 1041required significant changes to the data systems that counties used to track CalWORKs participants. California's counties are grouped into three consortia, each of which uses a different data system—LEADER, Cal-WIN, and C-IV (in addition, counties also utilize various other data systems to manage aspects of their programs; however, the primary focus of SB 1041 in this phase of the evaluation was on the systems being used to implement the 24-month time clock).

Representatives from all three consortia participated in the state SB 1041 workgroup process to develop guidance for counties—their role was (and continues to be) to change the data systems to meet the needs of the new legislation. Reflecting on their initial work to upgrade systems to align with SB 1041, consortia staff reported that some of the fixes were done relatively quickly, such as adjustments regarding the new earned income disregard.

The main challenge, as identified by staff across the three consortia, was the automation of the 24-month time clock, for a variety of reasons. In general, consortia representatives emphasized that there was a limit to the level of automation that could be achieved given all the ways that participants can meet the requirements of SB 1041. Cases ultimately require some level of caseworker review and determination. One consortia staff member explained there are multiple ways to meet the program requirements, stating,

> It could be a combination of working and studying and doing community service. For a system to account for so many possible combinations of weekly hours is very difficult. Some of the exemptions require a person to really go and analyze hourly or weekly [participation] and they cannot be automated.

The other challenges to automation were the quick pace from planning to implementation, and the complexity of the reforms and a reported lack of clear guidance from the state. As one consortium representative said,

> The state requires reports on the months based on Welfare-to-Work participation to determine which months could count toward the 24 [24-month time clock] and which months should be exempted or could be qualified for not counting . . . one of the challenges we received [faced] is because even though the regulation was effective January 2013, way after January 2013 we didn't have a clear description of how to determine these exemptions in Welfare-to-Work participation . . . the clarifications came months after the regulation was in place. So one of the bigger challenges for us in calculating these months was to have a clear interpretation of each exemption, how to apply the exemption, and how to calculate that and implement that retroactively for the months already gone. So that was an extra challenge.

Another consortium representative said,

> I think at this point of time we are pretty much clear, but back in 2013 we didn't have many answers that we need to being able to determine these exemptions accurately for our participants. So if I remember correctly . . . it took us almost a year to implement the time clock, not just from the technical standpoint but also to being able to determine the correct exemptions for our participants.

At the county level, administrators echoed the comments made by consortia staff, reporting that changes to data systems were made incrementally and continued well past the initial implementation period. Counties reported using their own internal tracking systems to generate reports. For example, an administrator stated,

> We always have some kind of workaround that we are using to process the work. A lot of it is manual. The workers really do have to keep on top of things to make sure that they do the entries correctly.

County staff also referenced maintaining their own internal tracking systems to generate reports, which were separate from the consortia databases. During one of our winter 2015 site visits, two years into implementation, one county reported that they had just recently received a system update that enabled staff to record the core and noncore hours. "They had to manually 'untick' clocks and remind staff to do it." The administrator added, "Now, we have to figure out how to use it. It's there . . . but how are we going to get this out? It's a lot of that. We are always working way behind the system." Another administrator shared,

> It's also difficult, from an automation standpoint, to program something so complex and to alleviate some of the workload for line staff . . . and the state was providing clarification the last couple of years. We keep getting clarification. That makes it very difficult to program, because when you don't have the full story, you can't really program correctly or fully—and sometimes you just stop.

According to another county administrator, "the state guidance was gray, and CalWIN was grayer still."

Initial Implementation of SB 1041

As illustrated in Figure 5.2, initial implementation of SB 1041 began with reengagement of parents who had been previously subject to the young child exemption that was changed as a result of the new legislation.[38] (See Appendix A for a detailed overview of the reengagement legislation and process.) Here, we summarize the perspectives of county staff regarding the reengagement process and present their perspectives on the new exemption.

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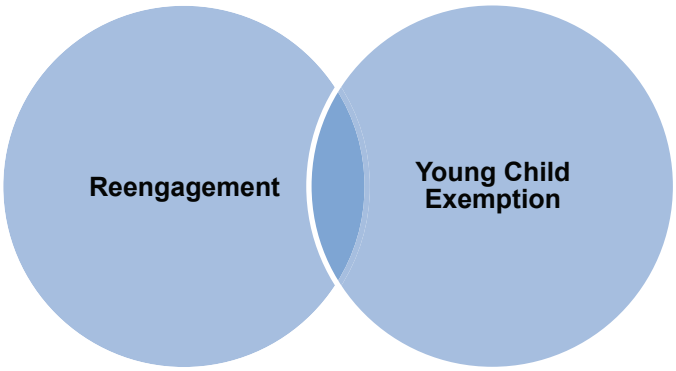
[38] Pursuant to AB X4 4, any individual with one child 12 to 23 months of age, or two or more children under the age of six, was exempt from WTW requirements. In addition, months when an individual qualified for this exemption did not count against the CalWORKs 48-month time limit. These short-term exemptions ended on December 31, 2012, and counties were given until January 1, 2015, to reengage those individuals exempt as of December 31, 2012 (CDSS, ACL 13-01, 2012).

Figure 5.2. Initial Stage of SB 1041: Reengagement and Young Child Exemption



Reengagement

Reengagement of participants was rolled out incrementally in counties. In our interviews, some of the focal counties referred to "reengagement sequencing" that involved phasing in outreach efforts with specific groups of clients—for example, first meeting with CalWORKs participants who had children that were going to age out the soonest (e.g., 0–6 months left before reaching their age limits), followed by participants with more time left.

Reflecting on the reengagement process, focal counties reported mixed reviews of their experiences. In one of the six focal counties, an administrator said, "the reengagement process was probably one of the smoothest processes [they had] had as far as SB 1041." In order to have the appropriate staff and resources available for reengagement, two of the focal counties reported arranging to bring participants in for reengagement on Saturdays. Other counties provided supportive services on-site (e.g., child care) to encourage participants to enroll in WTW activities.

However, reengagement was not without its challenges and many staff described it as an intensive effort. One focal county reported that they had high no-show rates when they attempted to reengage participants. Another county reported that identifying the participants who needed to be reengaged was especially difficult because their data system was having problems automating the information they needed. In this county, one leader said "I think generally we did it effectively but it took a lot of organizational attention."

One-Time Young Child Exemption

Staff from three of the six focal counties characterized the one-time young child exemption as somewhat challenging to know when clients should use it. One county leader expressed concern that, in the early stages of SB 1041 implementation, caseworkers would apply the exemption without considering the longer-term implications for individual participants. Similarly, a leader in another county recounted cases where the exemption probably should not have been taken, given participants' indications that they may have more children in the future. Although

caseworkers are to inform clients of their options and explain the ramifications of choosing one option over another, caseworkers shared similar views—that understanding when to encourage clients to consider the exemption was not as clear as it could be.

In five of the six focal counties, interview respondents reported that many CalWORKs participants did not understand the implications of using the exemption but still chose to take it. For example, caseworkers in two counties said participants often took the exemption immediately, without considering longer-term plans. Caseworkers and supervisors from two of the six counties noted that the one-time young child exemption was particularly challenging in complicated cases—for example, cases where a participant had one or more sanctions in the past or present, had members in the assistance unit with different statuses in the program, or had been on and off the program one or more times.

In two of the focal counties, another concern among county leaders and caseworkers was how the new one-time young child exemption may decrease the county's WPR. The one-time young child exemption is a state exemption, meaning that participants who take it are still considered work-eligible individuals according to federal requirements, and thus are counted against a county's WPR. One leader expressed that this is "a frustration for me, because for WPR, it counts against us . . . we have a ton of participants who supposedly request [the exemption] for the 0–23 months and that dings us." Similarly, a caseworker in another county said the one-time young child exemption is "yet again putting the county in peril . . . The federal guidelines say this population is work eligible." As noted elsewhere in this report, the one-time young child exemption represents another point where counties felt tension around priorities—meeting WPR or working with clients to help them benefit from exemptions included in the CalWORKs program.

Implementation of the WTW Time-Clock

As noted in Chapter One, SB 1041established the CalWORKs WTW 24-month time clock that allotted up to 24 months for participants to engage in a variety of activities that would prepare them to become or remain employed (CDSS, 2005). Although the lifetime limit for CalWORKs receipts remained at 48 months (the limit adopted in 2011 legislation), the support was divided into two periods: the first 24 months, when a set of flexible CalWORKs WTW services and other supports are available (e.g., subsidized child care, reimbursement for transportation and other work-related expenses), and a second 24 months, when the more restrictive federal TANF work activities apply. (See Appendix A for a comparison of the CalWORKs federal and WTW time clocks).

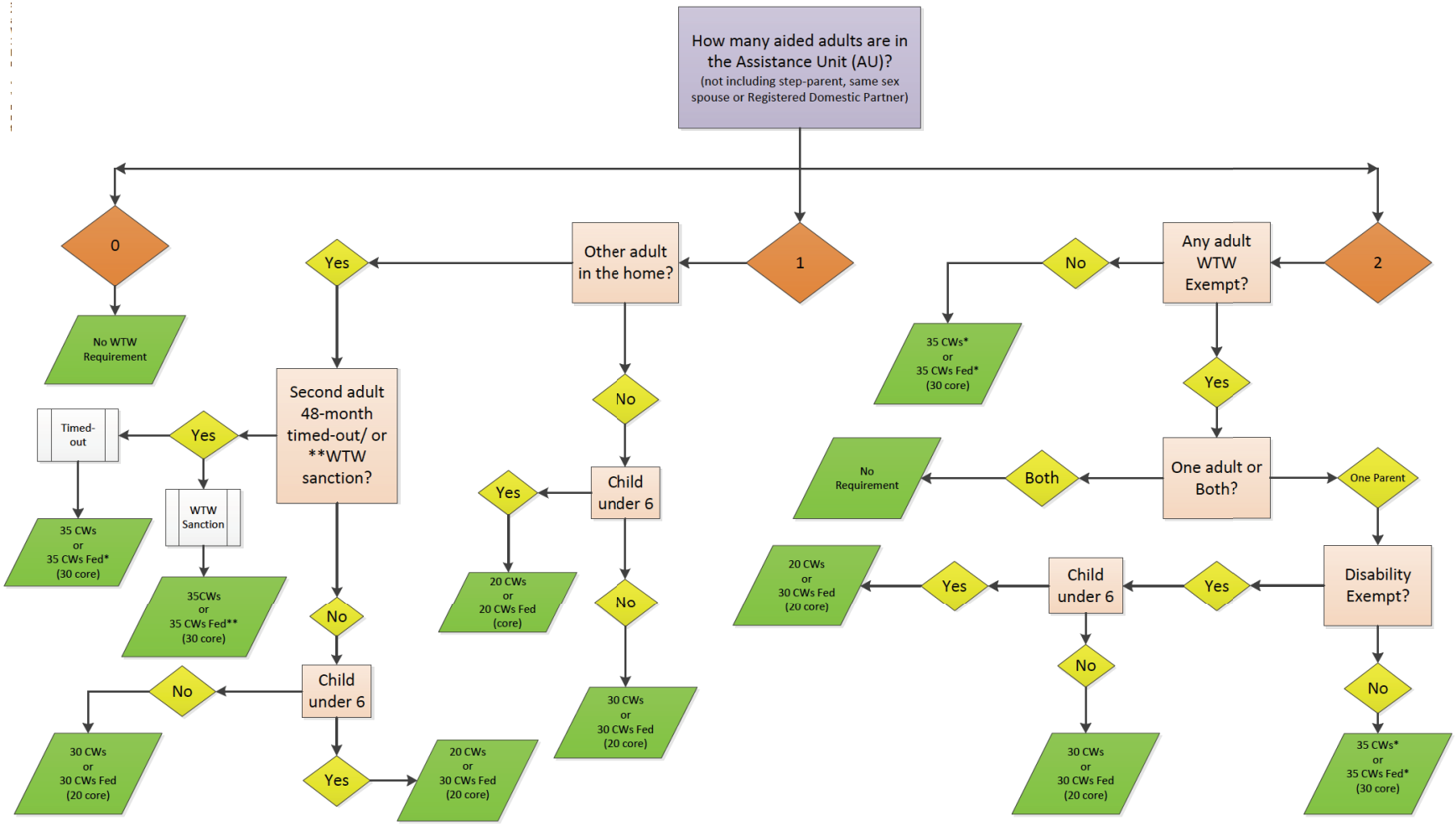
County caseworkers have six broad responsibilities related to the 24-month time clock. Figure 5.3 summarizes the main six caseworker tasks.

Figure 5.3. Major Caseworker 24-Month Time Clock Responsibilities

- First, caseworkers must determine the number of nonexempt adults in the family in order to assign the required number of work participation hours.
- Second, the ages of children in the family is another factor that informs assignment of participation hours. Participants can be scheduled to meet the CalWORKs minimum requirements under either the 24-month time clock or the CalWORKs federal standard participation requirement. Figure 5.4 details the minimum hourly participation requirements for participants based on the number of adults and ages of children in the family.
- Third, after the caseworker determines participation hours for a family, the WTW plan is developed. The caseworker and participant work collaboratively to complete the WTW 2 form,[39] which offers two options: Participants adhere to either the CalWORKs WTW participation requirements or the CalWORKs federal standards for work participation requirements. Based on their selection between these choices, participants are placed into two categories: (1) *WTW participants* are those whose WTW plan assigns them to a mix of activities and/or hours that do not meet the CalWORKs federal requirements, and (2) *CalWORKs federal program participants* are those whose plan indicates that they will meet the CalWORKs federal work requirements (CDSS, 2012a).
- Fourth, the caseworker must verify participant compliance with the WTW plan.
- Fifth, in addition, caseworkers are responsible for adjusting the time clocks and WTW plans as necessary and periodically notifying participants of the status of their 24-month time clock. The 24-month time clock is designed to start and stop each month depending on the participant's participation level and WTW plan (CDSS, 2012a). For *WTW participants*, the 24-month clock "ticks" until the caseworker "unticks" it for an approved reason. For *CalWORKs federal program participants,* the 24-month clock does not tick unless it is determined that they no longer meet the work requirements.
- Sixth, caseworkers must notify participants that their 24-month time clock is close to ending at least once between months 18 and 21 on this clock (CDSS, September 26, 2014). Caseworkers are also responsible for conducting case reviews to assess for time clock accuracy prior to sending the "Notice of Your WTW 24-Month Time Clock Ending Soon" (CDSS, 2014g).

[39] The WTW-2 form is a four-page document that lists CalWORKs WTW 24-month time-clock activities on the left side and CalWORKs federal work activities on the right side of the first page. In addition, the total number of required work participation hours is included one this form. Pages 2–3 include the details on the specific program assignment/s and service/s to which the participant has agreed. The final page is for participant acknowledgment. Each participant in the family signs his or her own form and has his or her own 24-month time clock (CDSS, undated-c).

Figure 5.4. CalWORKs WTW 24-Month Time Clock Hourly Work Participations Requirements Flow Chart



SOURCE: CDSS, 2014h, Attachment A.

The 24-month time clock was a major component of SB 1041. As a result, its implementation had a significant impact on administrators, staff, and participants alike. During the site visits, interview respondents described communication efforts around the 24-month time clock, explained challenges with implementation of this policy change, and offered lessons learned from the implementation process. Perspectives on these topics are provided below.

Communication About the 24-Month Time Clock

Training sessions were the primary mechanism used to introduce the 24-month time clock to staff. Administrative staff workers were tasked with developing departmentwide training sessions at regional offices. Caseworkers received training on how to calculate the 24-month time clock, how to determine which activities "count," and how to choose exemptions. While some caseworkers reported receiving time-clock training from the staff development unit, others received in-house training from county administrators. Training was staggered; as such, some of the caseworkers who completed the training during the early SB 1041 implementation stages had a different understanding of the time clock from those who completed it later. Others still reported receiving trainings through self-taught, self-paced, web-based platforms. Specifics about the new time clock were explained to participants through mailed notices, as well as during in-person meetings with the caseworkers.

Staff Training on the 24-Month Time Clock

Caseworkers and county administrators in all six focal counties spoke of the training they received on the 24-month time clock as inconsistent, inadequate, and disjointed—echoing themes described earlier in this report. The speed of SB 1041 implementation meant that county leaders were asked to create training sessions with incomplete information and had to constantly update the training based on evolving guidance from the state. One county administrator referenced the frustrations in preparing for the 24-time clock implementation:

> People want to know everything they are supposed to do when they sit in on a training: "How do I put appropriate information in the system?" "How do I tick the clock?" Because we couldn't do this upfront, it made training complicated.

Caseworkers commented on the inadequacy of the training sessions, saying that trainers were unable to answer their questions at times, and that the training caseworkers received varied. One caseworker stated, "We could have used more training and information. A lot of it was trial and error . . . " Caseworkers also felt their supervisors were not familiar with the 24-month time clock. One said,

> I was referred to my supervisor [for questions about the 24-month time clock], and even my supervisors were confused. When I asked my supervisor, my supervisor said look at the PowerPoint presentation—if you have questions, we can learn at the same time.

Because the various components of SB 1041 were not implemented simultaneously, training on the legislation's multiple components (including the 24-month time clock) was often ineffective and unclear. Given that CDSS regularly communicated revisions to the implementation guidance, training had to be updated frequently. As noted earlier, CDSS usually uses ACLs to communicate with counties. Through these letters, the state can introduce new legislation, alert counties to modifications in existing laws, and answer county workers' frequently asked questions. Of the 25 ACLs released between October 2012 and April 2015, 18 concerned updates to or explanations of the 24-month time clock. According to caseworkers in our focus groups, the rules from CDSS were constantly changing, which made training staff cumbersome and inconsistent.

The piecemeal implementation of SB 1041 made training on the 24-month time clock challenging. When asked how training was managed, one administrator noted,

> We've done multiple trainings. We're doing a follow-up time-clock training since the pieces with the time clock have come out recently. Going to refresh on the original (because staff have struggled on this) and training on who will hit the clock. There are some simple cases, but then there are some messy ones where it will take a day or two to do it.

A caseworker reflected on the training received on the 24-month time clock: "When we finally got our time clock training—no counselor did the same thing as anyone else. None of us were on the same page. There was no consistency."

Client Notification and Explanation

Counties were required to send advance notices about the new WTW rules, including the new CalWORKs WTW 24-month time clock, to all existing nonexempt participants by December 1, 2012 (CDSS, 2012a).[40] In addition, participants were informed of the 24-month time clock when they applied for the CalWORKs program or during their annual redetermination (CDSS, undated-b). County welfare staff were also trained to conduct comprehensive discussions with all participants to notify them of the new WTW rules. Staff from four of the six focal counties mentioned having these conversations with participants. Some staff referred to this as "meaningful robust conversations" (MRCs) or "meaningful conversations," in which they explained the various changes to the CalWORKs program (including the 24-month time clock) and completed the WTW plan. Helping participants understand their options so they could decide what was best for their families was a common theme during discussions with administrators and caseworkers. One administrator noted that the point of these conversations

[40] Counties were to send the CW 2205 informing notice to clients by December 1, 2012. The CW 2205 must be sent to all nonexcluded WTW-eligible adults that receive cash aid on behalf of or with a child, including sanctioned adults. The notice included a summary of the new WTW rules, including the new CalWORKs WTW 24-month time clock, hours of participation, the fact that clients would have more choices in the activities they could participate in during the 24-month time clock, and what type of conditions would stop the 24-month time clock.

was to inform participants of the various activities available to them to prevent them from losing the opportunity to receive WTW benefits. Per one caseworker, staff were instructed to, "explain all . . . options to the clients/customers and let them make the decision as to what they wanted," during the MRCs. An administrator in another county commented that the caseworkers were coached to have appropriate conversations with participants, "so a client can make the best decision for their situation." MRCs appeared to have been dually focused on educating participants about the new WTW options and helping participants decide between WTW or CalWORKs federal program activities.

Challenges with the 24-Month Time Clock

In each of the six focal counties, county administrators, caseworkers, and service providers cited multiple challenges with the 24-month time clock. One clear concern, across all six focal counties, was a lack of understanding about the clock. County administrators and caseworkers noted confusion on the county level on multiple fronts, including (1) perceived impact of the conflict between the WTW 24-month and 48-month time-on-aid clocks, (2) calculation of the 24-month time clock, (3) explanation of the 24-month time clock to CalWORKs participants, (4) manual revisions of the time clock, and (5) concerns about participants' 24-month time clock expiring (i.e., "timing out"). The following section details the challenges reported involving calculation and understanding of the 24-month time clock, and outlines the impact of these difficulties on caseworkers and CalWORKs participants.

Perceived Impact of Conflict Between WTW 24-Month and 48-Month Time-on-Aid Clocks

The many differences between the CalWORKs WTW 24-month time clock and the federal 48-month time-on-aid clock introduced earlier were a source of significant confusion for everyone involved in calculating and implementing these clocks. Specifically, in all six focal counties, concerns were expressed about caseworkers and participants' understanding of how to track time on aid. One administrator from a large county stated, " . . . the challenge [is that] we hope that the participants as well as the staff really understand that they have to look at both [time clocks] and see that they [participants] have time available." Another commented, "[during case reviews] you have to look at both clocks together . . . because we have had cases fall off the 48-[month time-limit] who should have had adjustments . . . " Yet another administrator from a different county said, "I'm an educated woman and it's hard for me to keep track of . . . it's tough!" Given that participation in services is contingent upon available time on aid, it is important that all parties are clear on the elapsed months.

Differences between the WTW and CalWORKs federal program's guidelines on service provision was another perceived challenge cited by interviewees in each of the six focal counties. One caseworker in a focus group commented that "the federal government is not thinking barriers, [t]he state is thinking barrier removal." Another caseworker in the same focus group said, " . . . the federal and state sides don't match up [regarding addressing barriers]."

Additionally, a supervisor argued that some participants have a more limited window within which they can receive WTW services that would support engagement in employment; since they have less than 24 months left on their 48-month time-on-aid clock. Finally, some interviewees expressed concerns over the consequences imposed on the caseworkers, counties, and state for providing services (e.g., noncore activities) that do not comply with federal work requirements. One caseworker illuminated this point, stating, "The state regulations for the 24-month does not have core hours—but the federal requirements expect core hours, and without that, the state and county stand to be losing a lot of money." Incongruence between the foci of the two programs thus presented challenges at multiple levels.

Calculation of the 24-Month Time Clock

As indicated above, calculation of the 24-month time clock, also known as determining whether the clock should "tick" or if the caseworker should "untick" it for approved reasons, is an important task of the caseworker. (See Appendix A for an overview of the calculation of the 24-month time clock.)

Many caseworkers found the task of calculating the WTW time clock particularly challenging and confusing, in part because CDSS frequently changed the guidance on regulations for calculating the 24-month time clock. For example, under new direction from CDSS (released in November 2014), caseworkers were to use an averaging methodology to determine if a client was meeting the minimum weekly hours under the 24-month time-clock plan. The weekly average is calculated by adding the total number of participation hours in all CalWORKs activities for the month, dividing by 4.33, then rounding to the nearest whole number (CDSS, 2014h). However, depending on the number of working days in a month, averaging in this way may mean that participants technically had to have *more* hours than detailed on the WTW form in order to meet WPR. (See the text box for further detail.)

> Consider the following scenario: a CalWORKs participant's WTW plan indicates that she is to complete 20 hours a week or an average of four hours per day. Prior to the November 2014 change in calculating the 24-month time clock, there was no averaging involved: If she completed at least 20 hours each week of the month, she met the requirements. Using the averaging method, hours are first added up over the calendar month. Calendar months may have from 20 to 23 working days (weekdays). With 22 or 23 working days in a month, a participant working four hours per day and 20 hours per week would then have 88 or 92 hours in a month. When divided by 4.33, the average exceeds 20 hours per week. In a month with 20 or 21 working days, the average after rounding will just fall short of 20 hours per week (e.g., 84/4.33=19.4). Thus, although the averaging method potentially provides a participant with flexibility in shifting hours across weeks in the same month, she may technically not meet the WPR in some months, even though she completed the 20 minimum hours as listed on her WTW form.

Respondents from five of the six counties expressed frustration over the change instructions from the state regarding the methodology for calculating the hours. This was particularly frustrating for county administrators and caseworkers, because previous directions from CDSS instructed them *not* to use this averaging methodology. One county administrator explained:

> . . . we did get [new] rules on ACL regarding how hours are calculated. Before that, the hours were straight hours, 20, 30, or 35 for a household. That was the minimum to be met weekly. No averaging. So if you were supposed to do 20 hours, and you only did 18 one week, then you didn't meet the requirements for that month. In November, the ACL retroactively changed the rule going back to July and said . . . now you have to use a 4.33 divisor to determine if [the minimum monthly hours] are met or not met . . . That's in line with the federal rule, they've always had a 4.33 divisor so now the state has gone that way. In theory, if you are averaging out and you want to meet 20 hours [per month], you have to do at least 22 hours per week. Averaging that by 4.33, that'll get you to 20 . . . It's just been a slow burn with staff . . . [they must be sure to] convey this to their customers."

The new averaging instructions led to further difficulty for both participants and caseworkers. Since the actual hours that participants had to complete were higher than was stated on their WTW forms, they were at increased risk for noncompliance with WTW or CalWORKs federal regulations, and thus, sanctions. For caseworkers, the new regulations meant more data entry, record keeping, and calculations. Caseworkers in all six focal counties expressed their frustrations with the number of changes to the CDSS instructions on the 24-month time clock. When asked about how the ACLs from the state affected the methods used to calculate the 24-month time clock, one caseworker explained,

> [There was a] one month period where CDSS was coming out every other week with a change in policy. It changed so fast that what people learned in the first training versus the last training wasn't the same thing . . . So we still don't [calculate the 24-month time clock] the same way. We have already gone back and recalculated them all, and we don't have time to go back and redo them all again.

Because multiple exemptions can apply to the same individuals, caseworkers were often confused about how to apply the exemptions. One caseworker stated,

> If it was black and white, it would be easier to get though. The state has given so many exemptions that you have to go back every single month and recheck everything. There are so many different variances in [the 24-month time clock rules] that it's unrealistic.

A county administrator in a different focal county spoke of this confusion among the staff regarding this issue in terms of the overall complexity of calculating the time clock, saying

> WTW is not one size fits all . . . there would still have to be a manual or a workaround because everyone's needs are different . . . Staff have to manually enter data into the system . . . It's almost like [the caseworkers are] working in reverse. The clock always ticks, unless they stop it . . . Some staff have

> challenges selecting from multiple exemptions. The caseworker needs to understand how the clock applies, and needs to know all the regulations . . . so there's lots of room for human error.

The difficulties of calculating the 24-month time clock—which included the challenge of applying multiple exemptions and keeping up with evolving instructions from CDSS—led to concerns about time-clock accuracy. Despite counties' efforts to standardize and clarify time-clock calculations, many caseworkers remained unclear about the process. Caseworkers in each of the six focal counties acknowledged inconsistencies in time-clock calculations. As one respondent stated

> . . . The general consensus across the board is that no one knows for sure how to do it [the 24-month time clock] or calculate it. You could sit down and watch all of us do it and I bet you would see a dozen different ways to get to the same end result. You may even get half a dozen different results at the end. There is no right or wrong, and nobody is really sure. It's kind of an, "Okay, that sounds right . . ."

Explaining the 24-Month Time Clock to CalWORKs Participants

County administrators and caseworkers alike noted how widespread confusion about calculating and implementing the 24-month time clock translated into difficulties discussing the time clock with participants. In one caseworker focus group, respondents spoke of the confusion on completion of the WTW 2 form. One caseworker commented that she tells participants, "Don't worry about core or noncore—just do your hours!" Her coworker, a caseworker in the same county, admitted, "Sometimes we don't even understand—we just pretend." A county-level administrator commented,

> It was very confusing . . . a lot of times you have to work it out and walk it through with your staff for them to understand it. Imagine, if you have to do that with your staff, what they have to do with the customers to get [them] to understand. Some customers still don't understand it.

When asked how well line staff understood the changes associated with SB 1041, one county administrator said bluntly, "[Staff comprehension of the 24-month] time clock is a little sketchy. Earned income disregard, they are okay with that. But the [24-month] time clock, everyone is a little sketchy on." Another administrator from a different county commented on how caseworker confusion about the 24-month time clock impacted the caseworker-participant relationship, saying, "The [core and noncore] activities are on the same page. They [caseworkers] don't know where they should put the information. We shouldn't have to figure that out in front of the client. They lose credibility with the customer that way."

Caseworkers and county administrators in five of the six focal counties expressed concerns that CalWORKs participants did not fully comprehend what the 24-month time clock meant for them. As mentioned previously, the clock featured multiple exemptions, fewer required hours, and numerous clock stoppers, all of which were designed to help participants address barriers to self-sufficiency. Caseworkers worried that participants would instead understand this time as a

way to continue receiving cash aid for less effort, and would not use the 24 months effectively. One caseworker noted

> For the majority of clients I saw, once you tell them that they have reduced hours, that's all they heard. I tried to explain to explain the difference of the [WTW 24-month] plan . . . once you finish that 24th month you are going to have to go to the CalWORKs federal plan and that is going to be absolutely mandatory . . . but they would just nod their head and sign off on [the plan].

Others thought clients perceived the CalWORKs federal 48-month time limit to be more important than the 24-month time clock, and as such were not fully cognizant of the consequences associated with timing out of the 24-month clock. One county administrator said

> Clients are still focused about the 48-month [time clock], not the 24-month [time clock] . . . the participants [don't] recognize how crucial it is to stop the 24-month clock. Even though we tell them and we review the [24-month] time clock, it hasn't sunk in. They are concerned about the 48 months.

Overall, caseworkers had difficulty explaining the 24-month time clock to participants, and were worried that participants did not truly understand what the time clock meant for their paths to self-sufficiency and their time on aid.

Impact of 24-Month Time Clock on the Role of the CalWORKs Caseworker

Caseworkers felt their primary role within the county had shifted from counseling to data entry. According to caseworkers in the focal counties, prior to SB 1041 and the 24-month time clock, they spent their time talking with participants, assessing barriers to self-sufficiency, and collaborating with clients to determine the best options. Now, they indicated that they spent more time calculating and generating reports than talking with their customers. One caseworker discussed how the calculation and data entry of the 24-month time clock, particularly as it pertained to reviewing cases, changed her work, stating: "It's taking forever to get cases done—we were doing overtime to get it done. It was taking away from the clients and our services to the clients to get it done manually." The increase in reporting and data collection also changed the nature of the conversation between the caseworker and the participant. As one caseworker noted

> Talking [with participants] about the [24-month] time clock takes the focus off counseling. It takes the time [away] from talking to them about education, how they did on their interviews, etc. Instead [the caseworker has to] explain 'you need to meet [these WTW requirements].' So, it is about the numbers, not the customer.

Determining Extensions of Participants' 24-Month Time-Clock

At the time of the focal county site visits, guidance to counties on addressing participants who were or had exhausted their 24-month time clock was at varying stages of implementation.[41] An administrator in one county commented, "we recently got an ACL from the state, as I said it [ACLs] always comes after the fact, now you [counties] can go back and give them [participants] some more time . . . " Delayed guidance from the state had a negative effect on staff, as notification letters to the participants regarding the expiring WTW time clock needed to be generated manually. One county commented that they were " . . . in the planning stages to do the training to the staff on what to do . . . once somebody's hit their 24-month clock."

While just beginning to experience time-clock expiration for some of their participants, one administrator said "we are having a lot of people file for extensions. It has become very popular." However, administrators and other service providers in three counties highlighted that there are a number of exceptions available that allow participants to extend their 24-month time clock. The administrators in two of these counties added that, "I would be surprised if we ended up with really large number of people at the end of the 24-month time-clock" and "there are so many [exceptions], that they [the state] don't seem to want the clock to stop ticking."

Perceived Benefits of 24-Month Time Clock

From the perspective of the administrators, supervisors, and caseworkers, the 24-month time clock provides CalWORKs participants the flexibility to participate in noncore activities that address barriers to employment and self-sufficiency. As noted earlier, the noncore activities include education related directly to employment, job skills training related directly to employment, and satisfactory attendance in English as a Second Language or GED courses (CDSS, undated-b). All staff groups in the six focal counties commented that the new time clock provided greater flexibility and breadth of options to participants.

However, some caseworkers and administrators worried that increased flexibility might cause participants to lose sight of the fact that WTW benefits are time limited. They encouraged participants to keep the long-term plan in mind. Specifically, administrators and service providers in four counties noted that elimination of core requirements allowed participants to focus on to education, part-time employment, and treatment without the pressure of supplementing their required participation hours with core activities. This point is well stated by one administrator:

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[41] Initial guidance on extending the 24-month time clock was issued by the state on February 5, 2014, in ACL No. 14-09. Since then, five additional ACLs handling expiring time clocks were released (ACLs 14-48, 15-01, 15-02, 15-03, and 15-59) that provided instructions on calculating and tracking extensions, explained the methodology for determining the target number of extensions, described the process for transitioning participants to post 24-month time-clock federal standards, and outlined the target number of extensions estimated for July 2015 through December 2015 (CDSS, 2014f; CDSS, 2015a; CDSS, 2015b; CDSS, 2015c; CDSS, 2015d).

> If someone wanted to focus more on training versus having to do multiple activities—such as having to do like community service just to meet a core requirement, or [work] experience, or trying to focus on getting a part-time job—and having more time to just solely focus on finishing up their training, they might be able to finish faster, take more courses, rather than trying to balance it with multiple activities.

While the flexibility offered through SB 1041 was seen as a potential benefit for clients, the overarching take-away from our discussions with staff in the focal counties was that the actual implementation of the 24-month time clock was challenging to implement, particularly for the caseworkers.

Work Participation Rate

As noted in Chapter One, a central component of the federal TANF program is the WPR.[42] Federal law requires states to meet a specific WPR or face a penalty by losing a portion of their TANF grant allocation. At the same time, SB 1041 modified the CalWORKs program to allow work-eligible individuals to participate in activities that do not count toward the WPR. Table 5.1 illustrates the difference between the CalWORKs federal and CalWORKs WTW work requirements and notes compliance with the federal WPR.

Calculating Weekly Participation Hours

The weekly work participation hours required for the WTW program are aligned with federal requirements. However, the methodology for calculating participation hours differs for the programs. Caseworkers spend an extensive amount of time calculating work participation hours, which significantly affects their workload. For WTW, this process consists of calculating a weekly average by adding the total number of hours of participation in CalWORKs activities for the month and dividing it by 4.33, then rounding to the nearest whole number (CDSS, 2014h).

Table 5.1. CalWORKs Federal and WTW Requirements

	Hourly Work Requirements (hours per week)	
Case Type	**CalWORKs Federal Requirements (up to 48 months)**	**CalWORKs WTW Requirements (for 24 months)**
Single parent with child younger than age six	20 core	20 noncore
Single parent with no child younger than age six	20 core/10 noncore	30 noncore
Two-parent family	30 core/5 noncore	35 noncore
Meets federal WPR?	**Yes**	**No**

[42] The WPR is determined by dividing the number of cases meeting the federal work requirements (the numerator) by the number of cases subject to the requirements (the denominator).

The averaging methodology for the CalWORKs federal WPR requires calculating a weekly average for each activity type (core and noncore) for the month and dividing each sum by 4.33, then rounding the quotients to the nearest whole number and adding the results. Veracity of these calculations is extremely important, especially for the CalWORKs federal WPR. Unfortunately, caseworkers in half of the focal counties reported confusion on calculating the hours for activities that meet WPR requirements. However, due to the criticality of meeting the WPR, three of the six counties indicated that they established specialized units to collect, verify, and report hours to the state.

Consequences of Not Meeting the CalWORKs Federal WPR

During the site visits, administrative and caseworker staff in five out of the six counties expressed serious concerns over the possibility of state- and county-level sanctions for not meeting the CalWORKs federal WPR. However, trepidation over the potential negative impact of not meeting WPR extends beyond state- and county-level penalties. Administrators and caseworkers in all focal counties felt that they were subject to consequences for falling short on the CalWORKs federal work requirements. Caseworkers in a focus group in one county shared that, in addition to the county sanctions, caseworkers are penalized in the form of Corrective Action Plans when their cases don't meet WPR. Caseworkers in another county discussed indirect effects of county noncompliance with WPR, including possible job loss if the county was sanctioned. Embarrassment for not meeting WPR during audits was another negative outcome cited by caseworkers in one of the counties. Another county's caseworkers affirmed this sentiment by noting that caseworkers feel like they are failing if they do not meet their performance standards. Administrators in another county commented that two consequences experienced by caseworkers include increased workload to assist participants with meeting WPR requirements, and poor performance reviews if they fail to do so.

Perceived Impact of SB 1041 on WPR

One of the most common concerns voiced by county staff was the tension they felt between supporting clients' participation in SB 1041 while feeling pressure to help the county meet WPR. Administrators in five of the six counties felt that the incentives or rules of SB 1041 were in conflict with the goal of meeting WPR and that SB 1041 directly contributed to a low WPR. One county administrator commented that SB 1041 takes them further away from meeting WPR. When asked about the impact of this legislation on WPR, one county caseworker responded, "It's a detriment to state and federal WPR numbers." Administrators, caseworkers, and service providers in all focal counties cited an apparent conflict between the WPR (CalWORKs federal) requirements and SB 1041 (WTW) requirements. All staff across the focal counties argued that WPR and SB 1041 differ in terms of philosophy, types of approved activities or exemptions, and the level of flexibility offered to participants. In addition, administrators and caseworkers across

the six counties stated that incongruence between the CalWORKs federal and SB 1041 policies contribute to staff confusion and high workload.

The primary recommendation offered by most of the counties was alignment of the CalWORKs federal and SB 1041 requirements. Administrators in one county asked, "When is the state going to go back to the table and see if they can align [SB 1041 requirements] with the Feds?" An administrator in another county said, "If I had one wish, I wish everything was synced up . . . " Caseworkers in the same county said, "We should mirror what the federal does [to meet the WPR]." In sum, while many counties recognize the benefits that SB 1041 affords CalWORKs participants, fear of not meeting WPR appears to outweigh the perceived advantages of SB 1041.

Philosophical Differences: Work-First vs. Work-Ready Approach

The WPR requirements are heavily work-focused with limited opportunity for participants to engage in non–work-related activities. Conversely, SB 1041 emphasizes the importance of mitigating the impact of potential barriers to employment through a variety of supportive services and options to participate in non–job-related activities. Administrators and caseworkers reported challenges reconciling these *work-first* versus *work-ready* philosophies. Some characterized the work-first approach as doing what is best to meet WPR, and the work-ready strategy as doing what is best for participants. Caseworkers in one county highlighted this point by saying, "you either help the participant or take the hit [on their performance for not meeting WPR]." Out of concern for the WPR, caseworkers in three focal counties indicated that they strongly encourage CalWORKs participants to engage in activities that meet the CalWORKs federal requirements. However, five out of six focal counties suggest that the work-ready activities offered under SB 1041 (e.g., education) may offer better opportunities for achieving self-sufficiency; thus are in the best interest of the participants. Balancing the competing values of WPR and SB 1041 is an ongoing struggle for the counties.

Approved Activities or Exemptions

Administrators and caseworkers in five of the focal counties referenced the inconsistency between the types of activities that participants can engage in under the CalWORKs federal and WTW policies. In order for participants to meet the CalWORKs federal WPR requirements, they must spend the requisite number of hours doing job-related core activities. However, SB 1041 allows participants to spend all of their required hours engaged in noncore activities that do not have to be directly associated with getting a job. An administrator in one county commented that the biggest problem with SB 1041 is that noncore activities are not compliant with the CalWORKs federal requirements. Caseworkers in another county indicated that the state's WPR review only looks at the core hours, not the SB 1041 noncore hours. They added that this is a disservice to the participants who opt into noncore activities and the caseworkers who work with those participants to select appropriate activities.

Caseworkers in one county agreed with the statement of their colleague: "The state understands barriers, we understand them, [t]he federal government doesn't." SB 1041 permits participants who experience barriers to employment to defer or limit engagement in any activities while they receive desired supportive services. Additionally, time-limited, intensive case management is available in most counties through the FS program. While participation in these activities is considered acceptable under SB 1041, it does not exclude participants from the CalWORKs federal WPR sample. One administrator said, "We have a ton of participants [who requested the state-only young child exemption (for individuals with a child under two years old)]. That dings us for our [CalWORKs federal work participation] rates." Another administrator lamented the conflict between the CalWORKs federal and SB 1041's handling of struggling participants this way: "I understand that they're [the state] trying to do good things, but you [the state] hold us accountable for WPR . . . "

Level of Flexibility

From the perspective of caseworkers in the focal counties, SB 1041 afforded participants unprecedented freedom to choose their own activities. As previously noted, participants can completely opt out of core activities for 24 months. During this time, these cases are noncompliant with the CalWORKs federal WPR regulations. Administrators and caseworkers in half of the focal counties suggested that SB 1041, vis-à-vis participant choice, disincentivizes engagement in federally approved activities. Caseworkers reported being discouraged in some instances from counseling participants to choose noncore activities because it was detrimental to meeting the CalWORKs federal WPR. Caseworkers in one county said, "We are being held accountable for their [participants'] choices . . . so [we] try to encourage them to do things that meet WPR." Given the cost of participant flexibility, some counties feel compelled to limit participants' freedoms for the sake of the CalWORKs federal WPR.

Staff Confusion and Workload

Misalignment of the CalWORKs federal and WTW requirements contributes to confusion at all levels, including administrators, caseworkers, and participants. Administrators in one county noted that it is hard for caseworkers to explain the difference between the rules and their impacts to the participants. Specifically, one administrator shared that the WTW form that differentiates between activities that are allowable for the WTW and CalWORKs federal programs, "[is] very confusing, [and] cumbersome." Caseworkers in another county said the following regarding the confusion between the two different requirements: "Because they are in conflict with one another; [we] communicate to them [CalWORKs participants] the goals [of] both." Staff confusion about the difference between the rules and the calculation of the WTW time clock contributes to an increase in work volume. A county administrator explained this point by stating, "The time clock piece of WPR [is] really messy, [s]o it adds to [caseworker] workload time for every single case."

Understanding of SB 1041

In our work in the focal counties, we explored the extent to which caseworkers and participants (based on the perspective of staff and the participants themselves) understood the changes to the CalWORKs program.

Counties' Perspective on CalWORKs Participants' Understanding of SB 1041

Across the focal counties, leadership and caseworkers described a varied and multipronged effort to communicate the SB 1041 changes to participants, including holding weekend reengagement sessions for participants, sending mailers, having MRCs with participants, explaining the changes when caseworkers met with individual participants, and using a customer service helpline. Caseworkers in three of these counties said that they were instructed to meet with participants in person rather than sending out contracts so the participants would better understand the changes.

Leaders and caseworkers identified several aspects of SB 1041 that have been difficult to explain to participants—these include the two different time clocks (the 24-month time clock and the 48-month limit on cash assistance) and the differences in how they "tick," along with the number of hours of participation each requires. While some participants may grasp the time clocks, they may not understand how the flexibility offered under the 24-month time clock could benefit them. Caseworkers reported that they spend a good deal of time talking with participants about time limits, but, as one caseworker pointed out, some participants do not understand the foundational concept that their time on aid is cumulative over the participant's lifetime. Another particularly onerous task, as described by caseworkers, is explaining to participants how the new 4.33 divisor (explained in detail in the section on the 24-month time clock) is used to calculate participation hours. Caseworkers also noted that explaining the difference between core and noncore activities (e.g., vocational training versus Job Club) to participants can be difficult.

In addition, several leaders highlighted that communicating the urgency of becoming self-sufficient to participants is not always easy—a challenge that existed prior to SB 1041. Leaders and caseworkers noted that some participants focused primarily on the fact that they now had fewer required hours rather than how to make the best use of the flexibility. Some participants are in "survival mode," explained one leader, and can only focus on what they need to do to get through their situation. Similarly, a caseworker in a different county said participants are focused just on the present and cannot look two or three months down the road. Caseworkers in two other counties voiced that some participants do not want to take the time to understand or only focus on certain aspects of SB 1041, such as increased choice in program activities. Lastly, leaders in two counties pointed out that during the early implementation stages, the staff might not have fully have understood the new program and thus might not have explained it clearly to participants. Staff echoed this concern that participants cannot be expected to understand SB 1041 if their caseworker does not understand it. When asked about client understanding of

legislation, caseworkers noted there is still a range in the level of understanding both at the caseworker and participant level, echoing what was stated earlier.

Leaders in all six focal counties reported that while there are still many participants who do not fully understand the implications of SB 1041, there is much less confusion now compared with two years ago, when the legislation was implemented. Caseworkers shared a somewhat similar perspective on the extent to which participants understand SB 1041, noting that staff are getting better at explaining the program, but it is still difficult for many participants to fully understand the changes brought about through the new legislation.

CalWORKs Program Participants' Perspectives of SB 1041

Across the 12 focus groups, participants reported that their primary sources of information about services and benefits available to CalWORKs participants were friends, family members, or other participants. From the participants' perspective, caseworkers did not provide consistent information about access to benefits and services, unevenly applied program rules, and inconsistently offered program, services of benefits. Across focus groups, participants indicated that they also received information from the CalWORKs program by mail but many reported that they do not always pay attention to the letters unless they are being informed that their benefits are going to be reduced, citing concerns that the information is often confusing and difficult to understand. The majority of focus group participants stated that they did not feel like they had a strong understanding of the benefits or services for which they might be eligible and stated that they had a very basic understanding of how the CalWORKs program works. For example, they understood that they have a limited amount of time during which they can receive cash assistance and food stamps and that there are certain activities and paperwork that they have to complete in order to continue to receive benefits. However, they did not have a clear understanding of how the amount of their cash assistance and food stamps is determined and often did not understand why the amount of assistance they received goes up or down (or why their cash assistance goes down but their food stamps go up). In addition, participants had an uneven understanding of other benefits or services for which they may be eligible (for example, many participants did not know they could receive assistance to secure stable housing), or when or how their "clock started or stopped." In fact, several participants reported that they did not know how much time they had left in the program.

Participants reported that if they had questions or concerns regarding the services of benefits they are or are not receiving, they would typically contact their caseworker. However, they also expressed frustration at their inability to get a satisfactory or timely response from their caseworkers. Across focus groups, participants complained that getting in touch with their caseworkers by phone was difficult and in some cases impossible, and that it could take several days and sometimes even weeks for a caseworker to respond.

Participants were asked to give their perspective on the impact of participation in the CalWORKs program. With one exception, participants across the 12 focus groups reported that

CalWORKs had definitely helped them and their family. Participants identified cash assistance and food stamps as the most important aspects of the program, with someone noting that without them, they would be homeless or unable to feed their children. Although two of the participants reported that receiving assistance with child care had been the most useful service because it had allowed them to go back to school or to start working, some other participants voiced concerns about the burdensome requirements and process for accessing child care (and how long it took for the program to reimburse child care providers).

Participants were asked to identify the services that they had found the most helpful or important in helping them find a job or go to school. Most participants reported that the cash aid and food stamps had been the most helpful, but several participants reported that help with transportation and child care had also been extremely useful. Participants that had been going to school also mentioned the assistance they receive in paying for schoolbooks and fees as being very useful. Across focus groups, only three participants reported receiving help with housing (although it is important to note that housing was identified by staff across all of the focal counties as a significant need among participants). None of the participants reported receiving counseling or services for help with alcohol or drugs, and only a few of the focus group participants said they received mental health services or domestic violence services.

Participants discussed if, and how, the CalWORKs program supported their growth toward self-sufficiency. Across the focus groups, participants stated that they needed more options, particularly in terms of the educational options that the CalWORKs program was willing to accept,[43] help in finding a job, better volunteer opportunities that could turn into paying jobs, and more counseling services for issues related to mental health or domestic violence.[44]

CalWORKs Participants' Feedback on SB 1041

Across all 12 focus groups, the majority of CalWORKs participants reported they were unaware of the changes to the CalWORKs program as a result of SB 1041, which became effective in

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[43] In three of the focal counties, six participants commented that CalWORKs will provide support (e.g., help with books, etc.) if one is enrolled in a trade school or a community college, but not if one is attending a four-year college. Several also commented that their caseworker limited their choices of what schools to attend—this likely was in part due to concerns we heard from caseworkers of CalWORKs participants signing up for for-profit schools or training programs where there was not a demand for those job skills in the local market. Another individual wanted flexibility in selecting which adult school to attend for GED preparation.

[44] With respect to an interest in more counseling services for issues related to mental health, alcohol or drug treatment, or domestic violence, several participants in five of the six focal counties expressed the need for better information on what services were available to them. Some found out about the availability of mental health services, for example, from other participants and others researched online what services were offered by CalWORKs. They noted that caseworkers varied in terms of what services they would offer a participant or inform them about. Several domestic violence victims indicated they were told about domestic violence counseling service but did not receive a referral to them. Another individual said she was embarrassed to ask her caseworker about drug counseling services and said it would be useful if there were written materials she could have used to find out this information. In general, several participants per county indicated that having better information about what counseling services were available would have been helpful.

January 2013 and that affected the benefits and services that participants could receive under the program. Consistent with earlier findings, participants who had enrolled in the program after 2013 were not aware of changes to the CalWORKs program, but even participants who were in the program prior to 2013 either were not aware or had limited understanding of the policy reforms and the effects they could have.

Drilling down into the specific components of SB 1041, almost none of the participants said they knew that SB 1041 provided more flexibility in selecting activities they might want to pursue to help them achieve self-sufficiency, that changes had been made to the weekly core requirements, or that the short-term young child exemption had been eliminated. Some participants were aware that there had been adjustments to the numbers of participation hours required for single-adult families, although they did not know why these changes were made.

Participants were asked if they were familiar with the 24-month time clock, including whether they understood what it meant or how it worked. While several participants had heard the term, the vast majority across focus groups did not understand how it worked. Among those who were aware of the 24-month time clock, some reported having received a letter from CalWORKs on this aspect of SB 1041 while others indicated that this had been explained by caseworkers. At the same time, many participants did not know how much time they had left on their 24-month time clock (while much more aware of how much longer they were eligible for cash aid, based on the 48-month limit). In addition, all participants reported that at some point, a caseworker had talked to them about the types of activities they could participate in, but they didn't specifically link these activities to the 24-month time clock and in some cases, participants reported that they had been told about various activities only when they first enrolled in the program.

A recurring theme across the 12 focus groups was lack of information on activities they could participate in and services they could receive, along with the sense that caseworkers did not provide information on services and activities unless the participant specifically asked about them. A recurring complaint among participants across the focus groups was that caseworkers provided inconsistent information about and access to benefits or services and that there was a great deal of inconsistency in terms of the information caseworkers provided, how strictly they applied the program rules, and what programs, services, or benefits were offered to participants.

When asked about educational opportunities that were available to them, participants' comments were mixed. Some participants reported that their initial caseworker (when they first enrolled in the CalWORKs program) had talked to them about continuing their education and had discussed specific options. Others reported that they had looked into education programs themselves and reported back to their caseworker. Most of the participants were aware that they could complete their GED, attend some college courses, or could pursue vocational or technical training—but only at approved institutions. Some participants reported that they could continue to receive assistance from CalWORKs if they were attending a community college, but that they had been told that their assistance would stop once they transferred to a four-year university.

Others reported having been told that their assistance would continue even after they transferred to a four-year university.

In each of the six focal counties, two or three participants per focus group on average reported participating in educational activities while in CalWORKs, including GED programs, vocational training programs, or community college classes. Some indicated they had returned to school to complete their GED, while others were pursuing technical training as a nursing assistant or medical technician. A few said they were pursuing a university degree or had plans to go to a university; one participant reported that she had completed a university nursing degree as a result of the assistance she received from the CalWORKs program (that included cash assistance, food stamps, transportation, help with books and school fees, and child care). At least one participant per focus group mentioned receiving assistance from the CalWORKs program (e.g., aid for books, transportation, uniforms, etc.) to attend school. Many of the participants who were pursuing an educational option reported that CalWORKs program support was crucial in becoming self-sufficient and would allow them to get a better-paying job so that they could get off public assistance.

Among participants who were not pursuing an educational option, some reported that they had not discussed it with their caseworker or did not seem particularly interested, while others stated that there were barriers that made it difficult to pursue or continue their education. This included not having adequate child care or transportation, having to work to support their child or children, and not being able to afford fees or supplies that CalWORKs would not cover.

CalWORKs Participants' Reported Experiences with Caseworkers

Interactions between caseworkers and participants were a focus of discussion during the focus groups—an issue that affects the CalWORKs program as a whole and is particularly relevant to SB 1041, given the detailed changes that were brought about under the new legislation. First, participants described a high level of turnover among caseworkers (with participants commonly reporting between five and six caseworker changes—and, in a few extreme cases, as many as 20 to 25 caseworker changes) and in some cases, without participants' knowledge. This appeared to be very frustrating for participants as they were forced to explain their circumstances and needs to each new caseworker, in some cases, experiencing delays in getting assistance as a result.

Second, in each of the six focal counties, participants mentioned difficulty in contacting their caseworker and that, in some instances, it took the caseworker a long time to return messages. Several participants commented that the caseworker never called them back or responded to email or text messages. These individuals indicated that when they needed to see their caseworker, they would go to the CalWORKs offices in person, sometimes waiting several hours to see their caseworker. On the other hand, some participants reported positive experiences with their current or a previous caseworker, noting that the caseworker had been very responsive to their requests, was knowledgeable about what services and benefits they were eligible for, and had encouraged them to go to school.

Several participants in four of the six focal counties also expressed the view that caseworkers have such large caseloads that they often do not have enough time to talk to participants about their plan for getting off assistance or to discuss different options for doing so. In one instance, a participant was told by a supervisor that their caseworker's large caseload was the reason for the delay in the caseworker getting back to the client. Some focus group participants commented that time with caseworkers was spent primarily on completing and signing forms or on resolving sanctions or other issues with their aid, rather than discussing options for getting off aid.

In each of the six focal counties, several focus group participants reported that some caseworkers appeared overwhelmed and uninformed and that new caseworkers did not seem to be appropriately trained and were themselves unsure about different aspects of the CalWORKs program or the different options available to participants. In five of the six focal counties, several participants per county reported that they felt like they themselves had to research different options, services, or benefits and bring these to the attention of their caseworker. Others reported that caseworkers were careless with their paperwork, for example, losing forms they turned in or taking a long time to process their forms, resulting in sanctions or delays in reimbursement for services such as transportation or child care. Some of these participants indicated that they had learned to make copies of all the paperwork they turned in and to keep detailed records of their activities, dates they turned in the forms, and interactions with their caseworker in order to be able to prove that they fulfilled program requirements when their paperwork was lost or misplaced.

