
WORKING TOWARD JOBS

*The California
Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) Program*



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF EVALUATION AND INSPECTIONS

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This technical report was prepared to describe the operation of the California Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program. This technical report is part of a larger study which was conducted to describe the operation of a sample of mature, well-regarded and comprehensive work programs for AFDC recipients and the insights of the administrators of those programs.

This report was prepared under the direction of Emilie Baebel, Chief, Public Health and Human Services Branch. This project was lead by Suzanne Murrin of that branch.

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The California Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) Program

**Richard P. Kusserow
INSPECTOR GENERAL**

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INTRODUCTION

This technical report is part of a series of profiles on the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) work programs participating in the *Working Toward JOBS* project.

Each profile begins with a categorized description of the subject AFDC work program, which is based on mail guides submitted by the program. Appendix A includes an overview statement written by the program manager. It describes the program, its goals, philosophy and lessons learned. Appendix B is a sample of documents used to conduct the program. Each program administrator was asked to submit sample documents which they felt would be useful to States and counties developing JOBS programs.

Data collection for this study was done from April to September of 1989. The information in the overview and technical reports is based on pre-JOBS work programs for AFDC recipients. As these programs have converted to JOBS, they may have made some changes to meet JOBS legal and regulatory requirements. Where possible, we have noted the changes the program administrators anticipated at the time of our data collection.

PROGRAM PROFILE

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Population: 27,996,000
Major industries: service, retail trade, manufacturing
First quarter 1989 unemployment rate: 4.97 percent
Annual income for a family of four: \$12,000
Number living below the poverty line: 3,441,786

THE CALIFORNIA AFDC PROGRAM

For Fiscal Year (FY) 1988:
Total cost: \$4,285,200,000
Federal share: \$2,271,100,000; State share: \$2,014,100,000
Number of AFDC cases: approximately 600,000
95 percent in urban settings; 5 percent in rural settings
Client averages:
 Age: 34
 Number of children in grant: 1.9
 Age of youngest child in grant: 1 year
 Length of spell on AFDC: 16.6 months
 55 percent have been unemployed 2 years or more
 38 percent have been previously employed for 1 month or more
Total FY 1988 case closures: 11,802
Closures after participating in work program: 2,675 as of June 1988

THE CALIFORNIA AFDC WORK PROGRAM

General Background

Name: Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN)

Operating Since: GAIN began operating in June 1986. The State legislation provides for phase-in of all participants through 1991.

Philosophy: GAIN is designed to provide welfare recipients with a full range of employment-related training and supportive services. The major thrust of the

program is directed toward assisting AFDC program applicants and recipients to obtain skills and opportunities that lead to unsubsidized jobs. The goal of the program is to assist all able-bodied welfare applicants and recipients to become economically self-sufficient.

The program is based on certain principles:

- (1) participants should be able to make choices about their program path and they should be required to live up to the responsibilities involved with these choices;
- (2) participants should be provided early program opportunities to obtain jobs;
- (3) program expenditures should be targeted where they can do the most good;
- (4) the State and counties have an obligation to provide sufficient services to participants to meet their needs, and to undertake an information campaign to make potential participants, employers and the public aware of the opportunities and values associated with the program; and
- (5) new programs should be good investments of public funds; additional system costs should be incurred only when they are likely to result in long-term personal and community pay-off.

Program Administrator:

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Administrative Issues

Structure: Local level GAIN administration is done through the county welfare departments (CWDs). The CWDs both deliver and coordinate delivery of services to participants (i.e., CWDs can contract for most participant services). Before counties implement their GAIN programs, they are required to develop a plan that specifies the arrangement and method by which employment, training, and supportive services will be provided to GAIN participants. Counties must conduct labor market, participant, and child care needs assessments, and must offer an adequate range of services targeted to those needs. In developing plans, counties must integrate input from other service providers (such as community

colleges, county offices of education, Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) Service Delivery Areas, and child care programs) to ensure the adequacy and coordination of services. Counties must also identify any unmet needs and include a proposal to meet those needs.

Each county GAIN plan must be approved by the County Board of Supervisors at the local level and by the Department of Social Services at the State level. Counties must update their plans annually.

The State meets on a monthly basis with the County Welfare Directors Association and its various subcommittees to ensure their input in program policy development and decision-making.

A profile of how the County of San Diego operates the GAIN program is included in the Office of Inspector General "Working Toward JOBS: The County of San Diego Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) Program" inspection report.

Funding: For State Fiscal Year 1989-1990 total projected expenditures for GAIN (excluding additional costs due to JOBS implementation) are estimated at \$331.8 million. Of this amount, \$102.4 million is funded with existing community resources. The amount of supportive services included in this estimate is \$56.4 million.

Staff: GAIN is supervised by the State Department of Social Services Employment Programs Branch which is staffed by 48 employees. This branch is divided into two bureaus. The policy bureau is responsible for developing State employment services policy, regulations and other directives; disseminating that information to the counties; and ensuring that policies and regulations are properly interpreted. The operations bureau reviews and approves county plans and budget proposals, provides technical assistance, monitors and evaluates the program, and acts as liaison to the County Welfare Directors Association.

GAIN is administered at the county level by the county welfare departments.

Success Measurements: California measures GAIN's success by calculating resulting employment and AFDC savings.

Recordkeeping: California's 58 counties have various electronic data processing systems. There are established electronic data processing functional requirements of GAIN which the counties utilize. Each county is required to submit to the State the following reports: GAIN monthly activity report indicating activity by each program component; GAIN quarterly characteristics report; quarterly

administrative expense claim report; and two annual reports, the GAIN county plan update and county GAIN budget proposal.

Provision of Services/Outside Resources: Because California has 58 counties which operate independently, each welfare department decides on the objectives of its program, within the parameters of State regulation. Many of the service components are subcontracted to outside agencies. For example, Napa county contracts orientation, appraisal, many case management services and job search services to the JTPA. Many other counties choose to provide those services themselves.

