

San Francisco's CalFresh Employment and Training Program (CFET): Identifying Strategic Opportunities for Marin County

ERIC PETERSEN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Marin County's CalFresh Employment and Training Program (CFET) has been in operation for two years but is now faced with a new population of CalFresh recipients needing employment services. Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) have had a work requirement waiver for the past ten years. That waiver is ending August 30, 2019. ABAWDs will only receive CalFresh benefits for three months within three years unless they meet work requirements or are exempt.

It is essential that Marin County examine

strategies that will assist ABAWDs to keep their CalFresh benefits and obtain employment. This case study examines San Francisco County's Human Services Agency (HSA) CFET program and how it delivers employment services to ABAWDs in a coordinated, integrated service model. Marin County's CFET program can learn from San Francisco's use of employer engagement, Workfare, data management, and centralized contracting to deliver services more strategically within Marin County's Health and Human Services Department (HHS).

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Introduction

SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, is a federal entitlement program administered by the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (USDA) that provides food purchasing assistance for low-income individuals and families. SNAP in California, called CalFresh, serves approximately four million persons, of which more than 48% are in working families.¹ For eligible persons who work and those that cannot, the CalFresh program is a critical support for preventing food access instability. For CalFresh recipients looking for work, having access to food is vital, as hunger can easily deter employment goals. However, many CalFresh recipients in California are eligible for CFET.²

CFET is a voluntary workforce development program designed to assist CalFresh participants into jobs and careers through access to employment and training opportunities. Counties that have CFET programs submit plans to the state that include some or all CFET-eligible employment components.

San Francisco has recently expanded its CFET program to accommodate a new reality that threatens food security for many: Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents or ABAWDs. Federal law

dictates that ABAWDs may only receive CalFresh for three months in a three-year period unless they are working at least 80 hours a month, participating in a CFET eligible component at least 80 hours a month, or complying with a CFET workfare program. CalFresh recipients exempt from the time limit are:

- Under 18 or 50 years of age or older,
- Responsible for the care of a child or incapacitated household member,
- Medically certified as physically or mentally unfit for employment or pregnant, or
- Already exempt from the general SNAP work requirements.

