

SPRING RENEWAL



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Families of Employment Services</i>	3
<i>Growing Success</i>	4
<i>Top Performers</i>	4
<i>Cultivating the Future</i>	5
<i>Breaking New Ground</i>	5
<i>Family Stabilization Services</i>	6
<i>Making the Connection</i>	6
<i>A Special Day for CalWORKs Families</i>	8
<i>Crash Course in CalWORKs</i>	9
<i>Planting the Seeds</i>	9
<i>Refugee Employment Services</i>	10
<i>Santa Clara County Safety Net</i>	11
<i>Sadly, We Bid Adieu</i>	12



Each spring, the season of renewal greets Employment Services with an opportunity to prepare for the coming year with a rejuvenated spirit. Unlike years past, CalWORKs families are finding themselves embraced by a much improved economy and a strengthening labor market which has opened the door to new employment opportunities and enhanced services.

Last Year's Showers, Yielding this Spring's Flowers

Last year's budget (2013-14) included funding for several new program enhancements aimed at more effectively engaging families in Welfare-to-Work programs.

Beginning this March, families received a 5% grant increase, bringing the new grant levels closer to pre-recession levels. While not fully restoring grants, the additional funding will go a long way in helping struggling families living on a shoe string budget.

Fostering further progress, Employment Services will be offering new services that are geared toward stabilizing families and increasing participant employability. **Family Stabilization Services** will provide preventative financial assistance to help participants staving off eviction or potential homelessness (see page 6 for more information). **Employment Connection Works** (EC Works) is an enhanced Subsidized Employment program (see page 7 for more information). Through EC Works, jobseekers at the Employment Connection Center will have a direct link to jobs that

will provide them with training and an opportunity for permanent, full-time employment. With wrap-around support and enhanced employment options, families now have everything they need to catapult themselves into self-sufficiency.

This Year's Prospects

The Governor's 2014-15 budget proposal maintains current funding levels and includes provisions for a new pilot program, the Child/Parent Demonstration Pilot Project.

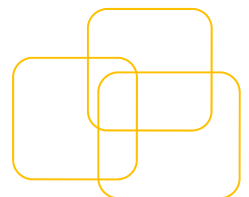
As currently envisioned, the new Child Care pilot will emphasize early childhood learning and increased parent involvement for families with children ages two to five years old. Through the program, families with severe barriers will receive parent education that focuses on developing meaningful ways to interact with their children. Kids in the program will participate in a learning curriculum designed to encourage early cognitive development. Employment Services Administration is following the development of this proposal and will provide more information at future CalWORKs Advisory Meetings.*

Although the proposed budget didn't include allocations for new service programs, Employment Services will continue to refine services from last year's enhancements. As spring moves forward, we will savor the opportunity to focus on building strong Early Engagement Services, fine tuning our delivery of quality core services and dedicating ourselves to breaking more performance records.

