

Mendocino County Department of Social Services CEO Report

March 2025

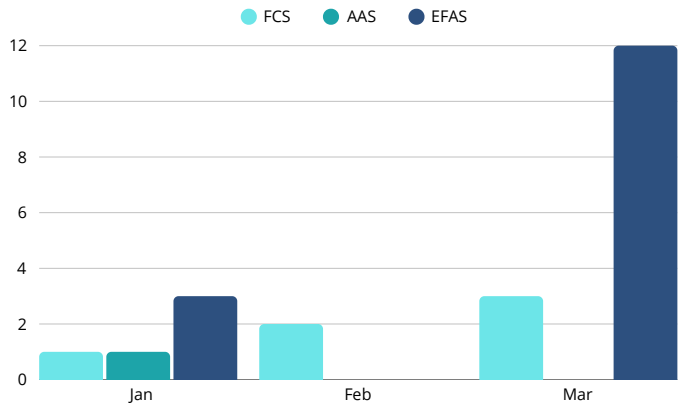
Effective County Government



Department Procedures Released 2025 Qtr 1:

- DSS 25-01 Travel
- DSS 24-05 Accident, Incident, Injury Reporting
- FCS 04-02 Civil Rights: Interpreter Services and Auxiliary Aids
- FCS 01-25 Transitional Care and Logistics
- AAS PA 25-01 Estate Confidentiality
- PA 25-02 Estate File Security

Newly hired staff by division 2025 Qtr 1



Special Investigations Unit 2025 Qtr 1

Welfare fraud referrals may be received from the public, through the State of California welfare fraud hotline, other County agencies, and internal sources.

The Income and Eligibility Verification System (IEVS) matches an applicant or recipient's data with State welfare files, wages, unemployment and disability benefit files, income information from the Internal Revenue Services, and/or Franchise Tax Board and the Social Security Administration. Eligibility Examiners review the matches within 45 days.

Referrals received **109**

Closed investigations **248**

Time of IEVS processing **89%**

IEVS processing timeliness has increased 17% since 2024 Qtr 4.

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



Adult & Aging Services (AAS) - With the continued aging of the population of the United States, an increased number of individuals find themselves needing assistance to remain safely in their homes. In response to this need, **IHSS has seen a 13% increase in aged and or disabled individuals utilizing the service over the last year, serving a total of 2,304 recipients as of January 2025.** The Public Authority is the first step in getting care providers enrolled in the IHSS program.

IHSS providers are required to attend in-person orientation, which is the educational and training component of enrollment, and complete a criminal background check conducted by the California Department of Justice. The Public Authority served more than 800 provider applicants in 2024. The Public Authority also maintains a registry referral service that provides a list of pre-screened workers to IHSS recipients who are in need of a provider but cannot find one on their own. The providers referred are matched with the recipients' individual needs, ensuring more people are able to get access to the services they need.

Due to the increased need for providers both registry and non-registry, Mendocino County Public authority has increased registry provider recruitment efforts by promoting the registry during new provider orientation and advertising on social media. Over the last year the provider registry has grown by 64%.

For more information, please visit www.mendocinocounty.gov/departments/social-services/adult-aging-services/in-home-supportive-services

The Vital Role of IHSS Caregivers

Unless you have worked as a caregiver or experienced the need for a caregiver, In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) may be somewhat of a mystery. February celebrates National Caregiver Recognition Day and an opportunity to highlight the realities of those both providing and receiving these vital IHSS services.

Michelle Sides is an IHSS caregiver. She is also a mother, grandmother, daughter, sister, and active community member in the Ukiah Valley. She has a long history of helping others including 18 years as a SPACE board member, 8 years as a Ford Street Project board member, and a career in the human services field.

[Click here for the full article.](#)



James enjoying his grandchildren

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In honor of Social Work Appreciation Month, the Department of Social Services was pleased to share multiple stories of social workers making a difference throughout Mendocino County.

March is Social Work Appreciation Month, a time to recognize the dedication and contributions of social workers like Christina Griffith, who have committed their careers to supporting and uplifting individuals and families in need.

Christina grew up in a family dedicated to helping others, with her mother working as a nurse. While she knew nursing wasn't her path, she was drawn to the nonprofit sector, working with adults with developmental disabilities, individuals with HIV and Hepatitis C, and those who didn't quite fit into specific assistance programs.

[Click here to read Christina's story](#)



March is Social Worker Appreciation Month, a time to recognize those who dedicate their lives to helping others. Connie Rodriguez is one of those individuals, though her path is not the traditional social work role many might imagine. Instead of child welfare or hospital settings, Connie works behind the scenes, supporting teens and families who rely on CalWORKs and CalWORKs Job Services.

