


DPSS NEWS

MAY 2021



Derrick and Tami Sanchez are one of three foster families selected by Children's Services to receive the Caregiver of the Year award, a distinction given during National Foster Care Month in May.

[See more on page 10](#)



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Staff:

May is the time we celebrate Mother's Day and offer our collective gratitude to moms everywhere. Children need moms: Biological, adoptive, foster, professional. To moms everywhere, and to each mom in our department, thank you for bringing love and safety to a child. This month we are spotlighting foster parents. These special people fill a crucial and trusted role in the lives of children in care. I hope you will take time to celebrate them and learn about some of the ways they are supporting local children and families.

May is also CalFresh Awareness Month. It's an opportunity to highlight the extraordinary benefits this nutrition and self-sufficiency program offers families and individuals. This month we expanded the hours in our lobbies to help customers who do not have access to telephone or internet services apply for benefits such as CalFresh. The expansion of onsite hours is a signal that Riverside County is passing a milestone in the pandemic and that we can increase public access while continuing measures to keep staff and visitors safe.

We recognize our mission to provide health and human services requires our doors be open. Please reach out to your supervisor if you have questions about the re-expansion of onsite hours or the public health protocols we have put into place and be open about any concerns you have as we go forward.

Albert Einstein said, "in the midst of every crisis, lies great opportunity." Thank you for improving how we deliver services. We know during this recovery that individuals and families will continue to need our services and our compassion more than ever. To each one of our 4,300 staff members — thank you for your resilience and commitment to meeting the needs of each person you encounter in your work. I am honored to serve alongside each of you as we bring hope and help to our neighbors and communities in Riverside County.

In partnership,

SAYORI BALDWIN

Assistant County Executive Officer—Human Services



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WHAT'S CURRENT

EXPANDED SERVICE HOURS IN SELF-SUFFICIENCY LOBBIES

Self-Sufficiency offices expanded their customer service hours in May as Riverside County meets public health benchmarks that signal business locations can safely increase their capacity for employees and guests.

“The safety of our staff and customers is at the forefront of the safeguards we have put into place inside our lobbies and employee areas,” said Shawn Ferris, lead of the Department Operations Center and chief of the Special Investigations Unit. The safeguards align with federal safety requirements.

The expanded hours are for customers who can't access benefits by phone or the internet. Preparing for the change kept Support Services Supervisor Chris Ross and a team of facility technicians busy. Last summer, Ross and his team installed plexiglass, put up signage, and took additional measures to protect against COVID-19.

Last month, the team began revisiting Self-Sufficiency offices; refreshing lobby signage, placing 6-foot floor markings in the lobbies, and adding protections in areas where employees work.

“Our team has taken a lot of steps to make sure these locations are ready



Support Services Supervisor Chris Ross puts up a COVID-19 screening sign outside the lobby restroom at the Perris Self-Sufficiency office.

EXPANDED SELF-SUFFICIENCY OFFICE HOURS BEGINNING MAY 3
8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

and safe for our staff and customers,” said Ross.

Customers are still being encouraged to use phone and online self-service options whenever possible, while DPSS recognizes that many individuals and families require onsite emergency services.

“It’s wonderful to see Riverside County beginning to reopen and our department expanding its hours of service for those who need help,” said Daniel Vejar, a deputy director in Self-Sufficiency.

Staff returning to offices will notice several changes, including:

- Meeting rooms, workstations, and path of travel marked to maintain social distancing
- Breakrooms and restrooms marked to limit occupancy
- Taped-off kiosks, interview areas, and main lobby seating
- Employee entrances with new COVID screening guidelines

Ross and the Facilities team have set up more than a dozen locations. The department will prioritize set up at additional facilities as needs are determined. Employees will find the latest COVID office guidelines by visiting [this SharePoint page](#).

STAY IN THE LOOP!

