

OCCSSA TODAY

Respect · Compassion · Fairness · Courtesy · Diversity · Creativity · Initiative · Efficiency · Integrity · Teamwork · Thoroughness

MAINTAINING RESILIENCY DURING COVID-19

CONTENTS

COVID-19 Resources	2
Innovation Challenge Deadline Extended	2
SSA Spotlight: Excellence in Service	3
Recognizing Social Work Month	4
Your Monthly Micro-Mindful Moment	4
SSA Marks First Full Year of Countywide Restaurant Meals Program	5
UC Riverside Hosts Social Services Panel on Homelessness	5
Beyond the Call: Exceptional Service in Action	6
SSA Promotions	8
Connect with Us!	8

During this time, our daily lives have been interrupted in ways none of us imagined. While at times these changes may feel overwhelming, there are steps we can all take to maintain our positive physical and mental wellbeing and ensure we are doing our part to keep our loved ones and community healthy.

1. Practice social distancing - critical to slowing the spread of illness

- Maintain enough distance between yourself and another person (generally six feet).
- Avoid shaking hands.
- Stay home if you begin to feel unwell.
- Cancel or reschedule all non-essential SSA meetings, travel, events and trainings, or consider scheduling via teleconference/web format.



2. Continue to follow good health practices

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

3. Consider the following tips for maintaining good mental wellbeing (from the World Health Organization)

- Only seek information from trusted sources – minimize watching or reading anything that makes you anxious.
- Stay connected and maintain your social networks – try to keep to your usual daily routines.
- Pay attention to your body – take breaks, get outside, eat and drink when your body signals it needs it.
- Share positivity – amplify hopeful stories of local people and celebrate successes.
- Protect yourself and be supportive of others.

4. Working from home tips - staying happy and productive

Working from home can take some adjustment at first. Try these tips to help you stay focused and healthy, wherever you're working:

- Create a productive workspace — a separate room, good airflow and comfortable chair.
- Structure your day - allocate time for the key things you need to do.
- Start strong - focus on completing a task before 9 a.m. to score an immediate win for the day.
- Minimize distractions - manage those nagging household chores, errands or kids.
- Stay connected - overcoming social isolation is critical.
- Keep healthy – stay hydrated, take your breaks and get some exercise.
- Celebrate your successes and your ability to continue providing.

5. Stay informed - knowledge is power

- Visit www.ochealthinfo.com/novelcoronavirus
- Two videos have recently been released, which you may find helpful:
 - [Be Resilient - In This Together](#)
 - [HCA's Public Service Announcement - COVID-19](#)



COVID-19 RESOURCES

The Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) has developed several helpful infographics for the community to address concerns regarding the COVID-19 coronavirus. For the latest updates and information on COVID-19, please visit HCA's website at www.ochealthinfo.com/novelcoronavirus. For questions, call HCA's Health Referral Line at (800) 564-8448. For a repository of all SSA communication related to COVID-19, visit the Community and Government Relations Sharepoint page by clicking [here](#).