Connie's journey began at 19 when she met Abby, an Employment Services Representative. At the time, Connie was a young mother with a 2-year-old son undergoing chemotherapy.

[Click here to read Connie's story](#)



Social work is a profession that calls to people for a variety of reasons, but the common thread is people wanting to help others. March is Social Work Appreciation Month and a time to recognize those that have chosen this helping career.

One such individual is Daisy Alam, a Family & Children's Services Social Worker with the Mendocino County Department of Social Services, who has been serving the Mendocino Coast since 2015.

[Click here to read Daisy's story](#)



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March is Social Work Appreciation Month, a time to recognize the dedication of the Mendocino County Department of Social Services staff who support our county's most vulnerable residents. One such individual is Tamera Newell, a Social Worker with the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program. IHSS enables elderly and disabled individuals to remain safely in their homes with the assistance of a care provider. Social workers like Tamera play a vital role in ensuring the well-being of IHSS recipients.



Tamera's path to social work was not conventional. As a single mother of two, she faced the challenge of finding stable employment without a college education or prior work experience.

[Click here to read Tamera's story](#)

March is Social Work Appreciation Month, a time to honor the dedication and commitment of professionals who choose to serve their communities. One such dedicated professional is Mendocino County Department of Social Services Adult Protective Services (APS) social worker, Jaqueline Otis.



Jackie grew up in a large family, including an older brother with special needs. "At that time, my father's health insurance wouldn't cover my brother. There weren't services such as physical therapy available, and finding resources was much more difficult than it is today." When Jackie's family connected with a social worker, Mrs. Smith, they not only found essential support but also a lifelong friend.

[Click here to read Jaqueline's story](#)

March is Social Work Appreciation Month, a time to recognize the dedication and impact of social workers who support individuals and families in need. Social workers play a vital role in strengthening communities, advocating for vulnerable populations, and fostering positive change.

Jorden began her career as a court clerk with the Mendocino County Superior Court's dependency and juvenile probation units.

[Click here to read Jorden's story](#)



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March is Social Work Appreciation Month, a time to recognize the dedication and impact of social workers who tirelessly advocate for individuals and families in need. Social work is more than a profession—it is a calling, one that requires compassion, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to positive change.

Entering the field of social work is often a deeply personal decision—one that shapes an individual's perspective on community and empathy. For Kim Perkins-Thompson, this journey began in her teenage years.

[Click here to read Kim's story](#)



Family & Children's Services (FCS) - In March 2025, FCS investigations requiring an immediate response increased approximately 33% compared to the average number of Immediate Response Investigations in 2024, with an increase of approximately 54% compared to March of 2024.

In the last three months, referrals have increased in three of the 4 major types of abuse:

- Neglect
- Physical
- Sexual abuse

Family and Children's services normally sees a spike in reports in September and October due to children returning to school and having more contact with mandated reporters. Although the spike we are seeing in March is not as significant as the increases normally seen when school returns in session, it is still significantly higher than the average for this time of year.

Throughout March with a planned start in early April, the Emergency Response team has been developing a new program to provide voluntary services aimed at supporting families facing challenges after an allegation has been made that does not meet the legal criteria for abuse or neglect, but still shows some level of risk, by providing resources and interventions to strengthen family bonds, improve well-being, and prevent child separation, ultimately keeping children safely in their homes. In the end, we hope to see a reduction in removals and court cases and an increase in sustainable stabilization in the home that participate in services.

Monthly FCS staff training:

- Updated Intake Screening form
- Safety Planning

The monthly trainings are mandated for all social workers and social worker assistants.

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CalFresh benefits and most CalWORKs cash grant payments are issued to customers on an EBT card.

EBT cardholders in California are currently receiving new chip and tap EBT cards in the mail or from their local county office. More than 3.2 million chip and tap EBT cards statewide are set to be distributed through June 2025.

All existing benefits will transfer automatically to the new EBT card and user PINs will stay the same. Cardholders will activate their mailed EBT card by using it as normal to purchase food or withdraw cash at a terminal or ATM. Magnetic-striped only EBT cards can still be used until a chip and tap card has been activated or up to 180 days after the new chip and tap EBT card is issued, whichever comes first. You can access the video, '[Protect Your Benefit with the EBT Chip and Tap Card!](#)' for more information.

EBT cardholders can further protect themselves against theft by using features on ebtEDGE such as pin resets, transaction viewing, freezing or unfreezing card functionality, blocking out of state transactions, and blocking internet transactions. For more information on the free ebtEDGE mobile app, please visit [ebtEDGE](#).