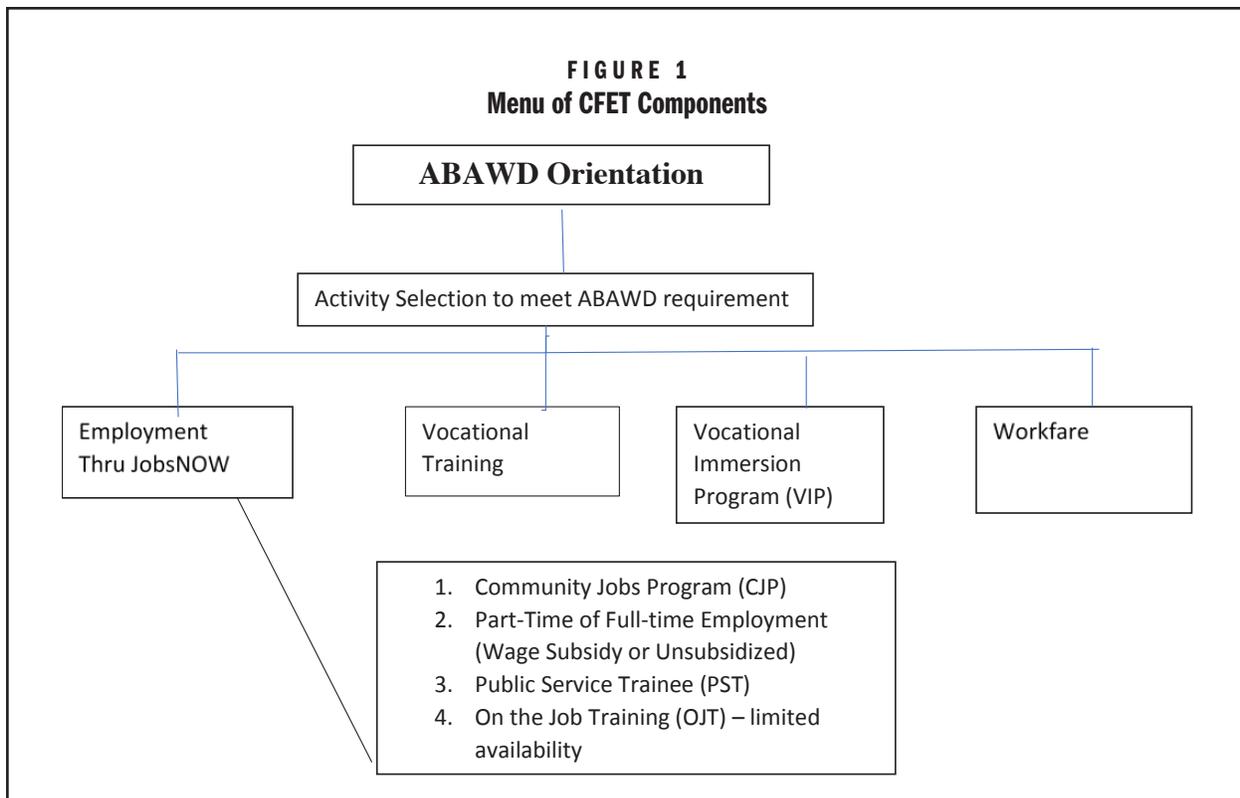
During the Great Recession, all California counties had an ABAWD waiver due to the high unemployment rate. However, as the economy has improved, some counties that have seen economic recovery with lower unemployment have had this waiver expire. San Francisco's waiver ended in 2018 but had a robust CFET program with strong infrastructure to expand and accommodate ABAWDs. Marin County's ABAWD waiver is expiring at the end of August 2019 and can learn from some of the best practices in San Francisco.

San Francisco's CFET Program

The CFET program is located within the City and County of San Francisco's Human Services Agency's (HSA) Workforce Development Division (WDD). The CFET program has been in operation since

1. A Closer Look at Who Benefits from SNAP: State-by-State Fact Sheets: <https://www.cbpp.org/research/a-closer-look-at-who-benefits-from-snap-state-by-state-fact-sheets#California> (2018, Nchako, Cai)

2. CalFresh Employment and Training- The Basics: https://wclp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/CalFreshET_WCLP_CalLaborFedWorkforceConference2017.pdf (2017, Bartholow)



2009 and currently serves approximately 1,333 participants. San Francisco's CFET program utilizes the following components:

- **Job Search:** requires participants to make a pre-determined number of inquiries to over a set period of time.
- **Job Search Training:** providing instruction in job-seeking techniques.
- **Workfare:** performing work in public service without wages and instead compensated in the form of their household's benefit amount as a condition of remaining eligible for CalFresh.
- **Work Experience:** program designed to improve the employability of participants through working in a specific field or occupation to gain work skills and actual hands-on job experience.
- **Educational Programs:** programs or services that improve basic skills and employability.
- **Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA):** job training and assistance services under WIOA, including on-the-job training.

Once an ABAWD is screened and determined to be employable they are to attend an ABAWD orientation which offers a menu of CFET components (*Figure 1*).

JobsNOW

Started in 2009 in response to the Great Recession, JobsNow used American Recovery Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding to launch a highly successful subsidized employment model by offering business services and pre-screened job seekers. Since its inception, JobsNOW has attracted over 500 employers with 20,000 San Francisco residents with jobs. After ARRA funding expired in 2010, JobsNOW utilized general funds to continue this best practice and expand its offerings to job seekers, which included partnerships with community-based organizations providing case management and training to ensure successful job retention.

While JobsNOW is still primarily a subsidized employment model, it has now expanded its menu to new populations such as ABAWDs. JobsNOW

offers supported employment, public service trainee employment, wage subsidies for full or part-time employment in private or non-profit settings, and unsubsidized employment.

