

# UC Berkeley

## Reports

### Title

Implementation of California's Cal-Learn Demonstration Project, A Process Evaluation: Program Planning and Implementation From June 1993 Through June 1996

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1mr635qn>

### Authors

Cunniff, James  
Dillon, Nara  
Hirshberg, Diane  
et al.

### Publication Date

1997-04-01

**IMPLEMENTATION OF CALIFORNIA'S  
CAL-LEARN DEMONSTRATION PROJECT  
A PROCESS EVALUATION**

**Program Planning and Implementation from  
June 1993 through June 1996**

WWW version : July 3, 1997

James Cunniff  
Nara Dillon  
Diane Hirshberg  
Carol Medlin  
Janet Malvin

UC DATA  
University of California  
2538 Channing Way  
Berkeley, CA 94720-5100

April 1997

## **Acknowledgements**

This report would not have been possible without the contributions of numerous individuals in state and county agencies who shared with us their experiences and knowledge. We would especially like to thank the following individuals for their valuable comments on earlier drafts of this report: J. Oshi Ruelas, Everett Haslett, and Lois Van Beers (CDSS Research Branch); Nancy Remley, Teri Ellen, and Detta Hunt (CDSS Employment and Refugee Programs Branch); Joan Laborde (Alameda County Social Services Agency/GAIN); Vicki Hayek (San Bernardino County Dept. of Public Social Services/GAIN); Elaine Butler (Los Angeles County Dept. of Public Social Services/GAIN); Barbara Early (San Joaquin Human Services Agency); and Lani Schiff-Ross (San Joaquin Dept. Of Public Health).

## Table of Contents

Glossary of Terms	i
Introduction	1
State-Level Implementation	4
California Department of Social Services	4
California Department of Health Services	8
California Department of Education	8
Inter-agency Coordination	8
Research Implementation	10
County Level Implementation	12
San Bernardino County	14
AFDC/GAIN	14
AFLP	16
Research	18
Alameda County	20
AFDC/GAIN	20
AFLP	21
Research	24
San Joaquin County	25
AFDC/GAIN	25
AFLP	27
Research	29
Los Angeles County	30
AFDC/GAIN	30
AFLP	32
Research	36
Summary	38
Appendices	39
Appendix A: Overview of the Cal-Learn Program	40
Appendix B: AFLP Standards of Practice	41
Appendix C: Cal-Learn Program Implementation Milestones	42
Appendix D: Cal-Learn Program Status, July 1995 - June 1996	43
Appendix E: Monthly Cal-Learn Caseloads - Research Counties	44

## Glossary of Terms

AFDC	Aid to Families with Dependent Children
AFLP	Adolescent Family Life Program - Cal-Learn case management model
Ancillary Expenses	Expenses incurred in order to attend and/or graduate from high school. Includes school books, GED testing fees, caps and gowns, etc.
AU	Assistance Unit (AFDC)
BAP	Bureau of Assistance Payments - Los Angeles County
CDE	California Department of Education
CDHS	California Department of Health Services
CDS	Case Data System - Alameda County AFDC Data System
CDSS	California Department of Social Services
CL-1	Orientation Notice
CL-2	Notice of Program Requirements
CL-3	Notice of Participation Problem (e.g., failure to show for orientation)
Client	Cal-Learn program participant
CWD	County Welfare Department
CWDA	County Welfare Director's Association
CWPDP	California Work Pays Demonstration Project
DPSS	Department of Public Social Services - Los Angeles County
EBPC	East Bay Perinatal Council - Alameda County AFLP
EW	Eligibility Worker - AFDC
GAIN	Greater Avenues for Independence
GEARS	GAIN Employment Activity and Reporting System - Los Angeles County administrative data system
GED	General Educational Development (High School Equivalency Degree)
GEMS/CLAS	GAIN administrative data systems in San Bernardino and San Joaquin Counties
GIS	GAIN administrative data system in Alameda County
GPA	Grade point average
HSA	Health Service Assistants - San Bernardino
IBPS	Integrated Benefit Payment System - Los Angeles County AFDC administrative data system
Lodestar	Database developed to collect data from AFLP agencies for CDHS, later modified to accommodate Cal-Learn and CDSS needs
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
Nested case	Teen parent who is on his or her parent's AFDC case
Non-nested (unnested)	Teen parent who has established his or her own AFDC case
NOA	Notice of Action
Participant	Participant in the Cal-Learn program
PMP	Pregnant Minor Program
SAPID	School Age Parenting and Infant Development Program
SAWS	Statewide Automated Welfare System - San Joaquin County AFDC administrative data system
SSA	Social Service Agency - Alameda County Welfare Department

## Introduction

The Cal-Learn program is one element of a major welfare reform package embodied in the California Work Pays Demonstration Project (CWPD) under a federal waiver approved by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on March 1, 1994. Unlike other CWPD reforms, many of which change the eligibility requirements of already-existing federal welfare programs, the Cal-Learn program introduces a new and innovative welfare approach targeted at pregnant and parenting teens on AFDC who have not yet graduated from high school. The goal of Cal-Learn is to help these teens overcome barriers to achieving a high school diploma or its equivalent by providing them with a combination of intensive case management, supportive services, and financial inducements throughout their participation in the mandatory program (see Appendix A). Cal-Learn teens who obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent are projected to have lower rates of long-term dependence on welfare.

The Cal-Learn program was initially approved by the California legislature in 1993 in Senate Bill (S.B.) 35, and in a companion bill, S.B. 1078. Under the Cal-Learn program, pregnant and parenting teens receive a \$100 bonus up to four times a year for maintaining satisfactory progress in school (at least a "C" grade point average per report card) and a one-time \$500 bonus for high school graduation or its equivalent. Their AFDC grants are reduced by \$100 up to four times a year if they fail either to maintain at least a "D" grade point average in school or to submit a report card. Intensive case management is offered to each teen, and child care, transportation and school-related expenses are available to assist Cal-Learn participants to attend school. Teens on AFDC who are eligible must participate in Cal-Learn until they earn a high school diploma or its equivalent, or until they turn 19.

In the S.B. 35 legislation, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) was identified as the lead agency for planning and implementation of the Cal-Learn program. As lead agency, CDSS was responsible for submitting the necessary federal waivers to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS); compiling a comprehensive budget; developing technical and administrative regulations for the program; conducting an evaluation of the Cal-Learn program; and coordinating an overall program design with the California Department of Health Services (CDHS), Department of Education (CDE), and the counties.

California's welfare programs are administered at the county level, with major funding and administrative oversight of the regulations from CDSS. Each county was required to submit a Cal-Learn plan for review and approval by CDSS describing how it proposed to implement its Cal-Learn program.

Earlier versions of Cal-Learn had been proposed in the 1992 ballot initiative known as Proposition 165, and in the FY '94 Governors's budget proposal. These versions differed from the bill which eventually passed in that they relied solely on the use of financial incentives and penalties to encourage teens to finish school. During legislative negotiations over S.B. 35, the Cal-Learn program became more complex and service oriented. It required that counties either contract case management services out to an existing Adolescent Family Life Program (AFLP)

agency, or ensure that the local agency providing these services meet the scope and standards of the AFLP model (see Appendix B). The legislation also required that Cal-Learn, which was originally intended to be operated as an AFDC program, coordinate with CDHS and CDE. This shift to a more service oriented program led to the decision to have the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program, the state's welfare-to-work program, rather than the AFDC program assume administration of Cal-Learn. The legislation specified that GAIN ensure the following:

- (1) The provision of education and training services needed by teenage parents to help them earn a high school diploma or its equivalent, including vocational training and preparation that may be available through local education agencies.
- (2) The linkage to other health and social services available in the community needed by teenagers. (S.B. 35, Article 3.5, 11331.(c)).

As noted previously, S.B. 35 also required that counties contract with agencies providing the Adolescent Family Life Program (AFLP) for case management services, except in specific circumstances.<sup>1</sup> The AFLP program is the State Department of Health Services' primary program for pregnant and parenting teens. The central focus of this voluntary program is to improve the health of teen parents and their children through comprehensive case management. In addition, the AFLP program seeks to enhance the social, economic and educational well-being of teen parents, via both counseling and referrals to needed services. The Cal-Learn program modified and expanded the AFLP case management model to emphasize assisting teen parents to stay in or return to school and graduate, in addition to focusing on other factors that impact the ability of teen parents and their children to become productive, responsible, independent citizens.<sup>2</sup>

The terms and conditions of the CWPDP federal waiver require an evaluation of the impact of the Cal-Learn program. CDSS contracted with the University of California (Berkeley) Data Archive and Technical Assistance Unit (UC DATA) to collect data for this evaluation. The research design developed by the California Department of Social Services and UC DATA in response to this mandate is described in greater detail in the research section below. The State of California, in agreement with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, had previously designated San Bernardino, Alameda, San Joaquin, and Los Angeles as "research" counties for a prior study of welfare reform, the Assistance Payments Demonstration Project

---

<sup>1</sup>If AFLP services could be shown to be unavailable, cost-ineffective, or the county has an existing teen services program CWDs were permitted to provide case management services themselves. However, in each of the four research counties, the CWDs contracted out case management services to the AFLP agencies that had been already operating for eight to ten years prior to the start of Cal-Learn.

<sup>2</sup> While Cal-Learn and AFLP funding streams are different, for the purpose of this report the agencies providing Cal-Learn case management will be referred to as AFLPs, since all of the case management agencies in the research counties were previously providing AFLP-funded services and are commonly referred to as AFLPs.

(APDP). The subsequent waiver for CWPDP maintained the same research counties for the new demonstration project, and thus established these as the counties for the Cal-Learn study.

In addition to collecting the data for the Cal-Learn impact evaluation, UC DATA is responsible for evaluating Cal-Learn program implementation in the research counties. The waiver describes this implementation study as follows:

The evaluation will include a process study that will describe how the parts of the program were implemented and operated. This study will examine the following aspects of the demonstration:

- The organizational aspects, such as, the planning process, staffing structure, funding committed, and procedures for verification;
- The contextual factors, such as, the social, economic, and political forces that may have a bearing on the replicability of the intervention or influence the implementation of the demonstration;
- The contextual factors which may have affected the observed impacts of the demonstrations and what those factors say about extrapolating the experience in California to the rest of the nation; and
- The differences between the demonstrations and the comparable services, activities, staffing, etc., available to those not participating in the demonstration (Waiver Terms and Conditions, CWPDP, 1994, pp. 9-10.)

This report covers the period from the initial planning for the Cal-Learn program through June 1996, which is the end of the first year of data collection for the evaluation. Full implementation of the Cal-Learn program and the research in the evaluation counties has been gradual (see Appendix C) as agencies have overcome challenges encountered in areas as diverse as: identifying potential Cal-Learn eligibles, modifying existing administrative data systems, randomizing teens, interpreting school report cards, and coordinating the issuance of bonuses and sanctions. Despite the fact that Cal-Learn is a small program relative to other welfare programs administered by the counties (such as AFDC, food stamps, and Medi-Cal), the administrative burden on the counties has been substantial. By April 1995, three of the four research counties were in compliance programmatically with the Cal-Learn mandate, and by June 1996 the fourth was in full compliance (Los Angeles County only began issuing sanctions in June 1996).

Information for this report was gathered primarily through face-to-face interviews with administrative personnel involved in the Cal-Learn program in the four research counties and in the state capital, Sacramento. Semi-structured, voluntary, and confidential interviews were conducted by UC DATA staff throughout the planning and implementation of the program. Those interviewed at the state level included policy officials from the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), the Children and Adolescent Health section of the California Department of Health Services (CDHS), and the California Department of Education (CDE). At the county level, interviewees included AFDC administrators and staff, GAIN supervisors and



staff, and AFLP directors, case managers, and data entry clerks. Additional information for this report was collected through reviewing documents relevant to the implementation and data collection efforts of the administering agencies.

### **State-Level Implementation**

#### California Department of Social Services.

*The federal waivers.* Shortly after passage of the legislation, CDSS identified a manager and five staff from GAIN's policy unit to coordinate the Cal-Learn program. They formed the new Cal-Learn Program Unit and began preparing the waivers or requests to set aside the Social Security Act rules as required by the federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). A universal requirement of federal waivers is that they be cost neutral. While it was recognized that Cal-Learn would be an expensive program to operate it was successfully argued that the entire package of reforms in the CWPDP should be viewed as a whole, and that cost savings from the other reforms (benefit cuts) would compensate for costs of the Cal-Learn component. Moreover, CDSS contended that Cal-Learn would have a long-range impact on reducing the welfare dependency of teen parents, a group particularly vulnerable to long-term welfare dependency, and that the potential for future savings would further offset initial Cal-Learn operating expenses.