DPSS WILL BE LAUNCHING NEW EMERGENCY ALERT PLATFORM

We’re excited to announce that we have recently subscribed to a new emergency alerting service! One Call Now (OCN) will allow DPSS to deliver information and provide timely updates to our staff via text message and/or email. The new service will enhance our current communication methods and make sure everyone is kept in the loop in a timely and effective way.

DPSS will be able to use the service to communicate for a variety of situations:

- Emergency alerts/notifications
- Evacuation notices
- Road closures

Please note that this is a free service for our staff, but depending on your wireless plan, message and data rates may apply. Check with your wireless carrier for more information.

Assurance and Review Services will be performing a test of this system in May 2021. To make sure that you receive the test message and/or email, you must ensure your county cell and/or personal cell number and preferred email is entered into PeopleSoft.

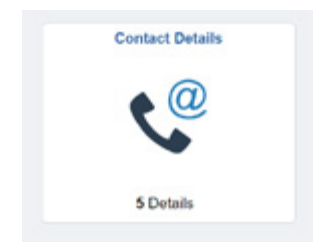
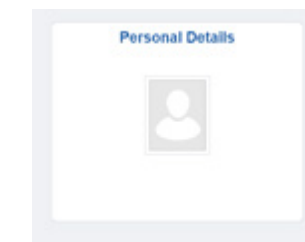
TO UPDATE AND/OR ADD YOUR INFORMATION IN PEOPLESOF:



Select Personal Details.



Select Contact Details and update your email or phone number as needed.



COVID-19 VACCINE SCAM TARGETS OLDER ADULTS

Scammers will use any potentially scary or confusing situation to prey on the vulnerable, and COVID-19 is no exception. Senior advocates are urging those with older loved ones, friends, and neighbors to keep an eye out for con artists and phishers taking advantage of ongoing vaccination drives.

Office on Aging (OOA) is reporting a scam involving a caller asking the customer to pay or provide financial information to schedule or reschedule a vaccine appointment. Another uses a phone number that appears to be a Riverside County line.

Seniors and their caregivers should never give out financial information to callers, websites or emailers who insist the data is required to schedule a COVID-19 vaccination. However, callers who contact Riverside County Public Health to book a vaccination appointment at a county-run clinic will be asked to provide basic personal information and their Social Security number.

“The Public Health county website, 211 and OOA call centers are trusted sources that require basic personal



information to register those interested in receiving the vaccine,” said Adult Services Assistant Director Todd Bellanca.

To help prevent someone you know from becoming a victim of a scam, Bellanca encourages employees to stay engaged with aging family members, neighbors, and friends, and to reach out to seniors in isolation.

Find tips to avoid a COVID-19 vaccine-related scam by visiting this resource from the Federal Trade Commission: https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2021/04/covid-vaccines-are-free?utm_source=govdelivery



**HEY,
EVERYBODY.
LISTEN UP!**

Podcast hosts Angela Naso (at left) and Gene Kennedy (at right) with guest Marivel Castaneda (center).

DPSS will begin bending the airwaves in late May with a new podcast called “theServiceStation.”

The conversations, available in English and Spanish, will give listeners information on DPSS programs and introduce experts on complex issues facing individuals and families in one of the nation’s most populous and diverse counties.

The podcast is set to launch May 26 on Buzzsprout and other mainstream platforms. Gene Kennedy and Angela Naso from Community and Government Relations public information team will host each show, interviewing guests from the community and DPSS — including representatives from units such as Adults Services, Children’s Services, Self-Sufficiency, and more.

Marivel Castaneda, from DPSS Community Outreach Branch, will be the podcast’s first guest, discussing how to sign up for CalFresh, the state’s largest food assistance program. Castaneda also offers insights about community needs in addition to the positive impacts programs like CalFresh have on individuals and families struggling to afford necessities.

“We are thrilled to introduce theServiceStation to our colleagues and communities,” said Kimberly Trone, manager of the Community and Government Relations unit.

As the podcast develops over the next year, Trone says the team will look for ways to expand the format to support more voices and topics.

“We envision the podcast will grow into a ‘must-listen’ destination, a safe place where listeners hear words and information to empower their lives and help them find solutions.”