Rafaela Perez

Employment Services Administrator

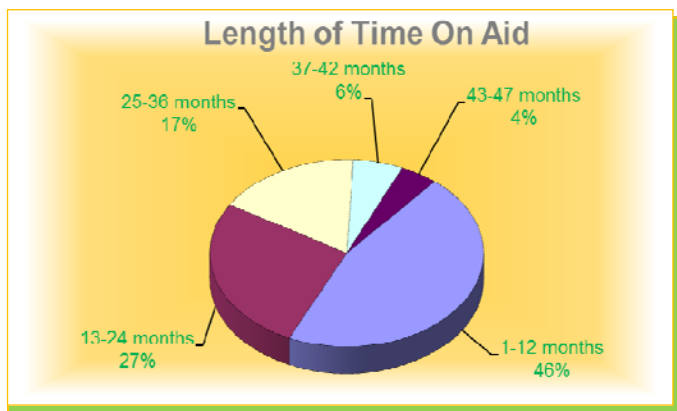
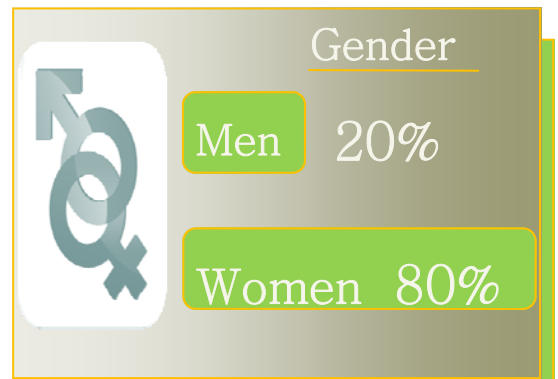
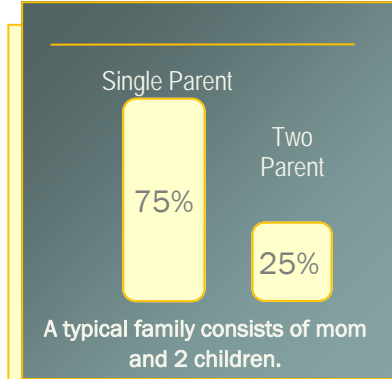
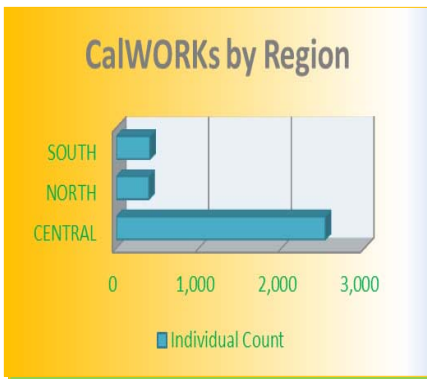
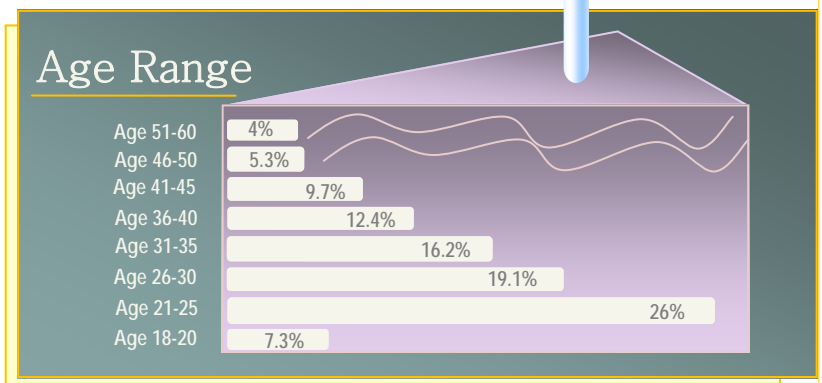
*See Appendix A for the CalWORKs Advisory location and schedule.



THE FAMILIES OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

In Santa Clara County, there are currently 12,361 active CalWORKs cases. A large portion of this population are receiving child-only grants*, the remaining 5,055 families are enrolled with Employment Services. As part of the requirements of receiving cash aid, these families participate in employment based activities designed to help them overcome barriers and develop or regain their self-sufficiency.

Below is a demographic snapshot of the families we serve:

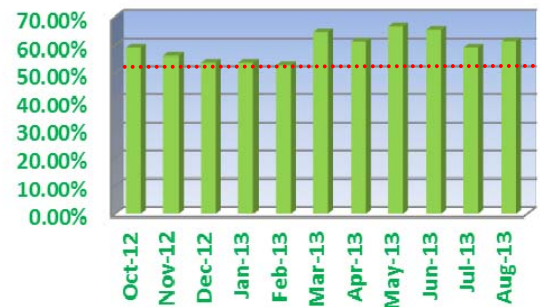


*Child-Only grants are those in which the sole recipient of aid is a child under the age of 18 and in the care of a CalWORKs timed-out parent or an elderly relative on a fixed income.

GROWING SUCCESS

Employment Services is looking at another banner year of record breaking performance as we reached an all-time high Work Participation Rate (WPR) of 66.87% last May. WPR is the bottom-line performance indicator that determines the health of the Employment Services program. Presently, the federal requirement is set at 50% and Santa Clara County has surpassed that goal for each of the past 18 months! Our current average yearly rate is 58.88% which is one of the highest rates in California.

