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Publication Date

2024-10-01

Data Availability

The data associated with this publication are available upon request.

CalWORKS: Does It?

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12/09/2024

One of the biggest debates in welfare policy has been the impact of work requirements on participant outcomes. Proponents of work requirements argue that conditioning aid on work will incentivize employment and increase earnings, while opponents argue that these requirements are only a burden and take up precious time that can be used for activities that will actually benefit the individual, like further education, taking care of children, or receiving medical care. This paper seeks to analyze the extent to which either of these theories holds true: what is the impact of work requirements on welfare program success? More specifically, how do county-wide variations in the amount of activities they consider work impact metrics of program success in California? To answer this question, I compared various CalWORKS (California's cash welfare program) performance metrics, including changes in wages, program reentry rates, and post-program employment rates across 55 California counties between 2017 and 2019.

Context and Significance

In 1996, Congress passed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity and Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), also known as welfare reform. This law ended the previous welfare program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and replaced it with Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF). TANF differed from AFDC in a few crucial ways: it required participants to work in order to receive aid, was temporary, and was funded via block grants to states (Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity and Reconciliation Act, 1996). The work requirements were a particularly contentious subject. Opponents argued that revoking or reducing aid to participants who are unable to meet work requirements was detrimental,

needlessly punitive, and would only hurt the most vulnerable. Proponents, on the other hand, argued that these measures would incentivize work and raise incomes.

To adapt to these changes, California created a list of “work activities” that CalWORKS (the state’s cash welfare program) recipients can participate in to fulfill their work requirements. This list includes more traditional conceptions of work, including actually working, looking for a job, and vocational training, along with other activities less directly related to employment, like educational programs and substance abuse treatment (California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids Act, 1997). The list has 20 activities in total, along with a blanket “other activities necessary to assist individuals in finding unsubsidized employment,” that allows counties to surpass 20 activities. Counties can pick and choose which work activities they choose to support.

The importance of CalWORKS at the state level and TANF at the federal level, along with the broad discretion state and local governments have in implementation make this an important topic to study. Approximately 825,946 households received TANF dollars in the 2023 fiscal year, subject to varying state work requirements. 306,907 of these are from California and received the TANF money via CalWORKS (Office of Family Assistance, 2023). An improved understanding of the impact work requirements have will allow policymakers, especially those at the state and local levels, to craft more effective programs to help the estimated 4.5 million Californians living under the poverty line (US Census Bureau, 2023).

Furthermore, despite the passage of TANF, the debate on work requirements has still not ended. For example, in the 2023 debt ceiling negotiations between the Biden Administration and Republican House, conservative leaders conditioned raising the debt ceiling on establishing work

requirements for SNAP recipients (Freking, 2023). These debates demonstrate the need for more research on the efficacy of work requirements.

Literature Review

Early research on work requirements generally found positive impacts on earnings, with major caveats. Some of the earliest studies were published in the late 1980s to the early 1990s and mostly analyzed state-level implementations of work requirements. One study, for example, analyzed seven welfare-to-work programs across the country, comparing participants who were subject to work requirements with those who were not. Researchers found that in five of these programs, participants who were subject to work requirements were earning at rates ranging from 10-30% higher than those in the control group, and were 4-6% more likely to be employed (Gueron, 1987). However, subsequent studies of these programs also found that work requirements had different effects on different subsets of people. Crucially, the earnings of some of the most disadvantaged subgroups, long-term welfare recipients with no prior earnings, were not benefited by work requirements. In Virginia, work requirements actually led to *less* earnings for this subgroup (Friedlander, 1988). The authors did not speculate about this relationship – it was a relatively minor finding in a rather broad paper – but opponents of work requirements will typically argue that the lack of flexibility work requirements offer makes it especially difficult for disadvantaged groups to benefit from cash welfare.

Another series of studies analyzed the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program, California's welfare-to-work program prior to the passage of PRWORA. The last in the series, which looked at impacts three years out, found major earnings differences among single parent families: families subject to the GAIN work requirements made, on average, \$1,414 more

than those who were not. Furthermore, these earnings were expected to increase over time. Raw earnings differences were also similar for two-parent households at \$1,168, but this was not expected to increase over time. There were also positive impacts on employment: participants subject to work requirements were more likely to be employed three years after data was initially collected than those who were not. However, it is important to note that the control group participants did not receive the same services from GAIN that the experimental group did. GAIN recipients had access to county social workers, for example, who could help them with the job search or connect them with other resources. It is therefore unclear if it was the work requirements or services that resulted in such impacts. Furthermore, while average impacts on earnings were positive, county-level outcomes varied significantly – two out of six counties studies did not see major earnings gains, indicating that work requirements may not be the primary predictor of earnings gains (Riccio, 1994). Overall, a meta-analysis of 24 studies prior to the implementation of PRWORA found that job search requirements and sanctions (reductions in aid as a consequence for not meeting job search requirements) have a positive impact on participant earnings, but that the characteristics of participants and location, like age, race, poverty rates, and unemployment, are also strong, and sometimes stronger, predictors of program success. Furthermore, vocational training participation had a *negative* impact on earnings. (Ashworth, 2004).

After the passage of welfare reform in 1996, researchers began to compare pre-TANF and post-TANF outcomes. One Wisconsin study compared the outcomes of people who left welfare in 1995 and 1997, before and after the implementation of welfare reform. Researchers found, in contrast to previous findings, that participants who exited under the much more work-focused TANF earned around \$1,400 less than participants who exited earlier and were not subject to the

TANF work requirements. They theorize that it is because of the type of work attained: participants who left under TANF typically found jobs in lower paying sectors in order to meet stricter work requirements, resulting in less earnings over time (Cancian et al., 2002). A paper that examined the effects of sanctions, a necessary component of work requirements, found that sanctioned participants are at a higher risk of food, housing, and medical insecurity (Reichman et al., 2005). On the other hand, there were also some indicators of success. One Louisiana study on the types of work activities found that the types of activities TANF incentivizes: employment, job training, and vocational education increase participant earnings. However, other activities like job search and work experience (unpaid work) had a negative effect on earnings (Davis et al., 2001).

In addition to comparing pre and post-TANF outcomes, researchers could also look at longer term impacts of earlier welfare-to-work programs. One re-examination of the GAIN program, for example, found that the positive impacts on earnings observed in work-first counties with stricter requirements shrunk over time, whereas in counties that focused more on education and skills development, the positive impacts grew (Hotz et al., 2000). Broadly speaking, the impacts of work requirements and welfare reform were initially not as positive as prior research suggested.

As time passed, researchers could begin to examine the long-term impacts of welfare reform. One study interviewed single mothers in Wisconsin, comparing women in different financial situations and program enrollment statuses over ten years. They found that TANF was often unable to overcome the barriers of deep poverty and chronic illness. Furthermore, the work-first approach overlooked issues that prevented subjects from getting work in the first place, like educational barriers and poor health. Overall, they found that impoverished

participants were not significantly helped by the TANF program (Hildebrandt & Keller, 2012). Other studies have more positive findings regarding welfare reform. A comparison of poverty rates pre and post PRWORA found that rates for female-headed families with children are lower after PRWORA (Haskins, 2016).

The literature, clearly, has not reached a consensus regarding the efficacy of work requirements. That being said, there are still broad conclusions one can draw. First, work requirements do seem to have a positive impact on short-term earnings. However, these benefits usually dissipate after a few years, and are not distributed evenly across subgroups. Secondly, the sanctions that work requirements necessitate have negative financial and health impacts on the sanctioned. Thirdly, environmental factors like economic conditions seem to have at least an equal effect on participant earnings as work requirements.

