

# Welfare-to-Work Handbook :. 42-7.26

## Welfare-to-Work Appraisal

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### Update:

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The purpose of this revision is to inform the [Department of Workforce and Benefits Administration \(WBA\)](#) staff of changes related to:

- [New participants who do not possess a high school diploma or equivalent at the time of Appraisal; and](#)
- [Updates to the business process under the Career Pathways and Employment Training \(CPET\) centers, previously known as Career Employment Center \(CEC\).](#)

### Summary:

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The [California Department of Social Services \(CDSS\)](#) provides the Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool (OCAT) to conduct Welfare-to-Work (WTW) Appraisals.

The purpose of this handbook is to inform staff on the process for conducting an appraisal under the implementation of Assembly Bill (AB) 74 [and AB 1604](#). The Bills changed the flow of Welfare-to-Work (WTW) activities [and prioritize the assignment of WTW education activities intended to earn a high school diploma or equivalent.](#)

### I. General:

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To better serve [WTW](#) participants, the [WBA](#) implemented the [OCAT](#) for the CalWORKs/WTW Appraisal.

[The](#) Appraisal is the first point in the WTW program to give direction to the participant in identifying the most beneficial path towards obtaining and maintaining meaningful employment. It is during this activity that the Career Development Specialist I (CDS I) has an opportunity to review and discuss with the participant [their](#) job skills and job aspirations to determine the best course of action in seeking and [identifying](#) realistic employment goals. [. Since the appraisal interview addresses very sensitive information, the interaction between the appraisal interviewer and the participant shall be positive and encouraging, as this will set the tone for future contacts with staff.](#)

The CDS I will complete the OCAT Appraisal. The OCAT Appraisal interview will generally occur after the completion of the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) test. If requested by the individual or it is identified in OCAT that a participant may have a Learning Disability (LD) as a result of the LD screening or a participant requests a Behavioral Health (BH) evaluation, then the CDS I will refer the participant for the appropriate evaluation(s) at the end of the one-on-one Appraisal interview ([note: Participants who request or agree to an LD Screening must not be assigned to another WTW activity until they have been screened](#)). Use Form 42-46 Screening

Summary & Evaluation Referral Form and/or Form 50-160 Referral for Help with Supportive Services to make appropriate referral(s) ([refer to Welfare to Work Handbook: 42-7.51 Learning Disabilities in Welfare-to-Work](#)).

**Note:** The LD screening in OCAT contains the same content as Form [WTW 18](#) WTW Learning Needs Screening Form and will be used in [place](#) of the [Form WTW 18](#) during OCAT appraisal. The Form [WTW 19](#) WTW Learning Needs Screening Form (client copy), [Form WTW 17](#) Waiver of CalWORKs Learning Disabilities, and the [Form WTW 20](#) Permission to Release Learning Disabilities Information are still used as required.

Upon completion of Appraisal, the participant will be assigned to the next appropriate activity depending on [their](#) unique circumstances and OCAT recommendations.

**Note: One-On-One Orientation -** On occasion (and per [SEIU Section 13-c of MOU](#)), the Employment Counselor (EC) may conduct a One-on-One Orientation and OCAT Appraisal. The following are examples [of](#) when an EC may conduct a One-on-One orientation and OCAT Appraisal:

- [The](#) case is pulled for WPR review and the client [must](#) complete orientation to move to the next appropriate WTW activity.
- Participant calls and states that they can only come in on a certain day or time due to their work schedule.

**Important Note:** EC shall confer with their supervisor before conducting a One-on-One Orientation. [Refer to Welfare-to-Work Handbook 42-7.25 Welfare-to-Work Orientation for additional information.](#)

### WTW Education Activities - High School Diploma or Equivalent

A. If during Appraisal, it is determined that the participant does not possess a high school diploma or equivalent, the participant shall be referred to a WTW plan signing to develop a WTW2 plan to earn a high school diploma or equivalent as the primary activity before any other assignment is made.

If it is determined that additional hours/activities are needed or beneficial (i.e. mental health or substance abuse services) to meet participation requirements, or the course of study is not immediately available, then the participant shall be referred to Assessment (ASM) for the completion of the WTW plan.