Submit ideas for future podcasts to dpssinfo@rivco.org and keep your eyes (and ears) open for more information on theServiceStation.

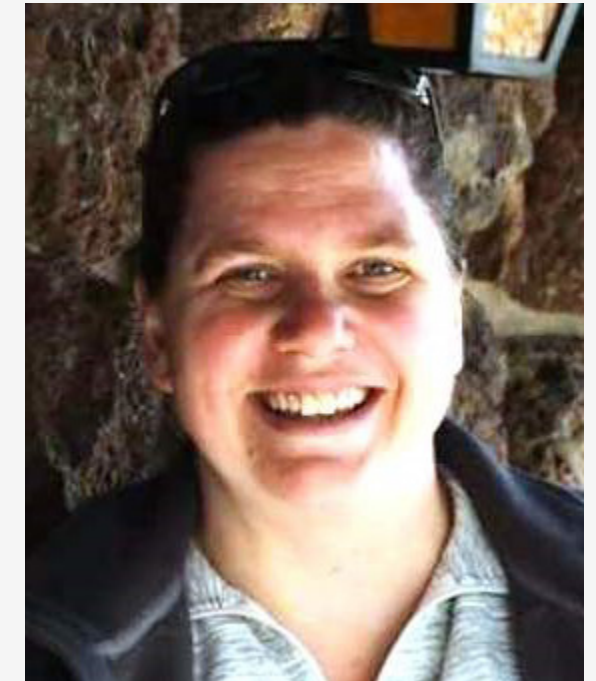


PASSION & PURPOSE: HER DRIVING FORCE

Krystal Elliott has worn many hats in the 16 years she’s worked for DPSS, but she describes her current role with the Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) program as the one where she found her purpose. Having held positions in Adult Protective Services and Self-Sufficiency, Elliott is now an administrative services analyst for the CSEC program.

Four years ago, Elliott was only two weeks into her position when she discovered her sense of purpose—a calling. “Being an administrative analyst is much more than just crunching numbers,” says Elliott. Besides organizing the annual CSEC conference in January, Elliott actively engages with community partners and helps social workers find resources for kids on their caseloads. In a recent Zoom session hosted by HOPE Collaborative, Elliott spoke to teens about how to protect themselves from online predators and addressed parents’ cyberbullying concerns.

“If I am able to reach one person in my outreach activities, I know I’ve made that ripple in the water,” Elliott says. Ultimately, she knows that her work can impact a child or youth who might need a resource, which will help get them the services they need to heal from the trauma they have suffered through no fault of their own. “Like in Oz, I’m the wizard behind the curtain,” Elliott continued.



“When you have so many people passionate about what they want to do, it really changes things.” — Krystal Elliott

Elliott is inspired by the mission, vision, and values of DPSS. “When you have so many people passionate about what they want to do, it really changes things,” she says. Reflecting on her work at DPSS, she notes the collective efforts of many. “I’m one piece of a greater puzzle and feel privileged to be a part of it.”

DID YOU KNOW?

Launched in 2015, the CSEC program provides information to support awareness, identification, and prevention education of commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth. Riverside is one of 38 counties that elected to participate in the voluntary program, resulting in the identification of 171 cases countywide. CSEC represents the largest investment by any US state into the development of robust local responses to sexually exploited children and youth, totaling nearly \$20 million each year. For more information, please email CSECProgram@rivco.org.



Each month Managing Director Jennifer Claar recommends a staff member to be spotlighted: a team player who demonstrates the spirit of innovation and learning. Claar has her MSW and PHD in Social Welfare from University of California, Los Angeles, and has led several innovative initiatives in her more than 20 years with the department. “A TOP culture is supported by a spirit of innovation and learning that should be recognized and celebrated,” Claar says.



INNOVATION HELPS DEPARTMENT VISUALIZE PROGRESS

JENNIFER CLaar'S TOP PICK FOR MAY:
SOCIAL SERVICES PLANNER & U.S. AIR
FORCE VETERAN JOSHUA CODA

Safety and precision have always been central to Joshua Coda's work.