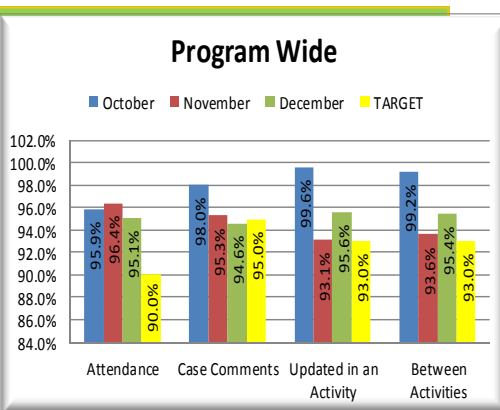
Santa Clara County
WPR Rate



Keys to Success

In managing cases, work participation rates and providing comprehensive services, Employment Counselors must perform a multitude of day-to-day tasks and ensure client follow-up to help track their progress. A key element in managing all the developments has been the Performance Based Reports (PB Report), an internal tool that gives workers an ongoing monthly overview of their case management tasks and client progress. The PB Reports consists of four primary indicators:

- ◇ Attendance
- ◇ Participation
- ◇ Contact
- ◇ Engagement



PB Reports are a real asset for staff and management; they've become a cornerstone tool that helps Santa Clara County reach higher levels of success with the WPR performance measure.



Top Performers

Each month, Employment Services showcases its top performers and provides recognition for their accomplishments. We recently caught up with some of our standout Employment Counselors to figure out the secret of their success and identify some best practices. As it turned out, their secret is simplicity.

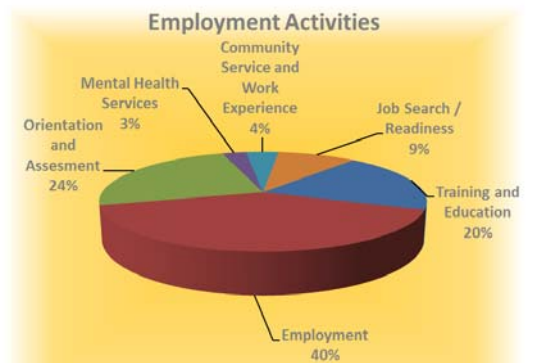
Many use the PB Report as a monthly checklist to manage the actions needed to maintain each case. As client documents come in, like attendance sheets and childcare billing, the counselors are able to update CalWIN and check the item off the list. By visually monitoring their work, they effectively schedule and balance their workload.

CULTIVATING THE FUTURE

CalWORKs Employment Services (CWES) Operations is the central hub that coordinates each family's engagement in Welfare-to-Work activities. By utilizing CalWORKs employment programs and an extended network of partners, Employment Services is able to help over 5,000 enrolled families develop effective employment plans that include support services they need to meet their required work participation hours and build a future based on self-sufficiency.

To begin, all participants receive a full assessment of their educational background, employment history, work skills and goals. With the help of their Employment Counselor, they develop an employment plan that is tailored to fit their needs. While plans vary, each may consist of key activity elements, such as G.E.D. courses, vocational training, community college degree programs and employment. Additionally, participants are also linked to supportive services that enable them to participate in these activities, including child care, transportation and counseling services.

CWES Operations has been very busy, focusing on optimal service delivery and building upon our WPR performance rate. Through the first half of the year they've already authorized: 9,372 transportation payments, 5,400 child care payments and 1,652 ancillary payments for items like school books, work uniforms and tools. Day-to-day, operations staff continue to contribute toward performance goals by providing retention services for up to 950 families each month!



The graph above represents client participation in the major employment activity categories.

Breaking New Ground

Not even the rain was able to put a hamper on the ceremonial ribbon cutting event to commemorate the opening of the new North County office. We were fortunate to be joined by Mt. View Mayor, Chris Clark, County Executive, Jeff Smith and County Supervisor, Joe Simitian, who braved the stormy weather to deliver encouraging opening words.

The new location, at **1330 West Middlefield Road in Mountain View***, will be a full service center, with Benefits, Employment Services and an Employment Connection Center all under one roof. With a new home office, families residing in the northern county district will be able to conveniently access employment and supportive services.

*See Appendix B for more details.



FAMILY STABILIZATION SERVICES



With the high cost of housing in the Bay Area, low income families often find themselves struggling to keep a roof over their head. Employment Services is now able to offer a solution that will help them overcome this barrier and enable them to channel their

efforts on participating in employment activities. These clients, who are either homeless or facing eviction, may now be eligible for Family Stabilization Services.

The Family Stabilization Housing Assistance Program's goal is to serve up to 300 families by the end of June 2014.

My Client May Qualify, Where Do We Start?

Clients that need Stabilization Services must complete an application, develop a housing service plan and complete a financial literacy course to demonstrate that they will be able to sustain their housing service plan. Social Workers will provide one-on-one counseling and attempt to help clients secure affordable housing based on their budget.

