

ALAMEDA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Monday, July 22, 2024

2:30 p.m.

Supervisor Nate Miley, Chair
Supervisor Lena Tam

Location: Board of Supervisors' Chambers – Room 512 – 5th fl
County Administration Building
1221 Oak Street, Oakland, CA 94612

Summary/Action Minutes

I. INFORMATIONAL ITEM: CalFresh Program Updates

[Attachment](#)

Presenters

Andrea Ford, Director, Social Services Agency and Roland Shao, CalFresh Program Specialist, Department of Workforce & Benefits Administration

Summary

CalFresh program updates included recent policy changes, food assistance expansions, anti-fraud efforts, and demographic trends in participation countywide. The California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) expansion, which will extend state-funded food benefits to income-eligible Californians aged 55 and over regardless of immigration status, has been delayed from October 1, 2025, to October 1, 2027. ACSSA will continue communication and outreach planning in anticipation of this timeline shift.

A new program launched in June 2024 called SUN Bucks (Summer EBT) to help families with school-aged children purchase food during the summer months. Eligible families receive \$120 per child, which is loaded to a separate SUN Bucks EBT card. Children are automatically eligible if they receive CalFresh, CalWORKs, Medi-Cal, or free/reduced price school meals. Families who believe they qualify but did not receive benefits can request review through the SUN Bucks helpline.

CalFresh continues to experience EBT electronic theft, primarily due to card skimming. Although theft levels have declined since December 2023, ACSSA is continuing prevention efforts. The ebtEDGE mobile and web app now allows cardholders to freeze and unfreeze cards, reset PINs, block out-of-state transactions, and view transaction history. In addition, Chip and Tap-enabled EBT cards will begin mailing this summer in four phases. Some retailers do not yet have chip-enabled terminals, so cardholders may need to swipe when necessary. ACSSA is also contacting households flagged by the State as potentially compromised and recommends frequent PIN changes.

Updates were provided regarding Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs). ABAWDs between ages 18–52 (changing to 18–54 on October 1, 2024) are limited to three months of CalFresh every 36 months unless they meet work requirements or qualify for an exemption. California currently qualifies for a statewide waiver through October 31, 2024, and labor data indicates the waiver will likely extend through October 2025. ACSSA is preparing staff training refreshers and encourages ABAWDs to enroll in CalFresh Employment & Training (E&T) for workforce and job readiness support.

As of June 2024, there are over 101,000 CalFresh households in Alameda County, representing over 171,000 individuals, with an average issuance of \$293 per month. Districts 3, 4, and 5 continue to serve the highest number of households, including many with homeless recipients and SSI recipients. Demographic data shows significant cultural and linguistic diversity among CalFresh participants.

Additional updates were provided on college and graduate student eligibility. Students may qualify for CalFresh only if they meet specific exemptions such as working 20 hours per week, participating in work

study, caring for dependents, or enrolling in state-approved employability programs. ACSSA is working with colleges to have more graduate programs recognized under the Local Programs that Increase Employability (LPIE) exemption list.

Purpose:

Report progress

Advocacy or Education

Request Social Services Committee Recommendation or Position

Other:

Speakers

There were no speakers on this item.

Committee Feedback

President Miley would like a report on the turnout of the Homeless Resource & Job Fair event held at The Coliseum.

Action

This item was informational only and required no Committee action.

II. INFORMATIONAL ITEM: Child Welfare Services Overview

[Attachment](#)

Presenters

Andrea Ford, Director, Social Services Agency and Michelle Love, Assistant Agency Director, Department of Children and Family Services

Summary

An overview was provided on the full continuum of Child Welfare Services (CWS), including hotline response, investigations, family support, youth permanency, and caregiver services. Child Welfare Services' vision is that every child in Alameda County can grow up in a safe, stable, and nurturing home, whether with family or an alternative caregiver when needed.

The Child Abuse Hotline operates 24 hours a day and received 11,879 referrals in FY 22/23. Of those, 3,653 referrals were investigated for suspected abuse or neglect. During that period, child abuse was substantiated for 493 youth, and 416 youth were removed due to immediate safety risks. In addition to emergency response, hotline staff make referrals to community supports to stabilize families and prevent separation when possible.

When a child is placed into protective custody, Dependency Investigations has 48 business hours to file a petition with the Juvenile Court. A Detention Hearing is held the next business day to determine whether the child remains removed. A Jurisdiction and Disposition Hearing follows within approximately 15 days to determine whether the youth becomes a dependent of the court. While a case is pending, families may receive housing support, substance use or mental health treatment, domestic violence services, parenting education, visitation coordination, and transportation.

