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## Director's Corner

BY AN TRAN

The past few months have been a very humbling time for me with **Debra Baetz retiring** and my subsequent transition into the role of Agency Director becoming a reality. I miss my daily chats with Debra as she was more than a boss — she was a friend, confidante, role model and person who I know cares so deeply about our employees and the community we serve. She definitely left big shoes to fill. I want to take a moment to thank Debra again for her leadership, mentorship and guidance, not only to me but to the entire executive team. And I appreciate the words of wisdom she has imparted to all of us as SSA staff.

I'm equally appreciative for the incredible support and encouragement many of you have given me since I moved into my new role. Thank you for your warm wishes and congratulations.

I look forward to this exciting opportunity to serve as the Director for what I believe is the best department in the County. Upon reflection, joining the County as an office services professional over 23 years ago was one of the best decisions I made in my career and it has been a privilege to grow and evolve since that time.

I am inspired by your accomplishments and hard work. For me, it all comes down to what we do and who we are — not just as employees of SSA but as people. At SSA, we play an important role in protecting the most vulnerable population



■ Continued on page 2

and strengthening families and communities. And it is through each of you and your hard work, commitment and compassion that makes this possible. I can't think of a better place to serve than SSA. It is this inspiration that fuels me every day. Debra and I shared a common vision for SSA – to provide comprehensive, holistic and integrated services to both serve the community and be part of the community. While we have achieved much success as an Agency along these lines, there is still a lot to be done.

So, you may ask, what is next? The answer begins with clarity — clarity of our vision, mission and core values, which will empower

us to do more.

SSA's five-year strategic plan is intended to provide the clarity I mention. It is a culmination of work and input from over 1,500 individuals, including SSA employees, clients, county leaders, representatives from labor organizations, community partners and other stakeholders.

Soon we'll launch the five-year strategic plan with a video that introduces key plan elements. Additional next steps include a series of ongoing communications, activities, town halls and/or unit meeting discussions that will help further reinforce the plan. There will also

be opportunities for you to get more involved as we implement plan strategies over time.

We call upon each of you to be open to new ideas, embrace our new mission, vision and values, remain flexible, and continue offering quality services and technical expertise. Collectively, we can be a force of positive change that will move this Agency forward in how we engage with our clients and one another in even more meaningful ways.

I look forward to this next step in our journey as an Agency and to seeing the great things we can accomplish, together.

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## First Contact Resolution Implementation Shows Early Success

BY JAMIE CARGO  
ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER I

**SSA** customers are already experiencing positive impacts from the June implementation of the First Contact Resolution (FCR) initiative.

Preliminary data show that the initiative is meeting its intended goal of taking each client through the eligibility process for SSA's public assistance benefit programs in as few touches as possible to achieve their determination. With support from the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and Change & Innovation Agency (CIA), Assistance Programs (AP) and Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services (FSS-AS) staff from all levels were able to develop and implement FCR in a little over a year, integrating more services and further enacting the County of Orange's No Wrong Door Policy.

FCR brought together SSA staff in five work groups: First Contact Resolution (FCR), Modified Adjustment Gross Income Medi-Cal (MAGI) for CalWORKs Denials, Call Center Expansion, RRR Block of Time Interviews and Communications.

The FCR workgroup built out the Joint FSS & AP Verification Matrix, creating new narrative tools for Medi-Cal and General Relief, updating the existing narrative tools for CalFresh and CalWORKs, and consolidating all narrative tools onto one platform. In addition, the work group developed a Joint FSS & AP FCR Processing Guide, Quick Reference Guide, updated the ancillary client engagement and task-based systems to include entries that assist with measuring the success of FCR. The group also updated the Review

Elements in the Case Accuracy Review System to measure accuracy and created FCR training for staff. That training will become part of Training & Career Development's Intensive Induction Trainings so that future employees will effectively apply FCR concepts to eligibility determinations.

So far, 59% of Medi-Cal, CalFresh and General Relief intake applications processed through AP, 60% of Semi-Annual Reports (SAR 7) and 47% of CalFresh recertifications were successfully completed through FCR.

For FSS-AS, 51% of new CalWORKs applications were successfully processed through FCR, with 61% of SAR 7 and 55% of recertifications also meeting the requirements.

■ Continued on page 3



The FCR initiative also brought AP and FSS together in the Call Center Expansion work group to expand offerings at the Orange's Call and Processing Center (OCPC). The workgroup examined alternatives for routing calls more efficiently, including tailoring scripts to ensure options were clear when customers called. Additionally, the workgroup established a process for handling pending applications initiated at OCPC's Intake Call Center and revised procedures that allow Intake Call Center staff to assist customers following an FCR approach.

At OCPC, AP saw 54% of Medi-Cal, CalFresh and General Relief applications successfully processed through FCR. FSS had 67% success in SSI/Non-Needy Caretaker Relative applications, 46% in homeless assistance requests and 67% in SAR 7.

The MAGI for CalWORKs Denials workgroup developed and delivered MAGI-specific training to FSS Intake Employment and Eligibility Specialists so they could begin approving MAGI for their CalWORKs applications that are denied. Additionally, the group modified the CalWORKs Denial Referral Processing Guide and Web Stats to reflect

this updated business process. Processing MAGI in CalWORKs intake reduces handoffs and delays in eligibility determinations for customers. This effort was implemented across all FSS CalWORKs regional offices on July 1, 2022. FSS staff reduced handoffs for 51 MAGI Medi-Cal for CalWORKs Denial customers in June and July 2022.

