

GAIN: THE BRIDGE TO INDEPENDENCE

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510 OVERVIEW

Appraisal is the first Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) activity. It is a one-on-one, one-hour interview with the GAIN Services Worker (GSW). During the appraisal process, the GSW provides participants with a thorough understanding of the GAIN program rules and regulations, time limits, work requirements and benefits of an employed lifestyle. The GSW must provide support in a kind and caring manner as they continually motivate participants and encourage them to become financially self-sufficient.

511 KEY POINTS

- CalWORKs recipients are required to participate in GAIN Welfare-to-Work (WTW) activities as a condition of eligibility for cash assistance.
- Calls are made to the participant prior to the Appraisal appointment in order to assist them with child care, transportation and any other barrier which would prevent attending the appointment.
- Participants are to be informed and regularly reminded of the benefits of early entry into the workforce and the career ladder concept of “a job, a better job, a career.”
- The weekly participation time in a WTW activity for participants in a one-parent household is 32 hours.
- The primary wage earner (the parent who had the greatest earnings in the past two years) in a two-parent household is expected to participate in a WTW activity at least 35 hours weekly. Both parents may contribute to the 35-hour weekly participation requirement. When both parents contribute to meeting the 35-hour weekly participation requirement, the parents may also split the 20-hour core participation requirement. However, one parent must participate with a minimum of 20 hours in core or non-core activities, (e.g., a split of 18 hours for one parent and 17 for the other is not permissible).
- Of the 32/35 weekly participation hours, at least 20 hours must be in core WTW activities; the remaining 12/15 required hours of participation may be in core or in non-core activities.
- Calls are made to participants who do not attend his/her appraisal appointment to encourage participation and address potential barriers.
- Participants who get a job may be eligible for continued support services (e.g., [child care](#), [transportation](#), [work-related expenses](#)) and/or [Post-Employment Services](#).

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512 POLICY

.1 Appraisal Scheduling/Case Assignment

CalWORKs participants are assigned to the appropriate GAIN Region using information passed over from LEADER to GEARS.

Once the GSW assignment and appraisal appointment time is set, GEARS centrally issues the GAIN Appraisal Appointment Letter, for English-speaking participants. The Appraisal appointments are staggered throughout the day and can continue beyond one hour, if needed, in order to meet the needs of the participant. Participants who speak languages other than English are scheduled for an appraisal via a manual scheduling process at the GAIN Region.

The GN 6053-1 is used to schedule the appraisal appointment. Mailed with the GN 6053-1, are the GN 6054-II, Important GAIN Information, GN 6059, GAIN Brochure, and “language blurb.” (The “language blurb” contains a notice written in threshold languages which directs the Non-English-speaking participant to contact his/her GSW, if he/she has any questions regarding the appraisal appointment). The appraisal appointment is scheduled 10 to 12 workdays from the issuance date of the GN 6053-1.

.11 Prior to the Appraisal Interview

The GSW reviews the case and calls the participant prior to the Appraisal appointment to discuss the need to have child care arrangements, in order to start JCO on the Monday following the Appraisal appointment. The GSW provides the telephone number of the Resource and Referral agency to the participant, as needed.

.12 Appraisal Interview

The appraisal interview is conducted by the GSW on an individual basis with the participant. During the interview, the GSW engages and communicates with the participant to identify what services the participant needs to be successful in GAIN. The GSWs appraisal activities include but may not be limited to:

- .121 Informing participants of the WTW regulatory provisions; e.g., rules, 60-month time limits, work requirements, rights and responsibilities, etc.
- .122 Creating a participant profile by gathering information such as employment history, skill level, educational background,

