

Handbook

A Guide to
Riverside County
CalWORKS and GAIN
Employment
Services



**Riverside County GAIN has previously received the
Innovations in American Government Award**

The Innovations Awards Program is sponsored by the
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Considered to be among the nation's most prestigious
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

What are CalWORKs GAIN Employment Services and what can they do for me?	1
Who must participate?	1
Who does not have to participate?	2
How many hours per week do I have to participate?	2
What is considered satisfactory participation?	3
What happens if I do not participate?	3
What if I have a good reason for not participating?	4
What is a Work Plan?	5
What type of activities will I be doing?	6
What are supportive services and how do I get them?	7
What can I do if I disagree with the decisions or actions of my GAIN Counselor?	8
What happens when I get a job?	9
List of educational opportunities and training centers.	9
Important Phone Numbers.	10

What are CalWORKs GAIN Employment Services and what can they do for me?

The purpose of CalWORKs GAIN is to help you prepare for work and find a job. Finding a job will help you become self-supporting, and your family will enjoy a better way of life. After you get a job, you will have more money for your family, serve as a role model for your children, increase your self-confidence, and build a future.



CalWORKs GAIN was designed with you in mind. It's not just another government program. It's much more than that.

CalWORKs GAIN staff are with you every step of the way, providing you with such important supportive services as child care, transportation, and work-related expenses.

CalWORKs GAIN can help you get the job that you need to be self-sufficient. If needed, you'll learn skills that will help you get a job in today's work force or in your local labor market.

CalWORKs GAIN can help you improve your chances of getting a job with private industries, businesses, or public employers in your area.

Through CalWORKs GAIN, everyone wins. You gain a job and a future. Employers gain a skilled work force.

Who must participate?

Mandatory Participants—If you are a California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) recipient, and you are not exempt, you must participate in CalWORKs GAIN. You are called a "mandatory participant."

If you are a mandatory participant, you must:

- keep appointments made by your GAIN Counselor
- sign a CalWORKs GAIN Work Plan if appropriate to your case
- meet all CalWORKs requirements, including the requirements in your CalWORKs GAIN Work Plan
- not quit your job or lower your earnings, and
- provide proof of satisfactory progress in your assigned activity when required.

Your Eligibility Technician will decide if you must participate in CalWORKs GAIN when:

- you apply for aid
- your eligibility is re-determined, or
- you have a change in your exemption status.

Volunteers—Even if you are not required to participate in CalWORKs GAIN, you can ask to take part. You would be called a "volunteer." Ask your Eligibility Technician how you can get into CalWORKs GAIN.

Demonstration Projects—Some counties are part of demonstration projects. These projects test different rules to see what works best. Your GAIN Counselor will explain to you if Riverside County is part of a demonstration project and if so, if different rules apply to you.



Who does not have to participate?

Exemptions—You are exempt and do not have to participate in CalWORKs GAIN if you:

- Are less than 16 years old and not a custodial parent, or if you are 60 years or older.
- Are 16, 17, or 18 years old and go to school (not college) full time, unless you are in school as one of your CalWORKs GAIN activities or you are a custodial parent.
- Have a disability that is expected to last at least 30 days and that would keep you from working at any job or participating in CalWORKs GAIN activities. You must be getting or trying to get the medical help you need.
- Are pregnant and a doctor states that you cannot work or participate in CalWORKs GAIN activities.*
- Are the non-parent relative caretaker of a child who is a dependent or ward of the court, or a child at risk of placement in foster care and we decide that taking care of the child keeps you from working or participating in CalWORKs GAIN activities on a regular basis.
- Must stay at home to take care of someone in the household who is unable to care for himself or herself if it keeps you from working or participating in CalWORKs GAIN activities on a regular basis.*
- Are the parent or other relative caretaker of a child six months of age or younger,



and are personally providing care for the child. You may be exempt for this reason only one time during a period of continuous stay on aid under the CalWORKs program. If you received this exemption before and you give birth to or adopt another child six months old or under, you may be exempt for 12 weeks.*

- You are a VISTA Volunteer.

