

Digitizing the JobsNOW! Intake Process for Medi-Cal Clients in San Francisco

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Susie Forbath
Tim Lillis
Cedar Louis
Jud Neer
Anthony Vasquez

Executive Summary

This project proposes that the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Innovation (MOI) implement a new web form for clients joining San Francisco's JobsNOW! employment program — an initiative matching low-income residents with work opportunities to maintain their Medi-Cal coverage. This web form would replace the current paper-based intake process and automatically integrate with the California Statewide Automated Welfare System (CalSAWS) which supports all public assistance programs in the state. By digitizing the JobsNOW! process, the MOI could reduce manual data entry and free up staff capacity for direct client support. Moreover, this system would be a step toward streamlining Medi-Cal's data infrastructure which would remove administrative barriers to benefits.

Problem

JobsNOW!'s current paper intake process is not equipped to handle the anticipated surge in Medi-Cal clients seeking help meeting new federal work requirements. Under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, also known as H.R. 1, passed in 2025, Medi-Cal recipients must complete 80 hours per month of work, volunteering, or training and undergo enrollment assessments twice a year. Currently, just 6 Employment and Training Specialists (ETS) provide Medi-Cal intake sessions where they manually collect and verify information already stored in CalSAWS. This data entry process is time-consuming and error-prone. With roughly 20,000 Medi-Cal recipients expected to soon seek ETS assistance, the current intake system will create a bottleneck in benefits access.

To learn more about this project, visit aspempolicyacademy.org. Please note that all authors' opinions published here are their own. This publication does not reflect the views of the Aspen Policy Academy or the Aspen Institute.



Solution

This project recommends that the MOI replace JobsNow!'s paper intake form with a CalSAWS-integrated web form that automatically prepopulates verified client data at the start of each intake appointment. Using the same infrastructure that powers other state benefits, the system would pull basic client information and eliminate redundant data entry. ETS would review the prepopulated fields with clients, make any necessary corrections, and collect a digital signature. By reducing time spent on the manual data entry, this project's proposal would clear ETS time to focus on connecting clients with employment opportunities to maintain their Medi-Cal coverage.

“The proposed process improvement would reduce manual entry so that the ETS can focus on clients’ needs while the form is already populated with basic data.”

If you'd like to learn more, see the full project at aspempolicyacademy.org/project/sf-jobsnow-intake-2026.



About the Tech Executive Leadership Initiative (TELI)

This project was completed as part of TELI, a partnership between the Aspen Institute's Policy Academy and the Tech Talent Project. TELI is a multiweek skills-building initiative that prepares experienced technology leaders to engage effectively with public sector challenges. Learn more at aspempolicyacademy.org/teli.

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