This research can serve to fill certain gaps in the literature. I analyze a different time period than prior studies of California's welfare program has. I also take many more variables into account: most prior research has focused solely on employment, earnings, and the size of welfare rolls. Using more metrics, like overall poverty rates and reentry rates, will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of work requirements.

Theory

I theorize that the impact of work activities on CalWORKS program success depends on the specific metric of success. More specifically, I hypothesize that an increase in the amount of work activities a county supports is associated with worse performance on short-term raw earnings measures but a better performance on long-term mobility and resilience measures. This means a lower post CalWORKS employment rate and a lower exits with earnings rate but also a

lower reentry rate, a lower reentry after exits with earnings rate, a higher wage progression rate, and a lower poverty rate. This is because, in theory, participants in counties with more work activities will have an easier time meeting their work requirements. This means that more immediate and narrow measures of CalWORKS success, like employment and exits with earnings, may suffer: recipients are likely to stay on CalWORKS for longer and will likely prioritize other non-employment based methods of advancement, like education. However, the metrics that focus on long-term resilience, like wage progression, reentry rates, and poverty rates, will benefit, as recipients are more likely to participate in activities that will help them in the long-term.

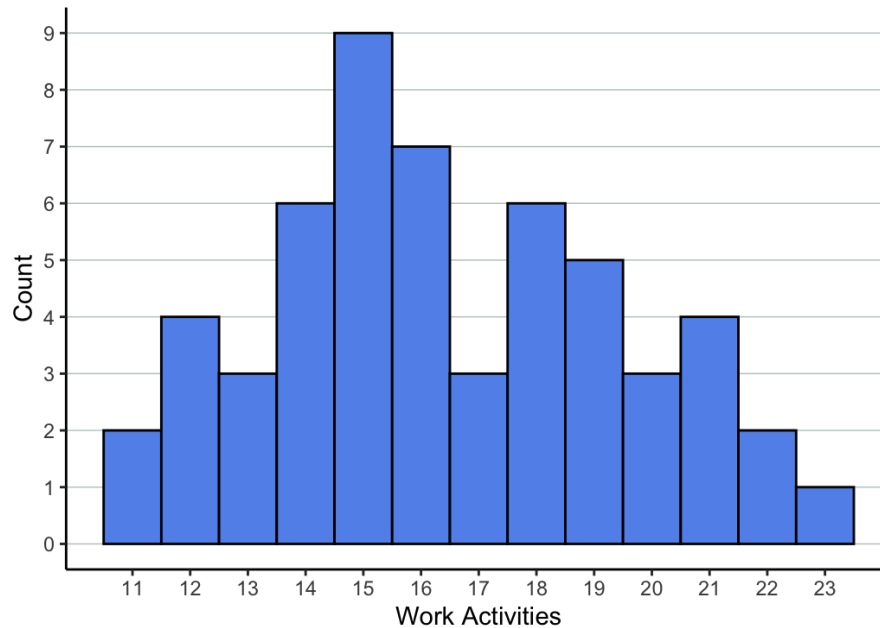
I also theorize that we will see different impacts based on county poverty levels. A high poverty county, for example, may be more vulnerable to the effects of chronic poverty, like low education and poor health, that can negate the effects of work requirements. As such, I hypothesize that the overall positive impacts that reducing work activities has will be weaker in counties with above-average poverty rates.

Research Design

I compared outcomes for 55 California counties between 2017 and 2019, stopping at the COVID-19 state of emergency. This is because, during the state of emergency, counties were able to issue blanket exemptions from work requirements due to COVID-19, which could produce unwanted variations. These exemptions have since been removed. Mono, Tulare, and Tuolumne counties were excluded from the analysis due to inadequate data.

Figure 1. Distribution of Work Activities

Data Source: California Department of Social Services



The independent variable is the strictness of work requirements, measured as the number of work activities a county offers. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the amount of work activities a county offers. Some of the most common work activities include unsubsidized employment (working at a job), job search (looking for a job), and vocational education. A more detailed breakdown of the types of work activities can be found in Appendix C. I chose this specific operationalization because this is the primary way counties are allowed to vary in their work requirements: other characteristics of work requirements, like the amount of hours or parameters for waivers, are set by the state. This data was obtained from the California Department of Social Services. Each county has to publish a county plan that, among other things, lists the amount of work requirements they offer. These plans are published on the CDSS website (California Department of Social Services, n.d.).

My dependent variables are all various performance metrics for CalWORKS participants. Wage progression is the percent change in a participant's earnings between program entry and

both two and four quarters after program exit. Exits with earnings is the proportion of program exiters that left the program with earnings. Reentry rates are the percentage of participants that reentered CalWORKS within 12 months of exiting. Reentry after exit with earnings is the reentry rate for participants who left with earnings. Post-CalWORKS employment rates are the percent of former participants who have earnings two and four quarters after program exit. This data was taken from the California Outcomes and Accountability Review (Cal-OAR) dashboard, which started collecting data in 2017 (California Outcomes and Accountability Review, n.d.). I collected and averaged observations for 2017-2019. My last dependent variable is poverty rates, taken from the American Community Survey (ACS). I used the 2019 5-year estimates, because it had data for all 58 California counties and is closest to the time period being analyzed. I chose to measure such a broad array of metrics in order to a full and deep understanding of program success.

My first control will be race, measured as the percent of a county that is not white. I am controlling for race because race tends to be a major confounding variable, and that holds true for this project as well. For example, one of the work activities a county can support is adult basic education, which includes English classes. A county with a higher proportion of people who do not speak English, typically racial minorities, may be inclined to offer English classes as a work activity, whereas a county with a higher proportion of English speakers may not feel that need. However, non-native speakers may also face challenges with economic mobility that native English speakers do not face. This would make it look like the extra work activity (adult basic education) is negatively impacting participant outcomes, even when the true cause of both is race. Controlling for race will allow me to avoid these pitfalls. The second control variable will be unemployment rates. Counties with high unemployment may want to increase the amount of

work activities because the labor market prevents participants from being able to participate in more traditional definitions of work. But a poor labor market will also affect earnings and employment, making unemployment an important measure to control for as well. Lastly, I will be controlling for the county's median income. Wealthier counties may have more access to resources like substance abuse treatment and educational programs, making supporting these programs easier on a county's social services office. At the same time, these counties also have more opportunities for advancement, making income another confounding variable to control for. All the control variables are taken from the ACS: both economic controls were taken from the 2019 5-year estimates. The race variable, measured as the percent of a county that is not white, was taken from the 2020 census data.

Methodology

To analyze the relationship between my variables, I ran a series of OLS regressions. Each dependent variable received four models: one model with no economic control variables included, one with all control variables included, and two that included race and one of the economic conditions measures: median income or unemployment. This resulted in 32 models. I also ran separate regressions for counties above and below the average poverty rate, bringing the number of models up to 96. I also ran Pearson's R correlation tests between the number of work activities and each dependent variable. Not all results will be included in the main text of the paper, but all results can be found in Appendices A and B. In addition, not all 55 counties were included in every model. Any county with four or less observations for any dependent variable was excluded from that dependent variable's model. Lassen County, for example, only had earnings with exits with observations for four quarters, and was excluded from the exit with earnings regression models.

Results

I found almost no relationships between work activities and performance measures. Only one dependent variable, wage progression after two quarters, was significantly impacted by the amount of work activities offered by a county. Socioeconomic factors, on the other hand, were much more likely to have a significant impact on the dependent variables.