The RRR Block of Time Interviews workgroup explored possible options for making it easier for customers to initiate contact with staff to conduct their CalFresh recertification interviews through the Call Center within a given timeframe. This process has been put on pause until after CalSAWS implementation.

The Communications work group endeavored to keep staff updated throughout the initiative, creating multiple feedback channels that included a dedicated inbox where questions could be submitted.

The work for the FCR initiative is ongoing and as more data becomes available, it is anticipated that procedures and processing guides will be further adjusted to enable staff in assisting our customers to the fullest extent possible while reducing wait times and handoffs.

The FCR planning work completed since April 2021 serves as a building block for other opportunities to streamline and improve the experience of customers, whether they visit us in person through our lobbies, connect over the phone through the Call Center, or make an online, fax or mail submission. "The work from all the committee members not only helped develop the First Contact Resolution processes, but also brought to light new paths to explore in the future as we all work toward a more efficient experience for our customers," said Marsela Gastelum, AP Deputy Division Director. "I'm grateful for everyone who participated and made this happen so quickly."

FSS-AS Deputy Division Director Sumit Sapra added, "Staff did an incredible job of coming together and diving into diverse ideas of how to accomplish our goal of reducing touch points for customers. Future initiatives will be all the better with the experiences gained here."

If you have questions about FCR, please email [firstcontactresolution@ssa.ocgov.com](mailto:firstcontactresolution@ssa.ocgov.com).



# Thank you to the following staff who served on the five workgroups that worked to implement First Contact Resolution:

## First Contact Resolution

### Project Leads:

Cristina De La Rosa, AMI AP  
Victor Guzman, AMI, FSS-AS ARC

### Workgroup Members:

Claudia Castro, SSSI, AP  
Monica Vejar, SSSI, AP  
Taylor Adray, SSSI, AP  
Shirley Valencia, AMI, AP  
Angie Ceja, SSSI, AP  
Joel Solis, ET, AP ARC  
Fabian Hartwell-Santiago, ES, AP ARC  
Atlacatl Chiguila, ES, AP SARC  
Cristal Perez, AMI, AP CRC  
Carlos James (CJ) Contreras, ES, AP LHRC  
Ahmad Sadeq, SSSI, FSS-AS  
Jacqueline Gonzalez, SSSII, FSS-AS  
Lori Evans, AMI, Admin  
Daniel Rodriguez, SSSII, FSS-AS CRC  
Luisa Luna, SSSII, FSS-AS DO  
Sylvia Renner, EES, FSS-AS ARC  
Ramona Parent, EES, FSS-AS SARC  
Oscar Rodriguez, SSSI, Admin  
Sara Ghanbariarni, ET, AP GGRC  
Michael Mestas, SSSI, FSS-AS CRC  
Robert Chafee, ES, AP LHRC  
Victor Perez, ET, AP SARC

## Call Center Expansion

### Project Leads:

Pelayo Pelayo, AMII, FSS-AS SARC  
Alex Garcia, AMI, AP OCPC

### Workgroup Members:

Alma Cervantes, SSSI, FSS-AS ARC  
Kathy Cortez, AMI, FSS-AS  
Marieth Gonzalez, SS, Admin  
Araceli Guillen, EES, FSS-AS FCRC  
Phillipe Moreno, SSSI, FSS-AS  
Carol Parks, EES, FSS-AS SARC  
Laura Pelayo, SSSII, FSS-AS  
Keith Ruppel, SOS, FSS-AS SARC  
Jessica Salazar, OCEA Representative  
Jose Balderas, ET, AP ARC  
Angela Carrington, SSSI, AP  
Than Nguyen, ES, AP OCPC  
Leslie Lee, ES, AP SARC  
Nellie Le Gaspe, ET, AP OCPC  
Analise Arellano, OSC, AP OCPC  
Nancy Sanchez, ET, AP OCPC  
Jana Klein, ET, AP OCPC  
Colleen Ruppel, OSC, AP SARC  
Sophia Ramos, ES, AP ARC  
Federico Vindigni, AMI, AP OCPC

## CalFresh RRR Interview Block of Time Scheduling

### Project Leads:

Ashley Clark, SSSI, AP SARC  
Monte Noble, AMI, AP BFS

### Workgroup Members:

Andrea Case, SS, AP  
Paul Sotelo, ES, AP ARC  
Van Nguyen, ET, AP OCPC  
Kathleen Clark, EES, Admin  
Nancy Ung, ET, AP SARC  
Manuel Corral, ET/AFSCME  
Representative, AP ARC  
Crystal Lopez, ES, AP ARC  
Phuong-Chi Nguyen, ES, AP ARC  
Mikey Tran, SSSI, AP OCPC  
Celina Villalpando, ES, AP OCPC  
Maria Rojas, SSSI, AP ARC  
Yolanda Mojica, SSSI, AP  
Sandra Gomez, SSSI, Admin  
Carla Duran, SSSI, Admin  
Kristin Timmins, SSSII, Admin  
Wendy Espinoza, SSSII, AP  
Tony Do, SSSII, AP  
Bonasy Kong, AMI, AP