MAKING THE CONNECTION

The Employment Connection Center (ECC) is the County's one stop employment shop that boasts a robust array of services focusing on Job Readiness, Job Development, Job Placement and Retention.

As part of the ECC's employment engagement strategy, the center regularly hosts work readiness workshops, job search activities and recruiting events that link job seekers with employers. With an approach that provides a full wrap-around employment experience, CalWORKs families are able to maximize their opportunities to gain employment, maintain their job and develop the skills they need to advance.

In the first half of the 2013-2014 fiscal year, the Employment Connection served over 616 program participants, of which, 312 secured employment at an average hourly wage of \$13.18 per hour.

SUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT

The Employment Connection Center recently expanded its Subsidized Employment offerings by introducing its newest endeavor, the **EC Works Program**. The new subsidized employment program combines both EC Works and the Transitional Subsidized Employment (T.S.E.) Program to serve program participants throughout Santa Clara County.

Subsidized employment is proving to be a mutually beneficial program for all involved. Employers that elect to hire Employment Services participants are able to provide on-the-job training while receiving a minimum wage reimbursement that helps offset their costs. Participants in the program have the inside track on a myriad of new job opportunities that are expected to transition into full-time, unsubsidized positions after a short 3 months!

Since its implementation in late November, the team has been hard at work getting the program off the ground. As of February 2014, the Employment Connection has recruited 42 employers, placed 41 participants into subsidized jobs and achieved a job retention rate of 63%. The ECC expects the numbers to continue to grow as news of the program spreads throughout the local business community.

Pursuing Success

Mary is a 23 year old single mother with little work experience. She was among the first participants to be placed in the Subsidized Employment program.



Minutes before her Subsidized Employment interview, she called the counselor and left a message “I promise that I will not let you down. You will not be disappointed with me.” A short while later, **Mary called again to announce that she got the job!**

Mary has continued to stay in touch and recently shared that she is developing a lot of technical skills and really enjoys her job.

Mary ultimately aspires to work within the human services field and is grateful for the opportunity to acquire work experience and the skills she needs to land her dream job.

A SPECIAL DAY FOR CALWORKS FAMILIES

This past December, the County Board of Supervisors hosted the 23rd Annual CalWORKs Client Achievement Awards ceremony and honored ten CalWORKs families for overcoming significant life hurdles and barriers on their path to employment. The day marks a milestone for many of the families and the celebration evokes much elation and emotion as they share their story with us. Below is a snapshot of some of this year's awardees.



Honorees Overcome the Odds

After years of dealing with drug addiction and homelessness, Daniel developed plans that enabled him to re-establish himself in the community and provide an avenue to financially support his daughter. After enrolling with Employment Services, he was able to receive Mental Health Services and attended Adult Education and Vocational Training with Metropolitan Adult Education. Once complete, he intends on joining the workforce as a C.N.C. Programmer.

Employment Services enabled Julie to return to school to earn her GED certificate at Metropolitan Adult Education. She went on to enroll in night classes at a local university. Soon after she was able to transition a work experience assignment into a full-time permanent job with the County!



Tram Anh found a job soon after her youngest son was born, but quickly discovered that she was unable to afford childcare for her two children. Her Employment Counselor linked her to the Supportive Services she needed to begin work, quality childcare. Her dedication really made an

impression on her employer and she is now permanently employed with full health insurance benefits and paid vacation.



Krystal worked with Employment Services', "Keys to Success" program to learn how to manage her learning disability. With these new skills, she enrolled at San Jose City College. As a CalWORKs grad, she now serves the community by helping other families overcome barriers working as a Family Case Manager with Gardner Family Health Network.

Unsung Heroes

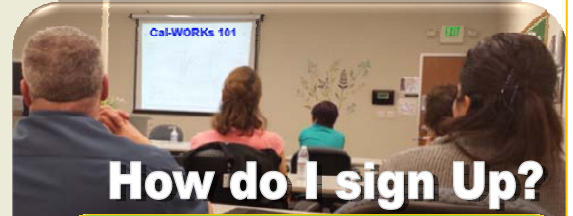
Although our families were the highlight of the event, each honoree made an effort to pay tribute to the CalWORKs staff, from Eligibility to Employment Services, working behind the scenes to inspire them. As County Staff, we have the opportunity to change lives by providing motivation, encouragement and advocacy. CalWORKs staff make the difference for our clients!
Rafaela Perez

CRASH COURSE IN CALWORKS

Throughout the year, the Employment Support Initiative Unit teams up with guest presenters from various service partners to conduct an all-inclusive workshop, appropriately named “CalWORKs 101.” The workshop is designed to provide an informative overview of CalWORKs programs, supportive services, regulations and procedures that clients follow while participating in the program.