Short-term Earnings Measures

Table 1: Short Term Earnings Regression Results

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Post-CalWORKS Employment 2Q	Post-CalWORKS Employment 4Q	Exits With Earnings
Work Activities	0.072 (0.157)	0.010 (0.154)	-0.001 (0.139)
Race (% POC)	0.093*** (0.034)	0.143*** (0.034)	0.109*** (0.031)
Median Income	0.0001** (0.00004)	0.0001 (0.00004)	0.0001*** (0.00004)
Unemployment	-0.234 (0.403)	-0.431 (0.399)	-0.427 (0.358)
Intercept	39.638*** (5.055)	38.833*** (4.976)	41.690*** (4.539)
Observations	49	47	46
R ²	0.498	0.515	0.648
Adjusted R ²	0.452	0.468	0.613
Residual Std. Error	3.349 (df = 44)	3.254 (df = 42)	2.913 (df = 41)
F Statistic	10.898*** (df = 4; 44)	11.129*** (df = 4; 42)	18.846*** (df = 4; 41)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

As Table 1 demonstrates, the number of work activities a county offers did not have a significant impact on any short-term earnings metrics. Race and median income, on the other hand, did have significant impacts on some of these variables. Median income had a positive effect on post-CalWORKS employment rates measured after two quarters: every extra dollar in household median income was associated with 0.0001 increase in post-CalWORKS employment rates after two quarters. Going from Trinity county's lowest median income (\$40,846) to Santa

Clara county's highest (\$124,055) would result in an approximate increase of 8.33. This relationship, however, does decay over time, and was statistically insignificant by four quarters. Median income also had a positive relationship with exits with earnings: a one dollar increase in household median income was associated with an 0.0001 increase in the exits with earnings rate, and going from the lowest to highest household median income would increase a county's exits with earnings rate by around 8.33.

Race also had a significant impact on all three short-term earnings measures. Higher diversity was associated with more positive results. For post-CalWORKS employment, a one percent increase in the population of racial minorities was associated with a 0.093 increase in rates after two quarters and a 0.143 increase after four quarters. Going from the lowest percent minority county (Nevada) at 19% to the highest (Imperial) at 90.6% would result in an approximated increase of 6.66 in post-CalWORKS employment rates at two quarters and a 10.24 increase at four quarters. For exits with earnings, the coefficient was 0.109: a one percent in minority population was associated with a 0.109 increase in exits with earnings rate. Going from the lowest minority county to the highest would increase the exits with earnings rate by approximately 7.8.

Work activities did not have any significant impacts on short-term earnings measures. Median income had the expected result: higher county median incomes were associated with better performance on exits with earnings and post-CalWORKS employment after two quarters. More diversity was also associated with better performance on these measures: counties with higher percentages of racial minorities saw higher post-CalWORKS employment and exits with earnings rates.

Table 2: Post-CalWORKS Employment 2Q by Poverty

	Low Poverty	High Poverty
Work Activities	0.005 (0.319)	0.103 (0.161)
Race (% POC)	0.110* (0.059)	0.026 (0.050)
Median Income	0.00004 (0.0001)	0.0003** (0.0001)
Unemployment	-0.818 (1.148)	0.487 (0.458)
Intercept	47.945*** (12.168)	24.848*** (7.789)
Observations	25	24
R ²	0.365	0.587
Adjusted R ²	0.238	0.501
Residual Std. Error	4.014 (df = 20)	2.628 (df = 19)
F Statistic	2.874** (df = 4; 20)	6.763*** (df = 4; 19)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 3: Post-CalWORKS Employment 4Q by Poverty

	Low Poverty	High Poverty
Work Activities	-0.050 (0.335)	0.082 (0.143)
Race (% POC)	0.138** (0.062)	0.126** (0.046)
Median Income	0.00005 (0.0001)	0.0001 (0.0001)
Unemployment	-0.266 (1.211)	-0.241 (0.407)
Intercept	40.472*** (12.977)	31.993*** (7.045)
Observations	24	23
R ²	0.373	0.672
Adjusted R ²	0.241	0.599
Residual Std. Error	4.209 (df = 19)	2.311 (df = 18)
F Statistic	2.823* (df = 4; 19)	9.213*** (df = 4; 18)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Separating the counties into high and low poverty categories slightly altered the results.

For exits with earnings, there were no significant differences between high and low poverty counties (see Appendix B). There were some small differences for post-CalWORKS

employment rates: median income only had a statistically significant impact at two quarters for high poverty counties (Table 2), and at four quarters, race had a slightly stronger relationship in low-poverty counties (Table 3).

Mobility Measures

Table 4: Mobility Regression Results

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Wage Progression 2Q	Wage Progression 4Q	Poverty
Work Activities	4.061** (1.768)	2.205 (1.854)	0.135 (0.099)
Race (%POC)	-0.231 (0.394)	-0.292 (0.413)	0.042** (0.018)
Median Income	0.0003 (0.0005)	0.001 (0.0005)	-0.0001*** (0.00002)
Unemployment	0.647 (4.579)	4.930 (4.801)	0.912*** (0.189)
Intercept	139.158** (57.094)	134.564** (59.865)	12.215*** (2.726)
Observations	47	47	55
R ²	0.130	0.076	0.795
Adjusted R ²	0.047	-0.012	0.778
Residual Std. Error	37.336 (df = 42)	39.148 (df = 42)	2.210 (df = 50)
F Statistic	1.565 (df = 4; 42)	0.866 (df = 4; 42)	48.375*** (df = 4; 50)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Figure 2. Work Activities and Wage Progression after 2 Quarters
 Data Source: California Department of Social Services

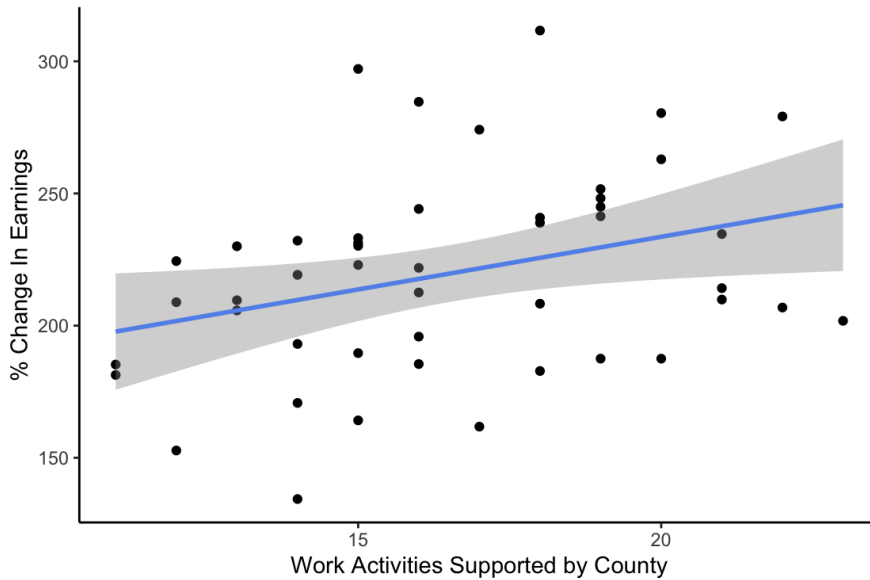


Figure 3. Work Activities and Wage Progression after 4 Quarters
 Data Source: California Department of Social Services