## MAGI

### Project Leads:

Odon Sanchez, AMII, Admin  
Melissa Polanco, AMI, FSS-AS

### Workgroup Members:

Jeaneth Magallan, ET, AP SARC  
Kathy Hannon, SSSII, FSS-AS  
Carole McCaffrey, SSSII, FSS-AS CRC  
Angela R. Perez, CM, FSS-AS ARC  
Diego Toscano, SSSI, FSS-AS  
Dolores Navarro, SSSII, AP  
Israel De La Cruz, SSSII, Admin TCD  
Jamie Petersen, SSSII, AP OPT  
Teresa Pantoja, AMI, FSS-AS SARC  
Mary Naranjo-Cortez, SSSI, FSS-AS  
Dayna Kruger, DET, AP OCPC  
Danielle Redd, ET, AP ARC  
Laura Krebs, EES, FSS-AS SARC  
Maximiliana Plascencia, SSSI, FSS-AS ARC  
Maria Villavicencio, SSSII, AP  
Nadia Moradi, SSSII, FSS-AS  
Diana Corral, EES, FSS-AS ARC  
Stephanie Hidalgo, DET, FSS-AS SARC  
Damian Rangel, ET, AP CRC  
Dorena Shafiebieg, SSSI, Admin  
Louie Montanez, ES, AP SARC

## Communications

### Project Leads:

Jamie Cargo, AMI, Admin  
Cristal Perez, AMI, AP CRC

### Workgroup Members:

Jose Balderas, ET/AFSCM, AP ARC  
Diana Corral, ES, FSS-AS, ARC  
Therese Elsner, ET, AP LHRC  
Melanie Frias, ES, AP GGRC  
Lupe Gonzalez, AMI, FSS-AS LHRC  
Desiree Martinez, ES, AP OCPC  
Cheyenne McCoy, ET, AP CRC  
Karlynda Medearis, EES, AP ARC  
Tammy Oliver, SSSI, AP GGRC  
Abraham Palomares, EES, FSS-AS CRC  
Colleen Ruppel, OSC, AP SARC  
Hugo Torres OSC, AP ARC  
Felissa Garcia, ES, AP OCPC  
Stephanie Bailon-Garcia, SSSI, AP LHRC  
Monica Mangal, ET, AP LHRC  
Jaime Tucker, ES, AP LHRC

# SSA Spotlight: Permanency is Home

BY MARLENE TELEGADAS AND NOREAN LUBCHENKO \*RETIRED  
ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER II's

The moment a child enters the child welfare system and becomes placed in out-of-home care, our focus is on keeping them safe. But based on the three pillars of child welfare — Safety, Permanency and Wellbeing — finding a permanent home for that child is equally important. In partnership with Casey Family Programs, a nonprofit working to improve the lives of children and families involved in the child welfare system, SSA's Children & Family Services (CFS) division is placing further emphasis on permanency through the Permanency is Home project.

Permanency may mean both legal permanency (e.g., the child reunifies with their biological parents or placed with a stable, permanent family through adoption or legal guardianship) and relational permanency (i.e., the child maintains a relationship or connection with a caring adult, such as a relative, neighbor, service provider, teacher or other important person in their life).

Through the Permanency is Home project, SSA aims to ensure every child has a place to call home and important long-term relationships that help them feel loved and connected. Ideally, each youth exiting foster care without legal permanence will have lifelong connections, including at least one adult to provide a permanent, parent-like connection and richness of identity that fosters within them a sense of their unique family history.

To promote a permanency-driven culture, SSA is focused on decreasing the time it takes for a child to achieve legal permanency,

as well as to understand and remove barriers to both legal and relational permanency. Some of CFS's practice shifts included broad changes, such as the reorganization of the Adoptions Program to support timely adoption efforts, while others have been as fundamental as asking youth questions such as "Who is important in your life?" and helping them maintain connections to the very people they have identified.

The desired outcome for children and youth in the child welfare system is legal permanency. However, by developing healthy, long-lasting relationships with caring adults, children and youth can also thrive in nurturing and supportive environments that provide a sense of belonging and safety, a sense of connection that translates into relational permanence.



"Becoming a permanency-driven organization is about creating a culture that promotes a sense of urgency when it comes to relational and legal permanency for each child/youth," says Adoptions Program Manager Marlene Telegadas. "The work of Permanency is Home offers opportunities to shift our practices to support children and youth, helping them stay connected to their important people, culture and heritage, as well as build an overall sense of personal history and belonging in their lives."

If you are interested in learning more about Permanency is Home, or in participating in the workgroups supporting the project, please contact [Marlene.Telegadas@ssa.ocgov](mailto:Marlene.Telegadas@ssa.ocgov), [www.childwelfare.gov/topics/permanency](http://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/permanency).

# Meet SSA's Leadership Development Team

## Loan English

**Deputy Division Director, Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services, Policy & Quality Assurance**

### Areas covered in your position:

Oversight of policies, procedures and contracts for CalWORKs, Refugee Cash Assistance, Welfare-to-Work and Adult Services programs

**Years of service with the County of Orange:** 17

### Divisions worked/previous experience:

I previously worked in the Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services Division as a Social Worker for the CalWORKs program. I was then assigned as a Senior Social Worker for the Children & Family Services Division before returning to the FSS-AS Division, where I had the opportunity to work at the CalWORKs West and South Regional offices and providing oversight of policy for Foster Care Eligibility, Adult Protective Services and In-Home Supportive Services.



Pictured: Loan English

### Fun fact about you:

Those who know me know that I LOVE to eat! I am a total foodie even though I claim to be on a diet every week. I am not a very adventurous person but when it comes to food, I am willing to try new things. I'm also blessed to have a 9-year-old son and I enjoy spending time with the family in my spare time.

### Professional development tips for staff:

Step outside your comfort zone! Stretch your learning. Do your job and do it well but also take on new challenges to learn something different to expand your knowledge. There are so many opportunities offered at SSA; take advantage of it. While on your journey to explore different paths, make sure you are soaking in everything it has to offer and building relationships along the way to expand your network.



