

Student Services Program Review Report

Sierra College, 2019-2020

Department/Program Name: CalWORKs

Date Submitted: 02/20/2020

Submitted By: Kara Perry

Ideally, the writing of a Program Review Report should be a collaborative process of full-time and part time faculty as well as all other staff and stakeholders invested in the present and future success of the program at all sites throughout the district. The Program Review Committee needs as much information as possible to evaluate the past and current performance, assessment, and planning of your program.

1) Relevancy: This section assesses the program's significance to students, the college, and the community.

1a) To provide context for the information that follows, describe the basic functions of your area and/or program.

If applicable, also describe how the program aligns with state mandates, priorities set by external agencies, or any other relevant organizations.

The CalWORKs Program is a categorically funded program that provides academic, career, and personal counseling services for at-risk parent students that are receiving cash-aid (welfare) from local counties. Facilitation of student success while assuring that the student remains in compliance with current county welfare regulations is a key part of the program.

To be eligible to participate and receive all Sierra College CalWORKs program services a student must:

- Provide verification each semester that he/she is receiving cash-aid for himself/herself
- Have a minimum of one scheduled appointment with a CalWORKs counselor each term (summer/fall/spring)
- County Welfare to work plan or
- Comprehensive Student Educational Plan (SEP) Completed by a CalWORKs counselor

The federal, state, and county mandates require that a student provide counties with:

- A comprehensive Student Education Plan indicating a college major and career goal that is approved by the county
- A monthly activity form completed by the student and signed by the CalWORKs counselor verifying participation in a prescribed number of hours (determined by the age of the children and the number of parents in the household).
- In certain circumstances a portion of a students required hours of participation must be in an employment activity and the Sierra College CalWORKs Program facilitates student opportunities to work on campus in subsidized positions. When students work in these on-campus jobs 75% of the wages are paid by the CalWORKs Program.

Due to the complex set of regulations that students and the program must understand, it is imperative that the CalWORKs counselors remain current with federal, state, and county welfare regulations to provide accurate information to the students. Advocacy for the students with county welfare offices is a vital component in removing county barriers to student success. (This advocacy frequently involves speaking with county workers to get supportive services such as books or childcare paid for in a timely manner.)

When supportive services (books/transportation costs) are denied or delayed by the county welfare office the CalWORKs counselor can provide a book voucher or a gas card to assist the student. These services remove barriers to success for students on a daily basis.

1b) How does your program support the District Mission, Vision Statement, and Core Values, quoted below? Please include an analysis of how your program supports ISLOs (Institutional Student Learning Outcomes): Communication, Technology and Information Competency, Critical and Creative Thinking, and Citizenship?

Sierra College Mission

The mission of Sierra College is to provide an inclusive and safe educational environment where learners are supported while challenging themselves and achieving their goals.

Sierra College Vision Statement

Sierra College will be the preferred destination for higher education and training in our region while eliminating achievement gaps among our students.

Sierra College Core Values

The following core values will establish our ethical principles and will guide our institutional decision-making. Sierra College will:

1. Empower students in their education.
2. Strive toward student success and continuous improvement.
3. Be an inclusive and equitable community.
4. Be responsive to the education and workforce needs of our local community and businesses.
5. Demonstrate collaboration with all stakeholders in decision making.
6. Manage all resources in a manner that is sustainable and responsible.
7. Support and model excellence and innovation in teaching, learning, scholarship, and creativity.

The Sierra College CalWORKs Program closely aligns with Sierra College's mission statement. CalWORKs students come into the program with diverse abilities, goals and needs ranging from learning English through our ESL classes to preparing for transfer. While many believe that they must limit their educational endeavors, CalWORKs counselors help students to learn that there are many educational pathways available, including options which may help them transfer to 4 year institutions. Through these educational opportunities the CalWORKs students go on to obtain certificates, associate degrees, and bachelor's degrees that lead to gainful employment and opportunities to contribute to their communities.

1c) Please analyze your program's effectiveness in supporting the strategic goals with which your program aligns. Please provide evidence in support of this analysis, including service or student learning outcomes, equity data, or other measurements of success.

Goal 1: Achieve equitable access and increase student success, retention and persistence in order to increase the number of students who complete certificates and degrees or transfer to four year colleges and universities while maintaining high levels of academic integrity.

Goal 2: Identify and close success and equity gaps amongst underserved and/or underrepresented student populations.

Goal 3: Provide professional growth and develop a climate of inclusion in order to support highly effective and innovative teaching and learning, support services, operations, and collaboration.

Goal 4: Meet and exceed external standards through an outcomes based framework for continuous quality improvement.

