

OCSSA TODAY

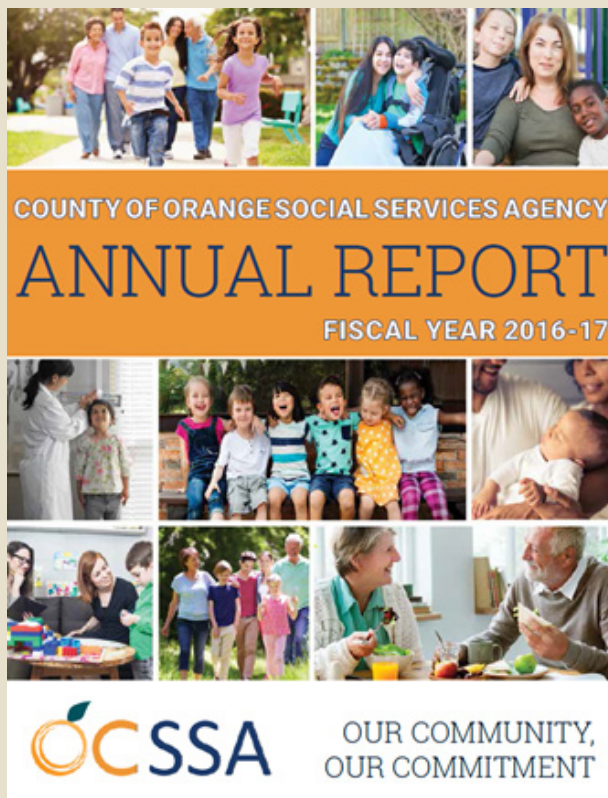
NEW YEAR, NEW LOOK



Welcome to the new SSA Today! As we ring in the New Year, we would like to introduce to you to the new and improved format of SSA Today. In an effort to make this publication more reader friendly, the SSA Today Newsletter Committee is proud to present our new version, which we hope will be more engaging and exciting! You will notice that photos will be prominent within articles, along with a new color scheme that is consistent with other County publications. The SSA Today Newsletter Committee values your feedback, so if there are additional

changes or additions that you would like to see, please email SSAToday@ssa.ocgov.com.

SSA'S ANNUAL REPORT



The Strategic Communications, Legislation and Policy Team (SCLPT) is pleased to announce the publication of the County of Orange Social Services Agency Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2016-17. The Annual Report provides an overview of SSA's programs, services and key accomplishments. The current Annual Report indicates that agency employees and partners provided various types of services and assistance to 2 in 5 children, 1 in 5 adults and 1 in 6 seniors.

SSA's Annual Report acknowledges the continuous support and collaboration of our dedicated agency employees, the Board of Supervisors, Orange County Executive Office, other County agencies/departments and community partners which support our efforts to make a positive impact in our community. The Annual

Report is accessible via the [SSA Internet Page](#) or at [Annual Report Fiscal Year 2016-17](#).

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SSA SPOTLIGHT: EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE

TASK FORCE PROCESSING CENTER



On January 1, 2014, with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), SSA's network became flooded with approximately 78,000 electronic applications (E-Referrals) from Covered California. This was an overwhelming response from the community we serve.

Assistance Program's leaders immediately began to brainstorm and think of solutions outside of the box. In March 2014, a pilot program was launched involving a small group of staff, ranging from experienced Eligibility Technicians (ETs) to newly hired ETs. Traditionally, new hires attend 12 weeks of intensive training to learn the Medi-Cal Program. However, these new

Pictured from left to right front row: Ricardo Peña, Stacey Hoang, Brenda Scherr, Maria Elisa Castillo, Kelleny Rivera, Hilda Quintana, Patricia Cory and Queen Udofia. Middle row: Gloria Castillo, Rosa Solis, Jami Nguyen, Eugenia Vargas, Tiffany McMurry, Jillian Vu and Lily Hoang. Back row: Tori Pham, Vincent Ojeda, Lori Mitchell, Damon Beard, Joshua Calilung, Daniel Ahn, Daniel Renner, Richard Cummins and Joe Sabet. Not pictured: Patricia Gamino, Blanca Guerrero, Jesus Monjaraz, Astrid Arellano, Marco Sanchez, Tera Lopez, Justine Nguyen, Adriana Alvarez and Christian Garduño.

hires would only receive 3 days of training. The new hires were then paired with experienced staff, who ultimately took on the role of Mentor. In August 2014, the pilot expanded from less than 40 staff to over 100, and reaching over 150 staff. From this group, the Task Force Processing Center (TFPC) was born, becoming an official region on December 1, 2014.