As a loadmaster in the U.S. Air Force between 2005 and 2009, Coda calculated weights and balances on the massive C-130 cargo plane nicknamed Hercules. His scrupulous attention to accuracy ensured that America's human and tactical cargo flew safely in and out of militarized zones around the world.

Coda graduated from UC Riverside with a political science degree in 2011. When he joined DPSS a little over four years ago, Coda's drive for innovation

transformed the way Riverside County communicates and coordinates its policies on homelessness, said Jennifer Claar.

“Josh works behind the scenes to strengthen the quality of our responses to individuals and communities in crisis,” she says.

Claar says Coda recently brought her his idea of organizing and visualizing the department's performance data on immersive dashboards. Then he built a prototype using Power BI, a Microsoft Teams application that is supported by Riverside County Information Technology.

Claar says she had been wishing for an “easy button” to get timely



Social Services Planner Joshua Coda is working to develop and refine tools to help DPSS more easily view the department's performance data.

performance data in a way that was simple to see and understand. “Now, I now am able to look at my phone and see how we are doing throughout the department.”

Coda says he wants to make it easier for everybody to look at data and understand how their programs are performing, as part of the department's strategic planning initiatives. He predicts Power BI will become a standard operating tool as DPSS continues its effort to achieve measurable improvements in performance, accountability, effectiveness, and efficiency.

“People respond to visuals that tell a clear story,” Coda says. “Accurate, real-time information helps us identify issues that are impacting our work, make targeted adjustments and improve our quality of services on an ongoing basis.”



From 2005 through 2009, Coda was a loadmaster with the U.S. Air Force



Derrick and Tami Sanchez were selected by Children's Services to receive the Caregiver of the Year award, along with two other Riverside County families. The Sanchezes are currently fostering four young foster boys.

FOSTER FAMILIES GO THE EXTRA MILE TO REUNITE FAMILIES IN CRISIS

MAY IS NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

When foster parents Derrick and Tami Sanchez receive a child into their home, which can sometimes be in the middle of night, they always assure the child that they are part of their family.

"Each child we receive is different, and we do what we can so they feel comfortable while they are with us," says Tami, who experienced being placed in a foster home as a youth. "One child's mother told us he liked beans and white rice, so that is what we cooked for him."

The Sanchezes, who have one teenage son of their own, are currently fostering four young foster boys, including a newborn. They do whatever it takes to ensure that the four boys stay in contact with their birth families. "We try to be flexible and work around the parents'

Each child we receive is different, and we do what we can so they feel comfortable while they are with us.

-Tami Sanchez, Foster Parent

schedule to make sure they get to visit their kids every week," said Derrick, a stay-at-home parent. "Ultimately, the goal is to reunite the family."

The Sanchezes are "competent, nurturing and protective parents that are always going the extra mile for the foster children in their home," affirmed the social worker who nominated them for the Caregiver of the Year Award.

The couple were selected by Children's Services in 2021 for the annual award. This is a distinction given during National Foster

Care Month, a moment marked by awareness campaigns and recognition of the important role and dedication of foster parents.

Out of the 14 children the Sanchezes have fostered since their certification in 2018, 10 have been successfully returned to their birth parents. The four boys in their care now are also on track for reunification. If there is

a child placed with them that is not able to return home, the Sanchez family says they would gladly adopt him or her.

"Each May brings us an opportunity to recognize our resource and kin families who are supporting our children by opening their homes and sharing their love," noted Bridgette Hernandez, deputy director

of Children's Services. "These parents help our children through a difficult time in their lives, providing comfort, understanding and security while their families work toward reunification, which is the ultimate goal."

Anyone interested in becoming a foster parent in Riverside County can call 1-800-665-KIDS (5437).

PARTNERSHIP ENHANCES CONTINUUM OF CARE

FOR SOME RIVERSIDE COUNTY FOSTER CHILDREN, A PROFESSIONAL PARENT BRINGS THE UNWAVERING SUPPORT AND LOVE THEY NEED



Jennifer Williams was in the foster system until her life was changed by the loving support of a professional parent.

