COUNTY OF ORANGE CALIFORNIA
OC SocialServicesAgency
Our Community, Our Commitment

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2025-2026



County of Orange Social Services Agency

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

Goal A



Integrated, Accessible, Equitable and Client-Centered Services

Goal B



Client-Centered Partnerships

Goal C



Employee Well-Being and Support

Goal D



Technology

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Our Leadership

Board of Supervisors 1

Executive Team 2

Director's Message 3

Our Agency

Agency Snapshot 4

Administrative Services 5

Assistance Programs 7

Children & Family Services 9

Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services 11

This Year's Spotlights 13

Client Letters 15

Acknowledgements 17

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.

Social Services Agency
Executive Team



An Tran
Director



Veronica Rodriguez
Chief Deputy Director



Dorthe Lee
Division Director
Administrative Services



Mike Edmundson
Division Director
Assistance Programs



Loan English
Division Director
Children & Family Services



Gail Araujo
Division Director
Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services



Dr. Sara Marchese
Medical Director

The County of Orange Social Services Agency's Executive Team provides high-level leadership and informed decision-making to guide the Agency's administration of social services programs and advancement of initiatives that ensure the safety and well-being of Orange County's most vulnerable residents. The team also oversees the Agency's strategic direction in fulfilling the mission, vision, values and goals defined under the five-year plan, MOSAIC (Moving Our Strategy to Action and Integration in the Community).

Director's Message



On behalf of the County of Orange Social Services Agency (SSA), I'm excited to share the Agency's Annual Report for the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year. This report looks back at the meaningful efforts the Agency has taken to support Orange County's most vulnerable residents. Behind those efforts are more than 4,000 employees dedicated to the mission of providing quality, integrated services that are accessible and responsive to our whole community. Of course, that work would not be possible without our collaborative relationships with fellow County departments, community partners, faith-based organizations and the Orange County Board of Supervisors.

As you'll discover in the report, there's much for SSA to be proud of. Despite persisting financial uncertainty brought on by state and federal legislation, we remained focused on delivering high-quality service to residents. We continued to be proactive in partnering with organizations across our community to bring much needed services and resources to high-impact populations including families, seniors, college students and immigrant communities. We implemented new technologies to reduce barriers for those we serve and to streamline our work processes. And we celebrated 40 years of providing temporary shelter to children who have experienced abuse, neglect or abandonment.

These examples offer only a glimpse of what we've accomplished as an Agency. As SSA moves on to the next fiscal year, we will continue to work closely with community partners to meet the needs of residents, to embrace new technologies to make our services and programs even more accessible and to deliver services that contribute to a safe, resilient and healthy community for all.

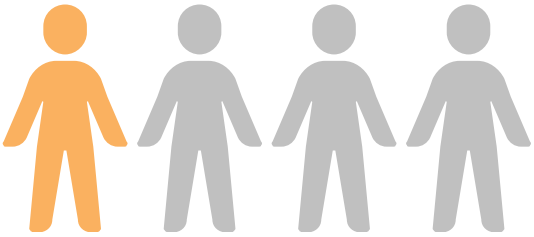


An Tran
SSA Director

Agency Snapshot

In 2025-2026, we administered $1.3 billion on behalf of the Federal, State and County governments in support of CalFresh, Medi-Cal, General Relief, CalWORKs, In-Home Supportive Services, Adult Protective Services, Children & Family Services programs and more.