Finally, several participants in each of the six focal counties commented that some of the caseworkers were unprofessional in dealing with them and that they felt they had to avoid getting the caseworker upset for fear of reprisals or repercussions that may affect their aid or services they receive. Others said they had reported a caseworker to a supervisor in order to get assistance with a problem.

At the end of each focus group, the moderator asked participants to provide recommendations for improving the CalWORKs program. Recommendations provided by participants included the following:

- Create more time for caseworkers to spend with clients by hiring more caseworkers and reducing their caseload.
- Improve caseworkers' customer service as well as their knowledge about aspects of program requirements.
- Provide more information (e.g., written materials, website) that describes all the programs, services, and assistance available to them.
- Standardize access to programs, services, and assistance for all participants.
- Provide more information about options and modify the CalWORKs database/information system so that the system can generate a list of services, programs,

and types of aid for which the participant is eligible (rather than leaving this up to the discretion of the caseworker).

- Expand child care options and streamline the process for getting reimbursed for child care and transportation.
- Improve access to counseling services and housing, as well as enhanced job search supports.
- Improve access to educational opportunities, particularly for non–native English speakers.

Early Engagement Activities

At the state level, SB 1041 was negotiated within the context of new or expanded programs intended to maximize the promise of the 24-month time clock. Under AB 74, those programs, known collectively as "Early Engagement," include the OCAT, FS program, and ESE program. We gathered information from both county leaders and caseworkers regarding the components of AB 74, given their relationship with SB 1041.

OCAT

As noted earlier, state-level interview respondents characterized the OCAT as a key component that would support the implementation of SB 1041. In addition to standardizing the assessment process across all counties in the state, the OCAT was designed to provide a more in-depth assessment of clients' barriers and needs than what was typically done prior to SB 1041. As detailed in Appendix A, the OCAT is based on the federal TANF OWRA. A workgroup process modified the OWRA to produce the draft OCAT, which was initially tested with five "early user" counties and then customized based on the feedback. Subsequent piloting occurred with five counties (some overlapping) starting in mid-2014. Statewide training and implementation occurred in spring 2015 with a projected August 2015 time frame for statewide implementation.

Two of the six focal counties included in this study—Los Angeles and Sacramento—were pilot-testing the OCAT at the time of our 2015 site visits, with the other counties aware of the tool and awaiting training. The majority of focal county staff—leadership and caseworkers alike—across the counties described the OCAT as a vehicle to conduct a more comprehensive appraisal of an individual's needs and develop a tailored WTW plan to address their barriers. According to both leadership and caseworkers, the OCAT will likely lead to more effective and early identification of client barriers, improve the referral process to appropriate services, and increase referrals to the FS program. As one caseworker commented, "Once we start, using it will give us a clear direction on how to help our clients." Caseworkers also noted that, over time, their appraisal forms had been shortened considerably and the more comprehensive OCAT was seen as a positive step. In particular, leadership and administrators from one county emphasized

that the OCAT can serve as a vehicle to increase rapport and deepen a relationship between caseworkers and participants.

While county administrators and caseworkers across the two focal counties generally were positive about the potential of the OCAT, they identified a common set of concerns:

- *The OCAT is time-consuming, affecting scheduling procedures with clients and caseloads*. The most common concern—voiced by administrators and caseworkers in both focal counties—was the length of time it takes to use the OCAT, with some interview respondents stating it can require two to four hours to complete. Counties that were early implementers or piloted the OCAT reported that some CalWORKs participants found the assessment process long and burdensome and were unable to complete it in one sitting. Staff also commented that the amount of time needed to complete an OCAT for a client also affected the number of appraisals that a caseworker could conduct in a single day. This raised concerns about scheduling clients and potentially slowing down the process by which clients had their initial assessment done. Caseworkers were also worried about the impact of the OCAT on their caseloads.
- *The OCAT and other data systems are not currently compatible, resulting in duplication of data entry.* Administrators and caseworkers in both counties voiced concerns about duplication of data entry and concerns given that the OCAT did not interface with existing data collection systems, including the statewide automated welfare reporting systems (e.g., C-IV, CalWIN) or county-level systems (e.g., GEARS).
- *The OCAT may result in increased referrals to appropriate services; however, timely access to those services may remain a barrier.* Administrators and caseworkers from the focal counties expect to see an increase in referrals to appropriate services as a result of use of the tool. Even with the potential of the OCAT to increase referrals to appropriate services and to identify barriers up front, a concern was whether timely access to services would become an issue. One caseworker speculated that moving the assessment up front still does not address the problem of the length of time it takes to get access to services: "*Even for the clients, the process it takes for them to get the referral and appointment gets pushed out by a month for mental health; to get to Job Club, they still have to find child care, etc., which pushes them out to the next class*." Caseworkers pointed to finite resources to address needs newly identified through the OCAT. "*Community resources are limited, though. Networking more with the community so we don't feel limited is important. We can't identify barriers in the OCAT and not address them . . . it would be unethical*."
- *The sensitive nature of the questions included in the OCAT were a concern for both caseworkers and clients.* Staff from both counties that had piloted the OCAT or were early implementers expressed concerns about the sensitive nature of some of the questions being asked on the OCAT. The tool includes items focused on drug use,

domestic violence, and mental health issues—many caseworkers, for example, were worried about broaching these topics, particularly as they were at the beginning of their relationship with the client. On the other hand, several interview respondents noted that the OCAT can serve as a vehicle by which line staff can establish a strong relationship with clients.

Family Stabilization Program

AB 74 called for counties to create a Family Stabilization program, effective as of January 1, 2014. The goal of the FS program is to increase client success through more intensive case management and the assignment of clients to the additional activities or barrier removal services necessary to ultimately achieve self-sufficiency. The FS program is meant to support families as a whole and could include mental health treatment for families, substance abuse counseling, and transitory housing, to name a few supportive services. (See Appendix A for a detailed overview of the FS program.)

At the time of this report, all but one of the six focal counties had implemented an FS program. Two of the six counties reported being in the early stages of implementation and were in the process of establishing their programs and determining how to structure staffing. Two other focal counties appeared to be farther along in regard to FS implementation, due to existing social service systems they had in place. For example, one county reported having a robust preexisting infrastructure for domestic violence, mental health, and substance abuse services—with the introduction of FS, they are now focused on providing new behavioral health supports for children, as well as extended rental subsidies, which are services that were not offered previously. Three counties indicated they had hired new staff to support their respective programs.

Based on feedback from county leaders, the startup phase of FS was challenging for three of the five focal counties because it was an entirely new program and necessitated new budgeting processes and the development of partnerships with external social service providers. One county reported that it took six months after initially implementing their FS program to introduce housing services (in the interim, staff referred participants to homeless shelters). Within a month of rolling out the housing component of the FS program, it was put on hold for about two and a half months as an influx of housing referrals overwhelmed the system. The county then reopened the housing program after hiring more staff, although caseworkers are still restricted in the number of FS referrals they can make on a weekly basis, and the county further restricts the total number of referrals that are accepted each week.

In general, county leaders across the five focal counties that have implemented FS characterized the program as an effective strategy to support clients with significant needs and barriers. One county leader stated,

> It's an important piece to have [as part of] CalWORKs . . . up until this point, it was a referral-based [program] instead of case manage[ment]. I think it is real important to keep this program.

Another leader stated, "the Family Stabilization worker's job is to think outside the box and get those resources."

Compared with the comments of county leaders, perspectives on the FS program among county caseworkers were somewhat more mixed across the five implementing counties. Caseworkers in two counties were mostly positive about the program. In the others, some caseworkers shared either neutral or positive opinions of the new program. Caseworkers pointed to significant needs among clients that would require long-term support, particularly those with chronic issues around mental health or housing. One of the most significant client needs identified by focal county staff was housing. In three of the six focal counties, staff reported that the majority of referrals relate to homelessness or that homelessness was considered a significant barrier for families. A fourth county, which claimed child mental health concerns as its primary reason for referrals, also indicated that housing was a great need among families.

Caseworkers also identified several implementation issues related to the FS program. For example, in one county, the primary concern was that communication between the FS program and other caseworker staff needs improvement. Two other counties reported that their data system did not include FS information for clients, creating challenges with tracking information. Given that the program is relatively new, these initial implementation challenges are perhaps to be expected.

Expanded Subsidized Employment Program

The ESE is another part of the Early Engagement strategies. As noted in Chapter One, the program includes funds that counties may use to expand the number of subsidized employment slots available to CalWORKs participants. (See Appendix A for an overview of the ESE Program.)

Feedback from focal county staff regarding the ESE program was generally positive (with just one county leader sharing his opinion that subsidized employment does not typically lead to long-term employment for clients). One focal county leader explained how their ESE program is focused on developing a trained workforce, with the hope that it will, in turn, help attract new employers to the county, which are needed in their community. In another focal county, staff described their efforts to strengthen external partnerships to train participants and help them to secure employment (e.g., collaborative efforts between trade unions and community colleges to ensure new vocational classes are accredited). Technology was an integrated aspect in ESE programs in two of the focal counties (e.g., the development of a website to match job-ready individuals with potential employers). Caseworkers in the majority of focal counties referenced positive experiences with the ESE program for their clients, pointing to many who have been

motivated by the prospect of a permanent job, hired through the program, and, as a result, have been able to go off cash assistance.

Three of the six focal counties provided detailed information about their ESE program, revealing variation in the types of employer agreements and reimbursement rates. For example, in one county, a leader described a wide range of employers with ESE contracts, including preschools, tax credit agencies, restaurants, medical centers, law firms, public agencies, and nonprofits (such as Habitat for Humanity). Table 5.2 displays examples from three of the focal counties of county ESE program requirements.

County leadership in three of the six focal counties also shared information regarding ESE eligibility criteria. For example, participants can be identified during orientation, Job Club, or community work experience as a possible candidate for the ESE program. Leadership staff in one county explained that a participant must complete 30 days of WTW activities such as Job Club and an additional 30 days of community work experience (unpaid) before they can be referred to the ESE program. This process helps ensure that the participant is able to address any challenges related to employment (e.g., child care, transportation) before entering the ESE program. A service provider from one of these three counties noted that part of the referral process includes an intensive one-on-one interview with the prospective employee to ensure they are "job ready."

Ensuring clients are a "good fit" for ESE was reported to be a key factor that contributed to the success of the program. Caseworkers in four of the six focal counties explained that it can be challenging to encourage participants who would likely benefit from the program to enroll, and conversely, to guide other participants to explore more-appropriate options. For example, caseworkers in one county explained that some participants "have a lot of doubt about their employment opportunities and self-worth" and may not pursue the ESE program. ESE may not be the best program for all participants, explained a caseworker, and it can be difficult to get participants to understand that completing their GED might be better for them in the long term

Table 5.2. ESE Program Designs, by County

County A	County B	County C
• Employer must agree to hire participants if they successfully complete the program. • 100% reimbursement of wages; no cap on wages (industry standard) • Employer commits to keep employee for additional six months of unsubsidized employment. • Employer must hire for a job that is a minimum of 32 hours a week. • Necessary training is also subsidized prior to six months of work.	• Employer asked to consider each participant as a potential permanent employee. • Months 1–3: 75% of gross wage (up to $1500) is subsidized. • Months 3–4: 50% of gross wage is subsidized. • Months 5–6: 25% of gross wage is subsidized. • Necessary training paid for by county (outside of subsidy).	• Months 1–3: 100% reimbursement of wages. • Months 3–6: tiered step down of reimbursement. • Subsidy percentage depends on the type of work.

than working in a low-wage job. In addition, according to caseworkers, participants who are receiving other benefits, such as subsidized housing, do not always see the value of employment when it may mean reduction of or loss of their cash grant. Noncompliance with employment requirements can be a challenge if the "fit" is not right—for example, a caseworker estimated a 20- to 30-percent attrition rate from their ESE program due to lack of compliance with the program requirements.

Although the majority of focal county staff agreed with the vision of ESE and shared some of the positive perceived impacts of the program during our site visits, leaders and caseworkers in all six counties described a variety of ESE administrative challenges. These included the requirements to spend out other subsidized employment funds prior to using ESE resources, as well as to use ESE resources within a one-year period. ESE is also restricted by the time a participant has left on assistance—once a participant reaches his or her 48-month time limit, he or she is not allowed to remain in an ESE placement in most cases. Finally, participants who transition off of cash-aid, but remain in an ESE placement, do not count toward a county's WPR, a concern cited by one county staff member. Caseworkers in two counties also described administrative barriers in getting timely information about participant placements (e.g., caseworkers' frustration regarding a lack of information about when their participant entered the ESE program and only finding out about it from the participant directly).

Staff from four of the six counties also described external factors that were considered barriers to program implementation—namely, identifying and recruiting employers to participate in the program. First, employers must be willing to commit to hiring the participant as a full-time employee after the six months of subsidized employment. Second, it is difficult to find employers who are willing to hire participants with little work experience or who may have a criminal record. Third, the employment sites need to be available within the county. Leaders in two counties explained that the ESE program is focused on placing, in the words of one county administrator, the "cream of the crop" in employment and will have little impact on other, more-vulnerable participants, such as those without high school diplomas, with criminal records, or who are homeless.

County Perceptions of the Impact of SB 1041

The evaluation was designed to gather feedback from county staff about perceived impacts of SB 1041 on the lives of CalWORKs participants. In general, most county administrators and caseworkers indicated that the expanded set of options afforded under SB 1041 within the 24-month time clock was a positive change to the program and increased engagement among participants. However, some staff expressed concern that SB 1041 was detrimental to participants' progress toward self-sufficiency and may have had a negative impact on the caseworker-participant relationship. Education service providers also shared their enthusiasm

about the educational prospects that the legislation afforded participants. These issues are explored in detail in the following section.

Perspectives of County Administrators

When asked how they thought SB 1041 had affected participants, if at all, administrators in all six focal counties emphasized both the positive and negative consequences of the added flexibility that SB 1041 afforded participants with the 24-month time-clock period. Many talked about how participants were now "in the driver's seat"—they had the choice to decide how to use their time on assistance productively.

Some administrators viewed the increased flexibility within SB 1041 as a benefit to participants, noting that their engagement in the program had increased. For example, one administrator said: "In some aspects, participation is up, because clients are doing what they want instead of what the county is making them do." In addition, administrators in four of the six focal counties specifically discussed how SB 1041 would allow participants more freedom to pursue their educational goals (e.g., completing a GED, taking English as a Second Language courses, or earning a higher-level degree), and perceived this to be one of the most beneficial effects of this legislation. As one respondent stated, the option of school has always been available, but

> now they have two years with SB 1041, and the possibility of another year on the federal side . . . before they only had 12 months lifetime in education or vocational training . . . [having more time] takes off a lot of pressure.

Some administrators noted the downside of SB 1041's emphasis on flexibility and specifically voiced concerns around what they viewed as a lack of urgency among participants, particularly those with the young child exemption: "They don't have to report, and they still get aid . . . we're enabling to do nothing and get the extra two years." Another administrator spoke about how the legislation did not do enough to motivate participants toward self-sufficiency, as the consequences for noncompliance were not strict enough.

> We have a lot of carrots out there, without any sticks . . . The noncompliance process has to be fixed with more teeth. Telling someone they aren't engaged isn't enough—they're still fine because their kids are getting money.

Although in the minority, these administrators worried that the lack of structure within those two years guided participants away from the ultimate goal: getting off aid and becoming self-sufficient.

Perspectives of Caseworkers

Similar to county administrators, caseworkers in the focal counties also emphasized the increased flexibility within the 24-month time clock. In five of the six focal counties, caseworkers described their views on how the expanded options under SB 1041 encouraged some participants to become more engaged with CalWORKs and reach their educational goals.

In multiple counties, however, some caseworkers spoke of how the expanded flexibility under SB 1041 came at the price of hindering clients on the path to self-sufficiency, as the legislation removed participants' focus from the 48-month time-on-aid clock and placed it on the 24-month one. While caseworkers recognized that SB 1041 was intended to address barriers to participants' self-sufficiency (e.g., mental health issues, unstable housing, substance abuse issues, etc.), many believed that certain aspects of the 24-month time clock—such as the multiple exemptions that could be granted and the reduced hours for engagement—did not put the participants on the path to self-sufficiency.

In addition, caseworkers in four of the six focal counties specifically discussed how the changes that were brought about under the legislation altered their interactions and conversations with participants. Due to the perceived increase in the level of reporting and data entry that accompanied the implementation of SB 1041, caseworkers reported that they have much less time to spend with participants during the initial assessment meeting and subsequent check-ins. Furthermore, conversations with clients often were spent explaining the rules of the 24-month time clock and other components of SB 1041. One caseworker expressed her frustration, saying,

> We lost a human connection there because we were so worried about these lists and reports. Before [SB 1041], you could pick up on a client who had an issue that they weren't asking you about. We don't have time for that now.

For several caseworkers, the increased focus on data entry and reporting (especially as it pertained to the manual calculation and start/stop of the 24-month time clock) detracted from their primary role—counseling, encouraging, and monitoring participants throughout their time in the CalWORKs program. It is important to note that these caseworkers had yet to implement the OCAT.

Perspectives of Education Service Providers

Education service providers also shared their perspectives regarding the impact of SB 1041 on CalWORKs participants. Community colleges were excited about the educational prospects that the legislation afforded participants. The decreased number of required hours (from 35 to 20 hours per week) meant that participants could concentrate fully on their coursework without the added stressor of a job search. Providers also mentioned the increased opportunity for participants to take general education classes, earn an associate degree, or transfer to a four-year college. From the providers' standpoint, these options are more beneficial for participants, as opposed to certificates, as they were believed to be more likely to lead to sustained employment and eventual self-sufficiency. While these providers commended SB 1041 for its efforts to expand educational options, they also noted logistical issues that hampered participants' ability to maximize these opportunities. Some education providers reported that their respective counties did not engage participants early enough during their time on aid: "The county isn't engaging them right away, [and] all the while, the clock is still ticking . . . The recipient could have been receiving free tuition, books and supplies, and transportation during that time." Given

that participants' time on aid is limited, education providers viewed it as a disservice to not engage participants in educational activities as soon as possible. Other providers discussed how some participants attempted to complete their educational goals but were stymied by bureaucratic delays with their ancillary supports (e.g., uniforms and textbooks).

Despite these logistical issues, on the whole, educational service providers were enthusiastic about the changes implemented through SB 1041, and believed the legislation to have a positive impact on CalWORKs participants—although not yet fully realized after two years into implementation. For example, many community college representatives we interviewed commented they expected an increase in referrals to their education programs, since SB 1041 afforded more participants the opportunity to attend school. However, these representatives said they had not observed an increase in CalWORKs' participant referrals since the implementation of SB 1041. One community college representative spoke specifically to her county, noting: "SB 1041 is so complex—it allows more opportunity to clients, but at the same time the county is understaffed and overworked, so it seems like the focus is not on education."

6. Initial Descriptive Analyses for Status and Tracking Studies

Based on the intent of the legislation, SB 1041 is expected to change certain outcomes for WTW participants but may also have led to other, unintended or unforeseen, changes. Hence, it is an important part of this evaluation to examine and track a variety of key indicators of CalWORKs WTW participation. In this chapter, we offer a descriptive, statewide perspective of the CalWORKs WTW program at a point in time and over time. Using the state administrative data and methods described in Chapter Two (and summarized in the text box to the right), we examined the status of all CalWORKs WTW participants at specific points in time (status study) as well as outcomes over one- and two-year periods for cohorts of participants entering the program in the years leading up to and after the change on January 1, 2013 (tracking study). In Chapter Seven, we offer an initial look at how participant outcomes (program participation and employment) might be associated with the passage of SB 1041, rather than other factors such as the changing economy. We consider the findings here and in Chapter Seven tentative because implementation of SB 1041 is ongoing and there is insufficient post–SB 1041 data for a robust examination of findings. We expect to supplement the data that informs findings from additional sources for future reports.

Chapter Six Methods

- Based on analysis of state administrative data from WDTIP, MEDS, and EDD wage data.
- Analyses conducted for adults who were in the CalWORKs WTW program and were eligible to work, including those who may have been sanctioned, either prior to or after SB 1041 implementation.
- **Status study** examines the cross-section of all CalWORKs WTW participants in March 2013, March 2014, and March 2015; two subgroups are examined:
  - Transitional group: Started CalWORKs WTW before SB 1041 became effective and continued past January 2013.
  - Post–SB 1041 group: Started CalWORKs WTW in January 2013 or later.
- **Tracking study** examines four CalWORKs WTW entry cohorts: those who entered in March 2007, March 2009, March 2011, and March 2013; outcomes for each cohort are measured one or two years after entry.
- Indicators examined include time on aid, exemptions, sanctions, leaving the WTW program, employment, and earnings.
- A final analysis examines the pace of reengagement for the population with a short-term young child WTW exemption as of December 2012.
- See Chapter Two for more detail on data and methods.

The initial descriptive analyses in this chapter addressed the following research questions, which are listed below with a brief summary of findings.

- *In the first two years after entry, how much of the 48-month time-on-aid limit did WTW participants use? How much of the WTW 24-month time clock did they use?* After two

years, participants who started in the CalWORKs WTW program in March 2013 had used about nine months on average of the 48-month time limit and about two months of the WTW 24-month time clock.

- *What percentage of WTW participants were exempt from participating in WTW requirements?* The percentage of participants who received at least one exemption during their first two years in the CalWORKs WTW program increased from the March 2007 entry cohort to the March 2013 entry cohort (from 44 percent to 49 percent). Annual snapshots of all WTW participants since SB 1041 showed that in March of 2013 about four out of ten participants had an exemption, while in March of 2014 and March of 2015, about three out of ten participants had an exemption.
- *What percentage of WTW participants received a sanction?* The percentage of participants who received at least one sanction during their first two years in the CalWORKs WTW program was around 12 percent for the March 2007 entry cohort and 14 percent for the March 2013 entry cohort. Yearly snapshots since SB 1041 showed that, in a given March, about one out of eight participants were currently sanctioned.
- *What percentage of CalWORKs WTW participants were not participating one year after entry? What percentage were not participating two years after entry?* The percentage of participants who were not in the CalWORKs WTW program one year after entry changed little from the 2007 to 2013 entry cohorts (50 percent to 49 percent), while the percentage of participants who were not in CalWORKs two years after entry increased, rising from 64 percent for the 2007 entry cohort to 67 percent for the 2013 entry cohort.
- *What percentage of WTW participants were employed?* A larger percentage of the March 2013 entry cohort was employed for at least one quarter in the cohort's first two years after entry compared with the March 2007 entry cohort (61 percent versus 49 percent). In addition, the percentage of new participants who were continuously employed for their first year on WTW increased from 14 percent for the 2007 entry cohort to 17 percent for the 2013 entry cohort. Yearly snapshots after SB 1041 showed that a higher percentage of participants were employed in March 2015 compared with March 2013 (25 percent in 2013 and 31 percent in 2015).
- *How much did WTW participants who were employed earn?* For the March 2015 cross-section, employed participants earned about $2,300 per quarter on average, a 10 percent increase compared with the March 2013 cross-section.
- *How did status change from 2013 to 2015 among WTW participants who had the short-term WTW exemption for young children in December 2012?* Among the participants who had the short-term WTW exemption for young children in December 2012, 14 percent still had this exemption in March 2014 and almost none still had it in March 2015. Slightly more than half were not participating in the CalWORKs WTW program in March 2015.

In considering these findings, it is important to keep in mind that these comparisons over time—capturing indicators before and after SB 1041 became effective for either cross-sections of CalWORKs WTW participants or for CalWORKs WTW entry cohorts—do not necessarily mean that the changes are attributable to the SB 1041 policy changes. First, as discussed in Chapters Four and Five, although most provisions of SB 1041 became effective as of January 2013, the pace of implementation within the counties means that the policy changes had yet to be fully implemented by the end of the time period we examined. Thus, our analyses provide only an initial look at very short-term outcomes following the effective date of SB 1041. Second, changes in the composition of the CalWORKs WTW caseload, as well as the improving economy, are just two potential confounding factors that could also be contributing to the patterns we describe in this chapter. The analytic approach employed in Chapter Seven is designed to control for such factors, although those analyses must also be viewed as a first look given the limited data in the post–SB 1041 period available for analysis.

The rest of this chapter first describes the status and tracking studies' population and time frame, then presents results for the various indicators of participant status through one-month snapshots and participant experiences over time. For both the status and tracking studies, we examined information about time on aid, exemptions, sanctions, leaving the WTW program, employment, and earnings. Each of these studies provides a different perspective on these same topics. As a guide to the remainder of the chapter, Table 6.1 identifies which of the two studies (the status or tracking study or both) addressed each research question. In general, the status study addressed questions about participation at a point in time and the tracking study addressed patterns of participation over time.

Table 6.1. Research Questions Addressed by Status Study and Tracking Study

Research Question	Status Study	Tracking Study
In the first two years after entry, how much of the 48-month time-on-aid limit did WTW participants use? How much of the WTW 24-month time clock did they use?		X
What percentage of WTW participants were exempt from participating in WTW requirements?	X	X
What percentage of WTW participants received a sanction?	X	X
What percentage of WTW participants were no longer participating one/two years after entry?		X
What percentage of WTW participants were employed?	X	X
How much did WTW participants who were employed earn?[a]	X	
How did status change from 2013 to 2015 among WTW participants who had the short-term WTW exemption for young children in December 2012?[b]	Not applicable	Not applicable

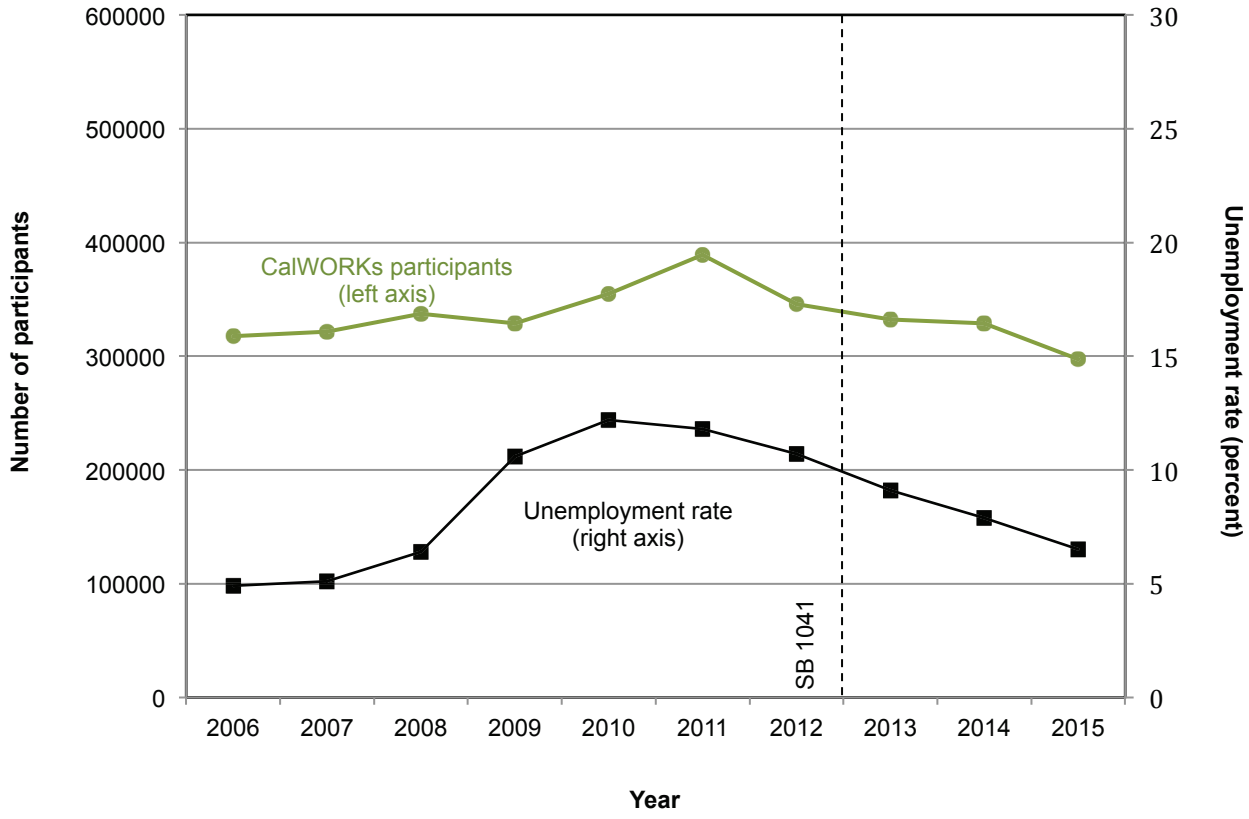
[a] Average real earnings were assessed for status study cross-section members who were employed.
[b] This research question does not use status study cross-sections or tracking study entry cohorts. Rather, it uses a group of participants who had the short-term WTW exemption for young children in December 2012.

All analyses in this chapter are descriptive and are limited to the data available at the time of writing this report.[45] Unless otherwise stated, all percentages shown in the figures in this chapter are based on the total number of participants within each cross-section, cohort, or subgroup. Tables that underlie all the figures in this chapter are located in Appendix E.

CalWORKs WTW Participant Demographics

This section describes the size and demographic composition of the CalWORKs WTW adult work-eligible participants from 2006 through 2015 who were included in the analyses presented in this chapter. The number of adult CalWORKs WTW participants rose steadily from 2006 through 2011, from 317,751 to 389,047 participants (Figure 6.1, measured on the left vertical axis). After peaking in 2011, the number of adult participants declined to 297,325 in 2015. Unemployment (superimposed on Figure 6.1, measured on the right vertical axis) peaked in 2010, one year before participation

Figure 6.1. Number of CalWORKs WTW Participants and Unemployment Rate: 2006 to 2015



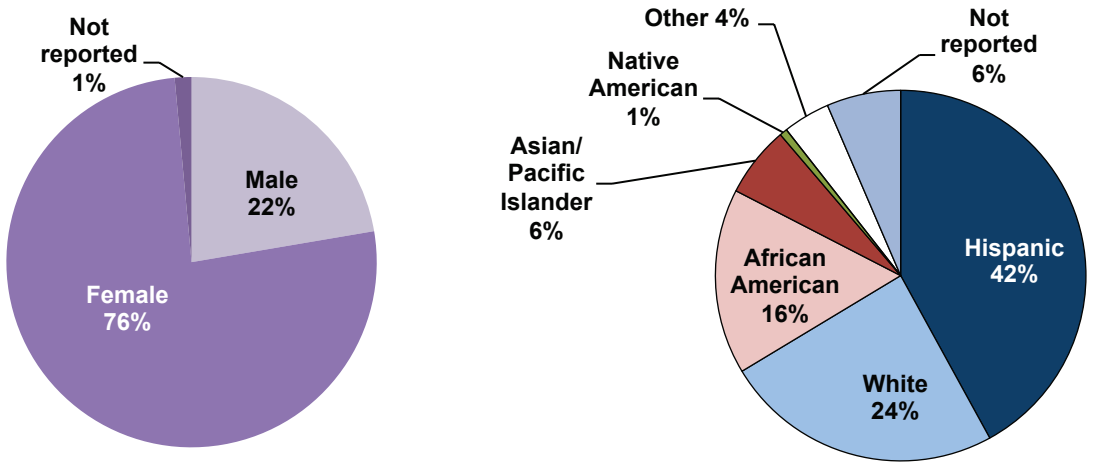
SOURCES: WDTIP, 2006 to 2015; EDD unemployment data.
NOTES: Participation is measured in March of each year. CalWORKs WTW participants are defined as adults who were in the CalWORKs WTW program and were eligible to work, including those who may have been sanctioned.

[45] For future reports, we expect to receive additional data on a wider range of topics from county consortia. Appendix B provides additional information about expectations for future reporting.

peaked, and both have declined since those peaks. It is important to note that other factors in addition to the economy may influence CalWORKs WTW participation, such as grant reductions and changes in the young child exemption (see Chapter One for additional discussion of caseload trends).

In 2015, more than three-quarters of adult CalWORKs WTW participants were female (76 percent) and 42 percent were Hispanic (Figure 6.2).[46] Compared with the demographic breakdown of the California labor force as a whole, there were more CalWORKs WTW participants who identified as Hispanic (42 percent compared with 36 percent). Also, more participants were African American (16 percent compared with 6 percent) and fewer were white (24 percent compared with 74 percent). A small percentage of CalWORKs WTW participants were Asian/Pacific Islander (6 percent) or Native Americans (1 percent).[47] In March 2015, the median age of CalWORKs WTW participants was 29 years old.[48]

Figure 6.2. Percentage of CalWORKs WTW Participants by Gender and by Race/Ethnicity: 2015



SOURCES: WDTIP and MEDS files.
NOTES: Gender and race or ethnicity are measured in March 2015. Numbers may not add to 100 because of rounding.

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[46] We examined the percentage of females and the racial or ethnic distribution each year from 2006 to 2015; however, earlier periods have higher missing rates (up to 23 percent missing for sex; up to 26 percent missing for race or ethnicity). Figure 6.2 displays the percentage of females and males and the percentage of distribution by race or ethnicity for the latest year only, March 2015, where the missing rate is lower (1 percent for sex; 6 percent for race or ethnicity). There was little change in the distribution across the years. See Appendix E for distributions prior to 2015.

[47] The source of the California population demographics is the California Demographic Labor Force Summary Tables—August 2015 (California Employment Development Department, 2015). The definition of the civilian labor force includes people ages 16 years and older; not members of the armed services; and not in institutions such as prisons, mental hospitals, or nursing homes. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race.

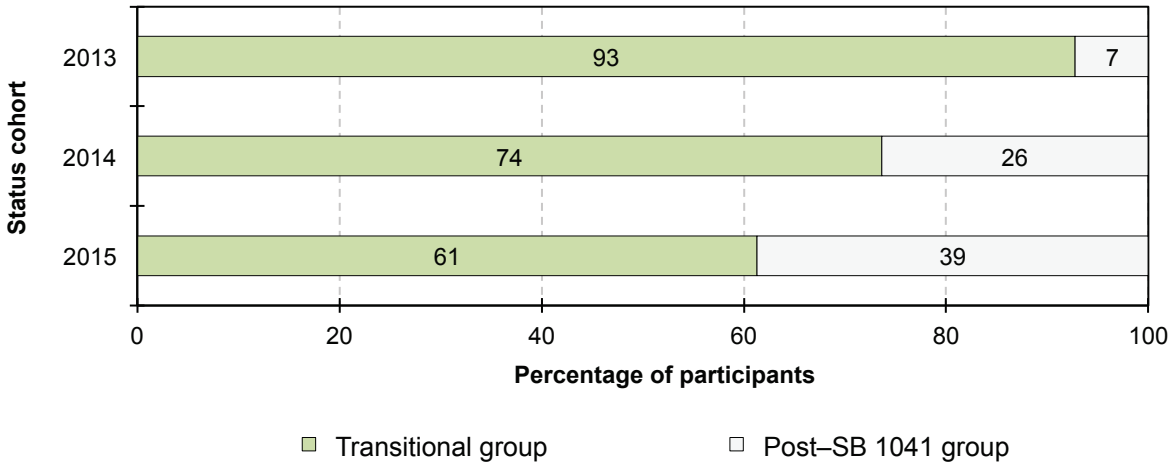
[48] We examined the median age of CalWORKs participants each year from 2006 to 2015. There was little change in the distribution across the years. See Appendix E for the distribution prior to 2015.

CalWORKs WTW Participant Counts for Status and Tracking Studies

From 2013 to 2015, the number of adult CalWORKs WTW participants declined by 11 percent (see the last three periods in Figure 6.1). The 2013 status cross-section had 332,186 participants compared with 328,854 for the 2014 status cross-section and 297,325 for the 2015 status cross-section. Moreover, the percentage of CalWORKs WTW participants who were subject to the SB 1041 rules for their entire time on assistance (the post–SB 1041 group) increased substantially as existing cases closed and new ones opened. In March 2013, only 7 percent of all participants entered the CalWORKs WTW program for the first time after SB 1041, a share that increased to 26 percent and 39 percent in 2014 and 2015, respectively (Figure 6.3). As time progresses, a larger share of participants will have only experienced CalWORKs WTW under SB 1041 rules and procedures.

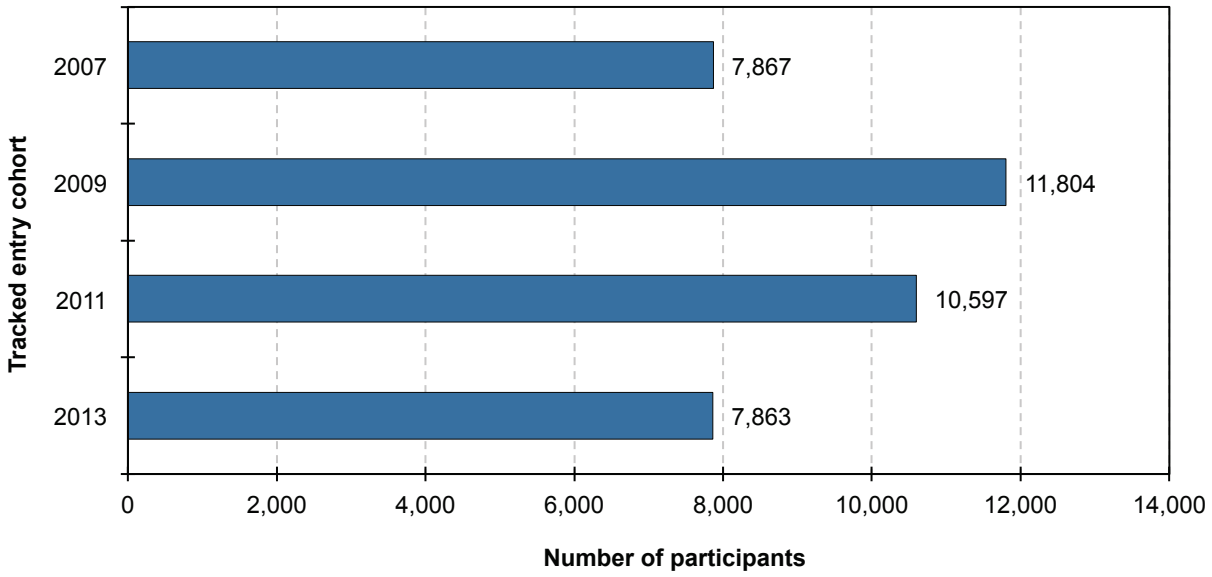
The counts for the status study included *all* adult CalWORKs WTW participants in a given March, whereas the counts for the tracking study included only *new* participants in a given March. These cohorts of new participants allowed us to track participation and employment outcomes from a common starting point (i.e., controlling for differences in the program tenure of subsequent cross-sectional participant samples). In March of 2007, 2009, and 2011, there were 7,867, 11,804, and 10,597 new participants, respectively (Figure 6.4). In March 2013, three months after SB 1041 started, there were 7,863 new participants.

Figure 6.3. Percentage of CalWORKs WTW Participants in the Transitional Group and Post–SB Group: Status Cross-Sections in March 2013, March 2014, March 2015



SOURCE: WDTIP files.
COUNTS: 2013: 332,186; 2014: 328,854; 2015: 297,325.

Figure 6.4. Number of New CalWORKs WTW Participants: Tracked Entry Cohorts 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013



SOURCE: WDTIP files.

Time on Aid and WTW Time Clock

In the First Two Years After Entry, How Much of the 48-Month Time-on-Aid Limit Did WTW Participants Use? How Much of the WTW 24-Month Time Clock Did They Use?

As discussed in Chapter Five and Appendix A, CalWORKs WTW participants' time on aid under SB 1041 is monitored by time clocks. As part of the SB 1041 reforms, the CalWORKs WTW program established a new WTW 24-month time clock that counts months concurrently with the 48-month time-on-aid clock. Once those 24 months have been exhausted, participants are subject to the stricter work requirements of the federal TANF program. If, however, the participant meets the more stringent federal TANF requirements, months on the 24-month clock are not counted. As before SB 1041, the second clock counts the total time that the adult has been on aid, which is limited to 48 months. Additionally, some CalWORKs WTW participants may receive an exemption, which allows them to continue receiving aid without counting the time against their 24-month time clock or 48-month time-on-aid clock. Therefore, we also examined months of participation (i.e., months of receiving aid) in contrast to months counted against their time clocks.

In our evaluation, we focus on both the WTW 24-month clock that emerged as a result of SB 1041 and the overall 48-month time-on-aid clock. As of March 2015, few participants were at the WTW 24-month time limit, so it is premature to assess how many participants are reaching this limit and what is happening to them when they do. In addition, WDTIP is limited in

providing the factors that influence time on aid. For future reports, we expect to draw on data from county consortia to have a fuller understanding of time spent on the 24-month time clock.

For the participants in the 2007, 2009, 2011, and 2013 tracked entry cohorts, we calculated the cumulative number of months of participation and the cumulative number of months counted on the 24-month and 48-month time clocks within two years after entry. Since the 24-month time clock did not exist before 2013, we examined the 48-month time-on-aid clock to offer an historical perspective. We examined how the gap between participation and counted months differed among the cohorts.

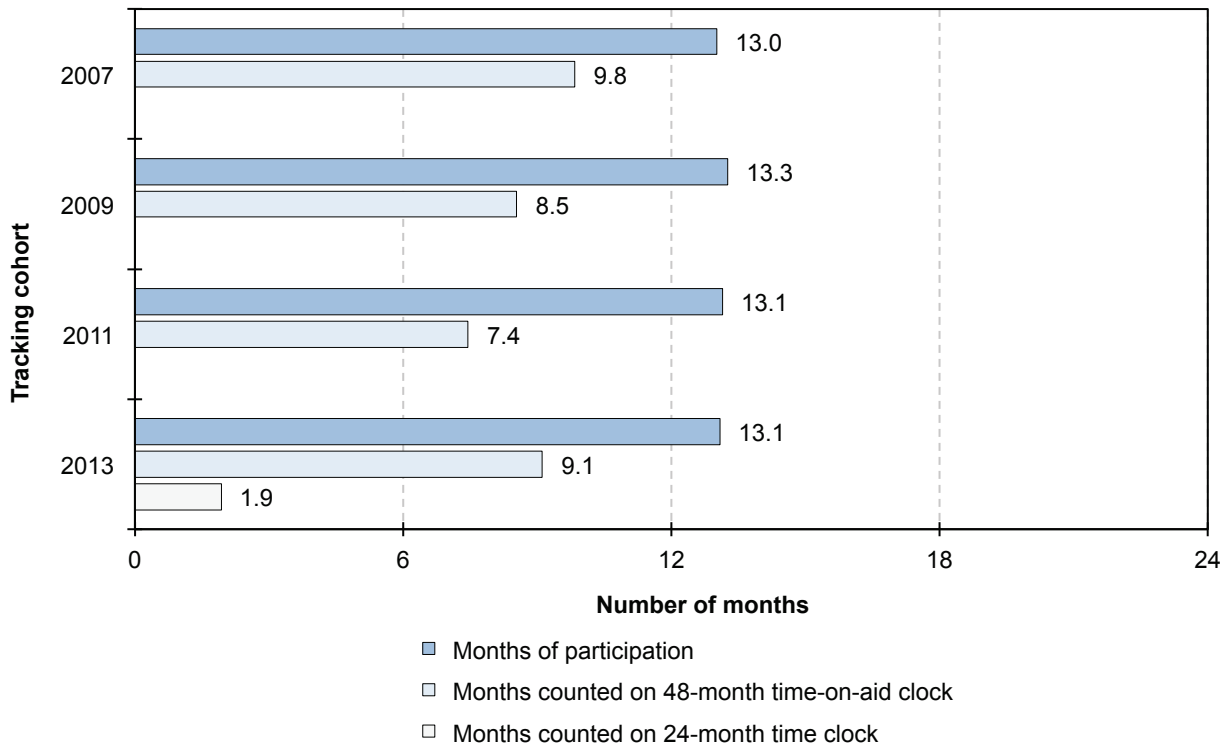
Participants in all cohorts participated in the CalWORKs WTW program for 13 months, on average, during the two years following entry. The 2011 cohort had the fewest months counted on the 48-month time-on-aid clock (seven out of 24 months counted on average), and the 2007 cohort had the most months counted on the 48-month time-on-aid clock (nearly ten out of 24 months counted on average).[49]

In addition, we examined how many months were counted on the 24-month clock for the 2013 entry cohort (the post–SB 1041 cohort) and compared it with the count on the 48-month time-on-aid clock. As of February 2015, the 2013 cohort had on average slightly less than two months counted on the 24-month clock and slightly more than nine months counted on the 48-month time-on-aid clock (Figure 6.5). The fact that the average 24-month clock number is so small may suggest a number of different possibilities: (1) few were approaching their 24-month time limit in 2015, (2) some counties were not able to implement the 24-month clock rules until well after SB 1041 took effect, (3) some CalWORKs WTW participants met federal work participation requirements, causing their 24-month clock not to move forward, and (4) some participants have exemptions or sanctions that caused both clocks to stop.

Another factor is the number of months of CalWORKs WTW participation compared with the number of months counted on the time clocks. The gap is greatest between the months counted on the 24-month time clock and participation months for the 2013 entry cohort (a gap of about 11 months; Figure 6.5). The next largest gap, between the 48-month time-on-aid clock and participation, is nearly six months for the 2011 cohort. The 2007 cohort, on the other hand, had the smallest gap, at three months.

[49] For the tracking study, months of participation and time counted on clocks were measured for the 24 months after entry, including the entry month. For example, for the 2013 cohort, the entry month was March 2013, and we counted the 24 months from March 2013 to February 2015. For the 2013 tracking entry cohort, months of participation ranged from one to 24 months, months counted on the 48-month time-on-aid clock ranged from zero to 24 months, and months counted on the WTW 24-month clock ranged from zero to 23 months.

Figure 6.5. Average Number of Months of Participation, Counted on the 48-Month Time-on-Aid Clock, and Counted on the 24-Month Time Clock Two Years After Entry: Tracked Entry Cohorts 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013



SOURCE: WDTIP files.
COUNTS: 2007: 7,867; 2009: 11,804; 2011: 10,597; 2013: 7,863.

Exemptions and Sanctions

What Percentage of WTW Participants Were Exempt from Participating in WTW Requirements? What Percentage of WTW Participants Received a Sanction?

Exemptions and sanctions are two major reasons for stopping the 24-month time clock. Participants may be exempted from WTW activity requirements if they meet certain criteria, such as caring for an ill family member or having a medical disability. SB 1041 also introduced new exemptions in January 2013 particular to the 24-month time clock. Furthermore, participants may be sanctioned for noncompliance with WTW activity requirements.

Across the 2013, 2014, and 2015 status cohorts, the proportion of participants who had exemptions in a given March decreased by 11 percentage points or 30 percent (Figure 6.6).[50] In

[50] The exemptions and sanctions shown in Figures 6.6 and 6.7 stop the WTW 24-month time clock and/or the 48-month time-on-aid clock. The exemption and sanction categories are not mutually exclusive. The "Exemption" category includes Exemption Codes 300-310, 313-322, 376, and 377, while the "WTW 24-MTC Exemption"

March 2013, 40 percent of participants had an exemption, compared with 32 percent in March 2014 and 29 percent in March 2015. In March 2013, a smaller proportion of the post–SB 1041 group had an exemption compared with the transitional group (29 percent compared with 41 percent), but in 2014, the gap between the two groups had narrowed and reversed (31 and 34 percent for the transitional and post–SB 1041 groups, respectively) and in 2015, the gap was somewhat wider (27 percent and 32 percent for the same groups, respectively).

The proportion of participants who had exemptions specific to the new WTW 24-month time clock increased over time (Figure 6.6). In March 2013, 3 percent of participants had at least one of these exemptions, which increased to 8 percent in 2014 and 9 percent in 2015. Both the transitional group and the post–SB 1041 group exhibited a similar pattern to the overall pattern. Three percent of the transitional group had at least one of the new WTW 24-month time clock exemptions, which increased to 9 percent in 2014 and 2015; 1 percent of the post–SB 1041 group had this type of exemption in 2013, which increased to 7 percent in 2014 and 8 percent in 2015.

Sanctions were much less prevalent than exemptions (Figure 6.6). Across all participants in all three years, the proportion of participants who had a sanction stayed nearly the same (13 percent in 2013 and 2014; 12 percent in 2015). In all three years, a higher percentage of the transitional group had sanctions compared with the post–SB 1041 group. Between 14 and 16 percent of the transitional group had sanctions in March 2013, 2014, and 2015, compared with 0 to 6 percent of the post–SB 1041 group. Furthermore, a smaller percentage of the post–SB 1041 group had at least one sanction compared with the transitional group. Though the difference between the groups shrank from 2013 to 2015, there remained a difference of 9 percentage points between participants with sanctions in the transitional and post–SB 1041 groups in 2015.

This difference in sanctions between the two groups may reflect the longer period of time that the transitional group had been in the CalWORKs WTW program at the point of assessing their status in March of each year. However, while the post–SB 1041 group was less likely to be sanctioned in March of each year compared with the transitional group, they were almost as likely to be exempted.

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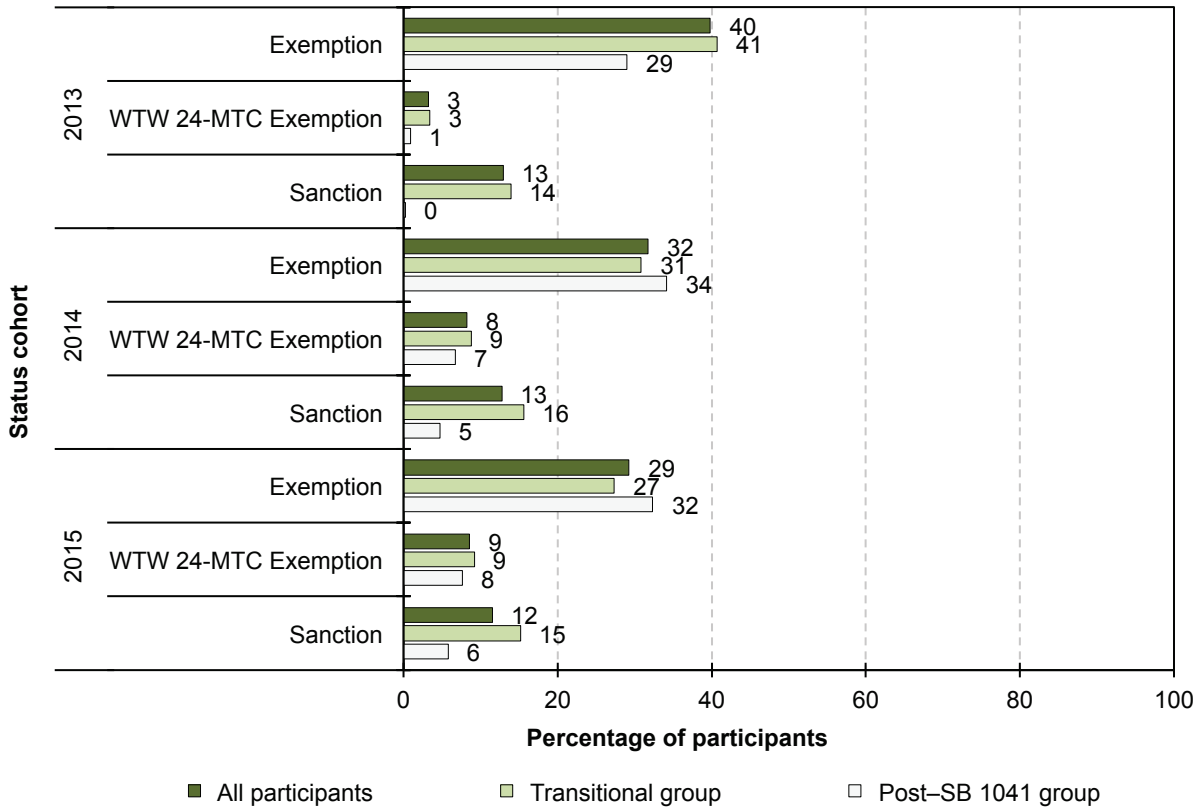
category includes only the four exemptions that started January 1, 2013 (Exemption Codes 319-322). The "sanction" category includes three WTW noncompliance sanctions, Exemption Codes 200-202.

Figure 6.6. Percentage of Participants Who Had an Exemption or Sanction that Stopped the Clock: Status Cross-Sections and Transitional and Post–SB 1041 Groups in March 2013, March 2014, March 2015

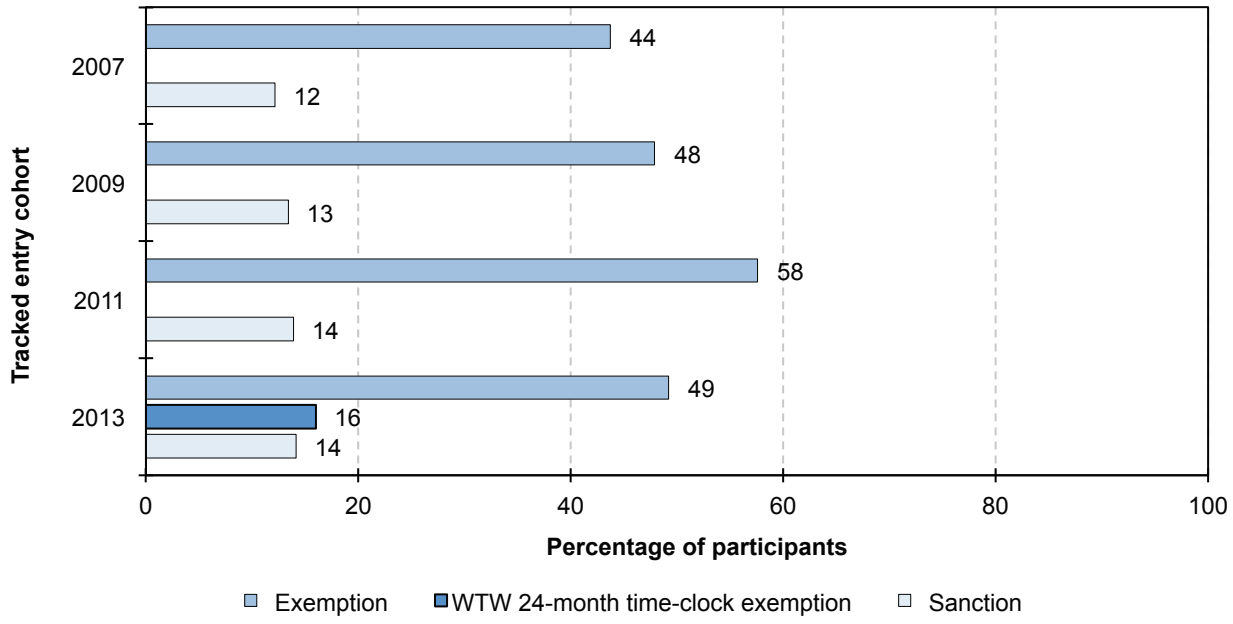


SOURCE: WDTIP files.
COUNTS: 2013: 332,186; 2014: 328,854; 2015: 297,325.