Goal 5: Modernize, revitalize and develop new facilities and infrastructure based on the current Facilities and Technology Master Plans.

Goal 6: Expand community partnerships and funding opportunities to support strategic goals and leverage resources.

Please address any developments related to Guided Pathways and Interest Areas that have impacted and/or will impact your program's support for these goals.

The CalWORKs Program most closely aligns with the Strategic Goal of Educational Effectiveness. This program helps to provide equitable access to students by providing targeted services to the CalWORKs student. These students gain an understanding of the required documentation which can be used as educational activities (classroom hours, study-time, and supervised study time) to meet the county, state, and Federal government hourly participation guidelines. Through group advising sessions and individual counseling appointments, CalWORKs students are given relevant information for achieving their goals while also learning how to qualify and use county and college resources to pay for needed services such as childcare, books, and transportation costs.

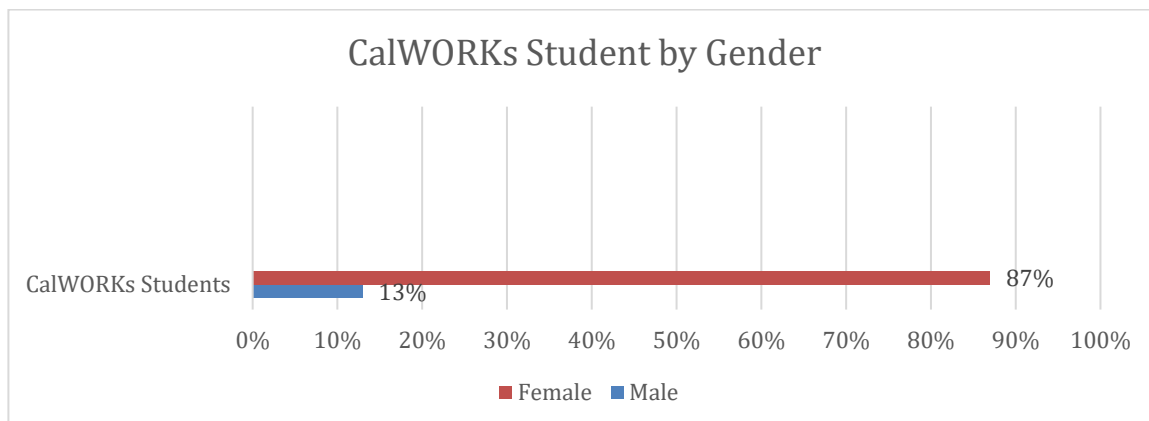
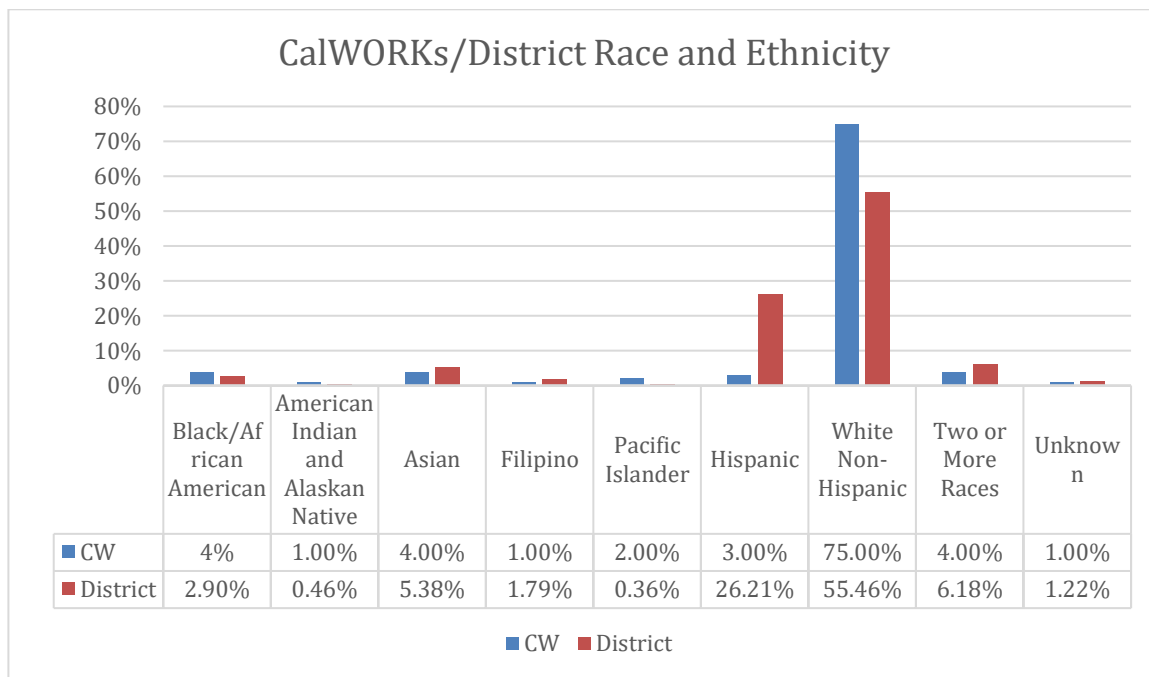
1d) Optional Additional Data: Describe any other relevant contributions of your program to the district mission, goals, outcomes, and values not incorporated in the answers above. These may include but are not limited to contributions to diversity, campus climate, cultural enrichment, community ties, partnerships, and service. Please include specific data and examples when these are available and relevant to the analysis.