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- .123 supportive services needs that may be a barrier to employment, and any other information that would be beneficial in helping the participant move toward self-sufficiency. Much of the information needed for the participant profile can be obtained while interviewing the participant during the completion of the GEARS appraisal screens;
- .124 Assessing a participant's marketable/transferable skills, employment history, and educational level, to identify the preliminary employment goal. (The participant is to be informed that the preliminary employment goal is not binding, as a more thorough employment plan may be developed by a professional assessor later in the program).
- .125 Identifying participants enrolled in a Self-Initiated Program (SIP) and evaluating the SIP for continuation as a WTW activity;
- .126 Assessing the need for supportive services and authorizing payments, as appropriate;
- .127 Screening for specialized supportive services will be conducted during the Appraisal interview. Referring participants who self-declare to having a mental health, domestic violence, or substance abuse problem to a clinical assessor. Those participants are to bypass motivational training and other appraisal activities and get a direct referral to a clinical assessor.
- .128 Assigning the participant to the appropriate Welfare-to-Work activity and negotiating contracts. Orientation/Job Club/Assessment (JCO) activity is usually the first WTW activity following appraisal for most participants.
- .129 Informing the participant of available expungement of criminal record services.
- .130 Screening for Learning Disabilities will be offered to participants during the Appraisal interview. Participants may waive screening if they choose to do so. Participants who self-declare having a learning disability or have a positive screening result will be offered a referral to a Learning Disability Evaluation, if they opt to bypass JCO.

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Note: It is essential that participants have a clear understanding of their responsibilities to participate in WTW activities 32 or 35 hours of each week and that they are aware of the consequences of non-participation and/or failure to comply. Therefore, the GSW is to carefully review the certification section of the WTW 1, WTW 2, and Job Club Activity Agreement with the participant.

.2 Participants Assigned to Orientation within the Past 12 Months

Participants who have already completed an Orientation within the last 12 months do not need to complete Orientation again. If the participant needs to be referred to Job Club, the LACOE scheduling clerk needs to be informed that an appointment is needed for the participant to start on day two of JCO. Any time the GSW calls the LACOE scheduling clerk for an appointment, the participant's home, message, and/or cell telephone numbers should be provided. LACOE staff make advance telephone calls to remind participants of their appointments.

.21 Participants Assigned to Orientation Only

Participants may be assigned to Orientation as a stand-alone activity if they do not need to attend Job Club. Participants in a SIP, or a participant returning after a 12-month absence from GAIN, fall into this category. Orientation is to be opened by selecting the [ORI](#) component code. The LACOE scheduling clerk is to be informed that the participant is only being referred to Orientation.

.3 Participants Who are Working Part-Time

Participants who are working part-time (less than 32/35 hours per week) are assigned concurrently to Flex Job Club. Flex Job Club provides participants with a job search activity that is tailored around his/her current employment schedule. Participants seek a full-time job or an additional part-time job which will bring his/her employment hours to 32/35.

.4 Participants Not Assigned to Job Search Services

When one of the following conditions exists, the participant is not assigned to JCO after appraisal.

.41 The participant requests and qualifies for an exemption or has a good reason not to participate. ([See Chapter 400](#))

.42 The participant is enrolled in an approved Self-Initiated Program

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(SIP). ([See Chapter 600](#))

- .43 The participant is a custodial or pregnant parent who is age 19 and does not possess a high school diploma or General Education Degree (GED) and is not in a SIP or exempt for a reason other than having a child under age one. ([See Chapter 1800](#))
- .44 The participant is referred to a clinical assessor for a self-declared substance abuse, mental health or domestic violence problem. ([See Chapter 1200 - Section 1250](#) and [1260](#))
- .45 The participant has a [learning disability](#).

.5 Assignment Interview

.51 Participant Motivation

During the course of the appraisal interview, participants will be assigned to JCO. In discussing the JCO assignment, it is important to take the opportunity to build rapport to make a thorough assessment of the participant's barriers and/or goals which will enhance his/her participation in the GAIN program.

