

# CalOAR: Understanding the Process

**Presentation at CalWORKs 2.0 County Convening  
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## Agenda

- What is CalOAR
- How the workgroup used a CalWORKs Logic Model
- Performance management and prioritizing measures
- Defining and operationalizing measures
  - Draft measures
- County self assessment and improvement planning
  - Draft process
- Training and technical assistance
- What's next

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## What is CalOAR?

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## Legislative Requirements

CalOAR legislation requires a work group to develop three distinct elements by July 2019: (1) process and outcomes indicators, (2) a county self-assessment process, and (3) a county CalWORKs system improvement plan

These elements must:

- Take local program variations into account, while still enabling county-to-county comparisons
- Help counties and the state understand program functions and progress, and determine whether state resources are sufficient to support programs
- Help counties make real-time and long-term decisions about program management

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## CalWORKs Logic Model

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## What is a Logic Model?

- A simplified visual description of a program or policy
- Discretely represents logical relationships between resources input to the program or policy, the activities or actions that utilize those resources, and the direct benefits that result from each
- Portrays the theoretical underpinnings of the TOC operationally, as related to (1) inputs, (2) activities, (3) outputs and (4) outcomes
- Is a helpful tool for both planning and evaluation

## Theory of Change (TOC)

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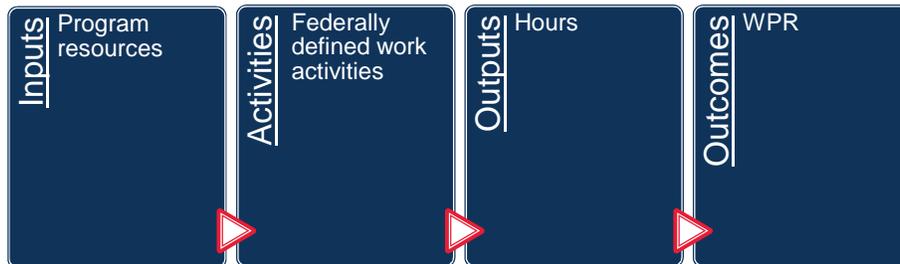
- Theoretical underpinning that explains why we should believe an outcome is likely
- Explicitly describes the steps and mapping leading up to a long-term outcome
- Avoids assumptions and guess work by drawing out the concrete reasons to believe a program or policy will have the intended impact
- Operationally this requires:
  - Identification of outcomes
  - Backward mapping to connect inputs, activities, and outputs to outcomes in a linear fashion

## CalWORKs Theory of Change

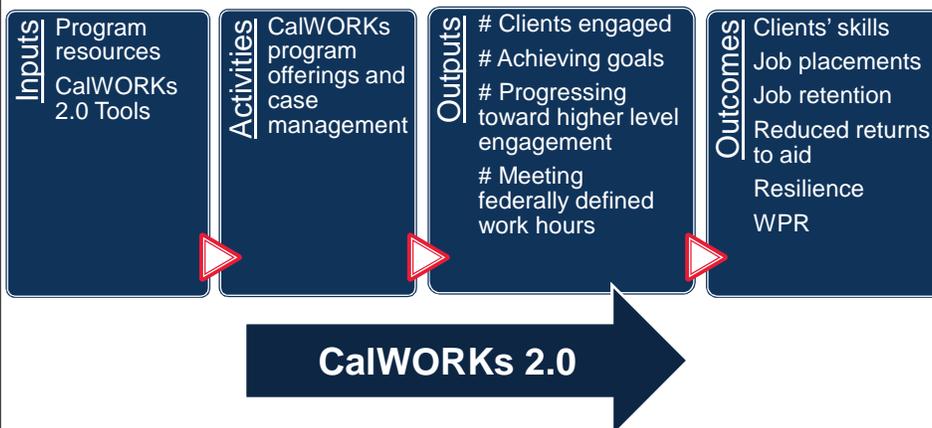
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- Effective engagement is a necessary first step to helping participants and to decrease sanctions
- People will be more motivated to participate when they are pursuing goals that are meaningful and within their reach
- Executive function and self-regulation are key to long-term job success and resilience
- Positive, supportive relationships are key to building and modeling executive function skills
- The CalWORKs 2.0 program approach is designed to facilitate improved engagement, increase choice and agency, and encourage executive and self-regulation skill building through routine practices and meaningful staff interactions
- The CW 2.0 effort is not only about the tools, but also about how the tools are used in an evidence-based framework and the program environment in which they are deployed for success

