

# Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2024-2025



# 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





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# Orange County Board of Supervisors



**Chair**  
**Doug Chaffee**  
Fourth District



**Vice Chair**  
**Katrina Foley**  
Fifth District



**Supervisor**  
**Janet Nguyen**  
First District



**Supervisor**  
**Vicente Sarmiento**  
Second District



**Supervisor**  
**Donald P. Wagner**  
Third District

Under the leadership and guidance of the Orange County Board of Supervisors, the County of Orange Social Services Agency 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 (SSA), I'm delighted to share the Agency's Annual Report for the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year. The following pages highlight the accomplishments and initiatives of our more than 4,000 staff who support the most vulnerable residents of Orange County. Our efforts would not be possible without SSA's collaborative relationships with fellow County departments, community partners and faith-based organizations as well as support from the Orange County Board of Supervisors.

This past fiscal year, SSA has experienced unprecedented economic and legislative uncertainties impacting safety net programs that residents rely on to get through difficult times.

Despite these challenges, our staff have remained committed to supporting, uplifting and meeting the needs of one-in-three Orange County residents each day. By leading with the Agency's values of respect, integrity, compassion and inclusiveness, they have stepped up more than ever to ensure the safety and well-being of the lives we serve.

During this time, SSA has focused on deepening partnerships, conducting ongoing targeted outreach, embracing new technologies and making our services and programs more accessible to the community. We continue to take advantage of innovative ways to bring our staff and resources closer to residents, meeting them where they are.

SSA will continue our work in strengthening Orange County to create a safe, resilient and healthy community for all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'An Tran', written in a cursive style.

An Tran  
SSA Director

# Agency Snapshot

2024-2025

In 2024 -2025, we administered

## \$1.3 billion

on behalf of the federal and state governments in support of CalFresh, Medi-Cal, General Relief, CalWORKs, In-Home Supportive Services, child and adult protective services and more.

**4,622**  
employees



**17**  
office locations

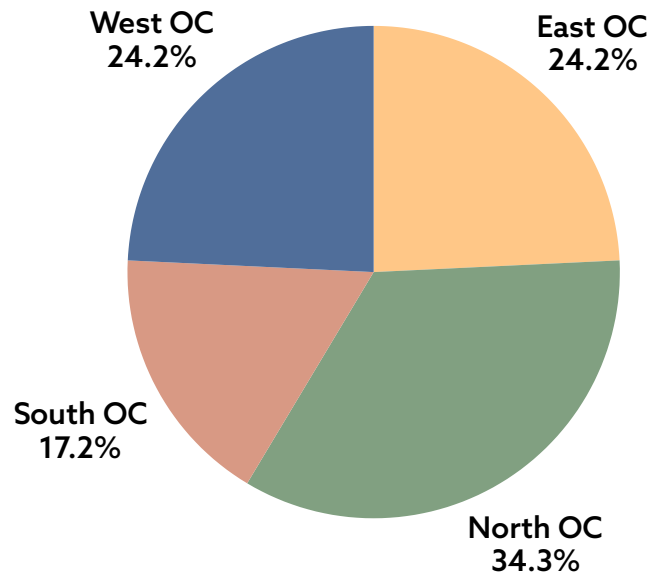




SSA serves  
**1,024,142**

Orange County residents

\*as of June 2025



That's about

**1 in 3** adults

**1 in 2** children

**1 in 3** seniors

who receive SSA's support



# MOSAIC Goals

SSA's first five-year strategic plan, MOSAIC (Moving Our Strategy to Action and Integration in the Community), was established in 2023 to provide the unifying big picture for where we are headed. MOSAIC consists of four multi-year goals to achieve SSA's mission and vision.

## Goal A: Integrated, Accessible, Equitable and Client-Centered Service

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.