In the end, it was steadfast support from a professional parent that helped Jennifer Williams find her way. Williams, a beaming and confident young woman, is a former foster youth who has already confronted many challenges in her life.

"They changed my life by showing me someone will care for you and someone will advocate for you no matter what," Williams said from the Oakland campus operated by Seneca Family of Agencies.

Seneca specializes in helping youth who are often considered too difficult to place in traditional foster care. Williams is a graduate of the agency's professional parent program. The success of the professional parent model has not gone unnoticed in Riverside County.

Children's Services is contracting with the agency for professional parents, and leaders in DPSS hope to see similar models developed locally. While the model is relatively

new in California, agencies across the country have begun incorporating it into their systems of care to help children and youth in trauma.

"The professional parent is really a godsend — an answer — to those children who have the deepest, hardest needs," says Charity Douglas, assistant director of DPSS Children's Services. "The professional parent is there to support them, help them heal, to love them — not to judge them."

The professional parent model will help Riverside County round out its continuum of care — the different types of placements available for children and youth in foster care. A professional parent commits 24/7 to one child only and sticks by that child through thick and thin.

"That's what's different than regular foster care," said Verlesha Smith, a placement program director

for Seneca. She called the new partnership with Riverside County "very collaborative," and notes, "They have similar values in that whatever it takes to meet the needs of the clients, that's what we are going to do."



WATCH: Learn more about how this partnership helps the needs of our young clients.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swMBuYyDv5c>

FAITH PARTNERS OPEN HEARTS AND SUPPORT TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN FOSTER CARE



Irene Capen and Noemi Amezcua of the Faith in Motion program help guide and support prospective parents to become a resource family home in Riverside County.

It's more than a year into the pandemic and the phones at Faith in Motion (FIM) haven't stopped ringing. When a prospective foster parent calls, they may reach Irene Capen, manager for Riverside County's FIM program.

Faith in Motion contracts with Children's Services to be a bridge to Riverside County's faith-based communities, helping them recruit and retain foster families for children and youth who need out-of-home care. The program partners with more than 70 churches and religious organizations countywide and is always looking to expand its partnerships by connecting with local churches and faith organizations. May is Foster Appreciation month, when foster parents are celebrated and recognized for their contributions to children and families.

"It is usually a calling a family has felt, and they are ready to take the next step," Capen says of the families who contact her organization about fostering. Capen, a foster mom who has also adopted, knows how much care and support is needed to guide families in their journeys. FIM is working with more than 300 potential foster parents right now. Although the pandemic has made recruitment more challenging, prospective families are still calling to find out how they can open their homes to a child or youth in need.

DID YOU KNOW?

Faith In Motion, a collaboration between the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), Children's Services Division and Riverside County's faith-based communities, helps to recruit and retain foster families for children and youth who need out-of-home care. The program was established seven years ago and partners with more than 70 churches and religious organizations countywide.

"The best part is being able to transform the life of a child while they are in your care."

—Noemi Amezcua

When a family prefers to navigate the process in Spanish, Capen refers them to foster parent Noemi Amezcua, who recruits and supports other foster parents who are sometimes immigrants like herself.

In her nearly 30 years as a foster mom, Amezcua has cared for about 100 kids. "This is definitely a vocation, something you feel in your heart to do," Amezcua said in Spanish. "The best part is being able to transform the life of a child while they are in your care."

Even though there are hundreds of prospective parents, Capen emphasizes the ongoing need for foster families and relative caregivers, also known as "resource families."

Finding a home for every foster child has evolved into a regional campaign called Love Has No Limits (LHNL). Faith communities hope to activate thousands of families to foster or adopt over 40,000 kids across Southern California. The LHNL website says that without intervention, many foster kids who age out of care are more likely to experience homelessness, incarceration, early parenthood, poverty, and human trafficking.