Evaluations: The Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) is under a multi-year contract with the State Department of Social Services to evaluate GAIN, with the final report due in 1992. Two interim reports have been released.

Participation Issues

Participant Descriptors: In FY 1988, approximately 125,000 registered, while 92,750 participated beyond registration. The average age of participants was between 30-34 years. Approximately 67 percent have less than a high school education. All other averages are the same as for general AFDC population.

Target Groups: The State program does not establish target groups. It has created a list of factors by which clients are to be excluded from the program should there not be enough resources to provide services to all clients. In order of first excluded these are: (1) AFDC-Unemployed Parent (UP) applicants, (2) AFDC applicants, (3) AFDC or AFDC-UP recipients, excluding teen-age parents, who are exempt volunteers, (4) AFDC-UP recipients on aid for less than 1 year, (5) AFDC-UP recipients on aid for less than 2 years, (6) AFDC recipients on aid for less than 1 year, (7) AFDC recipients on aid continuously for less than 2 years, (8) volunteer teenage registrants, and (9) all remaining AFDC recipients, with recipients receiving aid the longest the last to be excluded.

Mandatory Activities/Sanctions: A nonexempt recipient must participate in orientation and appraisal and any of the other program components agreed upon in the contract activity agreement between the CWD and the participant. Approximately 100 sanctions were imposed in FY 1988 for clients who did not comply with GAIN mandatory activities.

Volunteers: Between 10-15 percent of GAIN participants are volunteers.

Employment Placements: Approximately 37,000 full-time placements were made in calendar year 1988. Over 10,000 AFDC cases have been closed as a result of placements into subsidized or unsubsidized employment. The average starting wage is \$5.86 per hour. There is no follow-up information available because of the newness of the program.

Program Activities

Sequencing: GAIN uses a sequence of service components that participants are required to follow. The participant flow chart appears in the sample document appendix on page 12 in the GAIN guidebook.

Program Activities Listing: Because California's 58 counties are responsible for administering GAIN, each county's operations vary in order to meet local conditions. As such, information on how GAIN services are provided is county specific. The State GAIN office has submitted descriptions of the various categories of activities included under GAIN and the number of statewide participants. All participation figures are for FY 1988.

Orientation/Assessment/Employability Planning

Activity: The CWD obtains information that assists in determining the status of the registrant and provides forms for the Federal and California jobs tax credit. A self-appraisal form completed by the registrant may be used. Information collected includes: (1) questions related to deferral criteria, (2) employment background, (3) AFDC history, (4) current education and training activities, (5) educational history and competency, (6) need for supportive services.

The CWD determines deferrals, re-emphasizes to non-deferred registrants GAIN services, their responsibilities, consequences of failure to participate, and their rights. The CWD also determines which component the registrant should be assigned to and the registrant's need for educational and supportive services.

The CWD enters into a basic contract with the participant, using information gained in assessment and participant's employment goals.

Participants: 28,792.

Supportive Services

Activity: Child care services are available to every GAIN participant with a child under 12 years of age who has indicated the need in their basic or amended contract. The CWDs are encouraged to contract with existing public and private child care programs to provide any or all of the services. Child care services arranged by the participant may be paid for under GAIN, provided those costs do not exceed regional market child care cost rates. If a GAIN registrant terminates AFDC dependency due to unsubsidized employment, payment for child care services is available for a transition period of 3 months. Transportation costs are paid for every participant to and from his or her GAIN assignment, including transportation to and from the child care provider, and transportation for children to and from child care. Ancillary expenses shall be paid when necessary up to a maximum of \$450 per participant. These include books, tools, clothing, fees and other necessary costs of a work or training assignment. A person who has personal or family problems that are jeopardizing the successful outcome of the employment plan is referred to appropriate services to help them and their family adjust to the job training assignment.

Participants: 118,612.

Planned Changes: GAIN will make the necessary changes to conform to JOBS regulations regarding child care reimbursement and 12 month transitional child care.

Education

Activity: Adult basic education is pre-employment basic education, which includes reading, writing, and arithmetic necessary for employment or job training, including high school proficiency.

College and community college education provides sufficient employment skills training that can reasonably be expected to lead to participant employment.

Vocational English as a second language is intensive instruction in English for non-English speaking participants which is coordinated with specific job training.

Utilization of self-initiated education programs or an educational program entered into as the result of the employment plan shall not exceed 2 academic years.

Participants: 18,304 for all educational activities. Those who score below the certification level on the appraisal test are automatically referred to adult basic education.

Employment Services

Activity: Job club consists of job search workshops and supervised job search.

Job search workshops are group training sessions where participants learn various skills including how to seek out a job, job development, understanding employer requirements and expectations, and how to enhance self-esteem, self-image, and confidence.

Supervised job search is an organized method of seeking work which includes access to phone banks in a clean and well-lighted place, job orders, and direct referrals to employers. This process is overseen, reviewed and critiqued by an employment counselor. The amount of activity required during the supervised job search period is determined based on the participant's employment history and need for supportive services.

Unsupervised job search participants independently seek work and make periodic progress reports no less frequently than every two weeks to the CWD or the agency contracting with the CWD. The CWD or agency may verify the reported job search efforts.

Job placement activities include but are not limited to referrals to jobs listed by employers with the Employment Development Department's State Job Service.

Job development participants are provided active assistance in seeking employment, on a one-to-one basis, by an employment counselor.

Employment counseling is aimed at helping the participant reach an informed decision on an appropriate employment goal, and is performed by an employment counselor.

Participants: 12,110.

Anticipated Changes: In order to comply with JOBS, job search activity, whether group or individual, has been limited to a total of 16 weeks in any 12 consecutive month period. Of these 16 weeks, at least 8 must be in conjunction with other employment or training activity. Additionally, with the implementation of JOBS, program participation by an applicant is limited to job search.