At this and at all other appointments during which an assignment to JCO is made, the participant is to be:

- .511 Reminded that CalWORKs is temporary help and that it is expected the participant will get a job;
- .512 Informed of the key ways a job will result in a much better lifestyle for the participant's family (e.g., increased income, heightened self-esteem, freedom from welfare, positive role model for children, etc.); and
- .513 Assured that even a minimum wage job is better than no job and that CalWORKs will continue to help the participant even after s/he obtains work to help the participant improve their skills, get a better job, and become financially self-sufficient.

.52 Providing Information

For assignments to JCO, the four-week course is briefly described and the participant is:

- .521 Told that s/he, in a group setting, will learn effective job finding skills and techniques from specialized, high-quality instructors;

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- .522 Advised that s/he should treat the JCO course as if it were actually a job by dressing appropriately, arriving early, being prepared to “work” from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. (or as the contracted services provider might otherwise require), and scheduling personal or family appointments so that they will not interrupt JCO participation; and
- .523 Motivated and encouraged through an interview that expresses optimism regarding the participant’s chances of finding a job during JCO. All focus is on making JCO work - its promise is not to be undermined by discussion of any future GAIN vocational training and/or educational activities.
- .524 Participants are encouraged to dress professionally as if they are going to an interview. Appropriate dress clothing includes:
 - (a) Women: Suit, skirt, blouse, or a dress or business dress pants with a blazer-type jacket and medium-low heeled pumps with closed toes.
 - (b) Men: Suit or sport coat, dress shirt, and business dress pants, tie, belt and dress shoes. ([See Job Club, Section 712.531](#))

Information concerning the Flex assignment and JCO is provided.

- .525 For instructions on referrals to JCO or Flex ([see Chapter 700, sections 712.52 and 712.53](#))

.6 Completion of Appraisal

The appraisal process is complete when one of the following conditions occurs:

- .61 The GN 6129, Job Club Activity Agreement is signed or, for SIPs, the WTW 1 and WTW 2 contracts are signed; or
- .62 The participant is exempted or excused from participation for a good reason.

Note: A noncompliance notice is issued for failure or refusal to show for a complete appraisal. ([See Chapter 1300](#))

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.7 Subsequent Appraisal

For a subsequent appraisal, the GSW determines the participant's past GAIN participation by reviewing GEARS screens, including but not limited to the MGRG, IAPP and IPCA screens. If the prior appraisal occurred less than 12 months from the subsequent appraisal appointment date, the GSW is to use the [Welfare-to-Work Flow Decision Chart](#) in Chapter 300 and consider the participant's past GAIN history/participation to determine which WtW activity will be appropriate.

.71 Reappraisal

The purpose of reappraisal is to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances, e.g., a decline in the labor market or the presence of a previously unidentified or undeclared barrier that prevents the participant from obtaining employment in accordance with his/her WtW plan.

A participant must be referred within one workday to vocational assessment for a reassessment when he/she completes all agreed upon WtW activities and does not get a job.

When additional GAIN services are required to assist the participant in obtaining employment, the WtW plan is amended and a supportive services evaluation is done.

.711 Supportive Services

Participants are informed of the supportive services that are available to facilitate participation in a WtW activity and work-related expenses to overcome barriers to participation.

They include child care, transportation, work related expenses and specialized services for mental health, substance abuse, and domestic violence problems. At the close of the appraisal interview, a determination is made regarding the participant's need for supportive services and appropriate actions are taken.

[\(See Chapter 1200\)](#)

.8 Responding to Assignment Outcomes

.81 Changes Requested by the Participant

Participant requests for assignment-related changes after completion of the WTW 2 are evaluated in accordance with the three-day rule and/or the 30-day grace period and acted upon accordingly within one workday. (For explanation of three-day rule and 30-day grace

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period, see ([Chapter 900, Section 912.7.2](#)).

For participants who completed a Job Club Activity Assignment agreement, changing the activity is not an option. However, other requested assignment-related changes are evaluated and may be acted upon when reasonable and likely to increase the participant's chances of securing employment.