Back at the Faith in Motion headquarters, Capen says she hopes the phones will continue ringing with families whose hearts are drawn toward helping Riverside County children. Interested families or faith communities can contact FIM at (951) 228-5553 or e-mail icapen@fosterall.org.

LOVE HAS NO LIMITS

The need for finding a home for every foster child has turned into a movement led by communities of faith across Southern California called Love Has No Limits (LHNL). Without intervention, youth who age out of care are at-risk for homelessness, incarceration, poverty, and human trafficking. To find out more about LHNL, please visit lovehasnolimits.com. Families who are interested in fostering or adopting can also text HOME to (213) 523-3352.



MAY IS CALFRESH AWARENESS MONTH

CALFRESH TIP:

For recipes, updates, and tips for buying and preparing healthy affordable meals on CalFresh dollars, join CalFresh Healthy Living on Facebook at [facebook.com/CalFreshHealthyLiving](https://www.facebook.com/CalFreshHealthyLiving)

CALFRESH MAKES VITAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO COMMUNITIES

May is CalFresh Awareness month, a time for advocates to highlight the many vital contributions California's largest food assistance program makes to individuals and communities.

In Riverside County, CalFresh—formerly called Food Stamps—serves more than 75,000 working class and low-income households, including thousands of seniors and college students.

The program ensures eligible children receive school meals. Parents in CalFresh participate in job training, educational development, and receive other support that positions them for the workforce and independence. In a crisis, CalFresh can help fill the gap.

When the pandemic hit last year, CalFresh enrollment in Riverside County increased by nearly 20% as families sought to put food on their tables, said Allison Gonzalez, assistant director of Self-Sufficiency for Riverside County DPSS.

(Continued on page 15)

HOW TO APPLY

Online: [GetCalFresh.org](https://www.getcalfresh.org) | Phone: 877-847-3663 | In-Person: Visit [rivcodpss.org](https://www.rivcodpss.org) for a location near you.

“These investments help people become economically stable,” Gonzalez says. “They are lifelines for our disabled and retirees, many who’ve worked their entire lives and need help obtaining healthy food to meet their nutritional needs.”

CalFresh programs reduce poverty, help households stretch their food dollars, and strengthen local economies. In the past 12 months,

CalFresh issued more than \$575 million in benefits to Riverside County recipients, generating \$1.03 billion in economic impacts for local grocers, restaurants, eateries, and farmers markets, according to the state program’s calculator.

Kalayah Wilson, a UC Riverside student in her 20s, says CalFresh benefits have allowed her to live independently and focus on her

studies. She works part time as a CalFresh ambassador in the campus food pantry, encouraging fellow students to apply. Ambassadors like Wilson work to dispel myths surrounding CalFresh recipients.

“Sometimes all you need is that one person encouraging you to apply,” Wilson said.

SPOTLIGHT ON ELIGIBILITY TECHNICIAN II, ADAM TAKUMI

Takumi is one of many DPSS Eligibility Technicians who help Riverside County residents get their CalFresh benefits

Before joining the ranks of DPSS Eligibility Technicians (ET) in 2015, Adam Takumi had already spent 15 years in the retail industry. This experience in customer service prepared him for his current job as an ET in more ways than one. Starting out working the floor at an office supply store and quickly working his way up to store manager, he became well versed in interacting with customers, tracking store metrics, creating and delivering presentations, and solving problems.

It was another aspect of working in retail that gave him the heart for the work he does now, though. When the economy crashed in 2008, Takumi was fortunate enough to keep his job, but things were rocky for the retail industry. Between 2012 and 2015, he found himself on unemployment twice. That’s when he observed that the processes of getting financial assistance can be a challenge, due to long lines and other delays. “It makes you wonder what’s going on behind the scenes,” Takumi says.

While dealing with these uncertainties the second time



Adam Takumi

around, Takumi decided to get into a different line of work. That’s when he came across a position as an ET with Riverside County DPSS. Several friends had gotten into social work and suggested he apply. Now, as an ET II, he enjoys being able to provide prompt service and quickly guide people to what they need.