On-The-Job Training/Work Supplementation

Activity: On-the-job training is subsidized employment in which a participant receives job skills training from an employer. At the end of the training, it is expected that the participant will be retained by the employer.

Counties implementing the work supplementation program are required to utilize grant diversion for the purpose of providing and subsidizing jobs, including supported work and transitional employment. Grant diversion is a funding mechanism for subsidized employment, in which the participant's grant or a portion thereof is diverted to the employer as a wage subsidy.

Participants: 296.

Community Work Experience/PREP

Activity: Nonsalaried work experience with public or private nonprofit agencies under the pre-employment preparation activity. Basic PREP provides work behavior skills and a reference for future unsubsidized employment. Advanced PREP provides on-the-job enhancement of existing or recently acquired participant skills.

Short-term PREP is limited to 3 months. Long-term PREP is limited to 1 year.

Participants: 326 in short-term PREP, and 42 in long-term PREP.

Anticipated Changes: To comply with JOBS, California has modified the formula for computing the number of hours a participant is required to work each month in a CWEP assignment. The modifications to the formula guarantee that the hours required per month will never exceed the maximum hours established under JOBS.

Other Work Experience (Vocational Training/Education)

Activity: Vocational training includes training in employer-specific job skills in a classroom or onsite setting, including training provided by local private industry council programs and community colleges.

Participants: 5,540.

Case Management

Activity: Case management activities generally consist of conducting program orientations and appraisals, monitoring registrants who fail to appear at the program orientation, assigning participants to activities, arranging supportive services, monitoring program participation and authorizing sanctions.

OVERVIEW STATEMENT

CALIFORNIA GAIN PROGRAM OVERVIEW STATEMENT (August 1989)

GAIN, which stands for Greater Avenues for Independence, was created in 1985 in bipartisan State legislation which represented a landmark welfare employment initiative in California as well as the Nation. The program has provided job training, education and employment opportunities to more than 125,000 enrollees since State Fiscal Year 1988.

Principles

GAIN is designed to provide welfare recipients with a full range of employment-related training and supportive services. The definitive goal of the program is to assist Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) applicants and recipients to obtain skills and realize opportunities that lead to jobs which provide the means towards family self-sufficiency.

GAIN is based on the following principles:

- Participants should be able to choose between program options and be responsible for following through;
- Job opportunities should be provided from the earliest point and throughout participation;
- Resources should be directed cost effectively;
- Necessary services must be provided to participants to meet family needs and support participation;
- Potential participants and the public should be provided information to make them aware of the program goals, objectives, services, opportunities, rights and responsibilities;
- No participants should be set aside in an unassigned pool;

- New program investments should be undertaken with cost-effectiveness as the primary consideration.

Program Design

Applicants and recipients of AFDC whose youngest child is at least 3 years old must participate in GAIN (unless they have an acceptable reason for exemption) and are classified as mandatory registrants. Those with children under 3 years old and those who are otherwise exempt may volunteer to participate and are encouraged to do so. Mandatory registrants may be temporarily deferred from participation for specified reasons.

Registrants are appraised (appraisal is the initial assessment) by the County Welfare Department to determine the preliminary employment goal and the appropriate component for initial participation. As this time, participants are tested to determine their need for Adult Basic Education. In addition, background information such as employment history, prior AFDC receipt and other information are recorded in order to assist in participation decisions and requirements as well as supportive services to be provided. GAIN activities and components are listed below in their most common order of progression:

Initial Components

- Appraisal;
- Job Club, Supervised Job Search and other job search services;
- Adult Basic Education, which includes basic educational skills training, English language instruction, high school equivalency instruction, etc;
- Assessment, which includes an in-depth evaluation of the participants work history, education, skills, interests, aptitudes and other relevant factors and is used to reverse or validate the participant's original employment plan and determine additional GAIN activities which would contribute towards achieving that plan.

Post-Assessment Components

- Employment-related education including self-initiated programs;
- Job training which includes classroom as well as on-the-job training;

- 90 day job search services, which is job search activity occurring after an education or training activity;
- Work supplementation program activities which include supplemented employment, transitional employment and supported work;
- Pre-employment preparation, which is a modified community work experience program.

GAIN is a mandatory program, but we do not put our emphasis on penalties. The rationale for the mandatory nature of the program was expressed by one of the program participants in a recent interview with the Washington Post. She said, "If they [program managers] didn't do it like that [clients] wouldn't come. I heard a lot of people saying that at the orientation." Program requirements may initially get people to the orientation, but once clients get through the front door, it is our job to communicate the advantages of the GAIN program, because ultimately, individuals must participate wholeheartedly, and not primarily because they are required to, in order to be successful. In many cases, the hardest thing to do is to show clients that they are capable of making it on their own and achieving economic success.

One of the original key components of GAIN is Adult Basic Education (ABE). Probably the single most common characteristic of most AFDC recipients is low educational attainment. California's GAIN was one of the first programs to face this problem head-on by large-scale testing, marshalling the resources necessary, and providing ABE services to GAIN clients who need them. We believe that ultimately, this strategy will have a profound impact on long-term welfare dependency.

Implementation Of JOBS Provisions

In June 1989, enabling State legislation was enacted to incorporate the provisions of the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) program, as contained in the Family Support Act of 1988, into GAIN beginning July 1, 1989. The GAIN program already embodied all of the major components offered in JOBS, although with some significant differences in definitions and design. Therefore JOBS implementation here should be much simpler than in some other States which will be building from the ground up.

I would like to share some of the lessons we have learned from our experience with GAIN in the hope that they provide some guidance to facilitate JOBS

implementation in other States. GAIN is analogous to JOBS in many respects, and because of this, we believe our GAIN experience may be helpful.

