

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2023-2024



Table of Contents

Board of Supervisors	4
Director's Message	5
Agency Snapshot	6
Vision, Mission and Values	7
MOSAIC Goals	8
MOSAIC Implementation	9
Administrative Services	10
Assistance Programs	12
Children & Family Services	14
Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services	16
Client Letters	18



COUNTY OF ORANGE CALIFORNIA
OC Social Services Agency
Our Community, Our Commitment

Thanks to partnerships with community-based organizations, SSA outreach events frequently provide food for attendees to take home.





Orange County

Board of Supervisors



Chairman
Donald P. Wagner
Third District



Vice Chairman
Doug Chaffee
Fourth District



Supervisor
Andrew Do
First District



Supervisor
Vicente Sarmiento
Second District



Supervisor
Katrina Foley
Fifth District

Under the leadership and guidance of the Orange County Board of Supervisors, the County of Orange Social Services Agency (SSA) administers Federal, State and County social services programs that protect children and adults from abuse or neglect, enable the frail and disabled to remain in their homes, move eligible families from dependency to self-sufficiency and provide public assistance benefits for eligible recipients.

Director's Message

On behalf of the County of Orange Social Services Agency, I'm excited to share the Agency's Annual Report for the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year. This report captures the hard work and commitment of about 4,700 employees who serve the needs of 1



in 3 Orange County residents each day. It also highlights our collaborative work with faith- and community-based organizations, as well as partnerships with the Orange County Board of Supervisors and sister County departments.

This past fiscal year, we launched a five-year strategic plan with a mission to provide quality, integrated services that are accessible and responsive to our whole community. Much of this work is underway.

- We accelerated our outreach efforts to meet residents where they are, to increase their awareness of critical safety net programs and benefits, and to reduce their barriers to access – barriers such as language and transportation.
- We began assessing the needs of the county's older adult population as part of the Master Plan for Aging.
- We saw the renewed accreditation of our Child Abuse Services Team as the county's only Children's Advocacy Center, bringing together public safety agencies, medical

professionals, social workers, child interview specialists and child advocates to help victims of child abuse.

- We opened the County Community Service Center in the city of Brea to provide a second one-stop shop where residents can find social services programs and other community services.
- We saw the Medi-Cal population exceed 1 million Orange County residents and full-scope eligibility expand to more adults.
- We launched the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs to serve as a bridge between immigrants and refugees, and the supports they need to thrive in Orange County.
- And we celebrated the one-year anniversary of the statewide CalSAWS eligibility system, which streamlines access for residents to public assistance programs no matter where they live in California.

These reflect just a few highlights during the fiscal year. As you make your way through our Annual Report, you will see how our accomplishments and initiatives reflect our commitment to the community.

Looking forward, we plan to continue innovating in ways that will help us achieve the Agency's mission. We would not be able to do so without the tireless dedication of our staff and the enduring support of our partners.

An Tran
SSA Director

Agency SNAPSHOT

2023-2024



1 in 3

O.C. residents receive
SSA support



4,705

Employees



20

SSA locations

Last year, we participated in over 100 community events.

Our events
drew in over

25,000
attendees.