Analysis based on the tracked entry cohorts yielded similar findings as with status cross-sectional snapshots and adds a prepolicy trend. For each tracked entry cohort, the percentage of participants who received at least one exemption within two years was substantially greater than the percentage receiving at least one sanction (Figure 6.7).[51] However, the percentage of participants who received a sanction within two years remained between 12 and 14 percent across the years, whereas the percentage receiving exemptions within two years increased from 2007 to 2011 (44 percent of the 2007 cohort, 48 percent of the 2009 cohort, 58 percent of the 2011 cohort) then decreased (49 percent of the 2013 cohort). The 2013 tracked entry cohort is the first to have WTW 24-month time clock exemptions, and 16 percent of participants had one of these exemptions within two years after entry.

[51] For the tracking study, the presence of exemptions and sanctions were measured for the 24 months after entry including the entry month. For example, for the 2013 cohort, the entry month was March 2013, and we counted months from March 2013 to February 2015.

Figure 6.7. Percentage of Participants Who Had at Least One Exemption or at Least One Sanction That Stopped the Clock Within Two Years After Entry: Tracked Entry Cohorts 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013



SOURCE: WDTIP files.
COUNTS: 2007: 7,867; 2009: 11,804; 2011: 10,597; 2013: 7,863.

Leaving the WTW Program

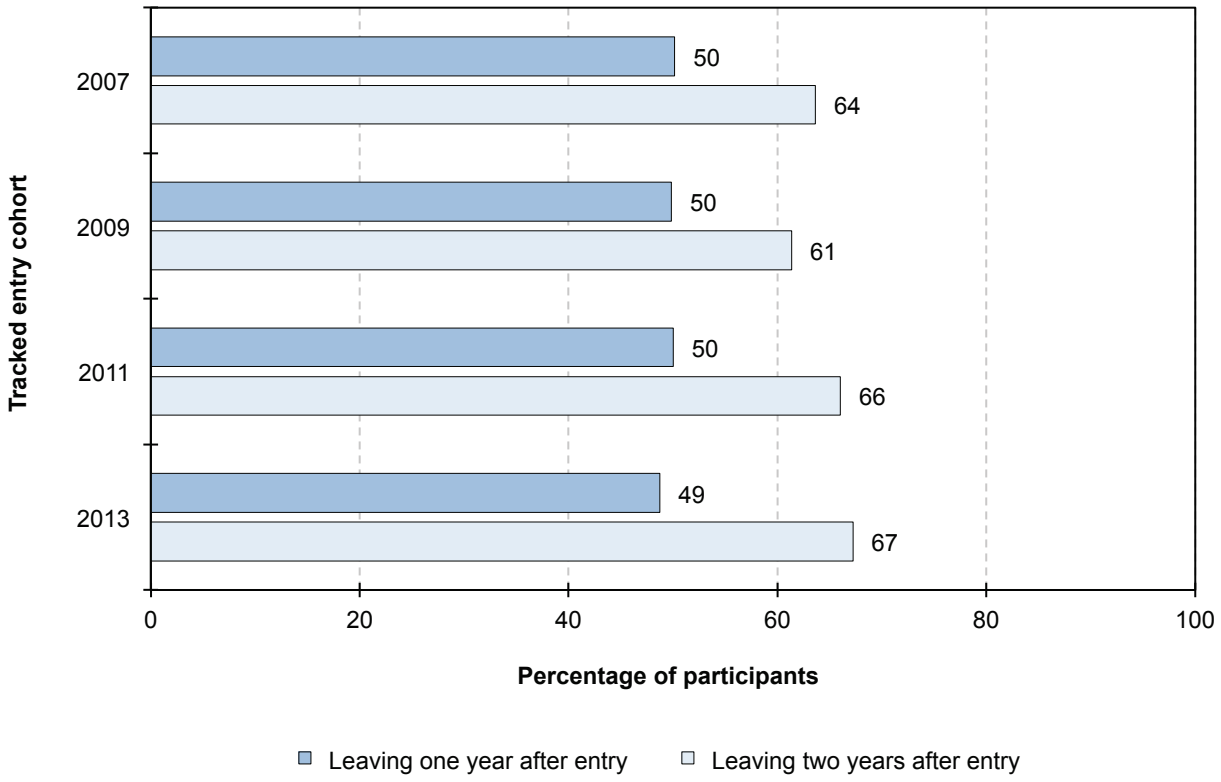
What Percentage of WTW Were Not Participating One Year After Entry? What Percentage of WTW Participants Were Not Participating Two Years After Entry?

Leaving the CalWORKs WTW program describes participants' exits from the program. Leaving the CalWORKs WTW program is a fluid concept because participants sometimes leave the program for a period of time and may return months or years later. To create a comparable measure across time for assessing program exits, we defined participants as having "left the program" if they were not observed as a participant in the program at given points in time after entry. We measured leaving at two points in time: the percentage of participants in a given entry cohort who were not in the program one year after first entry and two years after first entry.[52]

[52] We measured "leaving the WTW program after one year" as a participant who was not in the program during the last month of their first year of participation after beginning the program. For the 2013 cohort who started in March 2013, participants who were not present in the program in February 2014 were counted as leaving the program. We measured "leaving the WTW program after two years" as participants who were not in the CalWORKs program during the last month of their second year of participation after beginning the program. For the 2013 cohort who started in March 2013, those not present in the program in February 2015 were counted as leaving the program.

For the four tracked entry cohorts, the percentage of participants absent from the CalWORKs WTW program (i.e., not participating) at the one-year mark is consistent across time, about 50 percent (Figure 6.8). Absence at the second-year mark fluctuated across the years, from 64 percent and 61 percent in 2007 and 2009, respectively, to 66 percent and 67 percent in 2011 and 2013, respectively.

Figure 6.8. Percentage of Participants Who Left the WTW Program One Year and Two Years After Entry: Tracked Entry Cohorts 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013



SOURCE: WDTIP files.
COUNTS: 2007: 7,867; 2009: 11,804; 2011: 10,597; 2013: 7,863.

Participants who were sanctioned at those points in time were considered participants and, hence, not considered to have left the program.

Employment and Earnings

What Percentage of WTW Participants Were Employed? How Much Did WTW Participants Who Were Employed Earn?

One of the SB 1041 policy goals is improved long-term employment and earnings. This section offers an initial examination of employment patterns because only about two years had elapsed since the policy change at the time of the analysis in this report.[53]

By several measures, CalWORKs WTW participants increased their workforce participation over time. First, we examined the percentage of participants who were employed in the status cross-sections as of March 2013, 2014, and 2015. Next, we compared employment across the tracked entry cohorts during their first and second years of participation.[54]

Status snapshots in 2013, 2014, and 2015 indicate that a larger percentage of participants in March of each year were employed across time (Figure 6.9). The percentage of all participants who were employed increased from 25 percent in 2013 to 31 percent in 2015. (In relative terms, this represents an increase of 21 percent from 2013 to 2015.) The percentage employed increased among both the transitional group and post–SB 1041 group. The percentage among the transitional group increased from 25 percent to 32 percent from 2013 to 2015, while among the post–SB 1041 group there was a more modest increase from 27 percent to 29 percent.

We examined quarterly earnings among all participants in the annual snapshots who were employed.[55] Among the employed participants in March 2013, 2014, and 2015, quarterly earnings increased across the years after adjusting for inflation (Figure 6.10).[56] In March 2013, all employed participants with earnings earned an average of $2,062 per quarter, which increased to $2,289 by 2015, a 10-percent increase.

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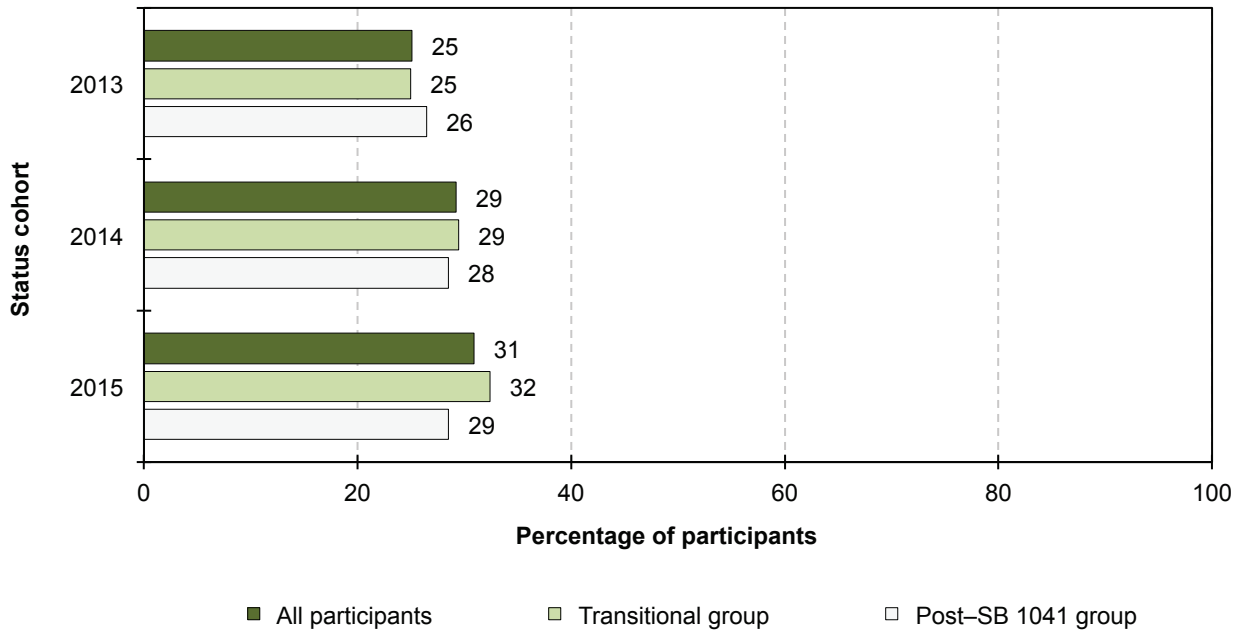
[53] In addition to improved long-term employment and earnings, another SB 1041 policy goal is for participants to have increased access to services and educational opportunities in the first 24 months of participation compared with the past. Participation in services may influence employment rates. In future reports, we expect to use county consortia data to examine participation in services and educational activities along with employment rates.

[54] We measured continuous employment in the first year after entry as participants who were employed in the four quarters following, but not including, the entry month because employment data were measured in calendar quarters (i.e., the first quarter of the calendar year is January, February, and March). For example, for March 2013 entrants, we determine whether they were employed in the four quarters covering the months April 2013 to March 2014. We measure continuous employment in the second year after entry as participants who were employed in the four quarters following the first year after entry. For example, for March 2013 entrants, we determine whether they were employed in the four quarters covering the months from April 2014 to March 2015. Employment was measured regardless of participation in CalWORKs.

[55] The transitional and post–SB 1041 groups had very similar earnings in March 2013, 2014, and 2015 (within $26.00) and are not shown in Figure 6.10. See Appendix E for average earnings by group.

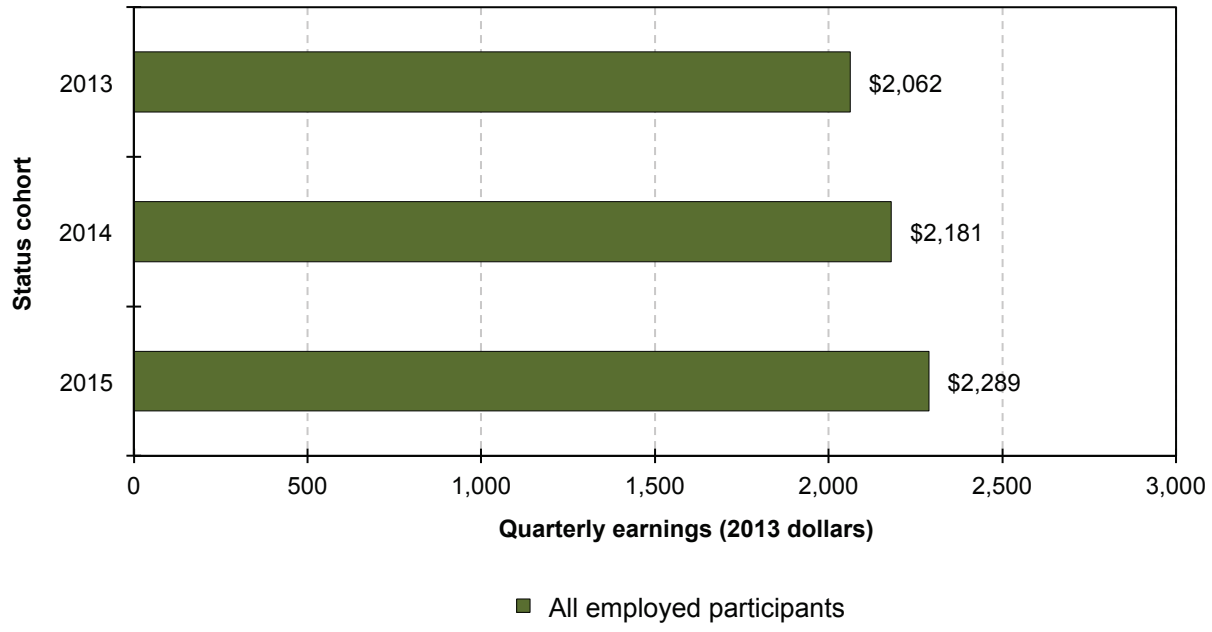
[56] We used the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all urban consumers (BLS, 2015a) to adjust earnings to 2013 first-quarter dollars. The average is based on participants who earned more than $0.

Figure 6.9. Percentage of Participants Who Were Employed: Status Cross-Sections and Transitional and Post–SB 1041 Groups in March 2013, March 2014, March 2015



SOURCES: WDTIP and EDD files.
COUNTS: 2013: 332,186; 2014: 328,854; 2015: 297,325.

Figure 6.10. Average Real Quarterly Earnings of All Participants Who Were Employed: Status Cross-Sections in March 2013, March 2014, March 2015

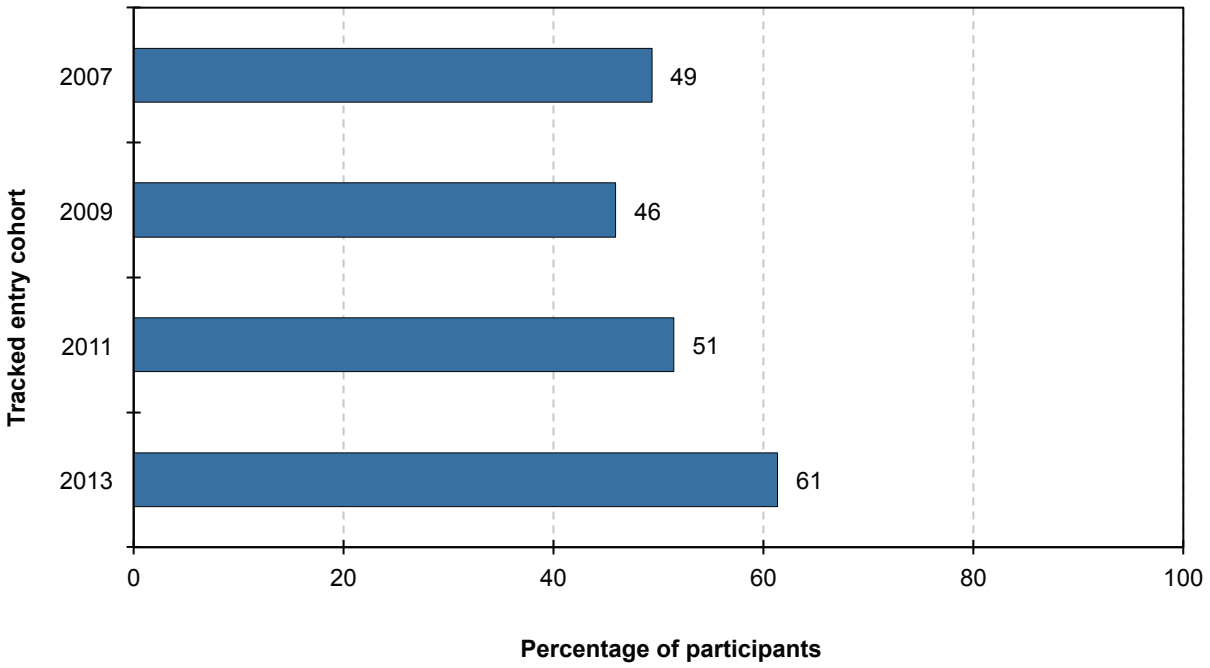


SOURCES: WDTIP and EDD files.
COUNTS: 2013, 83,152; 2014, 95,846; 2015, 91,665.
NOTE: Quarterly earnings are measured in 2013 first-quarter dollars using the CPI (BLS, 2015a) to adjust for inflation.

Next, we examined employment patterns for the tracked entry cohorts to assess the level of employment and found that later cohorts had higher employment rates than earlier cohorts (Figure 6.11). We assessed what percentage of each cohort was employed for at least one quarter during the first two years after entering the CalWORKs WTW program. The rate of employment was lowest for the earlier time periods (49 percent and 46 percent) and highest for the latest cohort (61 percent).

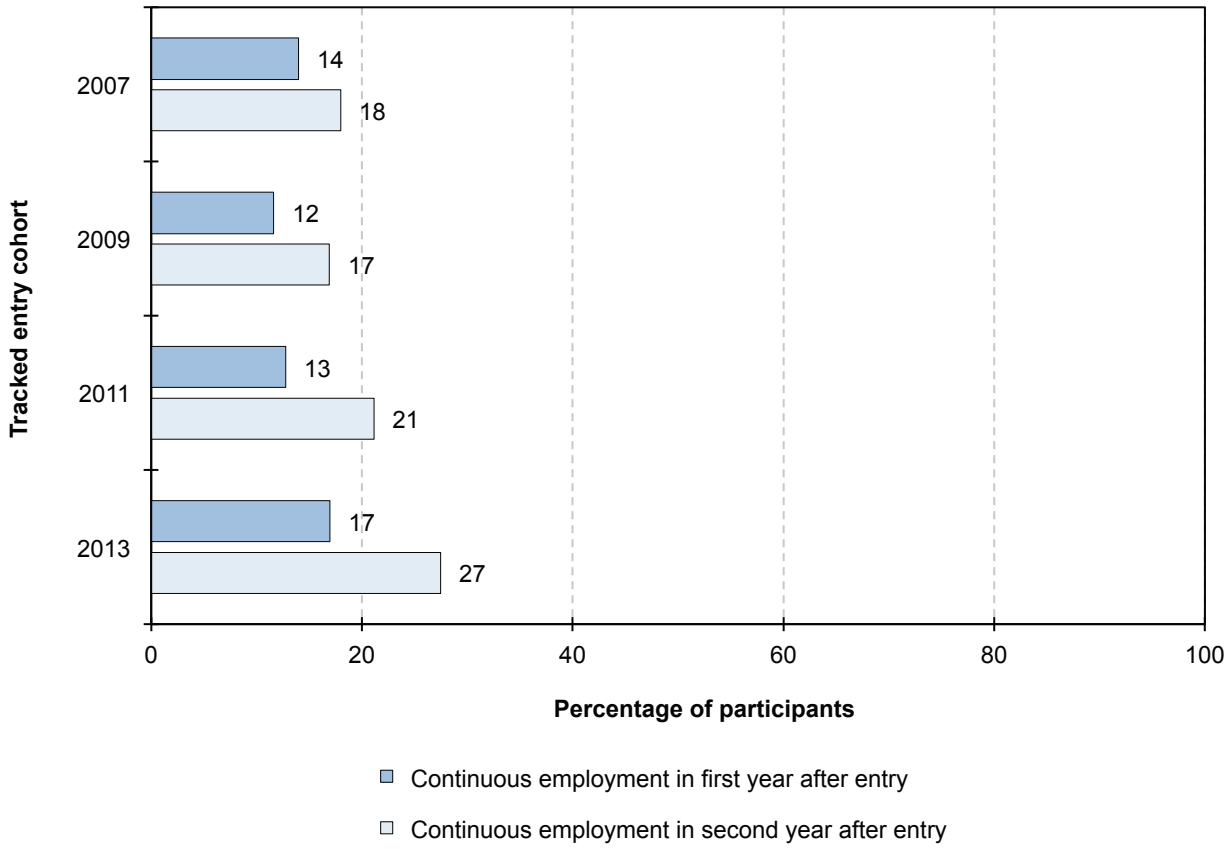
Our final look at employment was to examine employment continuity. For each tracked entry cohort, we compared the percentage of participants who were continuously employed during their first year of CalWORKs WTW participation with the percentage who were continuously employed during their second year. For all cohorts, a larger portion of participants were continuously employed during their second year after starting the CalWORKs WTW program compared with their first year (Figure 6.12). However, the 2013 cohort stands out from the other cohorts with a higher percentage of participants continuously employed during their first and second years of participation compared with other cohorts. The percentage of continuously employed participants during the first year of participation was 14, 12, and 13 percent, respectively, for the 2007, 2009, and 2011 cohorts compared with 17 percent for the 2013 cohort. Similarly, the percentage continuously employed during the second year of participation was 18, 17, and 21 percent, respectively, for the 2007, 2009, and 2011 cohorts compared with 27 percent

Figure 6.11. Percentage of Participants Who Were Employed for at Least One Quarter in the Subsequent Two Years After Entry: Tracked Entry Cohorts 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013



SOURCES: WDTIP and EDD files.
COUNTS: 2007: 7,867; 2009: 11,804; 2011: 10,597; 2013: 7,863.

Figure 6.12. Percentage of Participants Who Had Continuous Employment During the First Year and During the Second Year After Entry: Tracked Entry Cohorts 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013



SOURCES: WDTIP and EDD files.
COUNTS: 2007: 7,867; 2009: 11,804; 2011: 10,597; 2013: 7,863.

for the 2013 cohort. Furthermore, the 2013 cohort had a larger percentage-point increase in continuous employment from the first year to the second year of participation (difference of 4, 5, 8, and 10 percentage points for the 2007, 2009, 2011, and 2013 cohorts, respectively).

Reengagement

How Did Status Change from 2013 to 2015 Among WTW Participants Who Had the Short-Term WTW Exemption for Young Children in December 2012?

This section uses neither the status cross-sections nor tracking study cohorts; rather, it highlights a specific population among WTW participants: those who had the short-term WTW exemption for young children just before SB 1041 took effect.[57] We isolated the group of participants who

[57] Participants with the short-term WTW exemption for young children refers to those who were exempt pursuant AB X4 4 and were subject to reengagement (see Chapter Five for further discussion). This short-term exemption

had the short-term WTW exemption for young children in December 2012 to examine their trajectory during the reengagement process over the next few years. We examined this group of WTW participants, which we refer to as the "young child exemption reengagement group," at three intervals: March 2013, March 2014, and March 2015. At each period, we determined the percentage of the young child exemption reengagement group that: (1) had the new young child exemption that was established in January 2013; (2) had the short-term young children exemption and did not have the new young child exemption; (3) had a sanction and did not have either young children exemption; (4) had an exemption for another reason and did not have either young children exemption or sanctions; (5) was in the CalWORKs WTW program with no exemption or sanction; and (6) was not in the CalWORKs WTW program.[58] Participants who were in the program without an exemption or sanction may be considered as reengaged.

For the 59,876 participants in the young child exemption reengagement group (participants who had a short-term young child exemption in December 2012), 72 percent still had the same exemption in March 2013, but the percentage dropped rapidly to less than 0.1 percent two years later (Figure 6.13). Some in the young child exemption reengagement group switched to using the new young child exemption: 8 percent of the young child exemption reengagement group was using the revised young child exemption in 2014 and 5 percent in 2015. In 2013, few of the young child exemption reengagement group had a sanction (0.5 percent) or another type of exemption besides the short-term exemption for young children (5 percent). In 2014 and 2015, the percentage of the young child exemption reengagement group with a sanction continued to be low (6 and 8 percent, respectively). Compared with sanctions, nearly the same portion had exemptions other than the short-term young children exemption (10 and 9 percent in 2014 and 2015, respectively). By 2015, a quarter of those in the young child exemption reengagement group were reengaged, and more than half were not in the CalWORKs WTW program (reengaged: 11 percent in 2013, 27 percent in 2014, 25 percent in 2015; not in program: 11 percent in 2013, 35 percent in 2014, 52 percent in 2015).

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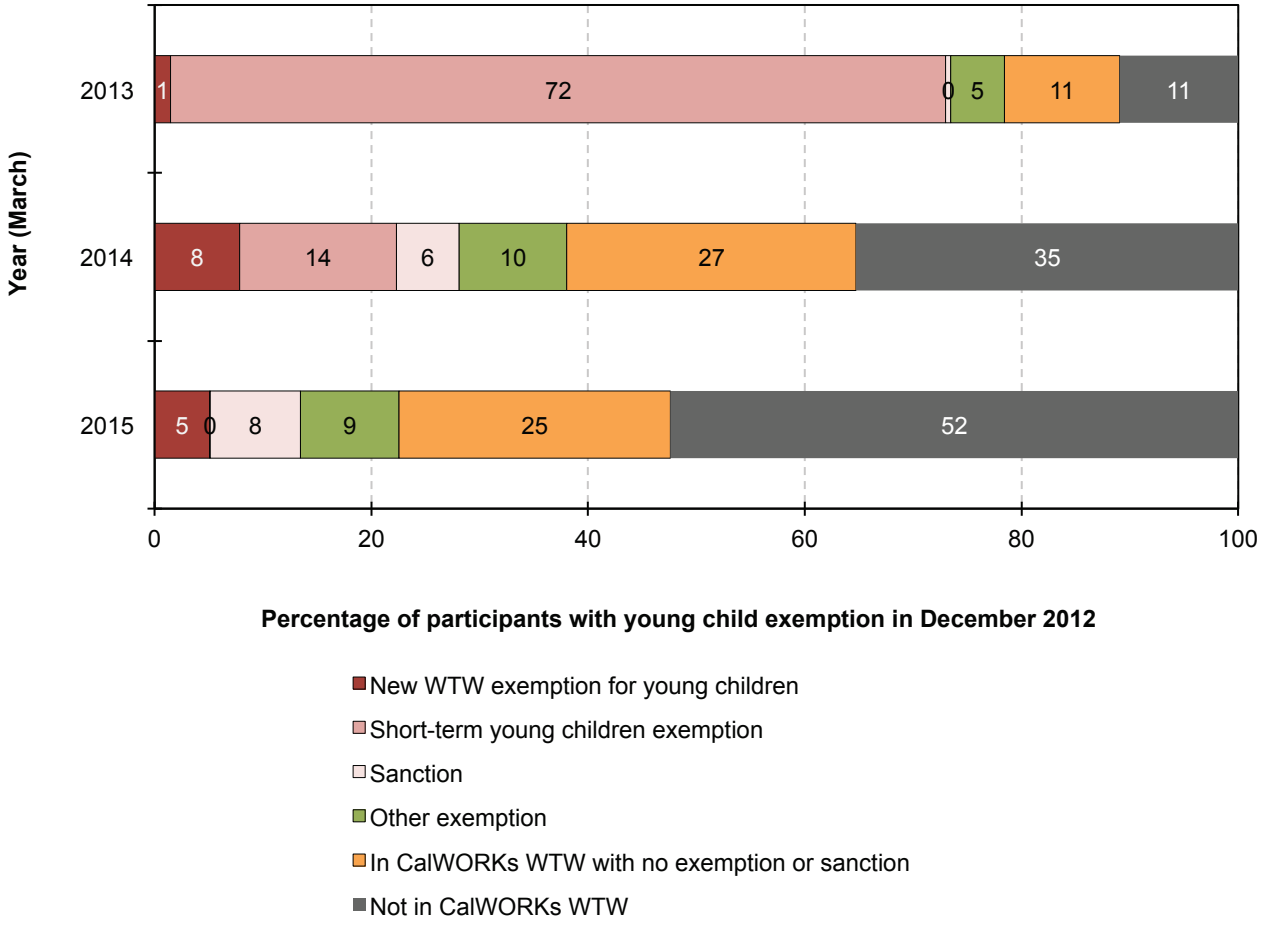
expired on December 31, 2012. Of the 327,693 participants in December 2012, 18.3 percent had a short-term exemption for young children.

[58] The category "other exemption" included exemptions such as for participation in the Cal-Learn program. It also included a small number of exceptions such as penalty, good cause, extender, and repayment. The category "not in CalWORKs" was measured as a participant not present in the WDTIP data system in March of the given year.

Figure 6.13. CalWORKs WTW Participant Status Among Those with the Short-Term WTW Exemption for Young Children in December 2012: March 2013, March 2014, March 2015



SOURCE: WDTIP files.
COUNTS: 2013: 59,876; 2014: 59,876; 2015: 59,876.

7. Initial Descriptive Analyses for the Impact Study

In this section, we examine questions related to employment, CalWORKs participation, and earnings, among other outcomes. As indicated in Chapter Two (and summarized in the text box to the right), the analyses presented in this chapter use state administrative data and nationally representative survey data to examine the association between the implementation of SB 1041 and various adult and family outcomes. In the case of the analyses of state administrative data, these outcomes are measured for specific cohorts of new CalWORKs WTW participants who entered the program before and after SB 1041 became effective.[59] The national survey data allow us to examine differences before and after SB 1041 for an important population: those potentially eligible for CalWORKs WTW participation, which we define to be female-headed households with dependent children where the female head has low education. For both types of analyses, we employ strategies to control for other confounding factors that may have affected the outcomes of interest.

Given the potential for unobserved factors that we cannot

Chapter Seven Methods

- Methods for the first analytic approach in support of the impact study:
  - Based on analysis of state administrative data from WDTIP, MEDS, and EDD wage data from 2010 to 2015.
  - Analyses conducted for adults who were in the CalWORKs WTW program and were eligible to work, including those who may have been sanctioned, either prior to or after implementation of SB 1041.
  - Conducted initial analyses using an interrupted time series design to compare outcomes for entry WTW cohorts pre– and post–SB 1041, controlling for observable participant characteristics and the local economy.
  - Outcomes examined include CalWORKs WTW participation, employment, and earnings.
- Methods for the second analytic approach in support of the impact study:
  - Based on analysis of nationally representative CPS data from March 2005 to 2015 and October 2005 to 2014.
  - Focus on population at risk of CalWORKs participation: female-headed families with one or more children under the age of 18 where the female head has less than a bachelor's degree.
  - Conduct initial analyses using a comparative case study design with a synthetic comparison group methodology to compare California with a group of "control" states possessing similar sociodemographic characteristics and TANF policies.
  - Outcomes examined include poverty status, unemployment status, receipt of public assistance, annual weeks worked full time, school enrollment, and participation in job training.
- See Chapter Two for more detail on data and methods.

[59] A participant was considered "new" if he or she had not previously appeared in the WDTIP database as a WTW participant.

control for, as well as the relatively short time period for examining outcomes in the post–SB 1041 period, we view these analyses as a first look at findings using these methods, findings that may or may not be robust to using more data. Additionally, while some aspects of SB 1041 may affect participants immediately (particularly the increased earnings disregard), other aspects may take time to implement (e.g., making greater use of the 24-month clock and linking participants to services) and we may not see the impact of those changes in the short time period under examination here. Indeed, the results in Chapters Four and Five suggest that implementation of the SB 1041 provisions and related supports were still under way during the time period covered by the data we have available for analysis. In future work, we will employ more-rigorous methods with data for additional time periods to strengthen our ability to interpret any effects we see as attributable to (or caused by) the SB 1041 policy changes.

Using data from WDTIP—California's welfare time-on-aid tracking and reporting system—we made regression-adjusted pre– and post–SB 1041 comparisons of outcomes related to employment and welfare participation. Due to the limited amount of time after the passage of SB 1041, the outcomes were measured one year after participants entered the CalWORKs WTW program, at which time participants theoretically would still be in the middle of using their 24 months of increased flexibility in meeting participation requirements. With this limitation in mind, the research questions for our use of WDTIP data and a summary of key findings for each are as follows:

- *One year after enrollment, were rates of employment and rates of participation different for cohorts of CalWORKs WTW participants enrolling after SB 1041?* When we accounted for the changing economy and demographics of CalWORKs WTW participants, we found that, after SB 1041, individuals were continuing to participate in CalWORKs WTW one year after entry at higher rates (2.2 percentage points higher) because those who were employed were combining work and CalWORKs WTW at higher rates than predicted (2.1 percentage points higher) rather than being "employed only" (1.9 percentage points lower).
- *One year after enrollment, was the level of earnings different for cohorts of CalWORKs WTW participants enrolling after SB 1041?* When we accounted for changes in the economy and in the demographics of CalWORKs WTW participants, the level of quarterly real earnings among CalWORKs WTW participants one year after enrollment was about $54 higher (4.2 percent) than predicted.

In addition, we addressed four other questions using data from the nationally representative CPS to compare the experiences of families in California who are potentially eligible for CalWORKs WTW with a synthetic comparison group of families in certain other states. Again, keeping in mind that these data cover just one year of experience after SB 1041 became effective, the specific questions and the associated findings are as follows:

- *Are families that are potentially eligible for the CalWORKs WTW program less likely to be in poverty than similar families in similar states across the country during the first year of SB 1041's implementation?* With one year of data covering the post–SB 1041 period, there is no indication to date that families potentially eligible to participate in the CalWORKs WTW program are less likely to have income below poverty or below 125 percent of poverty compared with the same demographic group living in comparable states.
- *Are families that are potentially eligible for the CalWORKs WTW program less likely to receive public assistance than similar families in similar states across the country during the first year of SB 1041's implementation?* Again, with just one year of data for the post–SB 1041 period, our analysis of the receipt of public assistance more generally and TANF receipt in particular shows that families potentially eligible for CalWORKs WTW were no more or less likely to make use of these components of the safety net than similar families in our comparison states.
- *Are heads of families that are potentially eligible for the CalWORKs WTW program more likely to be employed than heads of households in similar families in similar states across the country during the first years of SB 1041's implementation?* We find no statistically significant differences between families potentially eligible for the CalWORKs WTW program in California versus the comparison states in either the unemployment rate (measured two years after the SB 1041 policy changes) or the number of full-time weeks worked in the prior year (measured for just one year post–SB 1041 implementation).
- *Are heads of families that are potentially eligible for the CalWORKs WTW program more likely to be enrolled in school or job training than heads of households in similar families in similar states across the country during the first years of SB 1041's implementation?* Although we have two years of data beyond the effective date for SB 1041, we do not find any significant difference between California and comparison states in the rates of school enrollment (defined to include training) or rates of job training for families potentially eligible for CalWORKs.

The remainder of this chapter provides results for each research question in turn. Additional discussion of the methods employed in this chapter, as well as supporting documentation of the results, is provided in Appendix F.

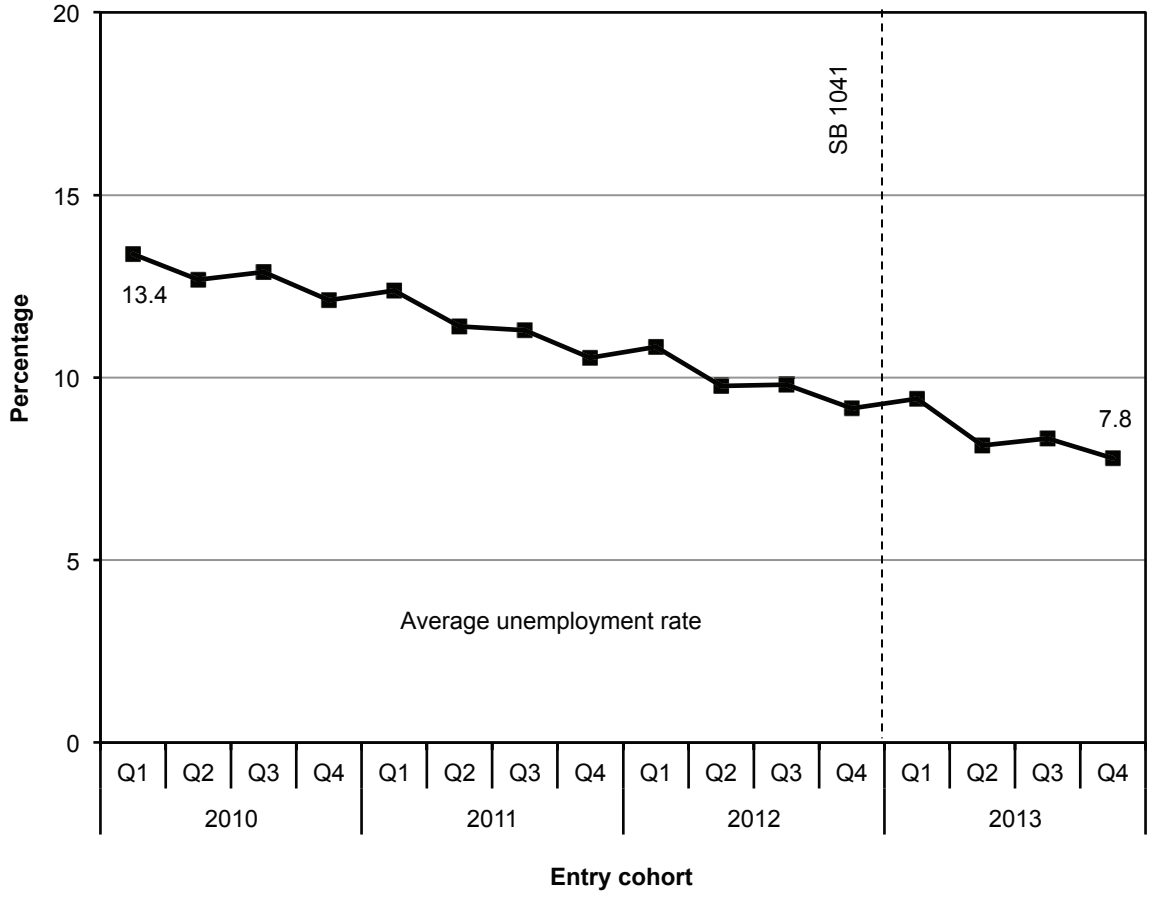
Analyses of State Administrative Data

We begin with findings from the administrative data, first examining results for the first question concerning employment and CalWORKs WTW participation and then the second question pertaining to earnings.

One Year After Enrollment, Were Rates of Employment and Rates of CalWORKs WTW Participation Different for Cohorts of CalWORKs WTW Participants Enrolling After SB 1041?

Looking at trends over the years just prior to implementation and just after it without any adjustments, one would observe that the post–SB 1041 cohorts had higher rates of employment (employed only and both employed and in the CalWORKs WTW program) and lower rates of CalWORKs WTW participation one year after enrollment. (See Appendix F for details.) These differences cannot be immediately attributed to SB 1041, however, because we know that there were other changes in the state and its economy in addition to SB 1041 that likely affected observed outcomes. In particular, the improving economy—measured by an average county unemployment rate that was 3 percentage points lower for the cohorts starting after the passage of SB 1041—could be a key driver for improving the outcomes of CalWORKs WTW participants (Figure 7.1). On the one hand, the improving economy could allow some people who might have otherwise entered the CalWORKs WTW program to not enter the program in the first place, while on the other hand, the improving economy would allow people who do enter the program to find work and potentially exit the program more rapidly. The question, then, is whether the differences for post–SB 1041 cohorts would remain if one were to account for those other factors. Our analysis examined the association of SB 1041 with changes in participants' one-year outcomes using a regression model to account for differences in the types of people entering the CalWORKs WTW program and the economic conditions at the time.

Figure 7.1. Average County Unemployment Rate

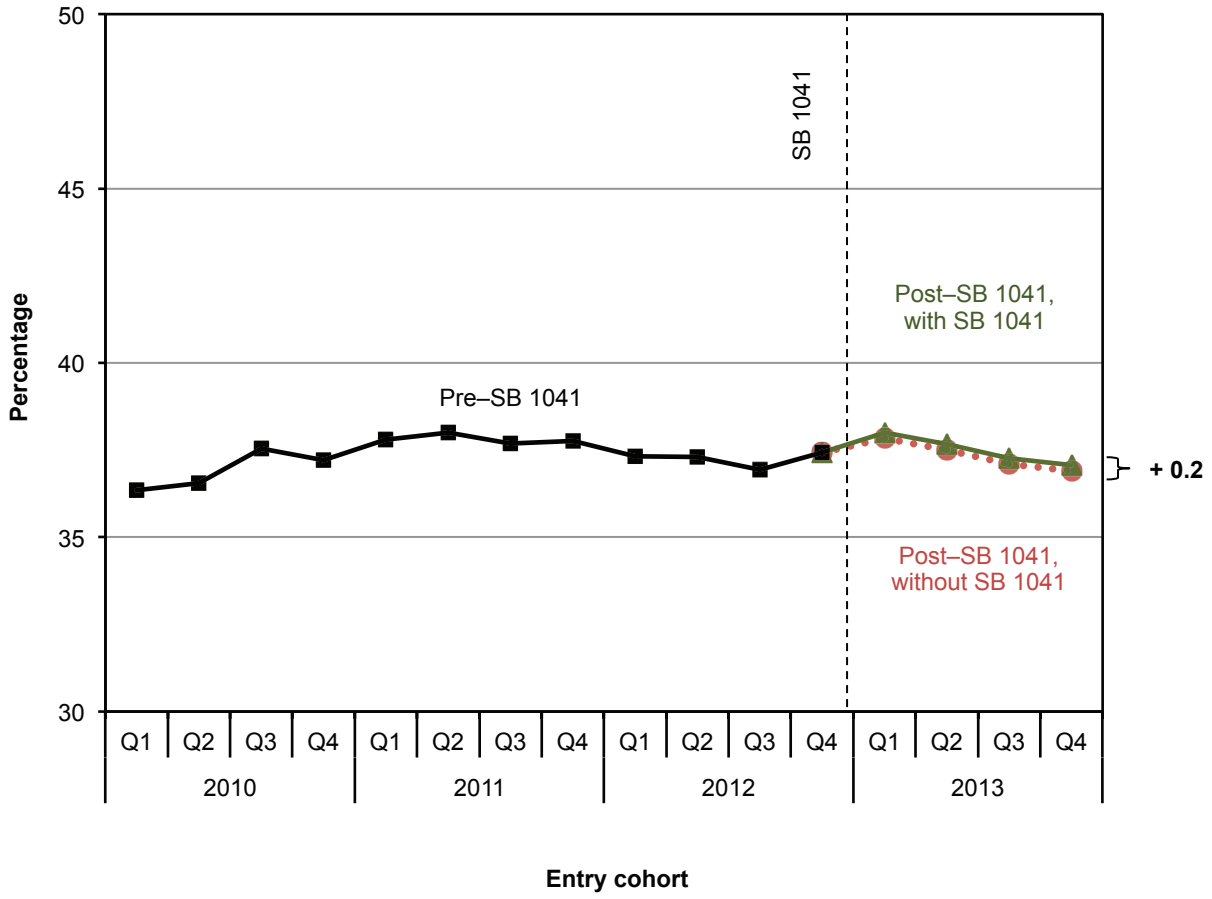


SOURCE: Authors' analysis of 2010–2014 WDTIP files, EDD employment and earnings files, and EDD county unemployment rate files.
NOTE: The average unemployment rate reported here is measured in the fourth quarter after the cohort enters CalWORKs and is weighted by the number of CalWORKs WTW participants in each county.

In our analyses that controlled for the unemployment rate and the changing characteristic of participants, the differences between the regression-adjusted trends post–SB 1041 and the projected outcome in the absence of the legislation were smaller in some cases and in a different direction in other cases, compared with findings based on analysis without these controls. For any given outcome in the pre–SB 1041 period, the regression analyses are reported as the outcome for each cohort, adjusted for differences—that is, *as if they all had the same county unemployment rate and participant demographics*. For the post–SB 1041 cohorts, two outcomes are reported: one that shows what the outcome would hypothetically be, as if SB 1041 had not been implemented (red dotted line), and a second (green solid line) that adds (or subtracts) a constant percentage to each cohort that represents the change in percentage for post–SB 1041 cohorts that is associated with the policy change. As a reminder, these results should not be interpreted as causal because there may be additional factors other than SB 1041 that our model does not take into account.

When we controlled for the county unemployment rate and participant characteristics, we found that SB 1041 was not associated with a change in the percentage of CalWORKs WTW participants employed one year after enrollment (Figure 7.2), but was associated with an increase in the percentage still participating in CalWORKs WTW (Figure 7.3).[60] With SB 1041, the percentage still participating in CalWORKs WTW one year after entering was 2.2 percentage points higher with SB 1041 cohorts than would have been predicted without SB 1041 (where the predictions are based on the trends of the pre–SB 1041 cohorts; Figure 7.3).

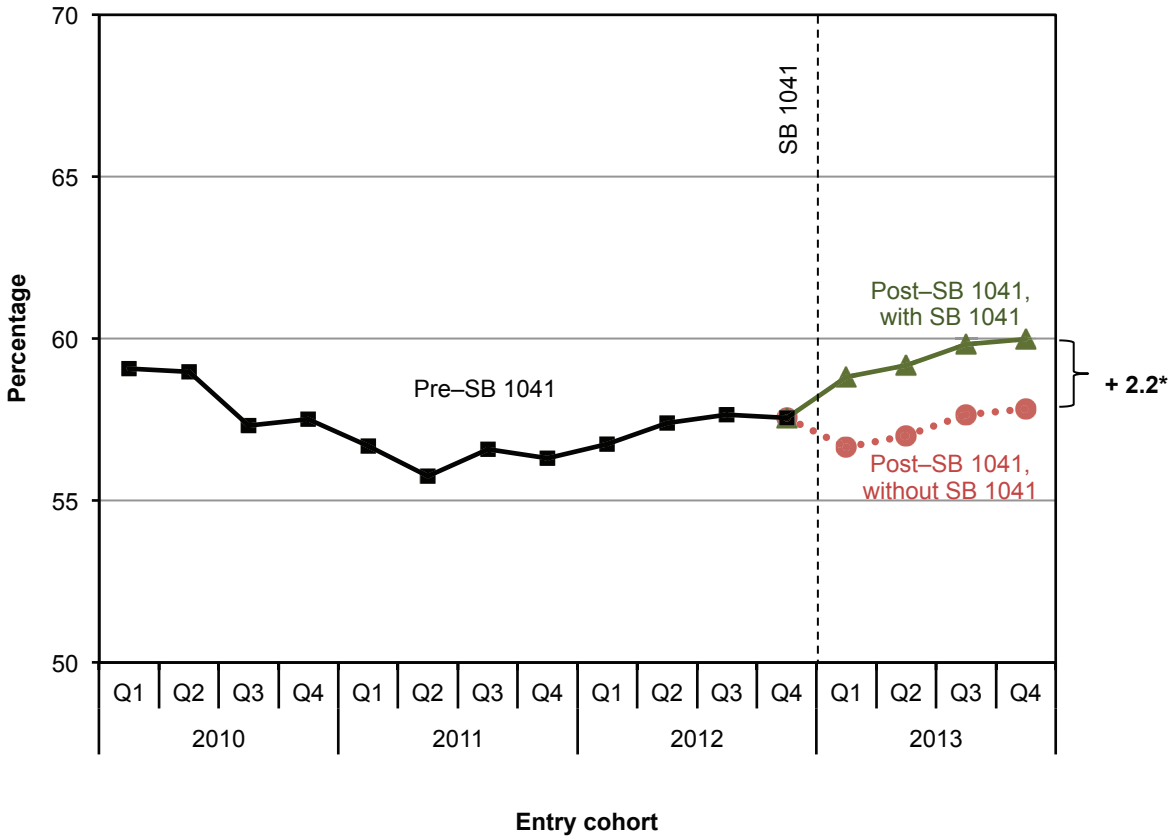
Figure 7.2. Change Associated with SB 1041 in the Percentage of CalWORKs WTW Entrants Who Were Employed One Year After CalWORKs WTW Entry



SOURCE: Authors' analysis of 2010–2014 WDTIP files, EDD employment and earnings files, and EDD county unemployment rate files.
NOTES: Outcome is measured in fourth quarter after enrollment in CalWORKs WTW. Controls include county unemployment rate and participant characteristics. An asterisk indicates that the difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

[60] In the remainder of this chapter, outcomes measured in percentages are plotted on a scale that has a fixed percentage-point range (20 percentage points), although the starting and ending point on the scale may vary with the range of the outcome measure that is plotted.

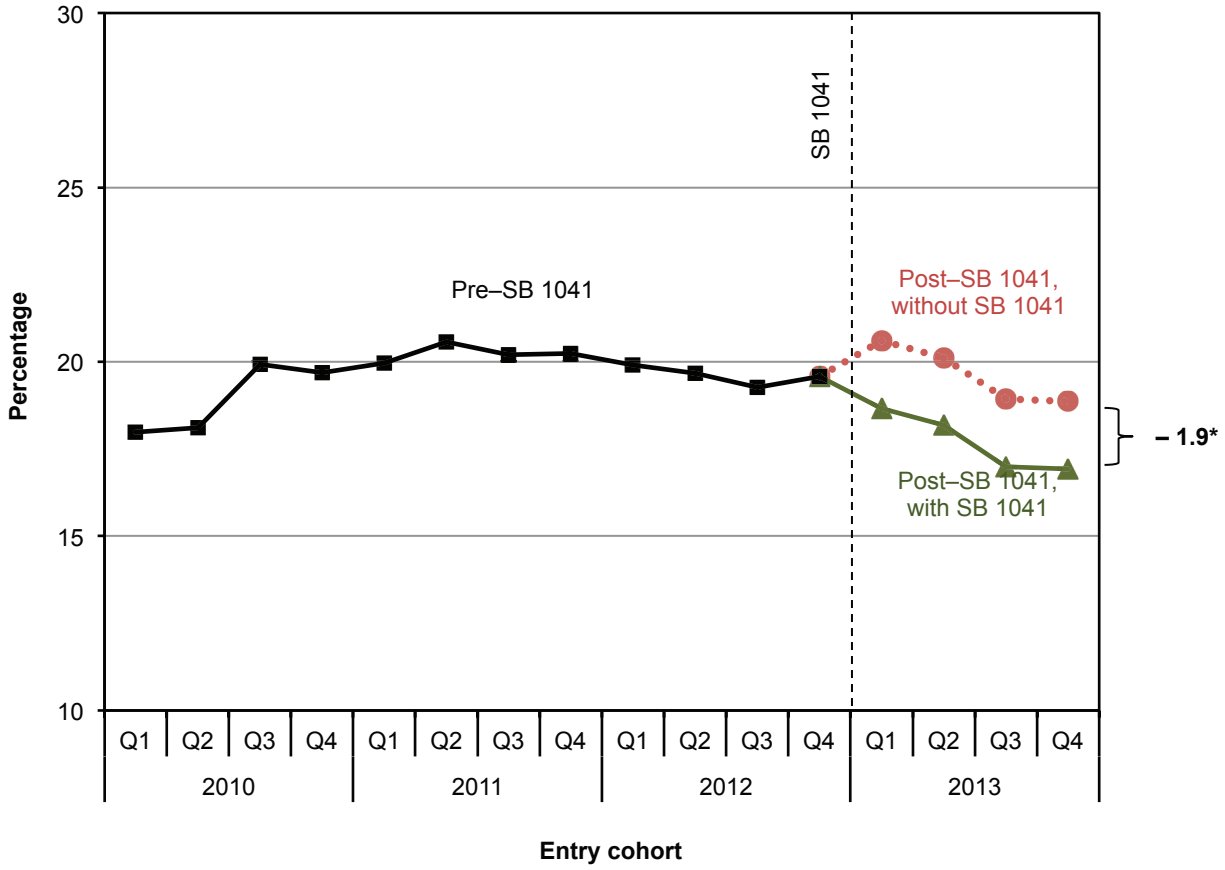
Figure 7.3. Change Associated with SB 1041 in the Percentage of CalWORKs WTW Entrants Who Were Participating in CalWORKs WTW One Year After CalWORKs WTW Entry



SOURCE: Authors' analysis of 2010–2014 WDTIP files, EDD employment and earnings files, and EDD county unemployment rate files.
NOTES: Outcome is measured in fourth quarter after enrollment in CalWORKs WTW. Controls include county unemployment rate and participant characteristics. An asterisk indicates that the difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

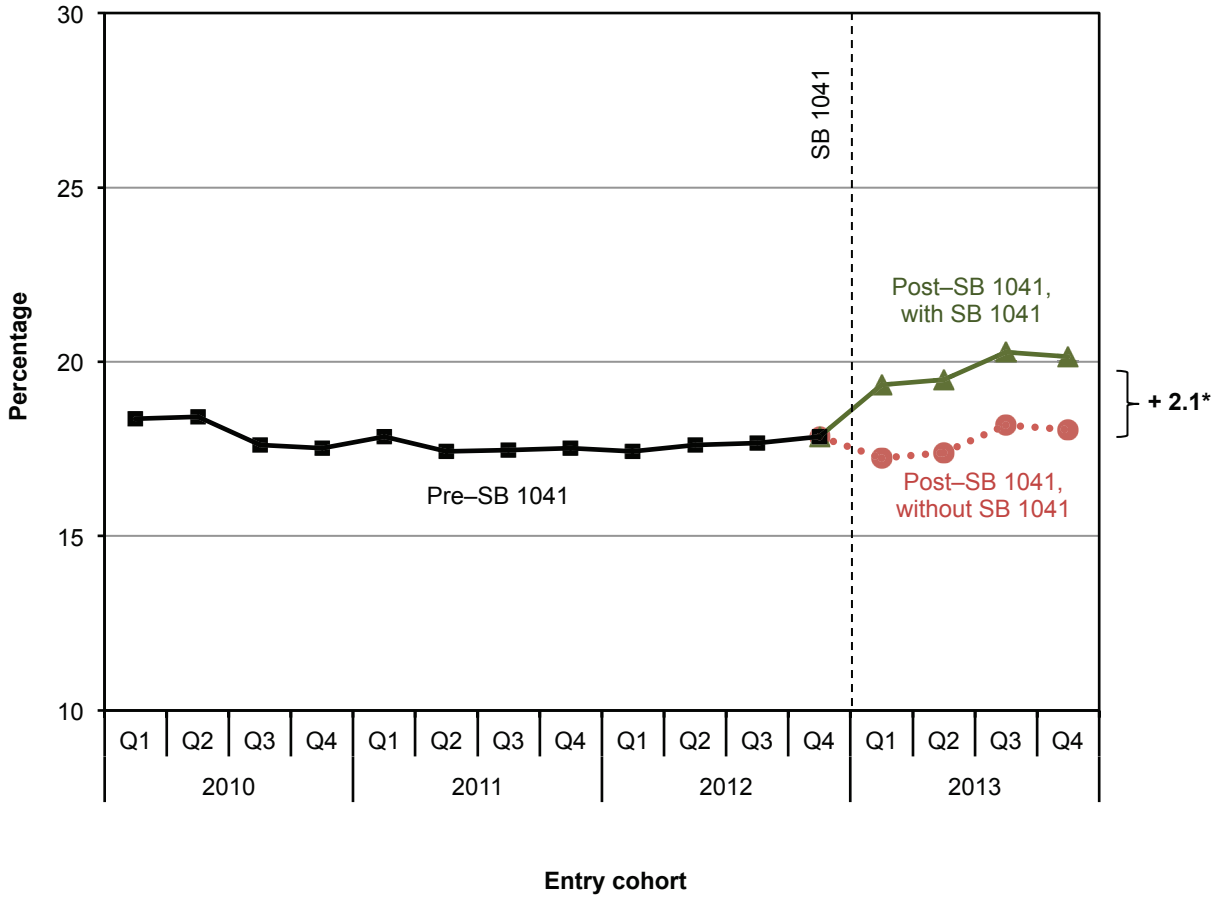
When outcomes were analyzed using the four mutually exclusive categories (Figures 7.4–7.7), we obtain a more nuanced view of these results: The higher rates of CalWORKs WTW participation that analysis associated with SB 1041 (Figure 7.3) was composed of those who were able to find jobs remaining on CalWORKs WTW rather than leaving. Controlling for county unemployment rates and participant characteristics, we see that the percentage of participants employed only (and not participating in CalWORKs WTW) one year after enrollment was 1.9 percentage points *lower* with SB 1041 than without (Figure 7.4), while the percentage of those employed and still participating in CalWORKs WTW was 2.1 percentage points *higher* (Figure 7.5). In other words, post–SB 1041 participants who were employed were more often staying on CalWORKs rather than leaving. Theoretically, this is a result one might expect because of the increase in the earnings disregard, one of the more-immediate aspects of SB 1041 to take effect. The percentages in the other two categories, participating in CalWORKs WTW only (Figure 7.6) and neither employed nor participating (Figure 7.7), had no significant change associated with SB 1041.