The CalWORKs program aligns with students need in that our CalWORKs recipient student population is a very low- income student (a single mother of one child receives \$672 per month in cash-aid). The students have a complex list of county, state, federal and Chancellor's Office requirements they must meet to qualify for financial and academic support services for school. Almost 100% of the CalWORKs students use financial aid to supplement their cash-aid income, and the Sierra College CalWORKs Program provides additional supportive services that facilitate academic success. Each CalWORKs student is given a paper copy of the BOGW form to complete with the CalWORKs counselor and then this form, along with a copy of their county eligibility document, is provided to the financial aid office therefore waiving additional fees for each student. Also, annually more than \$75,000 is spent from the CalWORKs categorical funds to provide book vouchers, Staples or Barnes & Noble cards to purchase school supplies, gas cards, USB thumb drives, and day planners. The students also need comprehensive counseling services, including addressing barriers to academic success such as county requirements, personal, career, and crisis intervention.

In the fall 2019 CalWORKs Group Advising Session more than one hour was used by the lead CalWORKs counselor to respond to students' questions and concerns regarding difficulties in dealing with the county agencies and workers when requesting necessary book funds and the financial aid process and requirements were discussed at length. When appropriate the CalWORKs counselor serves as a direct advocate on a student's behalf in requesting county services. When direct county contact is not possible, use of federal and state regulations are referred to during counseling sessions and students are "coached" in the appropriate terminology to use when requesting necessary services from the county case workers. Guidelines for applying for "Fair Hearing" (a legal process for addressing client claims of county misuse of policies) are also given to students, as well as information on services provided by Legal Services of Northern California.

A key component of the CalWORKs state program is tied to employment. The Sierra College CalWORKs Program facilitates this transition to employment by referring students to on-campus employment opportunities. They are directed to the Sierra College Job Links website and the Financial Aid office, for lists of jobs. If a student is offered on-campus employment a form is completed by the lead counselor and given to the financial aid office authorizing that 75% of the students pay will be paid by the CalWORKs Program. Most academic years, 18-25 CalWORKs students are employed in on-campus positions. CalWORKs students are granted tier 2 priority registration which greatly enhances their ability to get into required classes on days and times that meet their complex family schedules. The majority of CalWORKs students need to take classes during day hours due to childcare constraints so priority registration is a valuable service for them. Each month the CalWORKs student must obtain a signature from the Sierra College CalWORKs counselor on a county activity form (generated by the county and mailed to the student). This form is evaluated by the counselor or program SST for accuracy in reporting class, homework, and supervised homework hours and then returned to the student. The student then returns the signed form to the county for reimbursement of transportation costs and continuation of paid childcare services.

The CalWORKs student population is a diverse population. Although CalWORKs students are largely white, they are also immigrants and a large percentage of CalWORKs students are English Language Learners. Moreover, CalWORKs students are 87% single mothers with children under the age of 18. This diversity of cultural and life circumstances contributes to the overall campus community and in specific instances can lead to opportunities to educate and clarify misinformation about the welfare system. For example, a student recently described how she contributed to a classroom conversation on by sharing her struggles as a single mother and how she is using county resources to earn an education which will lead to independence for herself and her child. At first, she reported feeling uncomfortable but then several students followed up with questions and she felt good for having informed her classmates on something they may have known very little about.



2) Currency

2a) Service Outcomes and Student Learning Outcomes Assessment: Considering any relevant information, please describe and analyze your program's development and assessment of Service Assessment Outcomes and/or Student Learning Outcomes, including any relevant information regarding diversity and equity goals. Please describe any improvements or changes made to the program as a result of this analysis.

Outcomes and outcome data:

Our Service Area Outcomes are as follows:

2017-2018

Many CalWORKs students attend their one mandatory appointment with a counselor and then do not attend encouraged subsequent meetings scheduled near priority registration dates. Counselor and Student Services Technicians within the program hypothesized that changes to incentivize second appointment would increase additional appointment attendance and, in turn, increase student success by providing more counselor contact and connection to resources throughout the semester.