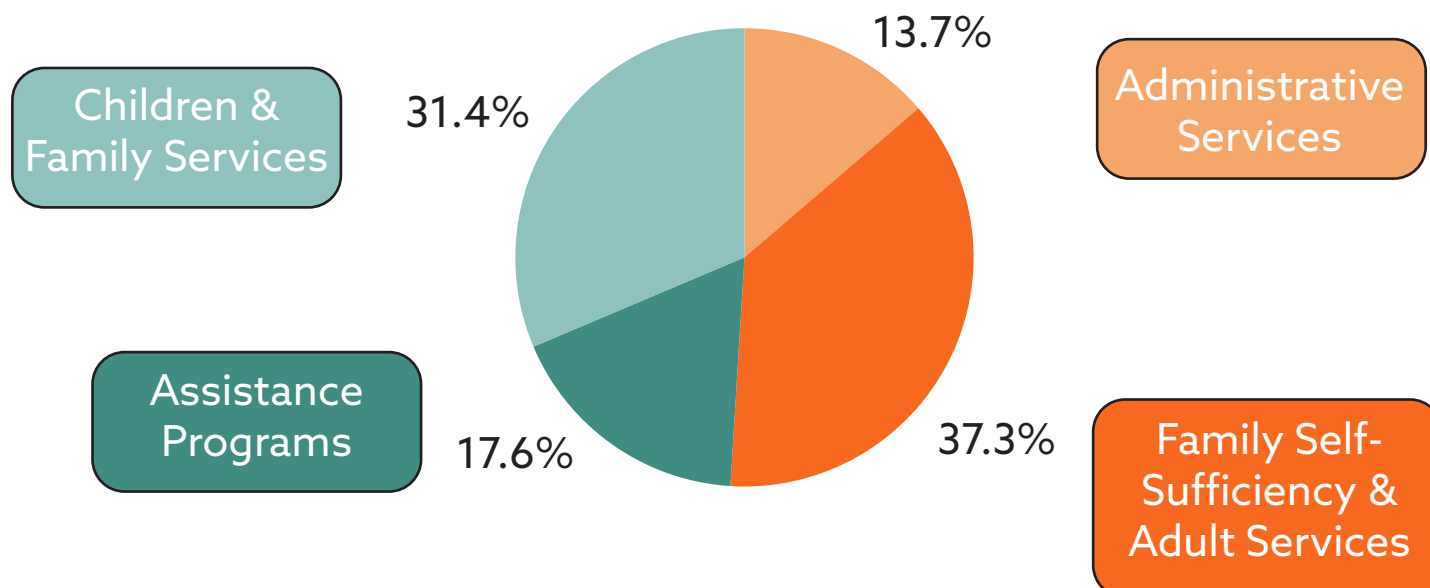
We assisted
over

10,000
people and families.

We partnered
with over

200
organizations.

In 2023-2024, SSA spent a total of \$1.192 billion on its programs.



Vision

A safe, resilient and healthy
community for all.



Mission

To provide quality,
integrated services that are
accessible and responsive to
our whole community.



Values

Respect | Integrity
Compassion | Inclusiveness



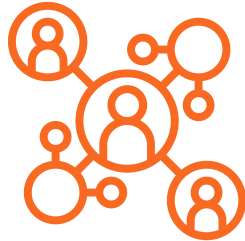
MOSAIC Goals

SSA has created its first five-year strategic plan called MOSAIC (Moving Our Strategy to Action and Integration in the Community). The plan provides the unifying big picture for where we are headed. MOSAIC consists of four multi-year goals to achieve SSA's new mission and vision.



Integrated, Accessible, Equitable and Client-Centered Services

Clients receive integrated services from their point of entry until they and/or their families have received the types of assistance they need from all appropriate work units.



Client-Centered Partnerships

Strengthen partnerships and collaborations with community partners, public agencies and other key stakeholders in support of integrated client services.



Employee Well-Being and Support

Enhance communications, employee training and professional development to support skill-building, job satisfaction, employee retention, succession planning and organizational effectiveness.



Technology

Improve the efficient and effective use of technology (and innovation in thought) to support staff and enhance integrated client services.



MOSAIC Implementation



More than 350 employees across SSA participated in MOSAIC kickoff events to share their ideas about the future of SSA. Supporters for each MOSAIC Goal met to brainstorm and identify which strategies to prioritize, all geared toward achieving the Agency's mission to provide quality, integrated services that are accessible and responsive to our whole community.



Administrative Services

Administrative Services (Admin) implements and coordinates resources behind the scenes to support SSA's programs and staff, allowing them to provide services critical to the community. Services include Accounting; Centralized Operations; Community & Government Relations; Contracts; Divisional Operations; Emergency Management & Safety; Facilities; Financial, Research and Data Analytics; Human Resources; Information Technology; Procurement; Program Integrity; Quality Support; Systems Management & Reporting; and Training & Career Development.