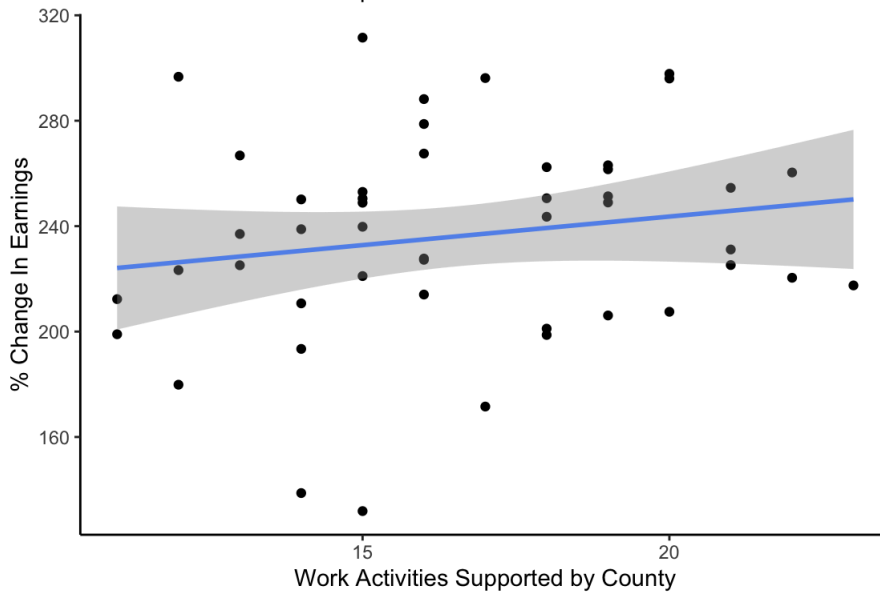


Table 4 shows the regression results for measures that capture the economic mobility of CalWORKS participants: work activities have a positive relationship with wage progression after two quarters. Each extra work activity was associated with an approximate 4.061 increase in wage progression rates. A county going from the lowest amount of work activities at 11 to the highest at 23 would see an approximately 48.73 increase in wage progression rates measured

after two quarters after program exit. However, as figures 2 and 3 demonstrate, this relationship deteriorates to a statistically insignificant one by four quarters after exit. Work activities also did not have a significant impact on poverty rates.

None of the socioeconomic measures – race, unemployment, and median income – had a significant impact on wage progression, but all had an impact on poverty rates. Race had a positive relationship on poverty: each additional percent minority was associated with an 0.042 increase in poverty rates. Going from the lowest to highest percent minority would increase a county's poverty rate by around 3.01. Unemployment rates also had a positive relationship on poverty rates: each additional point of unemployment was associated with an 0.912 increase in the poverty rate. Going from the lowest unemployment rate (3.7%) to the highest (14.2%) would increase a county's poverty rate by approximately 9.58. Median income had the expected effect on poverty – each additional dollar of median income was associated with a 0.001 decrease in the poverty rate. Moving from the lowest to highest median income would decrease a county's poverty rate by around 8.32 points.

Table 5: Poverty Rates by Poverty

	Low Poverty	High Poverty
Work Activities	0.108 (0.115)	0.034 (0.114)
Race (% POC)	0.048** (0.019)	0.032 (0.025)
Median Income	-0.0001*** (0.00002)	-0.0002*** (0.0001)
Unemployment	0.185 (0.344)	0.539** (0.216)
Intercept	12.201*** (3.471)	20.896*** (4.244)
Observations	28	27
R ²	0.553	0.531
Adjusted R ²	0.475	0.446
Residual Std. Error	1.563 (df = 23)	1.937 (df = 22)
F Statistic	7.102*** (df = 4; 23)	6.238*** (df = 4; 22)

*Note:**p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

There were some differences between high and low poverty counties regarding wage progression: race had a negative effect on wage progression after four quarters for high poverty counties (see Appendix B). Also, as Table 5 demonstrates, there were differences for high and low poverty counties regarding poverty rates. While median income had a similar effect for both low and high poverty counties, race only had a significant effect on low poverty counties, while unemployment only had a significant effect on high poverty counties.

Resilience Measures

Table 6: Resilience Regression Results

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	Reentry	Reentry after Exits with Earnings
Work Activities	0.231 (0.187)	0.126 (0.130)
Race (% POC)	0.080* (0.042)	-0.034 (0.039)
Median Income	-0.0001** (0.00005)	0.00000 (0.00004)
Unemployment	-0.769 (0.475)	0.043 (0.378)
Intercept	18.470*** (6.005)	14.165*** (5.048)
Observations	42	31
R ²	0.170	0.077
Adjusted R ²	0.080	-0.065
Residual Std. Error	3.797 (df = 37)	2.458 (df = 26)
F Statistic	1.893 (df = 4; 37)	0.543 (df = 4; 26)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Work activities did not have a significant impact on reentry rates. Furthermore, the only variable that had a significant impact on the resilience metrics was median income: every extra dollar in median income was associated with an approximately 0.0001 decrease in reentry rates. Going from the lowest to the highest median income will decrease a county's reentry rate by approximately 8.32 points. There were also no major differences between high and low poverty counties regarding both reentry measures.

Discussion

This project sought to examine the impact the amount of work activities had on the success of CalWORKS, and if this impact differs between high or low poverty counties. The data

seems to indicate that there is neither a major impact nor a major difference. This contradicted my hypothesis, which predicted that counties with a higher amount of work activities would perform worse on short-term earnings measures but better on mobility and resilience measures.

Notably, work activities had a positive relationship with wage progression after two quarters. Wage progression is essentially how much a participant's income changes between entering CalWORKS and two or four quarters after leaving the program. This positive relationship could be due to the flexibility that an increased amount of work activities offers: participants with more choice are able to actually do the activities that best benefit them, allowing them to make much more rapid gains once off of CalWORKS. However, this relationship decays by four quarters to one that is statistically insignificant. One theory to explain this decay is that, by four quarters, participants who had less work activities to choose from now had more time to catch up to their counterparts, making other factors like personal characteristics and economic situations much more important to success than the amount of work activities they were offered in a program. A broader reason for this decay could be that the current cash welfare system is not a long-term solution to financial instability: any benefits received from CalWORKS could decay over time.

Aside from wage progression, work activities did not have a significant effect on any other CalWORKS performance metrics. There are a variety of explanations for this. First, it could simply be that work requirements do not have an effect on these particular measures, and that socioeconomic factors outweigh and outperform the specific design of a welfare system as predictors of program success. However, it could also be that work activities are not the dimension of work requirements that matters most, but other aspects of work requirements, like hours required or the severity of sanctions, still do impact program success metrics. Lastly, the

lack of a relationship could stem from differences in the county administration of the work requirements. Counties have a certain amount of discretion in implementing their work activities: in addition to the number, they can also limit work activities to certain populations or limit the amount of hours a participant is allowed to allocate to certain work activities. It is possible that counties with more work activities choose to place such restrictions on their extra work activities, limiting the actual variation in work requirement flexibility and obfuscating the true effect of work activities.

One last notable finding is the impact of race: for my short-term earnings variables, more diversity had a beneficial impact. However, higher proportions of racial minorities are also associated with higher poverty rates. There are a few explanations for this split impact. One is that the growth in race-specific programs (business loans to black-owned businesses, for example), especially in more diverse, progressive counties, makes it easier for racial minorities to make gains in the short term, but that the impact of these programs is still not enough to overcome the impacts of racism. If this were true, the findings would theoretically show an impact of race on wage progression as well, as these programs should also allow for greater wage growth. However, my findings do not show this, indicating that there may be other explanations. Another theory is that the measure is fighting itself: some of the most diverse communities in California include the wealthy Bay Area and Los Angeles counties, but also the more impoverished counties of the Central Valley. For short-term earnings measures, the demographics of the wealthy Bay Area counties are felt more strongly, whereas for poverty, the demographics of the Central Valley were felt more strongly. Lastly, due to historically strong relationships between race and economic conditions, it could be the case that race is simply functioning as a proxy for some sort of economic measure that was not accounted for in the

models, one that raises short-term earnings measures for CalWORKS participants but also raises poverty rates.