2018-2019

One barrier which many students who receive CalWORKs face is accessing their caseworkers for questions, concerns or obtaining/submitted documents in a manner which is congruent with Sierra College timelines. As parents (often single parents) they encounter barriers while attempting collect and submit documents for the Sierra College CalWORKs program and the county. Counselor and Student Services Technician within the program hypothesized increasing access to caseworker by placing him/her on campus (especially during peak times) would alleviate a barrier for these students and increase access to a Placer County caseworker.

2019-2020 In progress

Assessment of outcomes:

In the space below, please describe or attach any cycle you have developed for outcomes assessment.

2017-2018

124 students at Rocklin and Nevada County campuses attended a first contact appointment and of these 87 also attended the "highly encouraged" and incentivized second appointment near the priority registration date. This was an improvement in the number of CalWORKs students that attended a second appointment in the previous year. CalWORKs was able to meet with 70% of our 2017-2018 total students for two contacts.

2018-2019

Piloted a program with Placer County Employment Services that allows a CalWORKs Employment Specialist to be in our office twice per month to see Sierra College CalWORKs students in our office. At the end of 2019 we assessed this service with a CalWORKs student survey. 80% of respondents utilized the on-campus caseworker. 70% said they found the services to be useful.

2019-2020 In Progress

The CalWORKs Program submits Service Area Outcomes each July, as well as an end of year report to Chancellor's Office each September to report on the following year's data.

2b) Professional Development: Describe how departmental activities serve to improve student service and student outcomes. Include flex activities, departmental meetings and activities, conferences, outreach to other colleges, research and implementation of best practices, changes in legislation, mandates from regulatory agencies, required faculty certifications, health and safety trainings or other factors. How do these activities contribute to your program's self-assessment and planning?

Please describe any staff development needs you have identified based on this analysis.

- The lead CalWORKs counselor participates in 35- 2 hour staff development/training sessions each calendar year. In these sessions updated information on relevant Sierra College's policies, processes, and procedures are provided to counselors to ensure they have accurate information to guide and facilitate student success.
- The CalWORKs lead counselor also participates in mandatory regional meetings to address advocacy issues for CalWORKs students and share best practices amongst regional colleges.
- An annual 3 day training institute is also attended by the lead counselor, and county staff meetings are attended each year.
- When federal/state/county welfare rules are updated significantly there are additional trainings offered and participated in by the lead CalWORKs counselor.
- Daily interactions by phone and in-person meetings with county welfare workers provides updated information and training opportunities for CalWORKS counselor
- Information gained from these activities are provided to adjunct CalWORKs counselors via email or training updates
- In addition to meetings and organized trainings, an electronic ListServ directory is maintained by the Chancellor's Office and the lead counselor participates and receives legal updates and/or questions regarding the implementation of county and college CalWORKs policies and processes. The lead counselor also routinely reviews the state Department of Social Services website for legal language and updates for CalWORKs compliance.
- Lead counselor attends trainings provided by the Mental Health grant in order to gain and maintain skills for assisting students in distress or experiencing mental health issues.
- Lead counselor completed Title IX training Fall 2016 in order to learn process of remaining in compliance with changing process due to changes in laws pertaining to reporting sexual assault and domestic violence

2c) Optional Additional Data: Provide any other information, not included above, that contributes to your program's success in supporting student service and student outcomes.