208,286

Applications
Submitted
through
BenefitsCal

\$64.8 million

Invested in
Community Services



SSA Warehouse staff gave backpacks, clothes and toys to Fullerton students to start the school year.

Accomplishments

- Operation Santa Claus distributed 27,174 gifts and toys to Orange County children in need. Senior Santa and Friends distributed more than 2,100 items to vulnerable adults, including 245 special requested items such as durable medical equipment. Together both programs collected more than 24,000 toys and gifts in 2023 by collaborating with 146 external businesses, 92 individual donors and 48 county agencies/ departments.
- The Emergency Management and Safety program expanded to prioritize staff training and exercises, mitigation, hazard analysis, response and recovery. This year, SSA partnered with the Orange County Sheriff's Department to train staff on Active Shooter/Active Attacker response techniques and prevention strategies. SSA also launched Alert SSA, the Agency's emergency notification system. Alert SSA gives the Agency the ability to quickly inform staff when there is a perceived, emerging or imminent emergency that affects safety or wellbeing.
- In September 2023, as part of the migration to a new statewide public benefit eligibility system, a new lobby management system rolled out, including a ticketing system, kiosks and tablets to make the check-in process more efficient.
- Partnering with County Executive Office and Human Resource Services, SSA participated in 26 one-day hiring events. Applicants participated in interviews, reference checks and health screening all in the same day. Nearly 550 job offers were made as a result of this highly successful and innovative approach to hiring.

Goal

- As a part of our five-year strategic plan MOSAIC, SSA will develop and implement a multi-year technology master plan that identifies needs, priorities, implementation steps and funding. SSA will evaluate our systems to ensure staff are best supported in their work, providing solutions for greater efficiency and accountability. The plan will improve the efficient and effective use of technology and innovation in thought to support staff and enhance integrated client services.

Assistance Programs

Assistance Programs (AP) serves as a safety net ensuring vulnerable adults, children and families have access to health care, food assistance and cash benefits to facilitate stability, self-sufficiency and independent living. Programs include CalFresh, Medi-Cal, General Relief and Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants.

530,069

Medi-Cal
Active Cases

181,332

CalFresh
Active Cases

5,726

General Relief
Active Cases



Clients met with eligibility staff for assistance in language at an outreach event at the Westminster Library.

Accomplishments

- Eligibility staff assisted about 530,000 families in navigating a return to the annual review process for Medi-Cal, health insurance provided to those who have low income. COVID-19 pandemic waivers allowed residents enrolled in Medi-Cal and Children's Health Insurance Programs (CHIP) to keep their coverage regardless of changes in their eligibility status. As a result of staff's efforts, on average 944,986 Orange County residents received Medi-Cal benefits.
- In November 2023, AP merged two teams to create the new Mentor, Onboarding and Quality Assurance (MOQA) Region. Mentor Onboarding supports newly hired eligibility staff by providing a more consistent onboarding experience with hands-on coaching. The Quality Assurance team supports existing eligibility staff by reviewing casework, hosting workshops and ensuring policy compliance. MOQA gives eligibility staff the tools to provide high quality customer service.
- Through the CalAIM Justice-Involved Reentry Initiative, AP expanded outreach efforts, including collaboration with community-based organizations and other County of Orange departments, and established a coordinated community reentry process. Outreach efforts connected Medi-Cal eligible youth and adults leaving incarceration to the physical and behavioral health services they may need prior to release and reentry into the community. The initiative helps address the health care needs of justice-involved individuals, delivering care more efficiently and advancing health equity across the county.

Goal

- Assistance Programs will embark on a business model redesign to enhance the customer experience, service delivery and business processes, thus providing a higher quality of service to the community.

Children & Family Services

Children & Family Services (CFS) works to protect children from abuse and neglect by partnering with families to ensure children live in safe, nurturing and permanent homes. Responding to child abuse reports, workers successfully divert more than 90% of cases through SSA's family resource centers and the support of community partners. Other services include providing support to youth in foster care and at risk-children.

