HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
Response to Ventura County 2007-2008 Grand Jury Report on

Human Services Agency Assistance Program:
Caseloads and Training

Report Findings:

F-01 The use of the computer was challenging for some HSA caseworkers who found it difficult to switch from a mostly paper-based system to a totally computerized system.

Response: Partially Concur

Implementation of the new CalWIN computer system presented tremendous change in the job of an HSA caseworker. The new system was a switch from the legacy WICAR system which was mostly paper-based to a process which is mostly computer based. Along with the computer system change in which caseworkers were required to learn new system functionality, two other changes were also introduced and implemented which included learning new business processes and an understanding of new program eligibility. The new computer system in and of itself, coupled with the other changes were initially challenging for many HSA caseworkers. However, over time caseworkers were able to obtain a better understanding and continue to gain knowledge in these three major areas of their job functions. Progressively as caseworkers spent more time using the system, they became more proficient and were able to comprehend and incorporate system logic with new business process and program eligibility.

F-02 The training provided to HSA caseworkers who handle multiple benefits using the CalWIN Training System is lengthy and complex. The training includes classroom and practical experience using the CalWIN Training System to simulate real caseloads.

Response: Concur

The CalWIN computer system has been designed to manage the eligibility determination and benefit issuance of a variety of complex assistance programs. Thus to ensure effective use of the system, a fairly thorough and rigorous training program has been developed that consists of classroom training and on-the-job training. The CalWIN system also provides for a training environment that allows trainers to develop and set up a simulation of real cases.

F-03   Training is provided by HSA instructors who divide it into system use and benefits administration. Some HSA trainers are more versed in program benefits while others in the CalWIN System. In some instances, a system instructor may not be able to answer benefits/program questions, and a benefits instructor may not be able to answer system questions.

Response: Partially Concur

The CalWIN computer system was implemented in April 2006 at which time the vendor provided full training to all HSA caseworkers on system utilization. Following CalWIN implementation as subsequent training was provided, Staff Development initially provided training on the program aspects of the job while working in conjunction with CalWIN Support Staff in providing the system functionality portion of the training. Subsequently Staff Development have gained a greater understanding and knowledge of the system functionality and have been successful incorporating both program eligibility and use of the system into their training curriculum. Over time Staff Development and other HSA instructors have become more versed and proficient in the use of the CalWIN system and are now able to answer both benefits/program questions as well as system use questions during their training.

F-04   New CalWIN employee training is composed of the following:

- eight weeks of classroom training on the system and programs
- eighteen weeks of closely supervised training while working a reduced caseload
- on-going training for system enhancements and fixes
- on-going refresher training using the CalWIN Training System
- on-going training by leads and first level management to assist workers who need extra help

Response: Partially Concur

CalWIN training is composed of two types of employee training as follows:

- **CalWIN training for new employees involves an "Orientation and Induction" (O&I) classroom setting environment.**
  - **This training consists of 6-8 weeks of classroom training on the CalWIN system and program eligibility along with on-the-job training.**
  - **After completion of their initial O&I, during their probationary period a trainee's supervisor/lead**

conducts a close review of their cases and provides individualized one-on-one training when needed.

- Ongoing training is provided to all employees and includes:
  - o System enhancements and fixes
  - o Ongoing refresher training
  - o New programs (trans-aid training)
  - o Specific identified areas where workers require or request additional assistance

F-05 Prior to conversion from the Welfare Information Computation and Reporting System (WICAR) to the CalWIN System, most HSA caseworkers handled a single benefit program.

Response: Concur

The WICAR system determined eligibility and benefit levels separately by individual programs without regard to household demographic information entered for other programs. CalWIN is an integrated system which determines eligibility and benefits for multiple programs based on client information. The functionality of the CalWIN system was designed based on a single worker concept for entering client information and taking into consideration each program's regulation and requirements. The system uses this information to determine multiple program eligibility. Based on this system design, caseworkers were trained to learn multiple program regulations and necessary system data entries required for the various programs. This change allows caseworkers to effectively and appropriately authorize benefits when client information is entered into the system upon application for multiple benefits.

F-06 Some caseworkers had difficulty converting from the WICAR System, where they administered a single benefit, to the CalWIN System where they administered multiple benefits.

Response: Concur

At initial implementation some caseworkers had difficulty converting from WICAR, a more simplistic data entry system, to the CalWIN system, which is a complex multi-windows database system. This conversion, as with learning any new computer system, was initially challenging for some caseworkers due to the complexity of the system and the associated learning curve. Most all caseworkers have subsequently become successful in learning and understanding the new system along with the additional program

regulations.