DHHS raised some issues about certain portions of the waiver application concerning Cal-Learn. These included concerns about the use of Title IV-A funding of supportive services, and the failure of Cal-Learn to track student's school attendance. After some negotiation it was agreed that IV-A funds could be used to fund Cal-Learn case management provided that Title IV-F (JOBS) funds were exhausted first, and that the Cal-Learn evaluation would track school attendance to the extent possible. The entire waiver process took five months, from submission of the waiver proposal on September 20, 1993 to final approval on March 1, 1994. The Cal-Learn program was officially launched following a mandatory 30 day waiting period, on April 1, 1994.

*Program regulation development.* Program implementation entailed the coordination of welfare, education, and health agencies at both the state and county levels. CDSS began planning by seeking input from the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA). A six member sub-committee was appointed for this purpose by CWDA in August 1993. This Cal-Learn Work Group was expanded later to include participants from the CDHS, CDE, and AFLP regional representatives. The Work Group's tasks included providing advice and input to the Cal-Learn Program Unit in the drafting of the regulations so that the program could be operated at the local level without placing undue bureaucratic burdens on counties.

A major aspect of the planning process of the Work Group at this stage was to familiarize the participants with the different perspectives and processes used by each of the agencies involved. GAIN was accustomed to managing programs through administrative oversight of detailed rules and regulations. In contrast, CDHS and CDE have relatively decentralized bureaucracies,

exercise minimal administrative oversight, and set standards of practice, guidelines and goals within which programs are free to exercise considerable latitude. Regulation development meetings proceeded throughout the winter of 1993-94, with draft versions routinely sent to all agencies for comments and suggestions. By February 1994, sufficient agreement had been reached among the parties for CDSS to issue the emergency program regulations in an All County Letter (ACL). ACL 94-16 contained instructions to the counties for submitting their Cal-Learn county plans and included a sample plan to use as a model.

Following issuance of the regulations, the Work Group decided to continue to meet as the main forum for discussing Cal-Learn implementation policy and budgetary issues. One issue that remained unresolved was the delineation and cost appraisal of the tasks to be performed by each agency. It was not until the May 1994 legislative budget hearings that final decisions were made in this regard. The 1994-95 Budget Act specified a rate of reimbursement for case management that increased the rate of reimbursement, but also mandated that a cost study be undertaken prior to the next year's budget hearings to determine the actual costs of running the program.

*Disseminating the Regulations.* CDSS sponsored training seminars in five locations (Sacramento, San Francisco, Fresno, Diamond Bar and Redding) in late February and early March of 1994. The Cal-Learn Work Group collaborated with CDSS to plan and present one-day training seminars for staff at county welfare offices, local school administrators, and the AFLP provider agencies. Participants in the trainings received Cal-Learn regulations and were encouraged to ask questions specific to the program. The major concerns raised by participants at these trainings had to do with funding for expansion of school-based child care; the capacity of schools to handle a sudden return of large numbers of drop-outs; the need for academic or psychological testing; confusion over submittal of report card information; issuance of bonuses and sanctions, and other operational details. Questions left unanswered at the trainings were addressed in subsequent All County Letters, and/or through individual contact with CDSS staff.

*Program Implementation.* Cal-Learn is administered within CDSS by the Cal-Learn Program Unit of the Employment Programs Bureau, Welfare Programs Division. Throughout 1994 and 1995, the Cal-Learn Program Unit focused on getting Cal-Learn implemented in the counties. Counties had to submit a Board of Supervisors-approved Cal-Learn County Plan to CDSS no later than November 1, 1994, have Cal-Learn implemented by April 1995, and have their caseloads fully phased-in by September 1995 (ACL-94-40, p. 2). To help the county welfare departments clarify their roles and responsibilities under the legislation, Cal-Learn Program Unit analysts were assigned to specific counties to answer questions and monitor the counties' implementation efforts. Responses to frequently asked questions about the program were periodically published in the form of All County Letters sent out by the Cal-Learn Program Unit.

Counties were asked to begin submitting their plans to CDSS on March 1, 1994. Placer County became the first county to begin operating Cal-Learn, starting on April 1, 1994. Other counties had more difficulty putting their programs into place. Some counties faced philosophical and political opposition from their boards of supervisors. Others had an existing web of agencies

and bureaucratic structures upon which Cal-Learn was layered, and the relationships among them needed to be carefully re-negotiated and adjusted to accommodate the Cal-Learn mandate. Where counties had no AFLP agency, the local health and welfare agencies worked to develop a case management program that would satisfy CDHS's AFLP standards. To facilitate that process, CDSS and CDHS jointly conducted a series of two-day training sessions in four locations across the state. These trainings included how to write up case management protocols that would meet the standards set by MCH for inclusion in Cal-Learn plans.

The case management agencies in all counties are required to collect a variety of client characteristic data for all Cal-Learn teens using the Lodestar software. The Cal-Learn Program Unit facilitated the installation of Lodestar software in the agencies other than AFLPs that were providing case management services. This was necessary to standardize their administrative records with those of the AFLPs operating in other counties. Lodestar is a FoxPro database program used to capture data on demographics, health, risk factors and educational settings for clients under AFLP case management. Developed under contract with CDHS, it was later modified to meet the needs of the Cal-Learn program and evaluation research, and was subsequently re-installed statewide.

The Cal-Learn Program Unit also focused attention on counties where fiscal, political, and ideological barriers hampered implementation of Cal-Learn. In two counties, for example, the County Boards of Supervisors initially refused to approve the County Plan to implement Cal-Learn based on their philosophical opposition to the provision of bonuses. CDSS, in negotiations with these counties, agreed to process and issue bonus checks directly from Sacramento at the counties' expense. The Boards of Supervisors in both counties eventually approved the County Plans. Relatedly, in February of 1996, legislation was proposed that would have created a separate pilot program eliminating Cal-Learn bonus payments (A.B. 2156) in several counties. However, this initiative failed.

As counties began planning for Cal-Learn implementation, the need for start-up funds at the local level became clear. County welfare departments needed to reprogram their AFDC and GAIN databases, and AFLP agencies had to expand their infrastructure to handle a significantly increased client load. The Budget Act of 1994/95 authorized expenditure of start-up funds for this purpose. The Program Unit developed a start-up allocation by redirecting eight million dollars from the operations budget. Although the start-up funds were made available to all counties by December 1994, it took time for counties to negotiate with the AFLP agencies how the funds were to be allocated within the counties.

A major undertaking of the Cal-Learn Program Unit in 1995 was a cost study of the Cal-Learn program. As required by the Budget Act of 1994, the CDSS and CDHS were to jointly develop a method of determining actual costs of case management and county welfare department administration for the Cal-Learn program and report these findings to the appropriate legislative subcommittees by April 15, 1995. To meet this mandate, the two departments conducted a survey in eight counties during January 1995 to capture the actual county cost of administering the program.

The findings from the eight counties indicated a substantial variation in the amount each of the counties was spending in the month of January for clients in Cal-Learn. Costs per case for case management ranged from \$109 up to \$381. The current standard is \$137.50 per month. The counties' administrative costs ranged from less than two dollars to almost \$25 per case for the month. The current costs standard is \$25.26 per case month.

While the two departments had made a substantial effort to collect all necessary data regarding actual program cost, the variation within the eight counties was so significant that it was not possible to determine a statewide cost for case management and county administration. Because of inconclusive findings, the report recommended continuing work on determining the actual cost of the program. During the survey period, the Cal-Learn program was in various stages of implementation, and although the eight counties surveyed had been implemented the longest they were still at different points in their implementation process. All eight counties had accessed start-up funding for this period.

The CDSS has continued with its effort to determine the actual cost of the Cal-Learn program. In August 1996, it released another survey to all 58 counties requesting a variety of detailed information regarding the costs associated with county administrative activities and case management activities for the Cal-Learn program. The information from this survey is being evaluated in conjunction with actual cost information obtained from the Fiscal Year 1995/96 Administrative Expense Claims (the process by which counties are reimbursed).

Following the start of implementation, the Cal-Learn Program Unit fielded many questions from CWDs on how to establish and interpret school progress as many of the programs attended by Cal-Learn teens neither issue quarterly report cards nor award letter grades. A substantial number of Cal-Learn teens, for example, attend GED programs at Adult Schools that typically document only the results of the GED exam rather than evaluate progress over time. Therefore, students preparing for GED exams have no progress reports to submit. In other alternative educational programs, the use of narrative progress reports makes it difficult to determine whether a teen deserves a bonus or a sanction.

Although the Cal-Learn Program Unit is still working on a definition of school progress that would accommodate an array of educational programs, it issued an All County Letter (96-15) in April 1995 to explain that counties may negotiate with schools to establish report card schedules for Cal-Learn teens. Neither the counties nor the schools, however, were mandated to participate in such agreements. Also in April 1995, the Cal-Learn Program Unit released the "Teen Parent Monthly Status Report" (STAT 45) that requires CWDs to report monthly caseload statistics.

#### California Department of Health Services

The Children and Adolescent Health section of the Maternal and Child Health Branch of the CDHS administers the AFLP program. Under the S.B. 35 legislation, they are responsible for the AFLP components within the Cal-Learn Program. For example they must certify that the

case management protocols of non-AFLP case management agencies meet the AFLP Standards of Practice (see Appendix B).

Modification of the case management data system (Lodestar) was required for the Cal-Learn program. CDHS contracted with software consultants to update Lodestar and they monitored the installation of the new Lodestar software in all counties. In May 1995, the four research counties participating in the Cal-Learn evaluation obtained priority over all other counties to receive the modified Lodestar software because this was considered critical for data collection. Beginning in August, CDHS and UC DATA then coordinated efforts to train AFLP staff in the four counties in the use of the new Lodestar database. In Los Angeles County, which had five AFLPs operating sixteen different offices, UC DATA hired a specialist to provide technical assistance to the case management agencies during the transition to the new Lodestar system and to assist with data collection generally.

### California Department of Education

The California Department of Education (CDE) was not consulted by the Legislature when the Cal-Learn statute was written. The oversight seemed particularly problematic because Cal-Learn was expected to draw large numbers of drop-outs back into schools across the State. Soon after the legislation was enacted, the CDSS contacted the CDE to help develop Cal-Learn regulations. The CDE helped introduce the Cal-Learn program to school districts and specialized education programs for pregnant and parenting teens. A program coordinator from the School Interventions and Educational Options Unit in the Special Services Branch of the CDE periodically published memoranda to inform and update schools on the requirements of the Cal-Learn program and the resources available to participating teens. It was hoped that these efforts would help reinforce schools' and educators' awareness of their legal obligation to provide pregnant and parenting teens with the opportunity to complete their high school education.

### Inter-agency Coordination.

Inter-agency coordination of Cal-Learn at the state level was formalized with the creation of the Cal-Learn Work Group. During 1995 and 1996, the Work Group met regularly, each quarter, and played an instrumental role in the statewide implementation of the program as well as in its ongoing administration. The Work Group was formally established through a request by CDSS to the County Welfare Directors Association for the appointment of county staff to represent the five GAIN regions and Los Angeles. It was initially established to provide assistance to CDSS during the development of the Cal-Learn regulations. At this early stage, county eligibility staff were also included to assure the appropriate linkage between the AFDC eligibility determination and Cal-Learn. After just a few meetings, the AFLP regional representatives were invited to participate as well.

While the initial purpose of the Work Group was to assist CDSS in program development, it quickly became a vehicle for information sharing regarding federal, state, and local activities

and concerns. As the Work Group consisted of members from each region for both CWDA and AFLP, one of their primary tasks was to bring issues forward from their regions for resolution, and to carry back information. The meetings provided a forum for the philosophical and practical reasons behind decisions, allowed compromises to develop, and ensured that this information would be transmitted to other counties.