Policy Implications

One major policy takeaway from these findings is that the theory behind work requirements that eventually led to welfare reform was not supported: counties with stricter work requirements were not associated with better results for any dependent variables. If anything, the wage progression results may suggest that there are benefits to loosening work requirements. Another important takeaway is that socioeconomic factors are typically stronger predictors of financial conditions than the specific design of a welfare system. While there may be other administrative reasons to implement work requirements, policymakers implementing them to improve the economic conditions of participants should consider other measures that more directly address the issue they are attempting to solve.

Limitations & Extensions

One major research limitation was the operationalization of my independent variable. While work activities are an important aspect of work requirements, other methods to measure this, like the amount of work hours required, are compelling and more direct alternatives. However, counties in California are all subject to state law regarding many other aspects of work requirements, limiting the variation in the independent variable. Future research could broaden the scope of this project and compare state outcomes using a more direct measure of work activities.

Additionally, the study struggled with data availability. There were only two years of data to work with, and a lot of smaller more rural counties had to be excluded from certain models at certain points. Furthermore, for one measure I wanted to analyze, sanction rates, there was no data at all for 2017-2019, and only a few counties had more recent data. Future research could wait for another decade of Cal-OAR data to be collected and re-run the study with better data and sanction rates included.

Another research limitation was the control variables: the “economic conditions” of a county are somewhat difficult to capture, and it could be possible that the two variables I chose to measure this with, median income and unemployment, failed to effectively control for confounding variables. Future research could re-run this study with different economic control variables, like GDP per capita, average home prices, or county revenue per capita. Another potential way to control for economic conditions is to limit the counties analyzed. A model of just the Bay Area counties, for example, would be less susceptible to economic factors confounding the results, as the Bay Area counties are quite similar in these factors already. Future researchers could compare results between Bay Area, Central Valley, and Los Angeles metro counties as a way to control for economic conditions.

One final research limitation was that I did not perform separate analyses for different subgroups of CalWORKS participants. We know from prior research that work requirements impact different subgroups differently, and future research could compare results between different ethnic groups, household status, or language spoken.

Conclusion

Work requirements, generally, did not have a significant impact on CalWORKS performance metrics. While counties with more work activities, and thus more flexible work requirements, saw greater wage growth, this impact decays over time, and there were no other significant relationships between work activities and CalWORKS performance metrics. Socioeconomic factors were much more likely to have significant impacts on the dependent variables. Unemployment and income had the expected results: higher incomes and lower unemployment was generally associated with better performance. Race had a more nuanced effect: high proportions of racial minorities were associated with better performance on short term earnings measures, but also high poverty rates. Overall, the findings suggest that work requirements are not doing what they were theorized to do by proponents, but that they may not be having as negative of an effect on outcomes as opponents argued.

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Appendix A: Regression Results

Wage Progression After 2 Quarters

Table 7: Wage Progression After 2 Quarters All Data

	<i>Model</i>			
	Only Race	Race and Median Income	Race and Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	3.959** (1.739)	4.074** (1.745)	4.061** (1.757)	4.061** (1.768)
Race (% POC)	-0.149 (0.303)	-0.196 (0.308)	-0.080 (0.322)	-0.231 (0.394)
Median Income		0.0003 (0.0003)		0.0003 (0.0005)
Unemployment			-1.826 (2.693)	0.648 (4.579)
Intercept	162.253*** (33.799)	145.081*** (38.355)	169.035*** (35.449)	139.200** (57.09)
Observations	47	47	47	47
R ²	0.111	0.129	0.120	0.130
Adjusted R ²	0.071	0.069	0.059	0.047
Residual Std. Error	36.868 (df = 44)	36.908 (df = 43)	37.096 (df = 43)	37.340 (df = 42)
F Statistic	2.747* (df = 2; 44)	2.129 (df = 3; 43)	1.962 (df = 3; 43)	1.565 (df = 4; 42)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 8: Wage Progression After 2 Quarters High Poverty Counties All Data

	<i>Model</i>			
	Only Race	Race and Median Income	Race and Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	3.278* (1.603)	3.328* (1.651)	3.270* (1.653)	3.310* (1.692)
Race (%POC)	-0.744** (0.297)	-0.790** (0.346)	-0.752** (0.345)	-0.927 (0.539)
Median Income		0.0002 (0.001)		0.0005 (0.001)
Unemployment			0.156 (3.306)	1.624 (4.808)
Intercept	209.054*** (31.450)	197.901*** (51.772)	208.338*** (35.642)	176.300** (83.15)
Observations	23	23	23	23
R ²	0.332	0.334	0.332	0.339
Adjusted R ²	0.265	0.229	0.226	0.192
Residual Std. Error	26.004 (df = 20)	26.626 (df = 19)	26.678 (df = 19)	27.270 (df = 18)
F Statistic	4.964** (df = 2; 20)	3.182** (df = 3; 19)	3.145** (df = 3; 19)	2.304* (df = 4; 18)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 9: Wage Progression After 2 Quarters Low Poverty Counties All Data

	<i>Model:</i>			
	Only Race	Race And Median Income	Race and Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	5.754* (3.304)	5.003 (3.273)	4.636 (3.433)	4.847 (3.469)
Race (% POC)	0.541 (0.535)	0.185 (0.581)	0.522 (0.532)	0.228 (0.643)
Median Income		0.001 (0.001)		0.0006 (0.0007)
Unemployment			-9.702 (8.669)	-2.230 (12.550)
Intercept	96.122 (64.662)	62.572 (67.535)	165.789* (89.482)	83.060 (134.500)
Observations	24	24	24	24
R ²	0.144	0.222	0.195	0.223
Adjusted R ²	0.063	0.105	0.074	0.059
Residual Std. Error	43.538 (df = 21)	42.552 (df = 20)	43.279 (df = 20)	43.620 (df = 19)
F Statistic	1.770 (df = 2; 21)	1.897 (df = 3; 20)	1.612 (df = 3; 20)	1.362 (df = 4; 19)

Note:*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Wage Progression After 4 Quarters

Table 10: Wage Progression 4 Quarters All Data

	<i>Models:</i>			
	Only Race	Race and Median Income	Race and Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	2.171 (1.849)	2.301 (1.853)	2.205 (1.876)	2.205 (1.854)
Race (% POC)	0.022 (0.322)	-0.031 (0.327)	0.045 (0.344)	-0.291 (0.414)
Median Income		0.0003 (0.0003)		0.0007 (0.0004)
Unemployment			-0.592 (2.876)	4.930 (4.801)
Intercept	199.057*** (35.922)	179.661*** (40.708)	201.254*** (37.857)	134.600** (59.860)
Observations	47	47	47	47
R ²	0.030	0.053	0.031	0.076
Adjusted R ²	-0.014	-0.013	-0.036	-0.012
Residual Std. Error	39.183 (df = 44)	39.173 (df = 43)	39.617 (df = 43)	39.150 (df = 42)
F Statistic	0.690 (df = 2; 44)	0.802 (df = 3; 43)	0.464 (df = 3; 43)	0.866 (df = 4; 42)

Note:*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 11: Wage Progression 4 Quarters High Poverty Counties All Data

