

# Handbook

## A Guide to Riverside County CalWORKs GAIN Employment Services



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

The Innovations in American Government Award Program is sponsored by the Ford Foundation and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Considered to be among the nation's most prestigious public service prizes, the Award honors programs and policies that represent creative, highly effective government efforts to meet public needs.

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

California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) GAIN is to help you prepare for work and find a job.

Finding a job will help you become self-sufficient, 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 self-sufficient future. Work with your counselor and make your plan today!



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 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 case manager
- sign a CalWORKs GAIN Action Plan with your case manager
- meet all CalWORKs requirements, including the requirements in your CalWORKs GAIN Work Plan Activity Assignment
- not quit your job or lower your earnings, and
- provide proof of attendance in your assigned activity.

**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 volunteer. Ask your Eligibility Technician how you can volunteer for CalWORKs GAIN.

**Demonstration Projects**—Some counties are part of demonstration projects. These projects test different rules to see what works best. Your case manager will explain to you if Riverside County is part of a demonstration project and if so, different rules may 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 if 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. Proof of the disability must be provided.
- Are pregnant and a doctor states that you cannot work or participate in CalWORKs GAIN activities. *This exemption does not apply if you are a teen parent required to participate in the Cal-Learn Program.*
- 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 a disabled household member. *This exemption does not apply if you are a teen parent required to participate in the Cal-Learn Program.*



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

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

## How many hours per week do I have to participate?

**Riverside County CalWORKs GAIN expects an average of 35 hours per week (152 hours per month) of participation in GAIN-approved activities.**

GAIN pays for necessary Child Care when both parents participate in GAIN activities.

## What is considered satisfactory participation?

**Attendance**—From time to time you will meet with your case manager 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 35 hours a week or 152 hours a month in their activities.



**Satisfactory Progress**—All CalWORKs GAIN participants are required to make satisfactory progress toward completing their assigned

activities. Satisfactory participation includes attendance as specified above 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 MUST provide documentation of your progress and attendance . Without proof, we can't help you!**

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

- you attended all of the required hours and/or obtained the goal of the activity assignment, or
- Your cash aid is discontinued.

## What is an Action Plan?

Your Action 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 case manager will help you review each of the following parts of your Action Plan:**

1. This booklet, the CalWORKs GAIN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES HANDBOOK.
2. 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.
3. 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 case manager will sign each Activity Assignment.
4. 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.***

# 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 your family and become self-sufficient.

**Appraisal**—At Appraisal, your GAIN case manager 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/Readiness**—When you start participating in CalWORKs GAIN, you will be assigned to a job search activity. 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.

**Assessment**—The purpose of Assessment is for you and your case manager to put together a CalWORKs GAIN Action Plan to help you get a job. To do this, the case manager 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.

**Community Service**— You may be a volunteer at a public or private non-profit agency while you are searching for a job. We believe you receive valuable skills and abilities through volunteer community service. Ask your case manager about possible volunteer community service as one of your activities.

**Work Experience (WEX)**— GAIN partners with organizations who allow you to volunteer and learn specific skills. If you already participate regularly in GAIN activities, you may be eligible to be a part of our WEX activity. Ask about WEX opportunities.

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

- Job Search and Job Readiness (includes Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Domestic Violence Services)
- Unsubsidized Employment
- Self Employment
- Subsidized Employment
- On-The-Job Training
- Vocational Training and Education including some homework time
- Work Study
- Work Experience, or
- Community Service.



**Non-Core Activities**—15 hours per week may be spent in the following activity(ies):

- Education Directly related to employment (includes ABE, GED, ESL and HSD)
- Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment, or
- Vocational Training and Education when it has already counted for 12 months as a core activity.

NOTE: All activities must be approved by GAIN. If an activity is not approved you will receive written notice.

# What are supportive services?

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 help pay for the supportive services as described below.

**Child Care Assistance**—If you **request** and are **determined eligible**, 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 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. **Care provided more than 30 days prior to your application for child care is your responsibility.**

\* Trustline registration is a background check for non-licensed child care providers.

*NOTE: In most cases, child care payments will go directly to the provider.*

**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.

**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, if necessary.



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

**Personal Counseling**—to help you participate in CalWORKs GAIN. Discuss your situation with your GAIN case manager 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.



*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 GAIN back while you are in GAIN if doing so will keep you from participating.*

# 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 case manager 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.

