

Keeping Linked



Strengthening Connections: Linkages Regional Series

The 2025 Regional meetings were a huge success for the Linkages Collaborative! Our team traveled across California to connect with counties, share insights, and strengthen the incredible network of coordinators and staff dedicated to making an impact. With **27 counties and 85 Linkages coordinators and champions participating**, these meetings were filled with valuable discussions, collaboration, and fresh ideas for the future.

Across all regions, the primary focus was on policy integration and tracking Linkages cases, ensuring that best practices are implemented and that every county has the tools needed to identify, manage, and support families through the Linkages process.



Our journey began on **May 13th** in **Napa**, where the Bay Regionals brought together **eight counties, as well as the Bay Area RTA**. Discussions centered on team building and collaboration, reinforcing the importance of cross-county partnerships in successfully integrating Linkages policies.

In this Issue

Linkages Regionals, p1

Success Story: Napa, p1

Past Events, p2

Committee Updates, p3

SAFE Site, p5

Fiscal Curriculum, p5

Implementation Support, p6

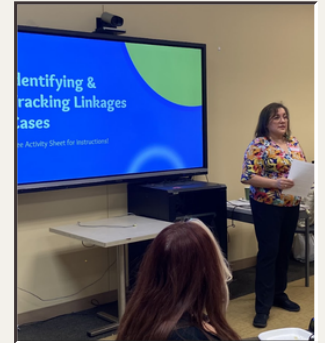
Upcoming Events, p6

Next, on **May 15th**, we headed north to **Redding**, engaging with **six counties** to dive deeper into policy integration. This region emphasized strategies for AB 135 with in-depth, scenario-based conversations, making sure families receive the comprehensive support they need.

The following week, the **Southern Regional in Glendora** on **May 20th** gathered representatives from **four counties**, as well as the Southern RTA and explored how AB 135 impacts Linkages policies. Scenario-based discussions helped counties navigate policy implementation in real-world situations.

Finally, our last stop on **May 22nd** in **Visalia** saw **nine counties** come together for the **Central Regional**, focusing on cross-training and its role in ensuring staff can seamlessly integrate Linkages' policies into their daily work. Beyond the discussions, we took the time to recognize planning committee members and acknowledge the contributions of those actively engaged in the CalPrevents Linkages Space. Their innovative ideas and suggestions are helping shape a stronger, more connected community of Linkages coordinators and their teams.

Looking ahead, be sure to follow up with CDSS representative Carolyn Spain if you requested **Safe Site** information. We invite everyone to complete the **CalPrevents** invitations to share their reflections on the Spring Regionals. **Next Steps:** Don't forget to schedule your **implementation support calls** following the **June Work Plan Webinar on June 24, 2025**.



Thank you for your dedication and for making this community thrive. Your commitment to supporting each other and strengthening Linkages is felt across the communities we serve daily! Let's keep up the momentum and continue building together.

Resources discussed or provided during the May Regionals can be found by visiting the Resource Hub on CalPrevents ([Linkages: CalWORKs/CWS Collaboration](#)) and on the [Events page on the Linkages website](#).

Napa: Using Meet & Greet to support AB 135 Implementation

Linkages is specifically about Social Services Internal staff coming together to better serve families. And, no matter what you call those staff – CalWORKs, Eligibility, Welfare to Work, GAIN, Child Welfare, Social Workers, Child & family Services Workers, Child Protective Services workers – Linkages is aimed at coordinating and collaborating on a system level and on individual staff levels with the goal of providing all eligible services to families being served by CalWORKs/TANF and Child Welfare Workers in public social service agencies.

With the passage of AB 135 that included CalWORKs FR Cash Aid, it is imperative that all systems in Social Services (no matter what you call your agency) coordinate their case planning and provide information immediately when a child is removed. At a recent Bay Area Family First Prevention Learning collaborative, Veronica Piper-Jefferson, Child Welfare Director in Napa County shared their county's cross training developed to acquaint CalWORKs and Child Welfare staff with knowledge about AB 135 (CalWORKs FR Cash Aid) through a "Meet & Greet" training strategy. We strongly believe that Linkages fits perfectly within the prevention work currently taking a front row in child welfare planning. Thank you, Veronica, for sharing Napa's work with us which can be found at [this link](#). We encourage you to "steal shamelessly" and adapt for your own county.



Click here to check out their presentation!