SCRUB YOUR HANDS WITH SOAP AND WATER
LAVE SUS MANOS CON JABÓN Y AGUA
Rửa Tay Cho Sạch

RINSE YOUR HANDS
ENGUAGA SUS MANOS
Rửa tay lại bằng nước

DRY YOUR HANDS
SECA SUS MANOS
Lau tay cho khô



For COVID-19 resources, call

**ORANGE COUNTY
COVID-19 HOTLINE**

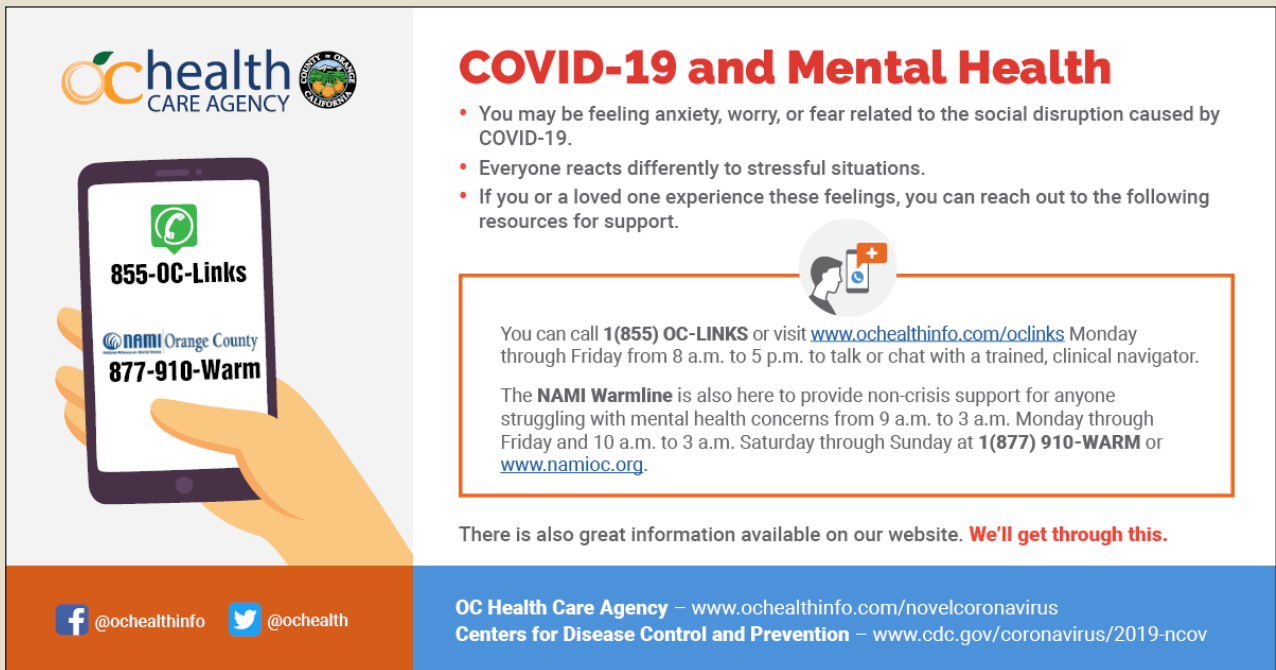
1-833-426-6411




ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

TEXT "OCCOVID19" TO 888777

You'll receive text messages from the Orange County Emergency Operations Center with updates and resources related to COVID-19 (Coronavirus) in Orange County, California.

OC Health CARE AGENCY

COVID-19 and Mental Health

- You may be feeling anxiety, worry, or fear related to the social disruption caused by COVID-19.
- Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations.
- If you or a loved one experience these feelings, you can reach out to the following resources for support.

You can call **1(855) OC-LINKS** or visit www.ochealthinfo.com/oclinks Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to talk or chat with a trained, clinical navigator.

The **NAMI Warmline** is also here to provide non-crisis support for anyone struggling with mental health concerns from 9 a.m. to 3 a.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 3 a.m. Saturday through Sunday at **1(877) 910-WARM** or www.namio.org.

There is also great information available on our website. **We'll get through this.**

OC Health Care Agency – www.ochealthinfo.com/novelcoronavirus
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov

@ochealthinfo @ochealth

INNOVATION CHALLENGE DEADLINE EXTENDED



INNOVATION IN ACTION



Thank you to everyone who has participated in submitting ideas for the Heart of SSA: Innovation in Action Challenge. Due to our Agency's rapidly changing circumstances and responses related to COVID-19, our submission deadline has now been extended to April 30, 2020. This is a flexible date and is subject to change. For more information on the Innovation in Action Challenge and to download a submission form, click [here](#).

SSA SPOTLIGHT: EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE

IN-HOME SUPPORTIVE SERVICES ACCOUNTING TEAM

Who is the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Accounting Team and what makes this team unique? They are a team of individuals who demonstrate all of SSA's core values, especially compassion, efficiency, initiative, integrity, courtesy, teamwork and thoroughness. With an average of 35,000 IHSS clients and 27,500 active IHSS care providers, the Accounting Call Center averages approximately 8,000 phone calls and 1,000 unannounced client office walk-ins monthly.

The Accounting Team comprises a Social Services Supervisor II, an Accounting Office Supervisor II, nine Senior Accounting Assistants (SAA) and seven Office Specialists. The IHSS program would not be complete without the IHSS Accounting Team. A vital resource and extension to the IHSS social workers, their primary responsibility is to assess the needs and requirements for care of IHSS clients to ensure they have the necessary resources to remain safely in their own homes.

Unity and leadership is shown at all levels. Richard Le, a Senior Accounting Assistant and Unit Lead, describes the Accounting Team as providing an "all hands on deck" approach to their daily tasks and assignments. He states, "We all went out to the lobby to help out," when the IHSS offices were recently hit with a huge increase of in-office walk-ins related to the recent Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) implementation.