F-07 There is ongoing instruction to cross train as many caseworkers as possible to be "Combo Workers". This training qualifies HSA caseworkers to administer multiple benefits programs.

Response: Concur

HSA continues to cross train caseworkers to become "Combo Workers" which enables them to authorize multiple benefit programs. Until training is completed, based on their program knowledge caseworkers are only assigned cases with single benefit programs.

F-08 There are on-going monthly team meetings between office management and caseworkers regarding training, system enhancements, caseloads, and other concerns.

Response: Concur

Center Managers and supervisors meet with caseworkers regularly to the discuss training, system enhancements and fixes, caseloads and other issues or concerns.

F-09 Employees are notified of enhancements, system problems, and program changes brought about by legislative action. This is done either electronically, or if extensive, in paper form.

Response: Concur

CalWIN system enhancements, fixes and updates due to legislative changes are communicated to employees through a variety of ways. Major changes or new "Releases" to the system are presented to caseworkers through training and PowerPoint presentations. Handouts which highlight the changes are provided at the trainings including screen shots of new system features and functionality.

System problems are communicated to employees through the CalWIN Broadcast Messaging System or by e-mail.

All of this information is also shared and discussed at monthly informational meetings Program Analysts and CalWIN Support staff has with caseworker supervisors.

F-10 Operations manuals have not been updated to reflect the CalWIN

System. However, the manuals do reflect current benefits/programs administration.

Response: Partially Concur

Prior to CalWIN implementation operations manuals included program policy and procedures which also reflected business processes for the WICAR computer system. At implementation, although not incorporated into the current program policies and procedures, CalWIN business process manuals were developed and posted to the new CalWIN website, which reflected new processes in the CalWIN system. In addition, the CalWIN system provides an On-line Users Manual (OLUM) which provides caseworkers with basic information on the CalWIN system. Efforts are underway to incorporate CalWIN system functionality and business processes into the current program administration manuals and delete references to the legacy WICAR system.

F-11   A project to rewrite Operations Manuals using "Policy Tech", a software package designed to support this function, was recently initiated and will take approximately two years to complete.

Response: Concur

Based on a targeted two-year completion goal, efforts continue to update policy and procedural manuals using "Policy Tech" software. A Policy Tech workgroup meets regularly to discuss the most effective format and method for documenting the information in the manuals to ensure a uniform format, standardization and ease of use for the end user. Training was recently provided to Program Analysts and other Policy Tech document writers. Document completion is tracked so as to communicate new postings in Policy Tech to the end user and to monitor progress.

F-12   One of the objectives of the CalWIN System is the reduction or elimination of supporting paper files, however a large number of supporting paper files are still being maintained and are sometimes difficult to locate.

Response: Concur

One of the goals of the CalWIN system is to reduce paper and case files. Currently signed applications, copies of supporting documents and other forms completed by clients are still required to be maintained in paper case files. However, the CalWIN system eliminated the need to maintain duplicate copies of notices and

correspondence sent to clients, case comments documentation and computer-system generated case management forms (278 LM documents) which significantly reduced a large amount of paper files.

In addition, unlike the prior need to maintain multiple case files for one household based on individual types of assistance programs, with CalWIN only one case file is maintained for a household regardless of multiple assistance programs. Further reduction of paper and case files will be achieved as HSA implements an imaging software system.

F-13   HSA and Information Technology Department have initiated a project to evaluate imaging software packages which will eliminate most CalWIN supporting paper files.

Response: Concur

HSA currently in partnership with Information Technology Services Division is evaluating potentially viable document management / imaging software solutions.

F-14   Caseloads assigned to employees vary:
- Fully trained "Combo Workers" have a caseload of approximately 300 which vary from office to office
- Caseworkers who have recently completed training have caseloads of approximately one-half of those fully trained.

Response: Concur

HSA employs an "equal distribution of work" methodology when assigning caseloads. The average ongoing caseload for a fully trained "Combo Worker" is 300 cases, which can vary from office to office based on a variety of factors. These factors include the number of staff in a particular office due to recent staffing level changes such as resignations, retirements, promotions and leaves of absences and/or the number of new trainees within an office.