P A S T E V E N T S

April 8th – Webinar – Linkages Coordinators: An Essential Role

There were 42 attendees from 21 counties that attended this webinar designed to provide information to new and existing Coordinators about their role. Linkages Coordinators are the central point of contact, and more importantly, responsible for leading their local Linkages implementation work. This webinar also highlighted some of our seasoned Coordinators; **Gloria Jakini- Rojas, Los Angeles; Coleen Ridlon, Humboldt; Mayle Johnson, Calaveras; and Lisa Duran, Riverside** who shared their experience being a Linkages Coordinator and how they have approached their role.

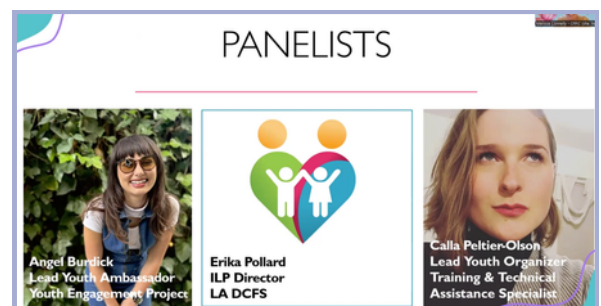
The post evaluation provided the following feedback:

- **91.6%** of the attendees stated that the webinar **provided new and helpful information** about the coordinator role.
- **100%** responded that they were **confident that they can apply what they learned** to better support their county.

"It was great hearing information from other Champions!"

May 29th – Webinar – Supporting Transition Age Youth with a Linkages Approach

On May 29, 2025, a statewide webinar featured **Calla Peltier Olson (Humboldt County Transition-Age Youth Collaboration)**, **Erika Pollard (L.A. County ILP)**, and **Angel Burdick (CFPIC Youth Engagement Project)** sharing lived experiences and innovative strategies to support transition -age youth exiting foster care.



Key strategies discussed included:

- **Teaming:** Inviting Self-Sufficiency staff to Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings can provide connections and help bridge systems as youth transition from care.
- **No Wrong Door:** Maintaining ongoing, accessible support through can help transition age youth navigate complex systems and promotes long-term stability.



The webinar also highlighted potential benefits of CalAIM for transition age youth, including enhanced access to coordinated care and community-based supports. [Click here to watch the full webinar.](#) You can view the [meeting slides here](#), and our [TAY + Linkages handout here](#).

June 24th – Webinar – Work Plan Workshop

A Work Plan Workshop was held to introduce the Linkages Work Plan process for creating a collaborative Linkages Work Plan with **Goals, Objectives, Tasks, and Timelines** customized to address each county's specific strategies. The idea is to start with the end (Goal) in mind and select topics on the Work Plan that will help you reach your goal. To do this, you also need to consider the subject matter experts to designate specific tasks to, provide timelines, and track on a regular basis for accountability and to keep things moving forward.

We had 45 attendees from 21 counties, and the post evaluation provided the following feedback:

- **100%** of respondents stated that the webinar provided new and **helpful information that they can apply confidently** within their counties Linkages work.

You can watch the recorded [Work Plan Workshop webinar here](#). There are several additional materials featured (guides, samples, templates, etc.), and they can all be found on the [Events page of the Linkages website](#).

"The handout examples were helpful!"

"The work plan walkthrough was great."

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Oversight

We are excited there are now three members with lived experience on the Oversight Committee: **Tammy M. Orange, Rogert DeLeon, Riverside and Joanne Wallace, Santa Clara**. We encourage Coordinators from Central and Northern/Mt Valley regions to recommend a parent with lived experience for membership on the Oversight Committee to represent their region.

As you may know, the purpose of the Oversight Committee is to "Provide guidance and support to the implementation of Linkages 2.0 across the State of California" and while we have been fortunate to have both

leaders from the State and Counties from both Child Welfare and Self-Sufficiency, we have been sorely missing the Lived Experience perspective. Please contact Jennifer.Marcelli@cfpic.org if you have a parent you would like to recommend as a member. We do ask that they have successfully met their case plan goals and are open to working on a committee to share ideas. We will stipend \$50 per hour for committee or activities they wish to do related to Linkages (other sub-committees, etc.). Minimally, we ask they attend the hour Linkages Oversight every other month and any prep or debrief call; approximately two hours every other month.

PEI

The most recent work of the committee has been to review and provide input on the work that **Derek Slama and Nkechi Kanu** undertook to develop a home-grown screening tool that could be provided to applicants and recipients of county benefits programs (CalWORKs, CalFresh, MediCal) to help them identify family needs that could be addressed by community-based services and supports.