SSA serves **1 in 4** residents in Orange County

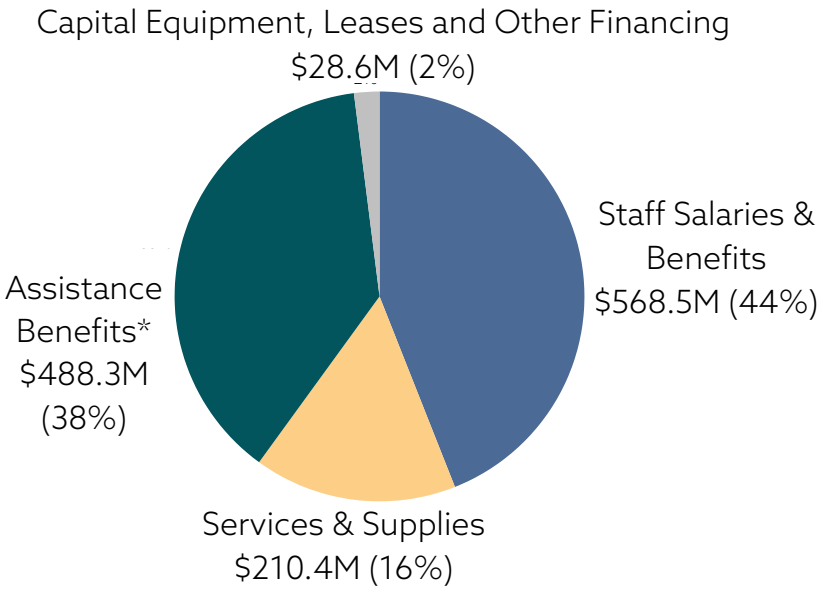


16 office locations

4,306 employees

2025 - 2026 Budget

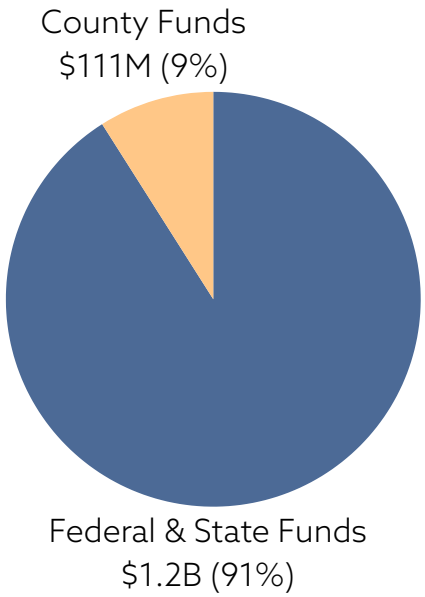