	<i>Model:</i>			
	Only Race	Race And Median Income	Race And Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	1.294 (2.035)	1.310 (2.100)	1.070 (2.034)	1.204 (2.010)
Race (% POC)	-0.879** (0.377)	-0.894* (0.440)	-1.099** (0.425)	-1.697** (0.640)
Median Income		0.0001 (0.001)		0.002 (0.001)
Unemployment			4.493 (4.069)	9.517 (5.710)
Intercept	266.736*** (39.925)	263.144*** (65.847)	246.154*** (43.864)	136.38 (96.738)
Observations	23	23	23	23
R ²	0.221	0.222	0.268	0.326
Adjusted R ²	0.144	0.099	0.153	0.176
Residual Std. Error	33.012 (df = 20)	33.865 (df = 19)	32.832 (df = 19)	32.380 (df = 18)
F Statistic	2.844* (df = 2; 20)	1.803 (df = 3; 19)	2.323 (df = 3; 19)	2.173 (df = 4; 18)

Note:*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 12: Wage Progression 4 Quarters Low Poverty Counties Low Data

	<i>Model:</i>			
	Only Race	Race And Median Income	Race And Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	4.725 (2.926)	3.903 (2.821)	3.817 (3.055)	4.131 (2.985)
Race (% POC)	1.071** (0.474)	0.680 (0.501)	1.056** (0.474)	0.618 (0.554)
Median Income		0.001* (0.0005)		0.001 (0.0007)
Unemployment			-7.879 (7.715)	3.239 (10.800)
Intercept	101.973* (57.260)	65.204 (58.205)	158.551* (79.633)	35.450 (115.700)
Observations	24	24	24	24
R ²	0.240	0.345	0.277	0.348
Adjusted R ²	0.167	0.247	0.169	0.211
Residual Std. Error	38.554 (df = 21)	36.673 (df = 20)	38.515 (df = 20)	37.540 (df = 19)
F Statistic	3.312* (df = 2; 21)	3.510** (df = 3; 20)	2.560* (df = 3; 20)	2.535 (df = 4; 19)

Note:*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Exits With Earnings

Table 13: Exits With Earnings All Data

	<i>Model:</i>			
	Only Race	Race And Median Income	Race and Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	-0.089 (0.204)	-0.008 (0.140)	-0.008 (0.154)	-0.001 (0.139)
Race (% POC)	0.113*** (0.036)	0.087*** (0.025)	0.166*** (0.028)	0.109*** (0.031)
Median Income		0.0001*** (0.00002)		0.0001*** (0.00003)
Unemployment			-1.372*** (0.235)	-0.427 (0.352)
Intercept	48.327*** (4.008)	37.725*** (3.108)	53.311*** (3.130)	41.690*** (4.539)
Observations	46	46	46	46
R ²	0.195	0.635	0.556	0.648
Adjusted R ²	0.157	0.609	0.524	0.613
Residual Std. Error	4.300 (df = 43)	2.927 (df = 42)	3.231 (df = 42)	2.913 (df = 41)
F Statistic	5.195*** (df = 2; 43)	24.407*** (df = 3; 42)	17.527*** (df = 3; 42)	18.850*** (df = 4; 41)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 14: Exit With Earnings High Poverty Counties All Data

	<i>Model:</i>			
	Only Race	Race And Median Income	Race And Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	0.049 (0.170)	0.098 (0.141)	0.087 (0.151)	0.101 (0.143)
Race (% POC)	0.116*** (0.031)	0.071** (0.030)	0.154*** (0.032)	0.092 (0.046)
Median Income		0.0002*** (0.0001)		0.0002 (0.0001)
Unemployment			-0.764** (0.302)	-0.246 (0.407)
Intercept	43.185*** (3.325)	32.082*** (4.416)	46.686*** (3.260)	35.358*** (7.043)
Observations	23	23	23	23
R ²	0.410	0.618	0.559	0.625
Adjusted R ²	0.351	0.557	0.489	0.542
Residual Std. Error	2.749 (df = 20)	2.271 (df = 19)	2.440 (df = 19)	2.310 (df = 18)
F Statistic	6.958*** (df = 2; 20)	10.235*** (df = 3; 19)	8.018*** (df = 3; 19)	7.511*** (df = 4; 18)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 15: Exit With Earnings Low Poverty Counties All Data

	<i>Model:</i>			
	Only Race	Race And Median Income	Race and Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	-0.028 (0.307)	-0.102 (0.277)	-0.171 (0.299)	-0.129 (0.292)
Race (% POC)	0.149*** (0.049)	0.101* (0.049)	0.150*** (0.047)	0.108* (0.054)
Median Income		0.0001** (0.00005)		0.0001 (0.0001)
Unemployment			-1.435* (0.766)	-0.383 (1.047)
Intercept	48.105*** (6.085)	42.053*** (5.998)	57.821*** (7.734)	45.560*** (1.140)
Observations	23	23	23	23
R ²	0.325	0.485	0.431	0.489
Adjusted R ²	0.258	0.404	0.341	0.375
Residual Std. Error	3.965 (df = 20)	3.555 (df = 19)	3.738 (df = 19)	3.638 (df = 18)
F Statistic	4.824** (df = 2; 20)	5.964*** (df = 3; 19)	4.788** (df = 3; 19)	4.302** (df = 4; 18)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Reentry Rates

Table 16: Reentry Rate All Data

	<i>Model:</i>			
	Only Race	Race And Median Income	Race And Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	0.234 (0.194)	0.219 (0.191)	0.231 (0.196)	0.231 (0.187)
Race (% POC)	0.034 (0.035)	0.041 (0.035)	0.031 (0.038)	0.080* (0.042)
Median Income		-0.00004 (0.00003)		-0.0001** (0.00005)
Unemployment			0.077 (0.294)	-0.769 (0.475)
Intercept	8.467** (3.737)	11.306*** (4.144)	8.165** (3.956)	18.470*** (6.005)
Observations	42	42	42	42
R ²	0.059	0.111	0.061	0.17
Adjusted R ²	0.011	0.041	-0.013	0.080
Residual Std. Error	3.938 (df = 39)	3.877 (df = 38)	3.985 (df = 38)	3.797 (df = 37)
F Statistic	1.228 (df = 2; 39)	1.584 (df = 3; 38)	0.822 (df = 3; 38)	1.893 (df = 4; 37)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 17: Reentry Rate High Poverty Counties All Data

	<i>Model:</i>			
	Only Race	Race And Median Income	Race And Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	0.317 (0.259)	0.323 (0.266)	0.342 (0.257)	0.334 (0.260)
Race (% POC)	0.035 (0.049)	0.029 (0.056)	0.067 (0.055)	0.115 (0.082)
Median Income		0.00003 (0.0001)		-0.0001 (0.0001)
Unemployment			-0.604 (0.515)	-1.015 (0.733)
Intercept	7.684 (5.032)	6.071 (8.343)	10.487* (5.527)	19.569 (12.701)
Observations	22	22	22	22
R ²	0.103	0.106	0.167	0.197
Adjusted R ²	0.009	-0.043	0.028	0.008
Residual Std. Error	4.156 (df = 19)	4.263 (df = 18)	4.116 (df = 18)	4.158 (df = 17)
F Statistic	1.096 (df = 2; 19)	0.714 (df = 3; 18)	1.203 (df = 3; 18)	1.042 (df = 4; 17)

Note:*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 18: Reentry Rate Low Poverty Counties All Data

	<i>Model:</i>			
	Only Race	Race And Median Income	Race And Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	-0.007 (0.312)	0.045 (0.321)	-0.014 (0.343)	-0.072 (0.336)
Race (% POC)	0.026 (0.053)	0.034 (0.055)	0.026 (0.056)	0.064 (0.060)
Median Income		-0.00004 (0.00005)		-0.0001 (0.00007)
Unemployment			-0.043 (0.834)	-1.378 (1.260)
Intercept	12.012* (5.966)	14.330** (6.611)	12.305 (8.359)	27.220* (13.500)
Observations	20	20	20	20
R ²	0.014	0.056	0.014	0.126
Adjusted R ²	-0.102	-0.121	-0.171	-0.108
Residual Std. Error	3.773 (df = 17)	3.805 (df = 16)	3.889 (df = 16)	3.782 (df = 15)
F Statistic	0.118 (df = 2; 17)	0.315 (df = 3; 16)	0.075 (df = 3; 16)	0.5383 (df = 4; 15)