If the participant chooses not to participate in education activities, then the participant may continue in an appropriate initial engagement activity. **The participant must specify, in writing, on the WTW plan that they elect not to participate in the educational activity.**

- The WTW Plan can contain several documents and this requirement may be met in more than one way. One way of documentation of the participant's decision may be to include it in the "Additional Comments" section of the WTW Plan Activity Assignment - entering a statement such as "Participant elects to not pursue a high school diploma or equivalent at this time."

The CW 2.0 approach enhances the current service delivery by incorporating strategies and tools that help families set and achieve reachable goals while considering participant's strengths and any barriers they may face. These approaches and tools will aid staff in increasing client engagement,

applying more intentional service selection, addressing whole family needs, and shifting to more "client-led" and goal-oriented case management.

Through contracted Service Providers (SP), the CPET centers provide ongoing career counseling and intensive supportive case management services offering employment preparatory training workshops for participants who are seeking employment opportunities or who will participate in an unpaid or subsidized work experience program that allows CalWORKs participants to gain basic employment skills at a private or public work site. Components of CPET include the incorporation of the Program Support Team (PST) meeting, which is designed to involve Employment Counselors (ECs) earlier and throughout the participant's progress in the WTW program. This meeting will include the CW 2.0 approach of helping families set and achieve reachable goals while encouraging continuous engagement and contact between employment services staff and all registered WTW participants.

1. The SPs will also conduct a CW 2.0 Introductory Interview Meeting, an initial private introductory interview with the newly enrolled participants. The SP will use these sessions to begin assisting individual participants with creating for themselves an individual and/or family Self-Sufficiency Plan (SSP). The SSP will be based on the principles of CalWORKs 2.0 and will assist participants with identifying intermediate action steps that will help them achieve mid and long-term career and life goals (please refer to [Welfare-to-Work Handbook 42-7.25 Welfare-to-Work Orientation](#)).
  - The CW 2.0 Introductory Interview may be conducted by the SP at any point before or after the orientation presentation.
2. Once the upfront activities are completed (i.e. orientation, appraisal, CW 2.0 intro meeting), the SP will provide an upfront activity summary document (Form 42-176 Program Support Team Meeting) to the EC for review. The Form 42-176 Program Support Team Meeting will include the following information:
  - Client Information
  - **Identified barriers / recommendations (from OCAT)**
  - Identified goals and plan (from CW 2.0 interview)
  - Any recommendations for EC review

## II. Components of the Appraisal:

Individuals who are not excluded or exempt from WTW participation must complete the Appraisal when the following occurs:

- At initial CalWORKs approval;
- Added to an ongoing CalWORKs case;
- Exemption status ends;
- Age 16 through 18 years and not complying with school attendance requirement; and/or
- Exempt individual requests to be a voluntary participant.
- **A break in aid for more than six months**

### Participants with a Break in Aid:

If a participant returns from a break in aid **that exceeds six months**, they shall be treated as a new participant as their circumstances may have changed since the initial Appraisal. A new OCAT Appraisal must be given and can be completed with the prior appraisal's populated answers. The

CDS I must review and update the prior answers to determine if any changes need to be made to the Appraisal Summary and Recommendations (ASR) document. This review of the questionnaire and update of the ASR meets the standards for a "new appraisal" regarding participants who have had a break-in aid of more than six months.

**NOTE:** At this time, the OCAT is not required for the following individuals:

- Limited English Proficient (LEP) Participant shall be referred to the appropriate LEP SP and a manual appraisal interview will be completed.
- SSI
- Undocumented
- Timed Out

### III. Process

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#### Appraisal Interview:

CDS I shall:

1. Conduct the appraisal interview with the OCAT for WTW participants. In a two parent household, each parent shall be interviewed separately.
  - The CASAS test assesses the participant's ability in the areas of reading and mathematics. The CDS I will use this information to determine a participant's aptitude and job readiness.
    - Example:
      - Participant scores at a 3rd grade reading level or below - refer **the** participant to ASM activity.
      - Participant scores above a 3rd grade reading level - participant is job ready if no other barriers exist.
  - It is important to summarize information during the initial OCAT interview with the client to assist in streamlining information amongst the case managing staff. While conducting the OCAT interview, the CDS I reviews the CalWORKs (CW) 2.0 [CalMap](#) (which is provided to the client and completed during Orientation) with the participant.
2. Acknowledge the participant's strengths and accomplishments. Continually encourage the participant to engage in the WTW program.
3. Evaluate any WTW exemption requests, using Form **CW2186 A** (CalWORKs Exemption Request Form). If the participant indicates that they have a medical exemption and does not have proof, provide a Form CW61 (Authorization to Release Medical Information Form) **to the participant** with a 15-day need letter.
4. Discuss, during OCAT, possible barriers to employment with the participant.
  - If the barrier to employment is food, shelter, etc., the participant will be referred to a Social Worker, while working with the participant to remain active in the program.
  - If the barrier to employment is child care, the participant will be referred to a child care provider, while working with the participant to remain active in the program.
  - If the barrier to employment is the inability to speak English and Job Club/Job Search (JCL/JS) is determined not to be beneficial, the participant will be referred to Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL).
  - If the barrier to employment is related to a mental or emotional condition or to substance abuse, the participant, with **their** agreement will be referred for a Behavioral Health (BH) screening which will determine if a participant needs further evaluation by a **SP**.
  - If the CDS determines the barrier to employment is related to a learning disability, either indicated by **the** participant or as a result of the LD screening, the participant must be referred for an evaluation with a learning

disabilities specialist to determine appropriate accommodations and services.

- If the barrier to employment is related to domestic violence, the participant will be referred to a Social Worker. If the Social Worker's evaluation indicates that this individual is unable to obtain and/or keep a job and recommends treatment for the participant, the participant can be [referred to Family Violence Law Center by the Social Worker](#) and given Good Cause or an Exemption.
  - If the participant is a noncitizen who is a victim of human trafficking, domestic violence, or other serious crimes and does not have [the](#) authorization to work from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, the participant will be referred to Family Violence Law Center [and/or](#) VESL as appropriate.
  - If the CDS I determines and the participant agrees that JCL/JS is not the next appropriate activity, the participant will be referred directly to ASM.
5. **Discuss educational needs and opportunities. If during Appraisal, the CDS I determines that the participant does not possess a high school diploma or equivalent, the CDS I shall refer the participant to a WTW plan signing to develop a WTW plan to earn a high school diploma or equivalent as the primary activity before any other assignment is made; or if necessary, the participant shall be referred to ASM.**
- The CDS I shall notify the EC of record once it has been determined that the participant will be scheduled for WTW plan signing for education activities to pursue a high school diploma or equivalent.
6. Discuss employment opportunities and training opportunities with the competence and skill level of the participant based on CASAS test results.
7. Explain to the participant that there are certain reasons an individual may not be required to participate in the WTW program. These reasons constitute Good Cause for failure or refusal to participate. Inform the participant to contact their EC to determine if Good Cause exists.
8. Remind participants [who are](#) attending school or [a](#) training program that verification of enrollment is required at the time of the Appraisal interview.
9. If the participant indicates he/she is currently attending school or training program and fails to bring verification of enrollment to his/her appraisal interview, the CDS I will assist participant in obtaining verification by:
- Viewing the Internet;
  - Contacting the school using the School Contact List; or,
  - Providing Form 42-4 (Verification of Education or Training Program) with a 10-day need letter.
10. Evaluate if Self-Initiated Program (SIP) is approvable or not (follow SIP guidelines), when a participant is already enrolled in such program at the time of Appraisal.
- Explain clearly and thoroughly to participants the options for SIP and Post Assessment Education/Vocational Training activities and the benefits for each.
  - Have [the](#) participant complete Form 42-91 Self-Initiated Program/Vocational Training Informing Notice. [The participant](#) will select whether [they](#) want to participate in a SIP or a Post-Assessment Vocational Training Program.
  - Issue a copy of Form 42-91 to [the](#) participant and retain [the](#) original to be imaged into WebFiles.
    - If SIP is approved, and the participant is meeting the required number of hours, a WTW2 Plan is required.
  - If SIP is approved, but [the](#) individual is not meeting the required number of hours, the participant must be referred to [ASM](#) for concurrent activities.
  - If SIP is not approved and the individual is making satisfactory progress, the participant will be referred to ASM. The EC of record must be notified to create a pending plan in CalWIN. (See [How To 278-](#) Develop or Amend a Welfare-To-Work Plan).