Expenditures



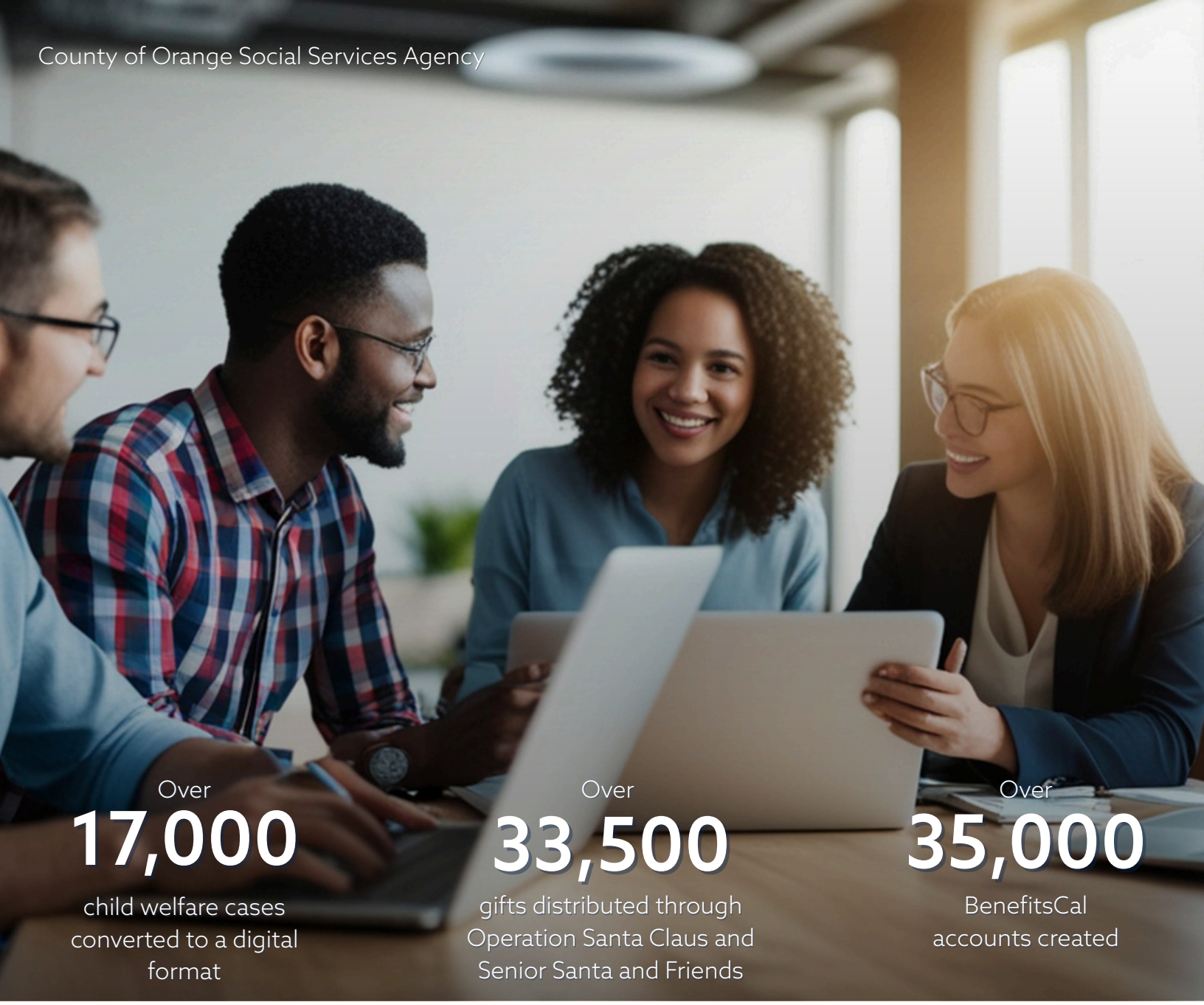
*Direct benefit payments from state and federal funds to eligible OC residents; restricted in nature.