Community partners, public agencies and their staff are encouraged to attend. Each workshop provides great deal of resource information, update eligibility requirements including insight on the CalWORKs, CalFresh, and Medi-Cal programs.

See Appendix C for a complete listing of CalWORKs 101 dates and times.



How do I sign Up?

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Contact Person: Anita Casillas
Phone: 408-755-7730
Email: ESI@ssa.sccgov.org

WORKSHOP LOCATION

ORIENTATION ROOM
1879 Senter Road
San Jose, CA 95112

PLANTING THE SEEDS

Employment Services has built partnerships with several local Adult Education Districts and local Community Colleges to help approximately 750 participants overcome educational deficiencies and build a brighter future for their families.



Adult Education has become a hot button issue over the last several years as the state legislature removed a permanent funding stream for these educational services. The Legislative Analyst’s Office recently released a comprehensive study on adult education that affirmed its importance and recommended reforms, including aligning the adult schools and the community colleges more closely. As a result of the recommendation, Governor Brown introduced Assembly Bill 86, which proposed funding and direction for regional consortiums, consisting of Adult School Districts and Community Colleges, to develop a comprehensive regional plan to better serve adult learners.

At this time, the local South County Consortium has convened and is currently identifying existing programs, assessing unmet needs and developing strategies to fill the gaps. Once complete, the Consortium will outline a plan that merges curricula, supportive services, linkage to career pathways and professional development for adult students. The Regional Plan is expected to be delivered to the State in March of 2015. Employment Services is following the developments closely and will provide updates and explore potential impacts at upcoming CalWORKs Advisory meetings.*

*See Appendix A for CalWORKs Advisory meeting schedule.

REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES



Santa Clara County was once the adopted home to a sizeable refugee population; however, loss of jobs in the manufacturing sector and increased cost of living have caused the bay area to become an increasingly difficult place to carve out a new life. Through the first quarter of the Federal Fiscal Year an estimated 71 refugees have resettled in Santa Clara County. This constitutes a **50% decrease** compared to the previous Federal Fiscal Year. The profile of incoming refugees closely reflects the hotbeds of international conflict. Santa Clara is hosting refugees from countries across the globe, with 56% heralding from Iran, 31% from Iraq, followed by Eritrea, comprising of 10% of the population.

The Social Services Agency contracts with several community-based organizations to provide specialized employment services to assist refugees in resettling and making social adjustments while helping them look for their first job in the United States. During the most recent federal fiscal year, the refugee agencies placed 41 participants in employment at an average wage of \$11.56 per hour.

Celebrating Diversity

Santa Clara County's cultural and ethnic sensitivity has played an important role in welcoming refugees and asylees from around the world. In this spirit, community partners and County staff organize several events to better serve this community.



Upcoming events include:

Citizenship Day: June 2014. The event offers a full range of citizenship services including: assistance with the N400 application, workshops in different languages to educate clients on the citizenship process and mock interview services. Additionally, Asian Law Alliance is committed to providing legal assistance on various citizenship elements.

22nd Annual World Refugee Awareness Day*: June 20, 2014. Each year, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors adopts a resolution to recognize the resiliency and unique contributions of refugees to their adopted country. Santa Clara County Refugee & Immigrant Forum hosts a wide variety of festivities, including: live music, activities for children, and ethnic food from around the world.

All events are open to the public, come and celebrate the County's diverse culture.

***See Appendix D for more information.**

SANTA CLARA COUNTY SAFETY NET

The Santa Clara County Safety Net committee is comprised of community based organizations dedicated to alleviating food insecurity through resources distribution, education and advocacy.

Outreach Specialists at Second Harvest Food Bank’s “Food Connection” have been hard at work combating hunger and reaching out to families in the community. During the last quarter, demand for food services has grown dramatically and they provided 12,732 food referrals, an increase of 19% over the same period last year. Through their efforts, they’ve conducted 6,015 CalFresh screenings and submitted 965 applications in Santa Clara County; 97% of which, were submitted online through www.mybenefitscalwin.org. Interested community members may also call the Food Bank’s hotline to apply over the phone at 800-984-3663. Operators are available in all languages.