Implementation Lessons

One of our most important early lessons was that planning takes time and that the best planning uses an open process which includes the affected agencies that are the most likely resources: the education and training providers, child care resource and referral agencies and other organizations both at the State and local level. Their early involvement ensures the most successful implementation, since without them there is no service delivery system or, at best, a fragmented one.

Another important lesson is that implementation takes more time than anyone will anticipate. Negotiating contracts with training providers takes time. Issues surrounding what will be paid for, what reporting and tracking requirements are, what the agencies' roles are and numerous other questions all take time to be resolved and negotiated. To illustrate this with a specific example, local welfare departments found out that their number of referrals to training providers was far lower than anticipated. This caused problems for providers who had set aside slots for GAIN participants, had hired staff, and set up space. The lower than anticipated number of referrals to training providers was due to a greater than anticipated need for Adult Basic Education prior to training. Educational providers experienced a slower rate of participation due to a number of things: no shows at orientation, the ability of the welfare department to process participants timely, the time it took participants to make arrangements for child care and the no-shows at the provider. Resolution of these problems took many months. The Department of Health and Human Services and States should realize that they need to be prepared to spend the necessary time to deal with these kinds of problems and to move cautiously on expanding their service delivery networks.

Tracking and monitoring of GAIN (and JOBS) participants requires automated systems. These systems unfortunately take time to develop, install, test and debug. In California, delays in setting up automated systems initially made tracking and monitoring clients a nightmare. As these systems have been installed and perfected, they have made the case managers' jobs more manageable. They are critical for States to have in place to report on participation.

Flexibility

GAIN has evolved by design into 58 different program variations in all 58 counties based on a single unifying program model and purpose. Similarly, JOBS will evolve into at least 50 different program variations in each of the States, all with differing local conditions, philosophies, constraints, clients, resources, etc.

This can either be characterized negatively in terms like nonuniform and inconsistent, or it can be viewed positively, in terms like innovative and creative. Our approach in California has been the latter. We believe that the program must adapt to the environment, and not vice-versa. This is achieved by allowing maximum reasonable local program flexibility within the overall program framework. Each county operates GAIN based on its own unique State-approved operating plan. The result has been that local agencies have ownership in their programs which reinforces responsible local administration.

Passage of the GAIN Act was only the first step of an expedited, but very involved implementation process. Next came 9 months of preplanning. The first county did not begin implementation until 1986 with the last in April of this year. We do not expect full phase-in of the caseload until 1991. Counties were given 2 years for planning and many of the larger counties took the full 2 years. During the phase-in process, later implementing counties learned from the experience of early operational counties. So did we as State administrators. We learned that not all obstacles or solutions can be anticipated in advance and that flexibility is as important as preplanning. We point this out in order to emphasize that you can expect full implementation of JOBS to take a long time.

Caseload Phase-In

Statewide implementation, i.e., in all political subdivisions, does not mean that the States' Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) caseloads in all of those jurisdictions are fully phased in. There is no shortcut or magic wand that can be waved over the AFDC population which will instantly convert them all into JOBS participants. Instead, a series of painstaking incremental steps must be taken in order to achieve the conversion. The following are some of the critical things which must be accomplished in order to successfully accomplish the transition:

- In-depth planning and laying the necessary groundwork;
- Developing components, providers and contracts;
- Developing procedures;
- Developing tracking and reporting systems;
- Informing enrollees how the program can benefit each of them individually and of their rights and responsibilities;

- Learning what works and what doesn't and developing solutions;
- Dealing with the unexpected.

In our experience with GAIN, although shortcuts can seem appealing, they don't often work. Therefore, the only practical approach to converting an existing caseload to JOBS is to allow sufficient time to accomplish all of the necessary steps and to maintain the flexibility to deal with contingencies.

One final thought is this: don't listen to the skeptics who say it can't be done or that it won't work. With a positive attitude, dedication and determination, the JOBS program, like GAIN, can be a success in your State and make a clear, positive difference in participants' lives.

SAMPLE DOCUMENTS



GAIN GUIDEBOOK



Welcome to GAIN

You've probably already heard or read a lot about GAIN's education, job training, counseling and employment opportunities. Now that you are participating, we'd like you to know more about GAIN and what it can do for you.

As you read through this Guidebook, you'll see why GAIN is truly a program that is going to work for you and your children.

This Guidebook is your GAIN manual. It covers most of the details you will need to know to participate in GAIN. To make it easy, we have broken the Guidebook into nine sections.





Table of Contents

Section 1—“What GAIN Is And What GAIN Can Do For You” explains how the program benefits everyone. See page 3.

Section 2—“Who Must Participate” explains who must participate and who can volunteer. See page 3.

Section 3—“Who Doesn’t Have To Participate” lists the kinds of people who do not have to participate, and the reasons why a person who is registered does not have to participate. See page 4.

Section 4—“The GAIN Program” describes all the steps in the process that will help you find a job. See page 5.

Section 5—“Supportive Services” describes the child care and other services that the county will provide for you while you are in GAIN. See page 7.

Section 6—“Your Contract” explains how you and the county will work together on a plan that will help you find a job. See page 8.

Section 7—“Good Reasons For Not Participating” lists the good reasons which may keep you from participating in a GAIN activity that you had agreed to in your contract. See page 8.

Section 8—“What Happens If You Do Not Participate” explains your rights and how you can solve problems that have kept you from participating in GAIN. See page 10.

Section 9—“What You Can Do If You Do Not Agree” tells what you may do if you don’t agree with the county about your participation in the GAIN program. See page 11.



Section 1

What GAIN Is And What GAIN Can Do For You

GAIN stands for Greater Avenues for Independence.

The purpose of the GAIN program is to teach, train, counsel and help you find a job. When you become self-supporting, you and your children will enjoy a higher income and a better way of life.

GAIN was designed with you in mind. It's not just another government program. It's much more than that.

- GAIN is with you every step of the way, providing you with such important supportive services as child care, transportation and work- or training-related expenses.
- GAIN helps you get the skills that are needed in today's work force. You could become a technician, salesperson, assembler or any one of hundreds of other professionals. You'll learn skills that will help you get a job in your local labor market.