Total $1.3 B

Revenue



Total $1.3 B



Administrative Services

Administrative Services (AS) 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; Administrative Services Divisional Operations; Centralized Operations; Community Relations; Contracts; Emergency Management and Safety; Facilities; Financial, Research and Data Analytics; Human Resources; Information Technology; Immigrant and Refugee Affairs; Procurement; Program Integrity; Quality Support; Strategic Communications; Systems Management and Reporting; and Training and Career Development.

Bringing Resources to the Community

SSA's Community Engagement and Outstation team hosted a total of 250 unique community events across Orange County. These events spanned a wide range of formats, partnerships and audiences, reflecting SSA's ongoing commitment to meeting residents where they live and connecting them with vital resources and support.



Improving Customers' Access to Services

This fiscal year, SSA enhanced customer access by reducing spam-flagged outbound calls through a new standardized caller ID system and by promoting the ongoing use of BenefitsCal, the online platform that allows clients to apply for and manage benefits such as Medi-Cal, CalFresh and CalWORKs from home. Over 35,000 clients created new BenefitsCal accounts and nearly 45% of all active beneficiaries adopted the platform to manage their benefits online.

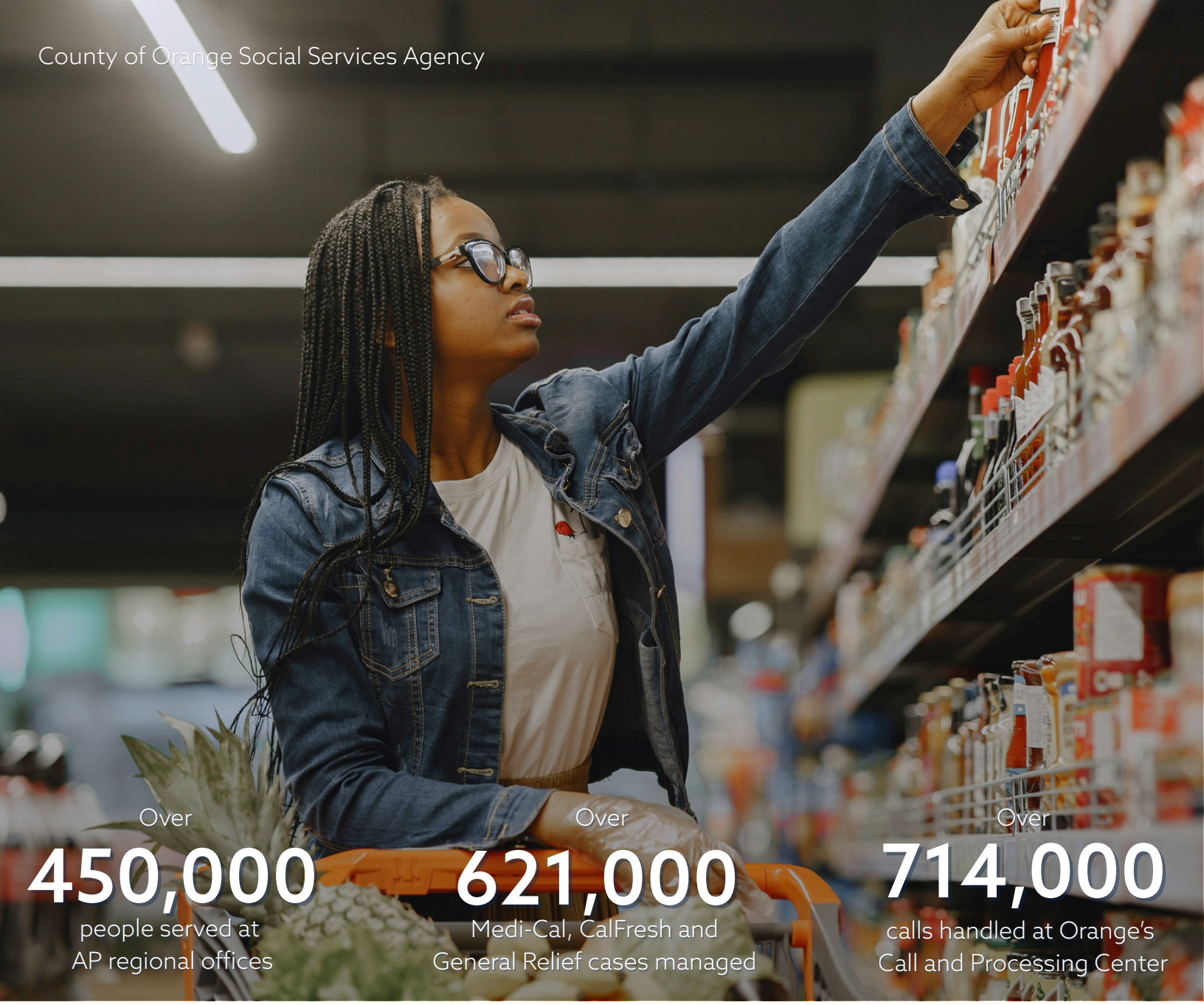


Managing Contracts and Procurement

SSA managed over 2,000 requisitions and 554 agreements, totaling $214 million in contracts and procurement services. This level of activity underscores the value and complexity of SSA's partnerships with vendors, service providers and community-based organizations, all of which play a critical role in supporting the Agency's delivery of essential services to vulnerable residents.

Looking Ahead

In keeping with MOSAIC Goal D and the modernization of technology, SSA looks forward to adding generative AI solutions across its programs and operations to enhance efficiency. These include the implementation of the Contact Center Call Summarization, which will automate standardized after-call summaries, enabling more consistent journal entries, reducing after-call wrap time and strengthening overall call center efficiency.



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.

Implementing H.R. 1 Requirements

Federal law under H.R. 1 created substantial changes to Medi-Cal and CalFresh eligibility rules for customers. AP navigated these challenges by continually planning ahead, collaborating with the state to stay apprised of ongoing policy and system updates, ensuring staff were adequately trained, and delivering ongoing communications to key stakeholders including residents, community partners and media. These efforts helped to ensure residents remained well-informed and compliant with the new rules while experiencing minimal disruption in receiving services.