Located at the Santa Ana Regional Center, TFPC became the first stop for all newly hired ETs in the AP Division. Over 1,000 newly hired ETs have come through TFPC since its inception, with anywhere from five to 60 new ETs being trained at TFPC at any given time. Upon arrival of new ETs, the Mentors immediately shift gears and move into action: coaching, training, fine-tuning training materials and processing our Non-Modified Adjusted Gross Income (Non-MAGI) category for Medi-Cal referrals, as the new ETs have not yet received training to process these cases. As a result, Mentors are able to develop skills that help them prepare for the next level. TFPC Mentors not only mentor new staff day in and day out, but they are also responsible for processing the multitude of applications that come their way all the while coaching staff at various levels of learning.

Working with minimal resources, newly hired staff and operational and policy instructions that changed frequently, TFPC created a model that helped the Agency meet the demands of ACA. This region serves as training grounds for SSA's newly hired ETs and also provides hands-on training on how to navigate through SSA's system-driven environment and process the influx of E-Referrals. The Mentors have successfully taught many newly hired staff how to navigate our complicated systems and process an application from beginning to end, accomplishing an average of 55,000 applications processed annually!

The success of TFPC would not be possible without the support and collaboration of their management, supervisors, and, most importantly, their Mentor ETs. Their personal commitment to quality is evident in everything they do, and their dedication to seeing a project through is second to none. TFPC's Mentor ETs work well under pressure on a daily basis and in a very deadline driven environment. Their dedication and action to their work has had a measurable impact on the agency and is a key reason why TFPC continues to thrive.

Congratulations to the Task Force Processing Center for all of the great work you do and for being recognized as the SSA Spotlight: Excellence in Service team for January 2018!



SSA EMPLOYEES WIN PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

The Orange County Emergency Managers' Organization (OCEMO) is a robust partnership in the Orange County Operational Area (OA) that includes all County agencies, the 34 Orange County cities, schools, special districts, utilities and other private non-profit partners. Diana LaRusso and Delcie Hynes of SSA's Emergency Management Team are active members of OCEMO and participate in a number of working groups and sub-committees that are responsible for planning and responding to the needs of the whole community during disasters. Further, as the mass care and shelter leads for Orange County, Delcie and Diana serve as the SSA representatives for mass care in the OA and co-chair the OCEMO Shelter Sub-Committee. This committee brings together collaborative partners involved in sheltering to plan for how Orange County responds and coordinates in providing for the needs of the community that is displaced after a disaster or other emergency.

Each year, OCEMO gives out two awards at their end of the year meeting and awards luncheon. Active members of OCEMO nominate their peers for the OCEMO Member of the Year Award which is given to the person "who goes above and beyond the call of duty for OCEMO" and the Helping Hands Award which is given to the person(s) "who helps out for the greater good of emergency management".

Delcie and Diana were selected as the recipients of the OCEMO Helping Hands Award for 2017 for their dedication and contributions to the Shelter Sub-Committee. Over the last year they have created a shelter plan template which has been used by a number of OC cities for their city sheltering plans. The nomination reads, "Delcie and Diana spearheaded the Shelter Sub-committee and, with their help and support, have coordinated the creation of shelter plans in multiple cities, strengthening the OA's mass care abilities. They were instrumental in the Anaheim Local Assistance Center (which was opened to support the needs of the residents affected by the Canyon 2 Fire). They are always willing to help!" At a recent OCEMO meeting Paul Catsimanes, OCEMO Chair said, "I just want to thank Delcie and Diana for their work on the Shelter Committee. They have gone above and beyond in bringing shelter plan writing workshops to their city partners, helping us to write our plans, which isn't really their responsibility. I appreciate their dedication to helping the cities write their plans."

"I just want to thank Delcie and Diana for their work on the Shelter Committee. They have gone above and beyond in bringing shelter plan writing workshops to their city partners, helping us to write our plans."

In addition to their joint nomination, Diana LaRusso also received a Helping Hands nomination for her efforts to improve the collaborative partnerships across stakeholder groups. From partnering with HCA to bring Save the Children (STC) and Children Disaster Services (CDS) training to OC in effort to develop our capacity to meet the needs of children in disaster shelters, to building a robust Functional Assessment Service Team (FAST) network both in Orange County and with statewide partners, our capacity to meet the needs of the whole community within the shelter environment has been greatly increased during her time in the field. Additionally, she has been an advocate for the need for self-care among our responders and their ability to bring basic psychological first aid skills with them into the shelters. Congratulations to the SSA Emergency Management Team on their joint nomination and selection as the recipients of the prestigious Helping Hands award, and congratulations to Diana LaRusso on her additional nomination!