Policy issues addressed by the Work Group included whether teens enrolled in English as a Second Language programs that do not lead directly to a high school diploma meet Cal-Learn's education mandates (published in ACL 96-14). More recently, the Work Group has been investigating issues related to monitoring and reviewing the school performance of Cal-Learn teens. For example, although a report card schedule for each teen must be determined within thirty days of enrollment into the Cal-Learn program, the procedure has been complicated by the fact that school report card schedules in some counties vary by school district, individual schools, school program, and/or the individual student. Also, the interpretation of report cards from non-traditional school programs has proven to be difficult because these programs may use non-traditional grading systems that apply credits and/or narrative reports instead of standardized letter grades.

## Research Implementation

*Research Design.* The federal waiver for the CWPDP mandated an evaluation of the impact of the Cal-Learn program on teen parents. In collaboration with CDSS, UC DATA designed a research strategy for evaluating Cal-Learn and in 1994 began testing the randomization process, research design, and data collection in San Bernardino. The evaluation employs a two-way factorial design to contrast the independent and combined effects of two program elements: (1) intensive case management and (2) financial incentives and penalties. Teens who meet eligibility requirements on paper are randomly assigned to one of four research conditions: full Cal-Learn, i.e., case management with bonuses and sanctions; case management with no bonuses or sanctions; bonuses and sanctions without case management; and neither case management nor bonuses and sanctions. All teens in the evaluation are offered supportive services, including reimbursement for child care, transportation to school, and school-related expenses. Sampling of teen parents for the evaluation takes place during three periods:

- the Test Cohort (November 1994--June 1995);
- the Early Cohort (July 1995--June 1996); and
- the Late Cohort (July 1996--June 1997).

### CAL-LEARN FACTORIAL RESEARCH DESIGN

<b>Case Management Incentives/Sanctions</b> (Supportive Services)	<b>Case Management No Incentives/Sanctions</b> (Supportive Services)
<b>No Case Management Incentives/Sanctions</b> (Supportive Services)	<b>No Case Management No Incentives/Sanctions</b> (Supportive Services)

*Eligibility for Research Participation.* Data collection and research implementation procedures were issued by the CDSS in August 1995 to all four counties taking part in the Cal-Learn evaluation. As pregnant and custodial teen parents on AFDC enroll in Cal-Learn during any of the three sampling periods, or cohorts, they are randomly assigned to a research condition based on their Social Security number. The following conditions must be met by teens to be included in the randomization:

- the teen must meet the Cal-Learn program eligibility requirements as defined in Cal-Learn regulations, Manual of Policies and Procedures, Section 42-763;
- the teen must be 18 ½ years or younger;
- the teen must not be a member of a household currently participating in the CWPDP control or experimental research groups; and
- the teen must be eligible for AFDC and new to the Cal-Learn program.

Exceptions to assignment by Social Security number are made when more than one teen in the same household is Cal-Learn eligible. In these cases, all teens in the same household are assigned the research code of the first teen randomized. Assignment of teens to research conditions in any period stops when a county reaches or exceeds its projected number of

"research teens" for that cohort. After Cal-Learn participants exit the program, UC DATA will continue to track these teens through June 1998 to uncover educational, employment and other effects of Cal-Learn.

*Timing of randomization.* The randomization for the impact evaluation across all four research counties was set to begin in July 1995. Although the randomization continued in San Bernardino, it actually began in the other counties in August (Alameda), September (San Joaquin), and December 1995 (Los Angeles). The randomization process begins when county workers identify potential Cal-Learn eligibles at intake or from AFDC records and randomize them into the four cells of the research design *before* attempting to notify or enroll them into the program itself.

Although the Cal-Learn Program includes an orientation, attendance is not mandatory. Teens are randomized into treatment condition regardless of whether or not they choose to attend the orientation. In other words, research clients are assigned randomly to condition before they are seen at orientation or contacted personally by mail or phone, by GAIN workers or AFLP case managers.

**PROJECTED SAMPLE SIZE BY COUNTY**

	<b>San Bernardino</b>	<b>Alameda</b>	<b>San Joaquin</b>	<b>Los Angeles</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>TEST COHORT</b>	700				700
<b>EARLY COHORT</b>	700	400	300	700	2100
<b>LATE COHORT</b>	700	400	300	700	2100

*Data Collection.* Sources of information about the Cal-Learn research teens are:

- a telephone survey of program participants (the Cal-Learn Retrospective Survey);
- the AFDC database for the county;
- the GAIN database for the county;
- the Lodestar database on case management; and
- the Supportive Services database in San Bernardino and San Joaquin counties.  
(In Los Angeles and Alameda supportive services are part of the GAIN database.)



## County Level Implementation

Although the four research counties vary considerably in size, population, and demographics, there were many common challenges in implementing the Cal-Learn program. One of the most significant was the need to coordinate four essentially separate local administrative entities: GAIN, AFDC, AFLP and local schools. In order for Cal-Learn to operate smoothly, each of these four entities must perform its own particular set of functional tasks. At the county level, individual county Cal-Learn Plans, Memoranda of Understanding between local agencies, and legally binding contracts with the AFLP agencies delineate specific task responsibilities for each organization.

GAIN is the agency responsible for the overall coordination and implementation of the Cal-Learn program in every county. Each county was required to assign a GAIN staff member to serve in the capacity of Cal-Learn Coordinator. A fundamental task for GAIN in each county was the establishment of new working relationships with the AFLP agencies. These relationships had been limited or nonexistent in the past, and they are particularly important because it is the AFLP case managers rather than GAIN staff who have the primary contact with Cal-Learn clients. During the first year of the program, GAIN developed procedures with the AFLPs through a trial and error process. Protocols for giving and receiving information evolved as staff learned what would and would not work. A parallel pattern was followed in GAIN's development of procedures for working with AFDC regarding the referral process for Cal-Learn clients, and for implementing bonuses and sanctions. As modifications to procedures were made, GAIN attempted to keep pace by updating forms and modifying their automated databases.

The functional tasks for AFDC, although narrower in scope, were no less difficult to accomplish. The foremost task for AFDC with regard to Cal-Learn implementation is the identification of clients for participation in the program. Referrals to the Cal-Learn program come from AFDC. To meet this responsibility all counties needed to integrate new teen parent identifier codes into their AFDC databases, and EW staff needed to become familiar with entering new codes and referring clients to Cal-Learn when appropriate. The major differences between the counties with regard to the accomplishment of this task had to do with the time lines and complexity of the database re-programming, and training of staff that was required to find these cases. In some counties, AFDC undertook additional steps since these efforts alone were not successful at picking up all Cal-Learn eligible teens.

A shared task between AFDC and GAIN in the implementation of Cal-Learn is the coordination of procedures for awarding bonuses and imposing sanctions. Originally it was planned that AFDC would take responsibility for awarding bonuses and imposing sanctions in all counties. Three of the four counties revised these plans, however, because their AFDC eligibility workers were unable to issue bonuses promptly. Since speed is considered essential to the reinforcing nature of the bonus, GAIN developed procedures for the issuance of bonuses that did not require any action by AFDC eligibility workers in these three counties. Developing timely

procedures between GAIN and AFDC for the imposition of Cal-Learn sanctions remained a challenge in two of the four counties during this reporting period.

Common issues for the AFLPs in every research county included expanding their capacity rapidly, serving a clientele that was no longer entirely voluntary in nature, implementing newly mandated reporting requirements, and strengthening relationships with the schools. Agencies varied in the degree to which they were willing to expand or modify operations to accommodate Cal-Learn. Some AFLP agencies made minimal changes to their operations while others took on more responsibility than was technically required of them. Prior to Cal-Learn, all four counties had AFLP agencies with a history and a system for providing services to pregnant and parenting teens. They all collected most of the same information on their clients because they all shared the same state-mandated database system (Lodestar) and its attendant data forms.

The Lodestar system, which had been set up primarily to collect health status, risk factors, and baby's health concerns, was modified in the summer of 1995 to collect additional school information on Report Card Outcome and Education forms. The Report Card Outcome Form tracks report card submittals, bonuses and sanctions, and is completed each time a report card is due. The Education Form captures the clients report card schedule and specific information about the client's schooling. This form is filled out whenever the client undergoes a change in education status, whereas, previously these changes were only noted at six-month intervals. The new version of Lodestar was installed in the four counties by the fall of 1995. Later, a client contact tracking form was added to record the frequency of contact with case managers. Research counties were required to track client contacts beginning July 1996.

The burden of linking up with schools and gaining their cooperation has fallen primarily on the AFLP agencies. The AFLPs work with the schools to get Cal-Learn clients enrolled, which is no easy task because so many of them are academically behind and/or in need of costly remedial and supportive services. AFLPs often work with the schools to establish procedures for obtaining grades and attendance information on Cal-Learn students. The procedures adopted for working with the schools vary not only from county to county, but from school to school.

Appendix D compares the four research counties with regard to Cal-Learn enrollment, bonuses and sanctions during fiscal year 95/96. The next section describes the more distinct variations between the Cal-Learn implementation processes in San Bernardino, Alameda, San Joaquin and Los Angeles counties.

## San Bernardino County

### AFDC/GAIN

In San Bernardino County there are nine district GAIN offices and twelve district Income Maintenance (AFDC) offices. Clients of the adult GAIN program are assigned to "employment specialists" (ES) who carry caseloads of about 125 clients each. GAIN decided to consolidate the administration of the entire county's Cal-Learn cases at one GAIN office in the City of San Bernardino. They also decided not to assign ES staff to the Cal-Learn teens, but rather to hire lower level GAIN technicians to fulfill GAIN's role in the operation of the Cal-Learn program. From August 1994 until May 1995 there was just one tech for the program. During this period the total Cal-Learn caseload grew to over 850 cases and a backlog developed in the processing of new cases into the program. In May 1995, GAIN hired two new technicians to help relieve the workload, however, one left after just 6 weeks on the job. It was not until August 1995, when a third and fourth technician were hired, that the county was able to catch up on the backlog in processing cases. By that time the total Cal-Learn caseload had reached approximately 1200 cases (see Appendix E). In May 1996, two additional technicians were hired, allowing all technicians to carry what was considered to be a "reasonable" caseload of about 200 cases each. The last round of hiring was followed by new and stricter reviews of technicians' work to assure that all actions required on cases are completed, and that these are completed within the appropriate time frame.

The Cal-Learn County Plan was passed by the San Bernardino Board of Supervisors in June 1994. GAIN began enrolling Cal-Learn eligible teens referred to them by the AFLP from their existing caseload beginning in September 1994. This process was completed during the first 3 months of the program's operation. Once clients previously known to AFLP and GAIN were registered into the program, the county then began registering new Cal-Learn referrals from AFDC.

San Bernardino had planned to identify Cal-Learn eligible cases through a process of adding teen parent identifier codes to the AFDC database. This would allow Cal-Learn teens to be flagged electronically. The re-programming of the county's AFDC computer system took place over the summer of 1994. Even after the AFDC system was modified, however, eligibility workers (EWs) had to learn the new codes, review their cases and enter new codes where appropriate. In San Bernardino, data entry staff actually enter all information into the AFDC database from paper forms filled out by EWs. Since all cases are only routinely reviewed once a year, it was expected to take a full year for all cases to have the new codes entered. To prevent this delay in finding Cal-Learn teens, GAIN requested that EWs manually review their cases in search of teens who might meet Cal-Learn eligibility criteria. AFDC also sent out 1400 "self appraisal forms" to cases where both a teen and a child under the age of three was part of the case. This method produced few eligible referrals, however.

The variation in the rate of referral to Cal-Learn from the 12 different AFDC offices in San Bernardino suggests that some EWs remain unfamiliar with the Cal-Learn program, and that all

eligible teens may not be referred to the program. GAIN has relied on paper referrals from EWs rather than computer codes in the system as the primary means of identifying referrals for Cal-Learn during this reporting period. There is some incentive for EWs to find Cal-Learn cases, because they lighten their own caseload by transferring Cal-Learn cases to specialized eligibility workers. Cal-Learn cases not assigned to one of the research conditions are transferred to the GAIN EW in the local AFDC office.

GAIN technicians in San Bernardino are responsible for screening referrals sent to them by AFDC to ensure that they are indeed Cal-Learn eligible and for entering clients into the Cal-Learn Administrative System (CLAS) database. The technicians work directly at computer terminals utilizing the CLAS administrative database. This database is a modified version of GEMS, the GAIN database used in San Bernardino and several other counties for adult GAIN clients. CLAS enhanced GEMS by adding new screens into which technicians could enter report card schedules, grades information, and new program deferral categories. CLAS was developed specifically for San Bernardino by Synergy to keep Cal-Learn clients separate for cost analysis and research purposes. All data in the CLAS/GEMS system must be entered by hand since this system is not linked electronically to the county's AFDC database. Technicians have a "read only" authorization to the AFDC database which allows them to verify referrals' AFDC status and other conditions of eligibility before registering them into Cal-Learn. At the point of registration, teens are also assigned to a Cal-Learn research condition.