We may ask for proof when you claim any of the above exemptions. Your GAIN Counselor can review your situation at any time.

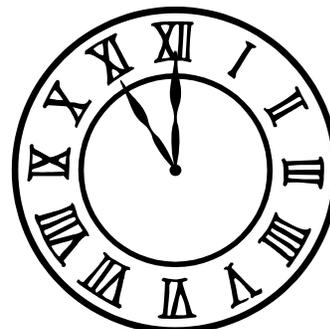
**This exemption does not apply if you are a teen parent required to participate in the Cal-Learn Program.*

How many hours per week do I have to participate?

One-Parent Families—Adult CalWORKs recipients who are not exempt will participate in assigned CalWORKs GAIN activities for a minimum of 32 hours per week.

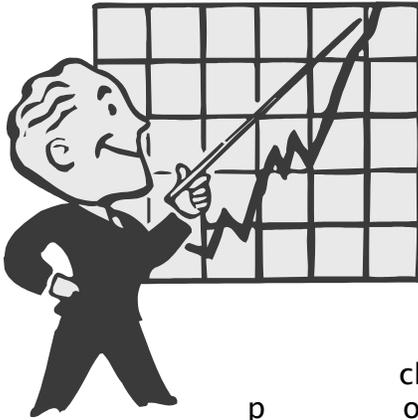
Two-Parent Families—Both parents who are recipients and are not exempt may contribute toward a 35-hour weekly minimum participation requirement. In some circumstances more hours of participation may be needed. Your GAIN Counselor can tell you if this applies to you.

The hours of participation requirements do not apply if you are participating in the Cal-Learn Program.



What is considered satisfactory participation?

Attendance—From time to time you will meet with your GAIN Counselor to determine what types of activities would best help you. People who regularly attend their activities are more successful in achieving self-sufficiency. You will sign an agreement to participate in each activity. You are required to attend all of the assigned hours. Generally, most people will be required to participate at least 32 hours a week in their activities.



Satisfactory Progress—All CalWORKs GAIN participants are required to make satisfactory progress toward completing their assigned activities. Satisfactory progress includes attendance and

participation in the assigned activities. Some activities have specific requirements. For example, some persons in education activities are required to maintain passing grades (usually a "C" or better) or must pass periodic progress tests. Persons who are employed must remain employed. You also must provide documentation of your progress when requested by the county.

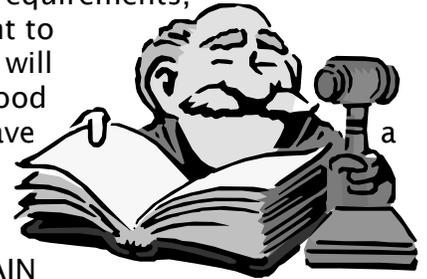
Completion of Assignment—You will have successfully completed an assignment if:

- you attended all of the required hours and/or obtained the goal of the activity assignment
- we determine that you will not benefit from further participation in that activity
- we determine a different activity will be more appropriate for you, or
- you go off cash aid.

What happens if I do not participate?

As you know, participation in CalWORKs GAIN is mandatory for all able-bodied CalWORKs applicants and recipients. Exemptions are listed in the section titled, "Who does not have to participate." If for any reason, you do not do what CalWORKs GAIN requires, the following steps will be taken:

Cause Determination—If you do not meet CalWORKs GAIN requirements, you have the right to explain why. We will decide if it is a good reason. If you have good reason for not doing what CalWORKs GAIN requires, your GAIN Counselor will try to help you so that you can meet the requirements. (See the section titled, "What if I have a good reason for not participating?")



Non-Compliance —If you do not meet CalWORKs GAIN requirements, we will schedule a home visit. If we are unable to contact you, we will send you a notice. You will have 20 calendar days after the date of the notice to meet with or call your GAIN Counselor to give the reason for not participating or agree to sign a compliance plan to do what you are required. If you meet the requirements of the plan, no penalties will be applied to you.