Shifting to Holistic Case Management

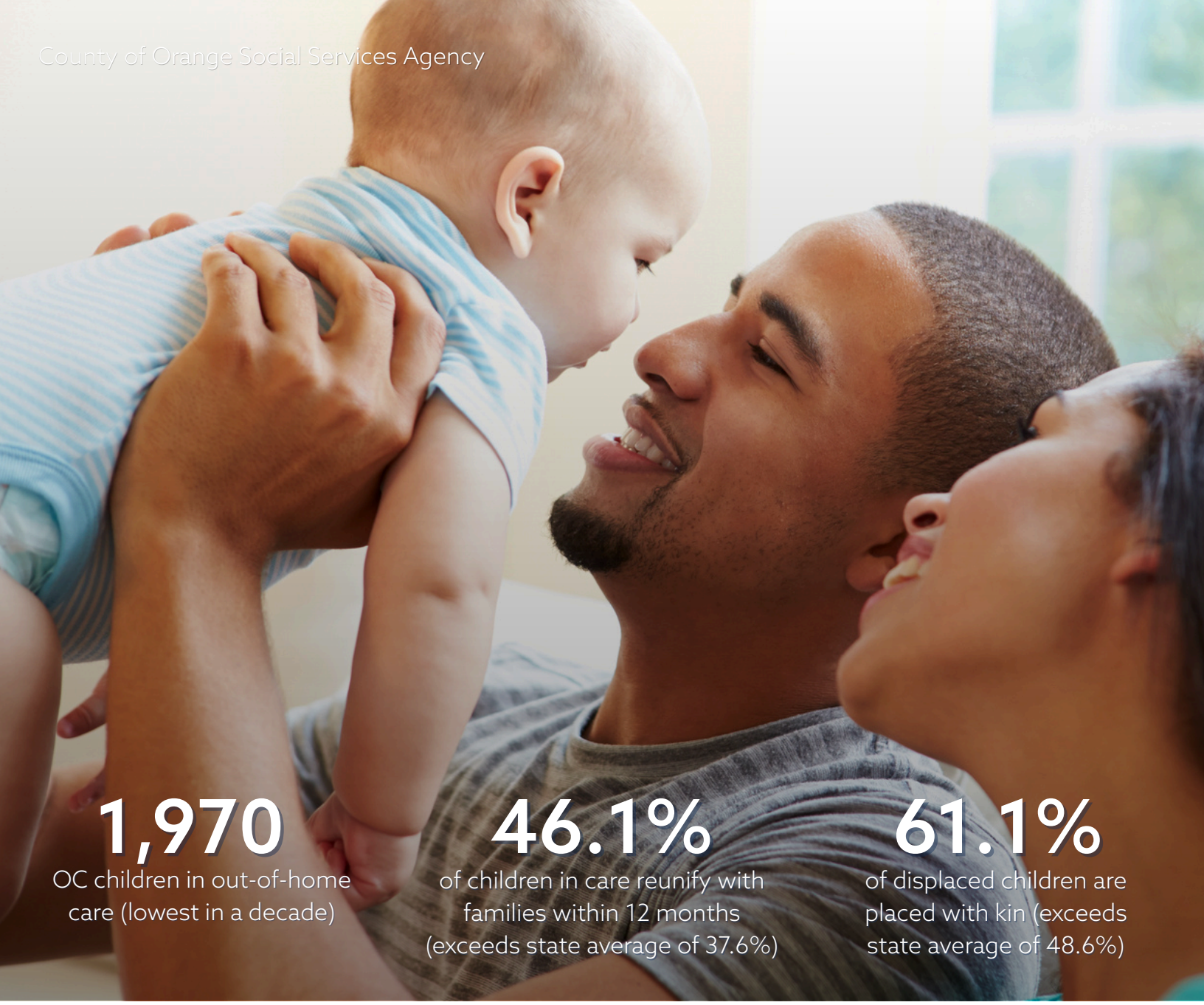
Aligning with MOSAIC Goal A (Integrated, Accessible, Equitable and Client-Centered Services), AP concluded its business model redesign assessment by launching the Caseload Service Delivery Pilot at the Garden Grove Regional Center (GGRC). The pilot involves shifting the management of GGRC cases to individual assigned workers, repurposing the roles of lobby staff and adapting call center operations to meet the needs of customers more efficiently. The objective of the pilot is to improve the accuracy of benefit determinations, maintain accountability to the residents we serve and create a more holistic service delivery experience.

Maintaining Optimal Service Delivery

This fiscal year, AP overcame the challenges of limited staffing brought on by a countywide hiring freeze and an 18% staff decrease. Leaders came together to reassess the division's workload priorities and redirected the focus of two specialized teams to take on urgent/high-impact work, thus alleviating regional office workloads. They further found opportunities to simplify work processes and relocate staff to where they could contribute the greatest impact. These operational shifts helped to minimize the impacts of staffing losses to AP's mandated performance standards and service delivery.