## Employed Participants Meeting Required Participation Hours:

Participants who are employed in unsubsidized employment with sufficient hours to meet the minimum hours of participation shall, following Appraisal, have a WTW2 Plan created by the [SP](#) or by the EC of record when appropriate.

### **During Orientation and Appraisal the steps listed below shall be followed:**

CDS I shall:

- Review the CASAS test results - Information can be located in CalWIN: Maintain Employment Services Information window, Tabs, or WebFiles.
- **Initiate the OCAT Appraisal interview in CalWIN.**
- Conduct **the** one-on-one OCAT Appraisal interview with the participant.
  - If Domestic Violence (DV) is disclosed, contact a Social Worker Supervisor to assign a Social Worker to continue with DV questions in OCAT.
  - **If there is a break-in-aid of six months or more, the CDS I shall complete a new appraisal.**
- Review the Orientation packet with **the** participant.
- Make sure all required forms are complete.
- Assist participants in identifying barriers to employment.
- Identify and refer needs for supportive services.
- Generate the Appraisal Summary and Recommendations (ASR) from OCAT
  - Have participant sign the ASR; and,
  - Provide a signed copy to the participant.
- Record OCAT Appraisal in the following CalWIN tabs.
  - Employment,
  - Education,
  - Competencies,
  - Skills tab, Occupation Index,
  - Barriers tab, Court Date/Legal Issues, and
  - Information Checklist.
- Schedule participants **in** the first activity as appropriate.
- Refer participant to EC to set up pending Plan in CalWIN for non-approved SIPs.
- Review and send Client Correspondence in CalWIN.
- Submit documents in **the** designated box to be imaged into WebFiles. ASRs shall be imaged under "OCAT Online CalWORKs Appraisal Tool" in WebFiles.
- Send courtesy email to the appropriate case managing staff and send the [CalMap](#) for priority imaging along with Appraisal Summary Report (ASR).
- **Check if a same-day PST meeting has been scheduled.**
  - **If so, the CDS I will notify the EC and SP that the Appraisal has been completed to move forward with a same-day PST (refer to [Welfare-to-Work Handbook 42-7.38](#) - Welfare-to-Work Case Management).**

Enter Case Comments in CalWIN.

**Important Note: If the Appraisal is not completed using the OCAT, the participant must **complete** the following additional documents:**

- [Form 42-1](#) Self-Appraisal;
- [Form 42-92](#) Employability: Social or Health Issues Self-Appraisal;
- [Form 42-117](#) Employment Placement Information;
- [Form WTW 17](#) Learning Disability Screening Waiver.

**Note:** The occasional One-on-One orientation and appraisal, conducted by Employment Counselors, shall include conducting the applicable steps listed above to complete the appraisal.

## References:

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EAS Manual 42-711.52-.549; 42-711.56; 42-711.57; 42-712.1

[How To 407: How to Use OCAT](#)

[CalWORKs Handbook 42-7.7 - Domestic Violence/Abuse Policies & Procedures for Waivers & Exemptions](#)

[CalWORKs Handbook 42-7.5 - Family Stabilization Program for CalWORKs Clients](#)

[Employment Services Handbook: 42-6.3 - Monolingual & Limited English Proficient Participants Program](#)

[Welfare-to-Work Handbook 42-7.0 - Welfare-to-Work Overview](#)

[Welfare-to-Work Handbook 42-7.6 - Supportive Services in the Welfare to Work Program](#)

[Welfare-to-Work Handbook 42-7.2 - Exemptions and Good Cause/Deferral Reasons in the WTW Program](#)

[Welfare to Work Handbook :. 42-7.51 Learning Disabilities](#)

[Employment Programs Newsletter: 07-11 - Self-Initiated Program/Post-Assessment Education/Vocational Training Update](#)

[SEIU Section 13-c of MOU](#)

[CalMAP](#)

ACL 18-40

ACL 15-69

ACL 15-43

ACL 15-09

MPP Section 42-711.513

MPP Section 42-722.32