“When you don’t have a source to provide for yourself, the added stress can make your life seem a lot more challenging,” Takumi says, adding that he likes being able to relieve that pressure for people.

Takumi is among 1,800 eligibility technicians providing quality service to individuals and families who are often facing difficult circumstances. His insight and experience are helping to continuously improve services and the workplace experience.

“Adam’s engagement in our strategic initiative workgroup and customer service practices have been outstanding,” said Carey Minjarez, a regional manager in the Self-Sufficiency division. “He takes pride in his work, supports others, and is knowledgeable about the program.”

Takumi, who works out of the Desert Hot Springs office, is one of many ETs who are trained to help county residents applying for CalFresh benefits. He notes that the cross-training they have been doing in the department means that when someone applies for CalFresh — or other programs — ETs look into whether they’re eligible for other benefits. Takumi’s favorite part of the job? “Making sure our customers get what they’re eligible for.”

TELECOMMUTER CONNECTION

WITH LORI



Lori Perry is a senior administrative analyst with Technology Support Services, regularly working in conjunction with the Independent Review Group-Assets Monitoring Services team. Look for her regular updates here in the Telecommuter Connection!

MONTHLY TECH TIP:

Please do not sign into Global Protect when in the office. Global Protect can only be used at home — not on the county network or domain.

LESS PAPERWORK, MORE STREAMLINED!

More telework requests available online through RivCoHelp

When the Technology Support Services (TSS) team took over coordinating the paper telework applications for 3,000 DPSS employees last December, we felt like skiers buried by a snow avalanche! With no St. Bernard to rescue us, we began digging ourselves out by streamlining our paper-based practices. We bulldozed an avalanche of paperwork and metal filing cabinets by moving our operation to RIVCOHelp, another name for ServiceNow — a software tool that supports operational management.

Riverside County IT (RCIT) is a great partner in our efforts and helped us facilitate the launch of our electronic ServiceNow workflow. This feature allows staff to “request” telework via a service request catalog item in the existing RIVCOHelp Portal. DPSS employees should keep their eyes out for further direction on how to request telework.

This was a Herculean lift of superhero magnitude and there aren’t enough capes for all those who put their muscle into the effort! Workflows were built within five days (with 12 to 16 hours spent on the project per day!). RCIT worked on the background configurations and TSS and DPSS

division telework coordinators worked with RCIT to test the application.

As a result, DPSS can now onboard its 3,000 teleworker applications online, with teleworking as another catalog item to select in RIVCOHelp. Be on the lookout for news and announcements, links, and easy-to-follow training guides on our DPSS Telework SharePoint site and via email. Thanks to all who are helping us see the light of day as we continue to promote processes that support teleworking!

WITH SERVICENOW, EMPLOYEES CAN:

- Identify their telework schedule (days and part-time or full-time)
- Provide their remote contact information
- Electronically accept the department’s telework agreement
- Request telework equipment

Once submitted, the request is electronically routed to the employee’s supervisor for approval.

CALSAWS CORNER: A Journey To One

THE POWER OF 58

STAFF CATCHES UP ON DOCUMENT IMAGING BEFORE CALSAWS MIGRATION IN THE FALL

As the department prepares to move to CalSAWS in September, Maria Virgilio is among the many employees who are running a marathon of sorts.

Virgilio, an office support supervisor at the Hemet Self-Sufficiency office, is working behind the scenes with other staff members department wide to scan and file customer paperwork — a task known as imaging and indexing. From now until the CalSAWS launch in the early fall, all remaining and incoming documents must be exported to the CalSAWS system on an ongoing basis.

“What’s a typical part of our daily job is so vital right now,” Virgilio said. “We’re all in this together, working hard to make sure we’re caught up because we know change is coming and we have to be ready for it.”

Beginning in August, Virgilio will train office staff and eligibility technicians in Hemet on how to image in the new statewide automated welfare system. She is among more than 60 CalSAWS Change Network Champions across DPSS who will motivate and support users during the CalSAWS launch. Virgilio is looking forward to the system’s new Optical Character Recognition technology which scans and verifies a document then indexes it automatically without staff needing to take additional steps.