GAIN technicians rely on AFLP case managers to orient clients to the program, send and explain most of the official Cal-Learn notices of action, and help clients with their supportive services paperwork. Student report cards are sent to GAIN by the AFLP case managers, along with their recommendations for a bonus or a sanction. Although most communication between GAIN and AFLP occurs by mail, there is also telephone contact between GAIN technicians and AFLP case managers, usually with regard to paperwork or needed information. Cal-Learn clients without AFLP case managers due to their research group assignment (F and N research cases) are mailed all their official Cal-Learn notices by GAIN, but there are no other attempts by GAIN to contact these clients directly.

GAIN technicians are responsible for review and final approval of case manager recommendations for Cal-Learn bonuses and sanctions, and they are responsible for processing and authorizing GAIN child care and supportive services funding. Cal-Learn technicians are not supposed to "counsel" clients, but merely advise them regarding program regulations. In general, the only time that clients meet with GAIN staff is when and if they utilize child care or supportive services. In these instances there is always a face to face meeting between the GAIN technician, the client and the child care provider. If clients have questions unrelated to payment issues they are generally referred to AFLP case managers for answers to these.

Cal-Learn bonuses and sanctions are processed by AFDC EWs after the GAIN technician has reviewed the student's report card and forwarded paperwork to AFDC authorizing either a bonus or sanction. Bonuses began to be issued in the county in February 1995 and sanctions began in April 1995. By the end of this reporting period, bonuses were typically being issued by AFDC

10 days after their authorization by GAIN, while sanctions were imposed one to two months after their authorization. GAIN technicians record a numeric grade point average (GPA) in the CLAS system for students eligible to receive a bonus or sanction. No GPA is entered in CLAS for students who, because of their research group assignment, are ineligible for bonuses and sanctions. During this report period, GAIN technicians have most often relied on the AFLP case managers to keep track of when report cards were due for teens assigned to case managers. GAIN did not begin to monitor whether case managers were turning in bonus and sanction recommendations according to the due dates in CLAS until 1996.

GAIN technicians maintain responsibility for the authorization of Cal-Learn supportive service payments. As has been the case in the other counties, utilization of supportive services by Cal-Learn teens in San Bernardino is lower than anticipated in the county's Cal-Learn plan. The low utilization rate has been attributed to a variety of factors associated with youth, including the greater availability of family members to provide child care, a lack of skills for complying with strict documentation requirements, and teens' frequent mobility. In San Bernardino, an additional factor to consider is their policy of "not disturbing" prior child care arrangements simply due to the availability of child care funding available through Cal-Learn.

### AFLP

*Agency and Expansion Issues.* The AFLP agency in San Bernardino is operated by the Perinatal and Adolescent Life Section of the San Bernardino Department of Public Health. The program is known as the Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting program and has been in operation since 1988. Prior to Cal-Learn, the program had slowly grown to serve about 380 Title V AFLP clients and employed ten case managers. The case managers were mostly registered nurses (7) and there were three M.S.W. credentialed social workers. In addition, the program employed three Health Service Assistants who provided supportive services to clients such as driving them to appointments. Program staff worked out of five Public Health buildings located throughout the county. The agency also sub-contracted case management of about 20 "hard to serve" clients to two, ethnically focused community-based organizations in the city of San Bernardino.

The AFLP agency began converting their Cal-Learn eligible clients over to Cal-Learn funding in September 1994. This procedure took several months and allowed the agency time to secure county Board of Supervisor's approval to hire the 20 new case managers, 5 new Health Service Assistants, 2 new clerical staff, and a new supervisory M.S.W. position which were needed to expand the program to serve the hundreds of new Cal-Learn referrals. The first new hires were made in November 1994, with additional staff coming on gradually as the caseload grew. Hiring was completed in the spring of 1995. AFLP staff are now stationed at a total of 7 different Public Health office locations, including a new and much larger main office in downtown San Bernardino. One half of the new case managers are registered nurses and the other half are social workers with either a Bachelor's or M.S.W. degree. The new case managers received training on the Cal-Learn program and were assigned small caseloads immediately afterward. In San Bernardino, case managers handle a mixture of AFLP Title V and Cal-Learn funded clients on their caseloads. During the first eight months of Cal-Learn implementation

caseloads remained generally low due to the difficulties in getting referrals from GAIN. Once GAIN caught up with the processing of referrals in the summer of 1995, caseloads increased to about 40 per case manager.

*Orientation, Intake and Client Contact.* Group orientation meetings for new Cal-Learn referrals are held once or twice each month at each AFLP office. Orientations are conducted by Health Service Assistants rather than case managers. At orientation, the HSA explains the rules of the Cal-Learn program and advises clients about what they can expect from case managers and GAIN. Clients who fail to attend their orientation appointment are contacted at home by the case manager assigned to them. After the initial contact is made, the case manager is expected to have a minimum of one client contact per month, although most case managers have much more frequent contact with their clients. Sometimes client contact is made by phone, although most often the case manager visits clients in their home or at school.

*Data Management Issues.* Case managers acquire information about clients on a variety of health, education and risk factors and they record this information in the Lodestar database. In San Bernardino, Lodestar is installed on a single personal computer located at the AFLP agency's main office. The upgraded version of Lodestar was installed in July 1995. During that month, the data were converted from the old Lodestar program to the new program. In December 1995, case managers began using the new Report Card Outcome and the Education forms. The Client Contact Tracking form was first used in May 1996.

*AFLP relationships with GAIN and AFDC.* Case managers communicate with GAIN via an all-purpose inter-office communication form called the "DPSS CL 700". This form is used to notify GAIN of clients' report card schedules, when official notices have been sent to clients, when clients have been oriented to the program or when there is some problem with the clients' participation in the program. AFLP sends copies of report cards to GAIN along with recommendations for whether clients should receive a bonus, a sanction, be granted "good cause" or be "held harmless". Since AFLP case managers also frequently assist clients with their GAIN supportive services paperwork, they often develop collaborative relationships with GAIN technicians to ease the flow of documentation for these clients. The AFLP case managers have no direct contact with AFDC workers, because AFDC workers are prohibited from discussing clients with any person outside of the welfare department.

*Schools.* Two priorities for case managers are to enroll their Cal-Learn clients in school and send report card schedules to GAIN as soon as possible after meeting with the client. To accomplish these tasks, AFLP case managers frequently advise clients who are not attending school about their educational options. The AFLP agency has strengthened its relationships with the schools since the implementation of Cal-Learn, although during this report period these relationships remained mostly informal ones, loosely structured by individual case managers at schools where their clients were enrolled.

Case managers report that there are limited school options for students who are over age 18 or behind in their academic credits. Returning to a comprehensive high school is usually not an

option for these students. Therefore, many, if not most Cal-Learn students, attend alternative programs such as continuation schools, GED preparation programs, or adult schools. Although it is a requirement that Cal-learn teens be enrolled in school “full-time”, what constitutes “full-time” is determined by the local school district. In fact, some “full-time” school programs only require two hours in school and eight hours of homework per week.

## Research

San Bernardino County was the first county to implement the Cal-Learn research design. Between November 1994 and June 1995 teens were randomized into one of four research conditions and are referred to as the "test cohort". This initial group of 490 teens was exposed to the research design before it was deployed in the other three research counties. Randomization for the "early cohort", which followed the test cohort, began in July 1995 with a target sample size of 700 teens. This number was reached before the program had been in operation for a full year, however, and researchers decided to continue randomizing after only a temporary suspension of the process during the months of May and June 1996.

GAIN workers are responsible for determining eligibility for randomization into the Cal-Learn research design according to the rules established by UC DATA and the CDSS Research Branch. This determination occurs simultaneous to making the determination of eligibility for the Cal-Learn program, which is done by AFDC in a centralized location for all research cases. San Bernardino defined "new to the Cal-Learn program" as either a first report of pregnancy or birth for a teen on someone else's AFDC case ("nested case"), or a pregnant/parenting teen opening her first case as the head of her own household, whether previously a teen parent on AFDC or not.

Data for the Cal-Learn evaluation are collected from the four automated databases: the AFDC, GAIN, Supportive Services, and AFLP/Lodestar. UC DATA received the first set of data files in March 1995. One drawback of the databases in San Bernardino is that none of the systems are linked electronically and therefore sharing information involves passing paper forms between multiple agencies and re-entering information by hand, leaving considerable room for data entry errors. Making the computer changes to network these systems, however, was deemed a low priority in terms of its relative costs and benefits.

The databases used by the county required re-programming to allow for the collection of variables needed for the evaluation. The county's AFDC database was re-programmed to allow for input of a teen parent indicator, and new warrant and budget file codes were added to signify payment of Cal-Learn bonuses and sanctions. The GAIN database, GEMS, was duplicated and enhanced to allow for the input of student report card schedules and grade point averages. This database is called CLAS and it contains data on only Cal-Learn teens. A second GAIN database, the Supportive Services database, is used to collect accounting information on the use of supportive services because CLAS does not hold this information. An additional database used for the Cal-Learn evaluation in San Bernardino is the Lodestar system used by the AFLP

programs to keep records on Cal-Learn case management. The version of Lodestar that was modified for the Cal-learn evaluation was installed in San Bernardino in July 1995.

Certain aspects of the bureaucratic implementation of the Cal-Learn program in San Bernardino have significant bearing on the interpretation of Cal-Learn administrative data. As noted earlier in the report, delays developed within GAIN in the processing of teens into the Cal-Learn program during the early implementation period. During this same period, the AFLP agency had employed many new case managers in anticipation of a great increase in referrals. To accommodate this increase, GAIN prioritized the processing of teens into the program who were assigned to the case managed research conditions. Case managed teens were generally processed into the program within 4-6 weeks, while the non-case managed teens usually waited about three months to be enrolled in the program and the research. This delayed their opportunities to participate in all aspects of Cal-Learn.

The way that data is collected and recorded by GAIN in the administrative databases also has some implications for its interpretation. School grades information, in particular, has been problematic. Many of the alternative educational programs do not issue letter grades from which a grade point average can be calculated. GAIN workers, however, are asked to enter a 2-digit GPA in the CLAS database. Technicians handled this situation by devising their own system for translating non-letter grades into 2-digit GPAs. Further, since only half of the research sample is eligible for bonuses and sanctions, GAIN only records GPA information for teens in two of the four research conditions. School attendance information in the administrative databases is even more limited. Although CLAS has the ability to record detailed attendance data, this is very time consuming and therefore is only done for teens utilizing GAIN child care funds. Since relatively few Cal-Learn teens utilize GAIN child care, there is little school attendance information available in CLAS.



## Alameda County

### AFDC/GAIN

The Alameda Social Services Agency (SSA) operates the county's AFDC program out of five offices spread throughout the county, while the GAIN program operates out of a separate, central office. The GAIN program was charged with primary responsibility for Cal-Learn, and its implementation tasks included planning, coordinating among agencies, issuing bonuses and sanctions, and administering supportive services. Of all these tasks, the biggest implementation hurdle has been coordinating with AFDC and the AFLPs to obtain the information it needs to operate the program.

Planning for Cal-Learn began early in 1994, when GAIN appointed one of its Program Specialists as the Cal-Learn Coordinator. The Coordinator drafted the Cal-Learn County Plan in conjunction with Alameda's two AFLPs over the Spring and Summer of 1994. Based on preliminary estimates of a Cal-Learn caseload of approximately 1,200 teen parents, GAIN and the other agencies developed staffing plans and negotiated contracts for case management and supportive services.

Alameda County started to implement Cal-Learn in September 1994, immediately following the Board of Supervisors' approval of the County Plan. The two existing GAIN Teen Parent Employment Counselors were assigned to Cal-Learn, along with a new Specialist Clerk. For the first year, they used the GAIN Information System (GIS) to operate the Cal-Learn program and had to do many Cal-Learn-specific tasks manually. The Employment Counselor's jobs changed significantly, since they no longer provided case management and instead focused on conducting orientations, administering supportive services, and issuing bonuses and sanctions.