Financial Sanctions—Your family's cash aid will be lowered if anybody who must participate does not meet CalWORKs GAIN requirements. This financial sanction will happen only if the person does not have a good reason, or fails to sign or complete a compliance plan. Persons who caused the financial sanction will not be eligible to receive cash aid until they participate with CalWORKs GAIN.

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If your family is a two-parent family getting cash aid because of unemployment, there are special rules for financial sanctions. The parent who did not cause the sanction can keep his or her cash aid if he or she participates in CalWORKs GAIN, is exempt, or has good cause for not participating.

Every time you are sanctioned, your family's aid will be lowered until you do what CalWORKs GAIN requires.

In addition, the second and subsequent time you are sanctioned, a representative may be appointed to handle your cash aid (pay your bills).



Penalties for Volunteers—Individuals who are exempt from participation (see the Section titled, "Who does not have to participate?") may choose to volunteer to participate in CalWORKs GAIN. If you volunteer for the CalWORKs GAIN program, but fail to meet requirements without a good reason, you may not be allowed to participate in CalWORKs GAIN for six months.

See your GAIN Counselor if you have any questions regarding these requirements.

What if I have a good reason for not participating?

We recognize that you may have a good reason for not participating with CalWORKs GAIN. The rules allow us to excuse you for specific reasons. You must contact your GAIN Counselor if you have a good reason for not participating. We will try to help you so that you can meet CalWORKs GAIN requirements.

Some of these reasons are related to you personally, and some are related to the assignment.

Reasons related to you:

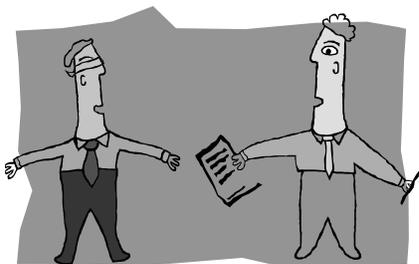
- You need transportation, work or training related expenses paid to participate, and these have not been provided.
- You are a victim of domestic violence and participating would be harmful to you or your family.
- Licensed or exempt child care is not reasonably available during your training, employment or travel time for:
 - a child 12 years old or younger
 - or
 - a child who is in foster care or an SSI recipient, but who is not included in the assistance unit.
- You have a severe family crisis which prevents your participation in activities.
- You must be in court or are incarcerated.
- You have a temporary illness or are physically or mentally unable to work.



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Reasons related to activity assignment or job:

- Discrimination at the job or training because of age, gender, race or color, religion, national or ethnic origin, physical or mental disability, political affiliation or marital status.
- Travel to work or training from your home is more than two hours round trip by car, bus or other transportation, or more than two miles round trip if you have to walk because other transportation is not available. The limit on travel and mileage does not include transportation time or mileage to take family members to and from school or to and from other care providers. *Note: If you do not take a job or participate in an assigned activity because of this reason, you may have to participate in Community Service.*
- The job requires more daily or weekly hours than is normal or customary.
- Conditions at the job or training violate health and safety standards or could cause you serious injury or death.
- The job or work activity does not provide Worker's Compensation Insurance.
- Accepting a job or work activity would interrupt or interfere with approved education or training assignments, except Work Experience or Community Service.
- Accepting a job or work activity would cause you to violate the terms of your union membership.



What is a Work Plan?

Your Work Plan is important. It tells you how we will work together, so that you can compete for and find a job. The plan will make sure that you receive the agreed-upon services and training for as long as you are taking part in CalWORKs GAIN and receiving cash aid. Your plan tells you what you must do, and what we must do, to make CalWORKs GAIN work for you.