Looking Ahead

AP will continue to work closely with the state and community partners to support the communication and implementation of 2027 H.R. 1 requirements including Medi-Cal Work and Community Engagement Requirements and six-month renewals, and focus on helping impacted residents navigate the new eligibility rules. At the same time, the division will remain committed to delivering high-quality customer service, engaging and supporting staff, and strengthening operational adaptability to meet organizational and community needs.



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 children at risk.

Moving Forward with FFPSA

CFS has completed the scope of work for the Families First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), defining the community pathway for Orange County (prevention services and supports to keep OC families safely together), incorporating the input of community partners and individuals with lived experience, and integrating Plans of Safe Care (supports for infants affected by substance exposure) with SSA's hospital partners.



Supporting Family Connections and Permanency

CFS established the Family Finding and Engagement (FFE) unit to support familial connections for foster youth and, when possible and appropriate, potential placement with family. This fiscal year, the unit strengthened family connections and permanency outcomes by creating 39 sibling connections, initiating 19 relative placements, identifying 318 relatives and re-engaging 21 parents.

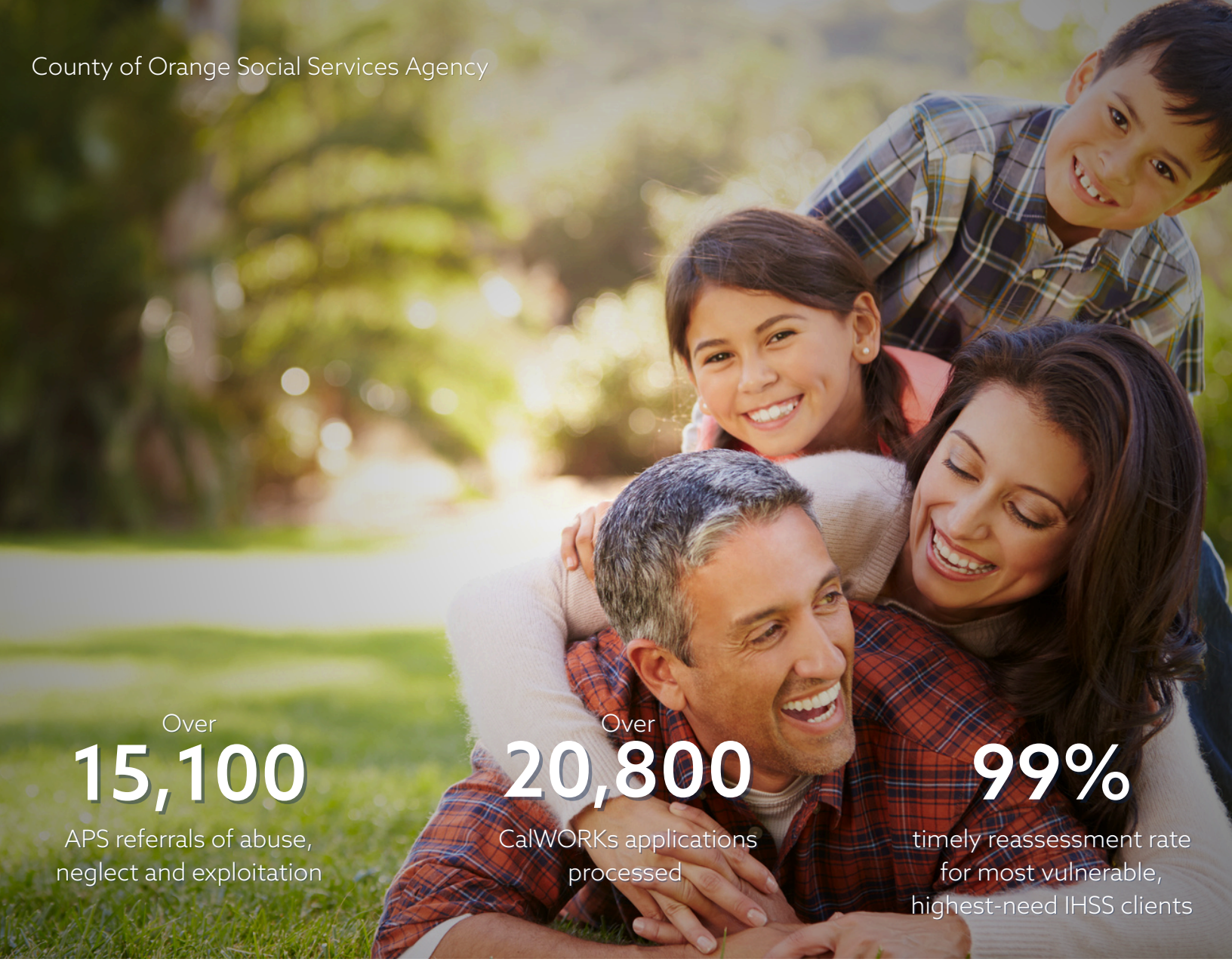


Achieving High Fidelity Wraparound

Led by SSA, the Orange County Wraparound program achieved High Fidelity Wraparound Certification, being recognized as fully aligned with the state standards for delivering evidence based services. Since 2001, OC Wraparound has served as a model for personalized, team-based and holistic care for Orange County children and youth with complex behavior health or special needs. Wraparound aligns with MOSAIC Goal B (Client-Centered Partnerships) through the strong collaboration between SSA, other County departments, community partners and contracted providers. To date, Wraparound has served approximately 9,100 youth and continues to serve about 357 youth each month.

Looking Ahead

CFS is excited to lead the implementation of the state's new child welfare system of record in Orange County, replacing the 28-year-old Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) with the CWS-California Automated Response and Engagement System (CWS-CARES). CWS-CARES is intended to enhance the efficiency of SSA's social workers and allow for more timely and effective outcomes for youth and families served.



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) supports 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).

IHSS Telehealth Reassessments