Pictured from left to right: Delcie Hynes, 2017 OCEMO Chair Paul Catsimanes, and Diana LaRusso.

MEET SSA'S NEW SAFETY & TRAINING OFFICER



Pictured: Juanita Trejo-Middleton.

Please join us in welcoming Juanita Trejo-Middleton, SSA's Safety and Training Officer.

On November 10, 2017, SSA was assigned a new Safety & Training Officer (STO) to provide safety and safety training oversight for the Agency. Juanita Trejo-Middleton is an employee of CEO-Risk Management, but is currently assigned to SSA. The main objective of the STO is to ensure that the Agency is in compliance with California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal/OSHA) Title 8 general safety orders, train employees on safety issues, conduct ergonomic assessments, work with Department Safety Representatives (DSRs), analyze and review safety data/metrics and provide guidance on any matters that involve safety at SSA.

Juanita graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Administration. Before coming to work for the County of Orange, she worked for 22 years at Southern California Edison with the last 11 years serving

as a Safety & Environmental Consultant. She has been employed with the County for the past two years. Her immediate goals for 2018 are to reduce the number of safety issues by 5% by educating, providing formal training and safety tools for all employees and creating an environment where employees are not injured as a result of their work.

Juanita has shared that she truly enjoys the people she works with and the environment at SSA. Please join us in welcoming her to SSA. If you would like more information about safety and training, please contact her at Juanita.Trejo-Middleton@ssa.ocgov.com or at (714) 541-7775.

SSA EXECUTIVE MEET & GREETINGS

The SSA Executive Team looks forward to seeing you at your office this year at their annual Meet & Greet! Look for your office and date here in SSA Today as they get scheduled throughout the year. To submit questions in advance of the Meet & Greet, please email the Executive Team at directorscorner@ssa.ocgov.com and indicate which Meet & Greet you will be attending in your email.

The first two Meet & Greet of 2018 have been scheduled:



MEET & GREET

MARCH 2018

Division	Location	Date	Time
Admin	HQ - 500 N State College Blvd. Orange 92868	3/6/2018	10:30 - 11:30 A.M.
CFS	OCFC - 401 The City Drive 92868	3/29/2018	1:30 - 2:30 P.M.

IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING



"If You See Something, Say Something" is a national anti-terrorism public awareness campaign that emphasizes the importance of reporting questionable activity to local law enforcement authorities.

The "If You See Something, Say Something" national campaign is reaching counties and cities across the country and it has reached our SSA Headquarters!

The goal of the local campaign is to deliver the message that homeland security starts with hometown security. The message to Orange County citizens is to simply be aware of their surroundings when in public and to report something that does not seem "right." Our local message of "Keep OC Safe" is a simple way for Orange County citizens to remember that the goal of the campaign is to protect our larger community.

When you see the Panda, start a conversation with your peers around how you can be observant, share information with local authorities and do your part in keeping our community safe.

If you have any questions, please contact our SSA Emergency Managers, Delcie Hynes, delcie.hynes@ssa.ocgov.com or Diana LaRusso, diana.larusso@ssa.ocgov.com.

Thanks for always being aware. You make all the difference.

DID YOU KNOW?

ADH, which stands for Administrative Disqualification Hearing, is a state mandated hearing which is held when a client commits welfare fraud, but the case details do not merit criminal prosecution. These hearings are not new; however, they had been on a State-granted hiatus for the past 10 years.

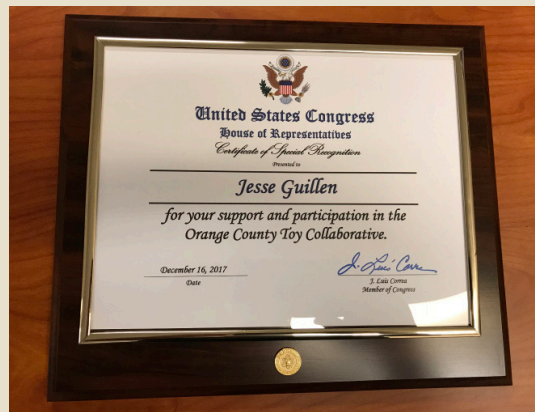
Overpayments that occurred due to substantiated fraud can be collected at a much higher rate than those that resulted out of non-fraudulent circumstances. Repeat offenders receive incrementally longer penalty periods for subsequent violations, so the ADH process discourages clients from misrepresenting the facts when applying for benefits or when they are subject to other reporting requirements. For this reason, ADH helps not only with benefit recovery, but can serve as a fraud prevention tool.