Private industry and businesses throughout California are also actively involved.

Once you're in GAIN and have been trained, you'll have a better chance at getting a job you want.

Everyone wins. You gain a job and a future. Private industry and business gain a skilled work force.

Section 2

Who Must Participate?

If you are an Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) applicant or recipient, and you are not exempt or deferred, you must participate in GAIN. You would be called a mandatory participant.

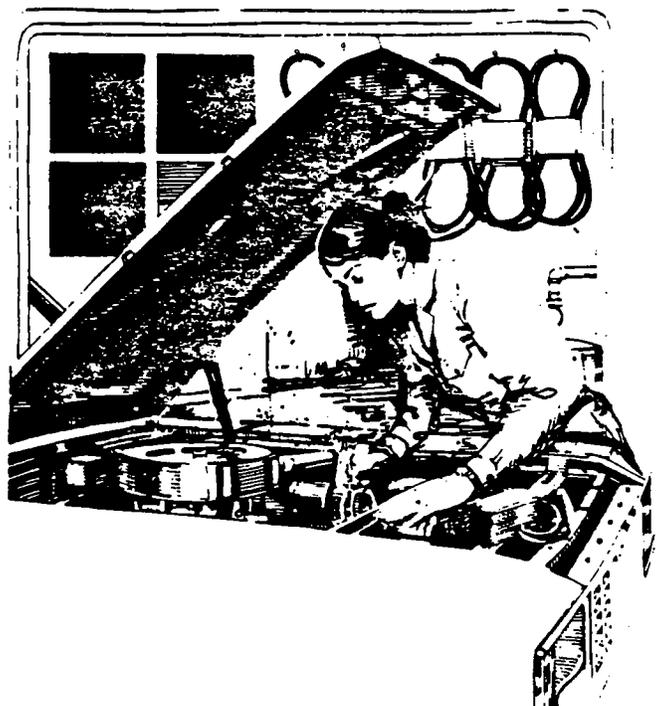
Note: Some counties also require applicants and recipients of other cash aid programs to participate in GAIN.

The county will figure out if you must participate in GAIN when:

- you apply for aid; or
- your eligibility is redetermined; or
- you have a change in your exemption or deferral status.

Even if you are exempt and you do not have to participate in GAIN, you can volunteer. You would be called a voluntary participant.

If you will be a GAIN participant, the county will send or give you a GAIN registration notice. This will tell you that you are now in GAIN.



Section 3

Who Doesn't Have To Participate



CORRECTION

Exemptions

You are exempt and do not have to participate in GAIN if you:

- Are under 16 years old.
- Are 16, 17 or 18 years old and go to school (not college) full-time.
- Are temporarily ill or have an injury that would keep you from working.
- Are 65 years old or older.
- Are physically or mentally unable to work.
- Are pregnant and the baby is due within six months
- Live so far away from the welfare office or service provider that you cannot participate.
- Must stay at home to take care of someone in the household who is unable to care for himself or herself.
- Work or expect to work 30 hours or more per week in regular employment that should last at least 30 days.
- Are the parent or caretaker of a child under three years old, and are responsible for providing care for the child.

Note I: If you are a parent who is under 20 years old and don't have a high school diploma or GED, different rules apply to you. You must participate no matter how old your child is, unless you have another reason to be exempt.

Note II: If you are the parent or caretaker of a child age three through five and are responsible for providing care for the child, you are only required to participate up to 20 hours per week.

Deferrals

Deferral does not exempt you. Deferral means that when a temporary situation keeps you from taking part in the program, you do not have to participate until the temporary situation changes. Under certain circumstances, you may be deferred if you:

- Are drug or alcohol dependent.
- Have emotional or mental problems.
- Are having legal difficulties, such as required court appearances.
 - Do not have the legal right to work in the United States.
- Are having a severe family crisis.
- Are in good standing in a union that controls referrals and hiring.
 - Are temporarily laid off from a job but have a definite call-back date.
 - Are working 15 or more hours per week.
- Have a temporary illness or have a family member who is temporarily ill.
 - Are in the first three months of pregnancy.
 - Are a parent who has a child age 3, 4 or 5 and are enrolled in school for at least 12 units of credit.
 - Are a 16 or 17 year old parent, do not have a high school diploma and are not currently in school.
 - Are a parent who is not the principal earner or an adult relative caring for a child, when the principal earner or other aided adult is in the home and is participating in GAIN.

Note: Your county may ask for proof when you claim any of the above exemptions or deferrals. Your GAIN worker can review your situation at any time. Deferrals will be reviewed at least every six months.

Section 4

The GAIN Program



There are many paths for GAIN participants.

Your path may not involve every step of the GAIN program. A lot depends on your education and job history. Each step is described below and shown on the chart at the back of this Guidebook. This will help you understand what choices you have and how you will move through the program.

Let's start at the beginning.

APPRAISAL—The county will decide if you are required to participate in GAIN. If you are exempt or deferred, you will not have to participate in GAIN. Exemptions and deferrals are explained in Section 3.

Shortly after you enter the program, you will be given a test. This test will help the county decide if you need to go to school. Your worker will look over your work history, education and your test results, and sign a contract with you. The contract is described in Section 6.

BASIC EDUCATION SERVICES—Your education is important to GAIN. If you haven't completed high school, or do not have basic reading or math skills, or do not speak English, you will go to an educational activity.

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION teaches reading and math skills necessary to get a job or go on to other GAIN activities.

ENGLISH-AS-A-SECOND LANGUAGE teaches you English skills if you do not speak English.

GED CLASSES prepare those who do not have a high school diploma to get a GED certificate.

Note: You can choose to complete your schooling before, during or after your participation in Job Club or Job Search.



