

# **Madera County Department of Social Services**

## **Linkages: Policy & Procedure Guide - Generic**

### **Purpose**

To promote safe and stable homes for children identified as at risk or as substantiated victims of abuse and/or neglect by providing coordinated services between Child Welfare Services (CWS), CalWORKs eligibility and Welfare to Work.

### **Definition**

A case is identified as a Linkage case if there is a Child Welfare Referral and/or Case with parents who are eligible to receive services through the Welfare to Work program and were receiving cash assistance for the child(ren) at the time CWS services were initiated. This includes exempt and sanction cases. Timed out cases are not linked.

### **Procedure**

#### **1. Screening-OA Responsibilities**

- a. When a referral is received and assigned to a CWS social worker, the Office Assistant (OA) will attach a MAD 501 to the Referral ID page and place the packet in an identified basket near the screener's desk, with the exception of immediate referrals, which will be handed directly to an Office Assistant.
- b. The Office Assistant will collect the packet at least once a day.
- c. The Office Assistant will screen each referral through Central Index, C-IV, and MED's (as needed) to determine if the case qualifies as a Linkages case.
- d. The Office Assistant will attach the Linkages Narrative Form MAD 455 and indicate on it whether or not it is a linkages case and write the name of the Welfare to Work case manager on the form.
- e. The Office Assistant will return the packet with as much information as she can locate to the Child Welfare social worker.
- f. A copy of the Linkages Referral Staffing Narrative Form MAD 455 will also be forwarded to the identified Welfare to Work case manager to notify them of child welfare involvement.
- g. This process is expected to be completed within 2 working days of receiving a referral.

- h. The Office Assistant will keep a Linkages Master Log of all referrals received and their outcomes. This log will be updated weekly to ensure cases continue to meet the criteria and remain open in CWS.
- i. Once a case is promoted the Office Assistant will retrieve the Linkages Referral Staffing Narrative Form MAD 455 from the Linkages Basket, update the Linkages Master Log and the Linkages Log (only Linkages cases) and forward the form to the WTW case manager, the eligibility worker and their supervisors to file and narrate in their case, if the case is closed it will be narrated.
- j. The Office Assistant will arrange and notify all parties of a Linkages staffing within 7 business days with the Welfare to Work case manager and supervisor, CWS social worker and supervisor and the CalWORKs Eligibility worker and supervisor to coordinate the case plan goals, objectives and services, if the ETW, EW or SW is unavailable their supervisor is to be present at the staffing. The OA will send the agenda and email an appointment for the respective parties to participate in the staffing via Outlook. The OA will also send a letter to the parents to notify them of the time, date, and location of the linkages staffing. A copy of the letter is also provided to the CWS social worker to be filed in the case file.
- k. The Office Assistant is responsible for scheduling a Linkages staffing once every six months or sooner if a court hearing has been scheduled based on the court staffing log. A Linkages appointment letter is sent to inform the client of the Linkages staffing. The OA will let the SW, WTW worker, and EW know of the Linkages staffing through email.

## **2. Emergency Response**

- a. The Emergency Response social worker will make an assessment if the family they are working with is eligible for Linkages based on OA screening process and document the outcome of the screening in the case narratives and in the special projects page of CWS/CMS as Linkages ineligible or Linkages.
- b. The ER social worker must consult with and may participate in a tandem home visit with the WTW case manager if the referral is a Linkages case. If a referral has been identified as being a Linkages case, (i.e. the linkages form will be in the case file) the ER social worker will make collateral contact with the CalWORKs EW/Welfare to Work case manager as soon as possible to discuss any barriers the family might have to keeping their child(ren) safe and what services are available to the family that may alleviate identified safety and risk factors.

- c. An ER investigation may not be closed without documentation of a collateral contact between a CWS social worker and CalWORKs EW/Welfare to Work case manager.
- d. When an ER investigation is closed, the ER social worker will complete the bottom portion of the linkages form and place it in the Linkages basket.
- e. If an ER investigation leads to opening a case under the provisions of family maintenance services, the assigned CWS social worker will be prepared for a linkages staffing within 7 business days with the Welfare to Work case manager and the CalWORKs Eligibility worker to coordinate the case plan goals, objectives and services.
- f. If the ER investigation leads to a protective hold on the children, the ER social worker will invite the Welfare to Work case manager and the CalWORKs Eligibility worker to the detention staffing. If the outcome of the detention staffing is to file a petition in court, and the Eligibility Worker was not present at the staffing, the ER social worker is responsible for calling the Eligibility worker to inform him/her of the removal of the children.
- g. If the ER investigation leads to a protective hold on the children and court action, the assigned CWS social worker will be prepared for a Linkages staffing within 7 business days with the Welfare to Work case manager and the CalWORKs Eligibility worker to coordinate the case plan goals, objectives and services on the Coordinated Case Plan form.
- h. The CWS social worker will notify the parents of the time established for the Linkages staffing in conjunction with the letter sent out to the parents by the OA.
- i. The Linkages staffings will be comprised of family, the Welfare to Work case manager or Supervisor, Eligibility Worker or Supervisor, and the appropriate CWS social worker or Supervisor. The Linkages Staffing Format will be utilized to structure the staffing. The CWS social worker must be prepared to discuss current intervention, service referrals and the development and completion of the **Coordinated Case Plan MAD 454** in conjunction with the Welfare to Work case manager and the EW.
- j. The ER social worker, ongoing social worker or Court worker will be responsible for documenting the staffing as Family Engagement Efforts (FEE) in the associated services section in CWS/CMS within 3 days.