Your GAIN Counselor will help you review each of the following parts of your Work Plan:

- The RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES tells you about CalWORKs GAIN, our responsibilities, and your rights and responsibilities as a participant. This agreement applies as long as you are in CalWORKs GAIN.
- This booklet, the CalWORKs GAIN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES HANDBOOK.
- The ACTIVITY ASSIGNMENT tells you about the activity or activities in which you are participating. You will sign a new Activity Assignment agreement each time you begin a new CalWORKs GAIN activity. Both you and your GAIN Counselor will sign each Activity Assignment.
- The ACTION PLAN outlines your short-term and long-term goals. It lists specific actions you want to take to become self-sufficient.

Read all of the parts of your Work Plan, including this booklet, carefully.

If you have any questions, be sure to ask your GAIN Counselor.

What type of activities will I be doing?

There are many paths open to CalWORKs GAIN participants. Your path may not involve every activity in CalWORKs GAIN. A lot depends on your education and job history. Remember: The purpose of CalWORKs GAIN is to help you prepare for work and find a job so that you can support yourself and your family.



Appraisal—When you start participating in CalWORKs GAIN, you will go to Appraisal. Your GAIN Counselor will look over your work history and education, need for supportive services, and other information to help the county decide what your CalWORKs GAIN activity or activities will be. During appraisal you will sign Rights and Responsibilities and an Activity Agreement.

Job Search—When you start participating in CalWORKs GAIN, you will go to a job search activity. However, the Job Search activities may be longer or shorter if the county and you agree that it would be beneficial to you. Job Search services include:



- interviewing skills
- employer expectations
- job seeking skills, and
- job leads.

The following CalWORKs GAIN participants will not be required to participate in a Job Search activity as the first activity but may volunteer to do so:

A person who is working full-time in an unsubsidized job or is participating in an approved Self Initiated Program (SIP) if the job search schedule would keep him or her from working or participating in a SIP.

Assessment—The purpose of Assessment is for you and us to put together a CalWORKs GAIN Action Plan to help you get a job. To do this, the assessor will:

- look at your abilities, interests, work history and education
- determine your need for supportive services

- compare your skills and the jobs available in your area
- consider any physical or mental problems you may have that limit your ability to work or participate in CalWORKs GAIN activities, and
- guide you to the services the county has or can get for you so that you can achieve self-sufficiency through employment.

Self-Initiated Programs (SIP)—If you are already in school or training, your CalWORKs GAIN Work Plan may be set up during Appraisal to allow you to continue. However, you may be sent for an Assessment if you need another activity at the same time so that you are participating in CalWORKs GAIN activities for the required number of hours.

Core Activities— At least 20 core hours per week must be spent in the following WTW activities:

- Unsubsidized Employment
- Job Search and Job Readiness assistance
- Work Experience
- Vocational Training and Education
- Work Study
- Subsidized Private or Public Sector Employment
- On-The-Job-Training
- Grant-Based On-The-Job-Training
- Supported Work/ Transitional Employment
- Community Service
- Study time hours when certain criteria are met, or
- Self Employment.

Non-Core Activities—A total of 12 or 15 hours per week may be spent in the following activity(ies):

- Adult Basic Education (includes ABE, GED, ESL and HSD)
- Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment
- In a Secondary School or in a course of study leading to a certificate or general education development, with satisfactory progress, or
- Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Domestic Violence Services.

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Re-Appraisal—If you have not gotten a job after finishing all of the activities included in your CalWORKs GAIN Work Plan, or have had an Assessment you will be Re-Appraised.

In Re-Appraisal, we will decide if there were special circumstances that kept you from getting a job during your activities. If we decide that you did have special circumstances, you will be sent to another activity. If we decide that you do not have special circumstances, you will participate in one of the following activities:

- Unsubsidized Employment
- Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment
- Mental Health, Substance Abuse, or Domestic Violence Services
- Subsidized Employment, or
- Community Service.

What are supportive services and how do I get them?

We understand that you may need more than job counseling to be successful in CalWORKs GAIN. That is why we will help you arrange and, if necessary, pay for child care, transportation and work or training related expenses. If other funding sources are not available to pay for all of your supportive services expenses, we will pay for the supportive services as described below.