To identify pregnant and parenting teens eligible for Cal-Learn, the County reprogrammed its AFDC database (called CDS) to add a teen parent identifier. In August 1994 and April 1995, the county conducted a massive manual review of the AFDC case files to identify Cal-Learn eligibles and enter this new teen parent code. At the same time, the SSA sent informing notices to all AFDC supervisors explaining the new teen parent identifiers in CDS. Eligibility Workers (EWs) were asked to check for teen parents as their cases came up for annual redetermination. GAIN also began screening for Cal-Learn eligibility, all new cases in which the head of household was under 19 years old.

Alameda's monthly Cal-Learn caseload reached a peak of 1,058 cases in June 1995, and then gradually declined to an average monthly caseload of 894 by July, 1996. It is not clear whether the number of eligible teens is dropping, or whether the SSA is still having trouble identifying Cal-Learn teens, especially nested teens. In order to meet union EW caseload restrictions, AFDC has been assigning an increasing number of cases to a central banking system. Since cases in this banking system are not assigned to a particular EW, they may not be tracked as closely as other cases. To address this issue, AFDC has repeatedly reminded workers to enter the teen parent identifier into the case information on CDS. Also, Cal-Learn staff in the GAIN

office review the AFDC caseload on a weekly basis to search for Cal-Learn eligible teens among the new AFDC recipients. GAIN assigned the task of screening and entering new Cal-Learn referrals into GIS to the Specialist Clerk. The clerk also sends the list of Cal-Learn referrals to the AFLP agencies as these teens are found.

During the first year of implementation, GAIN established a close working relationship with the two AFLP agencies. The three agencies conduct joint orientation sessions for new Cal-Learn clients, and are in constant communication about child care payments, report cards, and transportation subsidies. In addition, the administrators of the three agencies meet regularly to discuss ongoing issues and concerns.

In the first year of implementation, GAIN staff only administered supportive services for the clients of the smaller of Alameda's two AFLP agencies. However, in August 1995 the larger AFLP renegotiated its Cal-Learn contract to turn over the administration of all supportive services to GAIN. GAIN increased the number of Cal-Learn Employment Counselors from two to five to accommodate the increased workload associated with processing supportive services claims.

GAIN issued the first Cal-Learn bonuses in February 1995 and the first sanctions in April 1995. Over the next year, GAIN issued an average of 46 bonuses and 38 sanctions a month. The number of teens who receive neither a bonus or a sanction (because they have a D-average or "adequate progress") seems to be significant. Although the number of these recommendations is not tracked in either the GAIN or AFLP data system, GAIN workers have estimated that as many as 25 percent of the teens attending school may fall into this category. GAIN Employment Counselors reported that many of these teens seem to be enrolled in school programs that do not issue standard letter grades.

GAIN, not AFDC, processes both sanctions and bonuses. Generally, bonuses are issued one to three weeks after a report card is turned in, while deductions for sanctions can take up to several months. Processing sanctions takes longer than bonuses because they have to be deducted from the monthly grant and because all deductions for sanctions require a minimum ten-day notification period before they can be imposed. Moreover, SSA places a high priority on issuing bonuses promptly in order to enhance the impact of the incentive.

## AFLP

*Agency and Expansion Issues.* Alameda County's Adolescent Family Life Program is managed by two non-profits, the East Bay Perinatal Council (EBPC) and the Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center (TVHC). EBPC is a private, non-profit agency which began in the early 1980's as a network of perinatal providers concerned about the high rates of infant mortality in low-income neighborhoods of Oakland. It was one of the first agencies in the state to provide comprehensive case management services targeted specifically to pregnant and/or parenting teens. It had grown to an agency with a staff of over 80, serving a predominantly African-American clientele in the cities of Oakland and Richmond, and with a variety of programs

addressing the perinatal health care needs of women and families in the East Bay. Prior to the implementation of Cal-Learn, EBPC had about 700 teens in its Title V program, of which about a half were in Alameda County and half were in Contra Costa County.

TVHC began operating as a primary care health clinic in 1971, and in 1984 it opened a satellite clinic. Both clinics serve a largely (60-70%) Latino population in the southern portion of the county. The AFLP program is just one component of the TVHC, whose principal services are comprehensive primary health care. Prior to implementation of Cal-Learn, the AFLP program was staffed by 2 full time, MSW social workers, one of whom also served as its program director. There were 53 clients enrolled in the program, seven of whom were AFDC recipients.

In the past two years, the two agencies hired and trained staff, opened new offices, installed a new computer system, located and registered Cal-Learn clients, provided case management, and established procedures for collecting report cards and recommending bonuses and sanctions. Of all these tasks, locating clients and processing report cards have probably been the most challenging hurdles in implementing the new program.

The AFLPs began hiring and training staff for Cal-Learn after the official implementation date of September 1, 1994. EBPC hired 14 new case managers in the Fall of 1994. EBPC tried to keep its AFLP/Title V and Cal-Learn caseloads separate as much as possible, and the experienced case managers generally stayed with the AFL program. EBPC provided a week-long training program for its new case managers on AFLP case management standards and Cal-Learn paperwork requirements. TVHC added two case managers and mixed their Cal-Learn and Title V/AFLP caseloads. Over time, however, case managers began to specialize in either AFLP or Cal-Learn.

*Orientation, Intake and Client Contact.* During the first phase of program implementation, the AFLP's primary task was to find and enroll new clients into Cal-Learn. Case managers from both AFLPs went to all the orientation sessions conducted by GAIN in its Oakland office. However, since teen attendance at the group sessions was low, GAIN began referring repeat "no-shows" to the AFLPs in early 1995 in order to locate them and conduct individual orientations. Case managers searched for the teens by calling their homes, making home visits, checking with schools, and contacting other community agencies. Locating the teens can be difficult, especially if the GAIN client information is out of date, or only lists the address of a friend. However, the AFLPs have been successful at contacting most of the teens referred to them by GAIN. In those cases for which they are unable to locate the client, the AFLP is required to notify GAIN so they can begin the sanctioning process.

In response to declining caseloads in late 1995 and early 1996, one of the AFLPs began to increase their own outreach efforts for Cal-Learn clients, since low caseloads created funding and staffing problems. The EBPC generates a small but steady number of referrals from the local schools and its own service network. EBPC sends these potential clients to GAIN, where they are immediately screened for eligibility and randomized for the evaluation research.

Experienced AFLP staff reported that Cal-Learn case management was less intensive than what they had previously provided. While case managers met the AFLP standards, case management under Cal-Learn demands additional paperwork, involves non-voluntary clientele, and results in much less contact overall. Case managers reported interacting with many of their clients over the phone, and many of their face-to-face meetings involved filling out forms.

*AFLP Data Management Issues.* Alameda County AFLP case managers fill out the same Lodestar reporting forms that are used in the other research counties. They began using the newly introduced Report Card Outcome and Education forms in October and November 1995, and the new Client Contact Tracking Form in July, 1996. There are no other data systems for which they are responsible.

*AFLP Relationships with GAIN and AFDC.* During the early implementation of Cal-Learn, the two AFLP providers held combined monthly staff meetings, also attended by GAIN Cal-Learn staff, at which Cal-Learn operational issues were discussed, procedures were clarified and revised. These meetings were significant in that they allowed face-to-face communication between line staff from GAIN and AFLP agencies for the first time. The meetings served to reveal some of the organizational similarities and differences, and provided an opportunity for staff to confront and address their differences. The GAIN Cal-Learn coordinator and AFLP administrators continue to meet on a monthly basis. GAIN serves as the liaison between AFLP case managers and AFDC.

*Schools.* In addition to developing a close working relationship with GAIN, the AFLPs have also tried to establish formal relationships with the local school districts in order to effectively implement Cal-Learn. For example, the EBPC negotiated Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with many of the local school districts in its service area. These MOUs outline procedures for obtaining report cards directly from the school and gave case managers access (and sometimes office space) to the schools.

Even with these MOUs, many school administrators and teachers are unaware of Cal-Learn. District staff frequently failed to inform local school administrators about the MOUs, and they in turn often failed to inform their teaching and clerical staff. To cope with these communication gaps, case managers have established informal relationships with line staff in the local schools.

Case managers reported that collecting report card schedules, report cards, and other school information has been some of the most difficult aspects of implementing Cal-Learn. Local schools operate on different calendars, and often do not issue report card schedules at the beginning of the term. In addition, many teens fail to turn in their report cards, even when they could qualify for a bonus. Frequently, case managers take on the responsibility for getting report cards directly from the school or teacher. Case managers then send copies of the report cards along with their recommendations for a bonus or sanction to the GAIN Employment Counselors. According to the case managers, they tend not to get notices from GAIN when the

bonus or sanction is issued and therefore they did not have a good sense of how long the process takes.

In order to maintain some consistency in the face of a bewildering variety of report cards and progress evaluations, the AFLPs developed their own progress evaluation forms for Cal-Learn. These forms ask teachers to determine whether the student is currently passing, failing, or making adequate progress. The case managers use these evaluations to recommend bonuses, sanctions, or holding the teen harmless, respectively. Teachers have expressed ambivalence about these forms, however, since they already have their own progress reports and procedures. Furthermore, some teachers resent the fact that Cal-Learn uses their evaluations to impose financial rewards or penalties on their students.

Case managers reported that interpreting report cards without letter grades was difficult. Sometimes they consulted the teacher before making a decision, other times they simply made an educated guess. Case managers also reported using the "adequate progress" recommendation, which yields neither a bonus or a sanction, in ambiguous situations so as to warn the teen not doing well in school.

### Research

Data collection for the evaluation research was implemented in Alameda in August 1995. The CDS and GIS data systems were reprogrammed for Cal-Learn at this point, with new codes, ticklers, and procedures added to automate many of the processes Employment Counselors had been doing manually.

At that time, the Cal-Learn clerk began to randomize new Cal-Learn clients into the four different research conditions. Alameda's criteria for randomization deviates from the criteria used in the other counties in that clients whose children had been on AFDC prior to August 1, 1995 were excluded from the research. As that date receded further into the past, the proportion of randomized clients increased steadily. By June 1996, 280 clients had been randomized. Because cases are assigned to Employment Counselors alphabetically, each worker has cases in all 4 research conditions.

In October and November 1995 the Alameda AFLPs installed the new version of the Lodestar data system, reprogrammed to improve data collection for the evaluation project. The staff went through a one-day training program on the new system. AFLP managers reported continuing problems with the automated report card schedule in the first half of 1996. Case managers have also complained about the additional paperwork required by the new system. However, the AFLP directors reported being satisfied with the new system and thought that the new management reports were especially useful.

## San Joaquin County

### AFDC/GAIN

San Joaquin County is the smallest of the four counties included in the CWPDP study. The county operates both its GAIN and AFDC programs out of a single office building located in the county seat of Stockton. The county's Cal-Learn coordinator is the sole Program Assistant within the county's Employment and Training Division. This Division employs approximately 33 case-carrying "employment specialists" (ES) who carry caseloads of 200-260 clients each. During this report period the number of ES staff assigned to work with Cal-Learn cases increased from two to four.

When San Joaquin first implemented Cal-Learn in September 1994, they temporarily hired two ES workers to cover the Cal-Learn cases in order to more quickly implement the program. The temporary workers were replaced by three permanent and experienced ES staff in June 1995. A fourth ES position was added for Cal-Learn in January 1996. Cal-Learn ES workers specialize in handling Cal-Learn cases, although they sometimes also carry GAIN "youth" cases (under the age of 24). The Cal-Learn program underwent significant staffing changes in the spring of 1996 when both the Cal-Learn Coordinator and the Cal-Learn ES supervisor, both of whom had been with the program from its start, left their positions to take on new management responsibilities within the county's Human Services Agency.

The county began implementing Cal-Learn by phasing in clients of the former GAIN teen-parent program in September 1994, one month after the approval of the county's Cal-Learn Plan by the San Joaquin Board of Supervisors. Simultaneously, the county's AFLP agency began referring their clients who were thought to be on AFDC, to GAIN for registration into Cal-Learn. Despite their early start, the county had difficulty identifying eligible teens on the AFDC caseload for enrollment into Cal-Learn.

