

City and County of San Francisco's CalFresh Employment and Training (CFET) Program: Engaging Adult Residents Towards Self-Sufficiency

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

San Francisco County's CFET program is designed to promote job readiness and employment among the county's Non-Assistance CalFresh (NACF) clients, focusing on the ones receiving General Assistance (GA) and Personal Assisted Employment Services (PAES). Mirroring CalWORKs, PAES clients who participate in any of the CFET components receive necessary ancillary services such as transportation, housing, work clothes, tools, school materials etc. Behavioral health services are also offered to participants, when necessary, to help address the barriers they may have to workforce participation. Another aspect that is critical

to the successful participation of PAES clients is the employability determination that occurs before benefits are approved. A client's employability is assessed by the Triage Clinicians and he/she is referred to the appropriate programs or services. Although Santa Clara County Social Services Agency (SCC SSA) offers similar activities under its CFET program, it can greatly benefit from investing and adopting some of San Francisco's services.

This case study discusses the various services San Francisco offers under its CFET program. It also evaluates the implications for Santa Clara County and offers recommendations for improvement.

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Background

General Assistance (GA) is a state mandated program that serves as a safety net for indigent adults. It is county administered and 100% funded by the county's general fund.

Santa Clara County historically issued its GA benefits as loans. However, effective January 1, 2014, all GA benefits issued are treated as recoverable grants. Recipients are not required to repay their GA benefits, unless they are subject to the Interim Assistance Reimbursement (IAR) program. Santa Clara County's GA recipients are not subject to time limits and can receive cash benefits as long as they meet the program requirements. As a result, it has become more crucial for Santa Clara County Social Services Agency (SCC SSA) to ramp up its services to assist both employable and unemployable clients receive the appropriate services they need to overcome barriers and attain self-sufficiency.

San Francisco's Personal Assisted Employment Services (PAES)

Personal Assisted Employment Services (PAES) is one of the four programs offered under San Francisco's County Adult Assistance Program (CAAP). The purpose of PAES Program is to "provide employable adults with the education, training, and supportive services necessary to gain lasting employment and become self-sufficient" [CAAP Information – Form 2133CR (03/01/2014)]. Other programs under CAAP include:

- Cash Assistance Linked to Medi-Cal (CALM) – for aged and disabled individuals who are receiving Medi-Cal but are not eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and their spouses.
- Supplemental Security Income Pending (SSIP) – for individuals with verified long-term disability.
- General Assistance (GA) – for indigent adults who do not qualify for PAES, CALM, or SSIP.

A single individual participating in PAES can receive a maximum of \$444 per month – \$84 more than the monthly maximum GA benefit – plus employment services. Homeless PAES clients may also receive assistance in housing/shelter and utilities. Although PAES stipends are not time-limited, the employment services provided under PAES are limited to 27 months. Services may be extended for an additional six months if extension was deemed to likely lead to employment. Employment services offered under PAES mirror CalWORKs and are primarily funded through the CalFresh Employment and Training (CFET).

CalFresh Employment and Training (CFET)

San Francisco's CFET program promotes job readiness and employment among the county's Non-Assistance CalFresh (NACF) clients. Since 87 percent of GA and PAES clients also receive NACF benefits, San Francisco expectedly designed its CFET to target its PAES population.

San Francisco is expecting to serve around 10,038 CFET participants from October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2015. Its CFET budget for FFY 2015 is approximately \$21.2 million. 50 percent is funded by San Francisco's general fund and 50 percent is funded through federal dollars.

CFET COMPONENTS

There are six components under the CFET program being offered to clients to help promote job readiness and employment.

Workfare is operated through Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with several community-based, non-profit organizations (CBOs), along with the following four city agencies:

- San Francisco Recreation and Parks
- Department of Public Health
- Department of Public Works
- Municipal Railway (Muni)

Whenever deemed necessary (e.g., following CF and/or GA/PAES approval or when a client is at risk of being ineligible for CalFresh due to not meeting work requirements), clients are referred to the "Workfare Evaluation Group Meeting." The meeting works like a workfare orientation. Along with Human Services Agency (HSA) trainers who facilitate the meeting, employees from the four city agencies are onsite to give out assignments and have participants sign their specific contracts. Participants who want to perform a different type of activity other than what is offered by the four city agencies are referred to the workfare CBOs.

Part of the MOU with participating agencies and CBOs include reporting of attendance and performance. The workfare worksites return the attendance form to HSA, and HSA staff takes action on the client's case as necessary.

Job Search may be supervised or unsupervised and is assigned concurrently or sequentially with another CFET component.

Job Club. San Francisco offers two types of employment readiness workshops – Group Employment

Preparation Sessions (GEPS) and Job Readiness Workshops (e.g., JobsPlus workshop). GEPS activity is assigned to new PAES clients prior to the development of their employment plans. It also serves as an evaluation period to identify the best next steps for each client. JobsPlus workshop starts with a 6-week classroom training followed by supervised a job search and group follow-up activities. Behavioral health support activities are also incorporated into the workshops. Through a collaborative relationship, HSA staff (Trainers, Vocational Assessment Counselors, Employment Specialists) and mental health service providers teach participants the hard skills (e.g., computer use, resume building, etc.) and soft skills (e.g., anger management, dealing with difficult co-workers, etc.) – both equally important for the success of finding and retaining employment.

Work Experience. San Francisco HSA partners with certain county agencies and CBOs to provide this high-cost yet highly effective CFET component. Work Experience participants receive individualized support systems, such as intensive case management, while gaining the experience of continuous employment, which results in a higher probability of success. San Francisco pays 100% of the participants' hourly wages using its general fund. Work Experience lasts for at least six months and participants must work 20 to 32 hours per week.

Vocational Training. PAES participants who are assessed by their Employment Specialists on their needs for skills development or enhancement are referred to one of the vocational training providers. Some of the vocational training programs include: automotive, child care/child development, certified nursing assistant, computer/office training, computer repair, construction trades, and cosmetology. Vocational Training lasts from four to twenty four weeks and participants must attend 26 to 30 hours per week of training.

Education. Educational programs, which include Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language (ESL), Vocational ESL, High School equivalency

(GED) and selected post-secondary education, are assigned to CFET clients to improve basic skills or employability.

PAES clients who participate in any of these components receive necessary ancillary services such as transportation, housing, work clothes, tools, school materials, and so on. Behavioral health services are also offered to participants, when necessary, to help address the barriers they may have to work-force participation.

PAES Counseling Services

PAES Counseling Services (PCS), which is contracted with Richmond Area Multi-Services, Inc. (RAMS), is a 90-day program offered to PAES participants when it is identified that a behavioral health service will benefit the client. It provides a “pause” for participants to help them tackle certain barriers in order for them to be more successful in finding and retaining work. Clients are referred to PCS either by the Vocational Assessor during a GEPS session or by their Employment Specialist. The PCS team consists of a nurse practitioner whose focus is in psychiatry, case management team (case counselors, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, peer counselors), licensed social workers, psychologist, and MFT therapist. Some of the services provided are facilitated grief counseling, anger management and substance abuse counseling meetings, referrals to community resources, and Learning Needs Assessment testing and reporting.

Employability Determination through Triage

Another aspect that is critical to the successful participation of PAES clients is the employability determination that occurs before benefits are approved. Unless they have verification from an outside medical provider, all CAAP clients are referred to the triage unit to undergo an employability determination. The clients are assessed by the master-level mental health clinician (“Triage Clinicians”) and are referred to the appropriate services after determination is complete. Clients with no or limited restrictions are referred to

TABLE 1
Measured Outcomes (FY 2013-14)

Activity	Attendance/ Completion Rate
Program Orientation	70%
Workfare Evaluation Meeting	70%
Workfare	84% (per month)
Job Search Workshop	60%
Job Readiness Training	60%
Job Club	60% (of which, 50% were placed in jobs)

PAES or GA. Clients assessed as likely disabled are referred to the SSIP program.

The Triage services are also contracted through RAMS and funded through the Community Service Block Grant under Title 19. The unit consists of five counselors and one supervisor and they are expected to serve all CAAP clients (approximately 9,000 annually). The unit serves approximately 900 clients per month.

Outcomes

The first indicator of success is the attendance of the participants to assigned activities. *Table 1* shows some measured outcomes from fiscal year 2013-14:

San Francisco also administers the JOBS NOW! Program, which is a subsidized employment program funded through the CalWORKs grant for welfare-to-work participants and general fund for CFET and other participants. A total of 692 CFET clients participated in JOBS NOW! between July, 2011 to March, 2013.

- 61% (420) had earnings one quarter after exit
- 55% (383) had earnings two quarters after exit
- 54% (376) were still off aid (CalFresh) six months after exit

Implications for Santa Clara County

Like San Francisco, SCCSSA's CFET is designed to primarily serve its GA clients, a majority of which also receive CalFresh. CFET is administered by the Vocational Services (VS) unit located in the GA office. SCCSSA offers similar activities under its CFET program:

- **Workfare** - job-ready clients are assigned to work a number of hours per month. Clients who are assessed and deemed not ready to work due to alcohol or drug abuse are offered counseling services for a period of 90 to 180 days prior to workfare assignment.
- **Job Search** - unsupervised job search, usually assigned concurrently with workfare.
- **Employment Readiness (Job Club) and Networking Workshops** - employment classroom training where soft skills and hard skills are taught to the participants.

SCCSSA partnered with Work2Future at no cost to the county to offer the Helping Individuals Re-enter Employment (HIRE) program, which was implemented in October 2014. VS refers 35 of its ready-to-work clients to attend this accelerated employment training program. As of May 2015, 42 GA clients have been employed with a median wage of \$12.25 an hour and median work hours of 25 per week.

- **Vocational Training** - training on skills or trades that lead participants directly into employment.
- **Education** - educational activities within the county that help improve participants' basic skills and enhance employability.
- **Self-Initiated Workfare** - clients who reside in shelters are allowed to participate in the shelters' work experience and have it count towards their work requirement.

Due to budget limitations, services offered by VS are on a smaller scale in comparison to San Francisco. SCCSSA's CFET budget for FFY 2015 is \$2.7 million to serve approximately 5,713 participants between October 1, 2014 through September 30,

2015. In any case, SCCSSA can still greatly benefit from evaluating and adopting some of San Francisco's services in order to improve its CFET program.

Recommendations

- Explore adopting San Francisco County's policy of having the worksite providers submit the attendance sheets to SCCSSA. This will reduce the necessity of client visits to VS; hence, reducing lobby traffic. More importantly, clients who fail to submit their attendance sheets after completing workfare will be prevented from unnecessary sanction and automated fair hearings. Lastly, reducing office visits will help clients save transportation money.
- One way to streamline the attendance sheets and make it more accessible and functional for both worksite providers and VS is by having it available online and being able to submit it in an electronic format.
- Explore implementing some aspects of the PAES Counseling Service. Providing the clients, particularly the ones attending the job readiness workshops, an opportunity to meet one-on-one with a behavioral counselor or peer-counselor will assist in identifying the barriers that are hindering them from becoming and staying employed. If more extensive assistance is needed, clients can be referred to the substance and/or alcohol abuse workshops being provided in VS or other helpful resources in the community.
- Explore adopting the Triage Unit's employability determination. Currently, GA clients self-declare to their Eligibility Workers if they are employable or unemployable. Employable clients are referred to VS; unemployable clients (with long-term disability) are referred to SSI Advocacy. A more robust employability determination will ensure that the appropriate clients are being referred and served by VS and SSI Advocacy units. Since the SSI Advocacy will benefit from the Triage Unit's assessments and referrals, SCCSSA can leverage the new Triage Unit's funding through IAR.

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References

CAAP Information: Form 2133CR. (2014, March 1).