# Stories from the Field:

## Adult Protective Services in Action

BY DINA BAGUES  
ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER I

A team of Adult Protective Services (APS) social workers and supervisors recently made a difference in the life of a 63-year-old client with developmental disabilities when his sole caretaker, his father, became medically unable to care for him. The case came to the attention of APS after the elderly caregiver was hospitalized. Without a backup caretaker, the client's circumstances limited his ability to be self-reliant and to access services.

Over the course of about five months, APS Social Worker William Bell, along with APS Case Manager Brenda Negrete, worked diligently to begin connecting the client to SSA resources that ensured his safety and care. When the client's father and caretaker passed away, the client was left more vulnerable than ever. William and Brenda spent countless hours completing field visits, attending meetings, making phone calls, sending e-mails and documenting their efforts on behalf of their client. The two spent time advocating for and coaching the 63-year-old through applications, medical assessments and securing historical records to qualify him for various services.

APS Senior Social Services Supervisor Gina Di Mercurio connected geropsychology services and a geriatrician through the Elder Abuse Forensic Center (EAFC), where an assessment was conducted and medical records were reviewed. Mabel Gutierrez, APS Senior Social Worker for the Case Management Unit, provided oversight of the case, ensuring no resource was left untapped. The team also collaborated with Social Security Administration, Regional Center of Orange County, EAFC, placement specialists, Community Legal Aid SoCal, private fiduciaries and other community partners on the case.

Through the guidance of SSA, the 63-year-old client qualified for and began receiving Supplemental Security Income, affording him placement where he could reside safely.



From left to right: Social Worker Brenda Negrete, Senior Social Services Supervisor Andrew Bye, Senior Social Worker Mabel Gutierrez and Social Worker William Ball.



Senior Social Services Supervisor  
Gina Di Mercurio

**“This was a great example of real social work and the utilization of collaborative partners.”**  
- SSSS Andrew Bye

The APS Case Management Unit, established just over a year ago, has been a successful resource for SSA cases, providing opportunities for APS to keep cases open longer for clients who need additional time and support getting assistance. Thanks to Andrew, Brenda, Mabel and William's hard work, the client was able to get the support needed and is grateful for SSA's assistance in the absence of his father and caregiver.

# Board of Supervisors Recognizes Eligibility Professionals

BY EVAN WOLF

COMMUNITY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS INTERN

The Orange County Board of Supervisors, in honor of Eligibility Professionals Month, recognized SSA and OC Community Resources eligibility staff who serve Orange County's residents on August 9. SSA's eligibility professionals provide support to many programs, including: Medi-Cal, CalFresh, CalWORKs, General Relief, Foster Care and more.

Chairman Doug Chaffee, Fourth District Supervisor, recognized that eligibility professionals serve over one in four OC residents.

"Eligibility Professionals demonstrate compassion and dedication in their collaborative efforts to create a strong, safe and supportive community. The Board of Supervisors thanks all eligibility professionals for their terrific work," he said during the Board presentation.

SSA Director An Tran mentioned that eligibility professionals make up over 41% of SSA's more than 4,400 employees who collaborate in serving OC's most vulnerable.

"I am so proud of our eligibility professionals for their ongoing compassion and dedication to those who we serve, ensuring that they are treated with dignity and respect during what can be very difficult times. To our eligibility professionals: The work you do matters and has profound impacts on the lives of our residents," he said.

Joining Director Tran, the Board honored the following SSA employees who represent all agency eligibility professionals:

- Jana Klein, Assistance Programs
- Quan Vo, Assistance Programs
- Beth Mata, Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
- Kimberly Bonnar, Administrative Services

When asked to share their thoughts and reflect upon their crucial roles, our honorees said:

**"Being an Eligibility Technician is not just a job to me. It's my calling and I am passionate about it. I never lose sight of the fact that every contact**



The Orange County Board of Supervisors recognized Orange County Eligibility Professionals with a resolution presentation in August.

**I have with a client has the potential to make a positive change in that person's life. This is truly an honor, and I share this with all the hard-working, community-focused Eligibility Technicians in Orange County."**

-Jana Klein

**"There have been lots of things that I have learned and absorbed, but I am fortunate to be a Dual Eligibility Technician to serve the community and help them access Medi-Cal and CalFresh benefits."**

-Quan Vo

**"To hear the Board of Supervisors extend their gratitude to all eligibility professionals for the hard work they do to serve our communities, and to keep our public programs running, makes me very proud to be a part of this dedicated group of people."**

-Beth Mata

**"Recognition and encouragement make everyone feel good."**

-Kimberly Bonnar

Congratulations to Jana, Quan, Beth and Kimberly for being honored with this recognition, and to all our committed eligibility staff who care for our community.





# Unveiling SSA's Newest Mobile Response Vehicle

Replacing SSA's original decommissioned 15-year-old Mobile Response Vehicle, the Agency's newest addition to our fleet, joining our two mini-MRVs, serves as the largest of its three MRVs.

The large MRV is wheelchair accessible and equipped with computer stations inside the vehicle for staff to assist up to four clients at a time. Together, all three MRVs help bring SSA's programs and services to the community, enabling staff to meet clients where they are. SSA staff can determine eligibility for programs such as CalFresh, Medi-Cal, General Relief and CalWORKs and have the ability to print Electronic Benefit Transfer cards on site. Additionally, the MRVs are deployed to provide services during a disaster event. The MRVs have served more than 22,000 clients over the past five years and continue to ensure that our critical services are accessible to all Orange County residents.