Figure 7.4. Change Associated with SB 1041 in the Percentage of CalWORKs WTW Entrants Who Were Employed Only (Not Participating in CalWORKs) One Year After CalWORKs Entry



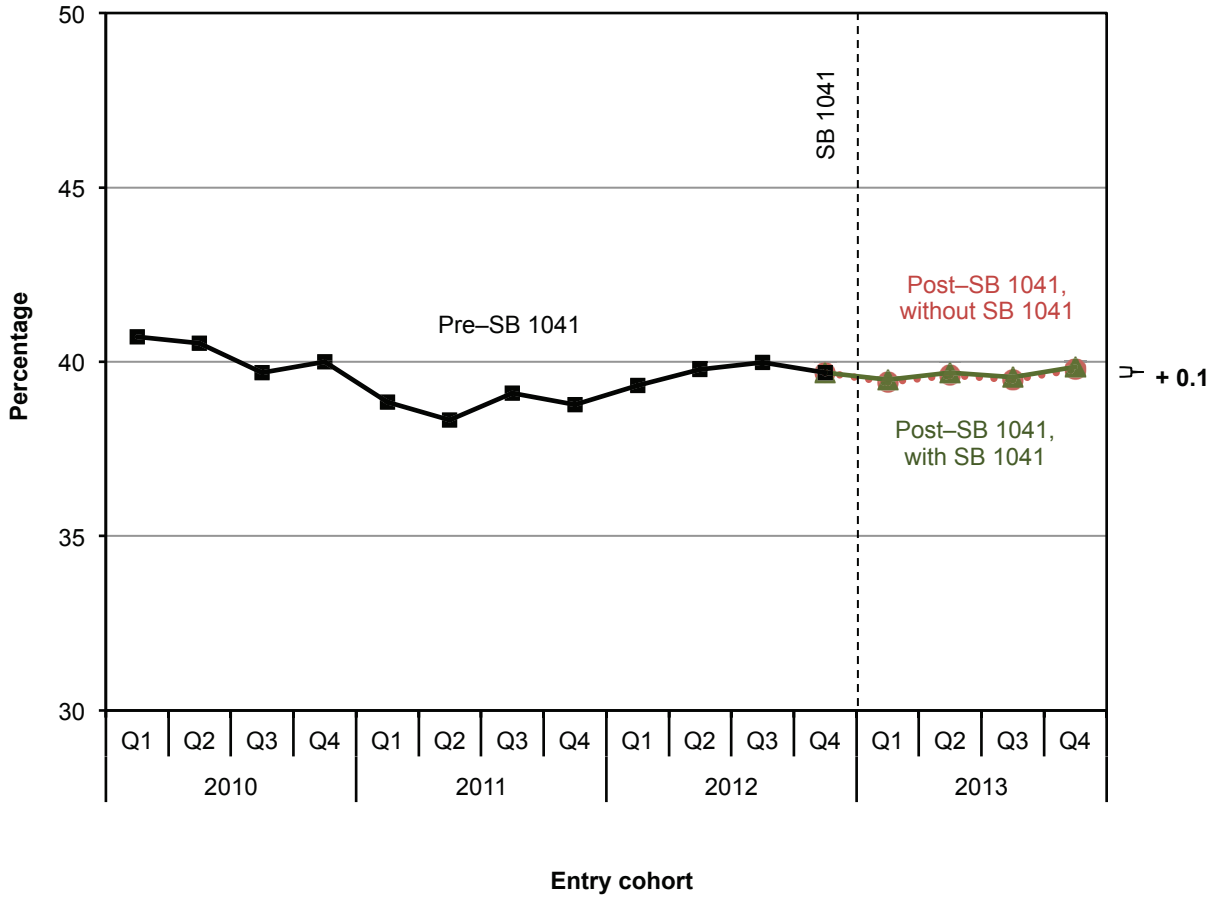
SOURCE: Authors' analysis of 2010–2014 WDTIP files, EDD employment and earnings files, and EDD county unemployment rate files.
NOTES: Outcome is measured in fourth quarter after enrollment in CalWORKs WTW. Controls include county unemployment rate and participant characteristics. An asterisk indicates that the difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Figure 7.5. Change Associated with SB 1041 in the Percentage of CalWORKs WTW Entrants Who Were Both Employed and Participating in CalWORKs One Year After CalWORKs Entry



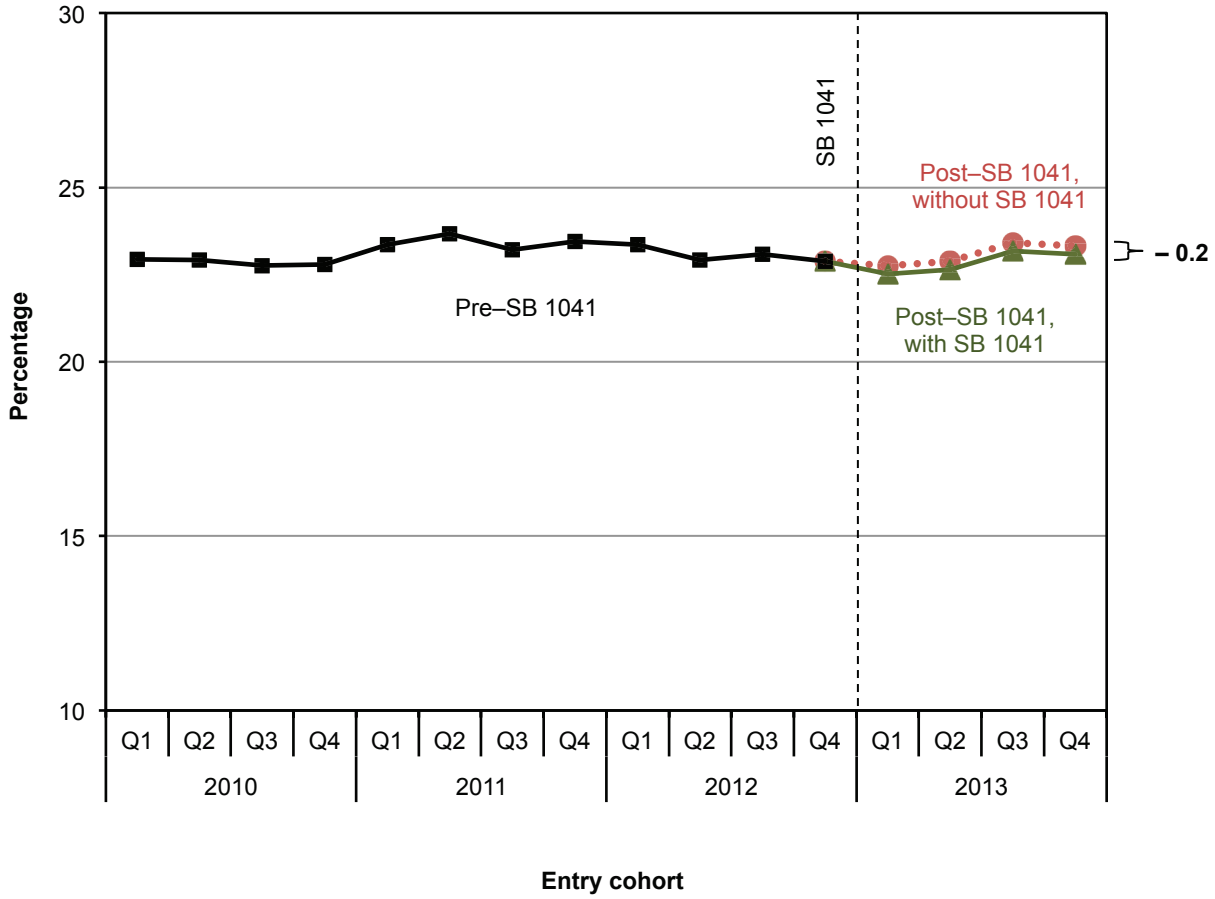
SOURCE: Authors' analysis of 2010–2014 WDTIP files, EDD employment and earnings files, and EDD county unemployment rate files.
NOTES: Outcome is measured in fourth quarter after enrollment in CalWORKs WTW. Controls include county unemployment rate and participant characteristics. An asterisk indicates that the difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Figure 7.6. Change Associated with SB 1041 in the Percentage of CalWORKs WTW Entrants Who Were Participating in CalWORKs Only (Not Employed) One Year After CalWORKs Entry



SOURCE: Authors' analysis of 2010–2014 WDTIP files, EDD employment and earnings files, and EDD county unemployment rate files.
NOTES: Outcome is measured in fourth quarter after enrollment in CalWORKs WTW. Controls include county unemployment rate and participant characteristics. An asterisk indicates that the difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Figure 7.7. Change Associated with SB 1041 in the Percentage of CalWORKs WTW Entrants Who Were Neither Employed Nor Participating in CalWORKs One Year After CalWORKs Entry



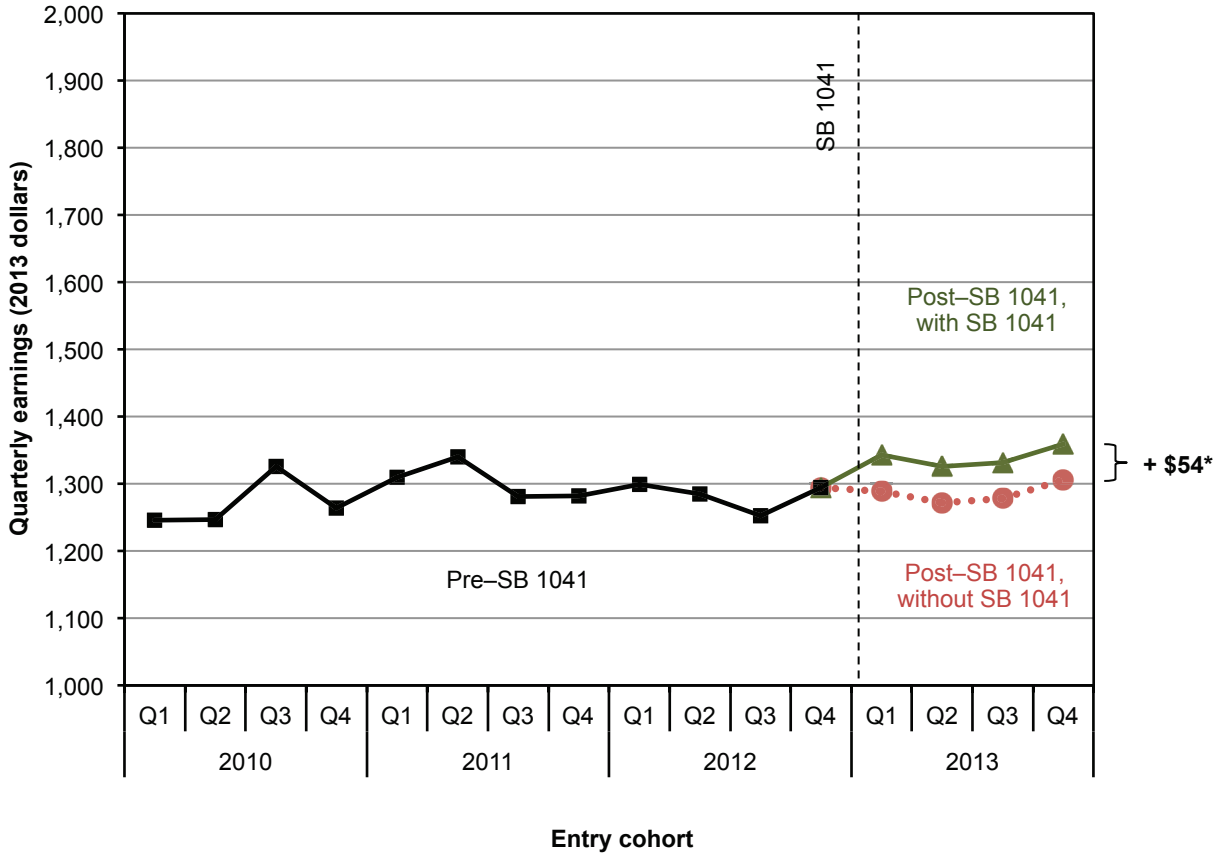
SOURCE: Authors' analysis of 2010–2014 WDTIP files, EDD employment and earnings files, and EDD county unemployment rate files.
NOTES: Outcome is measured in fourth quarter after enrollment in CalWORKs WTW. Controls include county unemployment rate and participant characteristics. An asterisk indicates that the difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

One Year After Enrollment, Was the Level of Earnings Different for Cohorts of CalWORKs WTW Participants Enrolling After SB 1041?

As one might expect given the improving economy over the period analyzed, real earnings for participants (measured in 2013 first quarter dollars) one year after starting the CalWORKs WTW program was higher for cohorts starting after SB 1041 than before (see Appendix F).[61] This trend is consistent with the falling unemployment rates reported above (Figure 7.1). When we controlled for the economic and demographic factors in our regression model, the results for earnings show an increase in earnings associated with SB 1041 (Figure 7.8). After we accounted

[61] Average earnings are calculated across all participants whether or not they worked. In other words, participants who were not employed had earnings of $0.

Figure 7.8. Change Associated with SB 1041 in Real Quarterly Earnings of CalWORKs WTW Entrants One Year After CalWORKs Entry



SOURCE: Authors' analysis of 2010–2014 WDTIP files, EDD employment and earnings files, and EDD county unemployment rate files.
NOTES: Quarterly earnings are measured in fourth quarter after enrollment in CalWORKs WTW are expressed in constant 2013 first quarter dollars using the CPI (BLS, 2015a) to adjust for inflation. Controls include the county unemployment rate and participant characteristics. An asterisk indicates that the difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

for participant characteristics and county unemployment rates, the increase in quarterly real earnings associated with SB 1041 was $54, or 4.2 percent.[62]

Analyses of CPS Data

Analyses of the CPS data were used to answer four questions pertaining to the patterns in poverty, receipt of public assistance, employment, and enrollment in school or job training after SB 1041 became effective in 2013, comparing results for the treatment population in California—female-headed families with children under the age of 18 where the female head has less than a bachelor's degree—against the same population in a comparable group of states. We

[62] The average adjusted earnings "without SB 1041" across the four 2014 cohorts was $1,286. The $54 increase in earnings is 4.2 percent of $1,286.

refer to this treatment population as families potentially eligible for the CalWORKs program or, alternatively, as families at risk for CalWORKs participation. To aid in interpretation, we note whether differences observed post–SB 1041 are statistically significant in each of the figures.

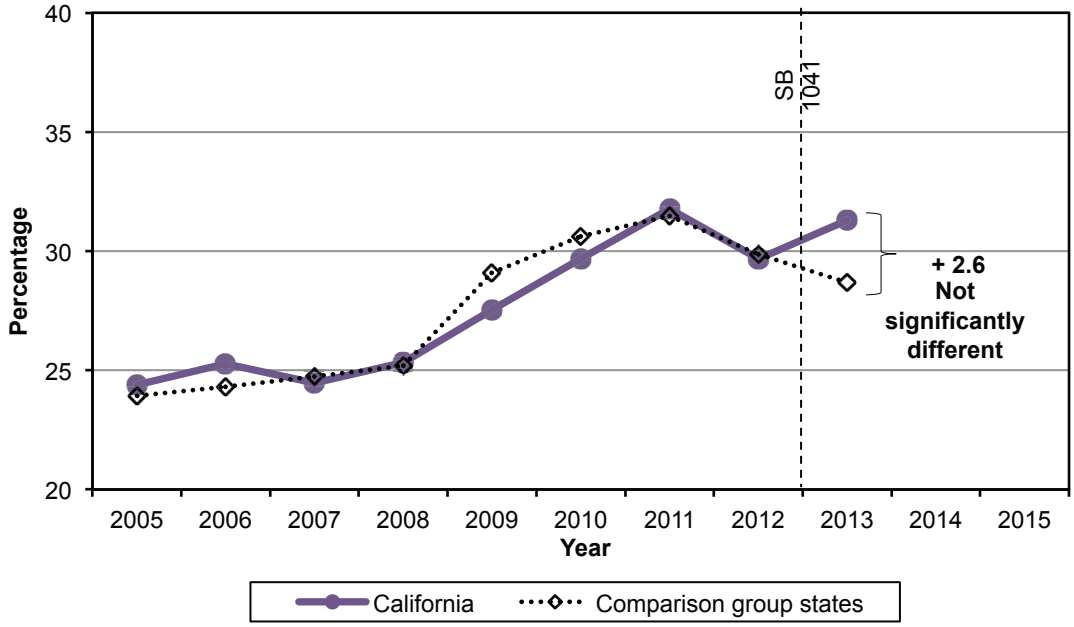
Are Families That Are Potentially Eligible for the CalWORKs WTW Program Less Likely to Be in Poverty Than Similar Families in Similar States Across the Country During the First Year of SB 1041's Implementation?

To answer this question, we analyzed two outcomes from the annual March supplement to the CPS that collects detail on the household's income and income components for the prior calendar year. The first measure is an indicator of whether the family is living below the federal poverty line (based on the size of the family, the number of children in the family, and the age of the head of household). For example, in 2013, the first year of SB 1041, the federal poverty line for a three-person family where two members are under the age of 18 was an annual income of $18,769. To circumvent the common criticism that the poverty line only captures extreme economic deprivation, we used a second measure that indicates whether the family is living below 125 percent of the federal poverty line. The March 2014 supplement was the most current wave of data available; thus, we can assess differences in rates of poverty only through 2013 (based on income reported retrospectively in March 2014).

We plotted the trend line for California and the weighted trend line for the comparison group states in the percentage of the treatment population with income below the federal poverty line (Figure 7.9) and the percentage with income below 125 percent of the federal poverty line (Figure 7.10). Twenty-four percent of families in the California treatment group and in the comparison group were living below the federal poverty line in 2005 (Figure 7.9). This increased to about 30 percent in 2009–2012, the years immediately following the Great Recession. In 2013, the first year following the passage of SB 1041, 31 percent of families in the California treatment group were living below the poverty line and 28 percent of the families in the comparison group were living below the poverty line. This difference of almost 3 percentage points does not meet our threshold for statistical significance.

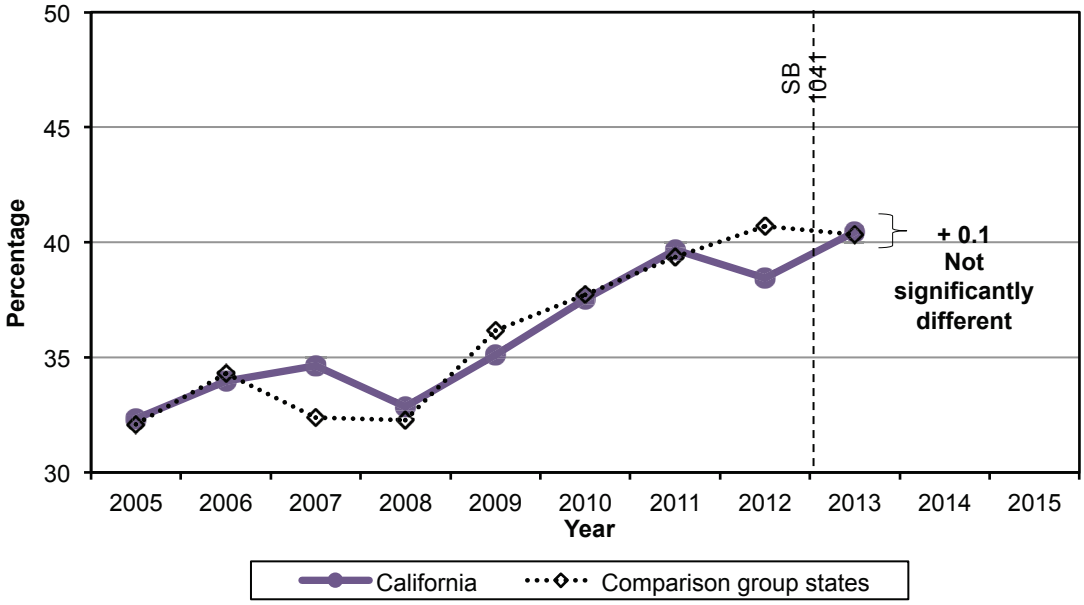
The trends in poverty when using the threshold of 125 percent of the federal poverty line (Figure 7.10) are similar to those using the official poverty line (Figure 7.9). There was an increase of at-risk families in both California and the comparison states living below 125 percent of the poverty line following the Great Recession. In 2013, the first year of SB 1041, 40 percent of families in both the California treatment group and in the comparison group of states were living below 125 percent of the federal poverty line. Although the data cover only one year of the post–SB 1041 era, there are no indications to date that families in California at risk for participating in CalWORKs are less likely to be in poverty compared with similar families in similar states across the country.

Figure 7.9. Percentage of Families Potentially Eligible for the CalWORKs WTW Program Living Below the Federal Poverty Line



SOURCE: Authors' analysis of 2005–2014 March CPS.
NOTES: Families potentially eligible for the CalWORKs WTW program are defined as female-headed families with one or more children under the age of 18 where the female head has less than a bachelor's degree. An asterisk indicates that the difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Figure 7.10. Percentage of Families Potentially Eligible for the CalWORKs WTW Program Living Below 125 Percent of the Federal Poverty Line

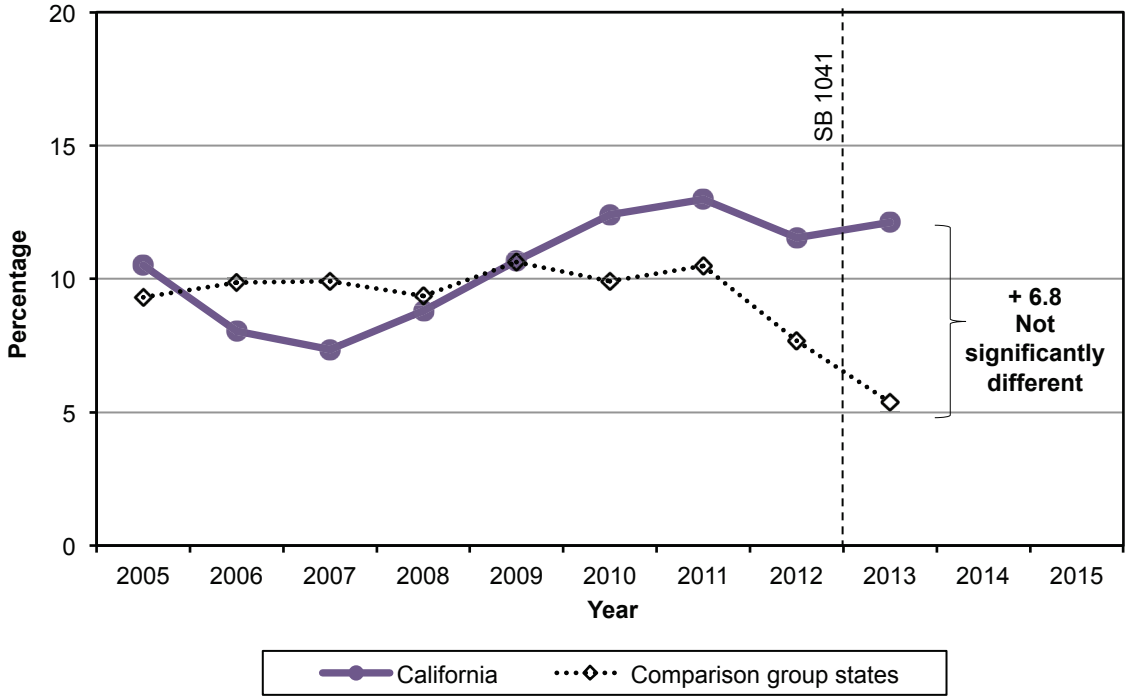


SOURCE: Authors' analysis of 2005–2014 March CPS.
NOTES: Families potentially eligible for the CalWORKs WTW program are defined as female-headed families with one or more children under the age of 18 where the female head has less than a bachelor's degree. An asterisk indicates that the difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Are Families That Are Potentially Eligible for the CalWORKs WTW Program Less Likely to Receive Public Assistance Than Similar Families in Similar States Across the Country During the First Year of SB 1041's Implementation?

As part of the March supplement to the CPS, sample members were asked to report income in the previous calendar year from several sources of public assistance, including TANF payments from state or local welfare offices. Using this information, we examine trends in *any* public assistance receipt and trends in TANF receipt in particular (Figures 7.11 and 7.12, respectively).[63] As with our analysis of poverty, we can assess differences in rates of self-reported public assistance only through 2013 (reported retrospectively in March of 2014).

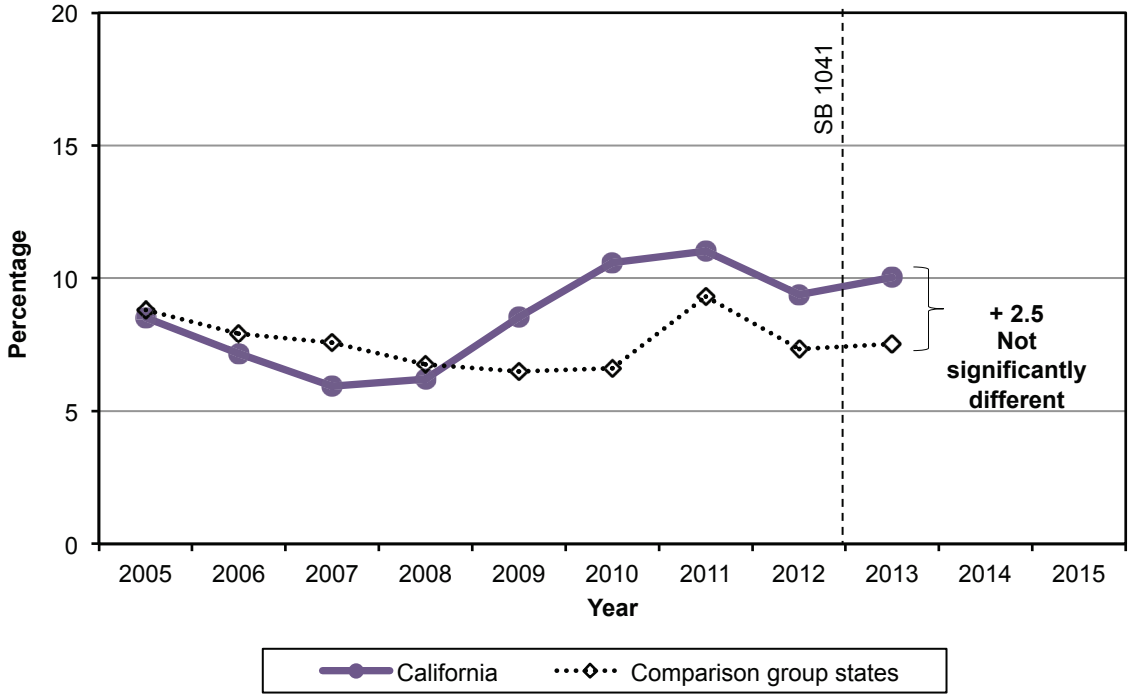
Figure 7.11. Percentage of Families Potentially Eligible for the CalWORKs WTW Program Receiving Any Form of Public Assistance



SOURCE: Authors' analysis of 2005–2014 March CPS.
NOTES: Families potentially eligible for the CalWORKs WTW program are defined as female-headed families with one or more children under the age of 18 where the female head has less than a bachelor's degree. An asterisk indicates that the difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

[63] Our results are not sensitive to potential underreporting of public assistance in the CPS but are potentially sensitive to differential changes in underreporting over our period of observation (should such changes exist).

Figure 7.12. Percentage of Families Potentially Eligible for the CalWORKs WTW Program Receiving TANF



SOURCE: Authors' analysis of 2005–2014 March CPS.
NOTES: Families potentially eligible for the CalWORKs WTW program are defined as female-headed families with one or more children under the age of 18 where the female head has less than a bachelor's degree. An asterisk indicates that the difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

In terms of any public assistance receipt during the year, approximately 10 percent of at-risk families in our California treatment group and in our comparison group reported receiving public assistance in 2005 (Figure 7.11). As of 2013, the first year following the SB 1041 reforms, 12 percent of the California treatment group reported received public assistance, compared with 5 percent of the comparison group states. Although sizable, this difference does not meet our threshold for statistical significance.

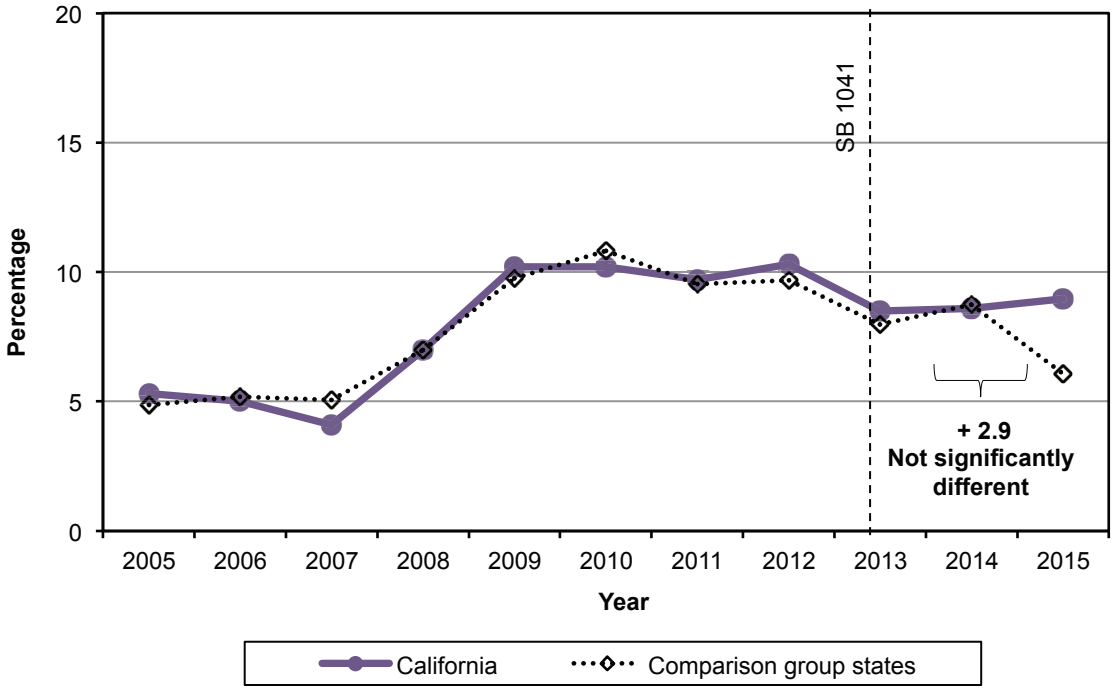
For TANF receipt in particular, approximately 9 percent of families in both our California treatment group and in our comparison group reported receiving TANF in 2005 (Figure 7.12). In 2013, rates of TANF receipt were only 2 percentage points apart: 10 percent of families in the California treatment group received TANF compared with 8 percent of families in the comparison group. This difference, however, does not meet our threshold for statistical significance. Taken together, our results suggest that families potentially eligible for CalWORKs were no more or less likely to make use of public assistance than similar families in similar states across the country.

Are Heads of Families That Are Potentially Eligible for the CalWORKs WTW Program More Likely to Be Employed Than Heads of Households in Similar Families in Similar States Across the Country During the First Years of SB 1041's Implementation?

We assessed possible SB 1041 effects on employment using two measures: a binary measure indicating whether the sample member was unemployed at the time of the March survey (available through 2015) and a continuous measure indicating the number of weeks worked full time in the calendar year (available through 2013). The former measure (shown in Figure 7.13) is a "point-in-time" status indicator that is used to contribute to the calculation of the monthly unemployment rate, while the latter measure (shown in Figure 7.14) captures intensity of employment across the calendar year.

In March 2005, the unemployment rate for female heads of household in both the treatment and comparison group was approximately 5 percent (Figure 7.13). Unemployment peaked for both groups in March of 2010: 10.2 percent for California and 10.8 percent for the comparison group. Following that peak, rates declined for both groups, with a somewhat larger decline for

Figure 7.13. Percentage of Families Potentially Eligible for the CalWORKs WTW Program Unemployed in March

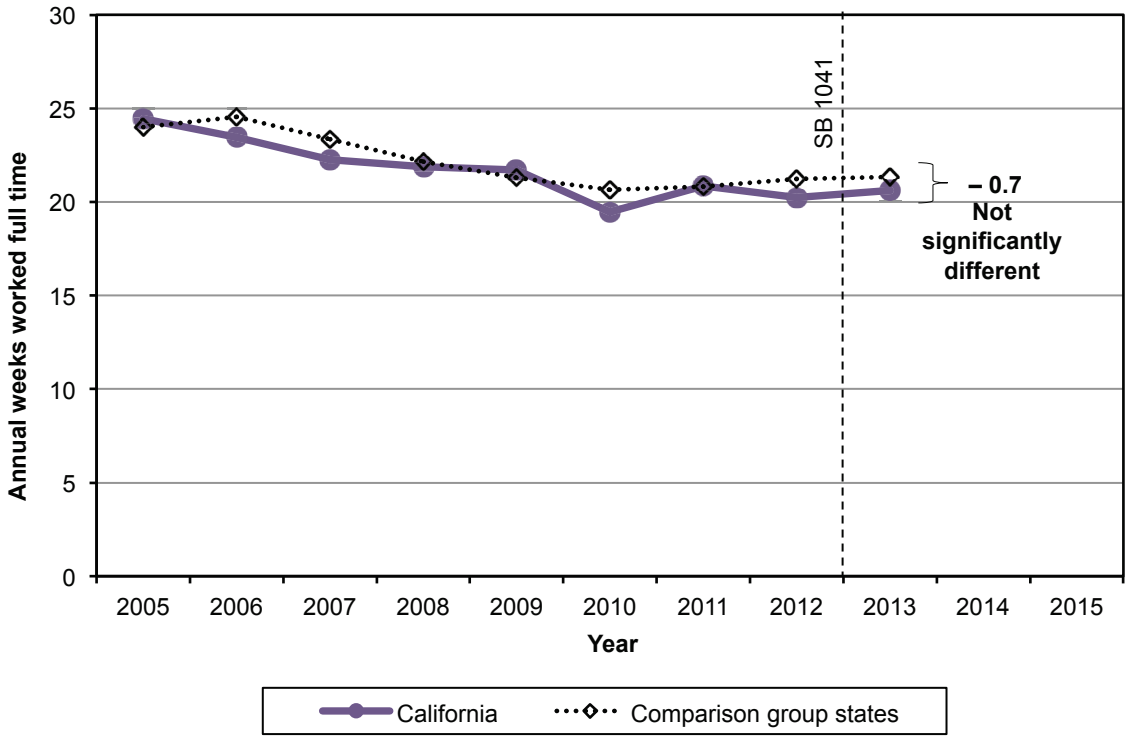


SOURCE: Authors' analysis of 2005–2014 March CPS.
NOTES: Families potentially eligible for the CalWORKs WTW program are defined as female-headed families with one or more children under the age of 18 where the female head has less than a bachelor's degree. An asterisk indicates that the difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

the comparison group. In March 2015, three years after SB 1041 was launched, 9.0 percent of female heads of household in the California treatment group and 6.1 percent of female heads of household in the comparison group were unemployed. This difference does not meet our threshold for significance.

Next we examined the average number of weeks worked full time (Figure 7.14). In 2005, female heads of household in the California treatment group and in the comparison group both worked full time an average of 24 weeks in the calendar year. This level of participation in the labor force declined steadily over the next eight years for both groups such that by 2013, the first year of the implementation of SB 1041, at-risk female heads of household in both groups worked full time an average of only 20 weeks in the calendar year. Taken together, the trends indicate that heads of families potentially eligible for the CalWORKs WTW program were no more or less likely to be employed than heads of households in similar families in similar states across the country during the first year of SB 1041's implementation.

Figure 7.14. Number of Annual Weeks Employed Full Time Among Families Potentially Eligible for the CalWORKs WTW Program

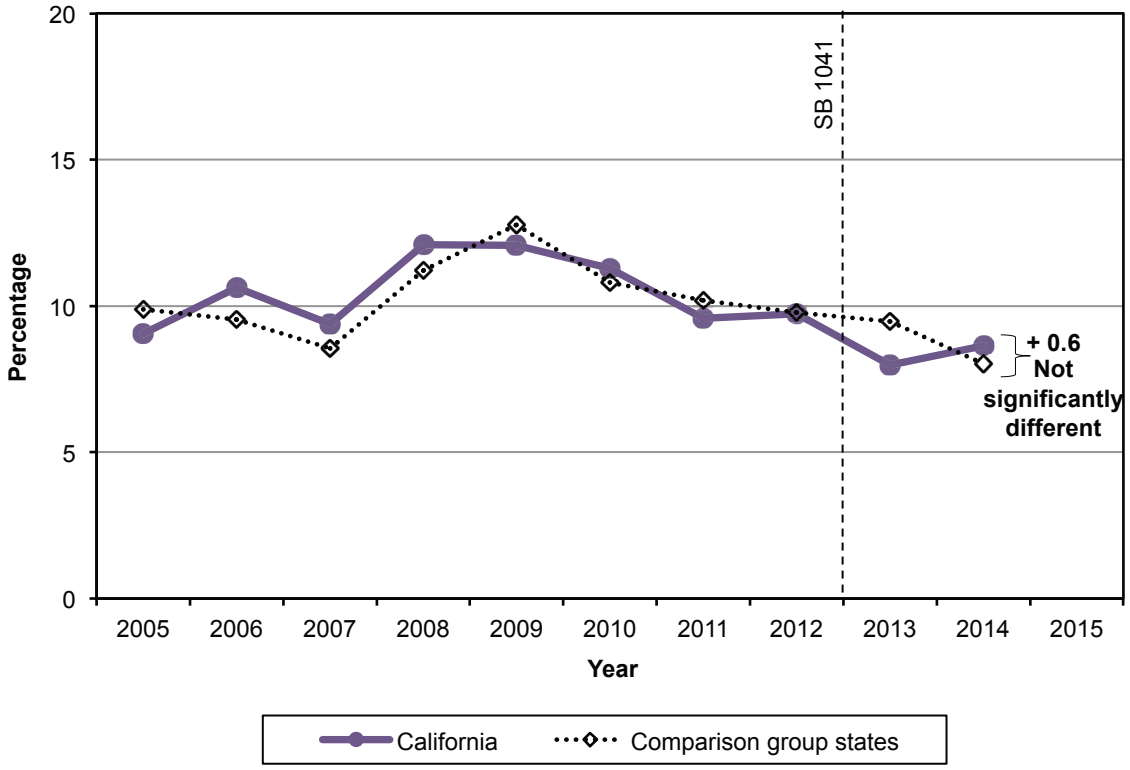


SOURCE: Authors' analysis of 2005–2014 March CPS.
NOTES: Families potentially eligible for the CalWORKs WTW program are defined as female-headed families with one or more children under the age of 18 where the female head has less than a bachelor's degree. An asterisk indicates that the difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Are Heads of Families That Are Potentially Eligible for the CalWORKs WTW Program More Likely to Be Enrolled in School or Enrolled in Job Training Than Heads of Households in Similar Families in Similar States Across the Country During the First Year of SB 1041's Implementation?

Lastly, we examine trends in schooling and job training, which we measured using information collected in the October supplement to the CPS. This is particularly of interest in the early years of SB 1041 as the policy emphasizes immediate participation in schooling or job training within the 24-month time clock as key facilitators of employment and economic self-sufficiency. The CPS uses October to inquire about school enrollment as it is soon after the start of most academic calendar years. Using information from this supplement, we examined trends in two measures: a binary indicator of any school enrollment (including job training) (Figure 7.15) and a binary indicator of enrollment in a job-training program (Figure 7.16).

Figure 7.15. Percentage of Family Heads Potentially Eligible for the CalWORKs WTW Program Enrolled in School in October

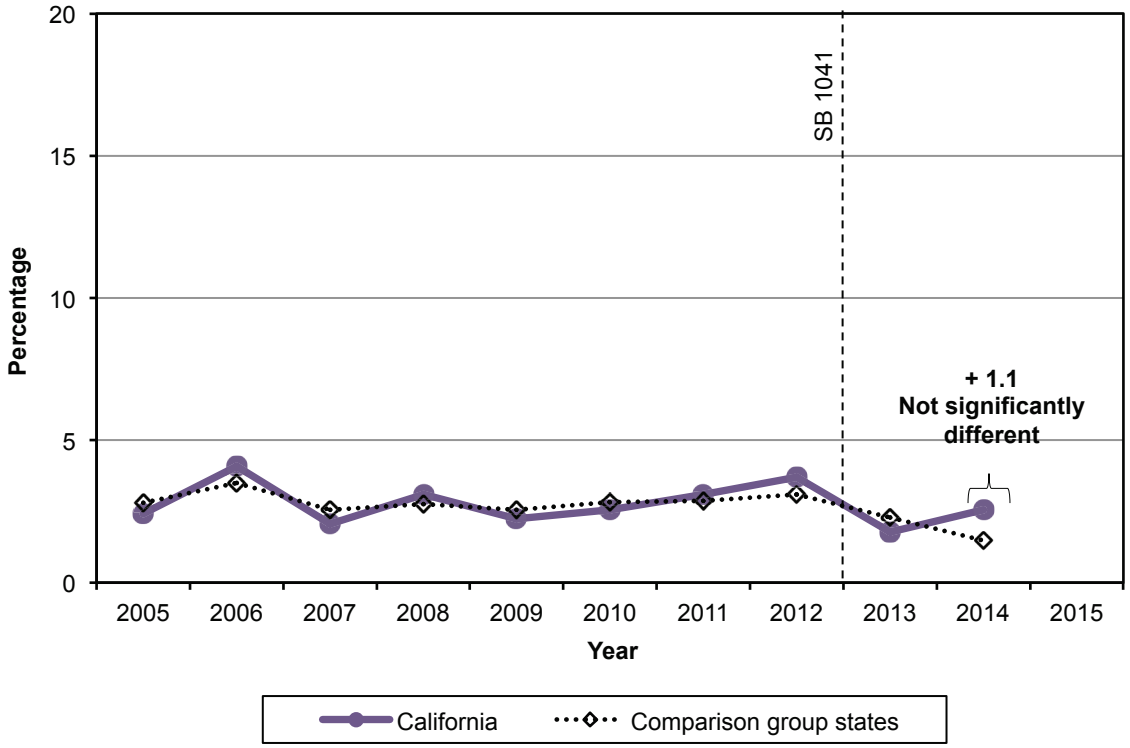


SOURCE: Authors' analysis of 2005–2014 March CPS.
NOTES: Families potentially eligible for the CalWORKs WTW program are defined as female-headed families with one or more children under the age of 18 where the female head has less than a bachelor's degree. An asterisk indicates that the difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

From 2005 to 2014, school enrollment (including training) among heads of families in the California treatment group and the comparison group held relatively steady—hovering around 10 percent (Figure 7.15). As of 2014, the second year in which SB 1041 was in effect, there was no difference between California and the comparison group states: 8 percent of heads of families in both groups were enrolled in school of some sort.

The trends in job training mirror those for the trends in school enrollment overall (Figure 7.16). Across the ten years that we observe, rates of participation in job training held relatively steady at around 3 percent, with the at-risk heads of families in the California treatment and in the comparison group states participating in job training at the same rates. These two figures show that families potentially eligible for the CalWORKs WTW program are no more or less likely to be enrolled in school and job training or job training alone than heads of households in similar families in similar states across the country during the first two years of SB 1041's implementation.

Figure 7.16. Percentage of Family Heads Potentially Eligible for the CalWORKs WTW Program Participating in Job Training in October



SOURCE: Authors' analysis of 2005–2014 March CPS.
NOTES: Families potentially eligible for the CalWORKs WTW program are defined as female-headed families with one or more children under the age of 18 where the female head has less than a bachelor's degree. An asterisk indicates that the difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

8. Conclusions and Policy Implications

The first report with findings from the evaluation of the SB 1041 reforms to the CalWORKs WTW program has provided a first look at the status of policy implementation, initial outcomes, and potential impacts from the vantage of approximately two and a half years since SB 1041 became effective on January 1, 2013. The combination of mixed methods applied to qualitative and quantitative data has served to generate a state-level perspective of the policy changes; the view from all 58 counties with respect to implementation; the experience of six focal counties with implementation and perceived impact that is likely to capture the range of experiences across the state; a set of indicators capturing participant status at a point in time and over time; and quantitative assessments of potential impact on a range of participant outcomes.

In this final chapter, we first summarize the key findings across the study components, integrating findings on a given topic across the study components where possible. Because these are early results, we are not yet able to delineate recommendations based on the findings. However, we conclude the chapter by drawing out implications for policy based on the early evidence.

Summary of Key Findings

Table 8.1 integrates and compiles our findings across the process study, status and tracking studies, and participant impact study presented in Chapters Three through Seven. Across the study components, we have identified a set of higher-level findings regarding the initial experiences with SB 1041 implementation and the associated outcomes and early impacts.

State- and county-level stakeholders had varied views regarding the goals and objectives of SB 1041. Some state-level stakeholders were concerned that many CalWORKs WTW participants would be unprepared to meet federal work requirements after exhausting their 24-month time clock. County administrative and line staff also said SB 1041 was a significant change to the CalWORKs WTW program that required a number of adjustments to be made. CDSS staff emphasized that the legislation is intended to offer more flexibility to clients in their progress toward self-sufficiency.

Delays in developing and releasing implementation guidelines resulted in implementation and training issues for county-level staff. CDSS implemented a state-level workgroup process to develop implementation guidance for SB 1041; however, the intensive planning process contributed to the slow release of guidance to the counties, creating implementation challenges at the local level. Implementation policies from the state were

Table 8.1. Summary of Key Findings

Topic	Key Findings
	Process Study Analyses
Stakeholders' views of SB 1041	• State-level stakeholders' perspectives regarding the goals and expected impact of SB 1041 differed, with some viewing it as well motivated with the potential for positive change, while others were more concerned about potential negative consequences.
State planning for and communication regarding SB 1041	• As required by the legislation, CDSS implemented a state-level workgroup process to develop implementation guidance for SB 1041, which was characterized as positive and inclusive by stakeholders. Communication of policy with the counties occurred primarily through ACLs. However, the intensive and lengthy planning process contributed to the slow release of guidance to the counties, creating implementation challenges at the local level.
County planning for and communication regarding SB 1041	• Interagency or interdepartmental meetings were the primary county vehicles for communication with other agencies. Three-quarters of all county social services departments reported reaching out to individual directors or agency representatives in other county agencies to plan for or implement support services under SB 1041. • County communications with line staff occurred through memoranda and other written documents (81 percent of all counties), briefings and/or internal staff meetings (93 percent of counties), and mandatory training sessions (83 percent of counties). • County staff communicated with participants about the changes that were brought about under SB 1041 primarily through in-person discussions, phone calls, and letters.
Status of SB 1041 implementation as of June 2015	• Across the 58 counties, most have completed the reengagement of participants with the short-term young child exemption. Eighty-six percent reported having implemented the FS program countywide and 69 percent reported they had implemented the ESE program countywide. • To increase supportive services, up to 60 percent of all the counties reported developing new or enhanced partnerships with education providers, vocational education/job training providers, domestic violence service providers, substance abuse treatment providers, and mental health service providers. • Across the focal counties, staff did not report significant reorganization of staff structures or roles to implement SB 1041, although they did emphasize that the reengagement process was labor-intensive and SB 1041 as a whole has required a strong focus on training and support for caseworkers.
Caseworkers and staff understanding of SB 1041	• Compared with other SB 1041 components, a higher percentage of all counties (18 percent) reported that their WTW caseworkers did not understand at all or only slightly understood the new WTW 24-month time clock; 16 percent of counties indicated their WTW caseworkers did not understand at all or only slightly understood the changes to the determination of hourly program participation. • Caseworkers who participated in focal county focus groups expressed a significant amount of confusion regarding SB 1041 and identified the WTW 24-month time clock as the most challenging component of the legislation, including the way in which time elapses (when the clock should "tick" and "untick").
CalWORKs participants' understanding of SB 1041	• According to the ACS, the WTW 24-month time clock is the SB 1041 feature understood the least by participants. Supervisors in 67 percent of counties reported that CalWORKs participants did not understand at all or only slightly understood the changes represented by the WTW 24-month time clock. • By comparison, 71 percent of all counties rated CalWORKs participants' understanding of the reengagement process for those who had a short-term young child exemption as moderately to very well understood. • Likewise, administrators and caseworkers in all six focal counties reported that there are still many participants who do not fully understand the implications of SB 1041, including where they land within the 24-month time clock period.
Stakeholders' view of factors that can support or hinder implementation	• According to many state-level stakeholders external to CDSS, the benefits of SB 1041 will not be fully realized until the accompanying Early Engagement reforms—the OCAT, FS program, and ESE program—are fully implemented on a statewide basis. Tension between promoting SB 1041 and meeting federal WPR requirements was viewed as another potential barrier, a theme that was also present in the focal county discussions on the topic.

Table 8.1—Continued

Topic	Key Findings
County experiences with factors that can support or hinder implementation	• Focal counties reported that participation in the state-level workgroup process and discussions better positioned them to begin planning early for SB 1041. Implementation was challenging given other concurrent policy changes (e.g., Medicaid expansion). • Forty-five percent of all counties indicated that existing relationships with other county agencies facilitated implementation. Interagency committees and advisory groups were rated as helpful. • Twenty-one percent of all counties reported that the *timing* of the release of state guidance on SB 1041 was a moderate or major hindrance to implementation, with smaller counties being more likely to provide this rating. Seventy-nine percent of counties reported that explaining the *complexity* of SB 1041 to participants was a moderate or major hindrance. • Given the complexity of the WTW 24-month time clock, the lack of full automation of the time clock was viewed as a hindrance to implementation, especially for smaller counties. Overall, 60 percent of all counties reported that the WTW 24-month time clock is being calculated using both an automated system (e.g., for an initial calculation) and manually (e.g., to make needed adjustments), typically by caseworkers (93 percent of counties). The latter was more common for smaller counties. • For 83 percent of all counties, caseworker supervisors reported that their WTW caseworkers understood the WTW 24-month time clock moderately to very well. At the same time, many caseworkers in the six focal counties indicated a poor understanding of the new time clock. • The lag between implementation of SB 1041 and upgrading the county-level consortia administrative data systems to meet the needs of the legislation was a source of frustration for county leaders and caseworkers in the focal counties.
County perceptions of SB 1041 reforms and their impact	• With such aspects as communications with participants; matching participants to WTW activities; provision of support services (e.g., child care, substance abuse, mental health); and coordination with other organizations in the public and private sector (e.g., community colleges, vocational education, other service providers, employers, and job training), a majority of counties consistently rated SB 1041 implementation as working moderately well to very well. This positive view of implementation also held for reengagement, tracking WTW participation, information management, and design and implementation of the ESE and FS programs. • Between 45 percent and 57 percent of all counties estimated that the implementation of SB 1041 in the early years had no effect on WPR, participation in WTW activities, compliance with CalWORKs program rules, earnings, participation in CalFresh, or the number of participants receiving sanctions. At the same time, between 36 percent and 40 percent of counties reported that participation in WTW activities and enrollment in education and training programs/ community colleges was somewhat better under SB 1041.
Coordination with other public and private service providers at county level	• Three-quarters of all county social services departments reported reaching out to individual directors or agency representatives in other county agencies to plan for or implement support services under SB 1041. • Concerns voiced by service providers in the focal counties regarding SB 1041 were similar to those identified by caseworkers—that SB 1041 was complicated and difficult to understand. • Education service providers in the focal counties (e.g., CalWORKs counselors on community college campuses) also noted that they had not observed the rate of referrals to education that they had expected, given the flexibility in activities afforded by SB 1041.
State-level stakeholders' view of potential long-run impact of SB 1041	• Stakeholders in CDSS and other state-level agencies and organizations expressed the potential for SB 1041 to have a positive effect on how clients experience their initial engagement with CalWORKs, the activities available to them, and their relationships with caseworkers. However, stakeholders noted that it is still too early to determine whether or not SB 1041 will have the intended effect of helping clients to overcome their unique barriers to self-sufficiency.