San Joaquin had planned for AFDC EWs to identify all Cal-Learn eligible clients and refer them to GAIN for enrollment into Cal-Learn. During 1994 and into 1995, however, the county was in the process of converting its AFDC computer system over to the new SAWS database. The conversion to SAWS was a major undertaking for the county and it required considerable time for EWs to learn the new SAWS system. When GAIN did not receive the number of Cal-Learn referrals from AFDC that it had anticipated, this was largely attributed to the distraction of EW attention onto the conversion to SAWS. Understanding that these issues would not be resolved soon, GAIN decided to try to find Cal-Learn cases on its own by assigning one of its workers to search for Cal-Learn eligible cases in the SAWS database, using a computer generated list of "potentially" Cal-Learn eligible cases as a guide. Problems persisted, however, since not all of the AFDC cases had yet been converted to SAWS, and the information in SAWS is not always current or accurate. GAIN and EW staff have reported that occasionally relationship codes entered into SAWS, (i.e., mother, grandmother, etc.), are outdated, missing or inaccurate. Efforts by GAIN to find Cal-Learn eligible teens combined with an increased awareness by AFDC staff of Cal-Learn have resulted in a gradual increase in referrals to the program.

Another major obstacle remained, however, since the county's AFLP agency was not able to hire new staff to handle all of the new referrals at the same rate of speed that GAIN was able to generate them. As late as June 1995, 34% of the cases identified as Cal-Learn eligible in the county remained in "deferral" status due to a shortage of case management staff.

GAIN assigned one ES to be primarily responsible for screening all referrals to ensure that they were truly Cal-Learn eligible prior to registering them for the program. To screen referrals, the GAIN ES checks the client's AFDC status in SAWS and checks the MEDS database to ensure that the client is not already part of the CWPDP "control" group. Beginning in July 1995, clients were assigned to Cal-Learn research conditions at the same point that they were registered into the Cal-Learn program. Initially, all Cal-Learn cases were assigned to ES workers alphabetically, by client's last name. In early 1996, however, GAIN began assigning all of the research sample cases to a single ES, and later in 1996, as the sample size grew, two of the four GAIN ES staff were carrying research clients. ES staff reported having very little personal contact with Cal-Learn clients since AFLP case managers provide the orientation to the program and thereafter answer most client questions. Clients who by virtue of their research group assignment were not assigned to case managers, received more attention from ES staff, including all of their official Cal-Learn notices. ES staff made no attempt to personally contact these clients. ES staff viewed their role principally as being the liaison between the AFLP agency and the county welfare department.

All ES staff in San Joaquin County work at computer terminals and utilize the CLAS administrative database, the same MIS system that is used by San Bernardino County. San Joaquin, however, does not use all of the CLAS data screens that are used by San Bernardino. In San Joaquin, CLAS is used to produce the statistics for the Stat-45, the Cal-Learn report that is sent to CDSS each month. It holds information such as when clients are enrolled into the program, their status with the AFLP, and the dates that Notices of Action have been sent to clients. CLAS is not used to keep track of when report cards are due, nor does it record GPAs and bonus information. These data are kept in paper case files at the ES worker's desk.

Procedures for the issuance of bonuses and the imposition of sanctions have undergone changes during this report period. Initially, AFDC EWs were issuing bonuses and imposing Cal-Learn sanctions upon the written request of the GAIN ES. The county began issuing bonuses to clients in February 1995, however the first sanctions did not begin to be imposed until August 1995. GAIN found that the length of time that it took for EWs to process bonuses and sanctions varied considerably, yet oftentimes the waiting period was unacceptably long. To streamline the process, GAIN began sending bonus authorization paperwork directly to the agency's Fiscal Department for payment beginning in late 1995. Since initiating this procedure, bonuses have been issued promptly; usually within a week or two after their authorization by GAIN. In San Joaquin, all bonus authorizations must be progressively approved by the AFLP case manager, the ES worker, the ES supervisor, and finally the GAIN Program Manager. The GAIN Program Manager began insisting on signing off on all Cal-Learn bonuses personally after disagreements with regard to how some report cards were being interpreted for students enrolled in non-traditional educational programs.

Cal-Learn sanction procedures have also undergone changes in response to the delays in processing at AFDC. Originally, ES staff were sending sanction authorizations to AFDC EWs once they had received a sanction recommendation from the AFLP case manager. There were delays in EWs processing sanctions, however, attributed to EW workload issues, confounded by the conversion to SAWS and some confusion on the part of EWs regarding how to process Cal-Learn sanctions differently from regular GAIN sanctions. In April 1996, San Joaquin hired a worker for the sole purpose of processing GAIN and Cal-Learn sanctions. By this time some Cal-Learn clients had many months of sanctions pending against them. Since the adoption of the new sanctioning procedures, however, AFDC has been recouping old sanctions, and new Cal-Learn sanctions are applied within a month or two of their authorization. Sanctions may be imposed without the sign off of the GAIN Program Manager. The vast majority of Cal-Learn sanctions are imposed for non-receipt of report cards rather than for poor grades.

As is the case in the other counties studied, the use of child care and supportive services by Cal-Learn clients is lower than expected. GAIN provided training, and all the forms clients needed to apply for supportive services, to the AFLP agency so that case managers could help clients with this paperwork. AFLP sends the completed paperwork to GAIN for processing applications and child care payments. The GAIN ES staff, therefore, only work directly with non-case managed teens. Processing the Cal-Learn child care forms is one of the more time consuming tasks according to GAIN staff. They report that due to the additional paperwork required by Cal-Learn, they are only able to process about three child care payments per day for Cal-Learn teens compared with about 20 per day for adults utilizing GAIN child care funds. Processing transportation (usually bus passes) and ancillary service payment authorizations is a much less cumbersome process for GAIN ES staff. These authorizations can generally be approved over the telephone and the paperwork can be processed within a day or two.

### AFLP

*Agency and Expansion Issues.* The AFLP program in San Joaquin has been operated by the county's Public Health Services Department since 1985. During this report period the program underwent substantial expansion. Prior to the implementation of Cal-Learn, and up until January 1995, the AFLP program employed three R.N. case managers and only served clients within the Stockton city limits. Between January and June 1995 the program hired 10 new case managers and expanded its geographic boundaries to serve clients throughout San Joaquin County. The case managers in this county have mixed caseloads of both Cal-Learn and Title V funded clients.

To accommodate the increasing Cal-Learn caseload the AFLP agency had intended to hire only master's level social workers and registered nurses to be Cal-Learn case managers. They had difficulty recruiting applicants with these qualifications, which when combined with a somewhat cumbersome Civil Service hiring process caused delays in the hiring of sufficient staff to accommodate all referrals to the program. Throughout most of 1995 Cal-Learn referrals were routinely deferred from participating in Cal-Learn due to the lack of availability of case management services. Up to 34% of the clients identified for participation in the program were



deferred during this period. The AFLP agency eventually was able to hire case managers with other related professional degrees and experience working with teens, although deferrals continued until November 1995. By the summer of 1996, the agency had lost some of its case management staff, and was once again deferring teens due to the lack of case managers. This second round of Cal-Learn deferrals, however, was handled somewhat differently than the first. The later "deferrals" were oriented to the program by the AFLP agency, began their 90-day participation period toward receipt of a bonus or sanction, but they did not actually receive case management services until space had become available on a case manager's caseload (up to three months after their orientation).

*Orientation, Intake and Client Contact.* Group orientation meetings for new referrals were held monthly at the AFLP's Stockton office. Clients who did not attend orientation meetings (more than ½ of all referrals) received an individual orientation to Cal-Learn by their case manager. Case managers spend considerable amounts of their time out of the office meeting with clients in their homes, at schools and other public facilities. They are monitored to ensure compliance with AFLP standards of practice.

*Data Management Issues.* AFLP case managers in San Joaquin utilize the same Lodestar reporting forms as AFLP agencies in the other research counties. They began using the newly introduced Report Card Outcome and Education forms in September 1995, and the new client contact tracking forms in July, 1996. They do not fill out forms for any other data systems.

*AFLP Relationships with GAIN and AFDC.* Over time, the AFLP has developed a close working relationship with GAIN. The AFLP Coordinator, who began in her position concurrently with the start up of Cal-Learn, and the GAIN Cal-Learn Coordinator, worked together to develop new procedures and forms to facilitate the flow of information between the two agencies. GAIN provided training and all the necessary forms for obtaining Cal-Learn supportive services to the AFLP case managers so that they would be able to help clients apply for and obtain these services. Case managers and GAIN workers have also communicated frequently by telephone about the status of individual cases.

*Schools.* The AFLP Coordinator was instrumental in networking with the schools and other social service agencies to make them more aware of the Cal-Learn program. In addition the AFLP assigned some case managers to serve as liaisons to specific schools with large Cal-Learn enrollments. Through their outreach to the schools the AFLP has helped to increase referrals to the Cal-Learn program, and they have provided GAIN with needed information about school calendars and student report card schedules. To aide in the collection and interpretation of report cards for Cal-Learn students, the AFLP also developed a simplified report card form, which teachers are asked to fill out for their Cal-Learn students. This form was developed after there had been some difficulties interpreting the variety of reporting mechanisms normally used by the schools to evaluate student performance, and since it was found that some alternative schools do not issue report cards to their students. The Cal-Learn report card form has just three categories of achievement which coincide with the Cal-Learn bonus, sanction and held harmless conditions. The form has been accepted by most schools, and it has largely relieved GAIN and

AFLP case managers of the burden of interpreting and determining recommendations for Cal-Learn bonuses or sanctions.

### Research

San Joaquin GAIN began to randomize teens into the Cal-Learn research design in September 1995. Teens who show on the MEDS database as already part of the CWPDP research are not randomized, although San Joaquin experienced difficulties with some cases where CWPDP research codes did not appear in MEDS until after clients had been assigned to Cal-Learn research conditions. When this was discovered these cases were pulled from the Cal-Learn research sample.

Data for the Cal-Learn evaluation is collected from four automated databases: SAWS, GEMS/CLAS, the GAIN Supportive Services database and Lodestar. These systems were slightly amended for Cal-Learn research purposes. SAWS was programmed to allow for the input of computer codes to flag Cal-Learn teens, bonuses, and sanctions in 1995. Due to the gradual conversion of cases to SAWS, however, these codes were not consistently used on all Cal-Learn cases until the end of 1995. CLAS was developed as a sub-system of GEMS by Synergy for San Bernardino County, specifically for Cal-Learn reporting purposes. San Bernardino shared the new system with San Joaquin where it was implemented even before documentation or manuals had been created. In an effort to advance the consistency of the data collected by CLAS between San Bernardino and San Joaquin, UC DATA coordinated an effort to create a CLAS User's Manual over the summer of 1995. Consistent use of CLAS between San Joaquin and San Bernardino, however, was never fully achieved, and some of the information available in CLAS in San Bernardino is not available in CLAS in San Joaquin. The GAIN Supportive Services database is used to report accounting information on the use of child care, transportation and ancillary expenses. The fourth automated database used for the evaluation is the Lodestar system. The new version of Lodestar was installed in San Joaquin in August 1995, and the new Cal-Learn forms began to be used in September 1995.

The implementation of new procedures for handling teens deferred from the Cal-Learn program due to a lack of availability of case management services has implications for interpretation of the administrative data on these clients. These clients are actually in something of a "semi-deferred" program status, since although they are on a waiting list for receipt of case management services, they are eligible for other aspects of the program, including bonuses and sanctions. While these clients may be assigned to a case management research condition, these clients may actually not have these services available to them.

## Los Angeles County

### AFDC/GAIN

In Los Angeles County, GAIN and AFDC operate as separate programs and are administered in different locations. L.A.'s GAIN division has about 600 staff assigned to six regional offices, each one covering a different geographic area of the county. In all but one of GAIN's regional offices, three to five case workers, centralized in one unit, work exclusively with Cal-Learn cases (Antelope Valley only has one GAIN Cal-Learn case worker, due to the small size of the caseload in that region). These GAIN case workers carry caseloads of up to 400 clients. Their responsibilities include approving exemptions and deferrals, administering bonuses and sanctions, and authorizing supportive service payments. There is one full-time GAIN central staff person assigned to coordinate the Cal-Learn program. There are 23 Bureau of Assistance Payments (BAP) offices, which administer L.A. County's AFDC program. BAP has 19 GAIN Service Coordinators (GSCs) who work as AFDC liaisons to GAIN.