# Beyond the Call: Exceptional Service in Action

## Erika Torres

Senior Social Worker, Children & Family Services



*Erika received the following words of recognition from a colleague after being recognized as Children & Family Services Employee of the Month for June 2022:*

“Erika was tasked with investigating a referral regarding domestic violence concerns. Thanks to Erika’s advocacy and customer service, the mother and children were safely relocated and provided resources to begin their new life safely. Thank you, Erika for all that you do!”

## Rachael Greenberg

Eligibility Technician, Assistance Programs

*Rachael received the following letter of thanks from a client:*

“I want to take the time to thank you for understanding the urgency of our situation and taking the time to go beyond for our family and our health. This is going to make a big difference in the children’s lives. People like you make a big difference. Thank you for caring about others. We appreciate you so much.”



## Lauren Almanza, Rusmeralda Garcia, Octaviano Negrete and Tessa Santoro

Social Workers II, Children & Family Services

## Sandra Flores,

Social Services Supervisor I

*SSA’s Indian Child Welfare Act Unit received the following words of praise from SSA leadership:*

“Following new requirements mandated by the California Department of Social Services, extended family and acquaintances of children entering the dependency system with Native American ancestry are now required to be interviewed. To ensure SSA was in compliance, SSA’s Indian Child Welfare Act Unit quickly developed new practices and guidelines in conjunction with SSA’s Policy Development Unit, County Counsel and Juvenile Court to meet the new mandates.”





# Beyond the Call: Exceptional Service in Action

**Agustin Alarid, Reza Faghihi, Jennifer Gallardo, Ani Haghverdian, Thuy Le, Mardielene Matthews, Han Nguyen, Xuan Thu Nguyen, Anhtu Phung, Jeremy Ton and David Tran**

**Social Workers, Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services**



“ In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) is happy to acknowledge SSA’s Social Workers who recently graduated from the IHSS Induction Training at Training and Career Development. IHSS is excited to have you join the team! ”



**Tracie Bui**

**Eligibility Technician, Assistance Programs**

*Tracie received the following words of recognition from her supervisor:*

“ A client who attended an SSA outreach event recently called to thank Tracie for her fantastic assistance in processing the client’s CalFresh application. The client expressed having trouble applying for CalFresh in the past but stated Tracie made the process quick and straightforward. She also stressed how nice and empathetic Tracie was during the review process. Thank you, Tracie, keep up the fantastic work! ”

## PPE Donations Bring Smiles to Schoolchildren

**BY JAMIE CARGO**

**ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER I**

**T**hey can move and reconfigure an entire floor of furniture and equipment for staff, help set up community engagement events and deliver important supplies and mail to our regional offices. But did you know Alex Caudillo and Ivan Diaz from Centralized Operations can also inspire a gaggle of elementary school children to clean?

Alex and Ivan, both Warehouse Workers I, delivered personal protective equipment including wipes and hand sanitizer to staff and students at Thomas Edison Elementary School in Anaheim to prevent our inventory of goods from expiring before SSA could use them all up. The school was thrilled to have extra supplies and the students knew exactly what to do with them. Their teacher created a thank you poster to express their appreciation to the SSA team.

For Ivan, the trip was extra special as he attended Edison Elementary as a child. When he received the request for drop off, he thought the name sounded familiar, but

didn’t think anything of it until he and Alex pulled up to the school. “I was caught by surprise being at my old school,” Ivan said. “It made me reminisce about the playground and all the fun I had there.” He is grateful he could deliver this contribution from SSA to his school.

“Having lived in the community, this donation had an extra layer of meaning for me,” Ivan said.





# In-Home Supportive Services Adopts DocuSign Process

BY PATRICK JENISON  
ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER I

As digital signatures become commonplace in businesses, a few programs at SSA have also adopted the use of e-signatures. Recently, In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) became the first client-facing unit to adopt DocuSign, a digital signature platform. DocuSign allows eligible individuals to fill out important paperwork from the comfort of their home.