Table 8.1—Continued

Topic	Key Findings
	Status and Tracking Studies Initial Descriptive Analyses
Exemptions	• The percentage of participants who received at least one exemption during their first two years in the CalWORKs WTW program increased from the March 2007 entry cohort to the March 2013 entry cohort (from 44 percent to 49 percent). Annual snapshots of all WTW participants since SB 1041 showed that in March of 2013 about four out of ten participants had an exemption, while in March of 2014 and March of 2015, about three out of ten participants had an exemption.
Sanctions	• The percentage of participants who received at least one sanction during their first two years in the CalWORKs WTW program was around 12 percent for the March 2007 entry cohort and 14 percent for the March 2013 entry cohort. Yearly snapshots since SB 1041 showed that, in a given March, about one out of eight participants were currently sanctioned.
Leaving CalWORKs	• The percentage of participants who were not in the CalWORKs WTW program one year after entry changed little from the 2007 to 2013 entry cohorts (50 percent to 49 percent), while the percentage of participants who were not in CalWORKs two years after entry increased, rising from 64 percent for the 2007 entry cohort to 67 percent for the 2013 entry cohort.
Employment and earnings	• A larger percentage of the March 2013 entry cohort was employed for at least one quarter in the cohort's first two years after entry compared with the March 2007 entry cohort (61 percent versus 49 percent). For the March 2015 cross-section, participants' real earnings (i.e., adjusted for inflation) were about $2,300 per quarter on average, a 10-percent increase compared with the March 2013 cross-section.
Reengagement	• Among the participants who had the short-term WTW exemption for young children in December 2012, 14 percent still had this exemption in March 2014 and almost none had it in March 2015.
	Impact Study Initial Descriptive Analyses
CalWORKs receipt, employment, and earnings	• Initial estimates based on state CalWORKs administrative data that account for participant characteristics and county unemployment rates suggest that persons entering CalWORKs in the post–SB 1041 period had WTW participation rates one year after enrollment about 2 percentage points higher compared with similar CalWORKs WTW participants who enrolled before the reforms. This rise in WTW participation was because participants were combining employment and WTW participation more often (an increase of about 2 percentage points) rather than being employed without participating (a decrease of about 2 percentage points) compared with similar participants who started before SB 1041. • When we accounted for changes in the economy and in the demographics of CalWORKs WTW participants, the level of quarterly real earnings among CalWORKs WTW participants one year after enrollment was about $54 higher (4.2 percent) than predicted. • These findings are consistent with the increase in the earned income disregard, which was one aspect of SB 1041 that was implemented immediately.
Other outcomes	• Estimates based on the CPS provide no indication that, in the first year after SB 1041 was implemented, outcomes for the population potentially eligible for the CalWORKs WTW program—such as income below poverty, school enrollment, or receipt of job training—have changed relative to a comparison group in other states with similar policies and demographics as California.

released slowly, and—according to county staff—often confusing or contradictory. This led to challenges in training staff on SB 1041 and to confusion among administrative and line staff in regard to the different components of SB 1041 (particularly related to calculation of the WTW 24-month time clock). Training for caseworkers on SB 1041 was described as difficult, given the continual release of state guidance to clarify components of the reforms and evolving guidance over time. The ACS survey indicated that, for 21 percent of counties, the timing of the release of state guidance on SB 1041 was a moderate or major hindrance with respect to implementation, with smaller counties more likely to report it being a hindrance than medium-sized to large

counties. In terms of the complexity of SB 1041 reforms, 79 percent of counties reported that it was a moderate or major hindrance with respect to implementation; again, smaller counties (65 percent) were more likely to report it being a hindrance than counties with medium to large caseloads.

County administrators and caseworkers found the complexity of SB 1041 hindered its implementation. Survey results showed that 52 percent of counties reported that the complex details associated with SB 1041 were not a barrier to implementation. At the same time, 79 percent of counties reported that explaining the complexity of SB 1041 to participants posted a moderate or major hindrance. In addition, caseworkers across the focal counties identified the WTW 24-month time clock as the most challenging component of the legislation, including when the clock should "tick" and "untick." The time involved in administering the time clock was also viewed as crowding out time to provide other services. Other hindrances cited in the ACS were those affecting CalWORKs participants, such as availability of affordable housing, job opportunities, vocational education, transportation options or resources, and line staff.

There were different views on caseworkers' understanding of SB 1041. In our focal county focus groups, caseworkers expressed significant concerns regarding the complexity of SB 1041, with a particular focus on the WTW 24-month time clock. Staff raised concerns about the adequacy of training and their supervisors' support to line staff. At the same time, when supervisors were asked on the ACS to indicate how well their caseworkers understood the changes to the WTW 24-month time clock, 83 percent of all counties indicated that the caseworkers understood the changes to the time clock moderately to very well. Compared with the other components of SB 1041, a higher percentage of counties (18 percent) reported that their WTW caseworkers did not understand at all or only slightly understood the changes to the WTW 24-month time clock; 15 percent of counties indicated their WTW caseworkers did not understand at all or only slightly understood the changes to the determination of hourly program participation due to the new averaging method for determining if a participant had met the minimum weekly hours under the 24-month time-clock plan. Relative to the other components of SB 1041, it was these two components that were most frequently identified by counties as aspects of SB 1041 for which their WTW caseworkers did not have at least a moderate understanding.

SB 1041 appears to be difficult to explain to CalWORKs WTW participants. Administrators and caseworkers in all six focal counties reported that there are still many participants who do not fully understand the implications of SB 1041, including where they land within the WTW 24-month time clock period. In fact, caseworkers said that while it was difficult for them to understand the changes brought about under the legislation, an even greater challenge was explaining it to participants. Data from the ACS reinforce this finding—93 percent of counties reported that explaining the complexity of SB 1041 to participants was a barrier. This gap in understanding the policy changes under SB 1041 has implications for the ability of

participants to select the education and training activities and other supports that will be most beneficial for them during the first 24 months of CalWORKs participation.

There were mixed views regarding the lag between implementation of SB 1041 and upgrading the county consortia administrative data systems to meet the needs of the legislation. Based on interviews and focus groups in the focal counties, this delay was a source of frustration for county leaders and caseworkers in the focal counties. At the same time, based on the ACS, county leadership in 64 percent of counties reported that lack of automation of the WTW 24-month time clock was not a hindrance in implementation. Conversely, 36 percent of counties reported that lack of automation of the WTW 24-month time clock was a minor, moderate, or major hindrance; this was especially true for smaller counties, where 50 percent indicated it was at least a minor hindrance.

The role of WPR in the implementation of SB 1041 was a concern for some state-level stakeholders and many focal county staff. Perceptions that WPR and SB 1041 represent competing agendas emerged as a major theme in the interviews with state and focal county stakeholders. State-level stakeholders, external to CDSS, were particularly worried that counties felt pressured to meet WPR, influencing the extent to which caseworkers helped participants access options available under SB 1041. This concern was reinforced by comments from caseworkers in the focal county focus groups, with many caseworkers complaining about the lack of alignment between the state and federal requirements. ACS findings showed that 29 percent of counties assessed that SB 1041 resulted in somewhat or much worse workforce participation rates—consistent with what we heard from the focus group discussions with caseworkers.

Given that the process study shows the provisions of SB 1041 and related Early Engagement activities have yet to reach full implementation, it may be premature to expect substantial changes in CalWORKs WTW participant outcomes or in measured impacts. The initial analyses for the status, tracking, and impact studies demonstrate the feasibility of examining participant outcomes using state administrative data, as well as such external data as the CPS. There is some indication from the status and tracking studies that participant outcomes have been changing over time, but given the improving economy, it is important to account for other factors that may be affecting participation in the CalWORKs WTW program, labor market behavior, and other aspects of family well-being. The initial impact study findings are based on data with one to two years of post–SB 1041 measures, which means we can only capture very early impacts. The pace of implementation for the reforms may explain the relatively modest effects demonstrated in the analyses that control for potential confounding factors. As the evaluation continues, we will be able to employ data covering a longer period of time after SB 1041 became effective and for a more extensive set of indicators available from county CalWORKs WTW administrative data.

Implications and Issues to Examine in the Next Phase of the Evaluation

As a multiyear evaluation, this initial report with evaluation findings was not intended to lead to specific recommendations, although Chapters Four and Five identified a number of policy changes recommended by the counties as part of the ACS and on the part of the stakeholders who contributed to the focal county interviews and focus groups. However, a number of the findings summarized in Table 8.1 are sufficiently robust, especially those from the process study, to identify important implications of the results, as well as issues that we expect to consider in the next phase of the evaluation. In this final section, we highlight these implications and issues for further exploration.

WTW 24-Month Time Clock

As indicated in Table 8.1, one overarching theme of the focal county component of the process study is that implementation of the WTW 24-month time clock has been extremely challenging for everyone involved. Determining each participant's time-clock status is a time-consuming combination of automated and manual processes that are difficult to implement in a consistent way, at least for caseworkers in the six focal counties, in part because caseworkers do not have a uniformly complete understanding of the policy changes. This means that implementation of time-clock rules may vary across counties or even across caseworkers within the same county, such that two CalWORKs WTW participants with otherwise similar circumstances and histories may realize a different accounting of their time-clock status.

Under the current SB 1041 policy, administrators in the six focal counties recognize that it is unrealistic to expect to be able to achieve consistency by fully automating the time clock; there are too many judgment calls required to determine what count as core versus noncore activities, when to tick or untick the clock, and so on. Although full automation may not be feasible, there may be ways to improve upon the existing automation systems to alleviate confusion and standardize as much of the process as possible. In addition, there is scope for further training of supervisors and caseworkers to improve understanding of the rules (e.g., what stops and starts the clock) and to ensure greater consistency in their application when manual adjustments are required. The smaller counties in particular may benefit from comprehensive training on the 24-month time clock. Counties may also gain from sharing information on best practices, although smaller counties may not have the resources needed to fully adopt practices that are working well in the larger counties, where more supports are available.

Our in-depth data collection in the six focal counties further indicated that administrators and caseworkers are concerned that the WTW 24-month time clock is not sufficiently long for barriers to stable employment and self-sufficiency to be addressed. As the evaluation continues, we expect to determine if this concern is relevant statewide by examining state and county administrative data on CalWORKs WTW participants' outcomes. Data from the CalSES will allow us to examine a broader set of adult and child outcomes for a sample of CalWORKs WTW

participants who first enrolled in one of the six focal counties before and after the SB 1041 changes.

CalWORKs WTW Participants' Understanding of SB 1041

The ACS and focal county work underscored that the complexity of SB 1041 made it challenging for caseworkers to understand and to explain to participants what SB 1041 is and what it means for them. The focus groups with CalWORKs WTW participants further reinforced the point that participants themselves really do not understand SB 1041, including such key aspects as the 24-month time clock, as well as what strategy they should take in terms of deciding how best to utilize core and noncore options and the one-time young child exemption. Although gaps in understanding program rules under CalWORKs or other programs is not a new phenomenon, these findings suggest that there is a need for simpler and more-detailed guidance that caseworkers and participants can follow. For CalWORKs WTW participants who are at the end of their 24-month time clock, consideration could be given to resetting their clock so that they have the opportunity to fully understand the implications of different options.

Potential Process Improvements

Recommendations offered during the focal county site visits focused on improving processes for caseworkers, which might ultimately make implementation easier and more understandable for all. In some cases, these processes were already being applied with good results in at least one of the focal counties and could therefore serve as models of best practice to test out and disseminate to other counties. In other cases, the recommended process change has yet to be implemented, so initial pilot testing of the process change may be warranted.

For example, one recommendation was improvement of the WTW 2 form. Commenting on the complexity of the WTW 2 form, one administrator indicated that staff have gotten to the point where they describe the differences between the WTW and CalWORKs federal programs by "what ticks and doesn't tick your clock, rather than try to fully go right side/left side." A caseworker in another county noted that updating the WTW 2 form every time there's a change in activities between the WTW and CalWORKs sides of the form is challenging. The administrator said the form could be "cleaner."

For another example, administrators and caseworkers in one county advocated a specialized unit to track and manage participants' time on aid. This county developed such a unit during the planning stages of implementing SB 1041. They said,

> we really saw we needed to have one [a unit]. Time on aid was very time-intensive and the line staff really didn't have the time to do it. This [was] a big burden off of them [caseworkers]. We developed a system for all of the cases that came to our unit and how they were corrected.

It would seem that a specialized time on aid unit would improve time-clock accuracy and reduce caseworkers' workload.

WPR

Our work in the focal counties identified a tension between needing to meet the WPR and allowing CalWORKs WTW participants to pursue the choices available to them under SB 1041. This issue was also echoed by interviews with state (non-CDSS) stakeholders. It is unclear the extent to which pressures felt by the counties regarding the WPR are influencing caseworker behavior: Caseworkers might hesitate to encourage and support participants to take advantage of the flexibility SB 1041 offers when those choices may not help the county meet the WPR. As part of the ongoing evaluation, we will continue to assess the extent to which concern over potential federal penalties associated with the WPR is deterring counties from fully supporting the options under SB 1041. At the state level, for example, key informants indicated that the expected influx of CalWORKs WTW participants in community colleges had yet to materialize, which might reflect county concerns with meeting the WPR, the state of the economy, or other barriers to education participation. Nevertheless, as the evaluation continues, we can monitor community college participation as one indicator of whether CalWORKs WTW participants are engaging in further education and training as intended with the SB 1041 policy changes.

Early Engagement Activities

These initial evaluation findings also have implications for the set of Early Engagement activities associated with SB 1041: the OCAT, FS program, and ESE program. There are also related issues to explore as the evaluation continues.

OCAT

Rollout of the OCAT across the 58 counties began in the late summer of 2015. One question it raises is that this more comprehensive appraisal tool may identify more barriers and service needs than previous appraisals have done and identify them earlier in the process when an individual comes in for an initial appraisal. One of the questions moving forward is whether the counties will have sufficient services and capacity to meet those newly identified needs.

Another issue is how counties will need to modify their processes to accommodate the OCAT. The guidance from CDSS focuses on the actual administration of the OCAT, but not guidance or training on how counties should modify their processes to move the appraisal process up earlier at intake and then change how a WTW participant is diverted to different programs and services to meet those needs. We will be focusing in the next round of focal county data collection on how counties have modified their processes to accommodate the OCAT and their experiences with it.

Given the sensitive nature of some of the OCAT items (e.g., questions related to domestic violence, drug use, mental health issues) and the fact that these questions may be asked in front of WTW participants' children, it may be that these items will be underreported because of WTW participants' reluctance to answer such questions affirmatively. Further, the fact that these questions are being asked at the very initial intake step (before a caseworker has had a chance to

establish a rapport with a client) also may make it challenging to obtain accurate answers to these more-sensitive questions. This suggests it would be valuable to analyze the data and assess whether there is potential for underreporting to occur for some of the OCAT items.

A final implication, given that the OCAT is still in the process of being implemented, is that the full SB 1041 "treatment" may not be realized until the OCAT is fully operational. Thus it may be several years before the full impact of SB 1041 can be assessed. This points to the value of the ongoing evaluation but also the need to acknowledge that the timing of the implementation of SB 1041 and supporting activities will not always align with the January 1, 2013, effective date of most of the legislation's policy changes.

FS Program

As suggested by several focal county leaders, the OCAT rollout in summer 2015 may have a strong impact on the FS program, driving increased referrals to the program, given the new expanded and comprehensive assessment process. In the next year of the study, the evaluation team will explore if referrals to FS have increased and perspectives on why that may be the case, as well as how the social service system is responding to any changes in demand.

ESE Program

The ESE program is relatively new and there is some variation in the way counties are implementing it. Therefore, it may be helpful for counties to learn from one another about their program models and strategies to expand the number and range of employers participating. Another issue that may warrant further exploration is the ESE program fund structure and allocation methods.

Appendix A. Understanding How the CalWORKs Program Functions

This appendix provides a summary of how key components of the CalWORKs program operate under SB 1041, namely the reengagement of parents who had previously been subject to the young child exemption and the CalWORKs federal and WTW time clocks. We also provide details on the set of Early Engagement activities: the OCAT, FS program, and ESE program. Together, these aspects of CalWORKs provide important context for understanding the implementation of SB 1041 and the report findings.

Reengagement of Parents Who Had Previously Been Subject to the Young Child Exemption

Initial implementation of SB 1041 began with reengagement of parents who had previously been subject to the young child exemption that was changed as a result of the new legislation. Specifically, SB 1041 included the introduction of a new one-time exemption for parents of young children, ending the temporary young child exemption enacted by AB X4 4, for which parents or other primary caretakers were eligible if either one child they cared for was between 12 and 23 months of age or at least two children were under six years of age. Clients could take this temporary young child exemption as many times as needed, as long as they remained eligible. SB 1041 created a new exemption for a parent or primary caretaker of a child between 0 and 23 months of age. One key difference between the new exemption and the previous one was that the new young child exemption is a one-time exemption: It can only be taken once in a participant's lifetime regardless of how many times a client leaves and reenters the CalWORKs program (CDSS, 2012b; CDSS, 2013a). The previous exemption ended December 31, 2012. As a result, counties were required to initiate contact and communicate with participants who were no longer eligible for this exemption and reengage them into the WTW program. Counties were required to complete their reengagement processes by January 1, 2015 (CDSS, 2012d; CDSS, 2013b).

CalWORKs Federal and Welfare-to-Work Time Clocks

Enactment of SB 1041 modified the CalWORKs program to include a new method of providing WTW activities to nonexempt participants. As of January 1, 2013, a WTW 24-month time clock was established for the CalWORKs program that allotted up to 24 months for participants to engage in a variety of activities to prepare them to become or remain employed (CDSS, 2012a). The new time clock is embedded within the preexisting CalWORKs 48-month time limit, which

determines how long nonexempt participants are eligible to receive cash assistance contingent upon compliance with the federal work participation requirement. Months in the new clock accrue prospectively and cumulatively, but not necessarily consecutively (CDSS, 2012a). After the WTW 24-month time clock expires, participants are obligated to meet the CalWORKs federal standards for work participation requirements for the remainder of their 48 months on aid.[64] In addition, participants with fewer than 24 months left on their 48-month time-on-aid clock are only permitted to participate in WTW activities for the time remaining on their clock (CDSS, 2012c).

Comparison of Time Clocks

While similar in some respects (e.g., number of required work participation hours), the time clocks are distinct in several ways. The first and most significant difference between the clocks is the approved activities. SB 1041 eliminated the WTW core and noncore hourly requirements, with the CalWORKs WTW 24-month time clock activities being more varied and extensive than the federal work activities (see Table A.1). All the activities listed under the CalWORKs WTW 24-month time-clock column (first column in Table A.1) are allowed, and participation in these activities, in any combination that satisfies the participant's hourly requirements, maintains him or her in good standing in the program (CDSS, 2012c). The increased flexibility resulting from the elimination of the core and noncore hourly requirements during the 24-month period was intended to support participants' opportunities to reach self-sufficiency. In addition, the number of hours that clients are required to participate in WTW have been aligned with the federal hourly requirements, which reduces the weekly participation requirements for single-parent families. When clients have used up, or exhausted, their WTW 24-month time clock, they are subject to CalWORKs federal standards. CalWORKs federal standards hourly requirements must then be satisfied through a combination of more restrictive "work-like" activities, listed on the second column of Table A.1.

Although there is some overlap in the approved activities, the requirements for participation in these activities differ. For example, participation in vocational education under the CalWORKs federal standards is limited to 12 months for the participant's lifetime. However, participants can engage in vocational education for the entire 24 months of the WTW time period.

The second major distinction between the two time clocks is the way in which time elapses, or "ticks." The 48-month time-on-aid clock begins as soon as the nonexempt participant is approved for the CalWORKs program. However, the CalWORKs WTW 24-month time clock is triggered by the participant signing the WTW 2 form, or if the participant does not meet the CalWORKs federal requirements.[65] Specifically, the CalWORKs WTW 24-month time clock

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[64] Participants began timing out of the WTW time clock in January 2015.

[65] The WTW 2 form is a four-page document that lists CalWORKs WTW 24-month time-clock activities on the left side and CalWORKs federal work activities on the right side of the first page. In addition, the total number of

Table A.1. Comparison of CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work 24-Month Time-Clock Activities and Federal Work Activities

CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work 24-Month Time Clock	Federal Work Activities
(No Core Activity Requirements)	**Core Activities**

• Unsubsidized employment
• Self-employment
• Subsidized private or public sector
• Grant-based on-the-job training
• Work study
• Work experience
• Community service
• Vocational education
• On-the-job training
• Job search and job readiness
• Mental health services
• Substance abuse services
• Domestic abuse services
• Supported work and transitional employment
• Job skills training directly related to employment
• Satisfactory attendance in a secondary school or in a course leading to certificate of general educational development
• Education directly related to employment
• Adult basic education
• Participation required by school to ensure child's attendance
• Other activities necessary to assist in obtaining employment
	• Unsubsidized employment
	  • Self-employment
	• Subsidized private or public sector
	  • Grant-based on-the-job training
	  • Work study
	• Work experience
	• Community service
	• Vocational education (12-month lifetime limit)
	• On-the-job training
	• Job search and job readiness (per established time limits)
	  • Mental health services
	  • Substance abuse services
	  • Domestic abuse services
	• Providing child care to a community service program participant
	Noncore Activities
	• Job skills training directly related to employment
	• Satisfactory attendance in a secondary school or in a course leading to certificate of general educational development
	• Education directly related to employment
	Activities Not Meeting Federal
	• Other activities necessary to assist in obtaining employment

SOURCE: CDSS, undated-c.

ticks on the first month following signing the WTW 2 form or after determination that CalWORKs federal work requirements were not met. In the event that a participant meets the CalWORKs federal work requirements after the WTW 24-month time clock starts, the caseworker can go back retroactively and "untick" the 24-month time clock for the relevant months. Conversely, if a participant met the CalWORKs federal work requirements but was determined to be noncompliant later, the caseworker would start the CalWORKs WTW 24-month time clock at the beginning of the following month. The 24-month time clock would continue to "tick" until the participant began meeting the CalWORKs federal work requirements or meets one of the other criteria for stopping the clock (e.g., WTW exemption, in the process of developing a WTW plan, good cause, domestic abuse waiver, etc.) (CDSS, 2012a; CDSS,

required work participation hours is included one this form. Pages 2–3 include the details on the specific program assignment/s and service/s to which the participant has agreed. The final page is for participant acknowledgment. Each participant in the family signs his or her own form and has his or her own 24-month time clock (CDSS, undated-c).

2012c). In general, the 48-month time-on-aid clock continues to tick each month while the nonexempt participant remains eligible for the CalWORKs program.

Third, the two time clocks also vary in terms of clock expiration. Given that the 48-month time-on-aid clock supersedes the WTW 24-month time clock, if an individual has "timed out" on the 48-month time-on-aid clock, he or she is not granted any additional time on the 24-month time clock (CDSS, 2012). However, if the WTW 24-month time clock expires during the 48-month time-on-aid period, a target of 20 percent of participants in each county can be approved for a six-month extension of the 24-month time clock if the participant

- is likely to secure employment within six months
- has encountered unique labor market barriers temporarily preventing employment, and therefore needs additional time to obtain employment
- is close to completing an educational or treatment program
- needs an additional period of time to complete a WTW activity specified in his or her WTW case plan due to a diagnosed learning disability or other disability
- has an application for Social Security's Supplemental Security Income (SSI) under review
- is a second adult in the family who hasn't exhausted the CalWORKs WTW 24-month time clock
- faces other circumstances as determined by the CDSS (CDSS, 2014c; CDSS, 2015a).

Calculation of the 24-Month Time Clock

Calculating the WTW 24-month time clock, also known as determining whether the clock should "tick" (and therefore the month should count as time used on the clock), is a complicated process that involves automated systems and manual revision. The automatic interface ticks the 24-month time clock automatically. Los Angeles uses the automatic LEADER system. CalWIN handles this automatic process for 18 counties in California, while C-IV manages this process for the remaining 39 counties (Legislative Analyst's Office, 2012). The automatic systems tick the 24-month time clock each month, and it is up to caseworkers to review the cases monthly and "untick" any clocks where necessary.

The action of unticking a clock takes place in a manual system that communicates with the automatic system to send time-clock information to the state and federal welfare programs. As mentioned earlier, the 24-month time clock is unticked if a caseworker finds that certain exemptions can be applied or if the CalWORKs federal requirements are met. In Los Angeles, caseworkers use the manual GEARS system to untick the clock. This data interface is also used to determine if participants met their monthly WTW hours. CalWIN and C-IV also provide subsystems that allow caseworkers to "untick the clock" if necessary. Caseworkers use a manual calculation process to determine if participants have met their monthly WTW hours.

There are several exemptions that can stop the CalWORKs WTW 24-month time clock, some of which also stop the 48-month time-on-aid clock. The one-time young child exemption, for example, exempts a CalWORKs participant from WTW and CalWORKs federal requirements provided that he or she is the primary caretaker of a child younger than 24 months of age (CDSS, 2012c). The exemption for adults caring for young children six months of age or younger, however, exempted clients caring for a child younger than six months from WTW participation, but not the CalWORKs 48-month time limit (CDSS, 2012c). Other exemptions, such as the domestic abuse exemption, excuse participants from both programs. For a complete list of exemptions see ACL 12-67 (CDSS, 2012).

Under new direction from CDSS (released in November 2014), caseworkers are to use an averaging methodology to determine if a client meets the minimum weekly hours under the 24-month time-clock plan. The weekly average is calculated by adding the total number of participation hours in all CalWORKs activities for the month, dividing by 4.33, then rounding to the nearest whole number (CDSS, November 14, 2014h).

Determining Extensions of Participants' 24-Month Time Clock

Initial guidance on extending the 24-month time clock was issued by the state in ACL No. 14-09 (CDSS, 2014c). Since then, five additional ACLs handling expiring time clocks were released (CDSS 2014f; 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015h) that provided instructions on calculating and tracking extensions, explained the methodology for determining the target number of extensions, described the process for transitioning participants to post–24-month time-clock federal standards, and outlined the target number of extensions estimated for July 2015 through December 2015.

Early Engagement Activities

At the state level, SB 1041 was negotiated within the context of new or expanded programs intended to maximize the promise of the CalWORKs WTW 24-month time clock. Under AB 74, those programs, known collectively as "Early Engagement," include the OCAT, FS program, and ESE program. We summarize each of these components in turn.

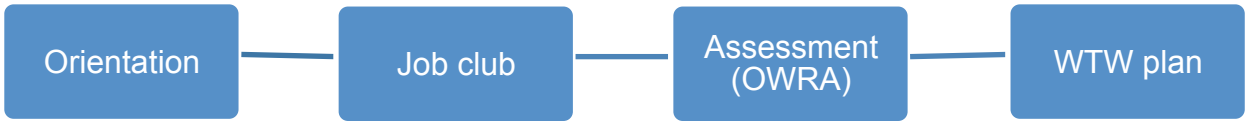
The Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool

As described in ACL 15-43, "the WTW appraisal is intended to evaluate a client's employment and education history, and identify any barriers to self-sufficiency that can be addressed through WTW activities and supportive services" (CDSS, 2015f) The OCAT is based on the federal OWRA tool for TANF. Through a workgroup process, CDSS modified the OWRA and

customized it to produce the OCAT.[66] In March 2014, CDSS contracted with ICF International to develop the web-based appraisal tool. CDSS also asked five counties to serve as "early users" of the uncustomized version of the OWRA tool in order to gather their initial reactions and ideas for customization.[67] In the summer of 2014, CDSS began piloting the OCAT in a select number of counties,[68] and statewide training and implementation began in the spring of 2015 through a series of regional train-the-trainer sessions (CDSS, 2015g). Completion of the statewide training was scheduled for July 2015 with the 58 counties expected to begin using the OCAT in August 2015.

Figures A.1 and A.2 illustrate how the federal OWRA tool is used in appraising TANF participants and how the appraisal process will be altered from pre–AB 74 to post–AB 74 when the OCAT is fully implemented. Importantly, the OCAT appraisal form is intended for use earlier in the process—that is, during a WTW participant's initial appraisal. Prior to the implementation of the OCAT, an assessment of barriers is typically done within the six focal counties only after an individual has participated in Job Club and been unsuccessful in finding employment (Figure A.1). This is consistent with a "work-first" approach, where job search activities are required immediately upon receipt of assistance—typically for four weeks—and followed by a more thorough assessment of skills and barriers if employment is not found. Following the implementation of AB 74, which established the OCAT, the appraisal was moved up earlier in the process so that it occurs when a WTW participant comes in for his or her initial appraisal (Figure A.2). This change means that counties will need to not only train their line staff in implementing the OCAT but also revise their flow and Early Engagement processes by which WTW participants are assessed and WTW plans developed.

Figure A.1. Federal OWRA

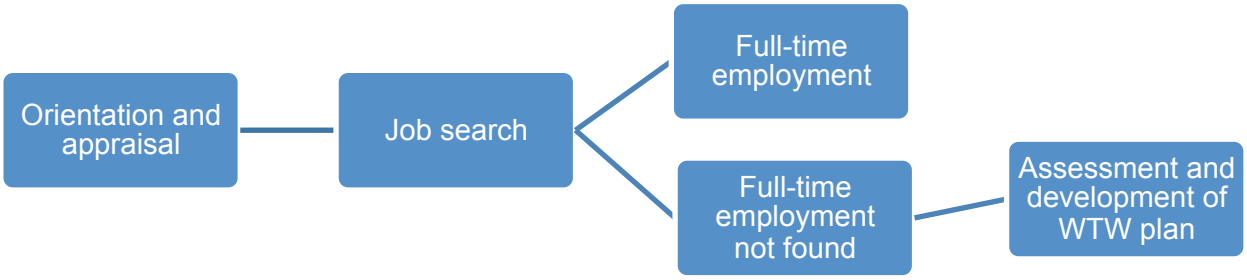


[66] CDSS engaged its stakeholder partners—including CWDA, county welfare departments (CWDs), welfare advocacy groups, community college representatives, and legislative staff—to conduct an extensive review of the federal OWRA tool and to make recommendations for modifying it to create the OCAT (CDSS, 2014e).

[67] The five "early-user" counties were Fresno, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Sonoma, and Tulare (CDSS, 2014e).

[68] The pilot counties were Lassen, Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Bernardino, and San Francisco (CDSS, 2014e).

Figure A.2. Assessment of WTW Participants' Barriers and Needs (Pre–AB 74)

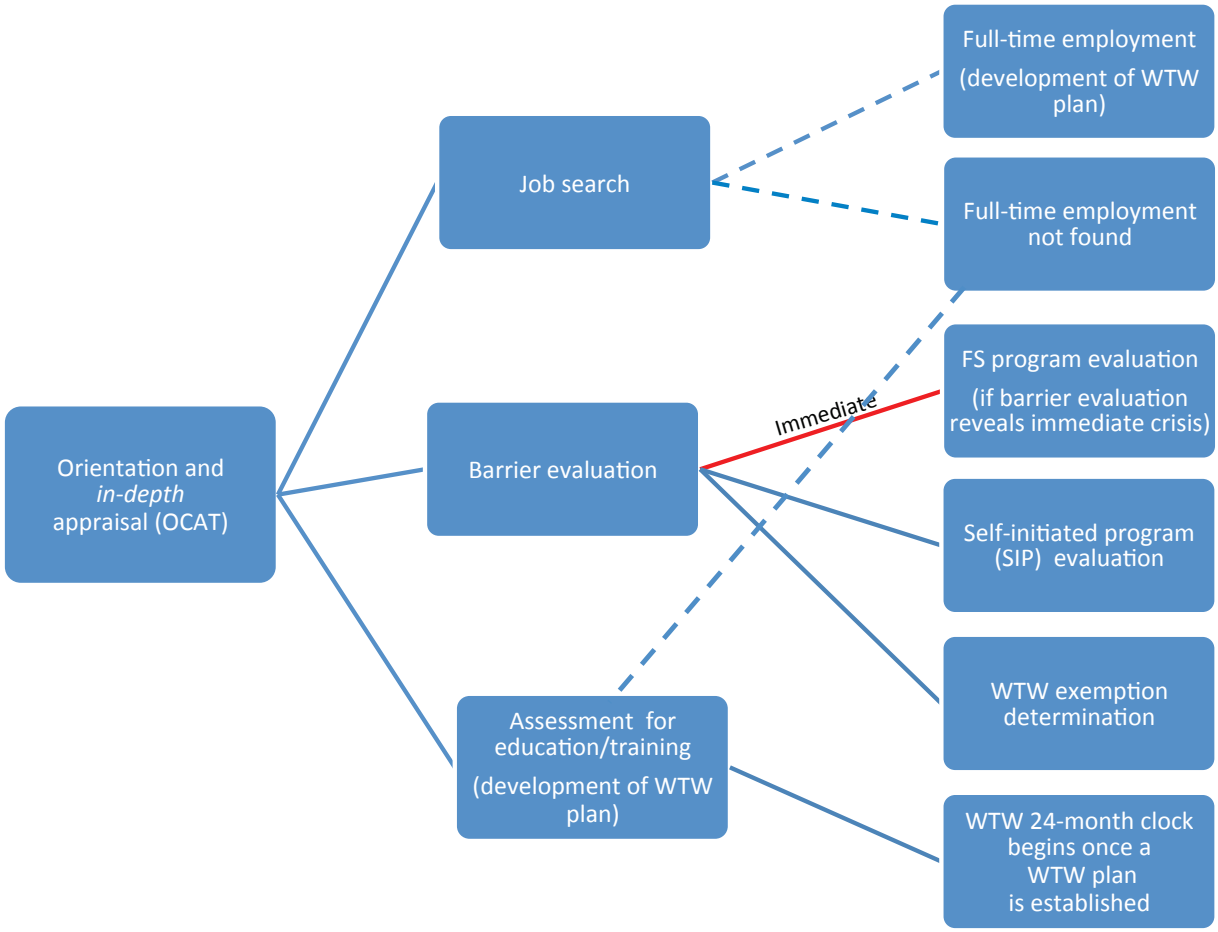


The OCAT generates a summary of the WTW participant's appraisal and produces a set of recommendations for addressing identified needs and barriers that includes appropriate supportive services. As Figure A.3 illustrates, this may include evaluation for the FS program, WTW exemptions, job search, assessment for education and/or training, and Self-Initiated Programs. This information is used to develop each client's individualized WTW plan.

Family Stabilization Program

AB 74 called for counties to create an FS program, effective January 1, 2014. As described in ACL 14-12 (CDSS, 2014a), the program "is designed to ensure a basic level of stability within a family prior to, or concurrently with, participation in Welfare-to-Work (WTW) activities. The goal of FS is to increase client success in light of the flexible WTW 24-month time clock through more intensive case management and the assignment of clients to the additional activities or barrier removal services necessary to ultimately achieve self-sufficiency." Families are required to already be participating in the WTW program to be eligible for FS. Additionally, at least one adult in the family must not yet have exhausted his or her 24-month time clock or 48-month cash-aid time clock to participate. Participation in the FS program will stop a participant's WTW 24-month time clock for up to six cumulative months. However, the length of time a participant remains in FS is dependent on the circumstance of each family. FS program participation is determined when a county identifies a family in crisis (e.g., homelessness, domestic violence, behavioral/mental health issues, or substance abuse–related needs) that would prevent adult WTW participants in that family from engaging in the program and attaining self-sufficiency. FS is meant to support families as a whole and could include mental health treatment for families, substance abuse counseling, and transitory housing, to name a few supportive services. FS is intended to be responsive to the participants and allow various degrees of flexibility to ameliorate and build family capacity to respond to their crises.

Figure A.3. California OCAT (Post–AB 74)



In addition, under SB 855 (2013), which modified Welfare and Institutions Code Section 11325.24(e), counties can offer housing and other needed services for any month in which a family is participating in the FS program. SB 855 also confirmed that FS is a voluntary program that aid recipients must agree to participate in; otherwise, they remain in the regular CalWORKs WTW system.

Expanded Subsidized Employment Program

The ESE program is another part of the Early Engagement strategy. It includes funds that counties may use to expand their current subsidized employment program. ACL 13-81 describes the ESE program as "one part of Early Engagement strategies being implemented as a result of the passage of AB 74. Other Early Engagement strategies include robust appraisal and family stabilization . . . " (CDSS, 2013c). The ACL states that "in addition to wage and nonwage costs for the job placements, ESE funds may be used to cover all operational costs of the ESE program, including the cost of overseeing the program, developing work sites, and providing training to participants. Although CWDs will have flexibility to utilize these funds as described

above, CDSS will also work with CWDA to determine the proportion of ESE funding that may be used for operational costs. . . . Funds allocated for ESE shall be in addition to, and independent of, the CWDs' Single Allocation and cannot be used by CWDs to fund or supplement the AB 98 Subsidized Employment program (AB 98 program)."

Appendix B. Additional Documentation for Primary Data Collection

This appendix provides further details regarding the primary data collection components: state-level key informant interviews, ACS, and focal county data collection. For the state-level key informant interviews, we provide a list of the agencies with which our interviewees were associated. We also provide the interview protocol. For the ACS, we present the online survey instrument, formatted as a paper survey. For the focal county data collection, we include the protocols for the key informant interviews, focus groups with caseworkers, and focus groups with CalWORKs WTW participants. We also provide tabulations that compare the characteristics of the CalWORKs WTW participants who attended a focus group session with those of the sample participants who were eligible for recruitment.

State-Level Key Informants

The state-level key informant interviews were conducted with individuals from the following agencies and organizations:

- CDSS, including the WTW Division, Child Care Bureau, and CalFresh Branch
- CWDA
- Legislative Analyst's Office
- Senate Standing Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review
- Assembly Committee on Budget
- Office of the Chancellor, California Community Colleges
- California Commission of Welfare Rights Organizations
- Western Center for Law and Poverty
- Data consortia specifically LEADER, CalWIN, and C-IV.

The protocol for these interviews is on the following pages.

All-County Survey

The ACS instrument follows the state-level key informant interview protocol.

Focal Counties Data Collection

This section includes the protocols for the key informant interviews, focus groups with caseworkers, and focus groups with CalWORKs WTW participants conducted in the six focal counties. We also assessed the representativeness of the CalWORKs WTW participants who attended a focus group session.

Representativeness of CalWORKs WTW Participant Focus Group Attendees

Table B.1 compares the mean values along several characteristics for individuals who were initially sampled for the focus group, were contacted and determined to be eligible, and attended a focus group. The last three columns of Table B.1 show the difference between the mean values for individuals determined eligible and for individuals who attended the focus groups and the statistical significance of those differences. The characteristics included in Table B.1 were obtained from WDTIP, which provided the sample frame for the initial sampling of individuals. Thus, we have these characteristics for CalWORKs WTW participants sampled for the focus group and specifically for those who attended.

We observe from Table B.1 that individuals who participated in the focus group are very similar in terms of sex, age, age of the youngest child, and composition of the household (whether a two-parent case or not) to the group of individuals deemed eligible and to those who were initially sampled. Regarding the race or ethnicity of the participants, we observe that black or African Americans were less likely to agree to participate and less likely to attend a focus group, while we observe the opposite for individuals in the "other" ethnicity category. However, these differences by race or ethnicity were not statistically significant. Another salient observation from Table B.1 is that CalWORKs WTW participants whose case language was Spanish were significantly more likely to agree to participate and attend a focus group than individuals whose primary language was English or some other language. This could be the result of conducting focus groups specifically targeted for Spanish-speaking individuals.

Table B.1. Comparison of Characteristics of CalWORKs WTW Participants Sampled for, Eligible for, and Attending Focus Groups

	CalWORKs WTW Participants		
Characteristic	**Sampled for Focus Groups**	**Eligible for Focus Groups**	**Attended Focus Groups**
Female (percent)	85.1	83.7	82.8
Age (in years)	31.6	32.0	32.1
Age of youngest child (in years)	6.2	6.2	6.2
Race or ethnicity (percentage distribution)			
Hispanic or Latino	40.6	41.9	44.1
White	21.8	23.0	22.6
Black or African American	24.7	22.8	16.1
Asian	2.3	1.7	0.0
Other	10.5	10.7	17.2
Case language (percentage distribution)			
English	85.5	85.8	80.6
Spanish	10.5	11.2	18.3
Other	4.0	3.0	1.1
Two-parent case (percent)	20.0	21.2	18.3
N	1,167	733	93

SOURCE: CalWORKs WTW participants' characteristics as reported in WDTIP database.
NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Differences between second and third column is statistically significant at the 5-percent level only for the percentage with a case language of Spanish.

Evaluation of SB 1041 Reforms to California's CalWORKs Program
State-Level Key Informant Interview Protocol
October 2014

I. Informed Consent

I work for RAND, which is a private, nonprofit, public policy research organization. [OR I work for the American Institutes for Research (AIR).] We've been contracted by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to conduct an independent evaluation of SB 1041, which is intended to provide a more flexible approach to supporting CalWORKs participants toward self-sufficiency.

Today I am hoping to hear about your views on this subject. The interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes.

Your confidential input about the development and implementation of SB 1041 is valuable to us. We will not share your individual responses with anyone else outside of the research project. And we will not identify any individuals by name in our study reports. If we use any quotations from these interviews, we will not attribute them to any individual by name. Although we won't be identifying you by name, it is possible that someone might be able to identify you by the information you give us. So we recommend that you don't tell us anything that you would not be comfortable with other people reading.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You may choose not to participate, decline to answer any question, or stop the interview at any time.

I plan to audio record it, solely for our note taking purposes. The audio recording will only be used by project staff, and we'll destroy it when the project is done.

Do I have your permission to proceed with the interview?

[IF NO:] Thank you anyway.

[IF YES:] Do I also have your permission to audio record the interview?

II. Interview Questions

1. **Role**. What was your role – and your organization's role – in regard to the development and/or the implementation of SB 1041?

2. **Development and Scope of SB 1041**. [If relevant, based on Question #1] This question is about the process of developing SB 1041 legislation and plans for implementation.
    a. From your perspective, what was the impetus behind the development of SB 1041? What factors drove the legislation?
    b. How did CDSS coordinate with other state agencies, the federal government, organizations such as the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), and with counties in developing SB 1041 legislation and plans for implementation?
    c. Were any other agencies involved in the development of SB 1041 that you have not mentioned?
    d. Can you describe CDSS' role in writing the regulations and also distributing TANF monies and state CalWORKs funds?

3. **Broader policy context.** At the state-level, what other major policy changes occurred during this same time period (2011-2013) that may have had implications for SB 1041 implementation?

   a. Did these other policy changes have any effects on the approach adopted for SB 1041 or on the timing of its implementation?
   b. Did these other policy changes hinder or facilitate SB 1041 implementation?

4. **Reporting Requirements**. In what way, if any, has the implementation of SB 1041 changed the way California reports to the federal government?
   a. In terms of state reporting requirements, what specifically has changed since SB 1041 was implemented?
   b. What are the reporting requirements for the counties? What has specifically changed since SB 1041 was implemented in regard to reporting?

5. **Status/Pace of Implementation.** From the state perspective, what has been the pace of implementing SB 1041 among the counties – for example, has it been a slow process or implemented all at once?
   a. Are there changes associated with SB 1041 that have yet to take effect?

6. **Communication to Counties**. How did CDSS inform counties about SB 1041 requirements? In addition to the All County Letters (ACLs) that were sent out to county welfare directors, were there other ways in which CDSS communicated implementation information with counties (e.g., webinars, meetings)?

7. **Communication to CalWORKs Participants**. From the state perspective, to what extent do participants understand the changes brought about by SB 1041?

8. **Technical Assistance**. What types of technical assistance and guidance has been provided by the state to counties?

9. **State Monitoring**. What types of monitoring activities are being undertaken by CDSS?
   a. CDSS has conducted field visits to a number of counties – from your perspective, what are the key challenges facing counties?
   b. Are there any innovative or successful implementation examples you would like to share, based on those visits?

10. **Variation in Implementation**. To what extent is there variation in program services and administration across counties and how do these relate to the differences in the delivery and coverage of services?

11. **Impact on County Welfare Organizational Infrastructure**. To your knowledge, what is the impact of SB 1041 on county welfare operations?
    a. Specifically, what has changed about county welfare staffing levels, if any?
    b. What has changed about the level of resources allocated to counties, if any?

12. **Impact on County Welfare Services**. What has changed in regard to services to CalWORKs participants, as a result of SB 1041?
    a. How has SB 1041 impacted, if at all, child care, transportation, and other supportive services?
    b. How has SB 1041 impacted, if at all, welfare to work activities?

   c. What impact are the new time limits, the revised work hour requirements, and the new clocks expected to have on county staff and CalWORKs participants? E.g., in terms of understanding and tracking.
   d. Are there other major changes that have impacted counties, as a result of SB 1041?

13. **Impact on CalWORKs Participants**. From the state perspective, what is the impact of SB 1041on CalWORKs participants?
    a. Is there any particular component of SB 1041 that you believe has had the strongest impact on CalWORKs participants? If so, why?

14. **Implementation Successes**. From your perspective, what has worked well with SB 1041?

15. **Implementation Challenges.** From your perspective, what have been the implementation challenges associated with SB 1041?
    a. What strategies have been effective, if any, in overcoming these challenges?
    b. Is there anything you'd change about SB 1041? Why or why not?

16. **Coordination across Programs and Systems**. From the state perspective, how effective is coordination among state welfare programs and other systems, in providing services to CalWORKs applicants and to current and former participants? These systems may include school districts, mental health programs, transportation providers, child care providers, community colleges, community-based organizations, the private sector, alcohol and drug programs, local planning councils, and other organizations.
    a. Beyond coordination, are any of these systems engaged in more intensive collaboration to serve CalWORKs participants?

17. **Data Systems**. How well do the current data systems support state and county needs related to implementation of SB 1041?

18. **Next Steps**. What does your agency see as being the next steps with respect to SB1041 implementation? For CDSS? For the counties?

19. What policy hurdles does your agency/CDSS see going forward and what steps may be needed to address them?

20. (For CDSS and other agencies): How has SB 1041 affected your organization?
    a. In terms of staffing levels or structures?
    b. Reporting relationships?
    c. Your organization's relationships with other departments or agencies: at the state-level? At the county-level?
    d. Other impacts?

Evaluation of SB 1041 Reforms to California's CalWORKs Program
All County Survey Instrument
2015

Dear Human Services/Social Services Director:

We would like to request your participation in a Web-based survey that is part of the state-mandated evaluation of the SB 1041 reforms to the CalWORKs Program. These reforms, which officially took effect in January 2013, are expected to impact county CalWORKs operations, CalWORKs participants' interactions with county staff, and a range of outcomes for participants and their families. The purpose of this survey (and the ones that will follow in future years) is to learn how your county has implemented the SB 1041 reforms and related legislation (including AB 74, which established the Family Stabilization Program and the Expanded Subsidized Employment Program) and how the operation of your county CalWORKs Program has changed as a result of SB 1041. The survey will ask about implementation activities going back to January 2013 when SB 1041 went into effect. This evaluation, commissioned by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), is being conducted by the RAND Corporation and American Institutes for Research (AIR).

RAND and AIR are asking the Human Services/Social Services Directors in all 58 California counties to take part in this Web survey. Participation in the survey is completely voluntary, but we hope you will agree to participate. The amount of time needed to complete the survey will vary depending on the size and complexity of your CalWORKs Program. All information you provide will be held in confidence by RAND and AIR. This means that the information you provide will not be shared with anyone other than persons authorized by RAND and AIR. Survey responses will be analyzed and included in a report to be released in late 2015. All responses will be kept confidential; report(s) will include survey results in aggregate form only and may include representative unidentified quotes, which therefore will not be attributable to any county individually.

We recommend that you print a Word document version of the survey (attached to the e-mail invitation you received) and complete it together with the members of your management team who are responsible for case management, employment and training services, and participant outreach and communication because many of the survey questions pertain to these specific program functions and activities. We also have a section that would be relevant for supervisors of Welfare to Work (WTW) line staff to complete. Once you complete the hard copy of the survey, please submit your responses online by entering the password provided in the e-mail you received with the survey link. Please submit your on-line survey responses by July 17, 2015.

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Cheryl Graczewski at AIR at AllCountySurvey@air.org or 650-843-8238. This frequently asked questions (FAQ) document also may help to answer your questions.

Thank you for your participation!

—The RAND/AIR CalWORKs Evaluation Team

Directions to Complete the All-County Survey

The 2015 SB 1041 All-County Survey includes the seven sections outlined below. We encourage you to work through each section, answering all questions, after consulting with your colleagues using the Word copy of the survey.

After completing the Word copy of the survey, enter your county's responses in the online survey. In the online survey, if you wish to return to a previous section, please use the back button on each page to move backwards, or exit and reenter the survey to return to the beginning. Your responses are saved as you proceed through the survey. Before closing your browser, please be sure to save your responses by clicking the "save and exit" button. Please complete all sections before "submitting" the survey at the end of Section VII.

To review definitions related to the SB 1041 reforms, please see the last two pages of the survey. We encourage you to print out the definitions document and refer to it as needed while completing the survey.

Section I. Implementation of SB 1041 Reforms to the CalWORKs Program in Your County
Section II. Interagency Collaboration
Section III. Organizational and Administrative Changes
Section IV. Questions for Supervisors About Line Staff and CalWORKs Participants
Section V. Provision of Services for CalWORKs Participants in Your County
Section VI. Expanded Subsidized Employment and Family Stabilization Programs and the Reengagement Process
Section VII. Outcomes and Expectations

I. Implementation of SB 1041 Reforms to the CalWORKs Program in Your County

We are interested in the status of implementation of the SB 1041 reforms to the CalWORKs Program including facilitators and barriers to implementation.

1. Please indicate the **current** stage of implementation of each of the following components of SB 1041 reforms to the CalWORKs Program in your county. In addition, we also ask about the status of related programs (the Family Stabilization [FS] Program and the Expanded Subsidized Employment [ESE] Program). (*Mark one circle on each line.*)

Program components	**Not planned/ designed**	**Program planning/ design in progress**	**Piloted in selected districts/ regional offices**	**Implemented countywide by June 2015**	*Not applicable*
a) The 24-month time clock and related mandates	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
b) Reengagement of AB X4 4 short-term young child exemption population	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
c) New/enhanced partnerships with education providers (e.g., community colleges)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
d) New/enhanced partnerships with vocational education/job training providers	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
e) New/enhanced partnerships with domestic violence service providers	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
f) New/enhanced partnerships with substance abuse treatment services	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
g) New/enhanced partnerships with mental health services	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
h) Expanded Subsidized Employment (ESE) Program	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
i) Family Stabilization (FS) Program	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

2. Please provide additional comments on the status of implementation of the components listed in the previous question that you think are pertinent.

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Please indicate the extent to which the following issues were or were not hindrances in the implementation of SB 1041 reforms (including related programs: family stabilization and expanded subsidized employment) in your county. *(Mark one circle on each line.)*

Issue	Did not hinder	Minor hindrance	Moderate hindrance	Major hindrance	*Not applicable*
a) Timing of state guidance on SB 1041 to the counties	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
b) Lack of automation of WTW 24-month time clock	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
c) Availability of job opportunities for CalWORKs participants	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
d) Availability of educational opportunities for CalWORKs participants	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
e) Availability of vocational education or on-the-job training opportunities for CalWORKs participants	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
f) Availability of financial resources for CalWORKs participants	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
g) Availability of child care services for CalWORKs participants	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
h) Availability of affordable housing for CalWORKs participants	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Issue	Did not hinder	Minor hindrance	Moderate hindrance	Major hindrance	*Not applicable*
i) Availability of transportation options or resources for CalWORKs participants	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
j) Competition with other state/ federal mandates (e.g., Medi-Cal expansion)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
k) Availability of line staff (e.g., caseworkers, employment services specialists) who work with and/or counsel WTW participants	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
l) Complexity of SB 1041 reforms to CalWORKs	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
m) Explaining the complexity of SB 1041 to participants	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
n) Prior reductions/freezes in staff and/or funding	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
o) Other	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

If you selected "Minor Hindrance," "Moderate Hindrance," or "Major Hindrance" for "Other," please answer Question 3a. If not, please continue on to Question 4.

3a. In Question 3, you selected "Other." Please specify below what "other" issue(s) have hindered the implementation of SB 1041 reforms and related mandates (family stabilization and expanded subsidized employment) in your county:

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Please indicate the extent to which existing relationships or partnerships with the following types of organizations were or were not facilitators for the implementation of SB 1041 reforms in your county. (*Mark one circle on each line.*)

Existing relationships or partnerships with:	**Did not facilitate**	**Minor facilitator**	**Moderate facilitator**	**Major facilitator**	*Not applicable*
a) Other county agencies (e.g., mental health, behavioral health, child support services, housing agency)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
b) Education providers (e.g., community colleges)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
c) Vocational education or on the job training providers	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
d) Employment services or job placement providers	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
e) Community organizations and/or welfare advocacy organizations	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
f) State organizations (e.g., CWDA)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
g) Other	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

If you selected "not applicable" for 4f and 4g above, skip Questions 4a and 4b below, and go to Question 5.

4a. In Question 4, you selected a response for "state organizations" that have or have not facilitated the implementation of SB 1041 reforms in your county. Please specify the state organization below:

_____

_____

_____

4b. In Question 4, you selected "Other" existing relationships or partnerships that have or have not facilitated the implementation of SB 1041 reforms in your county. Please specify the type or name of the "other" organization below:

_____

_____

_____

_____

You have reached the end of Section I: Implementation of SB 1041 Reforms to the CalWORKs Program in Your County. Please continue to the next section.

To return to a page in this section, please click “Back."
To continue to the next section, please click “Next.”
To exit the survey and return at a later time, please click "Save and Exit."

II. Interagency Collaboration

Now, we would like to ask you about the type of interagency coordination your county social services department undertook to plan for or implement SB 1041.

5. How did your county social services department communicate SB 1041's changes to the CalWORKs Program to other county agencies? (*Please mark all that apply.*)

Memoranda, letters, or Administrative Directives

Briefings

Interagency or interdepartmental meetings

Interagency working groups

Other

If you selected "Other," please go to Question 5a. If not, please proceed to Question 6.

5a. Please briefly describe "Other" from Question 5.

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Since the passage of SB 1041 in July 2012, did your county social services department undertake any of the following coordination activities with other county agencies specifically to plan for or implement CalWORKs support services (e.g., housing, child care, mental health, drug treatment, domestic violence services)?

	Yes	No
a) Convened an interagency planning meeting	❒	❒
b) Established an interagency working group	❒	❒
c) Reached out to individual directors or agency representatives	❒	❒
d) Other	❒	❒

If you selected "Yes" for "Other," please go to Question 6a.
Otherwise, go to Question 7.

6a. Please briefly describe "Other" from Question 6.

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. Please provide a brief description of the coordination activities you noted in question 6 that your department undertook with other county agencies specifically to plan for or implement the new CalWORKs support service requirements (e.g., housing, child care, mental health, drug treatment, domestic violence services)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

You have reached the end of Section II: Interagency Collaboration.
Please continue to the next section.