## Goal B: Client-Centered Partnerships

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



## Goal C: 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.



## Goal D: Technology

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





# This year we:

## GOAL A

- Launched a Business Model Redesign initiative to explore impactful changes to Medi-Cal and CalFresh service delivery processes
- Began piloting a new Family Services Worker role to more holistically support the needs of CalWORKs clients with child welfare involvement

## GOAL B

- Gathered existing partnership resources
- Explored current platforms to house resource information

## GOAL C

- Explored ways to support employee well-being such as recorded wellness sessions, virtual mindfulness events and centralized wellness resources
- Consolidated onboarding resources for new employees

## GOAL D

- Explored relevant internal technology training for employees
- Implemented a standardized caller ID for phone calls to clients





# 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.



Over  
**50,000**

beneficiaries created new  
BenefitsCal accounts

More than  
**35,000**

toys and gifts collected by  
Operation Santa Claus and Senior  
Santa and Friends





## Spreading Cheer Year-Round

Operation Santa Claus (OSC) and Senior Santa and Friends (SSF) work year-round to support Orange County's most vulnerable children and older adults. This year, in collaboration with 155 external businesses, 78 donors and 44 County departments, OSC and SSF distributed more than 29,000 toys and gifts.

## Skyrocketing BenefitsCal Use

SSA launched a campaign to increase the use of BenefitsCal, a platform that allows clients to apply for and manage benefits like Medi-Cal and CalFresh without leaving the comfort of their home. Annual benefit renewal reports submitted through BenefitsCal have nearly doubled, indicating a substantial increase in user engagement.

## Protecting Clients with EBT Chip Cards

In 2025, California became the first state to enhance fraud protection by introducing electronic chip/tap-enabled Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards. The cards replace outdated magnetic stripe versions that left vulnerable families at risk of skimming and theft. These secure cards helped over 153,000 Orange County residents safeguard their benefits and personal information.

## Looking Ahead

As part of our ongoing technological advancements, SSA is migrating physical child welfare case files to a digital format. The Child Welfare Services - California Automated Response and Engagement System (CWS-CARES) is a new statewide system intended to modernize child welfare case management by making it easier to track cases, supporting children and families more effectively. The system is set to launch across California in October 2026.





# 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.



518,639

Medi-Cal cases

143,987

CalFresh cases

6,056

General Relief cases

\*all statistics are averages





## Launching a Business Model Redesign

In a strategic effort to deliver more effective services, AP explored a comprehensive business model redesign aimed at enhancing the customer experience, streamlining service delivery and improving internal processes.

## Improving Client Navigation and Reduced Wait Times

This year, public-facing lobbies received an additional team of eligibility workers dedicated to triaging needs, identifying urgent issues and connecting clients to resources. By increasing SSA lobby staff, customers experienced shorter wait times and more focused customer service.

## Decreasing Call Abandonment Rates

After adjusting call center hours, call abandonment rates dropped from 31.2% to 12.25% reflecting higher efficiency in meeting customers needs, particularly during peak call times.

## Looking Ahead

With significant policy changes and fiscal challenges on the horizon, AP's goal is to maintain high quality customer service while concurrently fostering staff engagement.





# 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.



8,683

child abuse referrals  
investigated

3,249

in-person visits facilitated between  
children and parents by the Visitation  
and Support Services team

54,949

child abuse calls received by  
the hotline





## Creating Warmth and Welcome

The vision for a home-like visitation space at Orangewood Children and Family Center became a reality thanks to a grant from the Orange County Department of Education. With a trauma-informed and nature-inspired design, children can cook a meal, do homework or watch a movie with their families to maintain their bonds as their parents work toward reunification.

## Overcoming Foster Care Challenges

Over the past year, CFS focused on building a stronger network of Intensive Services Foster Care (ISFC) homes. The IFSC program provides specialty medical and mental health treatment to stabilize youth in home-based care, instead of group-home placement.

## Looking Ahead

CFS will focus on Family Finding and Engagement (FFE) efforts, the process of identifying relatives and kin of youth in foster care. FFE reestablishes connections between foster youth and their family members, encouraging shared holidays, birthday wishes or support in any aspect the family can offer. CFS plans to increase efforts to meet foster youth's complex needs.





# 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).

**19,729**

CalWORKs applications  
processed

**98.5%**

of IHSS applications  
processed within 90 days

**98%**

of APS initial face-to-face  
referrals/investigations  
completed within 10 days





## Advancing Community Partnerships

To better support Orange County's families and vulnerable adults, FSS-AS organized a series of Contractor Resource Fairs to connect staff with contracted providers. More than 300 staff members attended the events in addition to 13 contractors and community members. These fairs allowed staff and partners to reinforce a shared commitment to helping clients succeed.