At our most recent meeting Derek presented the findings from the extensive development process that he and Nkechi conducted. Nkechi, as you will recall, worked with us as an intern from the U.C. Goldman School of Public Policy; her work on the screening tool, which was her Capstone Project for that program, has been nominated for a special prize in recognition of her excellent efforts.

After developing the elements of what is now known as the Family Needs Screening Tool, Derek and Nkechi implemented both a survey and a series of focus groups to gather input and feedback from county, community and family stakeholders. They learned from these participants ways that the tool might be improved, avenues for its use and possible methods of implementation.

Based on input from the survey, focus groups and PEI Committee, two options for deployment of the tool have emerged:

1. In recognition that some counties do not have funding for staff who could administer the tool, a self-administered option would be available.
2. For counties that can provide staff support, there is a staff-administered option.

Derek suggested, and the Committee agreed on, the following next steps:

- Finalize Screening Tool
- Develop Implementation Plan
- Identify Pilot Counties
- Pilot
- Adapt Based on Learnings
- Disseminate Widely & Share Findings

If your county would like to know more about the Family Needs Screening Tool and might be interested in piloting it please contact the Committee Chair, Stuart Oppenheim: stuart.oppenheim@cfpic.org.

Evaluation

It has been a long process, but we are extremely excited to be in the last stretch of the RDA Coordinated Case Planning evaluation.

Both **Orange and Riverside** counties completed their case reviews as requested, however, there was a lag for RDA in obtaining the MOU approval from CDSS Research, Automation and Data Division (RADD) for RDA to receive the outcome data pulled from several automated systems by RADD. The data is now in RDA's hands, and they are doing a data analysis in June/July, the report in August with review by Riverside, Orange and CFPIC in September. When the report is finalized, we will send to the Linkages Coordinators and CWDA Children's and Self Sufficiency Committees.

ALMOST
THERE!

The original deadline could not be met due to the data delay, but **we are on track for a September 30th final report**. This outcome evaluation could not have been accomplished without the commitment and dedication of Orange and Riverside management, Linkages Coordinators and the staff completing case reviews; we appreciate you.

SAFE Site

Stay informed with the **CalWORKs & CWS Cross-Over Report!** This data helps counties assess Linkages-eligible families and supports planning efforts. Access your county's data via the secure **SAFE Site** portal—register up to two representatives by submitting a Gen 1395 form to Carolyn.Spain@dss.ca.gov. Reach out to andrea.lewis@cfpic.org with any questions.

Thanks to CDSS FEED for making this resource possible. Use **#SafeSite** in CalPrevents to connect with peer counties!



Linkages Fiscal Curriculum Available Now!

Hot off the presses! We're excited to announce that the **Linkages: Leveraging Funding to Enhance Outcomes curriculum**, developed with Northern Training Academy, is now available! This training resource will help your Linkages team understand how to leverage funding to support Linkages families in your county.

The curriculum includes a recorded video, PowerPoint, and trainee workbook with interactive exercises and key takeaways to reinforce learning. You can access the full Linkages Fiscal Curriculum package on the [Linkages Training Toolkit](#).

We encourage you to explore the materials and share them with your teams. This is a great opportunity to deepen understanding of how fiscal strategies support the Linkages vision of coordinated, family-centered services. If you have questions or need help, please don't hesitate to reach out!

Training Materials

These Linkages training materials are available to Linkages counties to use or tailor to match your local processes. Check out the curriculum overview video included with the materials for each curriculum package. Click on the images below to access the materials. Reach out to melissa.connelly@cfpic.org for more information!

- + Linkages Overview
- + Linkages CalWORKs and ER
- + Linkages Coordinated Case Planning
- + Linkages Leveraging Funding to Enhance Outcomes - Fiscal 2025

Open Office Hours for Implementation Support

Do you have questions related to Linkages? Are you working on your 2025 Work Plan? Would you like to connect with your peers? Would you like to provide an update related to your Linkages Collaboration in your County? The CFPIC Linkages Team would love to hear from you!! We have Open Office Hours created for your convenience!

[Click here to schedule your TA/Guidance Session now!](#)



Upcoming Events

Save the Dates!

Linkages CalWORKs and ER Coordination: Early Intervention Webinar
August 20, 2025
1:30 PM

Coordinated Case Planning Webinar
September 25, 2025
1:30 PM

Questions? Ideas for future newsletters? Contact us!



Melissa Connelly
Senior Associate
melissa.connelly@cfpic.org



Jennifer Marcelli
Program Director
jennifer.marcelli@cfpic.org



Andrea Lewis
Program Associate
andrea.lewis@cfpic.org



Danna Fabella
Senior Consultant
danna.fabella@cfpic.org