

San Francisco Human Services Agency

Family and Children’s Services Handbook

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General Procedures and Activities

Section 51-2

**Linkages (CalWORKs & FCS)
Case Coordination Meetings**

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HSA/FCS Policy Statement

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(signature on file)

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San Francisco Human Services Agency (SF HSA) has instituted Linkages with the goal of assisting families to achieve self-sufficiency and to promote child safety, permanency and well being. “Linkages” is the term used in San Francisco City/County to name the philosophy and working partnership between CalWORKs, Family & Children’s Services and community-based partners. Linkages is a practice, not a program. Linkages practice enhances intra-agency collaboration and linkages to community services and resources that provide a network of support for the family.

Open cases with families involved in both FCS and CalWORKs programs are considered “Linkages” cases. The Linkages case coordination meeting is the initial process in which FCS and CalWORKs coordinate and streamline the Court or non-Court case plan, or the FR case plan, together with the Welfare-to-Work/CalWORKs case plan. Other partner agency or community-based organization case plans may be included as well.

- All families, who have an open CalWORKs case and an open FCS case, will have a Linkages case coordination meeting within the first three (3) months of an opened FCS case.
- The parent(s)/family is present and involved at the Linkages case coordination meeting. Involvement means an active voice and participation by the parent in developing their case plan, using a solution-focused, needs-driven and strength based approach. If the family declines to participate, the meeting is still held. However, the family is then contacted by the Protective Services Worker as a follow-up for understanding and agreement of the coordinated case plan. Services are not disrupted nor discontinued if the family does not wish to participate in a case coordination meeting.
- The CalWORKs case plan and the FCS case plan each contain specific program requirements for each family’s unique situation. One case plan does not circumvent or outweigh the other; however, the WtW and Court timelines may dictate priorities.
- Prior to the Linkages case coordination meeting:
 - An initial placement TDM may occur (if applicable)
 - Court FM cases: The SDM FSNA (Family Strengths & Needs Assessment) is completed with the family within 35 days after case opening
 - Non-Court FM cases: The SDM FSNA is completed with the family within 60 days after case opening
 - CalWORKs/Family Reunification cases (AB429): If eligible, a family receiving CalWORKs when a child(ren) was separated from the home may receive CalWORKs supportive services, which will support reunification efforts.
- It is the responsibility of both the PSW and CalWORKs worker to engage in open and ongoing communication, regardless of the status of the case i.e., from Intake through case closure.

<p>Linkages Outcomes</p>	<p>Linkages practice, including Linkages case coordination meetings, was instituted to achieve the following outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More families achieving self-sufficiency through increased work participation and monthly earnings. 2. More CalWORKs sanctions are resolved 3. More families off of cash aid due to increased earnings 4. More families successfully achieving reunification 5. Fewer re-referrals to child welfare i.e., FCS Hotline 6. Fewer children entering out-of-home placement 7. Fewer children who re-enter out-of-home placement
<p>What is a Linkages Case Coordination Meeting?</p>	<p>When a family becomes involved with FCS, a child may or may not be placed in out-of-home care. However, a Court or Non-Court Family Maintenance case plan or Family Reunification case plan is developed that contains specific goals and timelines to ensure the ongoing safety of the child(ren). Usually, other agencies or service providers are already or should be involved to support the child/youth and family.</p> <p>The Linkages Case Coordination meeting brings together a team of support with the family, for the family. Through the meeting process, the family's case plans (FCS, CalWORKs and others) are coordinated and streamlined so that the family's success is enhanced in meeting the goals and timelines of many different case plans.</p> <p>Case plans to be coordinated may include the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work case plan • FCS Family Maintenance non-Court case plan • FCS Family Maintenance Court case plan • Family Reunification Plan (for CalWORKs/FR supportive services) • School Individualized Education Plan (IEP) • Riley Center (domestic violence) case plan • Public Health Nurse case plan • FRC case plan <p>In addition to the coordination of case plans, the Linkages meeting provides linkages to other resources in the community and/or available through other public agencies and/or community based organizations.</p>