The IHSS Accounting Team's mission is to ensure that the IHSS care providers' ongoing eligibility and payments are accurately and promptly aligned with their clients' eligibility and services. The team's daily actions include, but are not limited to, timesheet issuances, payment corrections, responding to the hundreds of payroll inquiries via phone calls or unannounced in-person clientele visits, completing Verification of Employment requests, processing over/underpayments and collaborating with the IHSS social workers, Public Authority and the internal Investigator Unit to maintain the efficiency and integrity of the active IHSS care providers' authorized and paid hours.

Some of the team's major milestones and accomplishments through the year include: the recent implementation of the EVV system requiring all IHSS clients and providers to be enrolled for electronic timesheets; the implementation of the Fair-Labor Standard Act (FLSA); the mass integration of the new Case-Management Information & Payroll System (CMIPSII); staying abreast on new tax laws pertaining to income tax exemptions for live-in care providers; and continuing to process overpayment computations and collections on a flow basis.

The IHSS Accounting Team continues to prevail and perform at their highest potential despite limited resources and increased mandates from the State and County levels. Each and every member of the IHSS Accounting Team is truly an asset to the IHSS program.

Congratulations to the IHSS Accounting Team on being selected as this month's SSA Spotlight!



Back Row: Michael Leigh, Hao Nguyen, Cuc (Tammy) Hua, Melba Hanna, Kim-Don Nguyen, Manal Gobran, Christine Salas, Angel Issaian, Sylvia Godoy, Huy Tran, Ngan Phan, Malena Mercado
Front Row: David Vinh, Phuong-Lan Nguyen, Holly Le, Richard Le
Not pictured: Roberta Rickers, Tracy Vu

RECOGNIZING SOCIAL WORK MONTH

On March 10, the Orange County Board of Supervisors presented SSA and the Health Care Agency with a resolution proclaiming the month of March as Social Work Month. Several social work staff selected by SSA's leadership joined Agency Director Debra Baetz in receiving the Board's recognition on behalf of all social work staff in our Agency.

"Social work can be challenging and overwhelming at times, but to me, it is a wonderful opportunity to make a positive impact in another person's life," said Vanessa Perez, representing Family Self-Sufficiency and the CalWORKs program. She continued, "It is very rewarding to see families taking the steps to success after I have used solutions, provided by the county, to assist them."

Kathy Haerle, representing Adult Protective Services, spoke about being "patient, open-minded and respectful" as a social worker. She added, "I engage in active listening, identify barriers and work to improve the lives of my client as well as their family as a whole. I advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves and strive to be a means for positive change."

When asked what social work means to him, Pedro Vargas, representing Children and Family Services, shared, "It provides me with the opportunity to engage and work with families who are in dire need of support and services to help address the issues that brought the family to the attention of Orange County Juvenile Court and SSA."

Rene Velasco-Pelayo, representing In-Home Supportive Services, added, "Social work to me is being the liaison between available resources and the individuals and families in need. Social work to me is working alongside like-minded individuals with a common purpose and a passion for assisting the most vulnerable."

Also representing SSA's other programs were Minerva Hidrogo (Children and Family Services) and Catharine Rooney (Administrative Services).

Social workers truly make a positive difference in our community, working hard to improve the lives of our most vulnerable children, adults and families. They assist people of every age, background and corner of the country. Thank you to all of our social work staff for your amazing service and dedication to protecting, supporting and improving the lives of children, adults and families in our community!



Left to right: Rene Velasco-Pelayo, Vanessa Perez, Kathy Haerle, CFS Director Anne Bloxom, Pedro Vargas, SSA Director Debra Baetz, Minerva Hidrogo, Catharine Rooney

YOUR MONTHLY MICRO-MINDFUL MOMENT

While our attention, focus and energy are compassionately in the service of others here at SSA, especially during this unprecedented time, we may get caught up in our attention to the needs of our customers, clients and family members and may lose sight of our own needs to recharge, replenish and fill our own tanks. Let's all make a commitment to ourselves to make a daily assessment, to be mindful of how much we have left in our tanks and what we might do to recharge and top it off. Here are a few tips:



1. Start small: Don't stress if you're running short on time. One minute may be all you need.
2. Make it a routine: Aim for practicing mindfulness each day for a week and then expanding as possible.
3. Maintain self-compassion: Give yourself grace. During times of crisis, our goal is to do the best we can!