Families may receive services either informally, without court involvement, or through Formal Family Maintenance when the court orders the child to remain at home under supervision. Informal Family Maintenance is generally a six-month voluntary support plan, while Formal Family Maintenance typically spans 12 months, with court discretion to extend or dismiss services. In FY 22/23, 536 children were served in Formal Family Maintenance.

When a child is placed outside the home, the goal is Family Reunification, with services typically provided for 6–12 months, or up to 18 months if the parent is making substantial progress. The SEED program offers specialized case management for families with children ages 0–5, with an emphasis on early childhood development, bonding, and caregiver stability.

If a child does not reunite with their family, they receive support through Permanent Youth Connections (PYC) and the Independent Living Program (ILP) to build lasting adult relationships and prepare for adulthood. As of June 2024, 521 youth are served in PYC/ILP, with placement types ranging from relative and resource homes to supervised independent living arrangements.

The Adoptions Program oversees both agency and family-based adoption processes, with 256 youth currently served. In 2023, 95 agency adoptions and 22 private/step-parent adoptions were finalized. Post-adoption support includes crisis stabilization, referrals, and reassessment of care needs.

There are 490 Resource Family Approval (RFA) homes currently approved countywide, though some homes are inactive or not currently accepting placement. A new Assessment Center is being developed to improve intake conditions and reduce trauma during placement transitions. Caregivers receive monthly stipends, Medi-Cal, training, respite/babysitting support, advocacy assistance, and access to caregiver appreciation and peer support activities.

Purpose:

Report progress

Advocacy or Education

Request Social Services Committee Recommendation or Position

Other:

Speakers

There were no speakers on this item.

Committee Feedback

There was no committee feedback on this item.

Action

This item was informational only and required no Committee action.

III. INFORMATIONAL ITEM: California Department of Social Services: Findings and Recommendations for The Alameda County Assessment Center
[Attachment](#)

Presenters

Andrea Ford, Director, Social Services Agency and Michelle Love, Assistant Agency Director, Department of Children and Family Services

Summary

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) completed a technical assistance review of the Alameda County Assessment Center following a request approved by the Board of Supervisors in October 2023. The purpose of the review was to evaluate placement practices, service coordination, community support, and the continuum of care for youth temporarily placed at the Assessment Center. CDSS also examined documentation accuracy, service access, and interagency coordination.

The review included a site visit on January 18, 2024, interviews with supervisory and direct service staff, and an electronic case file review of 26 youth who stayed at the Assessment Center between September 1, 2023, and November 30, 2023. Stakeholder input was gathered from County departments and provider partners, with additional coordination involving the Department of Health Care Services.

Identified strengths included consistent efforts to reduce overstay durations, clear prioritization of placing siblings together, and documented use of Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings, with 78% of youth reviewed having evidence of CFT participation. 61% of the cases reviewed included evidence of transition planning toward reunification, placement with relatives, or placement with non-relative extended family members. Alameda County also exceeded the statewide average in initial placement of youth with relatives, supported by ongoing family finding efforts.

Identified obstacles included limited placement availability for youth with complex needs, including behavioral health, developmental, or Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) risk factors. 58% of youth in the review sample were not placed within three days, and 77% were placed outside of Alameda County or lacked documentation confirming otherwise. Workforce vacancies, including staffing shortages affecting case coordination and family engagement, were noted as contributing factors to placement delays.

The case file review found that placement history entries were sometimes incomplete or not consistently updated when youth entered or left the Assessment Center. 62% of youth did not have the Assessment

Center recorded as a placement episode in the case management system. Documentation gaps were identified in mental health referrals and service follow-through, including cases where referrals were noted but not confirmed as initiated or sustained.

CDSS provided several recommendations and next steps, including use of Complex Care Capacity Building funding to expand placement options for youth with higher service needs. Alameda County is participating in the Kin-First Accelerator Program, which includes \$2.5 million in one-time funding to enhance family finding and caregiver engagement. Additional recommendations include developing safety planning protocols tailored to youth with complex needs and ensuring all Assessment Center stays are fully entered into the case management database within 90 days.

CDSS also recommended strengthening the continuum of preventative services, including increasing the use of community-based stabilization supports as an alternative to removal. Collaboration with law enforcement, the System of Care partnership, and the Alameda County Office of Education was advised to reduce reliance on shelter-based placement, minimize school disruptions, and improve coordinated service planning. The Interagency Leadership Team will continue reviewing capacity, alignment of provider roles, and meeting structure to support these system improvements.

Purpose:

- Report progress**
- Advocacy or Education**
- Request Social Services Committee Recommendation or Position**
- Other:**

Speakers

There were no speakers on this item.

Committee Feedback

There was no committee feedback on this item.

Action

This item was informational only and required no Committee action.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

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