806

Youth Reunified
With Their
Parents

1,535

Resource
Families

56,200

Calls to the Child
Abuse Hotline



The County of Orange departments came together to provide a night of spooky fun for foster youth at SSA's first Trunk or Treat event.

Accomplishments

- Often the first person a family encounters in child welfare is an Emergency Response social worker. This essential role requires engaging families, deescalating highly emotional circumstances and managing crises. To provide support and responsiveness to the community, CFS increased the number of staff, implemented safety monitoring measures and added crisis counseling and deescalation training.
- SSA continues to invest in the Orangewood Children & Family Center (OCFC), a shelter where abused and neglected children receive comfort and safety. Projects included the renovation of the kitchen, dining room and restrooms, replacement of the refrigeration system and exterior painting of the entire campus. In Fiscal Year 2023-2024, OCFC served 1,175 youth, averaging 52 youth in residence per day. Youth participate in events and extracurricular activities that promote normalcy and socialization, such as field trips to theaters, museums and cultural events.
- In February 2024, CFS implemented Motivational Interviewing (MI), an evidence-based practice aimed at creating an empathic, collaborative and empowering environment to address each client's unique challenges. This change is part of the Families First Prevention Services Act through a Comprehensive Prevention Plan, providing significant new opportunities to improve the well-being of Orange County residents.

Goal

- CFS continues to recruit and train more families willing to provide a safe and loving home to the most challenging foster youth through the Intensive Services Foster Care program.

Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) helps eligible families become self-sufficient through programs such as California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs), Foster Care, Welfare-to-Work, Cal-Learn and Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA). Adult Services (AS) is designed to support the well-being of vulnerable older adults, dependent adults and children through services such as Adult Protective Services (APS) and In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS).

98.2%

Of IHSS Applications
Processed Within
90 days

97.97%

Of CalWORKs
Applications Processed
Within 45 days



The newest County Community Service Center opened in Brea.

Accomplishments

- A new County Community Service Center opened in Brea on June 10, 2024, creating a second "one-stop-shop" for Orange County residents to connect to resources and services from government agencies and community organizations.
- Orange County continues to lead in engaging families in work activities as part of the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The Work Participation Rates are 47.8% for all families and 57.6% for two-parent families.
- APS transitioned to a new system, LEAPS, in December 2023, that allows staff to more efficiently record information about abuse and neglect cases. APS also added an application in June 2024 to track referrals and reporting for clients in the Home Safe Program.
- The IHSS Application Unit began processing CalFresh applications on February 1, 2024, in addition to Medi-Cal applications, providing holistic services to clients.

Goals

- FSS plans to continue to increase engagement of CalWORKs participants by 5% as part of CalWORKs Outcome and Accountability Review (CalOAR)-System Improvement Plan to reach a goal of 60.6%.
- FSS will continue to work with the

District Attorney's office to combat Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) fraud by implementing preventative measures, keeping CalFresh and CalWORKs clients informed and promoting community awareness.

Client Letters

We are grateful to serve our community every day. Letters like these from our clients remind us that our work matters.



"I want to thank you specifically. Without your suggestion, I would have never thought to apply my skills towards the benefit of others. I am extremely grateful for your direction and help!"

Dear OrangeWood

We like OrangeWood because you take care of kids that have been in bad situations. OrangeWood is important to us because they try to find families that will love the kids there as their own.

We raised money for y'all by selling baked goods and jewelry at an after-school market. We made around \$150 to \$200. We're just estimating.

Once again, we love what you guys do and we appreciate what you do for kids that need a family. Thank you!

"I'd like to take the time to say that we appreciate what you've done for our family. I hope your organization knows you're an asset, that you go above and beyond to make sure your clients' needs are met and that you take the time to listen. Being homeless and a mother, you gave me hope and made me believe that people like you do exist. May you continue to do the awesome work you've been doing. Thank you for being consistent with my case, always reaching out and making sure we're taken care of. You didn't just see me as a case number but as an individual looking forward to getting my life back. Thank you, thank you, thank you!"





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