

Mendocino County Department of Social Services CEO Report

September 2025

I. Effective County Government



Department Procedures Released July/August 2025:

- DSS 25-07 Live Scan
- APS 25-01 Home Safe
- PG-PA 25-07 Referrals with Minors as next of Kin
- PG-PA 25-08 Safe Deposit Box Search

MCDSS Time Coding Training Makes Great Strides

The Mendocino County Department of Social Services (MCDSS) leadership team has successfully implemented time code training across the department, leading to a stronger utilization of funding streams that were previously underused.

The most significant results have been seen in Family & Children's Services, which reported a 54% increase in Health-Related funding drawdown in FY 24/25 compared to FY 23/24. During the same period, state funding drawdown also increased by 23%. By improving accuracy in time coding, MCDSS has reduced reliance on Realignment funding, allowing the County to redirect resources toward better serving the residents of Mendocino County.

Launched on September 2 in response to a Federal Monitoring Review (FMR), the initiative now requires all MCDSS staff to participate in annual time study coding training to ensure continued accuracy and maximize funding opportunities. In addition, the MCDSS fiscal team is delivering division-specific trainings and reviews, creating a stronger connection between program work and fiscal management. This approach fosters greater alignment, accountability, and efficiency across the department.

MCDSS Launches Step Up: Supervisor Development Series

On July 30, MCDSS Director DeDe Parker and Assistant Director Stephen White launched a new training series for all department supervisors and above. Department leadership will rotate in presenting sessions focused on building core leadership skills, with an emphasis on practical application. Each training provides opportunities to practice these skills and offers tools for supervisors to take back and apply with their teams.

"I appreciated the clarification with different topics and loved that we all heard the same messaging at the same time! I believe this is helpful for keeping each one of us accountable to each other and our teams."

Participant feedback from Step Up: Supervisor Development Series

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II. Safe & Healthy County



Summary of Feedback Received for the Mendocino County Regionally Coordinated Homelessness Action Plan and Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness in Mendocino County

On June 25, 2025, and July 9, 2025, Mendocino County Department of Social Services and Mendocino County Homeless Services Continuum of Care (CoC CA-509), in partnership with Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC), conducted a series of listening sessions with individuals with lived experience, Tribal representatives, community members, and service provider stakeholders. These sessions were designed to inform updates to the Regionally Coordinated Homelessness Action Plan to Address Homelessness and identify emergent priorities, gaps, and opportunities in the current Continuum of Care.

The purpose of these sessions was to gather authentic, ground-level input to ensure that the revised plan reflects the lived realities of those experiencing homelessness, the strengths and needs of Tribal communities, and the insights of service providers working across sectors. Listening sessions were organized in alignment with Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness in Mendocino County – *to improve community and policymaker engagement*.

To ensure broad stakeholder input, Mendocino County hosted five in-person listening sessions. These meetings were designed to be accessible and inclusive, encouraging meaningful participation from underserved and historically excluded populations. Significant emphasis was placed on collecting input from stakeholders across both the inland and coastal regions to capture a broad range of perspectives. Tribal engagement was prioritized through targeted outreach and culturally appropriate opportunities to contribute feedback.

An Executive Summary of Stakeholder feedback and progress achieved on State System Performance Measures will be made available in the near future on the CoC website, <https://mendocinococ.org/>.



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Mendocino County Hosts Child and Family Services Review Partner Convening and Peer Review of Child Welfare System

The Mendocino County Department of Social Services (MCDSS), in collaboration with Juvenile Probation, recently hosted their partner convening and peer review panel consisting of representatives from Fresno, Glenn, Sierra, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Humboldt, Lake, and Merced Counties to assess Mendocino County's child welfare system. Mendocino is part of the California-Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR) program. The C-CFSR is the statewide accountability system and is a requirement for county Child Welfare Services and placement Probation agencies. The process includes the County Self-Assessment (CSA), development, approval of the 5 - year System Improvement Plan (SIP), and completion of annual progress reports. In addition, the C-CFSR is a partnership with the Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP), as there are prevention-related requirements within C-CFSR reporting. Within the same period of time, the county participates in a peer review process, consisting of groups of social workers and probation officers from other counties traveling to Mendocino County to review individual cases, identify strengths and suggestions for system improvements.

The CSA launched with a full-day community partner convening at the Ukiah Valley Conference Center, supported by guest facilitator Dr. Kush Cooper of Implematix. Community partners, client testimonials, and collaborative discussions helped identify gaps in the system and opportunities to collaborate to fill the gaps and better serve our community. Through the week the peer reviewers evaluated the details of each case and conducted direct interviews with child welfare and probation staff, and Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) representatives.

On Friday, July 25, peer reviewers presented their findings, highlighting both strengths and areas for improvement. This review marked a pilot effort focused specifically on ICWA cases and including ICWA representatives—an essential area for supporting Native youth and families in Mendocino County.

Feedback was shared with both Social Services and Juvenile Probation staff, and there was strong agreement on the key findings. One of the most prominent challenges identified was the impact of staffing turnover, which has led to inconsistencies in services across both departments. Despite this, reviewers noted the deep commitment of staff to improving outcomes for children, youth, and families.

The resulting report will serve as a roadmap for implementing systemic changes and strengthening child welfare practices throughout the county.

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Upcoming Changes to Medi-Cal Effective 1/1/26

Effective January 1, 2026, Medi-Cal eligibility changes may affect numerous Mendocino County residents.

Medi-Cal will once again consider assets (what a member owns) when reviewing eligibility for older adults and people with disabilities as part of the application and renewal process. This will affect Medi-Cal members and applicants whose eligibility is based on age (65+), disability (physical, mental, or developmental), or long-term care needs.

Important details to take notice of include:

- The asset limit is \$130,000 for one person. Each additional household member adds \$65,000 to the asset limit, up to 10 members per household.
- Assets include bank accounts, cash, and anything over one home and one vehicle.
- Some assets don't count, like the home you live in, one vehicle, household items, and certain savings, like retirement accounts.
- If you are already a Medi-Cal member, your assets will be reviewed at your annual renewal. The income rules are not changing.

Effective January 1, 2026, Medi-Cal will freeze new enrollments for certain adults who do not have **satisfactory immigration status** for federal full scope Medi-Cal. This group will no longer be able to newly enroll in full-scope Medi-Cal.

- If you are already enrolled in full scope Medi-Cal, you will stay covered no matter your immigration status as long as you complete your annual renewal and meet all other aspects of eligibility. Make sure to renew and use your benefits!
- If you are part of this group and lose your coverage, you won't be able to sign up again—except for emergency and pregnancy care.
- If your coverage stops because of a late renewal or missing paperwork, you will have 90 days to fix it and stay enrolled.
- Income-eligible children (0-18) and pregnant people can enroll in full scope Medi-Cal, no matter their immigration status. Coverage is for the entire pregnancy and one year after the pregnancy ends.

For more information, please contact [Mendocino County Department of Social Services](#), or call (707) 463-7700 in Ukiah and (707) 962-1000 in Fort Bragg.

