

# Safe & Healthy County

March 2024



## Serving Mendocino County

In a county that spans over 3,800 square miles and, with an estimated 70% of County residents residing in unincorporated areas, there can be a considerable amount of travel related to those supports, especially for our North County or Coastal residents who may not live along local public transit routes. Some program mandates may require staff to travel outside of Mendocino County and, depending on circumstances, out of state.

We appreciate our staff's dedication to supporting our clients and customers delivering services to those in need.

### Employment and Family Assistance Services (EFAS)

provides administration over the public assistance programs of CalWORKs, CalFresh, and Medi-Cal. While most of the casework is done onsite from offices located in Ukiah, Fort Bragg, and Willits, there are some supports that are provided away from those sites.



To provide equitable opportunity for isolated communities with insufficient internet and spotty cellular service, outreach staff regularly hold events in Round Valley/Covelo, Boonville, and Point Arena, averaging 1.6 events per month over the current fiscal year. At these events, staff assist residents with applying for or maintaining benefits for programs. For reference, during the month of January 2024, active persons by program for public assistance benefits were:

**CalWORKs: 1,837 persons**

**CalFresh: 17,103 persons**

**Medi-Cal: 38,272 persons**

Outside of general eligibility, specialized case management is provided by our Social Worker for pregnant or parenting teens receiving CalWORKs through the Cal-Learn program as well as households needing intensive case management services through our Family Stabilization Program. They complete assessments and work with individuals to create plans for enhanced supports, assisting families in crisis to overcome the barriers to self-sufficiency. For many, transportation is a common barrier to accessing supports. The Social Worker may travel to the participant to provide the connection to services, to ensure that geography is not a disadvantage to successful completion of a plan.

March was the end of the waiver of application and redetermination interviews for CalFresh applicants and beneficiaries that was enacted during the Public Health Emergency. Effective 4/1/24, interviews are now required for all CalFresh applications and redeterminations, regardless of circumstance. EFAS staff have interview booths available for these interviews and provide translation and other communication supports to meet individual needs.

EFAS staff administer programs according to the following mandates: W&I Code 10000-18999.98 as well as 42 CFR 431.50, and CCR 50105, 50141, and 50177, W&I Code 11320, 11323.4, and 11331.7 (a)

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## Serving Mendocino County Continued

**Adult and Aging Services (AAS)** provides services to our elders (ages 60 +) and dependent adults with disabilities (ages 18-59) through a variety of mandated services. These services require home visits, client transportation and emergency response that takes staff throughout Mendocino County and further depending on client needs. The department is equipped with a fleet to support these needs including some specially outfitted vehicles for safety and ability to move client belongings as needed.



AAS staff supporting Creekside residents in 2023

- In-Home Support Services (IHSS) initial and annual renewal home visits - Social Workers determine the number of hours a client is entitled to based on their physical needs and the environment in which they live requiring travel throughout Mendocino County.
- IHSS/Quality Assurance (QA) Home Visits – QA social workers investigate to ensure proper IHSS care is being administered by the IHSS provider, there is no fraud being committed, and/or the recipient was granted the appropriate number of hours.
- Adult Protective Services (APS) emergency response/follow-up – APS staff receive and investigate reports of elder or dependent adult abuse from mandated reporters, law enforcement, and community members requiring travel throughout Mendocino County.
- Public Administrator investigations (securing/taking protective custody of a decedents property/assets) – As required, this program has occasional outside county travel if decedent has assets in another county. The Public Administrator handles the disposition of deceased estates. The PA investigates and administers the estates of persons who die with no will or without an appropriate person willing or able to act as administrator.
- Public Guardian client visits – The Deputy Public Guardian ensures the client is being cared for and needs are being met. Depending on the facility location, this may require client transport out of Mendocino County.

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## Serving Mendocino County Continued

**Family & Children's Services (FCS)** Social Workers, Social Worker Assistants and Vocational Assistants spend much of their time in the field supporting Mendocino County children, youth, non-minor dependents and their families regardless of their location. This involves FCS staff driving many miles per month. From January to February 2024, FCS staff drove county vehicles approximately 55,366 miles. The mandated and/or court ordered reasons FCS staff use county vehicles include, but is not limited to:

- Transportation of foster children from their foster care placements to FCS offices or other locations for supervised visits with parents, often multiple times per week per court orders. This involves transportation of foster children not only placed within Mendocino County, but also placed outside of Mendocino County when their caregivers are unable to do so.
- Transportation of foster children to maintain them in their school of origin (school child was attending at the time of removal from parental custody) when their resource (foster) parent is unable to do so due to work or transporting other children to other school locations. This involves transportation of foster children not only placed within Mendocino County, but also placed in neighboring counties.
- Transportation of foster children to medical or other case plan related appointments in or out of county when their caregivers are unable to do so.
- Transportation of foster children to the Ukiah courthouse when they wish to attend Juvenile Dependency court hearings, and then to school, when their caregivers are unable to do so.
- Transportation of foster children to their new foster care placement which may be within Mendocino County or in other counties throughout California.
- Transportation of parents to the Ukiah courthouse for Juvenile Dependency court hearings if a parent does not have their own transportation resources.
- Transportation of parents for case plan related services outside of Mendocino County if a parent does not have their own transportation resources.
- Social Workers traveling to placements throughout Mendocino County and California to see the foster children on their caseload in-person once a month.
- Social Workers traveling throughout Mendocino County to investigate suspected child abuse referrals. At times, investigating social workers must travel outside of Mendocino County to complete investigations, such as when a child is hospitalized due to abuse or neglect. Many investigations require more than one visit with a family if safety planning, monitoring and additional supports are needed before an investigation can be closed.
- Resource Family Approval Social Workers traveling throughout Mendocino County to complete mandated in-person home inspections and family assessments for individuals wishing to provide foster care. This also includes traveling to neighboring counties to complete the home inspection and family assessment process for relatives and non-related extended family members who wish to provide foster care for their minor relatives in the custody of Mendocino County.

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## Serving Mendocino County Continued

### Family & Children's Services (FCS) continued:

- Social Workers traveling throughout Mendocino County to complete assessments of individuals applying to be legal guardians through the Probate Court or wishing to adopt through the Family Law Court.
- Social Workers and Social Worker Assistants traveling to parents' homes within Mendocino County to provide support regarding case plan related services which may include activities such as household organization, coaching on parenting skills, Wraparound intensive supports, etc.

We appreciate the work our staff do in the field to support Mendocino County's children, youth, young adults, their families and their caregivers.

As noted, these services are provided by court order and/or mandates which include but are not limited to: Education Code 48853.5. Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 306, 309, 319, 364, 4096.6, 11400 et seq., 16000, 16501, 16506, 16507, 16507.4, 16508, 16516.5, 16516.6, 16519.5, 16522.5, 16522.6, 18250 et seq., Penal Code Section 11164, 11165, 11166, Probate Code Section 1513, Family Code Sections 7820, 7851, 9001, California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Division 31 Child Welfare Regulations and CDSS Resource Family Approval Written Directives.