SSA MARKS FIRST FULL YEAR OF COUNTYWIDE RESTAURANT MEALS PROGRAM

SSA is pleased to share results of the first full year of the implementation of the Restaurant Meals Program (RMP) countywide.

RMP is a program that enables eligible elderly, disabled and homeless CalFresh recipients to purchase prepared meals at participating restaurants using their Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards. The program is intended to increase food access for those who may not have a place to store or cook food, may not be able to prepare food or who lack access to a grocery store.

The Orange County Board of Supervisors initially authorized SSA to implement RMP as a pilot program, which launched in the cities of Anaheim and Santa Ana in early 2018. Based on the success of the pilot, the Board of Supervisors approved SSA's recommendation to expand the Restaurant Meals Program countywide in November 2018, with program expansion beginning in January 2019.

Through significant outreach efforts, SSA has been able to secure restaurant participation in 30 out of 34 Orange County cities, ensuring program accessibility to the most vulnerable members of the community. Prior to the countywide expansion, SSA had 51 participating restaurants in Santa Ana and Anaheim; this figure grew to 108 as of January 1, 2020, with nearly 50 additional Orange County restaurants awaiting approval from the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service.

In 2019, over 85,000 RMP transactions were completed in Orange County with a total of \$889,000 in revenues generated for local businesses. These transactions represent a 745% increase over the prior year.

Additionally, RMP continues to show growth and diversity with the addition of five approved restaurant locations on the campus of California State University, Fullerton.

"We are very pleased with the success of the Restaurant Meals Program in Orange County and look forward to seeing continued growth in our number of participating restaurants," said SSA Director Debra Baetz. She continued, "RMP helps the community on a number of fronts — in our ability to provide greater access to prepared meals and in our support and partnership with local businesses in the community."

To learn more about the Restaurant Meals Program, please visit: <http://ssa.ocgov.com/calfresh/calfresh/rmp>



UC RIVERSIDE HOSTS SOCIAL SERVICES PANEL ON HOMELESSNESS



Pictured: Deputy Division Director Sumit Sapra (third from left) stands alongside other county leaders and UC Riverside students

On March 4, Family Self-Sufficiency and Adult Services Deputy Division Director Sumit Sapra represented SSA at a discussion panel hosted by the University of California, Riverside's School of Public Policy. Mr. Sapra joined other panelists from Riverside and Los Angeles counties for the "Social Services Panel: A Discussion on Alleviating Homelessness in Southern California" to help address questions about homelessness and offer a better understanding of the causes and challenges of homelessness as well as initiatives being undertaken in different counties to address the issue including housing needs. Approximately 70 people, including UCR students as well as members in the community, attended the event, which was also streamed online through Facebook Live.

BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION



RUTH MORAN, Eligibility Technician (ET)/Assistance Programs

ET Ruth Moran of Orange's Call and Processing Center recently received the following words of gratitude from a client, as shared by her supervisor:

"Ruth is a lifesaver! The customer contacted Service Center for help after spending much time going back and forth between Covered California and our Service Center. Ruth troubleshooted and fixed the errors found on (the eligibility determination system) CalWIN, saving the customer time and heartache. The customer says Ruth is gentle and very smart and wanted to thank her for her hard work."

JOHN WRIGHT, Systems Technician II/AGENCY ADMINISTRATION

Systems Technician II John Wright from the CFS Systems team was recognized as the CFS Employee of the Month for February 2020. The following comments were shared about John:

"John is super polite, hard-working, professional and knowledgeable. He is always on top of things. As the systems tech assigned to the Annex building, he is always running around helping employees with software and hardware issues. I'm impressed at how quickly he is able to come to our rescue and solve our issues. Even when something pops up that he is not familiar with, he takes time to do research and makes sure the need/issue is solved accurately and satisfactory. For example, a few weeks ago, I was in need of setting up video conferencing with PowerPoint presentation accessibility in one of our conference rooms. The room didn't have this option, but John went out of his way to research a good application for video conferencing, downloaded the app to the conference room's computer and took time to learn the application so he could show me how to use it. He also offered to be present for the presentation in case there were any questions/problems with the application. For this and many other times that he has gone and above his call of duty, I'm nominating John for Employee of the Month."