In March 2026, aligning with MOSAIC Goal A (Client-Centered Services) to ensure greater accessibility, IHSS implemented a Telehealth option for eligible clients needing to complete their annual reassessment to continue receiving benefits. Instead of having a social worker come to their home, clients now have a more convenient option to complete an interview with their social worker over the phone or video. Since launch, more than 500 telehealth reassessments have been completed.

Reorganizing Laguna Hills Regional Center

In March 2026, in alignment with MOSAIC Goal A (Client-Centered Services) and efforts to maximize resources at all levels of the organization, SSA's Laguna Hills Regional Center (LHRC) implemented the merger of the FSS-AS and Assistance Programs divisions. This included shifting clerical staff to support customers at the lobby windows, returning eligibility staff to full-time case processing, and consolidating workspaces and meetings for greater efficiency. This merger has allowed for a reorganization of staff across both divisions to offer a more integrated customer service experience at LHRC.



Strengthening APS Partnerships

This fiscal year, APS convened approximately 300 Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) meetings, bringing together community partners in healthcare, housing, behavioral health, law enforcement and other areas to coordinate services for vulnerable older and dependent adults. These MDTs align with MOSAIC Goal B (Client-Centered Partnerships), strengthening cross-system collaboration and coordinated responses, resulting in more timely interventions, better risk mitigation and stronger continuity of care for clients.

Looking Ahead

FSS looks forward to implementing CalWORKs transformations under California Senate Bill (SB) 119, updating policies, business processes, staff training and service delivery practices that meet the state's requirements, which include emphasizing participant engagement, collaborative case planning and reducing barriers to self-sufficiency. These changes are intended to provide a more responsive and equitable service experience for CalWORKs participants by tailoring employment plans to individual family circumstances, strengthening supportive services and promoting long-term economic mobility while maintaining program accountability.

This Year's Spotlights

We're proud to showcase the work that reflects our commitment to excellence and innovation. Here's a look back at four unique successes we've achieved as an Agency this year.



Orangewood Celebrates 40th Anniversary

Orangewood Children and Family Center (OCFC) celebrated its 40th anniversary, having opened in 1985 as a temporary home for children experiencing abuse or neglect. SSA hosted a ceremony to recognize OCFC's advocates and community supporters over the years, followed by a circus-themed event with food, games and entertainment for the children in residence. OCFC provides care for over 1,100 children every year with the support of SSA's group counselors, community partners and volunteers.