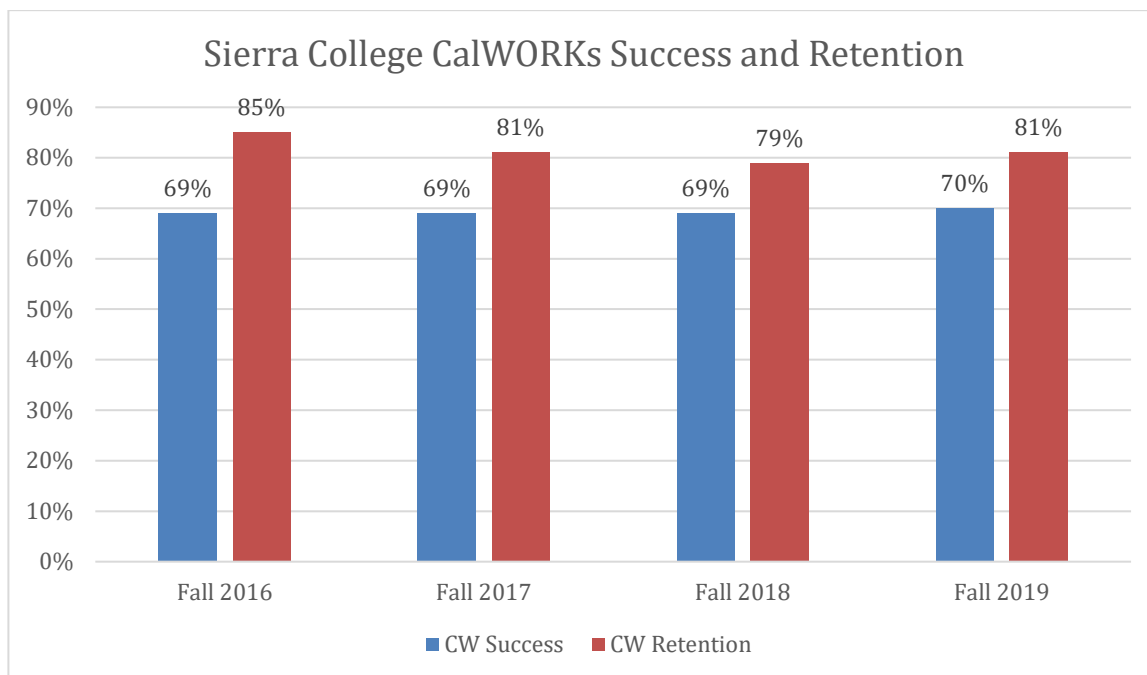
The lead CalWORKs Counselor works closely with the CalWORKs Student Services Technician to assure effective internal operations on a day to day basis. Processes are developed to assure consistency in how student services are delivered and what, if any, changes are needed to address changing student needs. Forms are developed and introduced jointly to determine viability. An internal database is maintained to track student eligibility and services needed which is shared by the lead Counselor and the Student Services Technician. MIS reports as required by the Chancellor's office are reviewed and approved by both the Lead Counselor and Student Services Technician to assure accuracy and completeness. The CalWORKs Program has passed the last 10 years of state audits with 100% accuracy

3) Effectiveness: This section assesses the effectiveness of the program in light of traditional measurements.

3a) Retention and Success/Service Outcomes: Please analyze your success in achieving your program goals using data that is relevant to your program, including service outcomes and/or student learning outcomes. Describe any changes you have made that have improved the effectiveness of the program as well as any barriers you may have encountered in making these or other changes. If you determine that you need to improve the program's performance in any way, please describe how you plan to achieve this goal.

Address separately the data for on ground and on-line services, as well as usage at the various centers when applicable

As relevant, please address your program’s role in the development of MAPs, Interest Areas and Guided pathways and the impact of these developments on program planning and assessment.



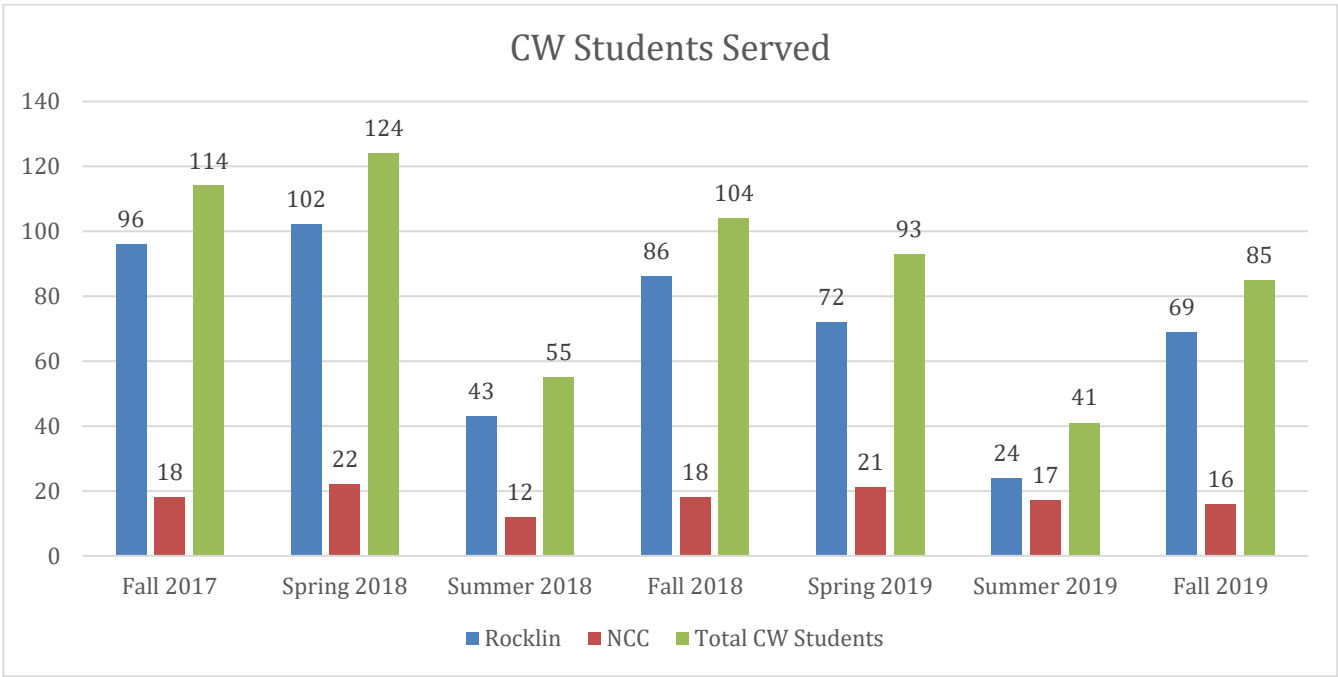
The prior charts shows that productivity of the CalWORKs student closely follows the retention and success rate of Sierra College’s general student population. More than half of the students in the CalWORKs program are single parents, and more than one-third of them are ESL students. Many of them are in unstable living environments, sharing housing with other family members as a means to reduce costs due the low cash-aid payments they receive. Many of the CalWORKs students are also working at least part-time to increase the family income, which reduces available time for homework. The county will not pay for childcare during hours used for studying, only class time or work hours, therefore again placing additional barriers in the path of student success.