Because the level of evidence for an ADH is so high, only cases in which the client's intent to commit fraud is clear and convincing are accepted. ADH referrals are made by the District Attorney and Program Integrity's Income Eligibility Verification System (IEVS) Units.

Program Integrity's Fraud/Overpayment Review Unit and Appeals Unit already implemented and updated the main components of the ADH process, such as revising policies and procedures and collaborating with the Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services (FSS & AS) and Assistance Programs (AP) divisions. It is expected that the ADH referral process will again commence for the FSS & AS and AP divisions in 2018. For more information regarding the ADH process, please contact: Lucy Torres at Lucila.Torres@ssa.ocgov.com or at (714) 438-8888, or Sonia Rodriguez at Sonia.Rodriguez@ssa.ocgov.com or at (714) 438-8841.



EMPLOYEES RECIEVE REGOGNITION FROM U.S. CONGRESSMAN



On Saturday, December 16th, SSA employees Chris Avventino and Jesse Guillen received plaques from United States Congressman Lou Correa for their assistance with the Orange County Toy Collaborative.

Pictured from left to right: Collin Cate, Steven Solomon, Mauricio Velarde, Captain Curt Morrison, Jesse Guillen, Alexa Pratt, U.S. Congressman Lou Correa, Christopher Avventino, Francis Nguyen, Engineer Sean Garrahy and Battalion Chief Steve Edwards.

Members of the OC Toy Collaborative include the United States Marine Corps, Orange County Fire Chiefs Association, SSA and Council of Orange County

Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Thank you to all SSA employees who assisted with the OC Toy Collaborative, Operation Santa Claus and Senior Santa & Friends.

CHANGES TO CALIFORNIA EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

Federal and State Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) income limits and maximum credit amounts have increased for Tax Year 2017, which may allow more individuals and families to be eligible. In addition, expansion of the State EITC allows self-employment income to be eligible for the credit for the 2017 tax year. Please click on the [link](#) for additional information!

CALIFORNIA EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

Cal
EITC

YOU'VE GOT MAIL...OR DO YOU?

By the Centralized Mail and Imaging Center Administrative Team



How does the Centralized Mail and Imaging Center (CMIC) help make your job easier? CMIC is the hub of document imaging and much more! Located at 840 N. Eckhoff in Orange, CMIC provides service to multiple programs such as: Assistance Programs (AP), Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) and Adult Protective Services (APS), as well as imaging historical documents from Closed Files. CMIC is expanding services this year to Children and Family Services, with the ultimate goal of CMIC being able to offer outstanding customer service to all Social Services Agency staff.

*Pictured (top row): Emelyn Nario, Martha Rosas, Shawntrice Smith, Vanessa Lopez, Miriam Arellano, Yvette Parra, Judith Edmundson, Elise Athas, Itati Rivero
Middle Row: Yolanda De Avila, Justine Myrick, Sandra Avina, Madel Manhit-Riffle, Diana Lee, Andrea Cao, Lorna Aguirre. Bottom Row: Jim Luna. Not Pictured: Luz Ramirez.*

CMIC personnel support staff by ensuring that critical documents are imaged properly into OnBase, the Agency's document management system. Once imaged, the case file is available electronically for viewing in OnBase. CMIC scans, on average, over 1.9 million pages per

month into OnBase. Ongoing imaging consists of processed and prepped documents from over 35 locations across the agency that are picked up and delivered daily. Assistance Programs uses the upfront imaging process for periodic reports and Medi-Cal annual redeterminations.

What's New?

In February 2017, the Upfront Imaging Mail Process was successfully implemented for AP staff. Upfront Imaging consists of staff providing a CMIC labeled return envelope to clients when requesting verifications for eligibility and case processing. Verifications will be sent directly to CMIC, who will then image the items into OnBase. Notification is then sent to the assigned worker. The project has reduced the workloads for clerical staff at the regional offices, allowing them to continue to provide needed internal and external customer service. Additionally, the Upfront Imaging Mail Process has reduced the need for Eligibility Technicians (ETs) to prepare documents for imaging, allowing ETs more time to focus on other important tasks.

What are the benefits of Upfront Imaging?