CalFresh.
A worry-free way to feed your family.
Free & confidential

Call 1-800-984-3663

What is CalFresh?
• A plastic card for buying food at food stores and farmers markets

Who Can Get It?
• Low-income individuals, families, and seniors
• An adult or child who has a social security number and is not receiving SSI

Funded by the USDA SNAP, known in California as CalFresh, an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Logos for Second Harvest Food Bank, Human Services, and CalFresh.

Spreading the Word

Advertising continues to be a key element in informing families about existing resources they may be eligible to access. Along with billboards and radio advertising, approximately 60,444 flyers and informational materials have been distributed at community centers, retail stores, libraries, and community resource fairs.



Employment Services’, Jaslin Yu, hosts the Social Services booth at this year’s Hunger Action Summit.

Hunger Action Summit

On January 24, 2014, the annual Hunger Action Summit was held at Santa Clara University. Service providers throughout the area were invited to learn about the “hunger picture” in our community and how to address this issue on a local, state, national and international level. Participants left with a better understanding of how they can effectively fight hunger on a personal and professional level.

Continued on page 12

Hunger Action Summit; continued from page 11

According to the Hunger Index conducted by Santa Clara University, in 2012, 595 million meals were needed to assist 185,000 households in Santa Clara County. To meet the need, 289 million meals were purchased and 153.8 million meals were provided to the community. 55% of those meals were secured from CalFresh, 15% from Second Harvest Food Bank, 14% from School meals, and 13% from other sources, including WIC. Sadly, 152.2 million meals were left unfilled in our community, leaving families and children hungry.

To find out how you can help these families meet their nutritional needs, the Safety Net meets monthly to strategize on new ways to serve the community and end hunger.*

***See Appendix E for dates and times.**

SADLY, WE BID ADIEU

For over twenty years the County has partnered with Career Closet to empower Employment Services' jobseekers by providing them with professional attire to help them enter (or re-enter) the workforce. Over the years, thousands of participants have walked through their doors for a fitting consultation and left beaming with confidence, ready to make a positive impression at upcoming job interviews. Regrettably, Career Closet has closed their doors and will no longer be providing wardrobe services for low income families. Both Employment Services and the families we serve will be forever grateful for their unwavering dedication, passion and heartfelt service throughout our partnership.