<p>Who Attends</p>	<p>The Linkages Case Coordination meeting is a family centered, team-driven and solution-focused process. Family is always involved in the coordination of their case plan. In addition, family may invite others for support, and/or a Peer Parent Advocate may be involved. The Linkages case coordination meeting includes the following:</p> <p><u>Required:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent (s) • Linkages Coordinator: Provides preparation and facilitation of the meeting • FCS case carrying social worker: ER, Court, FM, NCFM, FR, TPU • CalWORKs Social Worker (if applicable) • CalWORKs Employment Specialist and/or • CalWORKs Eligibility Worker <p><u>Optional/Depending on case situation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Parent Advocate • FCS Supervisor • CalWORKs Supervisor • Public Health Nurse • Domestic Violence liaison (Riley Center) • School representative • Other community-based organization representative who may have case plan involvement • Other public agency representative who may have case plan involvement
<p>Confidentiality Between CalWORKs and FCS</p>	<p>Refer to FCSHB 51-16: Communication and Collaboration Between FCS and CalWORKs Staff</p> <p>Utilization of a release form to allow FCS staff to speak with CalWORKs staff about a common case is not necessary.</p>
<p>Linkages Philosophy: CalWORKs and FCS</p>	<p><u>The CalWORKs Program</u> provides temporary financial assistance and employment-focused services to eligible families with minor children. Families who participate in CalWORKs generally also receive Nutrition Assistance i.e., Food Stamps and Medi-Cal benefits. Additional services are available to families with barriers to self-sufficiency, including mental health, substance abuse and domestic violence issues. Through Linkages practice, CalWORKs may prevent risk of future child maltreatment by earlier identification and provision of pertinent services to families.</p> <p><u>Family and Children’s Services</u> ensures the safety, permanency and well-being of children and youth who come to the agency’s attention. Through Linkages practice, FCS may enhance family stability and self-sufficiency by connecting families to CalWORKs and other services and resources before, during or after FCS involvement to enhance prevention, coordination or post-FCS efforts.</p>

Roles and Responsibilities	
FCS Unit Supervisor	<p>Upon receipt of the monthly Linkages report [refer to Linkages Case Identification and Referral in this handbook], the unit supervisor discusses each identified Linkages case with the individual Protective Services Worker (PSW).</p> <p>The monthly Linkages report is used as a tool to identify the common FCS and CalWORKs cases within the unit's caseload, that have been open within the last 3-6 months.</p> <p>The Coordinator's Notes column indicates the status of the Linkages case coordination meeting e.g., A Linkages meeting was held; or the Supervisor and PSW need to consult. The purpose of supervisor consultation with the PSW is to discuss and schedule the Linkages case coordination meeting.</p> <p>The Linkages case coordination meeting may occur as early as in ER or CDU; however, the meetings will occur more routinely in FM or FR status.</p> <p>If there are any questions or necessary corrections to be made to the report, contact the Linkages Program Development Manager.</p>
Protective Services Worker	<p>Once the PSW has identified that a family is ready for a Linkages case coordination meeting [refer to Linkages Case Identification in this handbook section], the PSW contacts the Linkages Coordinator at (415) 557-5926, who will coordinate, schedule and facilitate the pre-staffing and case coordination meetings.</p> <p>The SDM FSNA (Family Strengths & Needs Assessment) must be completed with the family prior to the Linkages case coordination meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-Court FM: within 35 days of case opening • Court FM: within 60 days of case opening <p>At the Linkages case coordination meeting, the PSW helps to ensure that the family is engaged in and understands the process before, during and afterward.</p> <p>If the family does not wish to participate in the case coordination meeting, the meeting still happens. Services are not discontinued nor disrupted if the family does not show or wish to participate.</p>
	CWSCMS Entries
	See FCSHB 65-2 Family Engagement Efforts (FEE) entries, which are entered by the Linkages Coordinator only.