Counselor intervention and addressing specific performance concerns is being done using the Starfish Early Alert tool by the lead CalWORKs counselor and the Student Services Technician. The addition of placing phone calls mid-semester, again providing that “warm touch”, will hopefully continue to provide students in this program with additional support prior to decreases in student performance.

3b) Usage Trends - Identify and analyze the usage trends relevant to your program for the last three years. Analyze these trends as well as any challenges experienced by the program in terms of providing timely and effective student service. If you determine that you need to improve the program’s performance in any way, please describe how you plan to achieve this goal.

Address separately the data for on ground and on-line services, as well as usage at the various centers when applicable.

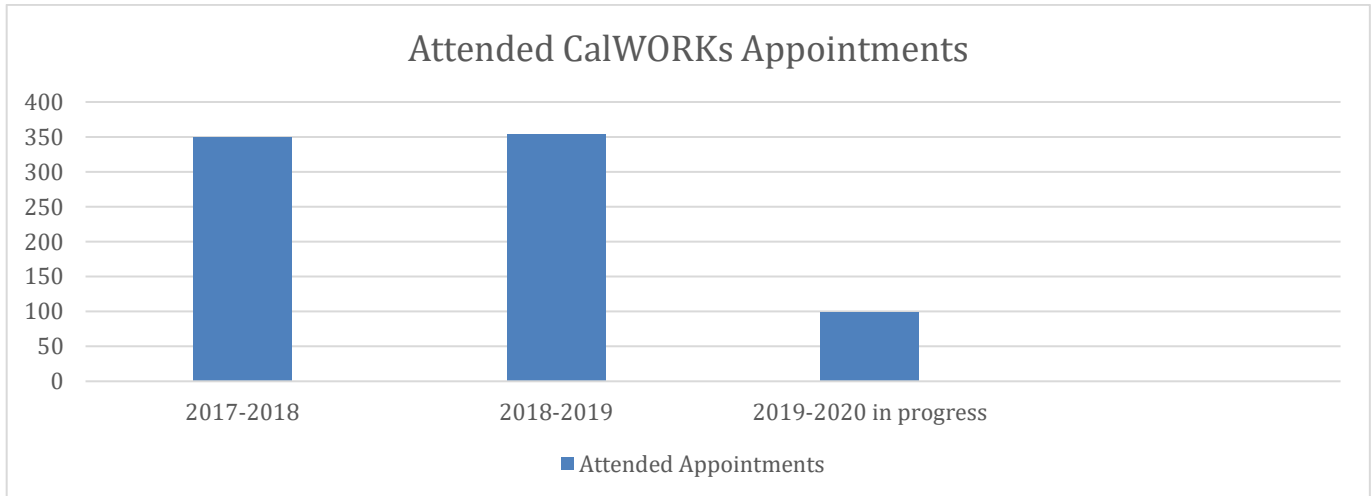
As relevant, please address any impact of the development of Interest Areas and Guided pathways on program planning and assessment.



