

Mendocino County Department of Social Services CEO Report

February 2025



Effective County Government

Mendocino County Department of Social Services has recently welcomed two key leadership changes including Assistant Director and Deputy Director of Family & Children's Services.



Stephen White, Assistant Director, brings a wealth of experience, having served 20 years in the United States Air Force as an Independent Duty Medical Technician, providing humanitarian and wartime health care worldwide. After retiring from the Air Force in 2018, he joined Mendocino County Social Services, where he has held leadership roles in Adult and Aging Services and Family and Children's Services. Stephen holds a bachelor's degree in environmental health and a master's degree in healthcare administration. His dedication to supporting Mendocino County's diverse community makes him a fantastic addition to our leadership team.



Renée Alger, Deputy Director of the Family and Children's Services Division, brings over 14 years of experience in the social services field. Originally from Sonoma County, she has worked in various sectors, including Economic Assistance, Adult and Aging, Maternal Child and Adolescent Health, and Program Planning and Evaluation for Human Services with the County of Sonoma Health and Human Services.

Mendocino County Department of Social Services Monthly Data

Since June 2024, our new MCDSS Data Dashboard is reporting on multiple data points for Family & Children's Services, Adult & Aging Services, and Employment & Family Assistance Services.

You will find this report at

<https://www.mendocinocounty.gov/departments/social-services>



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Safe & Healthy County



Front Door for Families provides guidance to Mendocino County families with children who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness. This grant-funded project helps Mendocino County families identify housing options in Mendocino County and develop a housing sustainability plan. The project can also link households to limited, short-term financial assistance to resolve homelessness.

Our team recently sent a survey to Front Door for Families clients and are please to share some of the feedback:

- 100% of program participants who had received limited financial support from Front Door for Families stated that without that assistance, they would have either become or remained homeless.
- 47% of program participants stated that support from Front Door for Families was a critical factor in their ability to remain housed with children or have their children returned to their care.

"This program is a life saver for most of us families that have applied everywhere and don't qualify for different reasons."

"Thank you Tami for the landlord contact information, where I was able to find a vacancy and move into an apartment with my little son, and thank you so much for the financial help with the security deposit and the first month's rent. This was a year ago and we are still here in the same apartment. Thank you."

"The program saved me and my kids from a bad situation thanks to front doors for family me and my kids live in a nice apartment!"

"Tami Voris is such an amazing woman! Between her and my Social Services Cal Jobs worker, they helped me find a shelter to live in last year for my son and I. After getting off the streets I was able to find employment, move from the shelter to transitional housing and, now I live in a house with my son and husband. I would not be where I AM TODAY IF NOT FOR THIS PROGRAM AND THE WOMEN WHO BELIEVED IN ME."



We are excited to be reporting quarterly in the Social Services Data Dashboard. **Scan the QR code to see the January Data Dashboard.**



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In response to winter storm impacts, including power outages affecting several California communities beginning on February 13, 2025, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has authorized mass replacements for 14 zip codes in the state, including 95585 (Leggett).

This replacement effort will ensure that CalFresh households residing in the affected areas receive an automatic replacement of 55 percent of their regular CalFresh benefits for the month of February without requiring participants to sign an affidavit attesting to food loss. This replacement is anticipated to happen on March 7, 2025. As a reminder, any CalFresh household that has suffered food loss due to household misfortune may request a replacement by contacting their worker to complete an affidavit. Verification of the food loss may be required. CalFresh, known federally as SNAP, is the largest food program in California, and provides an essential hunger safety net. Within Mendocino County, approximately 10,710 households (17,190 persons) are supported through these supplemental food benefits and the program brings about \$3.25 million to our community per month. For more information on applying for CalFresh, you may contact our offices by phone or in-person or apply online at benefitscal.com.

Fort Bragg	Willits	Career Point	Ukiah
764 S. Franklin St.	472 E. Valley St.	255 N State St., Suite 3	737 S. State St.
(707) 962-1000	(707) 456-3760	(707) 467-5500	(707) 463-7700

**March is Social Work Appreciation Month. The theme for 2025 is
"Social Work: Compassion + Action."**

For the **Family & Children's Services** (FCS) division of Mendocino County, Social Work Appreciation Month is a time to honor and acknowledge the incredible dedication and advocacy for children in our community demonstrated by our local FCS Social Workers. FCS currently has approximately 56 Social Workers and 19 Social Worker Assistants working with the children and families in our community. In 2024, there were approximately 1978 reports of suspected child abuse/neglect, of which 802 required an investigation.

The County of Mendocino is currently recruiting for Social Workers with a variety of professional levels. Qualified community members who are interested in a rewarding career advocating for children can apply at www.governmentjobs.com. Those interested in pursuing education for a career in Social Work could be eligible for monetary support to attend an undergraduate or graduate social work program under California's Title IV-Education Program.

Family & Children's Services has been dedicating resources to work with families through the process of becoming Resource Family Homes. FCS has significantly increased the number of approved Resource Family Homes from 83 in July of 2024 to 132 in February 2025, with 30 more families in currently in the approval process. If interested in becoming a Resource Family to temporarily foster children, visit www.mendocinocounty.gov/departments/social-services/foster-care or call (707) 467-5893.