The Cal-Learn plan was approved by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in August 1994. However, the implementation process was stalled for several months. The delay was due to several factors, including the wait for State start-up funds and negotiations on AFLP case load size. In addition to complex changes at the County GAIN office, implementation of Cal-Learn required that AFLPs expand significantly, and the costs of acquiring new office space and staff were considerable. The program began in March 1995, approximately six months after the other counties in the evaluation research. Program phase-in was delayed further in the Antelope Valley region because the agency initially contracted to provide case management services to clients in that area failed to implement a Cal-Learn Program. An existing AFLP agreed to take on the Antelope Valley area, and GAIN began assigning teens to that AFLP in April, 1996.

Identification of Cal-Learn participants in L.A. County requires the coordination of the different computer information systems used by GAIN, AFDC and the AFLPs. Both the Integrated Benefit Payment System (IBPS) used by BAP, and the GAIN Employment and Activity Reporting System (GEARS) used by GAIN and the AFLPs were modified to accommodate the Cal-Learn program. Re-programming of the IBPS system was required to enable it to identify potentially Cal-Learn eligible teens and to deduct Cal-Learn sanctions. GEARS was altered to include, among other things, report card schedules, eligibility flags, research codes and information on bonuses and sanctions. Re-programming efforts are an on-going process; Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) Computer Services staff have initiated over 115 requests to modify GEARS to meet Cal-Learn's program mandates and research needs, and more are anticipated. Re-programming of GEARS is done under contract by EDS, an independent computer programming company.

GEARS is the primary computer information system used to track information on GAIN clients. GEARS data entry is split between the GAIN Regional staff and the AFLPs as a way of facilitating communication about Cal-Learn participants. Unlike the other counties, L.A.'s GAIN case workers are only responsible for registering non-case managed research clients into

the program. Otherwise, the AFLPs screen potential program and research clients and register them. Thus, GEARS computer terminals were installed in each AFLP agency. GAIN maintains information on clients' addresses, Cal-Learn status and supportive services, and AFLPs enter AFLP file numbers, orientation dates, report card schedules, bonus and sanction recommendations and grades.

Even with all of the computer re-programming, Los Angeles County has had difficulty generating an accurate Cal-Learn client referral list for the AFLPs to use in enrolling teens into the program. Original programming logic for identifying Cal-Learn eligible teens failed to pick up nested teens. When the program was modified to rectify this problem, it instead started incorrectly identifying siblings as potentially Cal-Learn eligibles, including young boys. GAIN instructed the AFLPs to check the cases on GEARS in order to screen out ineligible referrals. The AFLPs were asked to return the annotated, corrected lists to GAIN. While this process was an extra step for AFLPs, when GAIN asked the AFLPs if they wanted to return to the earlier procedure, which had fewer mistakes but also missed many of the nested teens, the AFLPs declined, stating that they would rather check teens' case information in GEARS and capture as many eligible teens as possible.

The initial projected number of Cal-Learn eligibles in L.A. County was an overestimate. Inflated caseload estimates were reinforced by delays in deregistering clients who had sanctions pending. These clients continued to appear as active in GEARS until all sanctions had been deducted, even if they were no longer in the program.

GAIN began issuing Cal-Learn bonuses in July 1995. However, Los Angeles County did not begin applying Cal-Learn sanctions until June 1996, more than fifteen months after the program began. This delay was due to difficulties in re-programming IBPS, and it affected program issues as well as Cal-Learn enrollment counts. For example, a pending sanction locked up a teen's record in GEARS, forcing GAIN case workers to manually override the system in order to approve supportive services or allow the entry of subsequent report card outcomes and bonus and sanction recommendations. Again, with the issuance of sanctions, this problem was resolved. Recommendations for bonuses or sanctions are made by AFLP case managers via GEARS. GAIN workers must approve the recommendations. Bonuses are paid by GAIN through GEARS as a separate check to the Assistance Unit, while sanctions are deducted by the BAP office from the Assistance Unit's monthly welfare check.

GAIN case workers, in addition to approving bonuses, sanctions, exemptions and deferrals, handle Cal-Learn participant status issues, such as transfers within and out of the county, GEARS corrections, and supportive services requests. AFLP case managers assist participants in completing requests for supportive services, and forward these to GAIN for approval. Some GAIN managers hold weekly office hours at AFLP sites. These visits have helped streamline data processing, reduce mistakes and improve relationships between the agencies. In addition, the county GAIN division holds bi-monthly Cal-Learn meetings to facilitate dissemination of information about the program, county policies and issues, as well as communication between

the GAIN offices and the AFLPs. All of the AFLPs and GAIN regional offices are represented at these meetings, and recently BAP's GAIN Coordinators have begun attending as well.

### AFLP

Los Angeles County operates the largest Cal-Learn program in California. As such, it also has the most AFLP agencies providing case management services to Cal-Learn teens. In the county there are five AFLP agencies operating in 16 sites.

*Agencies and Expansion Issues.* ALTAMED HEALTH SERVICES CORPORATION. Altamed is a not-for-profit agency providing various health and social services, such as day care for senior citizens, health clinics in low-income communities, AIDS, chemical dependency and long-term care case management, community education and teen parent services. Altamed serves 250 AFLP clients and around 1,200 Cal-Learn clients. In order to meet the demands of the Cal-Learn program, Altamed expanded their teen parent program from one to five locations. They also increased their staff in this program from seven to fifty. Altamed provides both AFLP/Title V teen parent and Cal-Learn program services at their East Los Angeles site, but operates only Cal-Learn services in their other four locations.

EL NIDO FAMILY SERVICES. El Nido Family Center has been in operation since 1925. They work in four areas: teen parents, child abuse counseling and prevention, delinquency prevention, and parenting education. In the teen parent programs, El Nido serves 2,300 Cal-Learn and 800 AFLP/Title V clients. Five scattered sites provide Cal-Learn services across an area covering well over fifty miles. El Nido agreed to open its fifth site after Antelope Valley Community College District, which had the original contract for Cal-Learn services in the Lancaster/Palmdale area, failed to implement a Cal-Learn program. El Nido operates both AFLP/Title V and Cal-Learn programs in three locations, and Cal-Learn services only in the remaining two locations. El Nido staff grew from 90 staff to 190 with Cal-Learn. They also reduced the ratio of case managers to supervisors from 10:1 to 8:1, and hired a full time clinical coordinator, a quality assurance analyst, and a training coordinator.

FOOTHILL FAMILY SERVICES. Foothill Family Services has served the Pasadena area for seventy years. The agency has always had a focus on providing case management to teenagers. They offer clinical services and teen services in the areas of domestic violence, and abuse prevention and intervention. Foothill serves 200 AFLP clients and 1000 Cal-Learn clients. Before March 1, 1995, Foothill had six case managers and one assistant director. Now they have 36 case managers, four supervisors, five administrative support staff, and a director. Originally they had planned to expand to 56 case managers, but Cal-Learn enrollment has been lower than projected. Foothill recently opened a second case management site.

PROJECT NATEEN. Project NATEEN is a part of Los Angeles Children's Hospital. The hospital has a long history of involvement in adolescent health and well-being projects. They began providing case management services for at-risk teens in the early 1980s. Prior to Cal-Learn, NATEEN served 138 AFLP Clients. Now they work with 578 Cal-Learn teens in

addition to the AFLP clients. Expansion to accommodate Cal-Learn was complicated by the hiring practices of the hospital's bureaucracy. When Cal-Learn was implemented, NATEEN expanded from five case managers to seventeen. However, during the spring of 1996 there was major staff turnover. The Cal-Learn program coordinator left, as did one case manager supervisor and seven case managers.

**YOUTH AND FAMILY CENTERS.** Youth and Family Centers (YFC) has provided services to teenagers since 1991 when it ran a GAIN Teen Parent Program, and it also operated a SAPID program prior to the implementation of Cal-Learn. Start-up for the Cal-Learn program was difficult. They had to find additional office space, train staff, and start working with the teens in the same month. Their caseload of 300 AFLP clients increased to include 1400 Cal-Learn clients. They expanded from 38 to 70 employees, and recently hired a new executive director and reorganized their administrative structure.

All of the AFLPs began bringing Cal-Learn clients on board in March, 1995, although most had not completed their case manager hiring and training. Many case managers across the agencies are recent college graduates with degrees in social welfare, sociology, psychology or other social science backgrounds. The agencies tried to hire case managers whose ethnic and social backgrounds reflected that of their clients; in much of Los Angeles this has included bilingual case managers. Case manager training varies widely across agencies, as does the speed with which caseloads get assigned.

*Orientation, Intake, and Client Contact.* Each AFLP receives a monthly list of Potential Cal-Learn Eligibles from GAIN, which they check against the GEARS system as they assign teens to case managers. All AFLPs in Los Angeles utilize the GEARS system to send out forms notifying teens of their scheduled orientation. Orientations generally take place two weeks after the case managers receive the client referral. Although most AFLPs schedule group orientations initially, case managers across sites report that fewer than half of the clients invited will show up for the first orientation appointment. At this point, case managers try calling, writing and making home visits to schedule and conduct orientations. Orientations generally provide an introduction to Cal-Learn services and program requirements. They are conducted by case managers in most agencies. After orientation, case managers schedule appointments to do client assessments and intakes within thirty days of the orientation. Intakes are done as home visits. All of the agencies adhere to the Cal-Learn Regulations regarding AFLP Standards of Practice as a minimum level of contact with clients. However, the level of contact varies by client need, and the locations where meetings occur differ by agency policy and client preference.

*Data Management Issues.* All of the AFLPs have at least two data systems, Lodestar and GEARS. Lodestar is used to track client health and school status information, and case management practices. GEARS tracks information related to Cal-Learn eligibility and payments, including registration dates and orientation schedules, report card schedules, supportive services payments and bonus payment and sanction recommendations. Three of the five agencies have internal MIS systems in addition to GEARS and Lodestar, and case managers complained about duplicate paperwork. To reduce some duplication, Los Angeles County

AFLPs are not required to enter information into Lodestar if it is also recorded in GEARS; e.g., report card schedules and grades. In addition, some of the AFLPs have combined their Lodestar and GEARS forms.

The AFLPs had no experience with GEARS prior to Cal-Learn. All AFLP data entry staff reported that the GEARS training they received was inadequate. Data entry staff also noted that there are still numerous bugs in the system. There is now a GEARS Users Group, with representatives from all of the AFLPs and from GAIN. They meet on a regular basis to address GEARS problems and to develop standardized policies and procedures for data entry.

*AFLP Relationships with GAIN and AFDC.* The AFLPs and GAIN offices have worked hard to establish good working relationships. All of the AFLPs commented that their relationship with GAIN has improved in the past year. GAIN staff now hold weekly office hours at NATEEN and Youth and Family Centers, and some attend social events at AFLPs in addition to participating in business meetings. The bi-monthly Cal-Learn meetings and GEARS User Group meetings hosted by the GAIN division have also helped strengthen GAIN-AFLP relationships. Most AFLP interactions with GAIN are about child care authorization, bonuses, and sanctions or good cause determinations, client addresses, non-cooperative clients, and GEARS problems.

In contrast to the generally good comments about GAIN offices, AFLPs consistently complained about difficult interactions with AFDC Eligibility Workers (EWs). They expressed concern that AFDC Eligibility Workers have insufficient information about Cal-Learn. In addition, because the BAP offices are severely understaffed, and EWs do not handle individual cases, relationships are difficult to foster. Some AFLP agencies rely on GAIN staff to mediate between their case managers and the BAP offices. In other instances, the AFLPs have reached out to the BAP offices directly, by participating in meetings with EWs organized by GAIN region staff. However, BAP offices remain a source of frustration for L.A. County AFLPs.

*Schools.* Each of the AFLPs deals with numerous schools, and except for NATEEN, multiple districts. They report that relationships with schools and districts vary considerably, but overall they have improved. All of the Los Angeles County AFLPs have developed their own report card forms, which most of the schools use, and which GAIN accepts. This has helped address the lack of standardized reporting among the various independent study and alternative school programs. Several AFLPs that work with the Los Angeles Unified School District mentioned that the district's pregnant and parenting teen program staff have been very helpful in informing District schools about Cal-Learn.