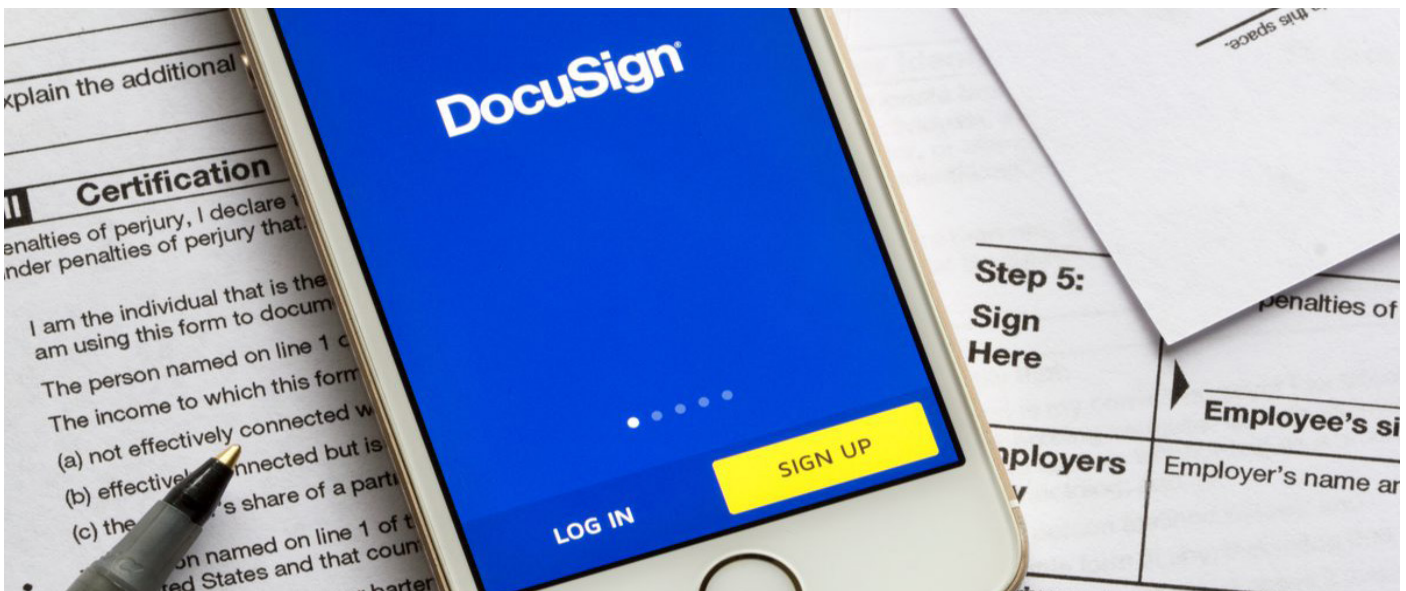
To facilitate the transition to DocuSign, Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services (FSS-AS) Policy and Quality Assurance (PQA) identified the most frequently used IHSS forms and converted them into DocuSign templates. PQA also recorded two instructional videos and developed a DocuSign manual for IHSS staff. In collaboration with Training & Career Development, PQA trained all IHSS staff on DocuSign in October 2021, followed by the launch of the e-signature platform on November 1, 2021. To ensure a smooth transition process, PQA conducted weekly office hours at the IHSS program office to assist staff as they integrated DocuSign into their daily operations.

As a result of the successful launch of DocuSign in IHSS, the eSignature Champion Collaborative was created to offer guidance and support to other SSA units in implementing the digital signature tool. The collaborative, which supports the Agency's goal of using technology to improve service delivery, also includes Contracts Services and Procurement Services, additional SSA units that have success-

fully adopted DocuSign. Programs like IHSS and Contracts Services provide technical assistance and expertise to programs in the e-Signature platform implementation process. Employees are encouraged to take steps, however small, to integrate DocuSign into their business practices. To assist in accomplishing this goal, a DocuSign manual for SSA has been developed and published on the SSA Intranet, under Manuals in the Administrative Services section.

Since the implementation of DocuSign in IHSS and with the assistance of the eSignature Champion Collaborative, FSS, Children & Family Services (CFS) Placement Coordination and Human Resources (HR) have incorporated DocuSign into their practices. Children & Family Services Placement Coordination uses DocuSign to facilitate the signing of placement paperwork for youth in out-of-home care. In July 2022, CalWORKs regional staff began using DocuSign to send documents to clients for immediate completion and signatures. HR also authorized SSA staff to use DocuSign for obtaining signatures and submitting performance evaluations (instructions are available in the DocuSign SSA User Manual on the Intranet).

The eSignature Champion Collaborative is here to help, and if you have any questions about DocuSign and how your program can leverage this tool, please email [eSignatureInquiries@ssa.ocgov.com](mailto:eSignatureInquiries@ssa.ocgov.com).



# Cultural Recognition

BY TRACI MULDOON  
STAFF SPECIALIST

September marks several observances recognizing the cultural diversity of our nation and world, along with some special days for advocacy. Read below to learn more.

## The Mid-Autumn Moon Festival

Observed on September 10 this year, the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival celebrates the moon's birthday in the hopes of receiving a plentiful harvest next year and is recognized throughout China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines. The holiday is marked by family gatherings and bringing offerings to the moon, such as spirit money, incense and moon cakes, a dessert containing ground lotus and sesame seeds or dates. The evenings are celebrated with moon-viewing parties and hanging lanterns to symbolize the light to prosperity and good fortune.



## Enkutatash

Observed on September 11 this year, Enkutatash marks 1 Meskerem, the first day on the Ethiopian calendar and start of the Ethiopian New Year. Celebrations for Enkutatash typically last one week and are centered around family gatherings, including church services, prayer, singing, dances and the exchange of gifts and bouquets of yellow flowers to symbolize hope and renewal. Traditional dishes such as doro wot, dulet and ga'at are also shared. On the eve of the Ethiopian New Year, wooden torches — “chibo” — are lit to symbolize the coming of sunshine after the end of the rainy season. Enkutatash instills hope in the heart and minds of Ethiopians for a fresh start and prosperity in their new year.



## National Day of Service and Remembrance

Observed on September 11 each year, the U.S. recognizes the anniversary of the nearly 3,000 individuals killed during the terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and in the crash near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, in 2001. On December 18, 2001, Congress declared September 11 as Patriot Day to commemorate the anniversary of September 11, 2001, before renaming it National Day of Service and Remembrance in 2009. National Day of Service and Remembrance is recognized with ceremonies, moments of silence and prayer for those killed and wounded during the terrorist attacks, including law enforcement, medical personnel and service members.





## National Hispanic Heritage Month

National Hispanic Heritage Month is observed from September 15 to October 15 each year to celebrate the achievements, histories, traditions and cultural diversity of Hispanic/Latino/Latinx Americans whose heritage is rooted in countries and territories including Spain, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. The 2022 theme for National Hispanic Heritage Month is “Unidos: Inclusivity for a Stronger Nation.” This year’s theme emphasizes the need for and welcoming of diverse voices and perspectives in decision-making processes to help build stronger communities and a stronger nation.