## How Outcomes Drive Program Logic: CW 1.0



## How Outcomes Drive Program Logic: CW 2.0

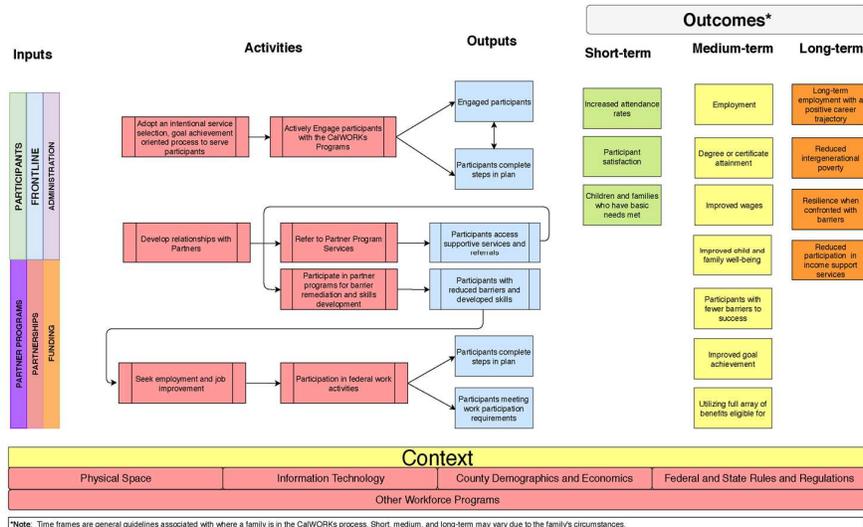


## CalWORKs Logic Model

- Operationalizes the 2.0 strategy
  - Customers have their own needs, and their WtW plans should be developed to meet these needs
  - Customers need skills to succeed and engage with the program. CalWORKs should help develop and model these skills
- Explains how the program can achieve its outcomes
  - Barrier remediation and meeting families needs immediately
  - Self-regulation/executive function skill building opportunities
  - Customer involvement and agency
  - Partnerships between staff and customers, and within agency and community
- Different levels of detail are needed for different purposes
  - Accountability can focus on the bigger picture- long term outcomes
  - Program management needs to get into the weeds and have process outputs to understand outcomes

## CalWORKs Logic Model

Draft CalWORKs High Level Logic Model



## How to Use the Logic Model

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- CalWORKs design and intended outcomes drive our discussion of activities and outputs
- Contextual factors also influence inputs and activities- these may change depending on perspective (Federal vs. State vs. County)
- The state regulatory framework defines some activities, but counties influence how those are operationalized and connected to outputs
- The state and counties each establish outcomes of interest – they should be complimentary

## CalOAR and the CalWORKs Logic Model

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- Our discussion of CalOAR metrics and processes has always fit clearly within the program scope as defined by the logic model
- Outcomes of interest at the state level should be directly reflected by inputs and activities defined within the CalWORKs program and statute
- Additional depth and specificity can be encouraged and considered at the level of county (through CQI and program management), but need to be flexible for local control
- Keep in mind accountability vs. program management

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## Performance Management and Prioritizing Measures

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## Key Themes

- **Measures must be prioritized**
  - You can't measure everything
  - There are many factors to consider
  - Focusing on one aspect may naturally lead to decreased attention paid to other aspects
- **Selected measures must be connected to their design, data sources, and ultimate use**
  - Is there a good way to define the measures
  - Do we have that data
  - Can a county make a meaningful decisions with this data
- **One needs to consider implementation when selecting and developing performance measures**

## Intentional Metric Selection

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- **Develop a clear logical rationale about how the metric supports program improvement and is actionable**
- **Consciously make decisions that push program management in the direction of CalWORKs 2.0**
- **Plan for future shifts in data management to better serve customers and workers**
- **Maximize existing data and specify how each metric benefits staff work, program process, and customers**
- **Recognize variations in program resources available in different counties and allow flexibility**

## Accountability vs. Program Management

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- **Accountability (outcome)**
  - **Information for the state to define and measure program success at a high level across all counties**
    - Is our funding and program design producing intended outcomes across all counties?
  - **Likely medium to long term outcomes**
- **Program management (process):**
  - **Occur in real time or short term**
  - **Are observable, actionable, and easy to interpret**
  - **Focus on input allocation and activity operations**
  - **Demonstrate key intermediate steps between inputs and outcomes**
    - Are county implementation decisions leading to successful engagement and completion of action plans?
  - **Assist with defining staff and program performance outputs**

## Process vs. Outcome

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- **Process measures: (specific)**
  - Occur in real time
  - Are observable and actionable
  - Demonstrate key intermediate steps between inputs and outcomes
  - Assist with defining staff performance success
  - Aid in program management
- **Outcome measures: (general)**
  - Occur over longer period of time
  - Are observable, but rely on understanding the process mechanisms leading to them to be actionable
  - Assist in determining program performance or success