Child Care Assistance—You can get child care for each child in your CalWORKs assistance unit, who is under the age of 13 years. Also, you may get child care for a child who lives with you but is not in your CalWORKs assistance unit, if not having child care would keep you from participating or getting a job. You can choose the kind of child care you want, like relatives, friends, neighbors, or child care centers. We cannot pay for child care if you choose somebody in your CalWORKs assistance unit, the child's legal guardian, the parent, or somebody less than 18 years old as the caregiver.

Payments can be made to licensed child care providers and, in some cases, to persons who don't need to be licensed. If your provider is not licensed, he or she must apply for TrustLine registration, unless your provider is your child's aunt, uncle, or grandparent. The most we can pay is the rate based on what is normally charged for child care in the area where your child care is provided. *NOTE: In most cases, child care payments will go directly to the provider.*



Transportation Costs—for travel to and from your approved CalWORKs GAIN activity, and for you and your children to travel to and from child care.

Work or Training Related Cost—for books, tools, and special clothing you need as part of your approved CalWORKs GAIN activity.

Personal Counseling—if needed to help you participate in CalWORKs GAIN. If services are available in your community, we will refer you to those places which may be able to help you. Discuss your situation with your GAIN Counselor and ask for a referral to an appropriate provider.

Advance Payments—if you qualify for CalWORKs GAIN supportive services payments, and you need your supportive services payment before you begin your activity, we may be able to give you an advance payment. That way, you will not be out any money - even for a short time.

NOTE: If CalWORKs GAIN pays more child care, transportation costs, or work or training related costs than you need to participate, you will have to pay CalWORKs GAIN back. But you may not have to pay CalWORKs GAIN back while you are in CalWORKs GAIN if doing so will keep you from participating.

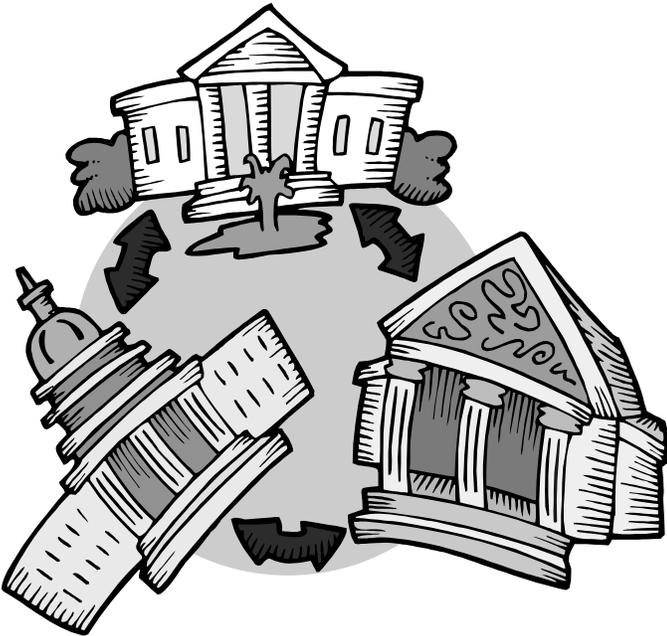
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Transition of Child Care Payments—Once you are employed and about to leave aid, we will transfer your child care case to the Riverside County Office of Education (RCOE). If you still need help with your child care costs after you are off aid for at least two years, you may be eligible, depending on the amount of your income, to continue to get help from RCOE.

What can I do if I disagree with the decisions or actions of my GAIN Counselor?

There are three actions you can take if you do not agree with our decision.

State Hearing - If you disagree with any county decision regarding a CalWORKs GAIN penalty (see the section titled, "What if I have a good reason for not participating?") your



status (standing) in the CalWORKs GAIN program, your activity assignment, or your supportive services, you can ask for a state hearing. For financial sanctions, you can use the same process you use when you disagree with the action we take on your cash aid.

Your GAIN Counselor will help you file for a state hearing if you want one. You can request a re-hearing after the state hearing decision is reached.

If you file for a state hearing before the penalties start, penalties will not be applied while you wait for the results of the review.