To return to a page in this section, please click "Back."
To continue to the next section, please click "Next."
To exit the survey and return at a later time, please click "Save and Exit."

III. Organizational and Administrative Changes

Now, we would like to ask you about what organizational or administrative changes your county social services department may have made in order to facilitate implementation of the SB 1041 reforms to the CalWORKs Program and related mandates (i.e., Family Stabilization Program, Expanded Subsidized Employment Program).

8. In 2013 and/or 2014, did your county social services department implement any of the following organizational or administrative changes in response to SB 1041 or to related legislation (AB 74 which established the Family Stabilization and Expanded Subsidized Employment programs)? (*Mark one circle on each line.*)

	Yes	No	Don't know
a) Created new units (e.g., specialized case management or reengagement units)	❍	❍	❍
b) Reassigned existing units	❍	❍	❍
c) Co-located welfare staff with other county agencies	❍	❍	❍
d) Opened new regional office locations	❍	❍	❍
e) Enhanced regional office locations			
f) Shifted funding from one unit or program to another	❍	❍	❍
g) Pooled funding across county agencies to provide services to CalWORKs participants	❍	❍	❍
h) Paid staff overtime to revise and/or calculate participants' WTW 24-month time clock status	❍	❍	❍
i) Paid staff overtime to implement the reengagement process	❍	❍	❍
j) Other	❍	❍	❍

If you selected "Other," please go to Question 8a. If not, please proceed to Question 9.

8a. In Question 8, you selected "Other." Please briefly describe the "other" organizational or administrative changes your county social services department implemented in direct response to SB 1041 or to related legislation below:

_____

_____

_____

_____

If you selected "Yes" for any of the items in Question 8, please go to Question 9.
If not, please proceed to Question 10.

9. In Question 8, you answered "Yes" to organizational or administrative changes your county social services department implemented in direct response to SB 1041 or to related legislation. Please elaborate on the changes you made:

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. Did your county social services department make any of the following changes to staffing in order to accommodate the implementation of SB 1041 or related legislation (e.g., to revise or calculate the WTW 24-month time clock, to support the reengagement process, to implement the Family Stabilization or Expanded Subsidized Employment programs)? (*Mark one circle on each line*.)

	Yes	No	Don't know
a) Hired new eligibility staff	❍	❍	❍
b) Hired new WTW caseworkers	❍	❍	❍
c) Hired new administrative staff	❍	❍	❍
d) Reassigned existing administrative or line staff, or redefined existing staff's roles	❍	❍	❍
e) Created new staff position(s) or function(s)	❍	❍	❍
f) Filled existing staff vacancies	❍	❍	❍
g) Other	❍	❍	❍

If you selected "Other," please go to Question 10a. If not, please proceed to Question 11.

10a. In Question 10, you selected "Other." Please briefly describe the "other" changes to staffing made in order to accommodate the implementation of SB 1041 or related legislation below:

_____

_____

11. If you answered "Yes" to any of the items in the question above (question 10), please elaborate on the changes you made:

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. Did your county social services department set up an internal tracking system (manual or electronic) or database(s) to help monitor implementation of SB 1041 reforms (e.g., the "robust conversation" completion, the reengagement process)?

❒ Yes ➔ **Go to Question 13**

❒ No ➔ **Skip to Question 14**

Don't know ➔ **Skip to Question 14**

13. If you answered "Yes," briefly describe what kind of system or database(s) your department has implemented.

_____

_____

_____

_____

You have reached the end of Section III: Organizational and Administrative Changes. Please continue to the next section.

To return to a page in this section, please click "Back."
To continue to the next section, please click "Next."
To exit the survey and return at a later time, please click "Save and Exit."

IV. Questions for Supervisors About Line Staff and CalWORKs Participants

Below are questions about SB 1041 that would be best answered by line staff supervisors.

14. How did your department communicate SB 1041 changes to the CalWORKs Program (e.g., to the WTW 24-hour time clock, WTW activity options, Cal-Learn, reengagement process) to your staff? (*Please mark all that apply.*)

- ❒ Memoranda and other written documents
- ❒ Briefings and/or internal staff meetings
- ❒ Mandatory training sessions
- ❒ Other

If you selected "Other," please go to Question 14a. If not, please proceed to Question 15.

14a. Please briefly describe "Other" from Question 14.

_____

_____

_____

_____

15. How well do you think your **WTW Caseworkers** understand the following changes SB 1041 and related mandates brought about to the CalWORKs Program? (*Mark one circle on each line.*)

	Not at all well	**Slightly well**	**Moderately well**	**Very well**	*Not applicable*
a) Determination of a client's 24-month time clock	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
b) Changes to the required hours of participation due to the SB 1041 reforms	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
c) Changes to the determination of hourly program participation due to the new averaging method	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
d) Enhanced educational flexibility	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
e) That there are now more choices in WTW activities (e.g., activities can include work, education, training, and mental health, substance abuse, and/or domestic abuse services)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
f) New one-time young child exemption	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
g) Reengagement process for clients who previously had the short-term young child exemption (AB X4 4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
h) Expanded subsidized employment (ESE) program	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
i) Family Stabilization (FS) Program	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

15a. Are WTW Caseworkers and Eligibility Staff the same staff in your county?

Yes ➔ **Skip to Question 17**

No ➔ **Go to Question 16**

16. How well do you think your **Eligibility staff** understand the following changes SB 1041 and related mandates brought about to the CalWORKs Program? (*Mark one circle on each line.*)

	Not at all well	**Slightly well**	**Moderately well**	**Very well**	*Not applicable*
a) Determination of a client's 24-month time clock	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
b) Changes to the required hours of participation due to SB 1041 reforms	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
c) Changes to the determination of hourly program participation due to the new averaging method	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
d) New one-time young child exemption	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

17. How well do you think CalWORKs **participants** understand the following program changes brought about by SB 1041? (*Mark one circle on each line.*)

	Not at all well	**Slightly well**	**Moderately well**	**Very well**	*Not applicable*
a) The WTW 24-month time clock	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
b) The new WTW participation requirements	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
c) The increase of choices for participants with respect to the activities that they can participate in during the WTW 24-month time clock period	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
d) The reengagement process for those who had the short-term young child exemption (AB X4 4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
e) The new one-time young child exemption	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

The following questions are about implementation of the 24-month time clock and Stage One child care services.

18. In your county, who is responsible for calculating how much time a CalWORKs participant has left on the 24-month time clock? (*Please mark all that apply.*)

- ❒ A **special group of staff** was tasked with the ***initial* calculation** of participants' 24-month time clock status.
- ❒ A **special group of staff** has ***ongoing* responsibility** for calculating participants' 24-month time clock status on a monthly basis.
- ❒ **Supervisors** of case worker staff calculate or reconcile participants' 24-month time clock status on a monthly basis.
- ❒ **WTW caseworkers** calculate participants' 24-month time clock on a monthly basis for their caseload.
- ❒ Other

If you selected "Other," please go to Question 18a. If not, please proceed to Question 19.

18a. Please briefly describe "Other" from Question 18.

_____

_____

_____

19. How is the 24-month time clock currently being calculated in your county? *(Please mark one answer.)*

- ❒ On a manual basis
- ❒ On an automated basis
- ❒ Both manually and using an automated system

20. In your county, how did you inform clients of their eligibility for "Stage One" Child Care services?

_____

_____

You have reached the end of Section IV. Questions for Supervisors About Line Staff and CalWORKs Participants.
Please continue to the next section.

To return to a page in this section, please click "Back."
To continue to the next section, please click "Next."
To exit the survey and return at a later time, please click "Save and Exit."

V. Provision of Services to CalWORKs Participants in Your County

Some services are directly provided by your county's social services department, by service providers contracted by your county, or by other county agencies or service providers to whom you refer CalWORKs participants as needed. We are interested in learning how the following activities and services listed below are provided to CalWORKs participants in your county.

21a. Please indicate how your department currently undertakes or provides the following **Employment and/or job-training** to CalWORKs participants in your county. (*Please mark all that apply.*)

	Directly by County Social Services Department	By local service providers contracted by the County Social Services Department	By referrals to other county agencies	By referrals to local service providers	Don't know
a) Assistance with finding unsubsidized employment	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
b) Assistance with finding subsidized employment (public or private sector)	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
c) Assistance with placement in on-the-job training	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
d) Assistance with finding volunteer or community service opportunities	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
e) Assistance with job search and job readiness	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
f) Other activities necessary to assist with employment placement or readiness	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐

If you selected "Other," please go to Question 21a.f. below.
If not, please proceed to Question 21b.

21a.f. In Question 21a, you selected "Other." Please specify or elaborate on the "other" activities your department currently undertakes or provides for employment and/or job-training to CalWORKs participants in your county.

_____

_____

_____

21b. Please indicate how your department currently undertakes or provides the following **Educational and/or Vocational Education/Training** to CalWORKs participants in your county. (*Please mark all that apply.*)

	Directly by County Social Services Dept.	By local service providers contracted by the County Social Services Dept.	By referrals to other county agencies	By referrals to local service providers	Don't know
a) Vocational education/training	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
b) Adult basic education	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
c) GED	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
d) College or postsecondary education	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐

21c. Please indicate how your department currently undertakes or provides the following **Supportive Services** to CalWORKs participants in your county. (*Please mark all that apply.*)

	Directly by County Social Services Department	By local service providers contracted by the County Social Services Department	By referrals to other county agencies	By referrals to local service providers	Don't know
a) Child care	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
b) Transportation (e.g., assistance with bus ticket, car repair, ride share arrangement)	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
c) Mental health	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
d) Substance abuse	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
e) Domestic violence	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
f) Language translation	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
g) Legal aid	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
h) Housing assistance	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
i) Other supportive services	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐

If you selected "Other," please go to Question 21c.i. below.
If not, please proceed to Question 22a.

21c.i. In Question 21c, you selected "Other." Please elaborate on how your department currently undertakes or provides other **supportive services** to CalWORKs participants in your county.

_____

_____

_____

_____

22a. Successful implementation often depends on adequate capacity in the county to deliver a needed service and on adequate funding to support the demand for a service. Please indicate whether your county is currently having a shortfall of service capacity (e.g., personnel, physical space) and/or a shortfall in funding for each of the following services for **Employment and/or Job training**.

	CAPACITY SHORTFALL				FUNDING SHORTFALL			
	None	Current shortfall in some parts of our county	Current shortfall throughout our county	Don't know	None	Current shortfall in some parts of our county	Current shortfall throughout our county	Don't know
a) Subsidized employment	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
b) Job skills training	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
c) Job search/job readiness	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
d) On the job training	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
e) Unsubsidized employment	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
f) Community service	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
g) Other employment	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒

If you selected "Other" for "capacity shortfall," please go to Question 22a.g1.
If you selected "Other" for "funding shortfall," please go to Question 22a.g2.
If not, please proceed to Question 22b.

22a.g1. In Question 22a, if you selected "Other" for capacity shortfalls, please elaborate on the **capacity** shortfalls for employment and/or job training services.

_____

_____

_____

_____

22a.g2. In Question 22a, if you selected "Other" for funding shortfalls, please elaborate on the **funding** shortfalls for employment and/or job training services.

_____

_____

_____

_____

22b. Please indicate whether your county is currently having a shortfall of service capacity (e.g., personnel, physical space) and/or a shortfall in funding for each of the following services for **Educational Services and/or Vocational Education/Training.**

	CAPACITY SHORTFALL				**FUNDING SHORTFALL**			
	None	**Current shortfall in some parts of our county**	**Current shortfall throughout our county**	**Don't know**	**None**	**Current shortfall in some parts of our county**	**Current shortfall throughout our county**	**Don't know**
a) Vocational education/training	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
b) Adult basic education	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
c) GED preparation	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
d) Community college/post-secondary education	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
e) Other education	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒

If you selected "Other" for "capacity shortfall," please go to Question 22b.e1.
If you selected "Other" for "funding shortfall," please go to Question 22b.e2.
If not, please proceed to Question 22c.

22b.e1. In Question 22b, if you selected "Other" for capacity shortfalls, please elaborate on the **capacity** shortfalls for educational services and/or vocational education/training services.

_____

_____

_____

22b.e2. In Question 22b, if you selected "Other" for funding shortfalls, please elaborate on the **funding** shortfalls for educational services and/or vocational education/training services.

_____

_____

_____

_____

22c. Please indicate whether your county is currently having a shortfall of service capacity (e.g., personnel, physical space) and/or a shortfall in funding for each of the following services for **Supportive Services.**

	CAPACITY SHORTFALL				**FUNDING SHORTFALL**			
	None	**Current shortfall in some parts of our county**	**Current shortfall throughout our county**	**Don't know**	**None**	**Current shortfall in some parts of our county**	**Current shortfall throughout our county**	**Don't know**
a) Child care	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
b) Transportation services (e.g., bus, metro-rail)	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
c) Mental health	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
d) Substance abuse	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
e) Domestic violence	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
f) Translation services	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
g) Housing assistance	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒
h) Other supportive services	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒	❒

If you selected "Other" for "capacity shortfall," please go to Question 22c.h1.

If you selected "Other" for "funding shortfall," please go to Question 22c.h2.
If not, please proceed to Question 23.

22c.h1. In Question 22c, if you selected "Other" for capacity shortfalls, please elaborate on the **capacity** shortfalls for supportive services.

_____

_____

22c.h2. In Question 22c, if you selected "Other" for funding shortfalls, please elaborate on the **funding** shortfalls for supportive services.

_____

_____

_____

_____

You have reached the end of Section V. Provision of Services to CalWORKs Participants in Your County. Please continue to the next section.

To return to a page in this section, please click "Back."
To continue to the next section, please click "Next."
To exit the survey and return at a later time, please click "Save and Exit."

VI. Expanded Subsidized Employment and Family Stabilization Programs and the Reengagement Process

The next set of questions is about the Expanded Subsidized Employment (ESE) Program and the Family Stabilization (FS) Program—programs established under AB 74 and closely related to SB 1041.

23. Does your county social services department participate in the CalWORKs WTW Expanded Subsidized Employment (ESE) Program? *(Please mark one answer.)*

- ❒ Yes
- ❒ No, we opted out of the program. ➔ **Skip to Question 26**
- ❒ No, but we are planning to or are in the process of developing a program for our county. ➔ **Skip to Question 26**

24. Does your county social services department **contract out** its ESE Program? *(Please mark one answer.)*

- ❒ Yes
- ❒ No

24a. If yes, please specify the organization to whom your county social services contracts out its ESE Program.

_____

_____

25. What program options does your county social services department offer as part of its ESE Program? *(Please mark all that apply.)*

- ❒ Paid work experience **with county and local government agencies**
- ❒ Paid work experience **with private for-profit organizations or the business sector**
- ❒ Paid work experience **with private nonprofit agencies**
- ❒ Job club
- ❒ Participants exempt from WTW are offered volunteer opportunities in the ESE Program
- ❒ Other

If you selected "Other," please go to Question 25a. If not, please proceed to Question 26.

25a. Please briefly describe "Other" from Question 25.

_____

_____

_____

_____

26. Has your county social services department developed a Family Stabilization (FS) Program?

- ❒ Yes ➔ **Go to Question 27**
- ❒ No ➔ **Skip to Question 29**

27. What services do you **currently** offer as part of your county's Family Stabilization (FS) Program? (*Mark one circle on each line.*)

	Yes	No	Don't know
a) Increased level and/or intensity of case management	❍	❍	❍
b) Treatment for family members of CalWORKs participants (if the situation interferes with the participant's ability to participate in WTW activities)	❍	❍	❍
c) Intensive day treatment, nonmedical outpatient drug free treatment, or residential treatment	❍	❍	❍
d) Emergency shelter	❍	❍	❍
e) Movement to transitional housing	❍	❍	❍
f) Rehabilitative services	❍	❍	❍
g) Substance abuse counseling/ treatment	❍	❍	❍
h) Other	❍	❍	❍

If you responded "Yes" to "Other," please go to Question 27a. If not, please proceed to Question 28.

27a. In Question 27, you selected "Yes" for "Other." Please elaborate on the services you currently offer as part of your county's Family Stabilization (FS) Program.

_____

_____

_____

28. Did your county social services department make any of the following changes in staffing specifically to accommodate the FS Program?

	Yes	No
a) Our department hired additional caseworkers	❒	❒
b) Our department reassigned caseworkers to work with the FS Program	❒	❒
c) Our department created a new unit to manage the FS Program	❒	❒
d) Other	❒	❒

If you responded "Yes" to "Other," please go to Question 28a. Otherwise, please proceed to Question 29.

28a. Please briefly describe "Other" from Question 28.

_____

_____

_____

The next set of questions is about your county's experiences in reengaging those individuals who had the AB X4 4 short-term young child exemption.

29. Did your county social services department hire additional staff or reassign staff in order to conduct the reengagement process?

	Yes	No	Don't know
a) Hired additional **administrative staff**	❒	❒	❒
b) **Reassigned administrative staff**	❒	❒	❒
c) Hired additional **caseworker staff**	❒	❒	❒
d) **Reassigned caseworker staff**	❒	❒	❒
e) Other	❒	❒	❒

If you selected "Yes" for "Other," please go to Question 29a.
If not, please proceed to Question 30.

29a. Please briefly describe "Other" from Question 29.

_____

_____

30. In your view, which of the following strategies that your county social services department used to reengage exempt individuals were particularly effective? (*Please mark all that apply.*)

Letters sent to the exempt individual

Meeting with exempt individuals by phone or in-person

Incentives that we offered

Other

30a. If you checked "incentives that we offered," please describe the incentives you offered to reengage exempt individuals.

_____

_____

_____

30b. If you checked “other,” please describe other strategies your county social services department used to reengage exempt individuals that were particularly effective.

_____

_____

_____

You have reached the end of Section VI. Expanded Subsidized Employment and Family Stabilization Programs and the Reengagement Process.
Please continue to the next section.

To return to a page in this section, please click “Back.”
To continue to the next section, please click “Next.”
To exit the survey and return at a later time, please click "Save and Exit,"
then close the page.

VII. Outcomes and Expectations

This section asks for your feedback on how implementation of SB 1041 has affected various outcomes for CalWORKs participants and how well the SB 1041 reforms are working in your county.

31. In your opinion, **to what extent has implementation of SB 1041 affected each of the following outcome**s for the CalWORKs Program and for participants in your county?

	Much worse	Somewhat worse	About the same	Somewhat better	Much better	*Not applicable*
a) Work participation rates (WPR)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
b) Participation in WTW activities	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
c) Enrollment in education and training programs/ community colleges	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
d) Length of time CalWORKs participants spend in educational activities	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
e) Persistence of CalWORKs participants in education/training activities	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
f) Compliance with CalWORKs Program rules	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
g) Number of participants receiving sanctions	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
h) Participation in CalFresh by participants	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
i) Earnings of participants	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

31a. If the implementation of SB 1041 improved outcomes for the CalWORKs Program and for participants in other ways, please describe below:

_____

_____

_____

32. In your opinion, **how well are the following aspects of the SB 1041 reforms to CalWORKs and related mandates** working in your county? (*Mark one circle on each line.*)

	Not at all well	Slightly well	Moderately well	Very well	*Not applicable*
a) Communication of new CalWORKs program rules to CalWORKs participants	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
b) Matching CalWORKs participants with appropriate WTW activities	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
c) Provision of supportive services (e.g., child care, domestic violence, housing assistance)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
d) Provision of mental health and/or substance abuse services	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
e) Coordination with community colleges	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
f) Coordination with vocational education providers	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
g) Coordination with other county agencies to provide supportive services	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
h) Working with nonprofit service providers	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
i) Working with employers and job training providers	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
j) Reengagement strategy for clients with the short-term, young child exemption (AB X4 4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
k) Tracking WTW participation of CalWORKs participants	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
l) Improving information management of the CalWORKs Program	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

	Not at all well	Slightly well	Moderately well	Very well	*Not applicable*
m) Design and implementation of the Expanded Subsidized Employment (ESE) Program	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
n) Design and implementation of the Family Stabilization (FS) Program	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

33. Is there anything else you would like to share about your county's efforts to implement SB 1041 reforms to the CalWORKs Program? Think especially of experiences and decisions that could benefit other counties.

_____

_____

_____

_____

34. Do you have recommendations for improving SB 1041?

_____

_____

_____

_____

35. Are there any aspects of SB 1041 reforms to CalWORKs that you need more information about?

❒ Yes

❒ No

35a. If "Yes," what information do you need about SB 1041 reforms?

_____

_____

_____

_____

You have reached the end of Section VII. Outcomes and Expectations.

Please provide an estimate of how much time it took to complete the entire survey.

Please continue to the next page.

To return to a page in this section, please click "Back."
To continue to the next page, please click "Next."

To exit the survey and return at a later time, please click "Save and Exit," then close the page.

You have reached the end of the survey. All of your responses have been saved.
If you have not completed the survey, but would like to save and exit the survey and return at a later time to complete the survey, please close your browser.
To re-open the survey to the beginning, please click here.
If you have completed the full survey and are ready to submit your answers, please click "Submit Survey" below. After submitting your survey, you will not be able to reenter the survey.

Thank you for your participation in this survey!

Further information on RAND-AIR's Evaluation of SB 1041 Reforms to California's CalWORKs Program is available online at http://www.rand.org/labor/projects/calworks-reform-evaluation.html. The survey results will be available in the project's annual report, to be released in late 2015. If you need to make changes to your survey, please contact Cheryl Graczewski at AllCountySurvey@air.org or 650-843-8238.

SB 1041 All-County Survey (ACS)

Definitions of SB 1041 Reforms

In this survey, we will be asking you about SB 1041 policy reforms to the CalWORKs Program that were implemented January 1, 2013. What we mean by SB 1041 reforms is the following:

- **Changes to the Welfare-to-Work (WTW) time clock**
  - 48 months of support:
    - 24 months of CalWORKs WTW services and activities
    - 24 months of Temporary Cash Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) work activities
  - Time clock initiation
    - Those starting the program on or after January 1, 2013, will follow the SB 1041 time clock structure.
    - Those in the program prior to January 1, 2013, with fewer than 24 months accumulated will be subject to the 24-month CalWORKs WTW time clock, followed by the TANF rules until the 48-month lifetime limit is reached.
    - Those in the program prior to January 1, 2013, with more than 24 months accumulated will be subject to the 24-month CalWORKs WTW time clock until the 48-month lifetime limit is reached.
- **Changes to the weekly core work requirements and weekly total work requirements**
  - Weekly core requirements:
    - No core requirement during the WTW 24-month time clock
    - During the period outside the 24-month time clock, 20 hours of the weekly work requirement for single parents and 30 hours of the weekly work requirement for participants in two-parent cases have to be in core activities that include employment, on-the-job training, and vocational educational training.
  - Total work requirements:
    - Single parent, child younger than six years old: 20 hours
    - Single parent, no child younger than six years old: 30 hours
    - Two parents: 35 hours
- **Change to how hourly participation requirements are determined**
  - In accordance with SB 855 and ACL 14-80, the total work requirements listed above are determined by an average per week during the month, rather than by a weekly minimum. This method takes the total number of hours in eligible activities in the month and divides it by 4.33. The weekly average rounded to the nearest whole number is then compared with the weekly minimum established for each type of assistance unit.
  - This change was effective as of July 1, 2014.
- **Cal-Learn**
  - Program reinstated as of April 1, 2013
  - Pregnant/parenting teens will no longer be under WTW rules, but under special Cal-Learn rules.
- **Young child exemption**
  - One lifetime exemption: One adult per family is excused from WTW activities if caring for a child less than two years of age.
  - Adults under the AB X4 4 young child exemption rules are not required to participate until the county reengages them.
    - The AB X4 4 short-term young child exemption expired on December 31, 2012. AB X4 4 was enacted on July 28, 2009. It included time-limit exemptions and WTW participation exemptions for clients with young children and time-limit exemptions for clients who have been granted good cause for lack of supportive

services. SB 1041 replaced these exemptions with a once-in-a-lifetime exemption for young children.
        - Counties had until January 1, 2015, to reengage these exempt individuals.
- **Earned income deduction**
    - Effective October 1, 2013: revert back to pre-2011 parameters of $225 disregard plus 50 percent of the remaining earned income

We also will cover two additional programs, established under AB 74, that are closely related to SB 1041:

- **Expanded Subsidized Employment (ESE) Program:** Additional funding for ESE programs for CalWORKs recipients (see ACL 13-81)
- **Family Stabilization (FS) Program:** Effective January 1, 2014: intensive case management and services designed to support the family in overcoming the situation or crisis, which may include, but are not limited to, WTW activities (see ACL 14-12)

We also cover "Stage One" child care services. There are three stages of CalWORKs child care. Stage One is defined as follows:

- **Stage One** begins with a family's entry into the CalWORKs program. Clients leave Stage One after six months or when their situation is stable, and when there is a slot available in Stage Two or Three.

Evaluation of SB 1041 Reforms to California's CalWORKs Program
Focal County Key Informant Interview Protocol
October 2014

I. Informed Consent

I work for RAND, which is a private, nonprofit, public policy research organization. [OR I work for the American Institutes for Research (AIR).] We've been contracted by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to conduct an independent evaluation of SB 1041, which is intended to provide a more flexible approach to supporting CalWORKs participants toward self-sufficiency.

[If unfamiliar with SB 1041] Senate Bill (SB) 1041 included significant reforms to the CalWORKs program. These reforms, effective as of January 2013, are designed to support participants' engagement with Welfare-to-Work activities early on and provide flexible, meaningful work activity options that can enhance their ability to secure stable, gainful employment. [If more information is needed], in particular this bill established a 24-month time clock with flexibility in welfare-to-work requirements; lowered the minimum hourly participation requirement for single parents; allowed recipients one lifetime exemption whereby one adult per family is excused from WTW activities if they are caring for a child under two years of age; adjusted the Earned Income Deduction from $112 to $225; and reinstated Cal-Learn, a program that provides intensive case management for teen parents who remain in school.] We also will be asking you a few questions about two additional programs, established under AB 74, that are closely related to SB 1041: the Expanded Subsidized Employment Program and the Family Stabilization Program.

Today I am hoping to hear about your views on this subject. The interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes.

Your confidential input about the development and implementation of SB 1041 is valuable to us. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. We will not share your responses with anyone else outside of the research project. And we will not identify any individuals by name in our study reports, although the focal counties will be identified by name in the project's reports. If we use any quotations from these interviews, we will not attribute them to any individual. Although we won't be identifying you by name, it is possible that someone might be able to identify you by the information you give us. So we recommend that you don't tell us anything that you would not be comfortable with other people reading.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You may choose not to participate, decline to answer any question, or stop the interview at any time.

I plan to audio record it, solely for our note taking purposes. The audio recording will only be used by project staff, and we'll destroy it when the project is done.

Do I have your permission to proceed with the interview?

[IF NO:] Thank you anyway.

[IF YES:] Do I also have your permission to audio record the interview?

II. Interview Questions

1. **Role**. Let's start with your role within the county welfare department – what is your position and key responsibilities? How long have you served in this role?

2. **Key Features**. What are the key features of (or key changes to) SB 1041 that are relevant to your position and responsibilities?
    - Probes:

- Changes to the WTW time clock
- Changes to the weekly work requirements (e.g., education, employment, on-the-job training, vocational training)
- Cal-Learn
- Reengagement of individuals with the short-term, young child exemption
- Provision of supportive services
- Family Stabilization Program
- Expanded Subsidized Employment Program

3. **Status/Pace of Implementation.** In your county, what has been the pace of implementing SB 1041– for example, has it been a slow process or implemented all at once?
    a. Please begin with an overview of what has changed under SB 1041 and when these changes were implemented.
    b. Are there any changes associated with SB 1041 that have yet to take effect?

4. **Broader policy context.** What other major policy changes occurred at the state-level or county-level during this same time period that may have had implications for SB 1041 implementation?
    a. Did these other policy changes have any effects on the approach adopted for SB 1041 or on the timing of its implementation?
    b. Did these other policy changes hinder or facilitate SB 1041 implementation at the county-level?

5. **Reporting Requirements.** What if anything has specifically changed as a result of SB 1041 in terms of reporting requirements for the counties?
    a. Has your county been able to meet the state's reporting requirements?
    b. What challenges, if any, has your county encountered in doing so? If there have been challenges, how are they being addressed?

6. **Communication from the CDSS to Counties**. How did the state communicate the changes brought about by SB 1041 to your county? In addition to the All County Letters (ACLs) that were sent out to county welfare directors, were there other ways in which CDSS communicated implementation information to the counties (e.g. webinars, meetings)?
    a. Was this communication adequate? In other words, did your office understand what was expected of them in regard to SB 1041?

7. **Technical Assistance.** What types of technical assistance (TA) and guidance were provided by the state (CDSS) to counties?
    a. Were there other sources of support for TA or sources of training? (e.g., the Child Welfare Directors Association, other organizations?)
    b. Was there collaboration/coordination across counties (e.g., those in the same consortium) with respect to TA and training?
    c. Are there unmet TA needs in your county?

8. **Communication from County Leadership to County Welfare Department Staff**. How did your county communicate SB 1041 changes to the staff?

   a. From your perspective, to what extent do you think county staff understand the SB 1041 changes? Do county staff struggle with understanding any particular aspect of SB 1041?

9. **Communication to CalWORKs Participants**. From your perspective, do CalWORKs participants understand the changes brought about by SB 1041?
   a. How did county staff communicate this information to CalWORKs participants?
   b. How was communication handled with participants in various categories (e.g., based on clock, ongoing vs. new CalWORKs participants, etc.)?
   c. Were additional/different methods used to communicate how the program works before/after SB1041 was enacted? In other words, what changed, if anything, as a result of SB 1041in regard to communication?
   d. It is our understanding that not all elements of the legislation were enacted at the same time. In what ways was this handled with respect to informing CalWORKs participants of the program's expectations and benefits?

10. **State Monitoring**. What types of monitoring activities of the counties is being undertaken by CDSS? By other organizations?
    a. Do you receive feedback from these monitoring activities? Has it been useful in regard to your quality improvement activities?

11. **Impact on County Welfare Department**. Reflecting broadly, in what ways has SB 1041 affected your organization? Did your county change the way you "do business" in order to implement SB 1041? What impact has it had on your staff?
    a. Has there been changes in regard to staffing levels?
    b. Did your office reorganize your staffing? For example, did you create cross-functional units or new staff positions, or redefine staff roles?
    c. Have there been changes in reporting relationships?
    d. What has been the impact of these changes, if any?
    e. How has SB 1041 affected your organization's relationships with other departments or agencies at the state-level? How about relationships at the county-level?
    f. In what ways did SB 1041 influence the resources and/or budgeting within the county, within your welfare department, within your unit/program?
       i. What was the impact of budget changes on recipients?
       ii. What was the impact of budget changes on caseworkers?

12. **Impact on CalWORKs Participants**. From your perspective, what is the impact of SB 1041 on participants?

13. **Implementation Successes**. In your county, what has worked well with SB 1041?

14. **Implementation Challenges**. What have been the implementation challenges associated with SB 1041 in your county, if any?
    a. What strategies have been effective, if any, in overcoming these challenges?

15. **Coordination among Programs and Systems**. From the county's perspective, how effective is coordination among county welfare programs and other systems, in providing

services to CalWORKs applicants and to current and former participants? These other systems may include school districts, mental health programs, transportation providers, child care providers, community colleges, community-based organizations, the private sector, alcohol and drug programs, local planning councils, and other organizations.

a. What is needed to improve coordination, if anything?
b. Beyond coordination, what is needed to improve collaboration with various systems?

16. **Data Systems**. How well do state and county data systems support the needs of the county in implementing SB 1041?
    a. Has any new data collection related to SB 1041 created a workload burden for your county?
    b. Does your county need any additional data, to support the implementation of SB 1041?

17. **Referral Process:** Could you please describe the referral process in your county for welfare to work participants who require supplemental services such as child care, transportation, mental health or substance abuse, education, domestic violence services?
    a. To what extent do you feel the referral process is working effectively in your county? Why do you feel the process is effective (or not)?
    b. Are there services for which you don't feel you have good partnerships or linkages to services available within your county?

18. **Supportive Services:** To what extent to you feel your county is able to provide the needed child care and transportation services to welfare to work participants? The needed domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental health services?
    a. Are more CalWORKs participants using child care services now as part of the welfare to work program?
    b. Are there barriers in your county to child care usage for welfare to work participants (e.g. not enough providers, location of providers)?
    c. Are there barriers in your county to usage of transportation services for welfare to work participants?
    d. Are there barriers in your county to usage of domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental health services by welfare to work participants?

19. **Education and Vocational Training Services:** To what extent to you feel your county is able to provide the needed education and vocational training programs to welfare to work participants?
    a. Are more CalWORKs participants participating in educational programs now as part of the welfare to work program?
    b. Are more CalWORKs participants participating in vocational training programs now as part of the welfare to work program?
    c. In your view what effect, if any, did SB 1041 reforms have in changing access to education and vocational training programs to CalWORKs participants?

20. **Expanded Subsidized Employment (ESE) Program.** In looking at the CDSS website (http://www.cdss.ca.gov/calworks/PG3412.htm), it looks like your county [does/does not] participate in the WTW Expanded Subsidized Employment program.
    a. What program options does your county offer?
    b. To what extent do you feel the program is working effectively in your county? Why?
    c. Was funding from SB 1041 used to expand the your county's Expanded Employment Subsidized Program? If so, in what ways?

21. **Family Stabilization (FS) Program:** Has your county developed a family stabilization plan?
    a. If so, please describe the kinds of services your county offers and whether these services are contracted out.
    b. Was funding from SB 1041 used to expand or fund your county's Family Stabilization Program?
    c. To what extent do you feel the program is working effectively in your county? Why? (One outcome may be more individuals receiving services rather than being exempt.)

22. **Reengagement of customers with the short-term, young child exemption**: Could you please describe the process (outreach) your county went through to reengage these exempt individuals?
    a. Did your county have to hire or reassign staff in order to conduct the reengagement process?
    b. To what extent to you feel the reengagement process has been successful? Why?

23. **Next Steps**. What does your county see as being the next steps with respect to SB1041 implementation?
    a. Are there improvements to the CalWORKs program that you would recommend?

24. **Challenges**. What challenges does your county see going forward in implementing the SB 1041 reforms and what steps may be needed to address them?

25. **Other**. Is there anything else you'd like to share with me today in regard to SB 1041 reforms to the CalWORKs Program?

Additional question by respondent type:

Budget Director

1. Did counties have adequate staff and funding to support SB 1041 changes?

2. How did the counties change the way they do business to implement SB 1041 ?

3. What challenges did counties have regarding budget changes?

4. What services were supplemented or expanded using Family Stabilization Program, Expanded Subsidized Employment, and/or Other Supportive Services funding?

5. What services were supplemented or expanded using AB 118 redirected funds?

6. What services were supplemented or expanded using AB 85 redirected funds?

7. To your knowledge, what was the impact [influence] of budget changes on recipients?

8. To your knowledge, what was the impact [influence] of budget changes on caseworkers?

9. How did the state communicate budget changes to counties?

10. How did county leadership communicate budget changes within county?

11. What is the effect [association], if any, of SB 1041 on provision of WTW activities, including timing of WTW plans and use of assessments?

Within Welfare Department, Director of CalFresh

1. To what extent, if any, has the implementation of SB1041 in your county affected the CalFresh program?

Other county agencies

1. To what extent, if any, has the implementation of SB 1041 in your county affected the services your agency provides to CalWORKs (welfare to work) participants?)

Service providers

1. To what extent, if any, has the implementation of SB 1041 in your county affected the services your agency provides to CalWORKs (welfare to work) participants?)

Community colleges

1. With passage of SB 1041, Cal-Learn was reinstated after being suspended from July 2011 to July 2012. To what extent do you feel the program is meeting its stated goal of encouraging pregnant and parenting teens to graduate from high school or its equivalent and become self-sufficient?

Evaluation of SB 1041 Reforms to California's CalWORKs Program
Protocol for Focal County Caseworkers Focus Groups
May 2015

Welcome

I want to thank you for coming today. My name is _____ and I will leading today's group discussion. I am a researcher from the RAND Corporation, a private, not for profit research organization based in Santa Monica, CA. We also have _____ present to take notes for us. [My colleague(s) _____ are also sitting in on today's discussion and may have a few questions for you later on.]

The RAND Corporation, in partnership with the American Institutes for Research (AIR), was awarded a contract by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to conduct an independent evaluation of the recent reforms to CalWORKs Program. Information collected as part of this project will help CDSS improve the quality of the services that the CalWORKs Program provides.

We are conducting focus groups with county caseworkers in different counties to learn about how SB1041 has affected your job and responsibilities; the type of support you need to handle the changes brought about by SB 1041; how changes mandated by SB 1041 were communicated to caseworkers; the type of training you received related to these changes; how you communicated the changes mandated by SB 1041 to aid participants; how well aid participants understood the changes to the CalWORKs program and in particular the WTW requirements; and what the impact of these changes has been on aid participants. The information you share with us today will help inform our understanding of the planning, implementation, and impact of SB 1041 reforms.

Does anybody have any questions?

Ground Rules

Before we begin, I would like to review a few ground rules for the discussion.

A. I am going to ask you several questions and I'd like to give everyone a chance to give their opinions. We do not have to go in any particular order but we do want everyone to take part in the discussion. We ask that only one person speak at a time.

B. We're interested in your opinions and whatever you have to say is fine with us. There are no right or wrong answers. We are just asking for your opinions based on your own personal experience. We are here to learn from you.

C. Don't worry about having a different opinion than someone else, but please do respect each other's answers or opinions.

D. If there is a particular question you don't want to answer, you don't have to.

E. Feel free to treat this as a discussion and to ask questions of each other and to respond to what others are saying, whether you agree or disagree.

F. As I already mentioned we will treat your answers as confidential. We are not going to ask you any information that could identify you and we are only going to use first names or

nicknames during the discussion. We also ask that each of you respect the privacy of everyone in the room and not share or repeat what is said here in any way that could identify anyone in this room.

G. While RAND will treat your answers as confidential, we cannot guarantee that everyone else in the room will do the same. Therefore, we recommend that you not share information as part of the group discussion that you would not want disclosed outside of this discussion.

Ice Breaker
Please tell us your first name or nickname only and how long you have been working as a caseworker in [COUNTY NAME's] Welfare Office.

Focus Group Discussion Questions

1. **Understanding.** What is your understanding of SB 1041 changes to the CalWORKs program?
    a. What specifically changed about the program?
    b. **Welfare to Work Time Clock**. What has changed in regard to the time clock?
        i. What is your understanding of what the 24 month time clock meant for participants?
        ii. When SB 1041 was implemented, did your county have to calculate the 24 monthly time clock for all WTW participants? If so, who did this? When was it done? Did it require staff overtime to do so?
    c. What has changed in regard to helping clients enter and remain in the workforce?
    d. **CalFRESH.** What has changed in regard to the CalFresh program?
    e. **Earned Income Disregard.** What has changed in regard to the earned income disregard?
    f. **Young Child Exemption and Reengagement.** What has changed in regard to the young child exemption and reduced hourly work requirements that allow clients to spend more time with their child?
        i. What was your role in reengaging individuals when this exemption expired?

2. **Training and Communication to Caseworkers**. What types of training and guidance about SB1041 were provided by the state, county, and county welfare supervisors to caseworkers?
    a. With respect to the changes that SB 1041 represented, how was this information communicated to you?
        i. E.g., changes to the core/noncore, greater flexibility in options for participants, the change to the 24 month time clock, expiration of the young child exemption
    b. With respect to calculating the 24 month time clock:
        i. How did you initially learn about the time clock changes?
        ii. What kind of training did you receive on calculating the 24-month time clock?
        iii. Was formal training provided by staff development, or training staff, and/or supervisors?

iv. The policy guidance from CDSS evolved overtime on calculating the 24-month time clock.
    1. From your perspective, how did that guidance change over time? (e.g., instead of counting total hours per month, use average number of hours)?
    2. How did you learn about the guidance changes over time?
v. Did you have to go back and re-calculate the 24 month time clock for their WTW caseload?

c. Were there other changes to policy guidance related to SB 1041 (e.g., eligibility for young child exemption and reengagement process)?
    i. How were these other changes communicated to you?
    ii. Did you receive training on them?
d. Do you feel you were given adequate guidance or training on the different changes SB 1041 represented? Why or why not?
e. If you had or still have questions about the changes brought about by SB 1041, what did you do?

3. **Reporting**. What has changed in regard to client reporting requirements?

4. **Responsibilities.** How has SB 1041 affected your job and responsibilities?
    a. How has SB 1041 in general affected your caseload?
    b. What organizational changes or redefining of staff roles have occurred, if any?
    c. 24 month time clock specifically:
        i. Who is responsible for calculating the 24-month time clock in your county? (e.g., supervisors, caseworkers?)
        ii. Who is responsible for updating the 24 month time clocks? Is it done on a monthly basis? Automated or manual?
        iii. What impact, if any, has the increased flexibility of activities for participants have on work force participation (WPR) rates?
            1. On your role as a case manager?
            2. On your ability to counsel customers on the options available to them?
            3. On your ability to assess barriers customers face?
            4. On participants' ability to achieve self-sufficiency?
    d. How has the Expanded Subsidized Employment program impacted your work with the participants?
        i. Do you make referrals to the program?
        ii. What are the barriers and/or facilitators to working with this program?
    e. How has the Family Stabilization program impacted your work with the participants?
        i. How do participants get referred to the program? Do you make referrals?
        ii. What are the barriers and/or facilitators to working with this program?
    f. Do you have the resources and support you need in order to deal with the different changes brought about by SB 1041? Why or why not?

5. **Communication to Aid Participants**. This question is about how CalWORKs information is communicated to aid participants.

   a. How were the SB 1041 changes to the CalWORKs program communicated to aid participants?
   b. How did you communicate the changes to the time clock to aid participants?
      i. In your opinion, what was the understanding of aid participant of what the 24 month time clock meant for them? (e.g., complete flexibility in activities for 24 months)
   c. For clients who have been on CalWORKs before SB 1041 and are still active – do you think this group understands the changes brought about by SB 1041?
   d. What elements of SB 1041 do participants understand well?
   e. What elements tend to be confusing to them?

6. **Implementation Successes**. In your county, from your perspective as a WTW caseworker what has worked well with SB 1041, if anything?
   a. Probe about the specific components of SB 1041

7. **Implementation Challenges.** What are the challenges associated with SB 1041, if any? What strategies have been effective, if any, in overcoming these challenges?
   a. Probe about the specific components of SB 1041
   b. Probe about flexibility in activities participants can choose from

8. **Impact on Aid Participants**. We've talked about the impact of various components of SB 1041 – broadly speaking, what do you think has been the impact of SB 1041 on participants, if any? (If no impact – why not?)
   a. What do you think it means to the participants to have greater flexibility in options (i.e., how do they interpret this change)?
   b. What effect do you think the greater flexibility in options will have on participants achieving self-sufficiency?
   c. What effect do you think the 24 month time clock will have on participants achieving self-sufficiency?

9. **Client Needs.** From your perspective what are the CalWORKs participants' most significant support needs?

10. **Client Self-Sufficiency**. What do you think participants need in order to ensure they successfully achieve self-sufficiency as quickly as possible?

11. **County Needs**. What do you need to help you do your job better?

12. **Advice to the State.** Do you have any advice to the state, in regard to helping counties implement SB 1041?

13. **Other.** Is there anything else you'd like to share?

Thank you for coming today and for sharing your opinions with us. We hope you enjoyed the discussion today.

Evaluation of SB 1041 Reforms to California's CalWORKs Program
Protocol for Focal County CalWORKs Participant Focus Groups
May 2015

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Ice Breaker
I'd like to go around the table and have each of you tell us your first name or nickname only and tell us how long you have been enrolled in the CalWORKs Program.

Topic 1: Participation in the CalWORKs Program.

1. What benefits or services are you currently receiving under the CalWORKs Program?
    a. How did you find out about the services and programs you have access to (e.g., caseworkers, family, friends, read about them)
    b. Do you feel like you have a good understanding of the benefits and services you are eligible for under the CalWORKs program?

i. If you have questions or concerns regarding the benefits and services you are receiving under the program, what do you do?
    1. Where do you go for information on the program or for information about the services or benefits for which you are eligible?
    2. Is there someone you can talk to about this? Whom?

c. What parts of the program are easy to understand and what parts of the program are confusing or not clear?
d. How has the CalWORKs Program helped you and your family?
    i. What programs or services have been most helpful? Least helpful?
e. Do you feel like the assistance you receive from the CalWORKs Program is helping you move forward in your life or helping you live like you want to live? Why or why not?

Topic 2: Changes to the CalWORKs Program.

As some of you may be aware, effective January 2013, changes were made to the CalWORKs program that affected the benefits and services that program participants such as yourselves could receive under the program.

For example, the 24-month time clock was implemented, participants/clients have more flexibility in choosing the activities they might want to pursue to help them achieve self-sufficiency, there are fewer participation hours for single-adult families, changes were made to the weekly core requirements, and the short-term, young child exemption was eliminated. By self-sufficient we mean that you no longer need aid, no longer need public assistance, are able to find a job that pays for your living expenses.

1. Were you aware of any of these changes to the program?
2. IF YES:
    a. Were there any changes to the number of hours you had to work?
    b. Were there any changes to the amount of time during which you could receive assistance from the CalWORKs Program?
    c. Were there any changes to your income tax benefits (e.g., earned income credit)
    d. Were there any changes to the cash payments you received from the program?
    e. Were there any changes to the benefits you received under the CalFRESH/SNAPs/Food Stamps program?
    f. Were there any other changes made to the program since January 2013 that you're aware of? If so, what were those changes?
3. WTW 24-month time clock
    a. Has your caseworker explained to you what your 24-month time clock is?
    b. Has your caseworker talked with you about how much time you have left on your 24-month time clock?
    c. Do you know when your 24-month time clock will end?
        i. If so, what does it mean for you? (in terms of the types of activities you will be able to participate in under the federal TANF rules?)

d. Have you received an exemption? (for example, a one-time young child exemption)

4. Activities:
   a. Has your caseworker had a conversation with you about the types of activities you can participate in during the first 24-months of the CalWORKs Program?
   b. What is your understanding of what those activities are?
   c. Are you aware that education is one of the options for your activities?
      i. Did your caseworker talk to you about your educational options?
      ii. For those participating in education classes: What type of education classes are you taking? At what location? Are you working towards a GED or AA degree? Do you feel that your education classes are helping you to become self-sufficient?
      iii. For those not participating in education classes: What factors were important in your decision not to participate in education classes?
   d. Of the range of activities you could participate in – which were most important to you? Probes:
      i. Job club
      ii. Job search
      iii. Job skills training
      iv. Educational programs
      v. Vocational training
   e. Of the range of services available to you – which were most important to help you participate in the above activities (or help you find a job)? Probes:
      i. Transportation
      ii. Child care
      iii. Housing
      iv. Mental health services
      v. Alcohol/drug treatment
      vi. Domestic violence services
   f. Do you feel that you are able to access the services that you need?
      i. If not: why?
   g. Has your caseworker worked with you to develop a WTW plan?

Topic 3: Communication to CalWORKs Participants.

1. How did you find out about the changes to the CalWORKs program that we just discussed?
   a. Probes: the 24-month time clock, increased flexibility in types of activities you can participate in, etc.
   b. Probes:
      i. Did you receive a letter from the California Department of Social Services?

ii. Did your caseworker talk to you about these changes and what they meant for you?
iii. Did you hear about them from other program participants or from other service providers (e.g., the community colleges)?

2. At the time you heard about the changes to the program, did you have a clear understanding of how these changes would affect you?
   a. IF YES: How did you think the changes would affect you and the activity(ies) you could participate in during the first 24-months of the CalWORKs Program?
   b. IF NO: What questions or concerns did you have?
3. Do you now feel like you have a clear understanding of how the program works and the benefits or services to which you and your family are eligible?
   a. If not: What are your concerns or what areas are you uncertain about?
4. How easy or difficult is it to get information or help from CalWORKs program staff?
5. Do you feel like CalWORKs caseworkers understand what you need and the challenges that you face in your day-to-day life? Why or why not?

Topic 4: Impact on CalWORKs Participants.

1. Do you feel that you have more flexibility in selecting the activities you can participate in?
   a. If yes: What do you see as the benefits?
2. Have you or anyone else in your family experienced any problems as a result of the changes to the CalWORKs Program?
3. What changes have you or your family made to your work, childcare, or living situation (e.g., where you live, if your children are living with you, etc.) since the changes to the CalWORKs Program went into effect in January 2013?
4. How have the changes to the program affected your ability to work?
   a. Has the program helped you to find a job?
   b. Has these changes helped you to become more self-sufficient?
5. How have the changes to the program affected your ability to continue your education?
   a. Has the program helped you to continue your education?
6. How have the changes to the program affected your ability to find and pay for childcare?
   a. Has the program helped you find childcare?
7. And now for the last question, what suggestions or recommendations do you have for improving the CalWORKs Program so that it can better serve you and others like you?

Thank you for coming today and for sharing your opinions with us. We hope you enjoyed the discussion today. I'm going to be handing out the payments. As you get them, please check to make sure that the money is in the envelope. HAND OUT PAYMENTS AND ASK PARTICIPANTS TO SIGN THE PAYMENT RECEIPT FORM.

Appendix C. Additional Documentation for Administrative Data

Documentation in this appendix includes data sources that informed the initial status study, tracking study, and impact study based on administrative data. We describe the administrative data sources, study population derivation, data preparation, and methods used to ensure data integrity. We also describe additional data sources that we anticipate using for analysis in future reports.

Data Sources

To address the research questions in this report, we used data from several large statewide administrative data systems, namely WDTIP, MEDS, and EDD.

Welfare Data Tracking Implementation Project

WDTIP, from the Office of Systems and Integrations, is a statewide welfare time-on-aid tracking and reporting system that provides counties with up-to-date information on TANF and CalWORK's applicants and participants. We used these data to identify our WTW study population and to track time on the 24-month and 48-month time-on-aid clocks. CDSS provided extracts of these files as separate data files for monthly CalWORKs WTW program participation, exceptions (i.e., monthly program exceptions from the various CalWORKs WTW and TANF time limits), summary information for TANF and CalWORKs WTW time clocks, and detailed monthly 24-month and 48-month time-on-aid clock information. These data use Client Identification Numbers (CIN) to identify participants and we used this number to link to a cross-walk and other data sources. These data are available from 1998 to the present, and we will continue to receive semiannual updates until April 2017.

Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System

California's Department of Health Care Services MEDS is a statewide data system used to store such client information as Medi-Cal eligibility and demographics. It uses Social Security numbers to identify individuals. The MEDS data provide monthly information related to Medi-Cal eligibility and eligibility for other state programs, such as the CalWORKs WTW program. The data extracts we used include all individuals in the state from 1998 to the present. CDSS receives quarterly updates from the California Department of Health Care Services and provides us with processed extract files semiannually. The extracts are in two forms: annual monthly extract files and the CDSS-created Longitudinal Database, a single longitudinal file containing all individuals participating in the CalWORKs WTW program from 1998 to the present. We used these data to provide demographic information for our target population, as well as program

participation and case type information for those individuals and cases not included in the WDTIP data.

Employment Development Division

California's EDD provides CDSS with an extract of data containing the wage and employer identification information for all Californians. The employer ID number cannot be attributed to specific employers. These data contain one record per Social Security number per employer identification number per quarter. For the current report, CDSS provided records for all CalWORKs WTW participants starting two years before their enrollment in the CalWORKs WTW program and following them for up to five years after they exit the program.

CDSS Cross-Walk

To aggregate administrative records for CalWORKs WTW participants, we linked individuals' CINs and Social Security numbers. CDSS maintains a file, updated quarterly, with these linkages for each individual for whom they have an Social Security number. We used this file, which we refer to as the CDSS Crosswalk, to link WDTIP's CIN identifiers with the Social Security number identifiers found in the EDD and MEDS data. For data security reasons, actual Social Security numbers, CINs, and other potentially sensitive identifiers were replaced throughout with randomized pseudo-identifiers. When we refer to linking files by Social Security numbers or CINs, it should be understood that we're working with pseudoidentifiers, not the actual identifiers themselves. While it did not present a substantial challenge to data preparation procedures, it is worth noting that before reducing to our study population, we found 854 CINs in the cross-walk (out of more than 18 million), which had more than one associated Social Security number.

Deriving Population and Groups for Status, Tracking, and Impact Studies

The study population is composed of all CalWORKs WTW-aided WTW participants, adult and minor parents and guardians who are exempt from WTW activities, and sanctioned participants who do not receive aid.[69] The WDTIP program participation file and exception file served as the sources for our population frames for aided and sanctioned participants, respectively.[70] Although

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[69] Unaided sanctioned participants include those sanctioned due to WTW noncompliance; being a fleeing felon; violating a condition of probation or parole; being convicted of a felony for the possession, use, or distribution of a controlled substance; being a custodial parent or caretaker relative who refuses to assign child support rights. We identified these sanctioned participants in the exception file as having exception reason codes 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, or 205, and no record in the program participation file within the same month.

[70] At the recommendation of CDSS, we classified participants who were present in both the WDTIP program participation file and the WDTIP exception file with an unaided sanction during the same month as aided, nonsanctioned participants because the inclusion of the participant in the WDTIP program participation file is an indication that the participant received aid.

WDTIP primarily tracks CalWORKs WTW and TANF participants' time on aid, the system also includes a margin of error of children and participants in other social service programs. Therefore, we limited WDTIP records to participants with the "CalWORKs Program Participation Type" indicator and adults and children who are also minor parents. We also limited WDTIP records from 1998 (when TANF was first implemented) to the present.[71]

We consistently defined our CalWORKs WTW participation sample as described above, regardless of CalWORKs WTW policy changes. For example, before the passage of AB 1468 in April 2015, drug felons were identified as *unaided and sanctioned*. With the policy change, they should be classified as *aided and WTW-eligible*. However, some individuals appear in the data after April 2015 with codes identifying them as sanctioned drug felons, and we processed their records as such regardless of the policy change suggesting that they be classified differently.

For analysis, the study population is divided into cross-sections or cohorts in order to compare participants at different points in time and address the research questions specific to the status, tracking, and impact studies. The groups and cohorts are summarized in Table C.1.

Status study cross-sections are composed of CalWORKs WTW participants in March of a given year. Three status study cross-sections have been created: March 2013, March 2014, and March 2015. Each status study cross-section is also composed of two groups, based on participation prior to the start of SB 1041 in January 2013. Participants were placed into the "transitional" group if they started in the CalWORKs WTW program for the first time before January 2013 and continued in the CalWORKs WTW program after the policy change. Participants were placed in the "post SB 1041" group if they started in the CalWORKs WTW program for the first time in January 2013 or later. We measured first-time participation by identifying the month and year that participants first appeared in the WDTIP program participation or exception files as of January 1998. For example, "status study cross-section 1, transitional group" is defined as individuals who were participants during March 2013 and first started in the CalWORKs WTW program between January 1998 and December 2012. "Status study cross-section 1, post SB 1041 group" is defined as individuals who were participants during March 2013 and first started in the CalWORKs WTW program in January, February, or March 2013.