.82 Outcomes Reported by the Contracted Services Provider

.821 The contracted services provider reports the outcome of the participant's Job Search Services assignment on GEARS. When the contractor updates the Job Search assignment, an ALERT is generated on GEARS to notify the GSW that an update has occurred in the participants Job Club component. The GSW reviews the MCAT GEARS screen and takes appropriate action.

- (a) "No show" (a participant fails to appear to start the activity). **Response:** A good cause determination is made within one workday. ([See Chapter 1300](#))
- (b) Dropped due to non-cooperation. **Response:** A cause determination is made within one workday, etc. ([See Chapter 1300](#))
- (c) Supportive services needed (e.g., a request to issue ancillary expense issuance for clothing which the participant has been unable to procure). **Response:** Action is taken to evaluate/provide the needed supportive services within one workday. ([See Chapter 1200, Section 1230](#))
- (d) Completed JCO without finding employment. **Response:** The participant is assigned to the next GAIN activity. ([See Chapter 300, Section 312.3](#))
- (e) Specialized Supportive Services needed (e.g., a participant has declared a need of services for [domestic violence](#), [mental health](#) or [substance abuse](#)). The JC facilitator will refer the participant back to the GSW indicating on the GN 6007, Notification of Change from Service Provider, and the specific need of service.

A need for supportive services can also be for ancillary expense issuance for clothing needed for the participant to go on interviews. **Outcome:** Action is taken to evaluate/provide the needed supportive

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services within one workday.

Got a job. **Outcome:** The participant is contacted to confirm her/his employment and complete employment information including start date, starting salary, employer name, employer address, contact person and telephone number is entered into GEARS within one workday ([see Chapter 1400, Section 1412.2](#)). Participants employed part-time are assigned to VA, while full-time participants are offered a Career Assessment and other Post-Employment Services within one workday. ([See Chapter 800](#) and [Chapter 1000](#))

- (f) Request for extension. Job Search Services activities may be extended if it would likely result in a participant's employment. Requests to extend a participant's JC assignment are usually made to the GSW by the contracted services provider, although GSWs may be notified by CalWORKs administration in special instances. Extension requests are granted within one workday, unless there is good reason to believe the extension would not lead to employment.

.9 Telephone Call Follow-up

When a participant does not “show” for his/her Appraisal appointment, the GSW calls the participant 45 minutes after the scheduled appointment time, or by no later than the end of the same day. The outcome of the telephone call is documented on the GEARS screen Maintain GAIN Participant Activity Comment (MPGA).

The GSW discusses with the participant the reason(s) why he/she was not able to attend the appointment and resolves any barriers to facilitate the most rapid engagement possible.

The GSW can reschedule the appointment and/or complete the Appraisal interview over the telephone by updating MGA1 and MGA2. If the participant needs to be exempted, the appraisal may be completed over the telephone and the participant may mail the verification for the exemption to the GSW. If the Appraisal appointment is rescheduled for a later date, the GSW updates GEARS on the original Appraisal date to prevent GEARS from initiating non-compliance.