As the above chart demonstrates, student enrollment varies per semester. The Sierra College CalWORKs program, unlike several other special population programs, does not screen and select students to participate in the program. If the student requests services from the program, has documentation of cash-aid eligibility, and has a county Welfare-to-Work plan and/or desires a comprehensive Student Education Plan (SEP), they must be served. We cannot deny services for poor performance in classes (although the county can choose not to use school as an approved activity) but adhere to Sierra College’s regulations on performance and dismissal.

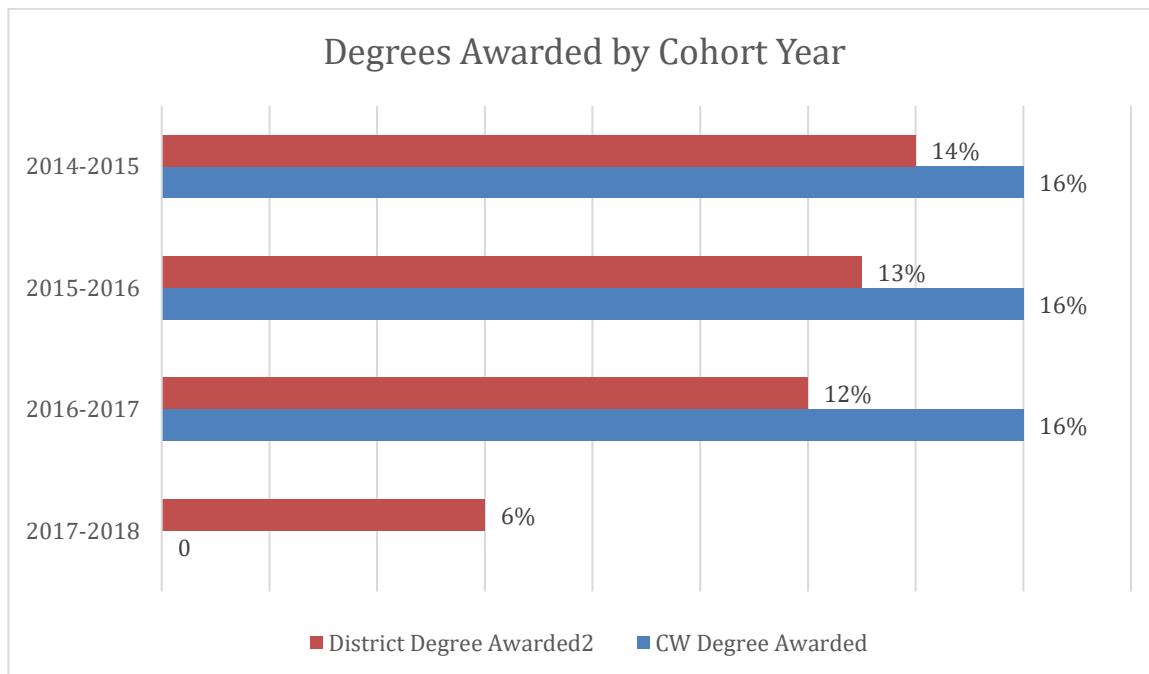
The program relies significantly on the counties to refer students to the Sierra College CalWORKs Program, but some students seek out the program’s services based on referral from family, friends, or general counselors. Generally the primary counties the program serves (Placer, Nevada, Sacramento) request that we do no outside recruiting of students, due to the complex county processes of determining which county clients are deemed eligible for vocational education.

There has been a considerable decrease in Placer County cash aid recipients as the economy is strong. In 2013 Placer County Department of Human Services averaged 1,026 adults per month in Employment Services. As of December 2016 that number was down to 767, and is currently even lower. The numbers in the Sierra College CalWORKs Program decreased in the 14/15 and 15/16 years as the economy strengthened. Currently, the program is at its lowest usage rate in 10 years, serving 85 total students in 2019-2020. Again, the program requirements and numbers are very much impacted by the economy, and federal, state, and county policies and changes at any of these three levels may lead to future changes in numbers.



There have been some changes to personnel in the CalWORKs program at the Nevada County Campus. The current adjunct counselor working for the CalWORKs program at the Nevada County campus is scheduled to work one day each week, which is down from the two days a week the previous counselor was available in Spring of 2016. The lead counselor and student service technicians in the program continue to discuss alternative ideas for how to best serve the small population of students at the Nevada County campus. We are considering additional options such as “virtual” appointments using web cameras to assist students from the Rocklin campus. In the last year, the adjunct counselor at the Nevada County Campus also began presenting at Department of Human Services new participant orientations to describe the benefits of our program and hopefully help increase our numbers on the Nevada County campus.

3c) Equity: Analyze and evaluate your program’s performance in promoting and/or achieving equity. Based on this analysis, describe any plans you have to sustain or improve the program’s contribution to student equity as a central component of student success.