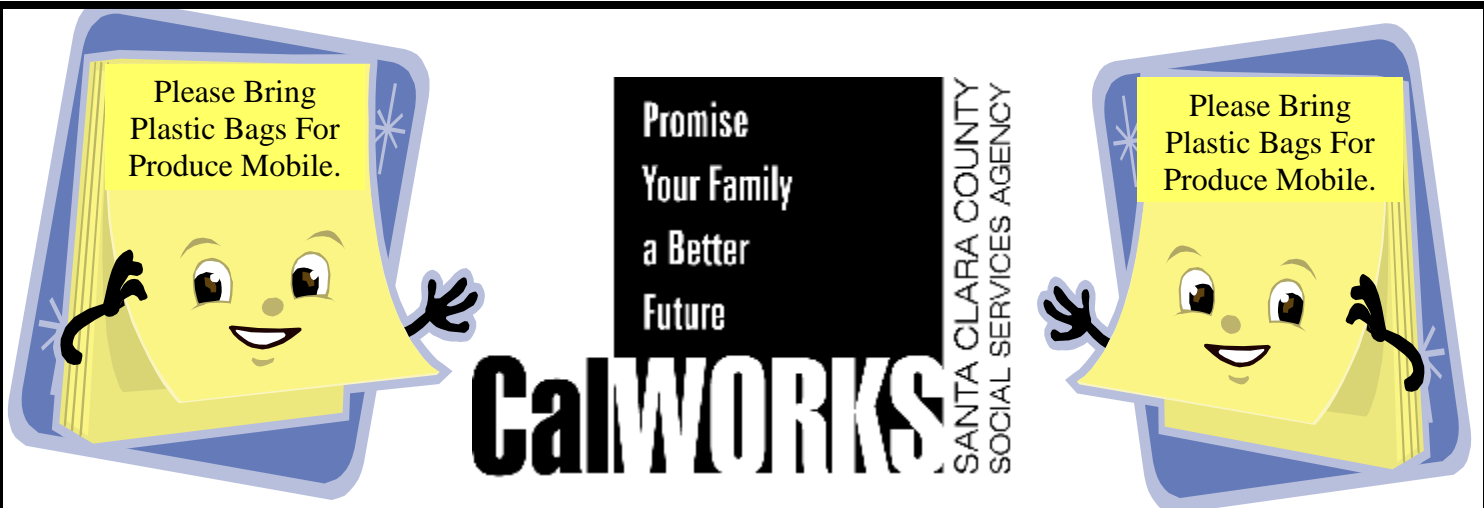


Stylish Shoes To Fill

With Career Closet's departure, Employment Services is scouting for a new partner to help fill the void. We are currently soliciting existing community based organizations that provide similar services to help outfit CalWORKs families with the professional clothing they need to engage in the job search and interview process. We will continue to keep our Community Partner network up to speed on new developments as they unfold at upcoming CalWORKs Advisory meetings.

APPENDIX

CalWORKs Advisory.....	A
North County Flyer.....	B
CalWORKs 101.....	C
Citizenship Day.....	D
Safety Net Schedule.....	E



CalWORKS Advisory 2014 Meeting Calendar

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
January 8	11:30 – 1:30	Social Services Agency 1879 Senter Road–Orientation Room
February 5	11:30 – 1:30	Social Services Agency 1879 Senter Road–Orientation Room
March 5	11:30 – 1:30	Social Services Agency 1879 Senter Road–Orientation Room
April 2	11:30 – 1:30	Social Services Agency 1879 Senter Road–Orientation Room
May 7	11:30 – 1:30	Social Services Agency 1879 Senter Road–Orientation Room
June 4	11:30 – 1:30	Social Services Agency 1879 Senter Road–Orientation Room
July	* NO MEETING THIS MONTH *	
August 6	11:30 – 1:30	Social Services Agency 1879 Senter Road–Orientation Room
September 3	11:30 – 1:30	Social Services Agency 1879 Senter Road–Orientation Room
October 1	11:30 – 1:30	Social Services Agency 1879 Senter Road–Orientation Room
November 5	11:30 – 1:30	Social Services Agency 1879 Senter Road–Orientation Room
December	➔ NO MEETING THIS MONTH – CLIENT ACHIEVMENT AWARDS	

For future meeting location contact Anita A. Casillas @ 408-755-7732
or email: Anita.Casillas@ssa.sccgov.org

The Social Services Agency office in North County is opening!!!