Tracking study cohorts are composed of first-time CalWORKs WTW participants in March of a given year. Four tracking study cohorts have been created: 2007, 2009, 2011, and 2013. For example, "tracked entry cohort 2007" is defined as individuals who were participants in March 2007, and had not been participants any time between January 1998 and February 2007.

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[71] We categorized participation according to the start month and year at the recommendation of CDSS. Monthly participation records are automatically generated into the data system each month, with a start date of the first day the month and an end date of the last day of the month. However, CalWORKs eligibility workers may edit these dates and may not reflect actual participation. Furthermore, in rare instances when participants had multiple participation records or sanction records in a given March with conflicting CalWORKs Assistance Units, counties, and/or aid codes, we retained the record that was last entered into the data source.

Table C.1. Summary of CalWORKs WTW Administrative Data Cohorts and Participant Groups Examined for Status, Tracking, and Impact Studies

Criteria	Status Study	Tracking Study	Impact Study
Years covered	2013, 2014, 2015	2007, 2009, 2011, 2013[a]	2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014
Months/quarters	March	March	Quarterly
Number of cross-sections or cohorts	3 cross-sections	4 cohorts	20 cohorts
Participation status	All participants	New, first-time participants	New, first-time participants
Participant groups	Transitional: Participant prior to and after SB 1041 Post–SB: Participant after SB 1041 only	Not applicable	Not applicable

[a] We examined participants across all years between 2006 and 2015 and found minimal difference across the years. In Chapter Six and in Appendix D, we present findings for 2007, 2009, 2011, and 2013.

Impact study cohorts are composed of first-time CalWORKs WTW participants in a given quarter. Impact study cohorts were created for each quarter between 2010 and 2014, for a total of 20 cohorts. For example, "impact study cohort 1" is defined as individuals who were participants in the first quarter of 2010 (January, February, or March 2010) and had not been participants any time between January 1998 and December 2009. "Impact study cohort 20" is defined as individuals who were participants in the fourth quarter of 2014 (October, November, or December 2014) and had not been participants any time between January 1998 and September 2014.

Approach for Data Preparation

As described above, we used multiple data sources to create our analysis data sets. Our goal for these data sets was to prepare files with valid data across each source and time frame. We consulted CDSS throughout the development of our analysis files to ensure we accomplished our goal.

The development of our analysis data files used a bottom-up approach, conceptualizing our study questions into variables, creating a master variable list (MVL), creating a data dictionary, then cleaning and merging data into final files. We analyzed and reduced the concepts within the overarching and more-detailed quantitative study questions as stated in Chapter One to create a set of indicator and outcome variables in the MVL. We also used administrative data documentation to inform the MVL development. Once we obtained the WDTIP, MEDS, and EDD administrative data from CDSS, we mapped the data sets' contents onto our MVL.

We developed the studies' data dictionary from the subset of the MVL variables required to address the study questions for this report. The data dictionary was continuously refined as we learned more about the administrative data.

With a road map in place, we cleaned, merged, and coded the data. We established the population frame as described above, then we added the WDTIP detailed 24-month and 48-month time-clock files, the WDTIP summary time clock, and WDTIP exception files, and matched records from the MEDS and EDD data sources. We excluded individuals from MEDS and EDD who were not identified in our sample frame in a given March, as these individuals were likely to be out of state, tribal TANF, diversion, or other non-CalWORKs WTW classifications.

Next, we created the remaining study variables. Although the majority of variables in our data dictionary were readily available from our data sources, we created and further refined additional variables. For example, because many exceptions were not analytically salient, we reported only exemptions identified in the WDTIP exception data source that affected time on the 24-month or 48-month time-on-aid clocks. We reported on exemptions and separated out the exemptions that began in January 2013 specific to the WTW 24-month time clock.

We used the full sample frame and data dictionary variables to create three separate analysis data sets for each study. The status, tracking, and impact study analysis data sets each consisted of participants belonging to defined cross-sections or cohorts unique to each study. We also aggregated variables in the tracking study analysis data set to a two-year span and the impact study analysis data set to the quarterly level.

Data Integrity

Staff at AIR and Stanfield Systems assessed the integrity of the data files and variables prepared for analysis. Internal review included independent replication of code written by data analysts, review of derived metrics in tabular and graphical form, and comparisons to published reports.

As part of the process of evaluating the quality and integrity of the prepared data files, our partner, Stanfield Systems, independently replicated key parts of the derived data. They conducted a series of tests, starting with raw data files and conceptual background information to guide the process of creating variables for analysis data sets. Stanfield Systems used this data set to replicate key findings reported in the chapters (i.e. cross-section, cohort, and group counts; population demographics; time on the 24-MTC). Therefore, not only was our coding validated, our design was also replicated independently.

We also assessed quality by comparing key indicators using our assembled data to similar numbers published in several CDSS reports and derived from a CDSS-maintained data set used for federal reporting. The coverage, level, frequency, and type of data for these sources are summarized in Table C.2. In particular, county-level reports such as WTW 25 and 25a CalWORKs Activity Reports contain full-population information such as caseloads, discontinuance counts, and applicant denials. A data set used for federal reporting, the Research and Development Enterprise Project (RADEP), uses an annual representative sample of CalWORKs cases. We matched individual-level data from RADEP to data in our analysis file and checked and verified a few key variables that were not checked by Stanfield Systems (i.e.,

number of children in assistance units, age of youngest child in assistance units, participant date of birth). Data-quality checks thus involved comparing key indicators based on the analysis data sets created for the evaluation studies with independently replicated findings, county-level reports, and the sample-based RADEP data.

Table C.2. CDSS Aggregated Reports and Other Administrative Data

Data Source	Coverage	Unit Level/ Frequency	Data Constructs
CA 237 CalWORKs Cash Grant Movement Report	All applicants and participants since 2006	State level/ monthly	Caseload status
CA 253 CalWORKs Report on Reasons for Discontinuances of Cash Grant	All participants since 2006	State level/ monthly	Case discontinuance
CA 255 CalWORKs Report on Reasons for Denials and Other Non-Approvals of Cash Grant	All applicants since 2006	State level/ monthly	Applicant denials
WTW 25 and 25a CalWORKs Welfare to Work Activity Report	Participants required to participate in WTW since 2006	State level/ monthly	WTW activities, exemptions, terminations
Research and Development Enterprise Project (RADEP)	Annual (federal fiscal year) representative sample of about 3,500 CalWORKs cases since federal fiscal year 2007	Individual and case level/ annual	Demographics, sources of cash assistance, earnings, other income sources

SOURCE: CDSS, undated-a.

Looking Forward

We expect that future reports will benefit from the richness of additional data sources: unemployment insurance information from EDD and SAWS (the three county-level data systems: C-IV, CalWIN, and LEADER). These data will contribute information about participants' financial well-being, use of services, and involvement in education and training. Table C.3 summarizes the databases that we expect to use in our future reports. The table lists the population covered, the unit of analysis and frequency, and the available measures.

As additional data become available from EDD and county consortia, as well as from updated WDTIP, MEDS, and EDD material, both the scope of our analyses and the confidence with which we can make statements about the impact SB 1041 will increase.

We expect updates of WDTIP, MEDS, and EDD data used for this report bianually. As these data sets grow, the trends that they help highlight will become clearer, helping paint a more precise picture of the impact of SB 1041.

Consortia data from SAWS will increase the scope of our analyses dramatically. Not only will the consortia data overlap with existing data, bolstering the credibility and precision of those metrics included already, they will also add material that addresses a number of additional topic areas, such as information about the participation in services and participation in education and

training. Also, we expect to report on additional information about unemployment, use of services, and reasons for leaving the program.

Table C.3. Expected Sources of Data

Data Source	Coverage	Unit Level/ Frequency	Available Data Constructs
EDD—unemployment insurance	All participants since 2006	Individual level/ quarterly	• Amount of unemployment insurance
SAWS CalWIN C-IV LEADER	All participants since 2007	Individual level/ monthly	• Public assistance and employment program participation • Measures of time accumulation, exceptions, exemptions, sanctions, and eligibility status variables • Actual amounts of monthly CalWORKs benefits received

Appendix D. Additional Results for Chapter Four ACS Analyses

This appendix provides additional analyses of data collected for the ACS. The first section provides results for Tables 4.3 and 4.4 for the full rating scale (i.e., the distribution of responses across "did not hinder," "minor hindrance," "moderate hindrance," and "major hindrance"). Results are presented for all counties combined, as well as for small counties, medium-sized counties, and large counties based on caseload size. In the second section, we provide results by county caseload size for questions reported in Chapter Four only for all counties. This affects Tables 4.10, 4.11, 4.18, and 4.19. In the third section, we present results for additional questions not reported in Chapter Four. These findings pertain to the provision of services for CalWORKs WTW participants related to employment, education and training, and supportive services, and counties' assessment of their capacity related to those services.

Results for Full Rating Scale

Table D.1 presents the full distribution of response for Table 4.4. Table D.2 provides the same response distribution corresponding to Table 4.5.

Table D.1. Whether Issues Hindered Implementation: All Counties and by County Caseload Size

Issues		County Rating of Whether Issue Hindered Implementation					
		Did Not Hinder	Minor Hindrance	Moderate Hindrance	Major Hindrance	Not Applicable	Total
Availability of job opportunities for CalWORKs participants							
All counties	Number	11	6	19	22	0	58
	Percentage distribution	19%	10%	33%	38%	0%	100%
Small counties	Number	2	1	4	13	0	20
	Percentage distribution	10%	5%	20%	65%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	4	3	8	5	0	20
	Percentage distribution	20%	15%	40%	25%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	5	2	7	4	0	18
	Percentage distribution	28%	11%	39%	22%	0%	100%
Availability of educational opportunities for CalWORKs participants							
All counties	Number	25	15	11	7	0	58
	Percentage distribution	43%	26%	19%	12%	0%	100%
Small counties	Number	4	4	6	6	0	20
	Percentage distribution	20%	20%	30%	30%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	13	4	3	0	0	20
	Percentage distribution	65%	20%	15%	0%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	8	7	2	1	0	18
	Percentage distribution	44%	39%	11%	6%	0%	100%
Availability of vocational education or on the job training opportunities for CalWORKs participants							
All counties	Number	22	14	15	7	0	58
	Percentage distribution	38%	24%	26%	12%	0%	100%
Small counties	Number	4	2	9	5	0	20
	Percentage distribution	20%	10%	45%	25%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	10	5	4	1	0	20
	Percentage distribution	50%	25%	20%	5%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	8	7	2	1	0	18
	Percentage distribution	44%	39%	11%	6%	0%	100%
Availability of financial resources for CalWORKs participants							
All counties	Number	29	13	10	3	3	58
	Percentage distribution	50%	22%	17%	5%	5%	100%
Small counties	Number	8	6	2	3	1	20
	Percentage distribution	40%	30%	10%	15%	5%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	12	3	4	0	1	20
	Percentage distribution	60%	15%	20%	0%	5%	100%
Large counties	Number	9	4	4	0	1	18
	Percentage distribution	50%	22%	22%	0%	6%	100%

Table D.1—Continued

Issues		County Rating of Whether Issue Hindered Implementation: Did Not Hinder	Minor Hindrance	Moderate Hindrance	Major Hindrance	Not Applicable	Total
Availability of child care services for CalWORKs participants							
All counties	Number	42	8	4	4	0	58
	Percentage distribution	72%	14%	7%	7%	0%	100%
Small counties	Number	12	3	2	3	0	20
	Percentage distribution	60%	15%	10%	15%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	13	4	2	1	0	20
	Percentage distribution	65%	20%	10%	5%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	17	1	0	0	0	18
	Percentage distribution	94%	6%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Availability of affordable housing for CalWORKs participants							
All counties	Number	5	8	14	30	1	58
	Percentage distribution	9%	14%	24%	52%	2%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	2	4	13	1	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	10%	20%	65%	5%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	5	6	9	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	25%	30%	45%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	5	1	4	8	0	18
	Percentage distribution	28%	6%	22%	44%	0%	100%
Availability of transportation options or transportation resources for CalWORKs participants							
All counties	Number	17	16	14	12	0	58
	Percentage distribution	29%	28%	24%	21%	0%	100%
Small counties	Number	5	3	4	8	0	20
	Percentage distribution	25%	15%	20%	40%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	4	6	8	2	0	20
	Percentage distribution	20%	30%	40%	10%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	8	7	2	2	0	18
	Percentage distribution	44%	39%	11%	11%	0%	100%
Competition with other state/federal mandates (e.g., Medi-Cal expansion)							
All counties	Number	15	14	10	16	3	58
	Percentage distribution	26%	24%	17%	28%	5%	100%
Small counties	Number	4	6	4	5	1	20
	Percentage distribution	20%	30%	20%	25%	5%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	5	4	3	7	1	20
	Percentage distribution	25%	20%	15%	35%	5%	100%
Large counties	Number	6	4	3	4	1	18
	Percentage distribution	33%	22%	17%	22%	6%	100%
Availability of line staff (e.g., caseworkers, employment services specialists) who work with and/or counsel WTW participants							
All counties	Number	18	7	19	14	0	58
	Percentage distribution	31%	12%	33%	24%	0%	100%
Small counties	Number	6	2	8	4	0	20
	Percentage distribution	30%	10%	40%	20%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	4	3	7	6	0	20
	Percentage distribution	20%	15%	35%	30%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	8	2	4	4	0	18
	Percentage distribution	44%	11%	22%	22%	0%	100%

Table D.1—Continued

Issues		County Rating of Whether Issue Hindered Implementation: Did Not Hinder	Minor Hindrance	Moderate Hindrance	Major Hindrance	Not Applicable	Total
Explaining the complexity of SB 1041 to participants							
All counties	Number	4	8	18	28	0	58
	Percentage distribution	7%	14%	31%	48%	0%	100%
Small counties	Number	3	4	7	6	0	20
	Percentage distribution	15%	20%	35%	30%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	1	3	5	11	0	20
	Percentage distribution	5%	15%	25%	55%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	1	6	11	0	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	6%	33%	61%	0%	100%
Prior staff reductions/freezes in staff and/or funding							
All counties	Number	20	11	6	12	9	58
	Percentage distribution	34%	19%	10%	21%	16%	100%
Small counties	Number	8	3	2	2	5	20
	Percentage distribution	40%	15%	10%	10%	25%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	6	5	3	5	1	20
	Percentage distribution	30%	25%	15%	25%	5%	100%
Large counties	Number	6	3	1	5	3	18
	Percentage distribution	33%	17%	6%	28%	17%	100%
Other							
All counties	Number	6	1	3	9	21	40
	Percentage distribution	15%	3%	8%	23%	53%	100%
Small counties	Number	2	0	1	1	6	10
	Percentage distribution	20%	0%	10%	10%	60%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	4	1	1	4	7	17
	Percentage distribution	24%	6%	6%	24%	41%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	0	1	4	8	13
	Percentage distribution	0%	0%	8%	31%	62%	100%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.

Table D.2. Whether Existing Relationships or Partnerships with Organizations or Providers Facilitated Implementation: All Counties and by County Caseload Size

Organization or Provider		County Rating of Whether Issue Hindered Implementation					Total
		Did Not Facilitate	Minor Facilitator	Moderate Facilitator	Major Facilitator	Not Applicable	
Other county agencies (e.g., mental health, behavioral health, child support services, housing agency)							
All counties	Number	13	17	17	9	2	58
	Percentage distribution	22%	29%	29%	16%	3%	100%
Small counties	Number	6	7	3	3	1	20
	Percentage distribution	30%	35%	15%	15%	5%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	5	7	8	0	0	20
	Percentage distribution	25%	35%	40%	0%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	2	3	6	6	1	18
	Percentage distribution	11%	17%	33%	33%	6%	100%
Educational providers (e.g., community colleges)							
All counties	Number	14	22	13	5	4	58
	Percentage distribution	24%	38%	22%	9%	7%	100%
Small counties	Number	7	8	4	0	1	20
	Percentage distribution	35%	40%	20%	0%	5%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	5	7	6	1	1	20
	Percentage distribution	25%	35%	30%	5%	5%	100%
Large counties	Number	2	7	3	4	2	18
	Percentage distribution	11%	39%	17%	22%	11%	100%
Vocational education or on the job training providers							
All counties	Number	18	16	12	4	8	58
	Percentage distribution	31%	28%	21%	7%	14%	100%
Small counties	Number	7	5	4	1	3	20
	Percentage distribution	35%	25%	20%	5%	15%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	7	6	4	0	3	20
	Percentage distribution	35%	30%	20%	0%	15%	100%
Large counties	Number	4	5	4	3	2	18
	Percentage distribution	22%	28%	22%	17%	11%	100%
Employment services or job placement providers							
All counties	Number	12	8	10	17	10	57
	Percentage distribution	21%	14%	18%	30%	18%	100%
Small counties	Number	8	2	3	5	2	20
	Percentage distribution	40%	10%	15%	25%	10%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	2	2	5	4	6	20
	Percentage distribution	10%	10%	25%	20%	30%	100%
Large counties	Number	2	4	2	8	2	18
	Percentage distribution	11%	22%	11%	44%	11%	100%

Table D.2—Continued

Organization or Provider		County Rating of Whether Issue Hindered Implementation: Did Not Facilitate	Minor Facilitator	Moderate Facilitator	Major Facilitator	Not Applicable	Total
Community organizations and/or welfare advocacy organizations							
All counties	Number	25	10	9	4	10	58
	Percentage distribution	43%	17%	16%	7%	17%	100%
Small counties	Number	11	2	2	0	5	20
	Percentage distribution	55%	10%	10%	0%	25%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	10	3	2	2	3	20
	Percentage distribution	50%	15%	10%	10%	15%	100%
Large counties	Number	4	5	5	2	2	18
	Percentage distribution	22%	28%	28%	11%	11%	100%
State organizations (e.g., CDSS, CWDA)							
All counties	Number	7	7	13	18	13	58
	Percentage distribution	12%	12%	22%	31%	22%	100%
Small counties	Number	3	3	2	5	7	20
	Percentage distribution	15%	15%	10%	25%	35%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	3	1	6	7	3	20
	Percentage distribution	15%	5%	30%	35%	15%	100%
Large counties	Number	1	3	5	6	3	18
	Percentage distribution	6%	17%	28%	33%	17%	100%
Other							
All counties	Number	2	1	1	4	24	32
	Percentage distribution	6%	3%	3%	13%	75%	100%
Small counties	Number	1	0	0	1	7	9
	Percentage distribution	11%	0%	0%	11%	78%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	1	0	0	1	7	9
	Percentage distribution	11%	0%	0%	11%	78%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	1	1	2	10	14
	Percentage distribution	0%	7%	7%	14%	71%	100%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.

Results Disaggregated by County Caseload Size

Table D.3 provides the disaggregation by county caseload size for the results in Table 4.10 regarding supervisors' assessments of caseworkers' understanding of other SB 1041 components. Table D.4 corresponds to Table 4.11, which reported on supervisor's assessments of participants' understanding of other SB 1041 components. Table D.5 provides disaggregated results for Table 4.18, which reported on counties' assessment of the effect of SB 1041 on outcomes. Table D.6 likewise has disaggregated results corresponding to Table 4.19, which reported on counties' assessment of how well SB 1041 and related mandates are working. In all

cases, we also include the results for all counties along with results for small, medium, and large counties based on their caseload size.

WTW Caseworkers' Understanding of Other SB 1041 Components

Table D.3. Supervisors' Assessment of How Well WTW Caseworkers Understand Other SB 1041 Changes and Related Supports: All Counties and by County Caseload Size

		Supervisor's Assessment of How Well Caseworkers Understand SB 1041 Change					
Policy Change		**Not at All Well**	**Slightly Well**	**Moderately Well**	**Very Well**	**Not Applicable**	**Total**
Enhanced educational flexibility							
All counties	Number	0	1	39	18	0	58
	Percentage distribution	0%	2%	67%	31%	0%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	0	15	5	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	1	9	10	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	5%	45%	50%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	0	15	3	0	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	0%	83%	17%	0%	100%
That there are more choices now in WTW activities							
All counties	Number	0	1	23	33	1	58
	Percentage distribution	0%	2%	40%	57%	2%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	0	10	10	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	1	4	14	1	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	5%	20%	70%	5%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	0	9	9	0	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%	100%
New one-time young child exemption							
All counties	Number	0	0	12	46	0	58
	Percentage distribution	0%	0%	21%	79%	0%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	0	3	17	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	0%	15%	85%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	0	3	17	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	0%	15%	85%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	0	6	12	0	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	0%	33%	67%	0%	100%
Reengagement process (AB X4 4)							
All counties	Number	0	2	22	34	0	58
	Percentage distribution	0%	3%	38%	59%	0%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	0	7	13	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	0%	35%	65%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	1	8	11	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	5%	40%	55%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	1	7	10	0	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	6%	39%	56%	0%	100%

Table D.3—Continued

Policy Change		Supervisor's Assessment of How Well Caseworkers Understand SB 1041 Change					Total
		Not at All Well	Slightly Well	Moderatel y Well	Very Well	Not Applicable	
ESE program							
All counties	Number	0	4	24	22	8	58
	Percentage distribution	0%	7%	41%	38%	14%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	2	8	4	6	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	10%	40%	20%	30%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	2	6	10	2	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	10%	30%	50%	10%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	0	10	8	0	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	0%	56%	44%	0%	100%
FS program							
All counties	Number	0	9	28	20	1	58
	Percentage distribution	0%	16%	48%	34%	2%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	3	9	7	1	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	15%	45%	35%	5%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	3	10	7	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	15%	50%	35%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	3	9	6	0	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	17%	50%	33%	0%	100%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Counties were instructed to mark one answer on the Likert scale per policy change. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.

WTW Participants' Understanding of Other SB 1041 Components

Table D.4. Supervisors' Assessment of How Well CalWORKs Participants Understand SB 1041 Changes: All Counties and by County Caseload Size

SB 1041 Component		Supervisor's Assessment of How Well CalWORKs Participants Understand SB 1041 Component Change					
		Not at All Well	Slightly Well	Moderately Well	Very Well	Not Applicable	Total
New WTW participation requirements							
All counties	Number	2	17	31	7	0	57
	Percentage distribution	4%	30%	54%	12%	0%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	9	9	2	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	45%	45%	10%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	2	4	10	4	0	20
	Percentage distribution	10%	20%	50%	20%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	4	12	1	0	17
	Percentage distribution	0%	24%	71%	6%	0%	100%
Increase in choices with respect to the activities for participants during the WTW 24-month time clock							
All counties	Number	3	12	31	10	0	56
	Percentage distribution	5%	21%	55%	18%	0%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	7	11	2	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	35%	55%	10%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	3	1	11	4	0	19
	Percentage distribution	16%	5%	58%	21%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	4	9	4	0	17
	Percentage distribution	0%	24%	53%	24%	0%	100%
Reengagement process for those that had short-term young child exemption (AB X4 4)							
All counties	Number	4	10	25	16	3	58
	Percentage distribution	7%	17%	43%	28%	5%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	6	8	5	1	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	30%	40%	25%	5%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	3	2	7	6	2	20
	Percentage distribution	15%	10%	35%	30%	10%	100%
Large counties	Number	1	2	10	5	0	18
	Percentage distribution	6%	11%	56%	28%	0%	100%
New one-time young child exemption							
All counties	Number	1	9	21	27	0	58
	Percentage distribution	2%	16%	36%	47%	0%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	6	7	7	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	30%	35%	35%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	1	1	5	13	0	20
	Percentage distribution	5%	5%	25%	65%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	2	9	7	0	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	11%	50%	39%	0%	100%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Counties were instructed to mark one answer on the Likert scale per component. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.

Counties' Views Regarding the Effectiveness of SB 1041 Reforms and Related Mandates at County Level

Table D.5. Counties' Assessment of the Effect of SB 1041's Implementation on Outcomes: All Counties and by County Caseload Size

		County Assessment of How SB 1041 Has Affected Outcome						
Outcomes		**Much Worse**	**Somewhat Worse**	**About the Same**	**Somewhat Better**	**Much Better**	**Not Applicable**	**Total**
Work participation rates (WPR)								
All counties	Number	3	14	26	14	1	0	58
	Percentage distribution	5%	24%	45%	24%	2%	0%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	4	10	6	0	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	20%	50%	30%	0%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	1	6	11	2	0	0	20
	Percentage distribution	5%	30%	55%	10%	0%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	2	4	5	6	1	0	18
	Percentage distribution	11%	22%	28%	33%	6%	0%	100%
Participation in WTW activities								
All counties	Number	0	5	30	21	2	0	58
	Percentage distribution	0%	9%	52%	36%	3%	0%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	1	12	7	0	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	5%	60%	35%	0%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	1	11	8	0	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	5%	55%	40%	0%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	3	7	6	2	0	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	17%	39%	33%	11%	0%	100%
Enrollment in education and training programs/community colleges								
All counties	Number	0	1	32	23	1	0	57
	Percentage distribution	0%	2%	56%	40%	2%	0%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	1	11	7	0	0	19
	Percentage distribution	0%	5%	58%	37%	0%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	0	12	8	0	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	0%	60%	40%	0%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	0	9	8	1	0	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	0%	50%	44%	6%	0%	100%
Length of time CalWORKs participants spend in educational activities								
All counties	Number	0	4	32	19	3	0	58
	Percentage distribution	0%	7%	55%	33%	5%	0%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	1	14	5	0	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	5%	70%	25%	0%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	1	9	8	2	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	5%	45%	40%	10%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	2	9	6	1	0	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	11%	50%	33%	6%	0%	100%

Table D.5—Continued

Outcomes		County Assessment of How SB 1041 Has Affected Outcome						Total
		Much Worse	Somewhat Worse	About the Same	Somewhat Better	Much Better	Not Applicable	
Persistence of CalWORKs participants in education/training activities								
All counties	Number	0	1	42	13	1	1	58
	Percentage distribution	0%	2%	72%	22%	2%	2%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	1	15	4	0	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	5%	75%	20%	0%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	0	14	5	1	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	0%	70%	25%	5%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	0	13	4	0	1	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	0%	72%	22%	0%	6%	100%
Compliance with CalWORKs program rules								
All counties	Number	0	10	32	15	1	0	58
	Percentage distribution	0%	17%	55%	26%	2%	0%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	2	12	6	0	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	10%	60%	30%	0%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	4	9	7	0	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	20%	45%	35%	0%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	4	11	2	1	0	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	22%	61%	11%	6%	0%	100%
Number of participants receiving sanctions								
All counties	Number	0	14	29	14	1	0	58
	Percentage distribution	0%	24%	50%	24%	2%	0%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	2	12	6	0	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	10%	60%	30%	0%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	6	8	6	0	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	30%	40%	30%	0%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	6	9	2	1	0	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	33%	50%	11%	6%	0%	100%
Participation in CalFresh								
All counties	Number	0	1	33	6	1	17	58
	Percentage distribution	0%	2%	57%	10%	2%	29%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	1	12	3	0	4	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	5%	60%	15%	0%	20%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	0	11	1	0	8	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	0%	55%	5%	0%	40%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	0	10	2	1	5	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	0%	56%	11%	6%	28%	100%
Earnings								
All counties	Number	0	1	31	23	2	1	58
	Percentage distribution	0%	2%	53%	40%	3%	2%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	1	12	7	0	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	5%	60%	35%	0%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	0	12	7	1	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	0%	60%	35%	5%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	0	7	9	1	1	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	0%	39%	50%	6%	6%	100%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Counties were instructed to mark one answer per outcome. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to each outcome as the denominator.

Table D.6. Counties' Assessment of How Well Aspects of SB 1041 and Related Mandates Are Working: All Counties and by County Caseload Size

Aspects of SB 1041 and Related Mandates		County Assessment of How Well Aspect Is Working					
		Not at all Well	Slightly Well	Moderately Well	Very Well	Not Applicable	Total
Communication of new CalWORKs program rules to CalWORKs participants							
All counties	Number	1	11	34	11	1	58
	Percentage distribution	2%	19%	59%	19%	2%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	7	11	2	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	35%	55%	10%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	1	2	10	7	0	20
	Percentage distribution	5%	10%	50%	35%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	2	13	2	1	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	11%	72%	11%	6%	100%
Matching CalWORKs participants with appropriate WTW activities							
All counties	Number	1	7	37	12	1	58
	Percentage distribution	2%	12%	64%	21%	2%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	2	16	2	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	10%	80%	10%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	1	1	11	7	0	20
	Percentage distribution	5%	5%	55%	35%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	4	10	3	1	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	22%	56%	17%	6%	100%
Provision of supportive services (e.g., child care, domestic violence, housing assistance)							
All counties	Number	1	5	19	31	2	58
	Percentage distribution	2%	9%	33%	53%	3%	100%
Small counties	Number	1	3	7	8	1	20
	Percentage distribution	5%	15%	35%	40%	5%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	1	7	12	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	5%	35%	60%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	1	5	11	1	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	6%	28%	61%	6%	100%
Provision of mental health and/or substance abuse services							
All counties	Number	2	5	26	23	2	58
	Percentage distribution	3%	9%	45%	40%	3%	100%
Small counties	Number	2	1	12	4	1	20
	Percentage distribution	10%	5%	60%	20%	5%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	2	8	10	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	10%	40%	50%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	2	6	9	1	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	11%	33%	50%	6%	100%

Table D.6—Continued

Aspects of SB 1041 and Related Mandates		County Assessment of How Well Aspect Is Working: Not at all Well	Slightly Well	Moderately Well	Very Well	Not Applicable	Total
Coordination with community colleges							
All counties	Number	0	7	28	20	3	58
	Percentage distribution	0%	12%	48%	34%	5%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	4	10	5	1	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	20%	50%	25%	5%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	2	9	8	1	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	10%	45%	40%	5%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	1	9	7	1	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	6%	50%	39%	6%	100%
Coordination with vocational education providers							
All counties	Number	1	6	32	11	8	58
	Percentage distribution	2%	10%	55%	19%	14%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	3	12	1	4	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	15%	60%	5%	20%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	2	11	4	3	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	10%	55%	20%	15%	100%
Large counties	Number	1	1	9	6	1	18
	Percentage distribution	6%	6%	50%	33%	6%	100%
Coordination with other county agencies to provide supportive services							
All counties	Number	0	6	18	21	13	58
	Percentage distribution	0%	10%	31%	36%	22%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	1	10	7	2	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	5%	50%	35%	10%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	4	4	8	4	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	20%	20%	40%	20%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	1	4	6	7	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	6%	22%	33%	39%	100%
Working with nonprofit service providers							
All counties	Number	0	7	28	18	5	58
	Percentage distribution	0%	12%	48%	31%	9%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	2	12	5	1	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	10%	60%	25%	5%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	2	7	8	3	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	10%	35%	40%	15%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	3	9	5	1	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	17%	50%	28%	6%	100%
Working with employers and job training providers							
All counties	Number	0	7	27	22	2	58
	Percentage distribution	0%	12%	47%	38%	3%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	4	10	5	1	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	20%	50%	25%	5%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	2	10	8	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	10%	50%	40%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	1	7	9	1	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	6%	39%	50%	6%	100%

Table D.6—Continued

Aspects of SB 1041 and Related Mandates		County Assessment of How Well Aspect Is Working: Not at all Well	Slightly Well	Moderately Well	Very Well	Not Applicable	Total
Reengagement strategy for clients with the short-term, young child exemption (AB X4 4)							
All counties	Number	0	9	18	26	4	57
	Percentage distribution	0%	16%	32%	46%	7%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	5	7	6	2	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	25%	35%	30%	10%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	3	3	13	1	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	15%	15%	65%	5%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	1	8	7	1	17
	Percentage distribution	0%	6%	47%	41%	6%	100%
Tracking WTW participation of CalWORKs participants							
All counties	Number	5	14	27	9	2	57
	Percentage distribution	9%	25%	47%	16%	4%	100%
Small counties	Number	3	2	11	3	0	19
	Percentage distribution	16%	11%	58%	16%	0%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	2	4	10	3	1	20
	Percentage distribution	10%	20%	50%	15%	5%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	8	6	3	1	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	44%	33%	17%	6%	100%
Improving information management of the CalWORKs program							
All counties	Number	5	18	24	7	4	58
	Percentage distribution	9%	31%	41%	12%	7%	100%
Small counties	Number	2	8	8	1	1	20
	Percentage distribution	10%	40%	40%	5%	5%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	2	6	9	2	1	20
	Percentage distribution	10%	30%	45%	10%	5%	100%
Large counties	Number	1	4	7	4	2	18
	Percentage distribution	6%	22%	39%	22%	11%	100%
Design and implementation of the ESE program							
All counties	Number	1	6	20	23	8	58
	Percentage distribution	2%	10%	34%	40%	14%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	4	8	2	6	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	20%	40%	10%	30%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	1	0	7	10	2	20
	Percentage distribution	5%	0%	35%	50%	10%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	2	5	11	0	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	11%	28%	61%	0%	100%

Table D.6—Continued

Aspects of SB 1041 and Related Mandates		County Assessment of How Well Aspect Is Working: Not at all Well	Slightly Well	Moderately Well	Very Well	Not Applicable	Total
Design and implementation of the FS program							
All counties	Number	0	4	30	23	1	58
	Percentage distribution	0%	7%	52%	40%	2%	100%
Small counties	Number	0	3	14	2	1	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	15%	70%	10%	5%	100%
Medium-sized counties	Number	0	1	8	11	0	20
	Percentage distribution	0%	5%	40%	55%	0%	100%
Large counties	Number	0	0	8	10	0	18
	Percentage distribution	0%	0%	44%	56%	0%	100%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Caseload size is up to 999 for small counties (20 counties), from 1,000 to 4,999 for medium-sized counties (20 counties), and 5,000 or more for large counties (18 counties). Counties were instructed to mark one answer per outcome. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.

Additional Survey Results

Two topics are addressed in supplemental questions not reported in Chapter Four: county provision of services for CalWORKs WTW participants and the capacity of counties to provide those services. Given the secondary interest in these questions, we report results for all counties only.

How Services to CalWORKs WTW Participants Are Provided

We asked how county social services departments undertake or provide employment-related services to CalWORKs WTW participants in their county, with results reported in Table D.7. With respect to providing assistance with finding unsubsidized or subsidized employment, it appears that counties use a combination of strategies. Eighty-four percent of counties reported that their social services department directly provides assistance with finding unsubsidized employment. In addition, 59 percent indicated they also contract with local service providers for this purpose. With respect to finding subsidized employment, 64 percent of counties indicated that their social services department directly provides these services and 55 percent indicated they also contract with local service providers. Between a quarter and a third of counties also made referrals to local service providers for subsidized and unsubsidized employment.

With respect to assistance with job search and job readiness, 83 percent of counties indicated their social services department directly provided that service (Table D.7). In addition, 64 percent contracted with local service providers and 28 percent made referrals to local service providers.

With respect to assistance with placement in on-the-job training, counties used a variety of strategies (Table D.7). Forty-seven percent reported that their county social services department

provided this assistance directly, 40 percent contracted with local service providers, 16 percent made referrals to other county agencies, and 21 percent made referrals to local service providers.

Table D.7. How Employment-Related Services Are Provided to CalWORKs Participants: All Counties

		How Employment-Related Services Are Provided to CalWORKs Participants				
Type of Service	**All Responding Counties**	**Directly by the County Social Services Department**	**Local Service Providers Contracted by the County Social Services Department**	**Referrals to Other County Agencies**	**Referrals to Local Service Providers**	**Do Not Know**
Assistance with finding unsubsidized employment						
Number	58	49	34	7	17	0
Percentage		84%	59%	12%	29%	0%
Assistance with finding subsidized employment (public or private sector)						
Number	58	37	32	7	15	0
Percentage		64%	55%	12%	26%	0%
Assistance with placement in on-the-job training						
Number	58	27	23	9	12	4
Percentage		47%	40%	16%	21%	7%
Assistance with finding volunteer or community service opportunities						
Number	58	46	21	6	11	1
Percentage		79%	36%	10%	19%	2%
Assistance with job search and job readiness						
Number	58	48	37	10	16	0
Percentage		83%	64%	17%	28%	0%
Other activities necessary to assist with employment placement or readiness						
Number	58	27	25	10	18	3
Percentage		47%	43%	17%	31%	5%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Counties were instructed to mark all that apply. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.

With respect to assistance with finding volunteer or community service opportunities, 79 percent of counties indicated that assistance was provided directly by their social services department and 36 percent contracted with local service providers (Table D.5). One out of five counties also made referrals to local service providers.

We also asked how county social services departments undertake or provide various education- and training-related services to CalWORKs WTW participants in their county. For all counties, as reported in Table D.8, the predominant way in which education and vocational services are provided to CalWORKs WTW participants is by referrals to local service providers. In addition, 48 percent of counties contract with local service providers for vocational education/training and 41 percent for GED preparation. In about a third of counties, adult basic

education is also provided through contracts with local service providers; in a quarter of counties, college programming or postsecondary education is also provided this way.

Table D.8. How Education- and Training-Related Services Are Provided to CalWORKs Participants: All Counties

			How Education- and Training-Related Services Are Provided to CalWORKs Participants				
Type of Service		All Responding Counties	Directly by the County Social Services Department	Local Service Providers Contracted by the County Social Services Department	Referrals to Other County Agencies	Referrals to Local Service Providers	Do Not Know
Vocational education or training	Number	58	2	28	10	45	0
	Percentage		3%	48%	17%	78%	0%
Adult basic education	Number	58	3	20	4	45	0
	Percentage		5%	34%	7%	78%	0%
GED	Number	58	3	24	7	47	0
	Percentage		5%	41%	12%	81%	0%
College or postsecondary education	Number	58	3	14	1	49	0
	Percentage		5%	24%	2%	84%	0%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Counties were instructed to mark all that apply. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.

Lastly, we asked how county social services departments undertake or provide supportive services such as child care, mental health, domestic violence, and other services to CalWORKs WTW participants in their county. Results are reported in Table D.9. Sixty-seven percent of counties reported that they contracted with local service providers for child care services, with 47 percent also indicating these services were provided by the county social services department and 28 percent made referrals to local service providers.

Transportation services refer to such assistance as with bus tickets, car repairs, or ride-share arrangements. This type of assistance is predominantly provided by county social services departments (91 percent) (Table D.9).

Housing assistance is provided in multiple ways, with 67 percent of counties reporting that it was provided by their county social services department and 60 percent indicating it was provided by referrals to local providers (Table D.9). A third of counties also reported contracting with local service providers and about the same number made by referrals to other county agencies.

Table D.9. How Supportive Services Are Provided to CalWORKs Participants: All Counties

Type of Service		All Responding Counties	How Supportive Services Are Provided to CalWORKs Participants: Directly by the County Social Services Department	Local Service Providers Contracted by the County Social Services Department	Referrals to Other County Agencies	Referrals to Local Service Providers	Do Not Know
Child care	Number	58	27	39	6	16	0
	Percentage		47%	67%	10%	28%	0%
Transportation[a]	Number	58	53	11	3	15	0
	Percentage		91%	19%	5%	26%	0%
Mental health	Number	58	8	33	37	17	0
	Percentage		14%	57%	64%	29%	0%
Substance abuse	Number	58	7	33	34	16	0
	Percentage		12%	57%	59%	28%	0%
Domestic violence	Number	58	12	38	15	33	0
	Percentage		21%	66%	26%	57%	0%
Language translation	Number	58	48	38	3	10	1
	Percentage		83%	66%	5%	17%	2%
Legal aid	Number	58	3	14	7	44	1
	Percentage		5%	24%	12%	76%	2%
Housing assistance	Number	58	39	19	19	35	0
	Percentage		67%	33%	33%	60%	0%
Other supportive services	Number	58	26	10	8	14	5
	Percentage		45%	17%	14%	24%	9%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Counties were instructed to mark all that apply. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.
[a] Includes, for example, assistance with bus ticket, car repair, ride-share arrangement.

Language translation services are predominantly provided by county social services departments (83 percent of counties) or by contracts with local service providers (66 percent) (Table D.9). Legal aid is predominantly provided by referrals to local service providers (76 percent of counties).

Domestic violence services are predominantly provided by local service providers through either contracts or referrals (Table D.9). Sixty-six percent of counties reported contracting with local service providers and 57 percent made referrals to these providers.

With respect to mental health and substance abuse treatment services, counties predominantly make referrals to other county agencies or contract with local service providers (Table D.9). For example, 64 percent of counties reported that mental health services are provided by referrals to other county agencies and 57 percent of counties indicated contracts with local service providers. With respect to substance abuse treatment services, 59 percent of counties reported that such services are provided by referrals to other county agencies and 57 percent of counties indicated contracts with local service providers.

Assessment of Capacity to Provide Services to CalWORKs WTW Participants

We asked counties for their assessment of capacity shortfalls for a range of services provided to CalWORKs WTW participants. Overall, counties identified shortfalls in a number of areas (Table D.10).

Table D.10. Assessment of Capacity Shortfalls for Provision of Employment-Related Services for CalWORKs Participants: All Counties

		Assessment of Current Capacity Shortfall				
Type of Service		**None**	**Current Shortfall in Some Parts of County**	**Current Shortfall Throughout County**	**Do Not Know**	**Total**
Subsidized employment	Number	34	13	11	0	58
	Percentage distribution	59%	22%	19%	0%	100%
Job skills training	Number	30	20	8	0	58
	Percentage distribution	52%	34%	14%	0%	100%
Job search/job readiness	Number	35	18	5	0	58
	Percentage distribution	60%	31%	9%	0%	100%
On the job training	Number	25	12	16	4	57
	Percentage distribution	44%	21%	28%	7%	100%
Unsubsidized employment	Number	28	17	13	0	58
	Percentage distribution	48%	29%	22%	0%	100%
Community service	Number	37	14	6	1	58
	Percentage distribution	64%	24%	10%	2%	100%
Other employment-related services	Number	30	5	1	5	41
	Percentage distribution	73%	12%	2%	12%	100%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Counties were instructed to mark one answer. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.

With respect to employment-related services, as shown in Table D.10, 41 percent of counties reported a shortfall in parts or throughout the county for subsidized employment services and 51 percent reported a shortfall in parts or throughout the county for unsubsidized employment and for community service.

With respect to assistance with job search and job readiness, 40 percent of counties reported a capacity shortfall in parts or throughout the county (Table D.10). Forty-nine percent of counties reported a capacity shortfall with respect to on-the-job training and 48 percent reported a capacity shortfall with respect to job skills training in parts or throughout the county.

With respect to education- and training-related services, as reported in Table D.11, more than half of counties reported a capacity shortfall in parts or throughout the county for vocational education/training. Forty-nine percent reported such a shortfall for adult basic education and 45 percent for GED preparation. Fewer counties (38 percent) reported a shortfall for community college or postsecondary education.

Table D.11. Assessment of Capacity Shortfalls for Provision of Education- and Training-Related Services for CalWORKs Participants: All Counties

		Assessment of Current Capacity Shortfall				
Type of Service		None	Current Shortfall in Some Parts of County	Current Shortfall Throughout County	Do Not Know	Total
Vocational education/ training	Number	26	14	17	1	58
	Percentage distribution	45%	24%	29%	2%	100%
Adult basic education	Number	28	12	16	2	58
	Percentage distribution	48%	21%	28%	3%	100%
GED preparation	Number	29	11	15	3	58
	Percentage distribution	50%	19%	26%	5%	100%
Community college or postsecondary education	Number	35	11	11	1	58
	Percentage distribution	60%	19%	19%	2%	100%
Other education-related services	Number	24	0	6	5	35
	Percentage distribution	69%	0%	17%	14%	100%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Counties were instructed to mark one answer. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.

With respect to capacity shortfalls for supportive services, as shown in Table D.12, a majority of counties reported capacity shortfalls for transportation and housing assistance (68 percent and 79 percent, respectively). With respect to mental health and substance abuse treatment services, 44 percent and 45 percent, respectively, reported capacity shortfalls in parts or throughout the county. Forty percent reported a capacity shortfall in parts or throughout the county for child care services. Only 23 percent of counties reported such for translation services and 34 percent for domestic violence services.

Table D.12. Assessment of Capacity Shortfalls for Provision of Supportive Services for CalWORKs Participants: All Counties

		Assessment of Current Capacity Shortfall				
Type of Service		**None**	**Current Shortfall in Some Parts of County**	**Current Shortfall Throughout County**	**Do Not Know**	**Total**
Child care	Number	35	14	9	0	58
	Percentage distribution	60%	24%	16%	0%	100%
Transportation[a]	Number	19	23	16	0	58
	Percentage distribution	33%	40%	28%	0%	100%
Mental health	Number	32	17	8	0	57
	Percentage distribution	56%	30%	14%	0%	100%
Substance abuse	Number	32	17	9	0	58
	Percentage distribution	55%	29%	16%	0%	100%
Domestic violence	Number	37	14	6	1	58
	Percentage distribution	64%	24%	10%	2%	100%
Translation services	Number	45	8	5	0	58
	Percentage distribution	78%	14%	9%	0%	100%
Housing assistance	Number	12	14	31	0	57
	Percentage distribution	21%	25%	54%	0%	100%
Other supportive services	Number	26	1	2	6	35
	Percentage distribution	74%	3%	6%	17%	100%

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of ACS data.
NOTE: Counties were instructed to mark one answer. Percentages are calculated using the number of counties responding to the question as the denominator.

Appendix E. Additional Documentation for Chapter Six Status and Tracking Studies Analyses

This appendix provides tables that document and support the findings summarized in Chapter Six. The sections in this appendix correspond to the sections in the chapter.

CalWORKs WTW Participant Demographics

Table E.1. Number of CalWORKs WTW Participants and Unemployment Rate: 2006 to 2015

Indicator	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
CalWORKs participants	317,751	321,564	337,435	328,637	354,569	389,047	345,934	332,186	328,854	297,325
Unemployment rate (percent)	4.9	5.1	6.4	10.6	12.2	11.8	10.7	9.1	7.9	6.5

SOURCES: CalWORKs WTW participants: WDTIP files; unemployment rate: EDD unemployment data.
NOTES: CalWORKs WTW participation is measured in March of each year. CalWORKs WTW participants includes adults who were in the CalWORKs WTW program and were eligible to work, including those who may have been sanctioned. These participants were members of two-parent families, all other families, and TANF timed-out cases. Unemployment rate is for California and measured in March of each year.

Table E.2.a. Number and Percentage of CalWORKs WTW Participants by Gender and by Race/Ethnicity: 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015

	Number					Percentage				
Characteristic	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015
By sex										
Male	50,959	61,648	79,729	74,019	66,370	15.8	18.8	20.5	22.3	22.3
Female	201,833	216,563	266,445	245,266	226,606	62.8	65.9	68.5	73.8	76.2
[Not reported]	*68,772*	*50,426*	*42,873*	*12,901*	*4,349*	*21.4*	*15.3*	*11.0*	*3.9*	*1.5*
Total	321,564	328,637	389,047	332,186	297,325	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
By race or ethnicity										
White	67,450	73,678	88,173	79,802	72,417	21.0	22.4	22.7	24.0	24.4
Hispanic	99,848	116,766	149,423	137,439	124,917	31.1	35.5	38.4	41.4	42.0
African American	50,293	49,394	58,704	53,657	48,162	15.6	15.0	15.1	16.2	16.2
Native American	2,479	2,376	2,631	2,275	1,986	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
Asian/Pacific Islander	19,715	18,888	21,457	18,910	18,394	6.1	5.7	5.5	5.7	6.2
Other	6,037	7,241	10,673	10,782	12,239	1.9	2.2	2.7	3.2	4.1
[Not reported]	*75,742*	*60,294*	*57,986*	*29,321*	*19,210*	*23.6*	*18.3*	*14.9*	*8.8*	*6.5*
Total	321,564	328,637	389,047	332,186	297,325	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

SOURCES: WDTIP and MEDS files.
NOTES: Participant characteristics are measured in March of each year. Categories may not add up to 100 percent because of rounding error.

Table E.2.b. Median Age of CalWORKs WTW Participants: 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015

Characteristic	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015
Median age	30	29	29	29	29

SOURCES: WDTIP and MEDS files.
NOTE: Participant characteristics are measured in March of each year.

CalWORKs WTW Participant Counts

Table E.3. Number and Percentage of CalWORKs WTW Participants in the Transitional Group and Post–SB Group: Status Cross-Sections in March 2013, March 2014, March 2015

	Number			Percentage		
Group	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015
All CalWORKs participants in status study	332,186	328,854	297,325	100.0	100.0	100.0
Transitional group	308,181	242,067	182,291	92.8	73.6	61.3
Post–SB 1041 group	24,005	86,787	115,034	7.2	26.4	38.7

SOURCE: WDTIP files.
NOTES: The 2013, 2014 and 2015 cross-sections included CalWORKs WTW participants all Two Parent Families, All Other Families, and TANF Timed-Out cases present in March of 2013, 2014, and 2015. Categories may not add up to 100 percent because of rounding error.

Table E.4. Number of New CalWORKs WTW Participants: Tracked Entry Cohorts 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013

Group	2007	2009	2011	2013
All CalWORKs participants in tracking study	7,867	11,804	10,597	7,863

SOURCE: WDTIP files.

Time on Aid and WTW Time Clock

Table E.5. Average Number of Months of Participation, Counted on the 48-Month Time-on-Aid Clock, and Counted on the 24-Month Time Clock Two Years After Entry: Tracked Entry Cohorts 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013

Group and Indicator	2007	2009	2011	2013
All CalWORKs participants in tracking study	7,867	11,804	10,597	7,863
Months of participation	13.0	13.3	13.1	13.1
Months counted on the 48-month time-on-aid clock	9.8	8.5	7.5	9.1
Months counted on WTW 24-month clock	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	1.9

SOURCES: WDTIP files.
NOTE: The WTW 24-month time clock was implemented January 2013.

Exemptions and Sanctions

Table E.6. Number and Percentage of Participants Who Had an Exemption or Sanction That Stopped the Clock: Status Cross-Sections and Transitional and After–SB 1041 Groups in March 2013, March 2014, and March 2015

	Number			Percentage		
Group and Indicator	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
All CalWORKs participants in status study	332,186	328,854	297,325	100.0	100.0	100.0
Participant had an exemption	132,266	104,289	86,993	39.8	31.7	29.3
Participant had a WTW 24-MTC exemption	10,785	27,083	25,493	3.2	8.2	8.6
Participant had a sanction	42,980	41,905	34,316	12.9	12.7	11.5
Transitional group	308,181	242,067	182,291	100.0	100.0	100.0
Participant had an exemption	125,307	74,663	49,803	40.7	30.8	27.3
Participant had a WTW 24-MTC exemption	10,571	21,260	16,719	3.4	8.8	9.2
Participant had a sanction	42,923	37,799	27,663	13.9	15.6	15.2
Post–SB 1041 group	24,005	86,787	115,034	100.0	100.0	100.0
Participant had an exemption	6,959	29,626	37,190	29.0	34.1	32.3
Participant had a WTW 24-MTC exemption	214	5,823	8,774	0.9	6.7	7.6
Participant had a sanction	57	4,106	6,653	0.2	4.7	5.8

SOURCE: WDTIP files.
NOTES: The exemptions and sanctions stop the WTW 24-month time clock, the 48-month time-on-aid clock, or both. The exemption and sanction categories are not mutually exclusive. The “Exemption” category includes all WTW exemptions except for WTW 24-MTC exemptions. The “WTW 24-MTC Exemption” category includes four exemptions that started January 1, 2013. The “Sanction” category includes three WTW noncompliance sanctions. Categories may not add up to 100 percent because of rounding error.

Table E.7. Number and Percentage of Participants Who Had at Least One Exemption and at Least One Sanction Within Two Years After Entry: Tracked Entry Cohorts 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013

	Number				Percentage			
Group and Indicator	**2007**	**2009**	**2011**	**2013**	**2007**	**2009**	**2011**	**2013**
All CalWORKs participants in tracking study	7,867	11,804	10,597	7,863	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Participant had an exemption	3,438	5,654	6,100	3,867	43.7	47.9	57.6	49.2
Participant had a WTW 24-MTC exemption	—	—	—	1,258	—	—	—	16.0
Participant had a sanction	956	1,580	1,472	1,112	12.2	13.4	13.9	14.1

SOURCE: WDTIP files.
NOTES: The exemptions and sanctions stop the WTW 24-month time clock, the 48-month time-on-aid clock, or both.. For the tracking study, the presence of exemptions and sanctions were measured for 24 months including the entry month. For example, for the 2013 cohort, we counted months from March 2013 to February 2015.The exemption and sanction categories are not mutually exclusive. The “Exemption” category includes all WTW exemptions except for WTW 24-MTC exemptions. The “WTW 24-MTC Exemption” category includes four exemptions that started January 1, 2013. The Sanction” category includes three WTW noncompliance sanctions. Categories may not add up to 100 percent because of rounding error. — = not applicable.

Leaving the WTW Program

Table E.8. Number and Percentage of Participants Who Left the WTW Program One Year and Two Years After Entry: Tracked Entry Cohorts 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013

	Number				Percentage			
Group and Indicator	**2007**	**2009**	**2011**	**2013**	**2007**	**2009**	**2011**	**2013**
All CalWORKs participants in tracking study	7,867	11,804	10,597	7,863	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Participant left at one year	3,947	5,885	5,301	3,833	50.2	49.9	50.0	48.8
Participant left at two years	5,007	7,240	6,996	5,286	63.7	61.3	66.0	67.2

SOURCE: WDTIP files.
NOTES: We measured "leaving the WTW program after one year" as a participant who was not in the program during the last month of their first year of participation after beginning the program. For example, for the 2013 cohort who started in March 2013, if they were not present in the program in February 2014 they were counted as leaving the program. We measured "leaving the WTW program after two years" as a participant who was not in the CalWORKs WTW program during the last month of their second year of participation after beginning the program. For example, for the 2013 cohort who started in March 2013, if they were not present in the program in February 2015 they were counted as leaving the program. Participants who were sanctioned are not considered to have left the program. Categories may not add up to 100 percent because of rounding error.

Employment and Earnings

Table E.9. Number and Percentage of Participants Who Were Employed: Status Cross-Sections and Transitional and After–SB 1041 Groups in March 2013, March 2014, March 2015

	Number			Percentage		
Group and Indicator	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
All CalWORKs participants in status study	332,186	328,854	297,325	100.0	100.0	100.0
Participant is employed	83,295	96,025	91,858	25.1	29.2	30.9
Transitional group	308,181	242,067	182,291	100.0	100.0	100.0
Participant is employed	76,940	71,296	59,043	25.0	29.5	32.4
Post–SB 1041 group	24,005	86,787	115,034	100.0	100.0	100.0
Participant is employed	6,355	24,729	32,815	26.5	28.5	28.5

SOURCES: WDTIP and EDD files.
NOTE: Categories may not add up to 100 percent because of rounding error.