Note:*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Reentry After Exits With Earnings

Table 19: Reentry Rate After Exits With Earnings All Data

	<i>Model:</i>			
	Only Race	Race And Median Income	Race And Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	0.128 (0.124)	0.126 (0.128)	0.126 (0.127)	0.126 (0.130)
Race (% POC)	-0.031 (0.029)	-0.031 (0.029)	-0.033 (0.032)	-0.034 (0.039)
Median Income		-0.00000 (0.00002)		0.00000 (0.00004)
Unemployment			0.036 (0.211)	0.043 (0.378)
Intercept	14.323*** (2.766)	14.576*** (3.425)	14.250*** (2.848)	14.170*** (5.048)
Observations	31	31	31	31
R ²	0.076	0.077	0.077	0.077
Adjusted R ²	0.010	-0.026	-0.025	-0.065
Residual Std. Error	2.370 (df = 28)	2.413 (df = 27)	2.412 (df = 27)	2.458 (df = 26)
F Statistic	1.152 (df = 2; 28)	0.747 (df = 3; 27)	0.751 (df = 3; 27)	0.5428 (df = 4; 26)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 20: Reentry Rate After Exits With Earnings High Poverty Counties All Data

	<i>Model:</i>			
	Only Race	Race And Median Income	Race And Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	0.301* (0.159)	0.281 (0.174)	0.299* (0.166)	0.259 (0.192)
Race (% POC)	-0.028 (0.034)	-0.026 (0.035)	-0.031 (0.043)	-0.007 (0.07)
Median Income		-0.00004 (0.0001)		-0.0001 (0.0002)
Unemployment			0.049 (0.353)	-0.242 (0.730)
Intercept	11.125*** (3.656)	13.480* (7.533)	10.973** (3.954)	18.117 (16.006)
Observations	16	16	16	16
R ²	0.262	0.270	0.263	0.277
Adjusted R ²	0.148	0.087	0.079	0.014
Residual Std. Error	2.346 (df = 13)	2.429 (df = 12)	2.440 (df = 12)	2.524 (df = 11)
F Statistic	2.304 (df = 2; 13)	1.477 (df = 3; 12)	1.427 (df = 3; 12)	1.053 (df = 4; 11)

Note:*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 21: Reentry Rate After Exits With Earnings Low Poverty Counties All Data

	<i>Model:</i>			
	Only Race	Race And Median Income	Race And Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	-0.177 (0.211)	-0.210 (0.224)	-0.260 (0.236)	-0.262 (0.250)
Race (% POC)	-0.023 (0.054)	-0.023 (0.055)	-0.003 (0.060)	-0.002 (0.07)
Median Income		0.00002 (0.00004)		-0.00000 (0.00006)
Unemployment			-0.545 (0.669)	-0.591 (1.060)
Intercept	18.670*** (4.445)	17.196*** (5.270)	21.740*** (5.873)	22.230* (10.540)
Observations	15	15	15	15
R ²	0.075	0.101	0.128	0.129
Adjusted R ²	-0.079	-0.144	-0.110	-0.220
Residual Std. Error	2.369 (df = 12)	2.439 (df = 11)	2.403 (df = 11)	2.519 (df = 10)
F Statistic	0.490 (df = 2; 12)	0.414 (df = 3; 11)	0.539 (df = 3; 11)	0.3686 (df = 4; 10)

Note:*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Post-CalWORKS Employment After 2 Quarters

Table 22: Post-CalWORKS Employment 2 Quarters All Data

	<i>Model:</i>			
	Only Race	Race And Median Income	Race And Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	0.027 (0.193)	0.069 (0.156)	0.070 (0.166)	0.072 (0.157)
Race (% POC)	0.110*** (0.032)	0.081*** (0.026)	0.143*** (0.028)	0.093*** (0.034)
Median Income		0.0001*** (0.00002)		0.0001** (0.00004)
Unemployment			-1.038*** (0.249)	-0.234 (0.404)
Intercept	44.816*** (3.672)	37.431*** (3.310)	49.328*** (3.333)	39.640*** (5.055)
Observations	49	49	49	49
R ²	0.208	0.494	0.429	0.498
Adjusted R ²	0.173	0.460	0.391	0.452
Residual Std. Error	4.113 (df = 46)	3.324 (df = 45)	3.532 (df = 45)	3.349 (df = 44)
F Statistic	6.036*** (df = 2; 46)	14.633*** (df = 3; 45)	11.259*** (df = 3; 45)	10.900*** (df = 4; 44)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 23: Post-CalWORKS Employment 2 Quarters High Poverty Counties All Data

	<i>Model:</i>			
	Only Race	Race And Median Income	Race And Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	0.084 (0.186)	0.109 (0.162)	0.098 (0.185)	0.103 (0.161)
Race (% POC)	0.117*** (0.033)	0.066* (0.034)	0.134*** (0.035)	0.026 (0.050)
Median Income		0.0002** (0.0001)		0.0003** (0.0001)
Unemployment			-0.413 (0.360)	-0.487 (0.458)
Intercept	41.396*** (3.502)	31.481*** (4.674)	43.631*** (3.985)	24.850*** (7.789)
Observations	24	24	24	24
R ²	0.392	0.563	0.430	0.587
Adjusted R ²	0.334	0.497	0.344	0.501
Residual Std. Error	3.034 (df = 21)	2.637 (df = 20)	3.012 (df = 20)	2.628 (df = 19)
F Statistic	6.777*** (df = 2; 21)	8.586*** (df = 3; 20)	5.024*** (df = 3; 20)	6.763*** (df = 4; 19)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 24: Post-CalWORKS Employment 2 Quarters Low Poverty Counties All Data

	<i>Model:</i>			
	Only Race	Race And Median Income	Race And Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	0.137 (0.311)	0.065 (0.304)	-0.012 (0.312)	0.005 (0.319)
Race (% POC)	0.135*** (0.048)	0.093* (0.053)	0.131*** (0.046)	0.11* (0.059)
Median Income		0.0001 (0.00005)		0.00004 (0.00007)
Unemployment			-1.308 (0.790)	-0.818 (1.148)
Intercept	43.806*** (6.059)	40.517*** (6.204)	53.265*** (8.165)	47.940*** (12.170)
Observations	25	25	25	25
R ²	0.269	0.349	0.354	0.365
Adjusted R ²	0.203	0.256	0.261	0.238
Residual Std. Error	4.105 (df = 22)	3.966 (df = 21)	3.952 (df = 21)	4.014 (df = 20)
F Statistic	4.054** (df = 2; 22)	3.751** (df = 3; 21)	3.830** (df = 3; 21)	2.874** (df = 4; 20)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Post CalWORKS Employment After 4 Quarters

Table 25: Post-CalWORKS Employment 4 Quarters All Data

	<i>Model:</i>			
	Only Race	Race And Median Income	Race And Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	-0.042 (0.179)	0.002 (0.154)	0.010 (0.157)	0.010 (0.154)
Race (% POC)	0.138*** (0.031)	0.120*** (0.027)	0.173*** (0.029)	0.143*** (0.034)
Median Income		0.0001*** (0.00002)		0.00006 (0.00004)
Unemployment			-0.929*** (0.240)	-0.431 (0.399)
Intercept	41.399*** (3.479)	34.894*** (3.388)	44.847*** (3.159)	38.830*** (4.976)
Observations	47	47	47	47
R ²	0.308	0.501	0.487	0.515
Adjusted R ²	0.277	0.466	0.451	0.468
Residual Std. Error	3.795 (df = 44)	3.260 (df = 43)	3.306 (df = 43)	3.254 (df = 42)
F Statistic	9.801*** (df = 2; 44)	14.396*** (df = 3; 43)	13.599*** (df = 3; 43)	11.130*** (df = 4; 42)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 26: Post-CalWORKS Employment 4 Quarters High Poverty Counties All Data