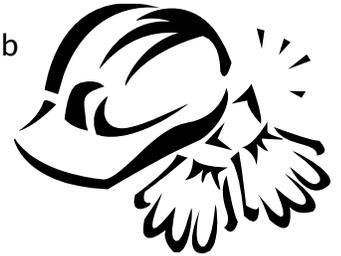
## Reasons related to you:

- You need transportation, work or training related expenses paid to participate, and these have not been provided (within program rules).
- 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.



## 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, sexual orientation or marital status.
- Travel to work or training from your home is more than two hours round trip, or more than two miles round trip if you have to walk. The limit on travel and mileage does not include 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 close to your home.*
- 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.



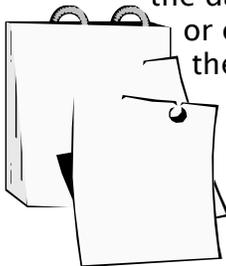
***Staying in touch with your case manager will help you complete your plans! Call because we can help!***

## What happens if I do not participate?

Participation in CalWORKs GAIN is mandatory for all able-bodied CalWORKs 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 **or provide proof of progress and attendance**, 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. (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 send you a notice that your cash aid may be lowered. You will have 20 calendar days after the date of the notice to meet with or call your case manager 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. If you do not follow the plan, you may be referred to financial sanction.

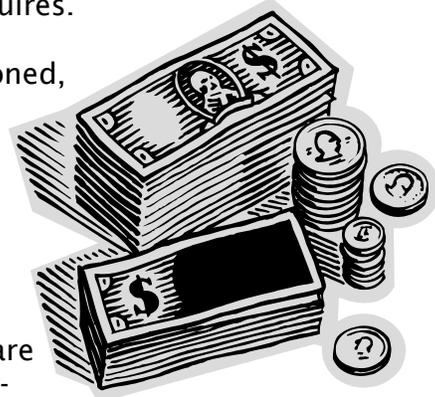


**Financial Sanctions**—Your family's cash aid will be lowered if anybody who must participate does not meet CalWORKs GAIN requirements. This financial sanction will happen only if the person does not have a good reason, or fails to sign or complete a compliance plan. Sanctioned individuals are not eligible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

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.

If you are sanctioned, a representative may be appointed to handle your cash aid (pay your bills).



**Other penalty**—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 case manager if you have any questions regarding these requirements.*

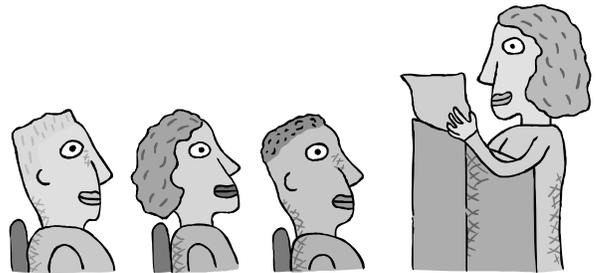
# What can I do if I disagree with the decisions or actions of my case manager?

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 denial of supportive services or penalty you can ask for a state hearing. Your case manager 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 penalty starts the penalty will not be applied while you wait for the results of the review.

**Third Party Assessment**- If you do not agree with the Action Plan resulting from your Assessment, someone who is not a DPSS representative will review your Action Plan and do another one, if necessary.



**Formal Grievance set by the County Board of Supervisors** - This is the process adopted by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors.



# What happens when I get a job?

When you have accepted a job offer you need to tell us. Your GAIN case manager 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?



**We need proof from your employer of the hours you will work as soon as possible.**

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?")

## *Here are Riverside County education and training providers:*

### 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
- Palo Verde College (760) 921-5512  
One College Drive, Blythe
- 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  
1575 Cherry Avenue, Beaumont
- Coachella Adult School (760) 398-6302  
1099 Orchard Avenue, 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) 253-7093  
520 Chaney Street, Lake Elsinore
- Moreno Valley Adult School (951) 485-5650  
24551 Dracaea Avenue, Moreno Valley
- Palm Springs Adult School (760) 778-0494  
2248 E Ramon Road, Palm Springs
- Palo Verde Unified (760) 922-4884  
190 N 5th Street, Blythe
- Perris Adult School (951) 943-6194 EXT34002  
755 North "A" Street, 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 Case Manager's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Eligibility Tech. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Child Care Worker Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Employment Development Department:

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

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Riverside County Department of Public Social Services  
**Susan Loew, Director**