The next step in the program is based on your past or current aid status and job history:

- If you have been taken off aid two or more times in the past three years because of employment, you will immediately move on to the Assessment activity of the GAIN program.

- If you haven't worked for two or more years, you will go to Job Club.

- If you've had a job during the last two years, you can choose to go to either Job Club or Job Search.

JOB CLUB—Job Club lasts for up to three weeks. First you learn how to prepare applications and job résumés, how to interview and how to find jobs. This is followed by supervised job search. If you don't find a job at the end of the Job Club, you will move on to the Assessment activity of the GAIN program.

JOB SEARCH—County workers will give you job interview leads and help you look for a job. If, at the end of three weeks, you have not found a job, you will move on to the Assessment activity of the GAIN program.



SELF-INITIATED PROGRAMS—If you are already in a job training or education program that the county determines will likely lead to a job, GAIN will allow you to continue this program. Supportive services will be provided if needed. Participation in self-initiated programs is limited to two school years.

ASSESSMENT—The goal of this activity is for you and the county to put together an employment plan to help you get a job. To do this, the assessor will look at your abilities, interests, achievement tests, work history and education. Then you will work closely with your GAIN worker or the assessor to set up employment goals and timetables and to decide the help you'll need to meet your goal. If you and your GAIN worker can't agree on what step you will go to next, a review will be made of your assessment and employment plan. (See Section 9.)

Your employment plan will help you and the county decide what your next step will be. This can include the following activities:

SHORT TERM PREP—PREP means Pre-Employment Preparation. Short term PREP lasts for up to three months. During that time you will train and work with a public or private non-profit organization like the YMCA to gain work experience and develop your skills. You will not get wages, but you will keep getting your cash aid and other benefits.

You may go to BASIC PREP which will give you experience and training in the working world, and will prepare you for future training. Or you may go to ADVANCED PREP which will give you additional training to increase job skills you already have.

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING will allow you to learn a job skill while working. You will get a paycheck, but all or part of your

cash aid could be used to help pay for your wages (grant diversion). You will continue to receive at least as much as your cash aid.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING will teach you to qualify for a specific job. This is generally provided in a classroom setting.

TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT will train you for a certain type of job in an actual work setting. The job is set up for you and may involve some other training before you begin. You will get a paycheck but all or part of your cash aid will be used to help pay for your wages (grant diversion). You will continue to receive at least as much as your cash aid.

SUPPORTED WORK will teach you basic skills while working. Along with other participants, you will receive intensive support services, training, supervision and counseling to help you handle job duties. You will get a paycheck but all or part of your cash aid will be used to help pay for your wages (grant diversion). You will continue to receive at least as much as your cash aid.

EDUCATION AND JOB SERVICES—These activities could be college courses, vocational English-as-a-Second Language, or adult education. You might receive special services to help you learn how to find a job. These could include job search workshops, supervised job search, unsupervised job search, job counseling, job development or job placement.

If you have completed your training or education but don't find a job right away, you will be referred to **90-DAY JOB SEARCH**. During this period, job services will be set up based on your individual needs.

LONG TERM PREP—If you don't successfully complete your training or education program, you will be referred to long-term BASIC PREP. The purpose of this



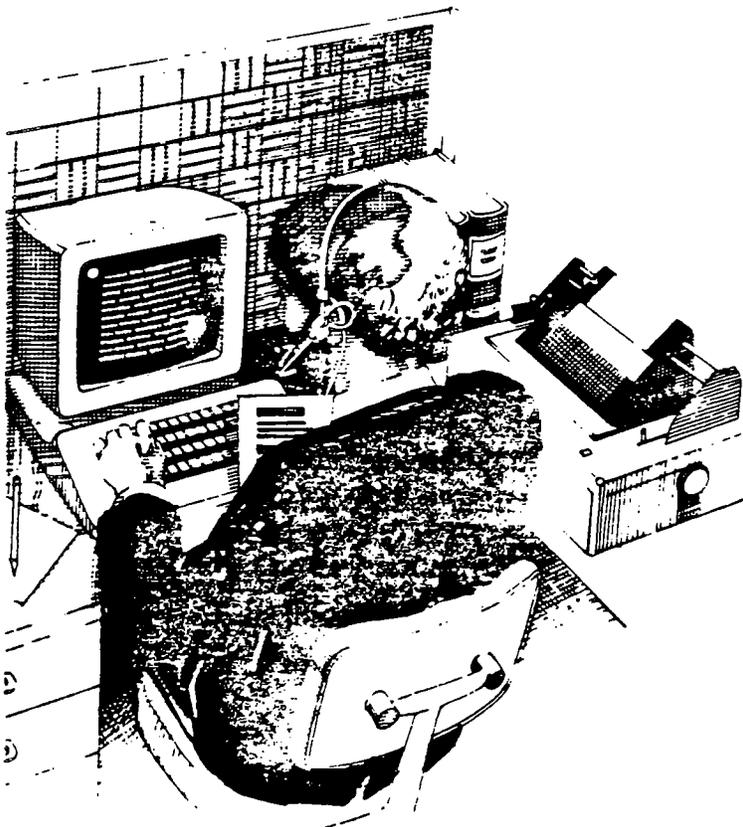
Section 5

Supportive Services

activity is to improve work skills and attitude. This assignment will be for up to one year and will be reviewed after six months.

If you don't find a job during the 90-day job search period, you will be assigned to long-term ADVANCED PREP. This assignment will last for one year unless you find a job first. Your PREP assignment will be reviewed after six months. After long-term PREP, your employment plan may be revised and you may be referred for more work or training assignments to help you reach your job goals.

As you can see, the whole idea of GAIN is to give you a range of training and services. You will develop skills so you can find the job that's right for you. GAIN is with you all the way to make sure that nothing stands in the way of your success.