<i>Model:</i>				
	Only Race	Race And Median Income	Race And Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	0.038 (0.160)	0.079 (0.141)	0.071 (0.147)	0.082 (0.143)
Race (% POC)	0.143*** (0.030)	0.105*** (0.029)	0.175*** (0.031)	0.126** (0.046)
Median Income		0.0002** (0.0001)		0.0001 (0.0001)
Unemployment			-0.656** (0.294)	-0.241 (0.407)
Intercept	38.053*** (3.142)	28.785*** (4.415)	41.056*** (3.171)	31.993*** (7.045)
Observations	23	23	23	23
R ²	0.539	0.665	0.634	0.672
Adjusted R ²	0.493	0.613	0.577	0.599
Residual Std. Error	2.598 (df = 20)	2.271 (df = 19)	2.373 (df = 19)	2.311 (df = 18)
F Statistic	11.688*** (df = 2; 20)	12.598*** (df = 3; 19)	10.994*** (df = 3; 19)	9.213*** (df = 4; 18)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 27: Post-CalWORKS Employment 4 Quarters Low Poverty Counties All Data

<i>Model:</i>				
	Only Race	Race And Median Income	Race And Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	0.029 (0.314)	-0.032 (0.316)	-0.066 (0.329)	-0.050 (0.335)
Race (% POC)	0.161*** (0.051)	0.133** (0.056)	0.160*** (0.051)	0.138** (0.062)
Median Income		0.0001 (0.0001)		0.00005 (0.00007)
Unemployment			-0.819 (0.830)	-0.266 (1.211)
Intercept	40.712*** (6.153)	38.027*** (6.519)	46.592*** (8.571)	40.470*** (12.980)
Observations	24	24	24	24
R ²	0.328	0.371	0.359	0.373
Adjusted R ²	0.264	0.277	0.263	0.241
Residual Std. Error	4.143 (df = 21)	4.107 (df = 20)	4.146 (df = 20)	4.209 (df = 19)
F Statistic	5.131** (df = 2; 21)	3.935** (df = 3; 20)	3.740** (df = 3; 20)	2.823* (df = 4; 19)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Poverty Rates

Table 28: Poverty All Data

	<i>Model:</i>			
	Only Race	Race And Median Income	Race And Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	0.218 (0.210)	0.154 (0.118)	0.140 (0.127)	0.135 (0.099)
Race (% POC)	0.024 (0.034)	0.081*** (0.020)	-0.009 (0.021)	0.042** (0.018)
Median Income		-0.0002*** (0.00002)		-0.0001*** (0.00002)
Unemployment			1.679*** (0.175)	0.912*** (0.189)
Intercept	9.463** (3.915)	20.917*** (2.449)	1.127 (2.512)	12.210*** (2.726)
Observations	55	55	55	55
R ²	0.029	0.699	0.655	0.795
Adjusted R ²	-0.008	0.681	0.634	0.778
Residual Std. Error	4.711 (df = 52)	2.648 (df = 51)	2.837 (df = 51)	2.210 (df = 50)
F Statistic	0.782 (df = 2; 52)	39.513*** (df = 3; 51)	32.224*** (df = 3; 51)	48.370*** (df = 4; 50)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 29: Poverty High Poverty Counties All Data

	<i>Model:</i>			
	Only Race	Race And Median Income	Race And Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	0.086 (0.157)	0.031 (0.126)	0.069 (0.130)	0.034 (0.114)
Race (% POC)	0.012 (0.027)	0.059** (0.025)	-0.009 (0.023)	0.032 (0.025)
Median Income		-0.0002*** (0.0001)		-0.0002*** (0.00006)
Unemployment			0.786*** (0.227)	0.539** (0.220)
Intercept	16.291*** (2.953)	27.312*** (3.741)	11.077*** (2.873)	20.900*** (4.244)
Observations	27	27	27	27
R ²	0.021	0.399	0.356	0.531
Adjusted R ²	-0.060	0.320	0.272	0.446
Residual Std. Error	2.681 (df = 24)	2.146 (df = 23)	2.220 (df = 23)	1.937 (df = 22)
F Statistic	0.259 (df = 2; 24)	5.086*** (df = 3; 23)	4.246** (df = 3; 23)	6.238*** (df = 4; 22)

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 30: Poverty Low Poverty Counties All Data

	<i>Model:</i>			
	Only Race	Race And Median Income	Race And Unemployment	All Economic Controls
Work Activities	-0.016 (0.159)	0.095 (0.111)	0.078 (0.152)	0.108 (0.115)
Race (% POC)	0.002 (0.024)	0.050** (0.019)	0.005 (0.022)	0.048** (0.019)
Median Income		-0.0001*** (0.00002)		-0.00008*** (0.00002)
Unemployment			0.919** (0.396)	0.187 (0.344)
Intercept	10.451*** (2.948)	13.665*** (2.112)	4.073 (3.869)	12.200*** (3.471)
Observations	28	28	28	28
R ²	0.001	0.547	0.184	0.553
Adjusted R ²	-0.079	0.490	0.082	0.475
Residual Std. Error	2.240 (df = 25)	1.539 (df = 24)	2.066 (df = 24)	1.563 (df = 23)
F Statistic	0.012 (df = 2; 25)	9.660*** (df = 3; 24)	1.800 (df = 3; 24)	7.102*** (df = 4; 23)

Note:*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Appendix B: Pearson's R Test Results

Table 31: Pearson's R Test Results Between Work Activities And CalWORKS Performance Metrics

	Correlation Coefficient	95% Confidence Interval	Df	T-statistic
Wage Progression 2Q	0.3258**	0.0423, 0.5605	45	2.3115
Wage Progression 4Q	0.1741	-0.1190, 0.4393	45	1.1863
Exits With Earnings	-0.0786	-0.3670, 0.2166	44	-0.5232
Reentry Rate	0.1934	-0.1174, 0.4697	40	1.2469
Reentry Rate After Exits With Earnings	0.1919	-0.1743, 0.5115	29	1.0529
Post-CalWORKS Employment 2Q	0.0050	-0.2766, 0.2858	47	0.0344
Post CalWORKS Employment 4Q	-0.0461	-0.3289, 0.2443	45	-0.3097
Poverty	0.1406	-0.1295, 0.3913	53	1.0341

Note:*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Appendix C: Work Activities Breakdown

Table 32: Work Activities Breakdown

Type of Work Activity	Number of Counties Offering	Percent of Counties Offering
Unsubsidized Employment	55	100
Subsidized Private Sector Employment	43	78.1818
Subsidized Public Sector Employment	40	72.7273
Work Experience	53	96.3636
On-the-job Training	55	100
Grant-Based On-the-job Training	28	50.9091
Supported Work	37	67.2727
Transitional Employment	35	63.6364
Work Study	53	96.3636
Self-Employment	55	100
Community Service	53	96.3636
Adult Basic Education	53	96.3636
Job Skills Training	54	98.1818
Vocational Education	55	100
Job Search and Job Readiness	55	100
Education Directly Related to Employment	52	94.5455
Secondary School	3	5.4545
Mental Health Services	28	50.9091
Substance Abuse Services	25	45.4545
Domestic Violence Services	25	45.4545
Other	23	41.8182