CalWORKs students are low-income parenting students receiving cash aid. As stated previously in this document due to the circumstances of their lives, going to school and moreover, completing a certificate or degree can be extremely difficult. The CalWORKs program works to mitigate, and remove barriers for these students, by providing additional resources and support structures, so that they can achieve their educational goals. One measure of how effectively the CalWORKs program is doing this is to look at completion data for CalWORKs students versus the larger Sierra College student body. The graph above shows that CalWORKs students are completing associate degrees at Sierra College at a higher rate than the district as a whole. This graph is by cohort year. No CalWORKs students that started Sierra College in 2017-2018 have completed a degree to this point. The CalWORKs programs plans to continue to support CalWORKs student completion rates through participation in auto-awarding, interest areas, and proactive case management within the Sierra College Success Center.

3d) Optional information: Please describe and evaluate any additional relevant information supporting the evaluation of your program.

3e) Analysis and Planning: Referring to the analysis in 3a-3d, your departmental planning document, and relevant information from section 2 above, please describe your program’s plans to maintain or increase its effectiveness and analyze and evaluate your efforts to achieve these goals.

The CalWORKs Program continues to serve as the first and primary point of contact for all CalWORKs students. In fall 2018 the CalWORKs program acquired a new Director of Special Programs and Services. While the person coordinating the program and a few processes have changed, requirements to remain compliant with regulations has not changed. An off-campus option

for employment, still subsidized by the CalWORKs Program, could increase the number of students that are employed and lead to higher, self-sustaining wages after graduation.

4) Resources: This category assesses the adequacy of current resources available to the program and describes and justifies the resources required to achieve planning goals by relating program needs to the assessments above.

4a) Please describe the future direction and goals of your program for the next three years in terms of sustaining or improving program effectiveness, relevance, and currency. Please include any analysis of relevant performance assessments in your explanation and of any impacts on program planning and development related to Interest Areas, Guided Pathways, student equity, and student success.

The Sierra College CalWORKs Program will continue to strive to offer the services that best facilitate student success within the parameters set by the Chancellor's Office, the local counties, the state of California, and the federal government guidelines. The current categorical funding is more than adequate for the current and future fiscal needs of the program, including the possibility of adding a PT Job Developer and paying for off-campus student employment should we decide to explore those options, or a % of a Support Specialist position to help address flags raised in Sierra Connect for CalWORKs students.

4b) Please describe and justify any projected requests for additional staff, new or augmented technology/equipment, and additional or remodeled facilities necessary to support these goals. Please incorporate any relevant data related to service outcomes/student learning outcomes, student success, and equity.

Equipment/Technology:

Equipment and technology needs are generally met through the use of the categorical funds provided the program by the Chancellor's Office.

Facilities:

The EOPS/CARE/TRIO/CalWORKs space is currently adequate. The programs currently share one adjunct office space which is inadequate at the beginning of each semester when all of the programs have an increased demand for services at the same time.

Staff:

Since program enrollment is down we will not pursue additional counselors at this time. Lead counselor is considering use of % Support Specialist in the future due to increased need for county contact, meeting attendance and building/maintaining relationships with Sacramento County as well. On and off campus job assistance for CalWORKs students is a consideration within the program as well and could be further explored within such a position. One 35% Director, one Counselor, equivalent to 145% Student Services Technicians comprised of several shared positions, and a full-time general funded counselor at the NCC campus that serves CalWORKs students. Student help is also utilized for 24 hours per week.

4c) Please check the appropriate boxes in the chart below indicating the general reasons for the resource requests described above (please check all that apply):

| Function/Role | Maintenance | Development | Growth | Safety | Outcomes | Other success measures | No Requests |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|--------|--------|----------|------------------------|-------------|
| | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | |

5) Summary/Closing

5a) Based on the analysis above, briefly summarize the program’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities/future directions, and challenges.

The CalWORKs Program continues to evolve and change, primarily due to changes in county, state, and federal regulation. The Lead CalWORKs Counselor continuously receives new information, communicates with counties frequently and attends trainings when possible to help ensure the program provides effective services to the CalWORKs student. The program’s success and strengths lie within our ability, skills, and knowledge of the lead counselor, and CalWORKs Technicians.

Collaborative efforts are made between staff and faculty to serve our students in the best way possible. Our focus will remain on serving students and remaining as organized as possible.

5b) How has ~~the author of~~ this report integrated the views and perspectives of stakeholders in the program?

This program review has used information provided anecdotally by students as well as the views and perspectives of the Lead CalWORKs Counselor and several CalWORKs Student Services Technicians.