NOTE: If you file for a state hearing for any other county action, different rules apply. The CalWORKs hearing rights form explains those rules. You can ask for copies of the form at any time.

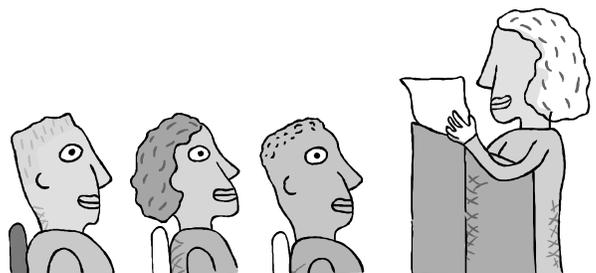
Third Party Assessment- If you do not agree with the Work Plan resulting from your Assessment, someone who is not a county representative will review your Work Plan and do another one, if necessary. The results of this Third Party Assessment will be used to set up your CalWORKs GAIN Action Plan.



If you have a Third Party Assessment done, penalties will not be applied while you wait for the results.

Formal Grievance set by the County Board of Supervisors - This is the process adopted by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors. Your GAIN Counselor will tell you how this grievance process works.

If you use the formal grievance process, you must continue to meet CalWORKs GAIN requirements. If you do, penalties will not be applied while the grievance is being decided.



What happens when I get a job?

When you have accepted a job offer you need to tell us. Your GAIN Counselor will ask you questions about the job including:

- The name and address of the company.
- What day do you start work?
- How much are you getting paid?
- How many hours are you going to be working every week?
- When do you expect your first paycheck?



There may be some other information that your GAIN Counselor needs depending on your specific case.

If you require anything job-related let us know right away. Remember we can help with required, work-related expenses.

Just because you start working doesn't mean your cash aid will stop. Your eligibility worker will determine how your cash aid will change and send you a letter.

If your cash aid does stop, you may still be eligible for Food Stamps, Medi-Cal and Child Care Assistance. If you are receiving child care payments we will transfer your child care case to the Riverside County Office of Education (See "What are supportive services and how do I get them?")

This section of the handbook offers a list of some of the education and training providers that are located throughout Riverside County.

Community Colleges

- College of the Desert (760) 346-8041
43-500 Monterey Avenue, Palm Desert
- Mt. San Jacinto College (951) 487-6752
1499 North State Street, San Jacinto
- Riverside Community College (951) 222-8000
4800 Magnolia Avenue, Riverside
- Riverside Community College (951) 571-6100
16130 LaSalle Street, Moreno Valley
- Riverside Community College (951) 372-7000
2001 Third Street, Norco



Adult Schools

- Banning Adult School (951) 922-2740
541 North Alessandro Road, Banning
- Beaumont Adult School (951) 845-6012
939 East Tenth Street, Beaumont
- Coachella Adult School (760) 398-6302
1099 Orchard, Coachella
- Corona/Norco Adult School (951) 736-3325
300 Buena Vista Avenue, Corona
- Desert Sands Adult School (760) 863-3693
81-711 Hwy. 111, Suite 202, Indio
- Hemet Adult School (951) 765-5190
26866 San Jacinto Street, Hemet
- Lake Elsinore Adult School (951) 245-2093
520 Chaney Street, Lake Elsinore
- Moreno Valley Adult School (951) 485-5650
24551 Dracaea Avenue, Moreno Valley
- Palm Springs Adult School (760) 416-8450
333 South Farrell, Palm Springs
- Perris Adult School (951) 657-7357
418 West Ellis Avenue, Perris
- Riverside Adult School (951) 788-7185
6735 Magnolia Avenue, Riverside

Important Phone Numbers

The area below is provided for you to keep track of important phone numbers that you might need while you are a participant in the CalWORKs GAIN Program.

GAIN Counselor's Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Eligibility Tech. Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Child Care Worker Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Notes:

Notes:

Riverside County Department of Public Social Services
Cynthia Hinckley, Ph.D, Director