### 3. Welfare to Work Case Manager

- a. The WTW case manager will be alerted to a possible Linkages case via the Linkages Referral Staffing form MAD455.
- b. The WTW case manager will be notified of the results of the possible Linkages cases via the Linkages Narrative form that has a completed lower section of the form that identifies the outcome of the CWS investigation. This form will be narrated and filed in the WTW case file by the WTW case manager.
- c. If an ER investigation leads to opening a case, the assigned WTW case manager will be prepared for a Detention staffing within 24 hours to discuss status of the WTW case, the client's level of participation, history of client contacts, case plan goals, objectives and need for additional services by completing the Detention Staffing CIV Datasheet.
- d. The assigned WTW case manager will be prepared for a Linkages staffing within 7 business days to discuss status of the WTW case, the clients level of participation, history of client contacts, and the coordination of case plan goals, objectives and need for additional services by completing the Detention Staffing CIV Datasheet and working to complete the **Coordinated Case Plan**.
- e. The ETW will document the staffing in the notes section of C-IV
- f. The WTW case manager will manage a Linkages case as any other WTW case with the knowledge that the family has children at risk of abuse or neglect. Particular attention to the CWS case plan and required activities will be incorporated into the WTW plan with monthly contacts and review of the coordinated case plan, taking place at a minimum of every 6 months. If the case is pulled for E2Lite review the enhanced participation is required between the SW and the ETW to ensure Core Activity Hours are met.
- g. The WTW case manager will be available to attend CWS staffing prior to the end of CWS three or six month case plan.
- h. CWS/CalWORKs Linkage will end when the FM, FR case plan services are terminated by the Court.
- i. If a CWS/CalWORKs participant fails to respond to WTW activities or sign the WTW Activity agreement, and the cash assistance case has been discontinued more than 30 days with no new application, the WTW case will be closed. The WTW case manager will inform the SW that the case has been closed. (Is this still applicable, given the provisions of AB 429)

#### 4. Continuing Cases

- a. Upon cases being transferred to another unit, a Linkages screening must be completed by the Linkages EW or the Linkages WTW case manager. Once a case has been identified as a Linkages case, the case carrying CWS social worker is responsible for the on-going coordination of all services (including expediting emergency applications) with the Welfare to Work case manager including coordinating case plan goals, services, and objectives.
- b. Once a case is received from the previous unit, the CWS Supervisor will review the case for the Linkages Referral Staffing Narrative Form. The CWS Supervisor will complete the **special projects code** prior to giving the case to the on-going CWS social worker. This page must be completed even if the case is ineligible for linkages.
- c. The CWS social worker will follow up and invite the client and the service providers to the Linkages staffing and the 6 month Linkages staffing.
- d. The CWS social worker is responsible for ensuring the Linkages status is documented in the **special projects code** in each child's notebook in CWS/CMS each time a change in service activity happens.
- e. Upon closing a Linkages case the approving Supervisor will contact their Linkages colleague in WTW or CWS.

#### 5. Eligibility Worker

- a. A copy of the Linkages Referral Staffing Narrative Form will also be forwarded to the identified CalWORKS Eligibility Worker (EW) and to their respective Supervisor so they are alerted to the potential linked case which will prompt the EW to complete the Detention Staffing C-IV Datasheet.
- b. If the ER investigation leads to a protective hold on the children and the children placed in out of home care, the assigned EW will end the cash aid benefits and the benefits code will be changed to the appropriate aid code. The case should immediately be routed to the linkages caseload supervisor. The case will be placed in the linkages Eligibility Worker's caseload who will rescind the CalWORKS as the parent(s) are eligible to continue to receive a CalWORKS grant and services for up to a full calendar month and children will be considered temporarily absent from the home. If, after the 30 day period the children are not returned to the home, the CalWORKS will be discontinued, but the case will remain in the

linkages caseload until it can be determined by CWS as an FR case at which time the linkages EW will determine the appropriate FR aid code and a zero benefit case will be established which allows all CalWORKS services to continue for up to 180 days.

- c. The EW will be notified of a linkages staffing within 7 business days and the Welfare to Work case manager, CWS social worker and the CalWORKs Eligibility worker will coordinate the case plan goals, objectives and services. The EW must be prepared to discuss current financials (QR7) medical eligibility issues, and any other barriers in their current services and eligibility. The OA will send the agenda and email an appointment for the respective parties to participate in the staffing via Outlook. The OA will also send a letter to the parents to notify them of the time, date, and location of the linkages staffing.
- d. The EW will document the staffing in the notes section of C-IV
- e. The EW will set a task reminder in C-IV for the 6 month re-evaluation based on the child(ren)'s removal date.

## **6. AB 429**

When children are placed in out of home care and Family Reunification services are being provided to a Linkages family, CalWorks services will also be provided to the family under the guise of AB 429. The cash aid will be discontinued and the appropriate FR aid code will be initiated. The **coordinated case plan form** will be utilized by both CWS social workers and WTW case managers to combine service plans for the client. The CWS client responsibilities will supersede the WTW responsibilities that are not congruent with the coordinated case plan. The EW will set a task reminder in C-IV for the 6 month re-evaluation based on the child(ren)'s removal date. The CWS supervisor will also set a reminder in CWS/CMS for the re-evaluation of the Linkages Staffing 6 months out from the child's removal date. Furthermore, the OA will update the Linkages Log, for "no cash" and the "re-evaluation date" required to reassess the appropriateness of Cal Works funding of CWS services cases. The re-evaluation period is to be consistent with the timeframes for CWS status review hearings.