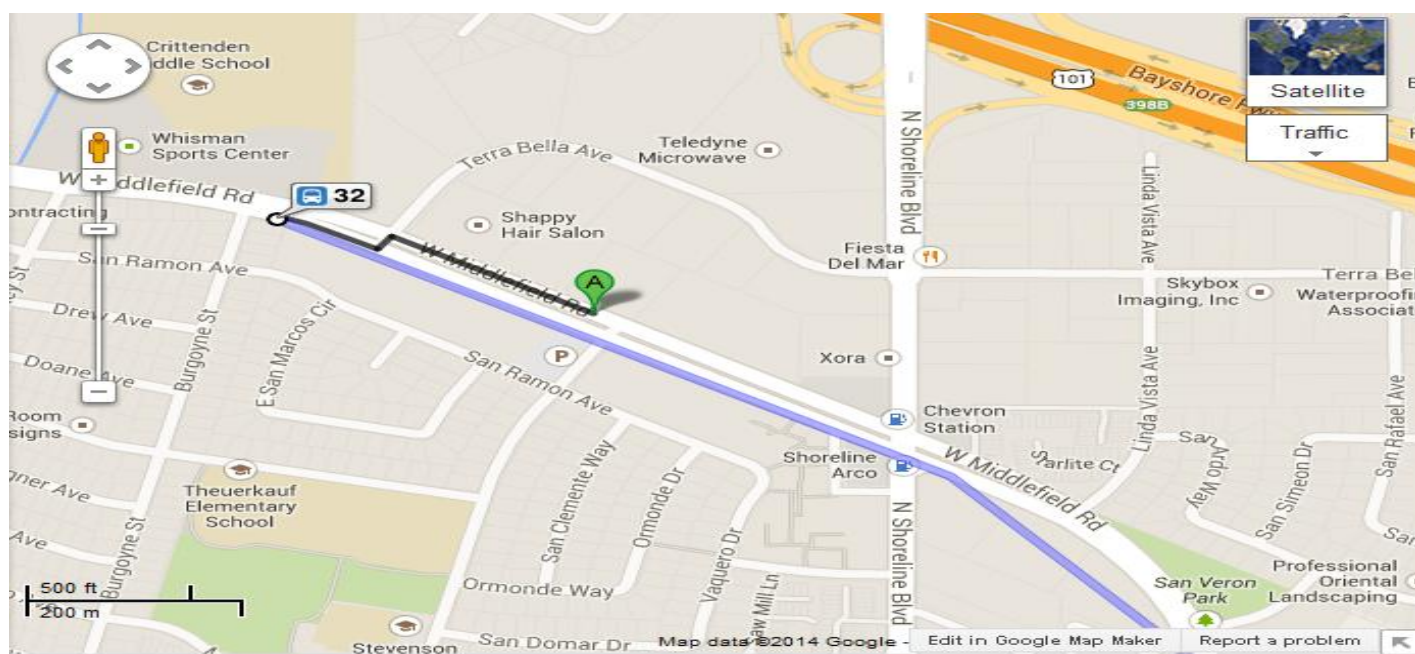


The new North County district office will **open** on **February 18, 2014** as a full one stop center, accepting both new and continuing Benefits clients and boasting a state of the art Employment Services Center.

The office will be located at:

1330 West Middlefield Road, Mountain View, CA 94043-4799

(VTA Bus Route 32)



Call North County Staff at **(408) 278-2400** or dial **1-877-962-3633** to:

- ✓ Apply for benefits
- ✓ Report Changes
- ✓ Inquire about the status of your benefits or other questions regarding benefits

Or

Use www.mybenefitscalwin.org

Or

Contact CalWORKs Employment Services at **(408) 278-2402**

Making a Difference Through People, Service and Performance!



CaIWORKs 101

2014 Workshop Calendar

DAY	DATE	TIME
Friday	February 28, 2014	1:30 pm – 4:30 pm
	April 25, 2014	
	June 27, 2014	
	August 29, 2014	
	October 31, 2014	

No Registrations on Workshop Day!

This workshop will provide an informative overview of Department of Benefits and Employment Services (DEBS). Presentations on the following programs are on the agenda: Social Worker Unit, Expungement Program, Health Alliance, Employment Connection, Child Care Resource & Referrals and Cal-Learn Program. Questions are encouraged during this workshop. Your promptness is appreciated.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Contact Person: Anita Casillas
Phone: 408-755-7730
Email: ESI@ssa.sccgov.org

WORKSHOP LOCATION

ORIENTATION ROOM
1879 Senter Road
San Jose, CA 95112

Mission of Santa Clara County Social Services Agency-

“A culturally sensitive and socially responsible public agency providing high quality, professional, financial, and protective services for residents of Santa Clara County.”



22nd Annual World Refugee Day

Friday, June 20th 2014 - 4:30 PM to 7:00 PM

Campbell Community Center - *Orchard City Banquet Hall*

1 W. Campbell Avenue, Campbell, California 95008

Join Us for

Presentations | Food | Entertainment
Children's Activities | Community Resources | Raffle Prizes

Traditional attire encouraged

For more information, please call 408-357-7452

Sponsored by:





Safety Net Meeting 2014 Calendar



SAFETY NET MEETING INFORMATION

The Safety Net Committee is co-chaired by Santa Clara County Social Services Agency and Second Harvest Food Bank. It is comprised of Community Based Organizations (CBO's) that come together in partnership to educate, access, strategize, develop and implement service recommendations to strengthen food and other services provided to those in need throughout Santa Clara County.

Safety Net meetings are held at the Second Harvest Food bank on the **4th Thursday** of each month from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This is a brown bag lunch meeting.

For more information about Safety Net Meetings and/or to request that discussion items be placed on the agenda, please contact Michelle at: (408) 755-7733 or michelle.campos@ssa.sccgov.org

<p>Location</p> <p>Second Harvest Food Bank 750 Curtner Avenue San Jose, CA 95125 (Upstairs, Going Room)</p>
<p>Time</p> <p>11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.</p>

Meeting Dates
January 23
February 27
March 27
April 24
May 22
June 26
July 24
August 28
September 25
October 23
November (No Meeting)
December (TBD)



SANTA CLARA COUNTY
SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY