

**San Francisco Human Service Agency's CalFresh Employment and Training
Program (CFET): Inspiring an Innovative Employment and Training Service Model
for Marin County**

Sherry Parr

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Federal Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), known as CalFresh in California, is a critical component of Marin County Health and Human Services Department's (HHS) safety net for unemployed and underemployed individuals, providing the needed food security missing in many Marin County households.

The CalFresh Employment and Training (CFET) program has historically been underutilized as a resource for workforce development, but recent regulatory improvements and alignment of program component definitions with those of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) have generated new interest. These changes, and the embedding of WIOA service delivery within the Marin County HHS, have led to a significant opportunity to integrate CFET and WIOA. This also opens opportunities for further assurance that CalFresh recipients have access to critical services to help them gain needed employment skills in order to move towards self-sufficiency.

This case study examines the San Francisco County Human Services Agency's CFET program that has incorporated several components of both WIOA and CalFresh programs, such as participant assessments and job search assistance, along with successful community partnerships into the model.

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Background

The CalFresh Employment and Training (CFET) Program provides employment and training activities to CalFresh participants who are not exempt from work registration. The goal of the program is to assist participants in obtaining employment and avoiding long-term dependency on assistance. Currently, Marin County Health and Human Services Department (HHS) operates a traditional CFET program serving employable recipients of CalFresh who also receive General Assistance by providing a job search component with access to supportive employment services.

The Federally Funded Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) workforce program provides employment and training activities to individuals with significant barriers to employment and dislocated workers. The goal of WIOA is to improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, increase economic self-sufficiency, meet skills requirements of employers, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the nation. Marin County's HHS operates an imbedded WIOA program which provides job search assistance and training to equip individuals to enter the workforce and retain employment services.

Marin County's federal eligibility to waive CalFresh time limits for the Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD) population is set to expire in August 2018. Participation in

WIOA services counts as a work activity for the purpose of stopping the clock on time limits for ABAWDs. Partnerships between CFET and WIOA can better connect ABAWDs, many of whom face barriers to employment, workforce resources, and opportunities.

Marin County is evaluating best practices and lessons learned by early adopters of comprehensive CFET programs to determine possible next steps in the expansion of its program. In addition, Marin County is hoping to identify and explore potential braiding of WIOA services to maximize program funding. Working to develop a meaningful and effective employment and training service model that meets the needs of participants, meets State/Federal requirements, and serves the community made evaluating San Francisco County's Human Service Agency's CFET program valuable.

San Francisco CFET Program

The San Francisco County Adult Assistance Program (CAAP) provides financial support and employment services to very low-income individuals with no dependent children. Marin County's General Assistance program provides similar support to this population. Eligibility for CAAP requires San Francisco residency, acceptable citizenship or immigration status, limited assets, expenses cannot exceed grant amount, and all participants must apply for CalFresh and Medi-Cal. Many of the participants face severe barriers to employment including homelessness, limited English proficiency, long-term unemployment, sporadic employment histories, substance abuse and/or mental health problems, criminal histories, or a lack of education or vocational skills. Under WIOA, serving individuals with barriers to employment is a key focus and aligns with the population being served in CAAP – such as, English Language Learners, ex-offenders, and those who are homeless.

CAAP has four separate programs that offer cash assistance and critical ancillary services to meet the needs of this population.

General Assistance (GA): provides individuals with less than 30 days of residency in San Francisco with cash assistance.

Personal Assisted Employment Services (PAES): provides employable adults with cash assistance and job placement and training.

Supplemental Security Income Pending (SSIP): provides cash assistance and case management to assist disabled individuals with their SSI application process.

Cash Assistance Linked to Medi-Cal (CALM): provides cash assistance and services to individuals receiving Medi-Cal due to age or disability.

The individual must complete an intake process to determine his/her program eligibility and employability. The process consists of a group orientation to review program services and requirements, an interview to rate an individual's level of employability, and the collection of required documentation.

San Francisco's CFET program utilizes six intensive components and ancillary services to promote self-sufficiency and the skills needed for retaining employment. Participants develop an individual employment plan by combining these services to achieve a long-term goal of unsubsidized employment. WIOA also requires the development of an individual employment plan to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals.

Employment and training Components

Workfare is non-salaried community service in a public service capacity. Positions are within public and private non-profit organizations that have a Memoranda of Understanding with the county. Participants perform various tasks for a total of six hours per week such as office work, roadside cleanup, and grounds maintenance. In comparison, *WIOA's Internships* component is an unpaid (or paid) structured, time-limited learning experience that takes place in a workplace in the public, non-profit, or private for-profit sectors.

Job Search includes inquiries about hiring opportunities to potential employers. A pre-determined number of contacts are made by the participant over a month. An unsupervised job search is offered in combination with another approved work-related activity. A supervised job search is offered to PAES participants after the completion of job club or occupational training. The utilization of *WIOA's Basic Career Services* boosts an individual's job search skills by teaching new tactics and tools needed to secure employment including knowledge of the local labor market, building a resume, refining one's interview style, and bringing the employer to the participant with onsite job recruitments.

Job Club is an enhancement of job readiness. San Francisco's CFET program offers two types of Job Club. Group Employment Preparation is a group of classes attended by all new PAES recipients prior to their assessments and development of individual employment plans. Job Readiness Workshop is an intensive, all day employment skills training. Job Club aligns with the essential focus of the *WIOA's Workforce Preparation* component, which helps participants acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, while obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into training or

employment.

Work Experience (On-the-Job Training) includes placement into a subsidized employment assignment where actual work experience and/or training is acquired. San Francisco County pays the subsidized wages with local city/county general funds only, not CFET dollars. It is believed that the high per participant cost translates to a more successful experience and benefits the local economy through participants' greater spending and consumption within the community. The JOBSNOW! program provides a placement of six months or more with a public agency, private sector business, or nonprofit agency. Employers are expected to retain the participant after the subsidized placement ends. *WIOA* allows participants to earn money while engaging with learning components, including *On-the-Job Training (OJT)*. OJT is a type of training that is provided by an employer to a participant. During the training, the participant is engaged in productive work for which he or she is paid, and the training provides the knowledge or skills essential to the full and adequate performance of the job. The employer is reimbursed for the time and cost of training a new hire for up to six months and is expected to retain the participant upon satisfactory completion of the training.

Vocational Training provides skills or trades training allowing for direct access to employment. The training opportunities are based on the goals of the participants, generally lasting six to twelve months, and leads to the obtainment of a certificate. The *Occupational Skills Training* component in *WIOA* is a structured, competency-based activity, usually with a set curriculum or learning plan that teaches the participant job specific skills needed to perform tasks and functions required by particular jobs or occupational clusters. The expected outcome of Occupational Skills Training is certificate attainment and entry into unsubsidized employment.

Education improves basic skills, such as literacy, and addresses issues, such as a lack of a high school diploma/GED, and thus improves employability. Intensive services designed to improve participants' language help participants achieve two levels of language learning in an eighteen-week session. Addressing the lack of a high school diploma or GED is a part of a participant's individualized employment plan. *WIOA's Adult Education and Literacy* component includes activities and services such as: adult education, literacy, workplace adult education and literacy activities, family literacy activities, English language acquisition activities, integrated English literacy and civics education, workforce preparation activities, and/or integrated education and training.

Budget and Population

E&T Funding is based on a formula mandated by SNAP regulations. Ninety percent of the grant is based on the number of state-work registrants relative to nationwide statistics. The remaining ten percent is based on the number of ABAWDs in a state. Funding is not based on the number of participants in an E&T program. There are three types of E&T funding: the *E&T Program Grant*, referred to as 100 percent money because it is 100% Federal funding. This grant must be spent on planning, implementation and operations of E&T program. The *ABAWD Grant* is money earmarked to provide services to all ABAWDs in the last month of their three-month time limit. The *50 Percent Reimbursement* requires the Federal government to reimburse fifty percent of payments made for allowable expenses. There are two types of allowable expenses: additional administrative cost and participant reimbursement.

The San Francisco CFET budget for fiscal year 2017 is roughly \$17.5 million dollars, with only \$204,000 coming from the one hundred percent federal funds. San Francisco County's general funds cover 50% of the remaining cost, approximately \$8.6 million with the outstanding 50%, or \$8.6 million, coming from

the federal matching funds. San Francisco County identified 26,164 unduplicated work registrants in the county for fiscal year 2017 of which 17,083 were anticipated to fall in the ABAWD population.

Marin County's CFET budget for fiscal year 2017, in contrast, is \$594,688 dollars, with only \$39,270 coming from the 100 percent federal funds. Marin County's general fund covers 50% of the remaining cost, approximately \$260,000 with the outstanding 50%, or \$260,000, coming from the federal matching funds. Marin County identified 5,773 unduplicated work registrants in the county for fiscal year 2017. Of which, 2,888 were anticipated to fall in the ABAWD population. Marin County's WIOA budget for fiscal year 2017 is nearly \$650,000, as federal funds these monies are not an eligible source of match for the 50/50 funds but are able to be blended to provide needed employment and training services. Blending these allocations and increasing the CFET budget will allow HHS to enhance and offer a full range of services to an increased number of participants.

Outcomes

In January 2017, the San Francisco Human Services Agency released a post-program employment and benefit outcomes report on the 3,151 participants of the JobsNOW program from July 2011 to June 2015. Overall, 62% of JobsNOW participants had earnings in the quarter after exiting the program. The average earnings of participants doubled in the second quart after exit, when compared to the participant income two quarters prior to placement. Six months after exiting the program, 72% of the participants who had been on CAAP were no longer receiving cash assistance.

Recommendations

CFET and WIOA share the goal of moving individuals into the workforce and helping them attain economic security. In addition, they share similar or complementary services to reach that

goal. Marin County HHS should explore expanding its CFET program by implementing aspects of the San Francisco County model that meet the community needs, along with drawing upon the resources and experiences of the San Francisco workforce system. The blending of funds and braiding of services of these two programs will provide services and support needed by those who face barriers to employment and will offer opportunities to ensure quality services and job training for barriered and low-income individuals. However, making this opportunity a reality will rely heavily on program and fiscal planning. The following recommendations support the implementation of a CFET plan:

- Identify community needs: which populations are not being served and what issues are going unaddressed. Network with employment and training programs within the county and community-based partner agencies to map services offered to lower duplication and maximize resources. Analyze the employment and training services required/allowable for CFET and WIOA to determine what could be offered to fill these gaps that would fit with the organizational mission.
- Complete a cost analysis of administration and staffing expanded CFET program.
- Develop a universal assessment tool used to screen an individual's work readiness, need for support services, and barriers to employment.
- Package existing work readiness activities into a job readiness series supporting individuals in gaining employability skills and income mobility, based on the assessed needs and job goals.
- Explore appropriate non-federal matching fund resources available within the HHS.

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