GAIN understands that you may need more than just training and job counseling to take part in the GAIN program. That is why your county will help you arrange and/or pay for child care, transportation and other supportive services described below. If you need it and ask for it, your county will give you the money for your supportive services before the service is used. That way, you won't be out any money—even for a short time. If other funding sources are not available or are not enough to meet all your costs, your county must pay for the following:

Child care costs for any of your children who are under 12, if necessary for you to participate in GAIN. Your county will help you arrange for child care or you can make your own arrangements. You can choose the kind of child care you want, like a child care center, relatives, friends or neighbors. Payments can be made to licensed child care providers and, in some cases, to persons who don't need to be licensed. Payments will be made at the rate that is normally charged in the area where you live. If you find a job, you may be able to get child care payments for another three months.

Transportation costs up to a certain amount for travel to and from your GAIN assignment, and for you and your children to travel to and from child care.

Work- or training-related costs up to a certain amount for books, tools and special clothing that you need as part of your GAIN assignment.

If you need **personal counseling** to help you participate in GAIN, and **services** are available in your community, the county will refer you to those places which may be able to help you.

Section 6

Your Contract

Your contract is an important agreement. It tells you how you and the county will work together so that you can get and keep a job. It is not a one-sided contract. It will make sure the county keeps its promises for training and services for as long as you are taking part in the GAIN program and receiving cash aid.

Your GAIN worker will help you review your contract. Your contract with the county tells you what you must do and what the county must do to make GAIN work for you. The contract has two parts:

- The **GAIN GENERAL AGREEMENT** (which includes this GAIN Guidebook). This agreement tells you about the program, the county's responsibilities, your rights and responsibilities, the good reasons you might have for not participating, and what the penalties are if you refuse to participate without a good reason. This agreement applies as long as you are in GAIN.
- The **GAIN ACTIVITY AGREEMENT** This tells you in which part of the program you are participating. This changes as you move from activity to activity.

Read your contract carefully. If you have any questions, be sure to ask your GAIN worker. You and your GAIN worker will sign each agreement.

You must continue to participate in the GAIN program, moving from one activity to another as you move toward your goal of getting a job.

There are two ways that the contract may end:

- You stop receiving cash aid; or
- You become exempt or deferred.

(See Section 3.)



Section 7

Good Reasons for Not Participating

GAIN recognizes that you may have a good reason for not signing a contract to participate, for not taking part in one of the GAIN activities that you agreed to in your contract, or for not accepting a job offer or job referral. Some of these reasons are related to you personally and some are related to the assignment.

Reasons related to you:

- You are temporarily ill or physically or mentally unable to work.
- You are required to appear in court or are in jail.
- You are having a family crisis or there is a change in your family's circumstances. This could include the death of your spouse, parent or child, or any illness that needs your immediate attention.
- Bad weather or other serious acts of nature prevent you from traveling to your work or training assignment.
- Transportation arrangements fail and other transportation cannot be arranged.
- You need a social service to participate that has not been provided.
- You refuse to accept major medical services even if your refusal means that you cannot participate in the program.
- Licensed or exempt child care is not reasonably available during your training, employment or travel time. "Reasonably available" child care includes having two choices that do not require:
 - adding more than 30 minutes one-way to your travel time; or
 - moving your child to a different school.
- A breakdown or interruption in child care arrangements.
- Suitable child care is not reasonably available for children with disabilities, chronic illnesses or other special needs.
- You are currently employed or are in a



training program that meets the goals of GAIN and you have notified and received prior approval from your GAIN worker.

- Any good reason not listed above if your GAIN worker agrees.

Note: You will not be subject to penalties if you are absent or late less than ten percent (10%) of the weekly hours you are required to participate. It is important that you know that the unused absent/late hours cannot be applied to the next week.

Reasons related to the activity assignment, job referral or job:

- Discrimination because of age, sex, race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, physical or mental disability, political affiliation or marital status.

- Travel to work or training from your home is more than two hours round trip by car, bus or other transportation, or more than two miles round trip if you have to walk because other transportation is not available.

Note: The limit on travel and mileage does not include transportation time or mileage to take members of your family to and from school or to and from other care providers.

- Conditions or responsibilities that could be harmful to you physically or mentally or that are not within your ability to do on a regular basis.

- Conditions that violate health and safety standards.

- Your training or educational program or job does not meet the goal of your employment plan.

- Your job or training slot was created:

- to have you take the place of a current employee; *or*

- to work the overtime hours of these employees; *or*

- to fill a position that would normally

be a promotion for current employees;
or

- to fill a position of a current employee before proper personnel procedures or collective bargaining procedures have been applied; *or*

- to fill a position created by an employer's attempt to reduce payroll or other costs by laying off current employees; *or*

- to fill a position created by a strike, lockout or other labor disagreement; *or*

- to fill a position that violates any existing collective bargaining agreements between employees and employers.

- The job or work activity does not provide worker's compensation.

- Accepting a job or work activity would cause you to violate the terms of your union membership.

- The job requires more daily or weekly hours than is normal or customary.

- You are not receiving the supportive services agreed to in your contract.

- Expenses such as clothes, books and tools are more than GAIN can pay for.

- The job is at a pay level that would leave you with less income than what you are now receiving unless the job fits the goals of your employment plan.

- Accepting a job or work activity would interrupt or interfere with an approved education or training assignment, or would keep you from returning to your regular job which is expected to be available soon.

Note: There are three exceptions to this last reason. It would not apply to you if your training program is a PREP assignment. It would not apply if the job offer provides employment or gives you enough income to lead to self-support and is within your employment plan. And it would not apply to you if the job is temporary while you are waiting to be rehired in your regular job.



What Happens If You Do Not Participate

As you know, participation in GAIN is mandatory for all able-bodied AFDC applicants and recipients. Exemptions and deferrals are listed in Section 3.

If, for any reason, you do not participate, the following steps will be taken:

Cause Determination—If you do not meet GAIN program requirements, you have the right to explain why. The county will decide if it is a good reason. (See Section 7.)