SSA Responds to Garden Grove Chemical Incident

A chemical incident in Garden Grove forced the evacuation of nearly 50,000 Orange County residents over Memorial Day weekend. SSA's Emergency Management Team coordinated with American Red Cross and County partners to rapidly set up seven overnight shelters that supported as many as 1,250 displaced residents and 78 pets. Other SSA volunteers also joined the effort by answering calls on the Public Information Hotline, providing translation services, supporting the deployment of shower trailers and checking on vulnerable families and adults.



Outstation Team Awarded for CalFresh Efforts

The Outstation Team was recognized by the University of California, Irvine's (UCI) Basic Needs Center with the 2026 Partnership Impact Award for their efforts promoting CalFresh enrollment among college students. The award is a testament to SSA's commitment to continually finding ways to bring services directly to the community. This fiscal year, the team helped over 1,800 students across different Orange County college campuses with CalFresh application assistance and benefits management.



APS Establishes Agreement with Public Guardian

Adult Protective Services (APS) celebrated the establishment of a new interdepartmental agreement with the Health Care Agency's Public Guardian. This formalized partnership enables both agencies to convene as a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) to review complex cases, share resources and develop solutions that best meet the needs of elderly and dependent adults, with the goal of preventing the need for conservatorship except as a last resort.

Client Letters

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



Cynthia (not pictured)
Senior Social Worker

"We would like to express our deepest appreciation for the presence and support from Cynthia throughout the CFS process. It was an extremely difficult, challenging and often overwhelming time, but Cynthia's unwavering support and ability to help us navigate the complexities of the system made it more manageable. Her assistance in connecting us with services, such as parenting classes, counseling and additional resources made a significant difference. Cynthia's patience, understanding and commitment to the well-being of the children was invaluable. Our family appreciates how she took the time out of her busy day to listen to our concerns and provide clear and timely information while maintaining a positive and hopeful outlook. We appreciate her empathy, non-judgmental approach, clarity and reassurance as well as her dedication to ensuring our voices were heard.

Knowing that we had someone like Cynthia on our side, someone who genuinely cared about the family's well-being, made a tremendous difference. We are thankful for all of her hard work dedication and for going the extra mile to help. We are committed to continuing the progress made and are grateful for the solid foundation Cynthia helped to build. Moreover, my paramount concern has always been the well-being of my grandchildren and I firmly believe that Cynthia's contributions have been instrumental in maintaining our family's stability. Her expertise and compassionate approach were invaluable for us in navigating a challenging situation and I attribute a significant portion of our positive outcome – maintaining a cohesive family unit – to her tireless efforts. I estimate that she was responsible for a majority of the success we've achieved. I strongly urge you to recognize Cynthia's outstanding performance and dedication to her work. She deserves the highest commendation for her service to our family."

"I met with Yesenia who explained everything clearly and showed courtesy and kindness. She explained what she needed, gave me forms and explained how to download information. She was positive and supportive. She expressed concern for our family situation and was able to resolve the CalFresh issue. This was compassion in action, far beyond what I expected."





"Ms. Elizabeth has been my social worker for about a year or so now and has been absolutely wonderful. She genuinely cares and gives me honest feedback. She has helped me be more focused and more involved in going back to school for my G.E.D. She makes sure I'm staying on task and when I start to fall behind, she's always there reassuring I can get back on track and do what needs to be done.

She goes above and beyond by making sure I always have the resources my family and I need. This year my family and I were chosen for the Operation Santa Claus program where I received gifts for my three children. I can never thank her enough for not only thinking of me, but my children as well. She's been so great and I'm glad I am able to receive such genuine care from the County. Thank you for all you do, Ms. Elizabeth!"

"I want to sincerely thank you for taking the time to review my client's appeal. Your thoroughness and attention to detail throughout the investigation was truly appreciated and played a key role in effectively resolving all our concerns. We were impressed by your depth of knowledge and the clarity with which you explained each aspect of the case. Your patience and professionalism made the entire process understandable and straightforward. You turned what had been a stressful situation into a very positive experience, and for that, we are truly grateful. Thank you again for your outstanding work."



Acknowledgements

Thank you to all SSA employees for embodying the Agency's values of respect, integrity, compassion and inclusiveness in all you do in service to the Agency's mission, vision and goals.









Notes

COUNTY OF ORANGE CALIFORNIA

OC Social Services Agency

Our Community, Our Commitment

www.ssa.ocgov.com

@OCSocialServicesAgency @OCSocialServicesAgency