.91 Non-compliance

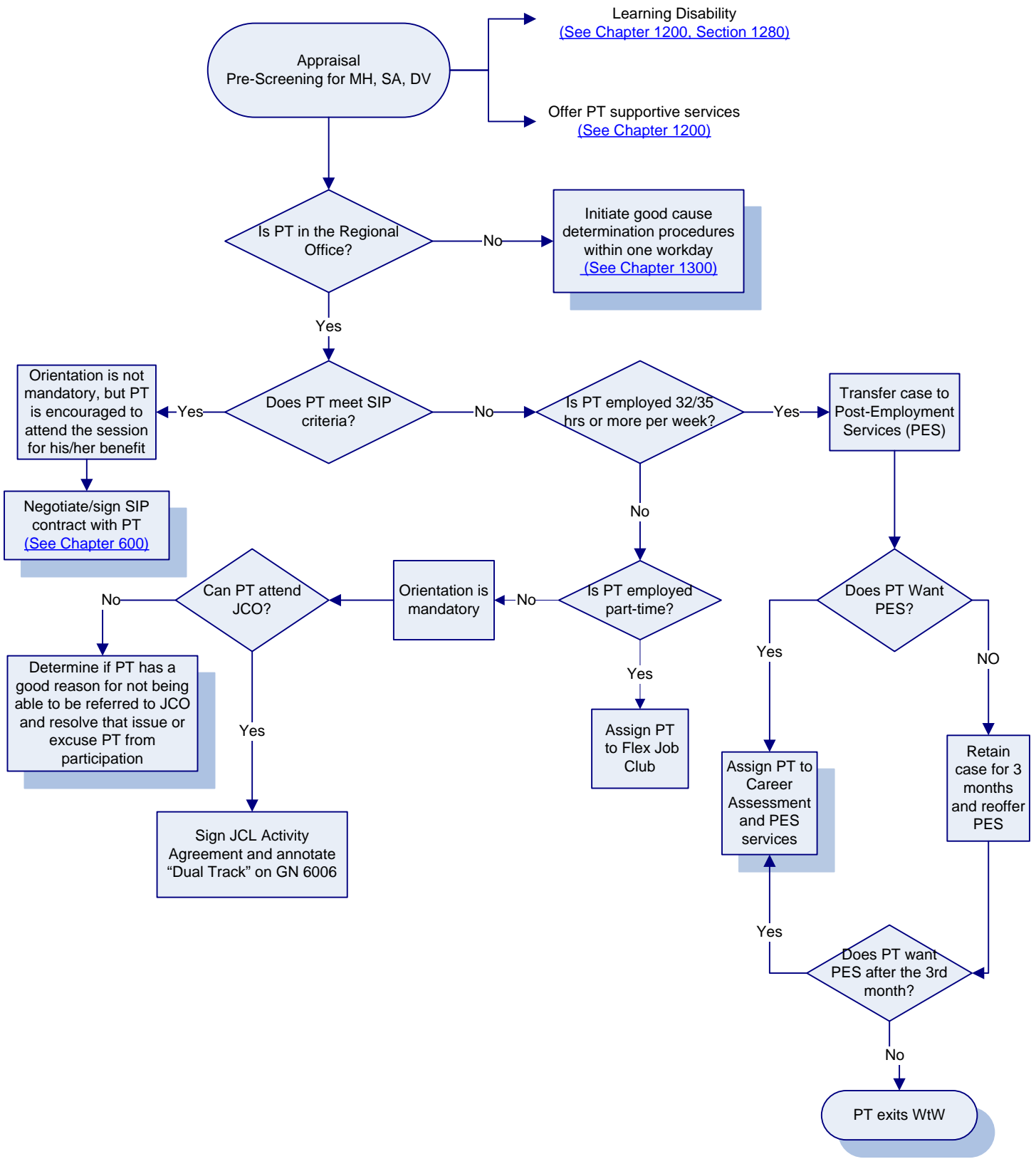
Non-compliance is the first step in attempting to resolve participation problems. The purpose of the non-compliance process is to address

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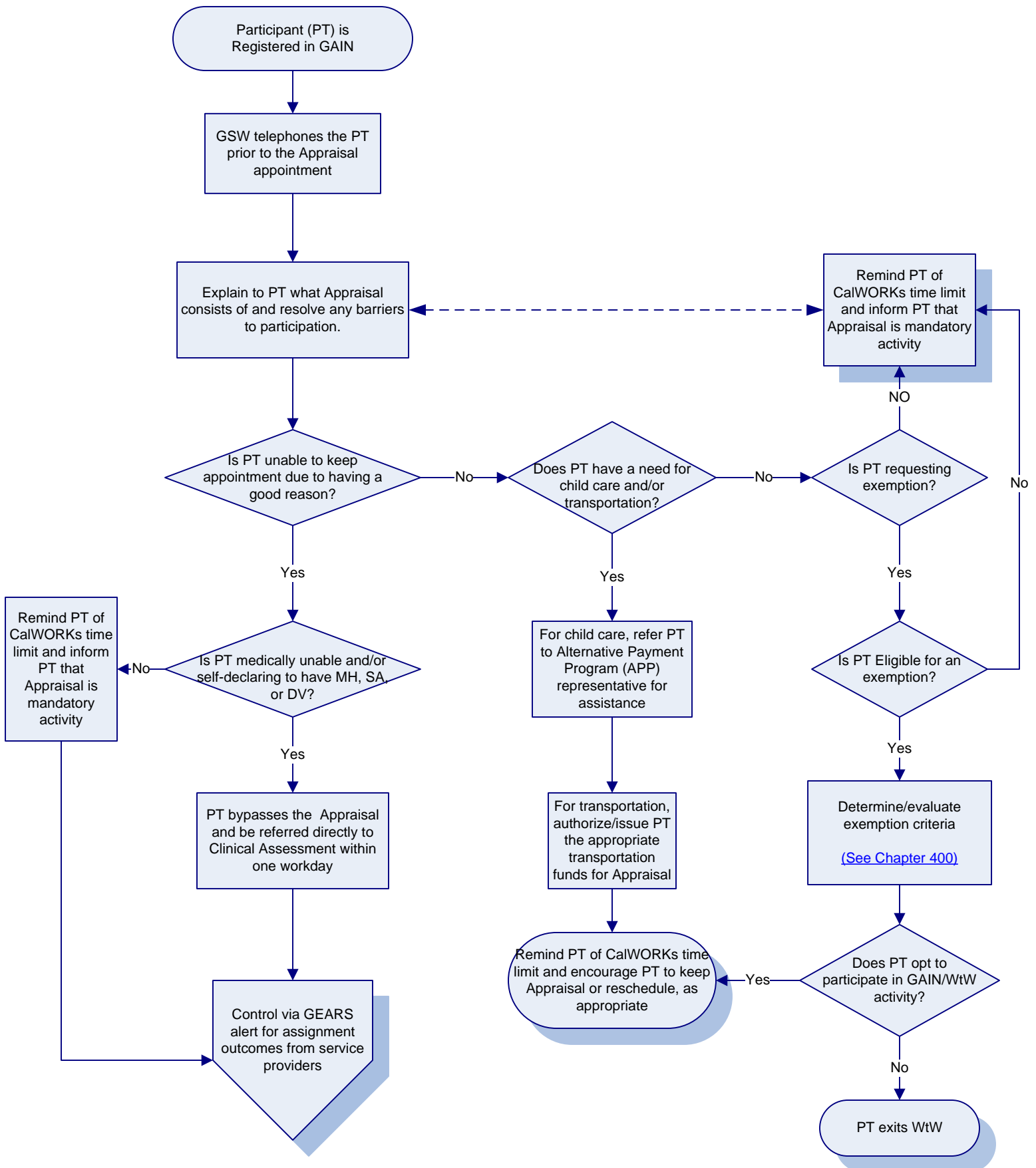
participation problems, determine their cause and resolve them so the participant can resume active engagement. ([See Chapter 1300](#))

Whenever mandatory participants fail to attend appraisal without a good reason, the non-compliance process is to be initiated after the GSW has tried to make the follow-up telephone call and the participant is not reached or fails to provide good cause for not showing to the initial Appraisal appointment. Volunteers who do not keep the appraisal appointment or fail to comply with WtW requirements without a good reason may be subject to exclusion.

.1 Appraisal Decision Chart



.2 Prior to Appraisal Appointment Decision Chart



.3 Appraisal Interview Decision Chart

