

## 40. Family Conferencing

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### 40.1 Family Conferencing

Since early 1996, Family Conferencing has been used in the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) to help families resolve concerns and establish an environment of care and protection for their child(ren). It allows the people who know and care about the child(ren) (e.g. family, extended family, community, etc.) to participate in the decision making, rather than leave the decision making entirely in the hands of the court and the social worker.

### 40.2 When is Family Conferencing Used in CalWORKs Cases

Family Conferencing is available to CalWORKs families when the family is experiencing a barrier which prevents them from attaining self-sufficiency. Typical signs that indicate a barrier exists include, but are not limited to:

- Sanctions due to non-compliance with CWES requirements.
- Non-satisfactory progress in school.
- School attendance problems of either the parent or child.
- Issues resulting from common cases (i.e. DFCS, Probation Department, Restorative Justice, Housing, and/or Juvenile Treatment Court).



**Note:**

Employment Technicians (ETs) may consider a Family Conference referral during the Good Cause determination.

### 40.3 Purpose of Family Conferencing in CalWORKs Cases

In a CalWORKs case, the purpose of Family Conferencing is to:

- Bring together the family's "Circle of Support" (extended family, friends, and service providers) to work jointly to break down barriers to self-sufficiency.
- Build on the strengths of the family and tap into the resources from the "Circle of Support".

### 40.3.1 Post-Conference

After the Family Conference is completed, the following occurs:

- The facilitator prepares/distributes a “Summary” to all conference participants.
- The **ET** records the time the CalWORKs family spent participating in the Family Conference as required CalWORKs participation hours.
- The **ET** integrates the agreed upon plan into the Welfare-to-Work Plan and monitors for compliance.
- The **ET** enters case documentation under the *CalWORKs Common Case Type* in the **Maintain Case Comment** window of CalWIN.
- The CalWORKs Social Worker ensures that all CalWORKs participation and other requirements in the family plan are met.
- The facilitator arranges for an optional follow-up meeting, if needed.

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## 40.4 Family Conference Referral - Procedure

### 40.4.1 To Initiate Referral

To initiate a Family Conference Referral for a CalWORKs family, a “Support Service Referral” (SC 1686) is completed. The SC 1686 must be signed by the client and sent to the CalWORKs Social Worker.

The SC 1686 may be submitted by ANY interested party including, but not limited to, the:

- Eligibility Worker (EW),
- Employment Technician (ET),
- Employment Counselor (EC),
- Other CWES Staff,
- Service Provider, or
- Community partner.



**Note:**

The referring party may consult with a Family Conference Resource Person (Employment Services Staff who have been trained as Family Conference facilitators) prior to completing the Family Conference referral, if additional information or guidance is needed.

## 40.4.2 CalWORKs Social Worker

Upon receipt of the SC 1686, the CalWORKs Social Worker will:

- Forward a copy of the SC 1686 to the currently assigned Employment Technician (ET).

**Note:**

The ET is responsible for informing the Employment Counselor (EC), if appropriate.

- Contact the customer to discuss Family Conferencing and its benefits. In order for a Family Conference to be successful, the CalWORKs family must participate willingly. Therefore, the option to participate is given to the client.
- Identify any CalWORKs family referred for a Family Conference that also has a DFCS case.
- Contact the Employment Technician (ET) and the Eligibility Worker (EW) to request information that may be pertinent to the Family Conference process.

**Note:**

Pertinent information includes, but is not limited to, outstanding issues and requirements, upcoming changes that may affect eligibility, current crisis situations, etc.

- Coordinate and facilitate a “Cross System Staffing” meeting, if there is a common DFCS case.

**Note:**

The purpose of the cross system staffing is to bring multiple systems people together to better understand what is presently happening within each system and the mandatory requirements affecting the family in each system (DFCS, Employment Services Benefits, etc.).

- Complete the “Family Conference Referral” (SC 1750).
- Forward the SC 1686 and SC 1750 to the Family Conference Institute.

## 40.5 Who Participates

The following persons are typically, but not always, involved in the Family Conference of a CalWORKs family:

- Person who makes referral,

- Family Conference co-facilitators,
- CalWORKs Social Worker,
- DFCS Social Worker,
- EW,
- ET and/or EC,
- Community Partner involved with family (e.g. Adult Education counselor, etc.),
- Family members,
- Extended family members or friends that the family would like to include.

Participants are invited upon the family's request.

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## 40.6 CalWORKs Participation Hours

The time that a CalWORKs recipient spends participating in a CalWORKs Family Conference is counted towards his/her CalWORKs participation hours.

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## 40.7 Welfare-to-Work (WTW) Plan

The agreed-upon plan that is developed by the family during the CalWORKs Family Conference is integrated into the family's WTW Plan. The ET will monitor the plan for compliance.

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## 40.8 Tracking

### 40.8.1 CalWORKs Social Workers

The CalWORKs Social Workers will:

- Track plan compliance and outcomes.

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## 40.9 Forms

### “Support Service Referral” (SC 1686)

“Support Service Referral” (SC 1686) - Generic referral form for support services, such as Domestic Violence, Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol, Multi-Disciplinary Team, and Mobile Medical Van referrals.

**“Family Conference Referral” (SC 1750)**

“Family Conference Referral” (SC 1750) - Referral form which gathers and records information about the family that will be used by the Family Conference Institute to set up the Family Conference.