## Identifying Potential Measures: Sources

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- **Laws, regulations, and other policy statements**
  - Identify a program's vision, strategy, and goals
  - Sometimes identify specific measures
  - Normally provide general guidelines but not enough details
- **Logic models**
  - Operationalize the program's strategy
  - Provide the proposed causal link among inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes
- **Stakeholders**
  - Counties                      – Advocates
  - Legislators                – Participants and former participants
  - Researchers              – CDSS and other agencies

## CalOAR

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- **Purpose and goals of potential measures**
  - Consistent with CalWORKs 2.0
  - Measure performance over time
  - Guide counties' self-assessment and system improvement plans
- **Cal-OARs Potential Measure Categories**
  - **Process measures**
    - Participant engagement
    - Service delivery
    - Participation
  - **Outcome measures**
    - Employment
    - Educational attainment
    - Program exit and re-entry – Churn
    - Child and family well-being (optional)

## Criteria for Selecting Measures

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- **Performance measures should be...**
  - Quantitative
  - Timely
  - Actionable
  - Standardized
  - Understandable
  - Minimally burdensome to compute and interpret
- **Focus on key outcomes that the program *affects***
- **The set of measures should be balanced and comprehensive**

## Current Draft Measures: Process

### PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT

- Engagement rate
- Sanction rate
  - Sanction cure rate
- OCAT/Appraisal completion timeliness
- OCAT/Appraisal to next activity timeliness

### PARTICIPATION

- Orientation attendance rate
- First activity attendance rate
- Education or training access
- Education and training utilization

### SERVICE DELIVERY

- Child Care access
- Transportation access
- Ancillary services access

## Current Draft Measures: Outcomes

### EMPLOYMENT

- Employment rate of current CalWORKs recipients
- Median earnings of current CalWORKs recipients
- Subsidized to Unsubsidized employment
- Wage progression
  - Post CalWORKs employment rate

### FAMILY AND CHILD WELL-BEING

- Adults receiving CalWORKs that were formerly on CalWORKs as children
- Housing assistance access for those with acute housing need
- Home Visiting transitions to WTW engagement
- Family Stabilization transitions to WTW engagement

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

- Improved literacy, basic skills and English language acquisition
- Educational completion

### PROGRAM EXITS

- Exits with income

### PROGRAM REENTRIES

- Program reentries
  - Program reentries after exit with income

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## Defining and Operationalizing Measures

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## Defining and Operationalizing Measures

- **Who and what are you measuring?**
  - Unit of analysis
  - Population measured
  - Population excluded
- **When are you measuring?**
  - Participants vs. exiters
  - Frequency of measurement
- **How are you going to measure?**
  - Sample vs. universe
  - What are the data sources?
  - How will the measure be calculated?
- **How will the measures be used?**
  - Accountability or program management
  - Actions to improve performance outcomes

## Considerations ahead

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- **Define what you are measuring**
  - How do you define an exiter?
  - How do you define success?
  - Who to exclude from the measure? Who to include in the measure?
- **Consider how the data will be used**
  - What is the ideal amount of information that counties can operationalize and use?
  - How about for the state?
  - When the data will be available?
    - Will the results be usable?
- **What would be the additional costs for the new measures?**
  - Do the existing data and systems support that measures you want to collect?
  - For any additional data collection weight the costs and benefits?
- **What would CalOARs look like if it were standardized across counties?**
- **How would accommodating county variations look impact the ability to understand and manage the system?**

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## Self-Assessment and CQI

## Making Sense of the Measures and CQI

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CalOAR calls for an iterative quality improvement process completed on a *three-year cycle*. The process will include:

- A self-assessment to describe the county's performance on each indicator, highlight strengths and weaknesses in current practices and resource development, and identify how local operations and system factors affect outcomes
- A system improvement plan to outline county goals for improving CalWORKs programming and the plan to achieve those goals. The improvement plan will be informed by the self-assessment process and a county peer review
- An annual progress report to track county progress on goals outlined in the system improvement plan each cycle

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## Technical Assistance

## CDSS Partnering with Counties

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CDSS will give counties TA and facilitate peer review during initial implementation of the performance indicators and the quality improvement process.

Currently we are:

- Confirming and consolidating indicators that promote replication of best practices in service delivery
- Establishing a process to determine state and county baselines as well as standardized targets
- Creating a process for reviewing all county reports and improvement plans and determining what TA will be provided to support county assessment and improvement

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## What's Next