“That frees us up to do other tasks,” Virgilio said.

Administrative Services Manager Dan Kohn, who is also a project leader on the CalSAWS Migration, applauds employees for their work on the transition.

“They’re working hard every day to make the change as smooth as possible,” said Kohn. “It’s an exciting time and the work will pay off as we move to a new system that will make our jobs more efficient and offer customers more streamlined access to services.”



Office Support Supervisor Maria Virgilio works out of the Hemet Self-Sufficiency office and is one of the department’s Change Network Champions.

IMAGING BENEFITS

- More access points to allow users to seamlessly navigate the system.
- Teleworking employees can access all aspects of imaging without additional logins or programs.
- Faster, more efficient scanning processes through features such as multi-case uploading and improved barcoding.

Recent Happenings



Social workers at the Banning office receive the backpacks assembled and delivered by Riverside County Fifth District Supervisor Jeff Hewitt and his team.

GIFTED BACKPACKS BRING COMFORT TO CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Backpacks in all shapes and sizes were brought to social workers in Banning who are called in when a case of suspected abuse or neglect has been reported or when a child is removed from a home.

“These backpacks will definitely go very quickly,” said Aaron Carpio, regional manager for the mid-county region. “This office alone serves 450 kids. This simple gesture will mean a lot to them.”

Assembled and delivered by Riverside County Fifth District Supervisor Jeff Hewitt and his team, the 50 distinctive backpacks are filled with comforting items such as stuffed animals to hug and handwritten notes of encouragement. These items are intended to help ease the transition for children or youth entering a foster home.

The supervisor further acknowledged that social work is one of the most difficult professions that often goes unrecognized. “I appreciate how hard you work every day,” he says. “It is a tough job. Anything you need, my office is always here to support you.”



Riverside County Fifth District Supervisor Jeff Hewitt delivered 50 unique backpacks to DPSS Children’s Services social workers in the Banning office.



Above: Children’s Service staff at the Cottonwood office in Moreno Valley celebrate Cinco De Mayo with a decorated breakroom on May 5. The holiday celebrates Mexican heritage and commemorates the Mexican Army’s victory over the French Empire. At DPSS, it’s a day where we recognize staff, community partners, neighbors, family and friends of Mexican descent and the many contributions they make to create a rich local culture and community.



Left: Ahead of Mother’s Day, our desert region staff went all out Thursday, May 6, at our offices in Indio to surprise and celebrate moms who work for the department. Along with being greeted by a Mother’s Day sign, moms were gifted a red rose and treated to coffee, donuts, and fresh fruit.



Dear Staff:

We hope you've enjoyed reading about some of your colleagues and some of the department initiatives, and that you had the opportunity to watch our video about the new solution for foster children with complex needs. These many endeavors we have the pleasure of showcasing are also shaping Riverside County DPSS into one of the nation's top social services providers.

Please take a minute to send a note to DPSSInfo@riveo.org and offer suggestions for the stories and people we should be spotlighting. As our colleague Krystal Elliott observed in her profile article this month, we are each a piece of this wonderful puzzle that makes up DPSS. Thank you for being wonderful in your service and helping us share the stories of our journey together.

Kimberly Trone, Gene Kennedy, Angela Naso, Tina Bellanger, Sydney Thibeaux

MISSION

Riverside County Department of Public Social Services is dedicated to supporting and improving the health, safety, independence and well-being of individuals and families.

VISION

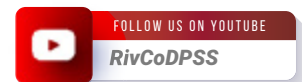
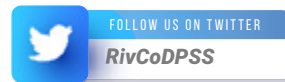
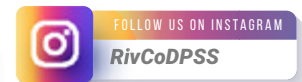
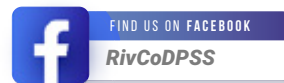
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VALUES

Accountability, Collaboration, Respect, Diversity, Integrity, Customer Focus

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