## International Day of Peace

International Day of Peace (Peace Day) is observed worldwide each year on September 21. Established in 1981 by a unanimous United Nations resolution, Peace Day provides a globally shared date for all of humanity to commit to peace above all differences and to contribute to building a culture of peace. The 2022 theme of Peace Day is “End racism. Build peace” and aims to work toward a discrimination-free world.



## Rosh Hashanah



Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year festival held on the first (and sometimes second) day in September. Observed September 25-27 this year, Rosh Hashanah begins with the blowing of a ram horn to signify the beginning of the 10 days of repentance leading up to Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. During Rosh Hashanah, prayers are read from the Mahzor, a prayer book, to serve as reminders of the covenant between God and the people of Israel, carrying with them the message of sacrifice, hope and continuity. Rosh Hashanah is also celebrated by eating traditional holiday foods, including apples and a traditional bread called challah. Rosh Hashanah is both a time of rejoicing and in-depth introspection, a time to celebrate the completion of another year while also taking stock of one’s life.

**Do you know of an employee who recently went above and beyond in their job or witnessed them in action? Did you know that you can give them a shoutout to recognize them for their hard work?**

Acknowledge their extraordinary service in the “Exceptional Service in Action” column of SSA Today! Download our “Kudos” form [here](#) and email your completed recognition to [ssatoday@ssa.ocgov.com](mailto:ssatoday@ssa.ocgov.com). Kudos may also be highlighted in a future Director’s Corner email as well.





# Employee Promotions

NAME	CLASSIFICATION	DIVISION
Agame, Priscilla	Social Services Supervisor I	Assistance Programs
Aguirre, Cindy	Social Services Supervisor I	Administrative Services
Alcala, Julio	Office Specialist	Administrative Services
Alhambra, Rosa	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Anguiano, Jorge	Eligibility Technician	Assistance Programs
Arenas, Olivia	Eligibility Technician	Assistance Programs
Augustine, Caryn	Office Supervisor C	Children & Family Services
Avalos, Karina	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Ayala, Myrna	Social Services Supervisor I	Administrative Services
Azer, Eren	Eligibility Technician	Assistance Programs
Barrios-Viramontes, Salvador	Office Supervisor B	Administrative Services
Behrouz, Mojgan	Social Worker I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Bell, Lisa	Sr. Social Worker	Children & Family Services
Bercaru, Constantin	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Borja, Lauren	Information Processing Technician	Children & Family Services
Bran, Amy	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Bright, Jill	Administrative Manager II	Children & Family Services
Brooks, Ryan	Sr. Research Analyst	Administrative Services
Bui, Tracie	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Castellanos, Brianna	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Castro, Camila	Eligibility Technician	Assistance Programs
Clark, Kathleen	Employment and Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Coromac, Melanie	Eligibility Technician	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Coronel, Jessica	Sr. Social Worker	Children & Family Services
Cortez, Aaron	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Cuevas-Castrejon, Erendira	Employment and Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Dasse, Carwina	Sr. Social Worker	Children & Family Services
De Jesus, Olivia	Employment and Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

# Employee Promotions

NAME	CLASSIFICATION	DIVISION
Diaz, Brittany	Secretary I	Assistance Programs
Dorostkar, Mehrsa	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Echevarria, Israel	Employment and Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Faghihi, Reza	Social Worker II	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Fletes-Luna, Erika	Sr. Social Services Supervisor	Administrative Services
Francisco, Judeliza	Social Services Supervisor II	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Garcia, Jovanna	Social Services Supervisor I	Assistance Programs
Garcia, Louis	Employment and Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Garcia, Maritza	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Gonzalez, Guadalupe	Administrative Manager I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Gonzalez, Jessica	Sr. Social Worker	Children & Family Services
Gonzalez, Jose Luis	Social Worker I	Children & Family Services
Gonzalez, Natalia	Sr. Social Services Supervisor	Children & Family Services
Hardy, Stephanie	Social Services Supervisor I	Administrative Services
Hauser, Elaine	Information Processing Technician	Children & Family Services
Heidari, Minoo	Employment and Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Hernandez, Irma	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Hernandez, Jose	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Hernandez, Nestor	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Hernandez, Rosaura	Social Worker II	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Hernandez, Sandy	Employment and Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Hewey, Susan	Office Supervisor B	Administrative Services
Hosseini, Nahid	Social Worker I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Hudson, Mahgabien	Employment and Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Huggins, Silvia	Administrative Manager I	Administrative Services
Jimenez, Rafael	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Justo-Trevino, Cesar	Office Supervisor B	Children & Family Services
Kamboya, Shruti	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

# Employee Promotions

NAME	CLASSIFICATION	DIVISION
Kelsall, Lauren	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Khair, Zarghoona	Social Worker I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Kharva, Radha	Employment and Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Kim, Bou He	Social Worker II	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Klein, Jana	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
La Rue, Steven	Social Worker II	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Lara, Aniam	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Le, Tri	Social Worker I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Leal, Nataly	Employment and Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Lemus, Fabiola	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Lewis-Medina, Tami	Administrative Manager II	Assistance Programs
Liwanag, Ronica	Social Services Supervisor I	Administrative Services
Lopez, Alisha	Employment and Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Lopez, Laura	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Luna, Marbella	Employment and Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Maldonado, Jonathan	Social Worker II	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Mansouri, Fatemeh	Employment and Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Manzano, Oscar	Eligibility Technician	Assistance Programs
Marchan, Ruben	Social Services Supervisor I	Assistance Programs
Martin, Maria	Administrative Manager I	Children & Family Services
Martinez III, Frank	Eligibility Technician	Assistance Programs
Martinez, Heidi	Sr. Social Services Supervisor	Children & Family Services
Martinez, Janet	Employment and Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Martinez, Melinda	Administrative Manager I	Assistance Programs
Martinez, Rosa	Social Services Supervisor I	Assistance Programs
Mejia, Lilian	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Mesdary, Julianne	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Mitchell, Lori	Social Services Supervisor I	Assistance Programs