Protective Services Worker (con't)	Family Reunification Cases
	<p>Linkages case coordination meetings, which involve families who were receiving CalWORKs when a child was removed from their home, may be eligible to CalWORKs/Family Reunification supportive services, even though their cash aid may have discontinued due to the child(ren) being removed (ACL 02-36; Assembly Bill 429). Due to the court timelines, it is important to identify and conduct a case coordination meeting as soon as possible after the child is placed in out-of-home care. Currently, CalWORKs/FR cases are identified through the monthly Linkages report and at the initial TDM.</p> <p>CalWORKs supportive services are available to maintain support even though the child(ren) may not currently be in the home. The purpose of CalWORKs/FR services is to continue services such as employment services, housing, etc. that will enhance the reunification efforts. Requests for a case coordination meeting on a CalWORKs/FR case is made by the assigned FR social worker.</p> <p>Refer to FCSHB 54-3 AB429/CalWORKs and Family Reunification Cases.</p>
	Follow-Through/After FCS Case Closure
	<p>Before closing the FCS case portion of a Linkages case, the PSW will notify the CalWORKs case manager (Employment Specialist and/or Eligibility Worker) about the case closure.</p> <p>Follow-up services are arranged for the family after the case closure through a Linkages After Care meeting in order to make every effort to arrange case monitoring and after-care for sustaining successful case-closure outcomes. Contact the Linkages Coordinator to arrange an After Care meeting for possible continued services through CalWORKs and other resources.</p>
Linkages Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Linkages Coordinator is primarily responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scheduling, • coordinating and • facilitating both the pre-staffing and case coordination meetings. • At the close of the case coordination meeting, the Linkages Coordinator ensures that a completed Form 1163 Linkages Referral/Family Plan Summary is completed, understood and signed by the parent(s), PSW, CalWORKs worker, and others (if applicable) at the case coordination meeting. A copy of Form 1163 is provided to all parties. • A type-written copy of the Form 1163 Linkages Referral/Family Summary is forwarded to the supervisors of the PSW and CalWORKs Eligibility and/or Employment Specialist after the Linkages case coordination meeting to help ensure that the agreed upon action items and timeframes are reviewed and followed through. • Since the Linkages case coordination meeting involves families, the Linkages Coordinator enters information from the Form 1163 onto CWS/CMS as per ACIN I-67-09 Family Engagement Efforts (FEE).

<p>CalWORKs Staff</p>	<p>Refer to CalWORKs HB Section</p> <p>It is the responsibility of both the PSW and CalWORKs worker to engage in open and ongoing communication, regardless of the status of the case i.e., from Intake through case closure in the best interests of the child and family.</p>
<p>Linkages Case Identification & Referral</p>	<p>A major component of Linkages is developing an efficient and timely system for identification of families who have both an open FCS case and an open CalWORKs case, also known as a Linkages case.</p> <p>Currently, the process of Linkages case identification for case coordination meetings is as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A manual and system data match is completed monthly utilizing data from both CWS/CMS and CalWIN systems. 2. A monthly Linkages report is generated and provided to each unit supervisor. The monthly report includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All cases in the unit that have been open within the last 3-6 months ○ Assigned PSW ○ FCS Case ID ○ FCS Case Name (by Child) ○ Current program (FM, FR) ○ FCS Case Open Date ○ Length of Time (that the FCS case was open) ○ Parent's Name ○ CalWORKs program (Welfare-to-Work, CalWORKs, Food-Stamps, Medi-Cal, Foster Care) ○ CalWORKs Worker's Name ○ Coordinator's Notes e.g., status of case coordination meeting 3. Upon receipt of the report, the unit supervisor consults with the case assigned social worker to discuss case status, concerns, etc. 4. The case assigned social worker contacts the Linkages Coordinator to schedule a pre-staffing and case coordination meeting as soon as possible. NOTE: Contact the Linkages Program Manager or Linkages Coordinator if there are any questions, concerns, corrections or suggestions to the report. 5. The Linkages Coordinator will annotate any status updates, which will be reflected on the next monthly Linkage report.