- Immediate access to case documents
- Reduces physical storage of documentation at the regional offices
- Minimizes risk of misplaced and damaged documents
- No prepping
- No copying
- More processing time
- Reduces regional staff workload
- Original verifications are returned to the customers

CMIC looks forward to continuing to support the various programs in SSA.

BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION



Molly Nichelson, Public Information Officer (PIO), Agency Administration

PIO Molly Nichelson recently received these kind words of appreciation from Joe Prickett of the Southern California Nutrition Incentive Program at UC San Diego for her work with the ¡Mas Fresco! More Fresh Program:

"Thank you so very much for your support of the ¡Mas Fresco! More Fresh Program. Thanks to your support, we had an outstanding response to our first ¡Mas Fresco! More Fresh enrollment event conducted on Monday of this week. Most of the people who enrolled during this event had heard about the program through the Orange County Social Services Agency. Your outreach

efforts about the program have been outstanding and have resulted in the further support and enhancement of the health and well-being of CalFresh recipients across Orange County. Again, thank you for your help and assistance in further supporting the health and well-being of CalFresh recipients."

Evan Rapien, Eligibility Technician (ET), Assistance Programs

ET Evan Rapien recently received these kind words of gratitude from a client as re-told by Eligibility Supervisor Carlos Resendiz:

"The client stated that it is not an easy situation coming to apply for benefits especially because she is a single mother with 4 children including one disabled struggling to meet needs, but the fact that Evan treated her with respect and dignity demonstrating genuine care at a personal level eased her situation. She was thankful that expedited benefits were approved and wanted to make sure his compassion and professionalism is recognized."



Al Pasillas, Administrative Manager I (AMI), and Ted Lin, Information Technologist II, Administrative Services Division

AMI Al Pasillas and Information Technologist II Ted Lin recently received these kind words of appreciation from Administrative Manager II in Assistance Programs Odón Sanchez for their assistance during a recent flood at the County Community Service Center (CCSC):

"I am amazed how many people came together to ensure we minimally impacted service to our community. A big thank you to Al Pasillas from facilities for his tremendous efforts. Our partnership with Information Technology (IT), specifically Ted Lin, really showed during these efforts as they seemed to drop everything when we call for support. Without our amazing team at CCSC, none of this could have been possible. Their flexibility and ability to adapt has been phenomenal."

BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION



David Guevara & Mike Pagano, Senior Social Services Supervisor I (SSSI's), Connie Gonzalez, Administrative Manager I (AMI) (Not Pictured), and Carmen Cisneros (Not Pictured), Secretary I, Assistance Programs

SSSI's David Guevara & Mike Pagano, AMI Connie Gonzalez and Secretary I Carmen Cisneros recently received an note of appreciation from an analyst at the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) thanking them for the support that they provide:

"I wanted to take a moment to thank you four in particular for all that you do to help resolve our shared client's issues."

She also thanked them for answering her questions, especially when she first joined DHCS and felt overwhelmed with information and various county processes. She mentioned that her collaboration with our four Medi-Cal Policy staff is helping her improve the consumer's experience, which is a top priority for her and DHCS.

Roxanne Barcelos, Social Services Supervisor I (SSSI), Assistance Programs (Not Pictured)

SSSI Roxanne Barcelos recently received these kind words of gratitude from an appreciative client for her excellent customer service:

"Roxanne, you really have the "SPIRIT of service" which is the other "S" in Social Service. You took extra effort to research the information I needed to make the deadline for continuing my food stamps. Once again, Roxanne, I thank you for your diligence. Your efforts can be a model for the entire agency; this experience has changed my opinion of SSA. I just can't say enough!"

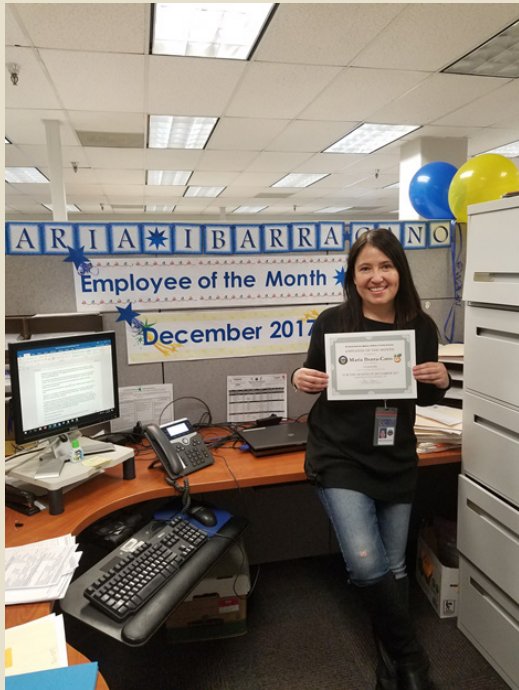
Maureen Lomeli, Office Assistant (OA), Administrative Services Division