The AFLPs all have schools at which their case managers hold weekly office hours or run support groups both for Cal-Learn teens and other pregnant and parenting teens. El Nido runs outreach programs in four San Fernando Valley high schools, and is in another 11 schools in the San Fernando Valley weekly. They are also in 30 schools in South Central Los Angeles weekly. The schools often call to request that they visit. NATEEN has case managers working with pregnant and parenting teen coordinators at four schools -- three large comprehensive high

schools and one Pregnant Minor Program. NATEEN runs support groups at these schools for pregnant and parenting teens. Altamed, Foothill and Youth and Family Centers likewise run programs at a number of different schools.

*Other Issues.* AFLPs expressed concern about a number of factors affecting their Cal-Learn clients and case managers' ability to either meet clients' needs or program requirements. A few of the more problematic are listed here. Public transportation is a problem in a number of communities. Some of the AFLPs were able to provide taxi vouchers for the teens for a while, courtesy of a program implemented after the civil disturbances in Los Angeles, but this program was being phased out. Altamed has a couple of vans which they use to transport teens to health clinics and other programs, but in other agencies, case managers often end up transporting the teens in their private cars. Teens served by El Nido's Antelope Valley office face transportation difficulties because the distances between schools, social services and residential areas are significant, and the public transit system is inadequate to meet the needs of students who must travel to out-of-home child care and then to school.

A shortage of appropriate child care facilities is a problem for many of the AFLPs. In particular, there is a shortage of infant care citywide. Even where there are slots available in licensed child care centers, many clients are reluctant to leave their children there. In fact, clients mostly use relatives for child care. They are afraid that their children will be abused or molested at licensed child care centers. Teens like on-site child care at their schools, but there are few on-site centers in Los Angeles area schools, and where they exist, child care slots are limited.



## Research

Los Angeles County began randomizing teens into the four research conditions in November, 1995. However, the first research teens were not oriented until December 1995, because the November CWD Cal-Learn referral list had too many errors, and AFLPs were asked not to use it until problems were resolved. L.A. is the only county in which the majority of Cal-Learn teens are *not* being put into randomized research conditions. Only one-third of the teens referred to GAIN are randomized into research groups using the last three rather than the last two digits of the teen's Social Security numbers.

Randomization is done by the Research and Statistics (R&S) division of GAIN. R&S analysts receive a computer-generated list of potentially Cal-Learn-eligible teens on a daily basis. R&S analysts assign teens to research cells and enter this information into GEARS. This process is generally completed in one day's time. The referral list sent to AFLPs includes codes which indicate that the client has been randomized into the research sample and the condition to which they have been assigned. Usually, there are no codes listed for non-research teens except in rare cases where a "U" has been manually entered.

The assignment of teens to research conditions has been problematic. Teens have been listed as non-research clients on the referral list sent by the CWD and then appeared as research clients in GEARS later in the month. This has resulted in AFLPs orienting research teens as regular clients without knowing that these clients were in one of the four research groups. For example, teens may have been assigned to the "case management/supportive services only" condition but are expecting to receive bonuses and sanctions because they were treated as if they were in the full program. Also, teens who had been in Cal-Learn as non-research "nested" clients receiving the full program have opened their own aid cases and then been assigned to a research condition when they should have been exempt from the research. Although the magnitude of these problems is unknown, every agency has experienced some difficulties involving the misclassification of Cal-Learn research teens. AFLPs have expressed frustration and concern for their clients who are being denied bonuses due to these problems.

Data collection for non-case managed teens is difficult. GAIN case workers note that these teens often don't initiate contact with GAIN, and the workers resist the impulse to do outreach to these teens in an effort to maintain the integrity of the research design. In addition, unless they are receiving supportive services, the teens, who are exempt from financial incentives and sanctions do not typically turn in school enrollment verification or report cards.

In order to implement the data collection for the evaluation, all of the case managers in L.A. County AFLPs received special training from UC DATA staff which included an introduction to the research, information on Lodestar data collection requirements for research clients, and handouts on the research and data collection in L.A. County. The UC DATA specialist hired to assist in the implementation and training on the new Lodestar system also conducted these

trainings and provided technical support for the AFLPs throughout the first nine months of the research implementation.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Summary

Cal-Learn is an ambitious and innovative program established by the California legislature to help pregnant and parenting teens overcome the barriers to achieving a high school diploma. The program places new administrative and programmatic demands on welfare, health, and education agencies as they work toward meeting this goal. During the first year and a half of the program's operation an infrastructure and procedures to implement this new program were put into place at the county level. Major challenges included the following:

- Interagency Coordination. Interagency linkages were established or strengthened between AFDC and GAIN, between GAIN and AFLP, and between AFLPs and the schools. Procedures for sharing information about clients between agencies evolved and improved over time as agencies became more familiar with their role in the implementation of Cal-Learn.
- Agency Reorganization and Expansion. In all four research counties, the GAIN programs reassigned staff to specialized units to coordinate Cal-Learn. AFLP agencies expanded over a short period of time to handle a significantly increased caseload. Financial and management pressures on agencies were considerable.
- Identifying pregnant and parenting teens. County welfare agencies had trouble finding parenting teens nested within existing AFDC households. New codes were programmed into AFDC databases to allow welfare agencies for the first time to identify teen parents on their caseloads. It took considerable time, however, for new codes to be routinely and consistently used.
- Data Collection. Meeting the demands of the impact evaluation required that each of the agencies modify data systems. New variables were required by the research, as well as new procedures for obtaining school information.
- Bonuses and Sanctions. Development of timely procedures for issuing Cal-Learn incentive bonuses and imposing program sanctions proved difficult for counties. The mechanisms now in place require that specialized staff in AFDC or GAIN, rather than generic eligibility workers, complete these particular tasks.
- Case Management. Cal-Learn requires that GAIN contract with AFLP agencies to provide case management services. The Cal-Learn program adopted the AFLP case management model, but added new responsibilities for data collection and increased emphasis on teens attending and completing school.
- Supportive Services. Use of child care and other supportive services by Cal-Learn clients is lower than expected across the research counties.

## Appendices

## Appendix A: Overview of the Cal-Learn Program<sup>3</sup>

- County welfare departments are required to implement the Cal-Learn Program for all pregnant and custodial teen parents under age 19, and receiving AFDC.
- The teen parent participates in Cal-Learn until a high school diploma or its equivalent is obtained or turns 19 years old.
- Supportive services necessary to enable the Cal-Learn participant to attend school regularly will be provided. These services include child care, transportation, and ancillary services.
- Teen parents may be exempted or deferred from the Cal-Learn Program only under specific circumstances, such as the unavailability of necessary services or a special need which affects school performance and which cannot be addressed. Cal-Learn deferrals are time-limited and the teen parent will continue to receive case management services during the deferral period.
- Exemption or deferral from Cal-Learn does not mean that the teen is exempt from attending school. All teens must attend school as required by Section 48200 of the California Education Code.
- All teens in Cal-Learn will receive case management services to assist the teen not only in obtaining their educational goals, but to address health issues for the teen and infant, parenting skills, and the safety and family issues involving the teen.
- Cal-Learn case management services must either be provided by Adolescent Family Life Program (AFLP) providers, or the services must conform to the standards of the Adolescent Family Life Program. Counties are required to contract for case management services with agencies that administer Adolescent Family Life Programs, unless:
  - AFLP is unavailable, not cost-effective or the county has an existing program and certain conditions are met.
- Counties which will be providing non-AFLP case management services will be required to submit additional information in their county plan which will be reviewed and approved by the Department of Health Services.
- Bonuses and sanctions are based on report cards and high school graduation. The bonus/sanction is limited to four times per year.
- A \$100 bonus is provided to the family if the participant maintains satisfactory progress. Satisfactory progress is defined as a grade point average of at least 2.0 (a C average)
- A \$100 sanction results from a participant failing to demonstrate adequate progress, either by failing to provide the report card or based on the report card grades. Adequate progress is defined as a grade point average of at least 1.0 (a D average).
- The sanction is applied to the family's aid, not to exceed \$50 in a single month.
- Cal-Learn participants receive a \$500 bonus for high school graduation or equivalency. The \$500 bonus is paid to the teen parent.
- For participants in non-graded programs the bonuses and sanctions will be given based on the school's determination of adequate or satisfactory progress.
- After the teen parent graduates from high school or obtains the equivalency, or turns 19, they become mandatory participants in GAIN.

---

<sup>3</sup>California Department of Social Services, AFLP/Cal-Learn Case Management Program Training packet, August 1994

## Appendix B: AFLP Standards of Practice<sup>4</sup>

1. The AFLP provider (the provider) fulfills administrative and management functions necessary to achieve the Mission and Goals of the AFLP and to meet the contractual requirements of the State Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Branch/AFLP.
2. AFLP provider agencies participate in network coordination in their communities for the provision of services to pregnant and parenting adolescents, their children, and their families.
3. The AFLP provider conducts outreach and case finding activities to identify adolescent women under 18 years of age who are pregnant or who have one or more children. The men who are their partners in pregnancy and parenting are recruited for the program so long as they are under 21 years of age.
4. The AFLP provider has a structured, interactive process to enroll clients into the program.
5. The AFLP case manager systematically collects, records, and analyzes client information to serve as a baseline for the development of the initial comprehensive Individual Service Plan (ISP).
6. The AFLP client will have an ISP developed after the initial assessment period, and that the ISP will be reviewed at least quarterly, and revised as needed.
7. The AFLP case manager, guided by the ISP, facilitates client access to and utilization of available public and public services.
8. Each client's progress is monitored on a monthly basis through client, collateral, and/or service provider contacts to determine the effectiveness of the service delivery and to assess progress toward individual goals and objectives.

---

<sup>4</sup>Source: California Department of Health Services, Maternal and Child Health Standards (1994). Each of the above Standards also has explicit criteria for evaluation of agency compliance.

### Appendix C: Cal-Learn Program Implementation Milestones

	<b>San Bernardino</b>	<b>Alameda</b>	<b>San Joaquin</b>	<b>Los Angeles</b>
Date teens first oriented to CL	Sept. 1994	Sept. 1994	Sept. 1994	March 1995
Date first bonuses issued	Feb. 1995	Feb. 1995	Feb. 1995	July 1995
Date first sanctions processed	April 1995	April 1995	Aug. 1995	June 1996
Date randomization began	Nov. 1994	Aug. 1995	Sept. 1995	Dec. 1995

## Appendix D: Cal-Learn Program Status, July 1995 - June 1996<sup>5</sup>

### ENROLLMENT BY COUNTY

	Alameda	Los Angeles	San Bernardino	San Joaquin	State
Number enrolled during period	752	10,393	1,341	739	41,232
Number discontinued during period	887	4,724	1,150	589	30,130
Reasons discontinued:					
Earned diploma or equivalent	137	530	141	100	4,687
No longer pregnant or custodial parent	13	13	4	15	492
Attained age 19	400	1,920	353	188	10,062
County transfer	69	45	124	29	1,708
Went off AFDC	171	1,444	497	215	9,881
Erroneously referred to Cal-Learn	97	772	31	42	3,300

### BONUSES AND SANCTIONS BY COUNTY

	Alameda	Los Angeles	San Bernardino	San Joaquin	State
Number of bonuses awarded	556	2,999	612	390	22,866
Number of \$100 bonuses	422	2,802	539	321	19,693
Number of \$500 bonuses	134	197	73	69	3,173
Number of sanctions imposed	922*	287	462	265	13,098
Sanctions for poor grades	51*	44	42	21	2,296
Sanctions for no report card	858*	239	416	242	10,402
Late report card w/o good cause	13	4	4	2	400
* Alameda County counted each \$100 sanction twice until June 1996.					

\* Source: California Department of Social Services *Monthly Status Report (Stat-45)*.

---

<sup>5</sup>The timeframe presented here corresponds to the period in which the impact evaluation was implemented, FY '95/96, as well as the first full year these data were available.



**Appendix E: Monthly Cal-Learn Caseloads - Research Counties, July 1995 to June 1996**

	Alameda	Los Angeles	San Bernardino	San Joaquin
July	984	5137	1069	387
Aug.	967	5731	1217	364
Sept.	952	5962	1265	411
Oct.	962	6359	1241	478
Nov.	927	7385	1283	626
Dec.	897	7905	1304	630
Jan.	882	8493	1412	663
Feb.	839	9044	1317	650
Mar.	797	9534	1445	620
Apr.	822	10096	1379	622
May	847	8024	1401	594
June	844	8098	1347	588
* Source: California Department of Social Services <i>Monthly Status Report (Stat 45)</i> , July 1995 - June 1996				