New trainees or caseworkers who have recently completed training are initially assigned reduced caseloads. Trainee caseloads initially start at 50 percent of a fully trained worker's caseload, with a gradual increase of cases each month reaching a full caseload before the end of the probationary period. Also, trainees are also not initially trained as "Combo Workers" until successful in one program aid.

F-15 Management is currently studying caseloads and will make adjustments as necessary. This study should be completed during the summer of 2008.

Response: Concur

HSA has initiated a Workload Study Project with a goal of equitable workload distribution. Project participation includes line staff, supervisors, managers and SEIU representation. Target date of completion is within the next 3 to 6 months.

F-16 HSA employees stated that although more time is spent setting up new cases using the CalWIN System than the old WICAR system, less time is needed for client record updates.

Response: Concur

At initial application, the CalWIN interactive interview requires caseworkers to spend more time with the client at application gathering required information to enter into the CalWIN system however, less time is spent by caseworkers having to perform manual budget computations and client notices.

At reapplication, renewal or when changes are made to a client's information, the caseworker only needs to enter the changed information and the system automatically acts on the changes and reassesses eligibility and recalculates benefits without the caseworkers having to manually recompute or re-enter all of the information needed to determine eligibility.

Report Recommendations:

R-01 Continue to train caseworkers who find using the CalWIN System and/or administering multiple benefit programs difficult.

Response:

HSA continues to train caseworkers who find using the CalWIN System and/or administering multiple benefits programs difficult. Refresher training continues to be requested and conducted in both system functionality and program eligibility.

Surveys and needs assessments are being conducted to identify training needs and areas in the system where additional training modules need to be developed and more focused training needs to be presented. In addition, a formal process was implemented by

Staff Development for offices/teams to request specialized training.

R-02   Revise CalWIN training so instructors are proficient in both the computer system and the benefits programs.

Response:

As HSA moved from the CalWIN development and implementation phase and further into the maintenance and operations phase, CalWIN trainers have placed more focus on understanding and integrating both program eligibility and CalWIN system functionality into their training. As trainers become more proficient in the use of the system, training curriculums and modules are being updated to incorporate and reflect both.

Staff Development participates in a consortium-wide CalWIN Training Subcommittee and Workgroup which assists in their continuous learning and understanding of the system.

R-03   Complete the updates of the Operations Manuals within a two-year time frame to reflect the CalWIN System.

Response:

HSA is continuing with the targeted goal to update operations manuals within a two-year time frame to incorporate CalWIN system processes with program policies and procedures manuals. This process will also include the development of comprehensive instruction documents and materials to assist caseworkers in performing their job functions. Progress on this goal is being monitored.

R-04   Complete the imaging software study and testing as soon as possible.

Response:

HSA and IT Services continue to partner on the HSA Imaging Pilot Project. This project was introduced to the Grand Jury in March 2008.

The team has identified the Administration Fiscal-Contracts and Grants division in addition to the Transitional Assistance Department's General Relief program as the 'generic' and 'program aid type' pilots for the project.

IT Services and HSA have been introduced to the FileNet Panagon solution that will be the platform in which the pilot will be implemented. This was accomplished by meeting with the FileNet Panagon vendor-IBM, and conducting/attending a HSA Presentation on FileNet Panagon. HSA's pilot project schedule is dependant on IT Services upgrade to the FileNet Panagon platform. The FileNet Panagon solution is scheduled to be updated on June 30, 2008.

Staff continues to actively work on the planning tasks of the project. The current focus is to validate and enhance the current business process documentation for managing Contracts/Grants and the General Relief program.

R-05   Implement imaging technology to reduce paper and provide better customer service.

Response:

In addition to the HSA Pilot Project work effort, the project team members met with the County Consultant, Al Cossey, to discuss the HSA business needs of an Enterprise Content Management (County wide) solution. HSA has identified the General Relief program as a possible pilot for the county's Enterprise Content Management solution.

The county's Enterprise Content Management project is in the discovery phase at this time.

The HSA Imaging Team has looked at various imaging solutions and is in the final stages of developing an imaging document for HSA Executives to review. The intent is to provide the necessary information so that an overall HSA enterprise imaging strategy can be defined and direction set.

R-06   Complete the caseload analysis for HSA caseworkers using the CalWIN system by the summer of 2008 and implement all required changes.

Response:

The HSA CalWIN Caseload study project was initiated to assess the workload of caseworkers as a result of changes due to the implementation of CalWIN. The project goal is to complete the workload analysis within the next 3 to 6 months and implement appropriate changes.