Recently recognized by her colleagues at Training Career & Development (TCD), Maureen Lomeli was presented the notable title of "Employee of the Quarter" and received TCD's Total Customer Dedication Award. Maureen demonstrates her exceptional talents and resourcefulness at TCD in supporting her administrative team, training teams, and agency collaborations. Here are some comments shared by her peers:

"Maureen gives 110% each day to her peers, staff and customers here at TCD. She is a kind, warm, helpful and positive individual who has a can-do attitude that we all appreciate! Maureen is the back-bone, despite carrying many of TCD's needs on her shoulders, however big or small; she is able to radiate her positive and infectious energy and attitude day-in and day-out especially with the arrival of the holiday season. Maureen brings the gift of good spirits to everyone she comes in contact with each day. Every TCD staff member is supported by her and she radiates total customer service dedication."



BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION



Maria Ibarra-Cano, Social Worker II (SWII), Children and Family Services

Congratulations to SWII Maria Ibarra-Cano who was recently recognized as the CFS Employee of the Month for December. Here is an example of Maria's selfless work:

"Maria is an exemplary co-worker, social worker, teacher and person! She always has a warm, friendly smile - the power of which cannot be underestimated in our profession as well as in life.

She is an excellent teacher/trainer. She consistently goes out of her way, though her own schedule is extremely full, to take the time to teach new social workers, and answer our questions, and just "help" anyone. Maria is a very hard worker. I observe her always going the "extra mile", taking her role and responsibility seriously, in order to do what is right and best for the vulnerable clients we are responsible to serve. She is a wonderful role model.

She is a wonderful resource of information with her many years working in the Relative Assessment Unit. She always shares what she knows, and is very generous in sharing her knowledge and skills for the benefit of all of the children and families that we work with. Maria is such a wonderful asset to us all, and I feel very lucky to be her co-worker!"

SSA PROMOTIONS

<u>Employee Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Division</u>
ANGUIANO, MIGUEL	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR I	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
ALVARADO, JOSE	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
BUTLER, BRENDA	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
CASTRO, CLAUDIA	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
CLARK, ASHLEY	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
GHANI, MANDANA	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
MARTINEZ, KELLEY	ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER I	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
MARTINEZ, RAQUEL	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
NGO, TU	ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER I	ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
NGUYEN, CHI	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
PEREZ, CRISTAL	ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER I	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
RIVERA, DIANE	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR I	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

IN MEMORIUM

SSA would like to recognize the recent passing of a retired SSA employee. Please keep her family in your thoughts during this difficult time.

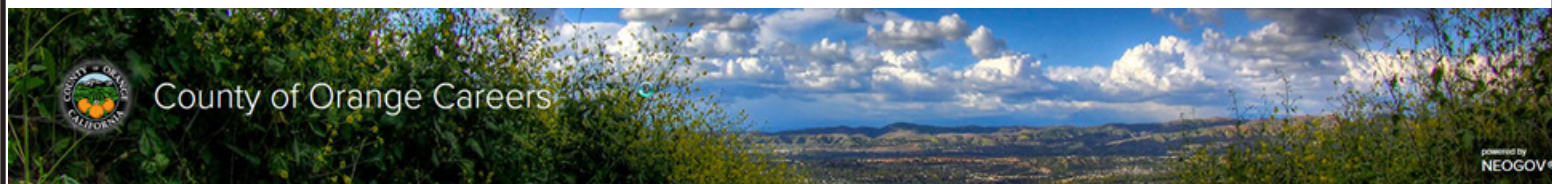
**Suzanne Stocker - Information Processing Technician,
Children and Family Services, 20 years of service**



LOOKING TO PROMOTE?

Please click on the link below to see the list of current job openings within the County of Orange.

www.governmentjobs.com/careers/oc



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www.facebook/OCSSA1

SSA Today is distributed monthly by SSA's Strategic Communications, Legislation, and Policy Team (SCLPT), and is published by the SSA Today Newsletter Committee. To contact the committee, please email:

Marco Rodriguez - SSA Today Coordinator
SSAToday@ssa.ocgov.com

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