<p>Components of a Linkages Case Coordination Meeting</p>	<p>The Linkages Pre-Staffing</p>
	<p>A pre-staffing occurs as soon as possible prior to the Linkages case coordination meeting. The pre-staffing is scheduled and facilitated by the Linkages Coordinator once a request is made by the PSW or CalWORKs worker. Pre-staffings do not include family representation because it is primarily focused on logistical issues.</p> <p>A pre-staffing is not a meeting to talk about how to coordinate the case plan, nor is it an opportunity to talk about the family without the family present. The pre-staffing ensures that all key parties have communicated prior to the actual case coordination meeting to ensure a smooth and productive case coordination meeting process. If necessary or desired, the pre-staffing may be held via telephone conference to ease communication.</p> <p>Pre-staffings typically last about 30 minutes, and are held for the purpose of clarifying meeting logistics, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who should be invited/present to the case coordination meeting • The date/time/location of the case coordination meeting with the family • Issues/concerns to be prepared for/aware of e.g., fraud • To remind the PSW to ensure that the SDM FSNA (Family Strengths and Needs Assessment) has been completed and reviewed with the parents prior to the case coordination meeting • To identify who will ensure that the family understands the purpose of the case coordination meeting, location, etc. • To identify special needs/accommodations e.g., language, travel, phone arrangements for an incarcerated parent. <p><u>Who attends the pre-staffing (required unless otherwise noted):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linkages Coordinator/facilitator • Assigned FCS PSW • Assigned CalWORKs Employment Specialist • Assigned CalWORKs Eligibility Worker (if applicable) • Assigned CalWORKs Social Worker (if applicable) • Public Health Nurse (optional) • Peer parent advocate (optional) • Domestic Violence Liaison (if applicable) • Other community or agency reps (optional) <p>At the pre-staffing, the Linkages coordinator/facilitator will complete the Referral page of Form 1163 Linkages Referral/Family Plan Summary, which will be further completed and signed by the parent(s) at the Linkages case coordination meeting.</p>

Components of a Linkages Case Coordination Meeting (cont'd)	The Linkages Case Coordination Meeting
	<p>Soon after the pre-staffing, a Linkages case coordination meeting with family involvement is held, which typically takes about 60 minutes. The case coordination meeting is scheduled through and facilitated by the Linkages Coordinator. Case plans are coordinated, not developed, at the Linkages case coordination meeting.</p> <p>NOTE: The PSW must complete and review the SDM FSNA (Family Strengths & Needs Assessment) with the family prior to the Linkages meeting – This is important for development of the FCS case plan, and to ensure that the family is fully engaged at the case coordination meeting.</p> <p>During the Linkages case coordination meeting, discussion typically includes, but not limited to, the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reason for the meeting • Family strengths and goals • Concerns e.g., Welfare-to-Work sanctions, drug testing, housing, etc. • Service Plan requirements of each program • Parents' current status e.g., substance abuse, housing, parenting classes, mental health, Welfare-to-Work activity • Child's current status e.g., placement, education, medical, therapeutic issues • Visitation plan and progress (if applicable)
	Family Plan Summary
	<p>At the close of the case coordination meeting, all parties agree to and receive a signed copy of the Form 1163 Linkages Referral/Family Plan Summary, which outlines the coordinated case plan goals and timelines; and other action items. Decisions made at the Linkages case coordination meeting are recorded by the Linkages Coordinator/facilitator on Form 1163. The purpose of the Summary page is to provide an account of all the decisions, action items and timelines agreed upon at the meeting. The parent(s), PSW and CalWORKs worker sign the Summary to indicate agreement.</p> <p>The Family Plan Summary represents the CalWORKs and FCS coordinated case plan and is filed in the Section 2A of the FCS 6-part case folder. The Summary becomes part of the official case plan, and is subject to Discovery.</p> <p>If the family is non-English speaking, the Form 1163 is translated to the primary language.</p> <p>Information from the Family Plan Summary is also recorded on CWS/CMS to record Family Engagement Efforts (FEE) by the Linkages Coordinator. Refer to ACIN #I-67-09.</p>

Benefits of the Linkages Case Coordination Meeting	<p>When a Linkages case coordination meeting is held, it opens up a forum for coordinating new or existing case plans and providing linkages to other resources/services.</p> <p>Benefits of the Linkages case coordination meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To coordinate the FCS and WtW activities into one case plan for both programs• To involve family early on in the case coordination process• To streamline case plans, services, goals and timelines, which will make more efficient use of time, energy and resources• To avoid court continuances due to case plan miscommunication• To enhance access to services for domestic violence, mental health, alcohol or other drug abuse, and other barriers to family stability, self-sufficiency and child safety• To increase case plan access• To eliminate contradictory and overwhelming mandates to clients• To eliminate duplication of time, efforts and resources• To determine best utilization of funding streams i.e., Federal, State and County• To provide post-FCS support that link families to community resources and services to meet their specific needs• To identify, assess and address work-related capability and potential income i.e., SSI, exemptions
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