

**SIDE LETTER AGREEMENT BETWEEN  
Santa Clara County and SEIU 521  
DEBS CalSAWS Innovation Committee Overview**

Following the state mandated implementation of CalSAWS and recent changes in state law, the parties agree that we are in a learning period for both the County and staff within DEBS. As such, staff and leadership must collaboratively reassess DEBS workflows and review our existing operational structure/s to best meet the needs of our community and improve the experience and effectiveness of our staff. Input and ideas from representatives across all DEBS classifications and work areas will be critical to creating better work structures across DEBS. To that end, the County and SEIU 521 agree to create a joint committee effective upon ratification of this Agreement to collaboratively assess and explore new approaches to work within DEBS – the DEBS Innovation Committee.

***The guiding principles of this committee's work will be to ensure DEBS operates in a manner that best services the needs of families and individuals in our community who require benefits; to ensure that staff throughout DEBS have an appropriate and sustainable workload; to efficiently use our resources so we can maximize service to the community; and to most effectively utilize the CalSAWS technology required by the state.*** The committee will examine the effectiveness of our current operational model/s, investigate alternate operational model/s, review data, and create a program to implement the model/s that best advance our guiding principles.

SEIU shall appoint one (1) Intake Eligibility Worker for each division (five total: North County, General Assistance, South County, Generic, and Health Care Reform) and one (1) Continuing Eligibility Worker for each division (five total: North County, General Assistance, South County, Benefits Service Center, and Continuing Benefits Services) to serve as DEBS CalSAWS Innovation Committee members. The SEIU Committee members shall be granted paid release time to participate in DEBS CalSAWS Innovation Committee meetings. Should Innovation Committee members determine that the makeup of various sub-committees, data collection teams, workgroups etc. formed as part of this project better serve the guiding principles in a format or manner that differs from this side letter, the Committee shall be permitted to make such changes.

The Innovation Committee will be jointly selected and will be comprised of up to ten (10) members for the County and up to ten (10) members for the Union. The committee shall meet at least monthly and during work time and will have appropriate research and data to complete the work of the committee.

The Committee's work will progress in a two-phase process: the Design Phase followed by the Test Phase.

The County and SEIU shall jointly appoint three (3) Eligibility Workers to serve as DEBS Data Evaluators; they shall be granted up to four (4) hours a week of paid release time for work associated with this project. Innovation Committee members, DEBS

administrators, and DEBS Data Evaluators will work together to define criteria and requirements used to generate reports pulled from the data collected. Responsibilities of DEBS Data Evaluators may include but are not limited to reviewing reports, interviewing and/or observing Eligibility Workers, and reviewing and analyzing data needed to make recommendations.

Effective upon ratification of this MOA by the Board of Supervisors, continuing through all phases of the DEBS CalSAWS Innovation Committee project, the caseload standards stated in Appendix G Section 9.7 shall be suspended. Instead, for all DEBS units (offices with or without individual or unit-based caseload standards), the County shall implement workloads based on what can be reasonably completed in an average workday, taking into account factors listed in Appendix G Sections 9.4 and 9.5 and the time Eligibility Workers spend serving on the Innovation Committee, as DEBS Data Evaluators, and/or other ways workers participate in this project. During the DEBS Innovation Committee project, the County shall not issue a verbal or written counseling nor formal discipline to any Intake or Continuing Eligibility Workers based on the caseload standards stated in Appendix G Section 9.7.

### ***Design Phase***

During the Design Phase the committee and/or committee workgroups will be established to design and propose potential business operations model(s) for effective client service delivery under the CalSAWS structure. The design workgroups will consist of subject matter experts from different DEBS groups, which may include but is not limited to:

- Executives
- Managers
- Supervisors
- Intake Eligibility Workers
- Continuing Eligibility Workers
- Employment Counselors
- Clerical Workers
- Program

SEIU and Labor Relations will be included as necessary in the process of defining the parameters of the design and/or workgroups or committees. The design phase shall begin no later than forty-five (45) calendar days following ratification of the successor MOA to the 3/9/2020-6/25/2023 MOA and will continue for up to nine (9) months. The design team and committees will finalize criteria including the test parameters, benchmarks, and testing timeframes. The design phase will conclude when the business model/s to test have been determined and written policies and procedures for the Test Phase have been generated. At the conclusion of the Design Phase, the Test Phase will commence.

The County shall retain a third-party consultant who will review the data and make recommendations regarding existing practices, policies, and contract language relating to case load standards and the specifics of CalSAWS. The DEBS Evaluator shall be granted paid release time to confer directly with the third-party consultant regarding the DEBS Evaluators' reports, findings, and recommendations. The County shall instruct the

third-party consultant that a DEBS Evaluator is a subject matter expert whose input is essential for accomplishing a complete analysis of DEBS and CalSAWS.

***Test Phase***

The Test Phase will involve defined group/s of Intake and Continuing Eligibility Workers and Supervisor/Management teams, as determined in the design phase, implementing the proposed operational model/s for a set period of time. During the test phase there will be regular check-ins, which will include iterative fine tuning, gathering data, and recognizing best practices and lessons learned. The test phase will continue for up to one (1) year.

At the conclusion of the test phase, the DEBS business operational model/s, as determined through this program, will be documented, and implemented. To properly document the DEBS operational model/s implemented, either the County or SEIU shall be permitted a limited reopener of SSU Appendix G Article G.9 Section 9.7.

This Side Letter shall sunset on the expiration date of the successor MOA to the 3/9/2020-6/25/2023 MOA; this side letter shall then be removed and not included in a future MOA.