Crucial to the success of JobsNOW is the utilization of Business Account Representatives (BARs). BARs connect with employers through outreach and engagement to assist with application processing, job postings, recruitment, and the hiring process. Weekly job fairs are held at WDD's Mission and Bayview centers for JobsNOW employers to recruit pre-screened candidates.

JobsNOW employers are eligible for three levels of wage subsidy reimbursement with the expectation that employers to retain employees as fully unsubsidized once the subsidy ends.³

Vocational Training Programs

San Francisco has developed a comprehensive training program for ABAWDs to develop marketable skills for in-demand occupations. The CFET program also utilizes WIOA funding to provide training at CityBuild Academy (pre-apprenticeship training in construction), Healthcare Academy (training for in demand health care occupations), and TechSF (training for those interested in technology occupations). In addition, HSA has partnered with several community-based organizations: Community Housing Partnership (front desk clerk training), Arriba Juntos (training classes in office skills, nursing assistant, and homecare), and Clean Cities (janitorial work experience and transitional employment).

Vocational Immersion Program

San Francisco's Vocational Immersion Program provides ABAWDs with limited English proficiency with classroom and workplace immersion trainings to develop skills to become competitive job seekers and employees.

Workfare

Workfare is a work activity provided to employable ABAWDs that may require soft-skills training and work experience. The goal is to improve an ABAWD's employability to prepare them for paid employment. San Francisco County currently serves approximately 800 participants in workfare through public sector assignments and selected community-based organizations. HSA has partnered in the City and County of San Francisco with the following departments: Department of Public Works, Recreation and Parks Department, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, and Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital. These assignments offer janitorial, food service and preparation, warehouse and food sorting, and customer service opportunities. Workfare is usually for three hours per week in which an ABAWD can maintain their CalFresh benefit in lieu of payment.

Funding

Funding to run San Francisco's CFET program is a blend of federal SNAP E&T dollars, local general funds and other local dollars. USDA provides grants to states in three categories: 100% funds, funds to assist at-risk ABAWDs facing time limits, and 50% funds or 50/50. The state uses a formula to disseminate 100% funds based on the number of CalFresh recipients who are considered work registrants in participating counties. The 100% funds can only be spent on the administration of the CFET program. For any additional CFET program administration or allowable supportive costs (i.e. transportation) beyond the 100% funds, the federal government will share 50% of the costs and the other 50% must come from a non-federal source. San Francisco primarily uses local general funds as match in its CFET program. It also has some small contracts with third-party providers of training services to CFET participants that provide a match from their own funds and San Francisco draws the federal match on their behalf.

3. City and County of San Francisco Human Services Agency: JobsNOW! Employer Information: <https://www.sfhsa.org/services/jobs-money/jobsnow/jobsnow-employers>

Outcomes

Since its inception in 2009, San Francisco's JobsNOW has placed over 20,000 participants in jobs. The program saw an 120% increase in average earnings after participants exited the program. Two and a half years after exiting the program, 87% of JobsNOW participants no longer needed cash assistance.⁴

Infrastructure

As San Francisco's WDD has expanded to accommodate ABAWDs, it has also built a solid infrastructure to manage the many components in their CFET program. To coordinate the many data points required for WDD staff and contractors, San Francisco utilizes a Salesforce platform called Launchpad. Launchpad is a cloud-based data management tool that manages data, client services, client activities, and job placements. Utilizing Launchpad has increased staff efficiency, improved contractor accountability, and reduced duplication of services. With Launchpad CFET program staff can:

- Schedule participants for JobsNOW interviews and track outcomes and job placement information.
- Refer participants to contractors and track attendance and progress.
- Record participants' assessment scores, skills, and certifications.
- Manage contracts, communicate with external providers, share documents, and generate up-to-date information for reports.