THOMAS SCHENACH, Social Worker II (SWII)/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

SWII Thomas Schenach of In-Home Supportive Services was presented with Adult Services' You Rock Award for March 2020. The following comment was shared by his supervisor:

"I currently supervise him (Thomas) and he has been so helpful when mentoring two new Social Workers I who are new to our unit. Although he is not assigned as a designated mentor to them, he has always made himself available to help them and has been flexible with his schedule in order to allow them to shadow him on home visits and write-ups. Even when it's a last minute request, I am able to count on him to help out the team. We are all very busy in our current assignments and I just wanted to give him praise for assisting his co-workers learn their new job duties."

BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION



SUSAN HWANG, Eligibility Technician (ET)/Assistance Programs

ET Susan Hwang of Orange's Call and Processing Center recently received the following words of gratitude from a client, as shared by her supervisor:

"A customer called the Service Center to report that you were patient and kind as you explained the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB) program to him. The customer states he received your letter for the evaluation and states he wants everyone to know you went above and beyond to help him and he appreciates your dedication to this community. Thank you Susan for your compassion to help others."

THOMAS NGU, Social Worker II (SWII)/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

SWII (Case Manager) Thomas Ngu of CalWORKs (Cypress Regional Center) recently received the following words of gratitude from a client:

"I have received a great deal of assistance from my social worker Thomas Ngu through social services. I'm currently in the Welfare to Work program and an active college student. When I first applied for the program, I wasn't aware of all the assistance available. Thomas helped me with all the benefits and assistance that was available to me. I know that I have become a

better individual due to the resources that have been provided such as cash aid, food stamps and mileage, mental health programs, housing, etc. This has helped me to get back on my feet and have motivation for my future. Anytime I need help, Thomas went above and beyond to make sure that myself and my daughter were okay. I'm forever thankful to have such a kind and helpful social worker, which made this difficult experience not so bad. Ever since I have been in the program, my life has changed for the better, which gave me hope for my career goals and future. Thank you again."

Another client also wrote:

I would like to let you know that Thomas Ngu has been a great social worker. He has been very helpful and been on top of my case. He always picks up the phone when I have any concerns regarding my case and has always been very helpful. He does a great job and has been the best social worker since the first day."



LIEN NGUYEN, Employment & Eligibility Specialist (EES) and YENETTE THAM, Social Worker II (SWII)/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

Continuing EES Lien Nguyen and SWII (Case Manager) Yenette Tham of CalWORKs (Santa Ana Regional Center) recently received the following words of gratitude from a client:

"Regarding Miss Yenette Tham and Mrs. Lien Nguyen, my social workers: They are the best I've ever encountered. They both treated me with respect and sympathy. They have given me the gift of encouragement and hope in a difficult time. I'm so grateful for their support. Their thoughtfulness is a gift I will always treasure. They both are the best of the best!"



SSA PROMOTIONS

EMPLOYEE NAME	CLASSIFICATION	DIVISION
AGUILAR, ALEJANDRO J	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR I	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
ARANDA, PEDRO PAOLO	STAFF SPECIALIST	AGENCY ADMINISTRATION
ARELLANO, MIRIAM	DATA ENTRY TECHNICIAN	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
CARMONA, JOSEPH J	ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER II	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
CORONEL, PORFIRIO	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
ESQUEDA, ELENA IRENE	OFFICE SUPERVISOR B	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
FARID, SADAF	SOCIAL WORKER I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
GARCIA, STEPHANIE	SR. SOCIAL WORKER	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
HARTWELL SANTIAGO, FABIAN	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
HERRERA, STEPHANIE THERESA	SR. SOCIAL WORKER	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
HO, HUYENCHAN THI	SOCIAL WORKER II	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
LE, JIMMYCONG THANH	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
LOPEZ, ALVA LORENA	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
LOTFY, SAYRA JESENIA	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
MUTCH, MAUREEN	ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER II	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
OCAMPO, MATTHEW PAUL	STAFF SPECIALIST	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
PARK, JOCELYN HEE JUNG	SOCIAL WORKER I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
RANGEL, RITA	ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER II	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
SAVALA, VICTORIA	ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER II	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
TRAN, NHAT-TAN	STAFF SPECIALIST	AGENCY ADMINISTRATION

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<https://www.facebook.com/OCSSA1>

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To download a submission form for the newsletter, click [here](#). To contact the committee, please email SSAToday@ssa.ocgov.com.

Do you have questions, comments or suggestions for the SSA Executive Team? Email questions, comments or suggestions to: directorscorner@ssa.ocgov.com.