

## SOLVING PROBLEMS

**A**bout to graduate? If you are finishing High School or getting your GED, and you plan to go to college by the end of the summer, you will not be put into welfare-to-work, and are guaranteed school.

**S**ign up for school NOW! To get a guaranteed education program, you must be enrolled in school *before* your first welfare-to-work appointment.

**C**ounties cannot *make you* do "appraisal" while your application is *pending*. If you were not given a choice, and enrolled in school before your aid was granted but *after* the appraisal, ask for a state fair hearing.

**G**et the county policy on how to show your school program will lead to employment. Make sure you ask for more time to turn in your proof, if you need it.

Denied a SIP? Ask for a state fair hearing. Fill out the back of any Notice of Action or call 800-952-5253.

**Call Legal Services**

## CALWORKS

Making it Work for You

## SIPs

Getting Education  
through  
CalWORKs

Prepared by  
Legal Services of Northern California  
[www.lsn.net](http://www.lsn.net)

# YOUR RIGHTS

## What is a SIP?

SIP stands for "Self-Initiated Program." It applies to people enrolled in school before their first CalWORKs welfare to work program

## Why be a SIP?

Being a "SIP" means you are *guaranteed education* as your CalWORKs welfare-to-work activity!

## Becoming a SIP

• You must be **enrolled in school before your CalWORKs "appraisal."** (This is usually your first welfare-to-work appointment.) *You do not have to have started school, just be signed up.*

• You must be making **"satisfactory progress"** in school.

• The program result in a **degree or certificate.** (If you already have a B.A., you must be in a teaching credential program.)

• The school program must **lead to employment.**

## Leading to Employment?

If your program is not on the county's list of pre-approved programs, the county must allow you to show the program will lead to work.

The county must tell in writing how you can prove your program will lead to work, and give you a reasonable time to turn in the proof.

## The County Won't Approve My Program!

- If you are in school, but you are *not* in a degree or certificate program, *or* the county decides that your program will not lead to work, **the county must let you finish the current term.**
- At the end of the term, you must either change to a degree or certificate program that will lead to work, or do a different welfare-to-work activity.



## How long do I have?

You have the full 60-months on CalWORKs to finish your program.



The county cannot make you change to a shorter program.

## Do I need to do "core" work activities?

- The new work rules *don't* apply to SIPs. You do **not** have to do 20 "core" hours as a SIP.
- You *do* have to meet the 32-35 hours/week participation rule.
- If you don't find your own activities other than school to fill up your hours, the county can send you to "assessment." The assessment will be used to make a welfare to work plan for the remaining hours.  
⇒ These other activities can't interfere with your school program.

## Does Study Time Count?

- Study time for that is listed as a school credit course is always counted.
- Supervised study time (such as study labs or tutorials) counts for participation hours.
- Study time at home will not count. If you cannot study in a supervised program because of a disability, as for home study as an "disability accommodation."



*The county must have study time in its county plan for the hours to count, unless the study time is a for-credit lab.*

## Volunteer SIPs

If you don't have to do welfare-to-work because you are **exempt**, you can be a volunteer. If you are a SIP when the county decides you are exempt, they **must** let you be a volunteer SIP. Volunteers still get support services. *See "Exemptions" brochure.* As a volunteer SIP, you can go to school at the pace that is right for you. You do not have to do the full 32 or 35 hours per week.

- As a volunteer, you can't be sanctioned. If you don't do your assignment or make "satisfactory progress" without good cause.