If you have a good reason for not participating, your GAIN worker will help you so that you will be able to participate. If changes can't be made, you will not have to participate.

Conciliation—If you do not meet GAIN program requirements and your GAIN worker decides there is not a good reason, you have the right to have another county representative review this decision. If this review determines that there is not a good reason, you and your GAIN worker will develop a plan for you to meet the program requirements. This process can last no more than 30 days.

Financial Sanctions—Your family's cash aid will be stopped or lowered if you fail or refuse to meet program requirements without a good reason and conciliation does not work.

Your family's aid payment will be lowered by not including you in the payment. If you are receiving aid because you are unemployed, and your wife/husband is not participating, she/he will be given the opportunity to participate. If she/he does not participate, your family's aid payment will be lowered by not including you and your wife/husband in the payment. If she/he does participate, your family's aid will still be lowered by not including you in the payment.

The first time, your family's aid will be lowered until you do what GAIN requires. The second time, your family's aid will be lowered for at least three months. After three months, the sanction will stop if you do what GAIN requires. The third or additional time, your family's aid will be lowered for at least six months. After six months, the sanction will stop if you do what GAIN requires.

Note: Financial sanctions do not apply to volunteers.

Penalty for Volunteers—If you volunteer for the GAIN program but fail to meet the requirements without a good reason, financial sanctions will not apply to you. Instead, you may not be allowed to participate in GAIN.

Section 9



CORRECTION

What You Can Do If You Do Not Agree

There are four ways you can protest a program or participation requirement that you do not agree with.

Formal Grievance Set by the Unemployment Insurance Code—Your county will offer a plan to help you solve the problem. If you do not agree with your GAIN worker's plan, you may design your own plan. The county will work with you to decide on the best plan for you to follow. This process can last up to 30 days.

Formal Grievance Set by the County Board of Supervisors—This is the process adopted by your County Board of Supervisors. Your GAIN worker will tell you how this grievance process works.

Independent Assessment—If you don't agree with the results of your assessment or employment plan, someone who is not a county representative will review your assessment and do another one if necessary. The results of this independent assessment will be used to set up your employment plan.

State Hearing—This is the same process you can use when you do not agree with any action your local welfare office takes about your cash aid. Your GAIN worker will help you file for a State hearing if you want one. You can request a rehearing after the State decision is reached.

Depending on what process you use, and when you file an appeal, penalties (financial sanctions) can be avoided. (See Section 8.)

- If you use the formal grievance processes, you must continue to meet program requirements and participate until the grievance is decided, or penalties will be applied.

- If you have an independent assessment done, no penalties will be applied while you await the results of the review.

- If you file for a State hearing before the penalties start, penalties will not be applied until after the hearing is decided.

You have the right to seek legal advice during any of these processes. For help, contact your legal aid office at the address below:



A Final Word

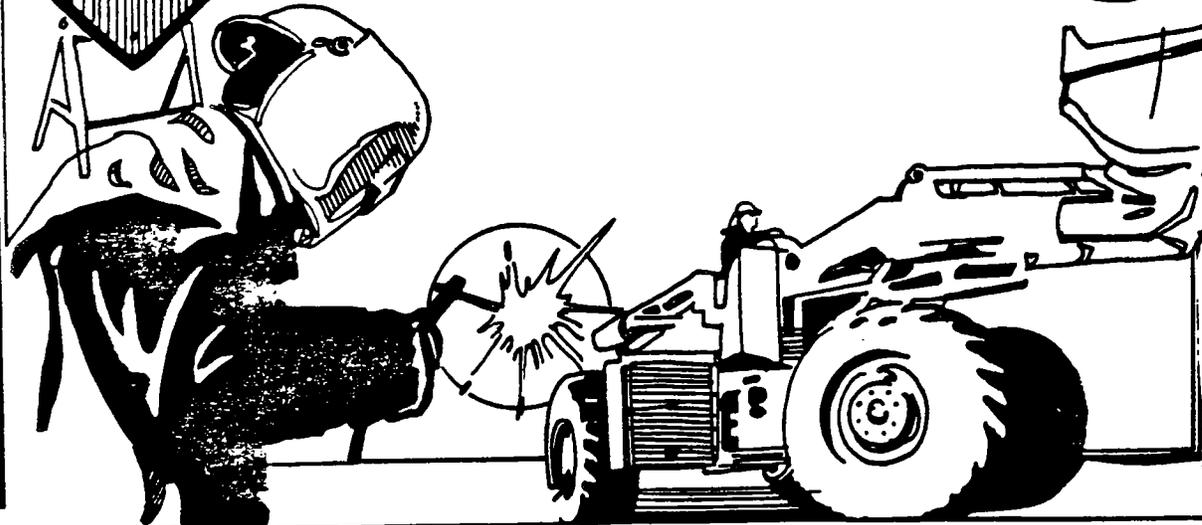
We wrote this Guidebook to tell you how GAIN works for you and how you can get the most out of the program.

This Guidebook should answer most questions you may have about supportive services, training and education, job opportunities, your contract, and your rights and responsibilities. If you still have questions, please be sure to ask. Your county GAIN staff is here to help you and your family.

Remember, the goal of GAIN is to prepare you to compete for and find a job—not a “make work” job, but a job with a real future.

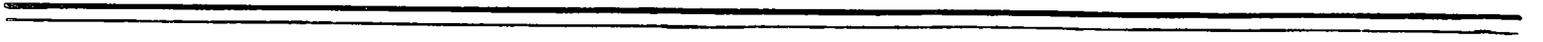
GAIN is going to work in California. By taking part in the GAIN program, you will go from being dependent on welfare to being independent through employment.

Good Luck!





Notes





STATE OF CALIFORNIA
George Deukmejian, Governor
HEALTH AND WELFARE AGENCY
Clifford L. Allenby, Secretary
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Linda S. McMahon, Director