## Streamlining In-Home Supportive Services

In-Home Supportive Services implemented a new service delivery business model focused on increasing staff support and accountability in meeting specific state mandates like processing applications within 90 days and meeting state reassessment rates.

## Looking Ahead

IHSS will implement a new Telehealth Reassessment Option for eligible clients, providing flexibility and easier access to their redetermination of benefits. Clients receiving benefits will be able to request a reassessment at any time if their circumstances change.

To address client-facing barriers, like time or transportation, to SSA resources, FSS will strategically expand field-based services, implementing targeted outreach efforts, increasing in-person client contact and offering clients additional services that they may be eligible for.



# This Year's Spotlights

We're proud to showcase the work that reflect our commitment to excellence and innovation. Here's a look back at several key milestones and initiatives we've celebrated as an Agency this past fiscal year.



## Leading the State in Kinship Placement

When children enter the foster care system, SSA prioritizes keeping them in familiar settings — with family, friends or neighbors. Maintaining family connection during the time a child is out of their parents' custody is vital to their well-being and growth. Orange County ranks first out of all 58 California counties in kinship placement with a 48% success rate.

## Boosting CalFresh Awareness Across College Campuses

SSA's Community Engagement team and Assistance Program's outstation efforts reached over 1,400 college students across Orange County this past fiscal year. In collaboration with higher education entities, SSA helped college students overcome barriers by providing on-campus application assistance and management of existing benefits. One student shared, "By enrolling in CalFresh I don't have to eat Cup Noodles every day. I can have a good meal now."







## Celebrating 30 Years with FaCT

This year, FaCT (Families and Communities Together) celebrated its 30th year with an annual conference packed with honorary speakers, partners and excited attendees.



## OIRA Celebrates One-Year Anniversary

In May, the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) celebrated its one-year anniversary. More than 160 attendees including community members, partners, stakeholders and representatives from the Orange County Board of Supervisors attended a celebration that featured powerful storytelling through panel discussions, poetry readings, narrative excerpts and an Entrepreneurial Spirit Award ceremony.





# 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 both for helping me and my baby during a really difficult time. You were always just a phone call or email away and went above and beyond! We now have permanent housing with the help and resources that were offered to us and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Honestly, I'm in tears as I write this as you have no idea how much easier you made it for me considering all the stress I was already dealing with and things I'm going through as a single mom experiencing domestic violence and relocating with a 2-year-old."

A photograph of two women standing in front of a brick wall. The woman on the left is wearing a pink sweater and has dark hair. The woman on the right is wearing a light blue sweater and has long dark hair. Both are smiling at the camera.

**Kathy Hernandez**  
Social Worker II (Case Manager)

**Alicia Quintana**  
Employment & Eligibility Specialist



"I used to fear going into a Social Services Agency office but not anymore. I now know that from the moment I walk in, I will be greeted with a smile and any problem or issue will be resolved. The positive energy is contagious! I always leave the office in better spirits than when I walk in. The entire team is amazing. Everyone I have contact with is helpful, kind and acts as a part of a team. It's amazing! Other people may walk in with a bad mood, but your team takes it in stride. Thank you to everyone on the team and especially to Chacha who has helped me on more than one occasion. She is absolutely wonderful and I am immensely grateful for her help."



**Chacha Lopez**  
**Eligibility Technician**



**Albert Nevarez**  
**Social Worker II**

"SSA's Adoption Program receives more than 300 public inquiries each year called post adoption inquiries. Recently, a post adoption inquiry was submitted by an adoptee reaching out to contact any member of her biological family. This was the first time the adoptee had reached out to SSA. The inquiry was assigned to Albert, who went above and beyond in handling this sensitive inquiry. He communicated with the parties in a timely manner and was able to provide a very high standard of public service to two sisters who were initially placed in separate homes. The sisters were so appreciative of Albert's assistance that they sent photos accompanied by the following: 'Thank You, Albert. God Bless you!'"



# Notes









[www.ssa.ocgov.com](http://www.ssa.ocgov.com)



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