San Francisco also utilizes a centralized contracting system coordinated by the Office of Contract Management (OCM). OCM develops contract boilerplates and has fiscal, legal, and program team members ensuring the following: coordination of bid solicitation, contract evaluation, performance tracking, and awarding of contracts. OCM also monitors contracts for both fiscal and program

compliance. Program staff assist with contracting by developing the scope of work with contractors, communicating services and program information, and assisting with contract monitoring. San Francisco uses a reporting and billing on-line system called "Carbon". Contractors can submit program reports as a measurement of work completed and invoices for review and approval prior to payment.

Marin County's CFET Program

Marin currently averages 85 CFET participants per month within its General Relief program. When the ABAWD waiver expires in August, approximately 20 additional ABAWDs per month are estimated to be subject to the work requirement. The participants will be served by 2.5 FTE Employment Development Counselors who also work with WIOA enrolled participants. Marin County's Employment and Training Branch (ETB) can learn from some of the aspects of San Francisco's CFET program to prepare for ABAWDs and build infrastructure within Marin County's Health and Human Services Department.

Recommendations for Marin County

- I. **Employer engagement:** The outcomes of San Francisco County's JobsNOW program demonstrate that local employer relationships are crucial to not only meet employer needs, but to build programs that support development of the skill sets required for these in-demand occupations. As Marin County's WIOA program has seen significant funding cuts, it is imperative we blend funding across programs to support local employer engagement.

Next Steps: (1) Develop business engagement curriculum (first month). **Costs:** Staff time, eight hours. (2) Inservice curriculum for employment and training staff (second month). **Costs:** Staff time, one hour. (3) Incorporate curriculum into onboarding for new staff (third month). (4) Add additional Employment Development Counselor to focus on business engagement 50%. **Costs:**

4. City and County of San Francisco Human Services Agency JobsNOW! Program Outcomes: <https://www.sfhsa.org/services/jobs-money/jobsnow>

up to \$106,495- braided funding streams: CFET, WIOA, and CalWORKs.

2. **Workfare:** With the ABAWD waiver ending, Marin County needs to expand options for its CFET participants, who typically face the greatest obstacles in health and wellness equity. San Francisco County's Workfare program is a government-community partnership that is highly successful for this population. It is recommended that the Workfare model be replicated in Marin County.

Next Steps: (1) Form a task force consisting of Social Services and Human Resources staff charged with implementing a pilot workfare program (three months). **Costs:** Staff time for task force. (2) Perform cost analysis to identify 50/50 offset with CFET funding (three months). **Costs:** Staff time for analysis.

3. **Coordinated Data System:** Programs within Marin County's CFET program struggle with compiling, coordinating, and evaluating data. San Francisco County's use of Launchpad illustrates the benefit of data systems that reinforce coordinated delivery and information sharing. Marin County's Strategic Plan focuses on integrating service delivery by improving cross-program data sharing to be more client-focused.

Next Steps: (1) Form task force including members across Social Services, Information Technology, and Compliance charged with examining cloud-based data sharing systems (six months). **Costs:** Task force staff time. (2) Data system purchase and ongoing maintenance, utilizing 50/50 funds. **Costs:** 50% reimbursement of non-federal funds to purchase and maintain system.

4. **Centralized Contracting:** San Francisco County's centralized contracting system highlights the benefits of uniformity in procedures, control of procurement process, and ability to efficiently maximize funding opportunities. Marin County's contracting process is fragmented but is open to improvement as called for in its Strategic Plan.

Next Steps: (1) Formation of a dedicated contracts unit including the following positions: Contracts Program Manager (\$155,654), Department Analyst II (\$132,453), and two Administrative Assistants I (\$165,547). Contracts unit has single points of contact with risk management, county counsel, and fiscal (six months). (2) Develop department manual to ensure consistency across divisions (6 months). **Costs:** Department Analyst and Administrative Assistant staff time. (3) Form task force across HHS, Information Technology, and Compliance charged with examining data base systems for contracts tracking database. **Costs:** Task force staff time.

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