

## COMPARING UNCOORDINATED AND COORDINATED PLANS: IMPACTS ON FAMILY LIVES<sup>1</sup>

Below are two descriptions of case plans for the same family, a composite of actual circumstances for families in CalWORKs and CWS. These descriptions illustrate how uncoordinated and coordinated case plans can impact family life in dramatically different ways. The descriptions also showcase strategies to coordinate plans, approaches currently in use in Orange County.

### **An Uncoordinated CalWORKs and CWS Plan**

#### *CalWORKs Plan*

Barbara and Ted\* are on CalWORKs. The CalWORKs worker did not inquire whether they are also receiving CWS services, and the clients did not mention it.

Ted is participating 35 hours a week in approved CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work activity. His CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work plan includes 32 hours of vocational training at the community college in a four-month intensive training program. Ted will have a refrigeration repair certification at the end of the class. Ted must also receive three hours a week of Behavioral Health Services. No child care is provided because Barbara is staying home with the children.

#### *CWS Plan*

The CWS worker did not inquire whether the family is on a CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work plan, and the clients did not mention it. Child Welfare Services activities require parenting education classes and counseling three times a week for three months for both parents. Barbara has mandated drug testing weekly and is required to participate in substance abuse treatment. In addition to a weekly therapist session, she has to attend a one-hour group session at least four times a week. Ted must attend Al-Anon once weekly.

### **A Coordinated CalWORKs/CWS Plan**

Agency identifies clients who are in both programs and informs both CalWORKs and CWS workers that Barbara and Ted are in CalWORKs and CWS. The CalWORKs worker calls the CWS worker to discuss the case and coordinate their case plans. The coordinated case plan includes the following elements:

- For CalWORKs, Ted is participating 35 hours a week in an approved Welfare-to-Work activity. Ted's CalWORKs plan includes CWS activities: parenting classes and Al-Anon totaling 10 hours per week and three hours coordinated with Behavioral Health Services.
- The CWS worker uses participation in CalWORKs Behavioral Health Services to meet Barbara and Ted's counseling and parenting requirements. The CWS worker also uses the CalWORKs requirement of 20 hours of vocational training, which will be completed in six months, to demonstrate Ted's cooperation and efforts toward stability.
- Child care for the children will be paid through CalWORKs while Barbara attends drug counseling and testing as required by the CWS case plan. The CWS and CalWORKs workers jointly address the appropriateness of the child care provider and Trustline requirements. Transportation is paid through CalWORKs for parents to get to various CWS and CalWORKs activities. Throughout, the CalWORKs and CWS workers maintain contact to monitor the client's progress and revise the case plan as needed.

\* Not their real names.

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<sup>1</sup> Karpilow, Kate Ph.D. (2005) Linkages Planning Guide. Public Health Institute, California Center for Research on Women and Families, p. 25.