Table E.10. Average Real Quarterly Earnings of All Participants Who Were Employed: Status Cross-Sections in March 2013, March 2014, March 2015

Group and Indicator	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Employed CalWORKs participants in status study	83,152	95,846	91,665
Adjusted quarterly earnings (2013 $)	$2,062	$2,181	$2,289
Employed transitional group participants	76,809	71,168	58,932
Adjusted quarterly earnings (2013 $)	$2,063	$2,174	$2,296
Employed post–SB 1041 group participants	6,343	24,678	32,733
Adjusted quarterly earnings (2013 $)	$2,052	$2,200	$2,275

SOURCES: WDTIP and EDD files.
NOTE: Quarterly earnings are measured in 2013 first quarter dollars using the CPI (BLS, 2015a) to adjust for inflation.

Table E.11. Number and Percentage of Participants Who Were Employed for at Least One Quarter in the Subsequent Two Years After Entry: Tracked Entry Cohorts 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013

	Number				Percentage			
Group and Indicator	**2007**	**2009**	**2011**	**2013**	**2007**	**2009**	**2011**	**2013**
All CalWORKs participants in tracking study	7,867	11,804	10,597	7,863	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Participant is employed	3,883	5,422	5,452	4,824	49.4	45.9	51.4	61.4

SOURCES: WDTIP and EDD files.

Table E.12. Number and Percentage of Participants Who Had Continuous Employment During the First Year and During the Second Year After Entry: Tracked Entry Cohorts 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013

	Number				Percentage			
Group and Indicator	**2007**	**2009**	**2011**	**2013**	**2007**	**2009**	**2011**	**2013**
All CalWORKs participants in tracking study	7,867	11,804	10,597	7,863	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Participant employed continuously during year one	1,100	1,374	1,350	1,333	14.0	11.6	12.7	17.0
Participant employed continuously during year two	1,413	1,997	2,239	2,158	18.0	16.9	21.1	27.4

SOURCES: WDTIP and EDD files.
NOTE: Categories may not add up to 100 percent because of rounding error.

Reengagement

Table E.13. CalWORKs Participant Status Among Those with the Short-Term WTW Exemption for Young Children in December 2012: March 2013, March 2014, March 2015

	Number			Percentage		
Group and Indicator	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Participants with short-term WTW exemption for young children as of January 1, 2013	59,876	59,876	59,876	100.0	100.0	100.0
New WTW exemption for young children	883	4,687	3,044	1.5	7.8	5.1
Short term young children exemption	42,835	8,677	28	71.5	14.5	0.0
Sanction	279	3,470	4,997	0.5	5.8	8.3
Other exemption[a]	2,953	5,945	5,432	4.9	9.9	9.1
In CalWORKs with no exemption or sanction	6,367	15,978	14,989	10.6	26.7	25.0
Not in CalWORKs[b]	6,559	21,119	31,386	11.0	35.3	52.4

SOURCE: WDTIP files.
NOTES: Categories may not add up to 100 percent because of rounding error.
[a] This category includes exemptions such as exemption for participation in the Cal-Learn program. It also includes a small number of exceptions such as penalty, good cause, extender, and repayment.
[b] This category includes participants not present in the WDTIP data system in March of the given year.

Appendix F. Additional Documentation for Chapter Seven Impact Study Analyses

This appendix provides tables and information that document and support the findings using state administrative data and the CPS presented in Chapter Seven.

State Administrative Data Methods and Supporting Tables

For administrative data analysis, CalWORKs WTW participants were defined as individuals in two-parent families, all other families, and TANF timed-out cases. Individuals were considered participants if they were identified in the WDTIP file as an adult or minor parent or guardian who was aided, including if he or she was exempt from WTW activities, or sanctioned and did not receive aid.

Tables F.1 to F.3 report the numbers presented unadjusted averages of employment and CalWORKs WTW participation outcomes.

Table F.1. Employment and CalWORKs WTW Participation of First-Time CalWORKs WTW Participants in the Fourth Quarter After CalWORKs WTW Enrollment

Entry Cohort		In Employment (only or also in CalWORKs)	In CalWORKs (only or also in Employment)
2010	Q1	31.3	61.6
	Q2	32.5	61.6
	Q3	35.4	59.6
	Q4	35.8	58.8
2011	Q1	34.3	57.2
	Q2	36.3	57.6
	Q3	37.7	57.7
	Q4	38.7	55.4
2012	Q1	36.1	55.7
	Q2	38.0	57.0
	Q3	39.1	56.7
	Q4	40.3	54.5
2013	Q1	38.8	55.7
	Q2	40.6	56.3
	Q3	41.6	56.3
	Q4	41.6	53.8

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of 2010–2014 WDTIP files and EDD employment and earnings files.

Table F.2. Employment and CalWORKs WTW Participation of First-Time CalWORKs WTW Participants in the Fourth Quarter After CalWORKs WTW Enrollment, Four Mutually Exclusive Categories

Entry Cohort		In Employment (not in CalWORKs)	In Employment and CalWORKs	In CalWORKs (not in Employment)	Not in Employment or CalWORKs
2010	Q1	15.1	16.2	45.4	23.3
	Q2	15.0	17.5	44.1	23.5
	Q3	17.7	17.7	41.9	22.7
	Q4	18.4	17.4	41.4	22.8
2011	Q1	18.7	15.6	41.6	24.1
	Q2	19.4	16.9	40.6	23.1
	Q3	19.8	17.9	39.8	22.5
	Q4	21.1	17.6	37.8	23.5
2012	Q1	20.6	15.5	40.2	23.7
	Q2	20.7	17.3	39.7	22.3
	Q3	20.8	18.3	38.5	22.4
	Q4	22.3	18.0	36.5	23.2
2013	Q1	21.3	17.5	38.1	23.0
	Q2	21.3	19.2	37.1	22.4
	Q3	20.8	20.8	35.5	23.0
	Q4	21.6	20.0	33.8	24.6

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of 2010–2014 WDTIP files and EDD employment and earnings files.

Table F.3. Average Unemployment Rate Across Counties of First-Time CalWORKs WTW Participants in the Fourth Quarter After CalWORKs WTW Enrollment

Entry Cohort		Unemployment Rate
2010	Q1	13.4
	Q2	12.7
	Q3	12.9
	Q4	12.1
2011	Q1	12.4
	Q2	11.4
	Q3	11.3
	Q4	10.5
2012	Q1	10.8
	Q2	9.8
	Q3	9.8
	Q4	9.2
2013	Q1	9.4
	Q2	8.1
	Q3	8.3
	Q4	7.8

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of 2010–2014 WDTIP files, EDD employment and earnings files, and EDD county unemployment rate files.

For the analysis of regression-adjusted trends, the following linear probability model was estimated:

$$y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PostSB1041_i + \beta_2 UR_c + \beta_3 {UR_c}^2 + \theta_2 X_i + \sum_{q=2}^{q=4} \gamma_q Quarter_i^q + \sum_{c=2}^{c=58} \delta_c County_i^c + \varepsilon_i$$

where:

y_i is the outcome for participant *i* in the fourth quarter after the quarter in which the participant first enrolled in CalWORKs WTW;

$PostSB1041_i$ is an indicator that equals 1 if participant *i* enrolled in CalWORKs WTW in 2013 or later;

UR_c is the unemployment rate in county *c* (centered at the global mean) and ${UR_c}^2$ is the unemployment rate squared;

X_i is a vector of individual level characteristics for participant *i* including: participant sex, race or ethnicity, age, and language, the age of the youngest child and number of children in the case at participants' entry into CalWORKs WTW;

$Quarter_i^q$ are a set of indicator variables for the starting quarter in which participant *i* enrolled; and,

$County_i^c$ are a set of indicator variables for the county in which participant *i* enrolled.

The figures display one line for the pre–SB 1041 cohort, the average regression-adjusted values for participants in each cohort:

$$y_i^{adj} = y_i - \hat{y}_i + \bar{y},$$

where:

$\hat{y}_i$ is the predicted outcome for participant *i* from the regression equation; and,

$\bar{y}$ is the average outcome over the entire analysis sample.

For the post–SB 1041 cohorts, the regression-adjusted values represent the outcome as if SB 1041 had not been implemented because the predicted value, $\hat{y}_i$, removes the change in income associated with SB 1041. To calculate the outcome with SB 1041, the coefficient on SB 1041 was added to the change associated with SB 1041 into the regression-adjusted values:

$$y_i^{adj,with\ SB1041} = y_i - \hat{y}_i + \bar{y} + \beta_1.$$

Table F.4 reports the numbers presented in Figures 7.2 and 7.3, while Table F.12 reports the numbers presented in Figures 7.4 through 7.7. In each of these tables the values for the post–SB 1041 cohorts are the values with SB 1041. In the final rows of Tables F.4 and F.5, the estimate and standard error of the difference in outcome associated with SB 1041 are presented.

Table F.4. Percentage of First-Time CalWORKs WTW Participants Employed and Participating in CalWORKs WTW in the Fourth Quarter After CalWORKs WTW Enrollment, with Controls

Entry Cohort		In Employment (only or also in CalWORKs)	In CalWORKs (only or also in Employment)
2010	Q1	36.3	59.1
	Q2	36.5	59.0
	Q3	37.5	57.3
	Q4	37.2	57.5
2011	Q1	37.8	56.7
	Q2	38.0	55.8
	Q3	37.7	56.6
	Q4	37.8	56.3
2012	Q1	37.3	56.7
	Q2	37.3	57.4
	Q3	36.9	57.7
	Q4	37.4	57.5
2013	Q1	37.8	56.6
	Q2	37.5	57.0
	Q3	37.1	57.7
	Q4	36.9	57.8
Difference for Post-SB1041 Cohorts	Estimate	0.2	2.2*
	Std. Err.	0.3	0.3

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of 2010–2014 WDTIP files, EDD employment and earnings files, and EDD county unemployment rate files.
NOTE: Controls include county unemployment rate and participant characteristics. An asterisk indicates that the difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Table F.5. Percentage of First-Time CalWORKs WTW Participants Employed and Participating in CalWORKs WTW in the Fourth Quarter After CalWORKs WTW Enrollment, Four Mutually Exclusive Categories, with Controls

Entry Cohort		In Employment (not in CalWORKs)	In Employment and CalWORKs	In CalWORKs (not in Employment)	Not in Employment or CalWORKs
2010	Q1	18.0	18.4	40.7	22.9
	Q2	18.1	18.4	40.5	22.9
	Q3	19.9	17.6	39.7	22.8
	Q4	19.7	17.5	40.0	22.8
2011	Q1	20.0	17.8	38.8	23.4
	Q2	20.6	17.4	38.3	23.7
	Q3	20.2	17.5	39.1	23.2
	Q4	20.2	17.5	38.8	23.5
2012	Q1	19.9	17.4	39.3	23.4
	Q2	19.7	17.6	39.8	22.9
	Q3	19.3	17.7	40.0	23.1
	Q4	19.6	17.9	39.7	22.9
2013	Q1	20.6	17.2	39.4	22.8
	Q2	20.1	17.4	39.6	22.9
	Q3	18.9	18.2	39.5	23.4
	Q4	18.9	18.0	39.8	23.3
Difference for Post-SB1041 Cohorts	Estimate	–1.9*	2.1*	0.1	–0.2
	Std. Err.	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of 2010–2014 WDTIP files, EDD employment and earnings files, and EDD county unemployment rate files.
NOTE: Controls include county unemployment rate and participant characteristics. An asterisk indicates the difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

The analysis of real quarterly earnings uses the same methods described above. Average unadjusted earnings are presented in Tables F.6 while supporting numbers for Figure 7.8 are presented in Table F.7.

Table F.6. Real Quarterly Earnings for First-Time CalWORKs WTW Participants in the Fourth Quarter After CalWORKs WTW Enrollment

Entry Cohort		Real Quarterly Earnings ($)
2010	Q1	991
	Q2	1,051
	Q3	1,235
	Q4	1,209
2011	Q1	1,124
	Q2	1,238
	Q3	1,272
	Q4	1,330
2012	Q1	1,204
	Q2	1,295
	Q3	1,336
	Q4	1,430
2013	Q1	1,346
	Q2	1,430
	Q3	1,522
	Q4	1,586

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of 2010–2014 WDTIP files and EDD employment and earnings files.
NOTE: Quarterly earnings are measured in 2013 first quarter dollars using the CPI (BLS, 2015a) to adjust for inflation.

Table F.7. Real Quarterly Earnings for First-Time CalWORKs WTW Participants in the Fourth Quarter After CalWORKs WTW Enrollment, with Controls

Entry Cohort		Real Quarterly Earnings ($)
2010	Q1	1,245
	Q2	1,247
	Q3	1,326
	Q4	1,263
2011	Q1	1,310
	Q2	1,340
	Q3	1,281
	Q4	1,282
2012	Q1	1,299
	Q2	1,285
	Q3	1,252
	Q4	1,294
2013	Q1	1,289
	Q2	1,272
	Q3	1,278
	Q4	1,306
Difference for Post-SB1041 Cohorts	Estimate	53.7*
	Std. Err.	13.5

SOURCE: Authors' analysis of 2010–2014 WDTIP files, EDD employment and earnings files, and EDD county unemployment rate files.
NOTES: Quarterly earnings are measured in 2013 first quarter dollars using the CPI (BLS, 2015a) to adjust for inflation. Controls include the county unemployment rate and participant characteristics. An asterisk indicates the difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

CPS Data Methods and Supporting Tables

We now describe the synthetic control group methods used in Chapter Seven. We compare changes in socioeconomic well-being of a sample of potential CalWORKs WTW eligibles and their families to the corresponding changes in a comparison group consisting of other states. Specifically, we investigate changes in poverty level, receipt of public assistance, employment, and enrollment in school and/or job training programs. In this appendix, we describe the logic underlying the synthetic comparison group method as well as the data and the estimation techniques we used to implement this method.

Analytic Approach

Case studies are often used to study the impacts of policy interventions on organizations, cities, states, and countries, and causal effects are estimated by comparing the outcomes for the unit or units affected by the intervention (also called the "treatment" unit[s]) or intervention to the

outcomes for a set of unaffected unit(s) (also called the "control" or "comparison" unit[s]). The comparison units serve as a proxy for the treatment unit's counterfactual condition: what would have happened to the treatment unit *had the treatment unit not been exposed to the event or intervention* (Bennett, 2004; Morgan and Winship, 2014; Rubin, 1974).

The selection of comparison units (Eisenhardt, 1989; Seawright and Gerring, 2008) is a critical step in minimizing threats to the validity (Shadish, Cook, and Campbell, 2002) of inferences about the impacts of policies or interventions in case study research. Specifically, in order to make valid causal inferences, there must be no case selection bias (Bennett, 2004; George and Bennett, 2005; Shadish, Cook, and Campbell, 2002), and the comparison units must be as similar as possible to the treatment unit on all other characteristics that may influence the outcome. It is only when the comparison group serves as a credible counterfactual that differences in outcomes can be attributed to differences in exposure to the policy or intervention.

However, conventional case study methods leave the selection of comparison cases to the discretion of the researcher, which can compromise the validity and generalizability of the research findings because comparison cases can be chosen arbitrarily, and the selection of comparison cases may contain selection bias (George and Bennett, 2005). In the current analysis, we address the issue of case selection bias by using a data-driven approach to select defensible, sound comparison cases, rather than relying on researcher judgments about comparison case suitability.

Specifically, we use the synthetic comparison group methods proposed by Abadie and Gardeazabal (2003) and Abadie, Diamond and Hainmueller (2010). With these methods, the comparison group is constructed as a weighted average of the available comparison units. Weights are selected to minimize the difference between the treatment unit and the weighted comparison units prior to the policy or intervention. In this way, the comparison group serves as a credible counterfactual case.

In Chapter Five of this report, we apply synthetic comparison group methods to estimate the impacts of the SB 1041 reforms to California's CalWORKs WTW program on participants' socioeconomic well-being.[72] SB 1041 is a specific policy intervention that is anticipated to improve socioeconomic outcomes of female-headed families in California. Specifically, we construct a group of comparison states using a weighted average of the outcome for states not affected by SB 1041, and we can make inferences about the impacts of SB 1041 by comparing the outcomes in California to the outcomes of the weighted comparison group states, as these states serve as a reasonable counterfactual for California. In other words, because the comparison group states are constructed to be (nearly) identical to California on all relevant characteristics prior to the implementation of SB 1041, any differences in outcomes can be attributed in part to this policy change.

[72] The target population of those potentially eligible for the CalWORKs program consists of female-headed families in the CPS with a child under the age of 18, without a bachelor's degree, living in the state of California. This treatment group is referred to as "California" for brevity throughout the analysis. Similar populations (female-headed families with children under the age of 18) were examined in comparison states.

Statistical Model

We investigate the impacts of the SB 1041 reforms to California's CalWORKs WTW program on participants' socioeconomic well-being by comparing socioeconomic well-being of female-headed families in California with a weighted combination of other U.S. states selected to resemble California prior to the implementation of SB 1041. This weighted combination serves as a counterfactual "synthetic" California *without* SB 1041, and the impact of SB 1041 can be estimated by finding the difference in outcomes between California and its counterfactual.

Formally, we let *t* be the number of time periods from 2005 to 2013.[73] The implementation of SB 1041 occurs in 2013, and so $t = 1, \ldots, 8$ are the preintervention periods and $t = 9$ is the post-SB 1041 time period. If Y_9^T is the post-SB 1041 observed outcome for California, and Y_9^C is the unobserved *counterfactual* outcome—that is, the outcome in California had SB 1041 not been implemented—the impact of SB 1041 can be found as $\delta = Y_9^T - Y_9^C$.

However, since Y_9^C cannot be observed, we use a weighted combination of other U.S. states selected to resemble California on all relevant background characteristics prior to the implementation of SB 1041 to estimate this counterfactual outcome. Let *J* be the number of available comparison units (48 U.S. states[74]), let $W = (w_1, \ldots, w_j)$ be a vector of (nonnegative) weights such that $\sum_{j=1}^{48} w_j = 1$, and let w_j represent the weight of the *jth* comparison state. An estimate of the impact of SB 1041 can be found as $\hat{\delta} = Y_9^T - \sum_{j=1}^{48} w_j Y_{9j}$, where Y_{9j} is the observed outcome for the *jth* state in the post-SB 1041 time period.

Construction of Synthetic Comparison

Since different values for *W* produce different synthetic comparison units, it is important to select a set of weights that produce a comparison group that is as similar to California as possible on all relevant observed background characteristics.

The synthetic comparison method determines optimal weights by minimizing the distance between a (*k* x 1) vector of preintervention characteristics for California, X_1, and a weighted combination of the preintervention characteristics for comparison states, WX_0. These preintervention characteristics include variables such as sociodemographic characteristics that are known determinants of economic outcomes. We also include the average pre–SB 1041 outcomes in the set of covariates to control for time-varying unobserved factors. Specifically, the values in W are chosen to minimize the formula:

$$\|X_1 - X_0 W\|_V = \sqrt{(X_1 - X_0 W)' V (X_1 - X_0 W)} \quad (1)$$

[73] Several outcomes were available in 2014 and 2015. For simplicity, we describe only the case where outcomes were available in the 2005–2013 time period.

[74] We exclude Washington, D.C., and Wisconsin. Wisconsin was excluded because Maximum Monthly Benefit data were not available for the 2005–2013 time period.

where V is a (k x k) positive semi-definite matrix. The matrix V assigns weights to each of the covariates included in the model, based on the relative importance of each covariate. There are many ways to select V. Weights may be specified *a priori*, based on strong theory, or may be determined empirically. In the current analysis, we use the method proposed by Abadie and Gardeazabal (2003) and Abadie, Diamond, and Hainmueller (2010), which selects a positive-definite, diagonal V such that the mean squared prediction error of the outcome variable is minimized for the entire preintervention time period, 2005–2012 (Abadie, Diamond, and Hainmueller, 2011).[75]

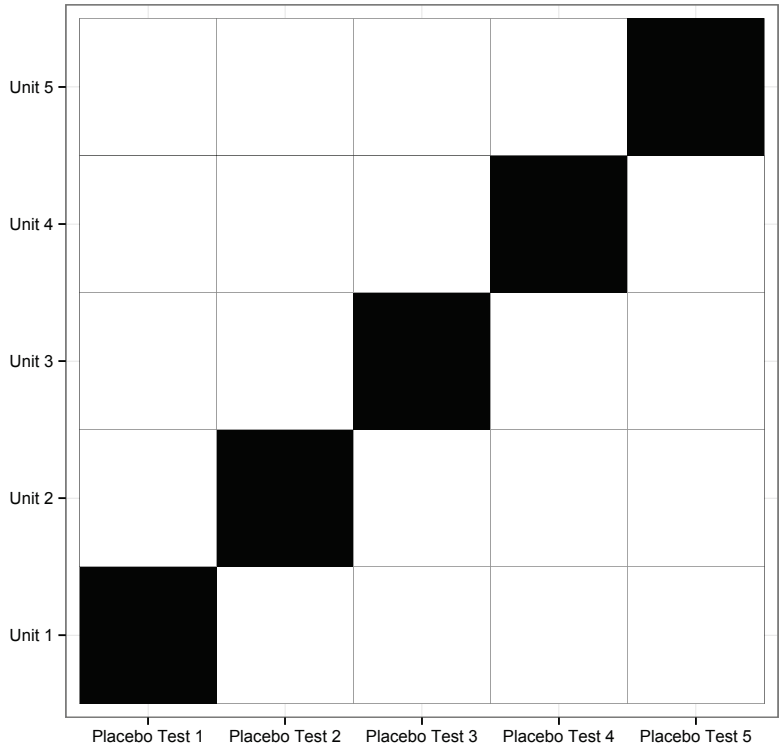
Inference in Synthetic Comparison Group Designs

Ideally, in order to make a compelling case that SB 1041 made a large impact on socioeconomic well-being among female-headed families in California, we would like to see that the difference in outcomes between California and the weighted combination of comparison states is sufficiently small in the pre–SB 1041 implementation time periods, and appreciably larger after SB 1041 implementation.

However, "sufficiently small" and "appreciably larger" are terms that confer more art than statistical precision. Abadie, Diamond, and Hainmueller (2010), recommend using placebo tests to make inferences about the magnitude of the observed differences. The logic of these placebo tests is similar in spirit to permutation tests. We treat every comparison unit (in this case, every state that is *not* California) as if it were the treatment unit, and then reapply the synthetic comparison group methods to the remaining comparison units. This principal is illustrated on a simplified case (with five comparison units) in Figure F.1.

[75] Recent work has called attention to the potential for certain values of V to result in biased estimates of impacts. In such cases, closer matches may be achieved in the preintervention time periods and may produce larger gaps in the postintervention time periods. This may occur, for example, by specifying that preintervention outcomes receive all of the weight, or by including all lagged preintervention outcomes across all observable time points as covariates. Choices such as these risk placing too much weight on certain variables at the expense of overall balance. To the extent that V weights do not take into account information about known determinants of the outcome, the validity of inferences about impacts can be compromised (Abadie and Gardeazabal, 2003). In this analysis, we address this issue following Kaul, Klößner, Pfeifer and Schieler (2015), and use a data-driven process to select V and the average of the outcome's preintervention values over the entire preintervention period as a covariate.

Figure F.1. Example of Placebo Tests with Synthetic Control Group Method



In the first placebo test, we would treat Unit 1 as the treatment unit (shown as a black square), construct a comparison group from the remaining units (Units 2—5, shown as white squares), and then estimate new preintervention differences and a new intervention impact, which we will call $\hat{\delta}_{p1}$, where the *p1* subscript is used to indicate that this is the impact estimate for the first placebo test. In the second placebo test, we would treat Unit 2 as the treatment unit, and construct a comparison group from the remaining units (Unit 1, Units 3—5). By repeating this process for all of the comparison units, it is possible to determine if there are small differences prior to the intervention, and whether the observed estimate of the impact, $\hat{\delta}$, is markedly different from the estimated impacts from the *5* placebo tests $\hat{\delta}_{p1}, \ldots, \hat{\delta}_{p5}$.

In the case of SB 1041, we have up to 48 placebo tests, one for each of the 48 states included in the comparison group.[76] We use these placebo tests to obtain a distribution of impacts, $\hat{\delta}_{p1}, \ldots, \hat{\delta}_{p48}$. If the true impact effect that we observe in California is greater in magnitude than 95 percent of our placebo distribution, we consider the effect to be statistically significant.

[76] Based on the recommendations in Abadie, Diamond, and Hainmueller (2010), we exclude placebo studies for states that demonstrate poor fit in the preintervention time period, based on the criteria that the mean squared prediction error for these states must be less than five times larger than the mean squared prediction error for California.

We use the same logic to inspect whether differences between California and the comparison group were "sufficiently small" prior to SB 1041. Specifically, all the estimated differences in the years 2005–2012 are defined to be sufficiently small if they fall within the 95-percent confidence interval established by the placebo tests.

Details of Specific Analyses

Socioeconomic well-being was evaluated using the following outcome measures:

- proportion of female-headed families without bachelor's degrees and children under the age of 18 living below the poverty line
- proportion of female-headed families without bachelor's degrees and children under the age of 18 living below 125 percent of the poverty line
- proportion of female-headed families without bachelor's degrees and children under the age of 18 receiving any form of public assistance
- proportion of female-headed families without bachelor's degrees and children under the age of 18 receiving TANF
- proportion of female-headed families without bachelor's degrees and children under the age of 18 unemployed in March of a given year
- number of weeks employed full time among female-headed families without bachelor's degrees and children under the age of 18
- proportion of female-headed families without bachelor's degrees and children under the age of 18 enrolled in school in October
- proportion of female-headed families without bachelor's degrees and children under the age of 18 participating in job training in October.

We obtained data for these outcome measures from the CPS. We include in X_0 and X_1 a common set of covariates for California and the 48 comparison states. These predictors and their sources are summarized in Table F.8.

In addition, to control for time-varying unobserved factors, we use the mean preintervention (2005–2012) outcome variables as predictors in each respective model.

Using the methods described above, we constructed a weighted comparison group that closely resembles California in the 2005–2012 time period. In the following sections, we present information about the quality of the match between California and the comparison group states for each of the eight outcomes. We also present details from the placebo tests, supporting our inferences about match quality and the impact of SB 1041.

Table F.8. Pretreatment Covariates Used in Synthetic Comparison Group Analyses

State-Level Variables	Source
Percentage of adult population who are Hispanic	U.S. Census Bureau (undated)
Percentage of adult population who are non-Hispanic African American	U.S. Census Bureau (undated)
Percentage of adult population who are non-Hispanic white	U.S. Census Bureau (undated)
Percentage of adult population who are foreign born	U.S. Census Bureau (undated)
Percentage of population age 18 and under	U.S. Census Bureau (undated)
Percentage of adult population with a bachelor's degree	U.S. Census Bureau (undated)
Percentage of families below poverty line	U.S. Census Bureau (undated)
Percentage of families that are single-parent families	U.S. Census Bureau (undated)
Percentage of births to unmarried women	U.S. Centers for Disease Control (2015)
Unemployment rate	BLS (undated)
Maximum monthly income eligibility for TANF	Urban Institute (2014)
Maximum monthly TANF benefit	Urban Institute (2014)
Lifetime TANF benefit limit	Urban Institute (2014)

Analysis of Poverty Rates

Poverty rates among female-headed families with children under the age of 18 were measured in two ways: the proportion living below the poverty line, and the proportion living below 125 percent of the poverty line.

Baseline characteristics for California and the synthetic comparison, as well as the V-matrix weights, are shown in Tables F.9 and F.10, for the proportion living below the poverty line and the proportion living below 125 percent of the poverty line.

The first two columns in Tables F.9 and F.10 display the means for each of the covariates included in the model for California and for the weighted comparison group. These columns show that the comparison states are fairly similar to California in terms of the pretreatment sociodemographic characteristics, and can serve as a defensible counterfactual. The third column shows the V-matrix weights for each covariate. These values represent the relative importance of each of the covariates based upon its power to predict preintervention trends in poverty rates. Covariates with larger values are given more importance. For example, variables capturing the percentage of families that are below the poverty line are given a large amount of importance, whereas the percentage of foreign-born individuals is given little importance. Importantly, characteristics where there are larger differences between California and the comparison group have small V-matrix values and are given relatively little importance. For example, the Maximum Monthly Income Eligibility for Welfare variable shows some imbalance in Table F.9, but this variable is given almost no importance in the analysis.

Table F.9. Pretreatment Covariate Balance and V-Matrix Weights for Comparisons with California in the Proportion Living Below the Poverty Line

Variable	California	Comparison	V-Matrix Weight
Unemployment rate	0.09	0.06	<0.005
Percentage of families that are single parent families	0.28	0.28	0.06
Percentage of families below poverty line	0.10	0.10	0.04
Maximum monthly welfare benefit	0.26	0.13	<0.005
Maximum monthly income eligibility for welfare	0.39	0.26	<0.005
Lifetime welfare benefit limit	57.0	60.0	0.01
Percentage age 18 and under	0.26	0.26	0.05
Percentage Hispanic	0.37	0.26	0.04
Percentage non-Hispanic black	0.06	0.09	0.04
Percentage non-Hispanic white	0.41	0.44	0.14
Percentage with college degree	0.30	0.28	0.04
Percentage foreign born	0.27	0.17	0.04
Percentage of births to unmarried women	0.39	0.39	0.03
Percentage below poverty line 2005–2012	0.27	0.27	0.47

Table F.10. Pre-Treatment Covariate Balance and V-Matrix Weights for Comparisons with California in the Proportion Living Below 125 Percent of the Poverty Line

Variable	California	Comparison	V-Matrix Weight
Unemployment rate	0.09	0.06	<0.005
Percentage of families that are single parent families	0.28	0.29	0.08
Percentage of families below poverty line	0.10	0.10	0.03
Maximum monthly welfare benefit	0.26	0.21	0.01
Maximum monthly income eligibility for welfare	0.39	0.35	<0.005
Lifetime welfare benefit limit	57.0	55.3	<0.005
Percentage age 18 and under	0.26	0.26	0.02
Percentage Hispanic	0.37	0.24	0.01
Percentage non-Hispanic black	0.06	0.07	0.04
Percentage non-Hispanic white	0.41	0.59	<0.005
Percentage with college degree	0.30	0.29	0.09
Percentage foreign born	0.27	0.14	<0.005
Percentage of births to unmarried women	0.39	0.39	0.07
Percentage below 125 percent of poverty line 2005–2012	0.36	0.36	0.64

Tables F.11 and F.12 display the weights of each comparison state for the two poverty measures—i.e., the W weights in Equation (1). The weights in Table F.11. suggest that poverty-rate trends in California prior to the passage of SB 1041 are best reproduced by a weighted combination of Hawaii, New Jersey, Nevada, and Texas, with Texas receiving most of the weight. All other potential comparison states are assigned no weight. The weights in Table F.12 suggest that the 125 percent poverty rate trends in California prior to the passage of SB 1041 are best reproduced by a weighted combination of Alaska, Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, and Utah, with New Mexico and New York receiving most of the weight. All other potential comparison states are assigned no weight.

The *V* and *W* weights reported in Tables F.9 to F.12 are used to implement the synthetic comparison group methods and to estimate the counterfactual comparison outcome trends that are presented in Chapter Seven.

Table F.11. Comparison Group States and Their Associated Weights for Comparisons with California in the Proportion Living Below the Poverty Line

State	Weight
Texas	0.55
Hawaii	0.23
New Jersey	0.17
Nevada	0.05

Table F.12. Comparison Group States and Their Associated Weights for Comparisons with California in the Proportion Living Below 125 Percent of the Poverty Line

State	Weight
New Mexico	0.31
New York	0.28
Utah	0.20
New Jersey	0.12
Alaska	0.09
Massachusetts	<0.005
Hawaii	<0.005

Inferences about whether the implementation of SB 1041 had an impact on poverty were made using the placebo tests described above. Table F.13 summarizes the distributions for each placebo test, and provides a 95-percent confidence interval for each time point in the 2005–2013 period. To recall, we are looking for, ideally, (1) sufficiently small (insignificant) gaps in the pre–SB 1041 time period and (2) demonstrably larger gaps in the post–SB 1041 time period. The first criteria would give evidence that the comparison group serves as a defensible counterfactual, and the second would give evidence that the policy implementation was impactful.

The first and fourth columns of numbers show the difference between California and the comparison group for each year in the period 2005–2013. We use the 2.5th and 97.5th percentiles from the placebo test distributions to create 95-percent confidence intervals to evaluate the magnitude of these differences. If the estimated differences fall within the range of the 2.5th and 97.5th percentiles, we consider the difference to be nonsignificant. If the estimated difference is above the 97.5th percentile or below the 2.5th percentile, we consider the difference to be significant. In the time periods 2005–2012, overall, these 95-percent confidence intervals suggest that there are, in fact, sufficiently small differences between California and the comparison group states. The one exception is in 2009 for the poverty measure. With overall similarity between California and the comparison group states, we believe the inferences about the impacts of SB 1041 are valid. However, in 2013, the estimated differences also fall within the 95-percent confidence intervals, suggesting that there was not a significant impact of SB 1041 on poverty, as measured either by percentage below the poverty line, or percentage below 125 percent of the poverty line.

Table F.13. Estimate of Differences Between California and Comparison Groups States with Corresponding 95-Percent Confidence Intervals for Poverty Outcomes

	Poverty			125 percent of Poverty		
		Placebo States			Placebo States	
Year	Difference Between California and Comparison Group	2.5th Percentile	97.5th Percentile	Difference Between California and Comparison Group	2.5th Percentile	97.5th Percentile
2005	0.005	–0.023	0.019	0.002	–0.040	0.026
2006	0.010	–0.017	0.021	–0.004	–0.027	0.036
2007	–0.003	–0.034	0.021	0.023	–0.034	0.034
2008	0.001	–0.026	0.017	0.006	–0.024	0.044
2009	–0.016	–0.015	0.013	–0.010	–0.033	0.033
2010	–0.009	–0.014	0.023	–0.002	–0.037	0.024
2011	0.003	–0.019	0.028	0.003	–0.043	0.029
2012	–0.002	–0.030	0.027	–0.023	–0.032	0.035
2013	0.026	–0.070	0.065	0.001	–0.076	0.108

Analysis of Public Assistance Receipt

Receipt of public assistance among female-headed families with children under the age of 18 was measured in two ways: the proportion receiving any public assistance in the previous calendar year and the proportion receiving TANF during the previous calendar year.

Baseline characteristics for California and the comparison group states, as well as the V-matrix weights are shown in Tables F.14 and F.15, for proportion receiving any public assistance, and the proportion receiving TANF.

The first two columns in Tables F.14 and F.15 display the means for each of the covariates included in the model for California and for the weighted comparison group. These columns show that the comparison states are fairly similar to California in terms of the pretreatment sociodemographic characteristics, and can serve as a defensible counterfactual. The third column shows the V-matrix weights for each covariate. These values represent the relative importance of each of the covariates based upon its power to predict preintervention trends in public assistance receipt. Covariates with larger values are given more importance. For example, variables capturing the percentage of families receiving public assistance in the pre–SB 1041 time period are given a large amount of importance, whereas the percentage of individuals with a college degree is given little importance. Importantly, characteristics where there are larger differences between California and the comparison group have small V-matrix values and are given relatively little importance. For example, the variable for the percentage of Hispanics shows some imbalance, but this variable is given almost no importance in either public assistance analysis.

Table F.14. Pretreatment Covariate Balance and V-Matrix Weights for Comparisons with California in the Proportion Receiving Any Form of Public Assistance

Variable	California	Comparison	V-Matrix Weight
Unemployment rate	0.09	0.08	0.06
Percentage of families that are single parent families	0.28	0.30	0.11
Percentage of families below poverty line	0.10	0.10	0.08
Maximum monthly welfare benefit	0.26	0.22	0.08
Maximum monthly income eligibility for welfare	0.39	0.34	<0.005
Lifetime welfare benefit limit	57.0	55.7	0.01
Percentage age 18 and under	0.26	0.23	<0.005
Percentage Hispanic	0.37	0.06	0.01
Percentage non-Hispanic black	0.06	0.11	0.03
Percentage non-Hispanic white	0.41	0.78	0.01
Percentage with college degree	0.30	0.29	<0.005
Percentage foreign born	0.27	0.09	<0.005
Percentage of births to unmarried women	0.39	0.39	0.11
Percentage receiving public assistance 2005–2012	0.10	0.10	0.50

Table F.15. Pretreatment Covariate Balance and V-Matrix Weights for Comparisons with California in the Proportion Receiving TANF

Variable	California	Comparison	V-Matrix Weight
Unemployment rate	0.09	0.07	<0.005
Percentage of families that are single parent families	0.28	0.28	0.13
Percentage of families below poverty line	0.10	0.08	<0.005
Maximum monthly welfare benefit	0.26	0.19	<0.005
Maximum monthly income eligibility for welfare	0.39	0.28	<0.005
Lifetime welfare benefit limit	57.0	59.8	<0.005
Percentage age 18 and under	0.26	0.23	0.01
Percentage Hispanic	0.37	0.14	0.01
Percentage non-Hispanic black	0.06	0.07	0.08
Percentage non-Hispanic white	0.41	0.67	0.01
Percentage with college degree	0.30	0.36	<0.005
Percentage foreign born	0.27	0.15	0.12
Percentage of births to unmarried women	0.39	0.36	0.09
Percentage receiving TANF 2005–2012	0.08	0.08	0.51

Tables F.16 and F.17 display the weights of each comparison state for the two poverty measures. The weights in Table F.16 suggest that public assistance trends in California prior to the passage of SB 1041 are best reproduced by a weighted combination of Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, and Vermont, with Michigan receiving most of the weight. All other potential comparison states are assigned no weight. The weights in Table F.17 suggest that the TANF receipt trends in California prior to the passage of SB-1041 are best reproduced by a weighted combination of Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York and Rhode Island, with Massachusetts receiving most of the weight. All other potential comparison states are assigned no weight.

Table F.16. Comparison Group States and Their Associated Weights for Comparisons with California in the Proportion Receiving Any Public Assistance

State	Weight
Michigan	0.57
Massachusetts	0.18
New York	0.11
Maine	0.09
Vermont	0.05

Table F.17. Comparison Group States and Their Associated Weights for Comparisons with California in the Proportion Receiving TANF

State	Weight
Massachusetts	0.59
New Jersey	0.20
New Mexico	0.09
Hawaii	0.07
Rhode Island	0.05
New York	<0.005

The *V* and *W* weights reported in Tables F.14–F.17 are used to implement the synthetic comparison group methods and to estimate the counterfactual comparison outcome trends that are presented in Chapter Seven.

Inferences about whether the implementation of SB 1041 had an impact on public assistance were made using the placebo tests described above. Table F.18 summarizes the distributions for each placebo test, and provides a 95-percent confidence interval for each time point in the 2005–2013 period. As a reminder, we are looking for, ideally, (1) sufficiently small (insignificant) gaps in the pre–SB 1041 time period and (2) demonstrably larger gaps in the post–SB 1041 time period.

Table F.18. Estimate of Gaps Between California and Its Comparison State and Corresponding 95-Percent Confidence Intervals for Public Assistance Outcomes

	Public Assistance			TANF		
		Placebo States			Placebo States	
Year	Difference Between California and Comparison Group	2.5th Percentile	97.5th Percentile	Difference Between California and Comparison Group	2.5th Percentile	97.5th Percentile
2005	0.012	–0.036	0.038	–0.003	–0.038	0.038
2006	–0.018	–0.041	0.047	–0.007	–0.032	0.043
2007	–0.026	–0.032	0.028	–0.016	–0.028	0.022
2008	–0.005	–0.049	0.044	–0.006	–0.041	0.041
2009	0.001	–0.026	0.056	0.020	–0.028	0.051
2010	0.025	–0.042	0.044	0.040	–0.029	0.047
2011	0.025	–0.033	0.041	0.017	–0.024	0.042
2012	0.039	–0.043	0.035	0.021	–0.044	0.034
2013	0.068	–0.067	0.080	0.025	–0.057	0.082

We use the 2.5th and 97.5th percentiles from the placebo test distributions to create 95-percent confidence intervals to evaluate the magnitude of these differences. If the estimated differences fall within the range of the 2.5th and 97.5th percentiles, we consider the difference to be sufficiently small. If the estimated difference is above the 97.5th percentile or below the 2.5th percentile, we consider the difference to be significant. In the time periods 2005–2012, overall, these 95-percent confidence intervals suggest that there are, in fact, sufficiently small differences between California and the comparison group. With overall similarity between California and the comparison group, we believe the inferences on the impacts of SB 1041 are valid. However, in 2013, the estimated differences also fall within the 95-percent confidence intervals, suggesting that there was not a significant impact of SB 1041 on public assistance receipt, as measured by either percentage receiving any form of public assistance or percentage receiving TANF.

Analysis of Employment

Employment among female-headed families with children under the age of 18 was measured in two ways: the proportion of unemployed families at the time of the March survey, and the number of weeks worked full time in the calendar year (available through 2013).

Baseline characteristics for California and the comparison group states, as well as the V-matrix weights, are shown in Tables F.19 and F.20, for proportion unemployed and the number of weeks employed full time.

Table F.19. Pretreatment Covariate Balance and V-Matrix Weights for Comparisons with California in the Proportion Unemployed in March

Variable	California	Comparison	V-Matrix Weight
Unemployment rate	0.09	0.08	0.10
Percentage of families that are single parent families	0.28	0.29	0.06
Percentage of families below poverty line	0.10	0.09	0.03
Maximum monthly welfare benefit	0.26	0.19	0.01
Maximum monthly income eligibility for welfare	0.39	0.39	0.09
Lifetime welfare benefit limit	57.0	58.1	0.04
Percentage age 18 and under	0.26	0.24	<0.005
Percentage Hispanic	0.37	0.12	<0.005
Percentage non-Hispanic black	0.06	0.08	0.03
Percentage non-Hispanic white	0.41	0.60	0.05
Percentage with college degree	0.30	0.29	0.16
Percentage foreign born	0.27	0.13	<0.005
Percentage of births to unmarried women	0.39	0.40	0.04
Percentage unemployed in March 2005–2012	0.08	0.08	0.25

Table F.20. Pretreatment Covariate Balance and V-Matrix Weights for Comparisons with California in the Number of Weeks Employed Full-Time

Variable	California	Comparison	V-Matrix Weight
Unemployment rate	0.09	0.06	<0.005
Percentage of families that are single parent families	0.28	0.28	0.11
Percentage of families below poverty line	0.10	0.11	0.02
Maximum monthly welfare benefit	0.26	0.16	0.01
Maximum monthly income eligibility for welfare	0.39	0.27	<0.005
Lifetime welfare benefit limit	57.0	50.6	<0.005
Percentage age 18 and under	0.26	0.27	<0.005
Percentage Hispanic	0.37	0.27	0.01
Percentage non-Hispanic black	0.06	0.05	0.01
Percentage non-Hispanic white	0.41	0.60	0.04
Percentage with college degree	0.30	0.27	0.02
Percentage foreign born	0.27	0.13	0.05
Percentage of births to unmarried women	0.39	0.38	<0.005
Number of weeks worked 2005–2012	21.8	22.3	0.66

The first two columns in Tables F.19 and F.20 display the means for each of the covariates included in the model for California and for the weighted comparison group. These columns show that the comparison states are fairly similar to California in terms of the pretreatment sociodemographic characteristics, and can serve as a defensible counterfactual. The third column shows the V-matrix weights for each covariate. Variables capturing average employment trends in the pre-SB 1041 time period are given a large amount of importance. Importantly, characteristics where there are larger differences between California and the comparison group have small V-matrix values and are given relatively little importance.

Tables F.21 and F.22 display the weights of each comparison state for the two employment measures. The weights in Table F.21 suggest that unemployment trends in California prior to the passage of SB-1041 are best reproduced by a weighted combination of Alaska, Hawaii, Illinois, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, and Rhode Island, with Illinois, Rhode Island, and Hawaii receiving most of the weight. All other potential comparison states are assigned no weight. The weights in Table F.22 suggest that the full time employment trends in California prior to the passage of SB-1041 are best reproduced by a weighted combination of Arizona, Massachusetts, New Mexico, New York, Texas, and Utah, with Arizona and Utah receiving most of the weight. All other potential comparison states are assigned no weight.

Table F.21. Comparison Group States and Their Associated Weights for Comparisons with California in the Proportion Unemployed in March

State	Weight
Illinois	0.29
Rhode Island	0.22
Hawaii	0.21
Michigan	0.13
Nevada	0.09
Alaska	0.07
New Jersey	<0.005

Table F.22. Comparison Group States and Their Associated Weights for Comparisons with California in the Number of Weeks Employed Full-Time

State	Weight
Arizona	0.30
Utah	0.26
New Mexico	0.17
Texas	0.15
New York	0.12
Massachusetts	<0.005

The *V* and *W* weights reported in Tables F.19–F.22 are used to implement the synthetic comparison group methods and to estimate the counterfactual comparison outcome trends that are presented in Chapter Seven.

Inferences about whether the implementation of SB 1041 had an impact on employment were made using placebo tests. Table F.23 summarizes the distributions for each placebo test, and provides a 95-percent confidence interval for each time point in the 2005–2015 period for unemployment, and for each time point in the 2005–2013 time period for weeks worked full time. As a reminder, we are looking for, ideally, (1) sufficiently small (insignificant) gaps in the pre–SB 1041 time period and (2) demonstrably larger gaps in the post-SB 1041 time period.

Table F.23. Estimate of Gaps Between California and Its Comparison State and Corresponding 95-Percent Confidence Intervals for Employment Outcomes

	Unemployment in March			Weeks Worked Full-Time		
		Placebo States			Placebo States	
Year	Difference Between California and Comparison Group	2.5th Percentile	97.5th Percentile	Difference Between California and Comparison Group	2.5th Percentile	97.5th Percentile
2005	0.004	–0.008	0.016	0.466	–1.946	2.064
2006	–0.002	–0.015	0.016	–1.111	–1.822	2.006
2007	–0.010	–0.015	0.013	–1.110	–1.516	2.421
2008	0.000	–0.008	0.013	–0.254	–2.133	2.178
2009	0.005	–0.021	0.008	0.414	–1.963	2.250
2010	–0.006	–0.012	0.020	–1.186	–1.863	2.688
2011	0.002	–0.011	0.014	0.030	–1.670	2.184
2012	0.006	–0.007	0.010	–0.997	–1.699	2.300
2013	0.005	–0.036	0.049	–0.718	–6.084	5.694
2014	–0.002	–0.043	0.058	—	—	—
2015	0.029	–0.033	0.053	—	—	—

We use the 2.5th and 97.5th percentiles from the placebo test distributions to create 95-percent confidence intervals to evaluate the magnitude of these differences. In the time periods 2005–2012, overall, these 95-percent confidence intervals suggest that there are, in fact, sufficiently small differences between California and the comparison group states. With overall similarity between California and the comparison group, we believe the inferences the impacts of SB 1041 are valid. However, in the post–SB 1041 years, the estimated differences also fall within the 95-percent confidence intervals, suggesting that there was not a significant impact of SB 1041 on employment, as measured either by March unemployment rates or the number of full-time weeks of employment in the prior calendar year.

Analysis of Schooling and Training

Schooling was measured as the proportion of household heads that were enrolled in school programs at the time of the October supplement. Training was measured as the proportion of household heads that were participating in job-training programs during the same time period.

Baseline characteristics for California and the comparison group states, as well as the V-matrix weights, are shown in Tables F.24 and F.25, for proportion enrolled in school, and the proportion participating in job training.

Table F.24. Pretreatment Covariate Balance and V-Matrix Weights for Comparisons with California in the Proportion Enrolled in School in October

Variable	California	Comparison	V-Matrix Weight
Unemployment rate	0.09	0.07	0.03
Percentage of families that are single parent families	0.28	0.29	0.10
Percentage of families below poverty line	0.10	0.09	0.12
Maximum monthly welfare benefit	0.26	0.21	0.04
Maximum monthly income eligibility for welfare	0.39	0.39	0.12
Lifetime welfare benefit limit	57.00	60.00	0.06
Percentage age 18 and under	0.26	0.25	0.17
Percentage Hispanic	0.37	0.18	<0.001
Percentage non-Hispanic black	0.06	0.07	0.05
Percentage non-Hispanic white	0.41	0.52	0.05
Percentage with college degree	0.30	0.27	0.05
Percentage foreign born	0.27	0.15	0.04
Percentage of births to unmarried women	0.39	0.40	0.09
Percentage enrolled in school 2005–2012	0.11	0.10	0.05

Table F.25. Pretreatment Covariate Balance and V-Matrix Weights for Comparisons with California in the Proportion Participating in Job Training

Variable	California	Comparison	V-Matrix Weight
Unemployment rate	0.09	0.07	0.05
Percentage of families that are single parent families	0.28	0.30	0.15
Percentage of families below poverty line	0.10	0.10	0.12
Maximum monthly welfare benefit	0.26	0.18	0.01
Maximum monthly income eligibility for welfare	0.39	0.36	0.03
Lifetime welfare benefit limit	57.0	60.0	0.02
Percentage age 18 and under	0.26	0.26	<0.001
Percentage Hispanic	0.37	0.24	0.03
Percentage non-Hispanic black	0.06	0.07	0.05
Percentage non-Hispanic white	0.41	0.56	0.03
Percentage with college degree	0.30	0.26	0.03
Percentage foreign born	0.27	0.13	<0.001
Percentage of births to unmarried women	0.39	0.39	0.22
Percentage participating in job training 2005–2012	0.03	0.03	0.21

The first two columns in Tables F.24 and F.25 show that the comparison states are fairly similar to California in terms of the pretreatment sociodemographic characteristics, and can serve as a defensible counterfactual. The third column shows the V-matrix weights for each covariate.

Importantly, characteristics where there are larger differences between California and the comparison group have small *V*-matrix values and are given relatively little importance.

Tables F.26 and F.27 display the weights of each comparison state for the two schooling measures. The weights in Table F.26 suggest that schooling trends in California prior to the passage of SB 1041 are best reproduced by a weighted combination of Alaska, Hawaii, Nevada, New Jersey, New York and Texas, with Alaska and Texas receiving most of the weight. All other potential comparison states are assigned no weight. The weights in Table F.27 suggest that the job training participation trends in California prior to the passage of SB 1041 are best reproduced by a weighted combination of Alaska, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, and Washington, with Texas and Alaska receiving most of the weight. All other potential comparison states are assigned no weight.

The *V* and *W* weights reported in Tables F.24–F.27 are used to implement the synthetic comparison group methods and to estimate the counterfactual comparison outcome trends that are presented in Chapter Seven.

Table F.26. Comparison Group States and Their Associated Weights for Comparisons with California in the Proportion Enrolled in School in October

State	Weight
Alaska	0.30
Texas	0.24
New York	0.16
Hawaii	0.16
Nevada	0.15
New Jersey	<0.005

Table F.27. Comparison Group States and Their Associated Weights for Comparisons with California in the Proportion Participating in Job Training

State	Weight
Texas	0.32
Alaska	0.30
Nevada	0.22
Colorado	0.10
New Mexico	0.06
Washington	<0.005

Inferences about whether the implementation of SB 1041 had an impact on schooling were made using placebo tests. Table F.28 summarizes the distributions for each placebo test, and provides a 95-percent confidence interval for each time point in the 2005–2014 period. As a reminder, we are looking for, ideally, (1) sufficiently small (insignificant) gaps in the pre–SB 1041 time period and (2) demonstrably larger gaps in the post–SB 1041 time period.

The first and fourth columns of numbers show the difference between California and the comparison group for each year in the analysis period. We use the 2.5th and 97.5th percentiles from the placebo tests to create a 95-percent confidence interval to evaluate the magnitude of these differences. In the time periods 2005–2012, overall, these 95-percent confidence intervals suggest that there are, in fact, sufficiently small differences between California and the comparison group states. The one exception is 2006 for the school enrollment outcome. With overall similarity between California and the comparison, we believe the inferences of the impacts of SB 1041 are valid. However, in 2013 and 2014, the gap estimates also fall within the 95-percent confidence intervals, suggesting that there was not a significant impact of SB 1041 on schooling, as measured either by school enrollment or job-training participation.

Table F.28. Estimate of Gaps Between California and Its Comparison State and Corresponding 95-Percent Confidence Intervals for School and Training Outcomes

	School Enrollment in October			Participation in Job Training		
		Placebo States			Placebo States	
Year	Difference Between California and Comparison Group	2.5th Percentile	97.5th Percentile	Difference Between California and Comparison Group	2.5th Percentile	97.5th Percentile
2005	–0.008	–0.009	0.008	–0.004	–0.016	0.012
2006	0.011	–0.023	0.009	0.006	–0.009	0.009
2007	0.008	–0.025	0.032	–0.005	–0.017	0.012
2008	0.009	–0.018	0.018	0.003	–0.013	0.013
2009	–0.007	–0.018	0.022	–0.003	–0.010	0.011
2010	0.005	–0.014	0.010	–0.003	–0.007	0.014
2011	–0.006	–0.019	0.025	0.002	–0.011	0.014
2012	0.000	–0.024	0.031	0.006	–0.012	0.010
2013	–0.015	–0.048	0.046	–0.005	–0.024	0.032
2014	0.006	–0.047	0.035	0.011	–0.021	0.054

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The California Budget Act of 2012, through trailer Senate Bill (SB) 1041, contained significant reforms to the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program. CalWORKs is California's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, a central component of the safety net that provides cash aid for low-income families with children. The SB 1041 reforms to CalWORKs aim to engage participants in more-intensive work activities as early as possible, while also providing more flexibility in work activity options and increased incentives for work as participants move toward self-sufficiency. The California legislature included a provision in the bill for an independent evaluation to determine if SB 1041 is achieving its objectives and if there are any unintended consequences.

Following the background and study design report, this first evaluation report provides initial findings from the process study based on the first wave of an online All-County Survey (ACS) and qualitative data from state-level interviews and interviews and focus groups conducted in six focal counties. Findings from the status and tracking studies are based on analysis of state administrative data. Initial insights on participant outcomes in terms of welfare use and employment are explored with state administrative data and nationally representative data from the Current Population Survey. Future reports will be based on further qualitative and quantitative data collection, including a second wave of the ACS, additional interviews and focus groups in the focal counties, both state- and county-level administrative data, and the first wave of the California Socioeconomic Survey.

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