# Employee Promotions

NAME	CLASSIFICATION	DIVISION
Mora, Jeannette	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Moreno-Martinez, Francisca	Eligibility Technician	Assistance Programs
Navarro, Dolores	Social Services Supervisor II	Assistance Programs
Nguyen, Betty Huyen-Thao	Social Worker I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Nieves, Annette	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Noori, Salma	Eligibility Technician	Assistance Programs
Ochoa, Humberto	Social Services Supervisor I	Administrative Services
Ochoa, Sonia	Social Services Supervisor II	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Ojeda, Alicia	Administrative Manager II	Assistance Programs
Ongkeko, Grisel	Social Worker II	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Ornelas, Jaime	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Ortega, Jose	Employment and Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Padilla, Juana	Information Processing Technician	Children & Family Services
Patel, Shane	Sr. Social Services Supervisor	Children & Family Services
Paul, Karen Terese	Eligibility Technician	Assistance Programs
Pearsall-Carrion, Susan	Sr. Social Services Supervisor	Children & Family Services
Pena, Gerardo	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Perez, Adalberto	Employment and Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Perez, Maribel	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Pham, Tyler Nguyen	Social Worker II	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Pineda, Zuleyma	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Plascencia, Maximiliana	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Quan, Thanh	Social Worker I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Rahat, Hedieh	Social Worker I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Ramakrishnan, Asha	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Ramirez, Ednita	Sr. Social Services Supervisor	Children & Family Services
Ramirez, Stefani	Eligibility Supervisor	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Reyes, Sully	Eligibility Supervisor	Administrative Services

# Employee Promotions

NAME	CLASSIFICATION	DIVISION
Reynoso, Elizabeth	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Rodriguez, Alonso	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Rojas, Norma	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Sadeq, Ahmad	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Salazar, Veronica	Employment and Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Saldivar, Veronica	Sr. Social Services Supervisor	Children & Family Services
Santos, Daysy	Eligibility Technician	Assistance Programs
Scott, Amber	Sr. Social Worker	Children & Family Services
Shay, Daniel	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Shrieves, Sara	Secretary I	Assistance Programs
Solis, Rosa	Social Services Supervisor I	Administrative Services
Steffy, Jacquelyn	Social Worker II	Children & Family Services
Stephenson, Kim	Information Processing Technician	Children & Family Services
Tang, Ronald	Social Worker II	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Timmins, Kristen	Social Services Supervisor II	Administrative Services
Tovar, Sonya	Administrative Manager I	Assistance Programs
Tran, An	Director, Social Services	Administrative Services
Umana, Kimberly	Social Services Supervisor I	Administrative Services
Valdez, Marlene	Social Worker I	Children & Family Services
Vargas, Melissa	Administrative Manager I	Administrative Services
Vega, Amanda	Social Services Supervisor II	Assistance Programs
Vega, Ezequiel	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Vega, Maria	Secretary I	Children & Family Services
Vega, Melissa	Administrative Manager I	Administrative Services
Vega, Noem	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Ventura, Julio	Office Supervisor B	Children & Family Services
Vijeila, Sherin	Employment and Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

# Employee Promotions

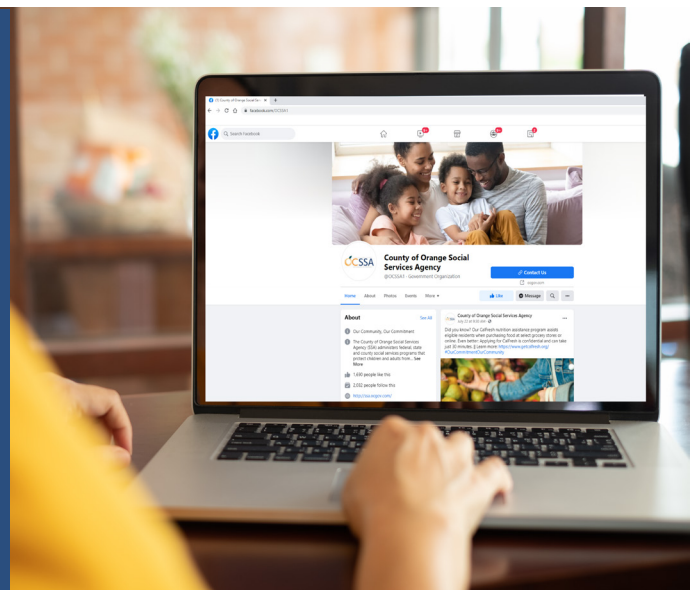
NAME	CLASSIFICATION	DIVISION
Waters, Rodney	Administrative Manager I	Administrative Services
White, Pamela	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Zuniga-Ribero, Yilda	Eligibility Technician	Assistance Programs

## In Memoriam

It is with deep sadness that we share the passing of Jacqueline Brewer, a former Employment and Eligibility Specialist at CalWORKs North office, on August 8, 2022. Jacqueline began her career at the County of Orange in 1991, when she worked at the County Assessor's Office.

Jacqueline was well-known for her professionalism, pleasant demeanor and smile. Our hearts go out to the family and loved ones of Jacqueline. She will truly be missed.

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