

**County of Santa Cruz
Human Services Department
FY 2014-15 Annual Report**



Serving people in need in Santa Cruz County

Our Vision

Every child, adult, and family in Santa Cruz County is safe, healthy, and financially secure.

Our Mission

We strengthen our community by protecting the vulnerable, promoting self-sufficiency, alleviating poverty, and improving the quality of life.

We Value:

- ◆ Excellent Service
- ◆ Compassion
- ◆ Integrity
- ◆ Partnerships
- ◆ Effective Practice



We Are: Dedicated to making a difference.

Human Services Department

FY 2014-15 Accomplishments

Increased Access to Health Coverage

- ◆ Increased the number of Medi-Cal beneficiaries by 60% since 2013
- ◆ Doubled the percentage of IHSS providers enrolled in health coverage from 16% in 2013 to 34% in June 2015

Increased Access to Food Support

- ◆ Provided CalFresh benefits to an unprecedented number of individuals

Strengthened Community Supports

- ◆ Implemented a CalWORKs Housing Support Program which includes the provision of housing and support to homeless families

Facilitated Children's Educational Attainment

- ◆ Promoted the educational success of children in Foster Care through the FosterEd program

Protected Residents

- ◆ Increased the rapidity in which Adult Protective Services referrals were followed-up on
- ◆ Exceeded national and State standards for child welfare services

Improved Customer Service

- ◆ Used technologies to increase and enhance customer service

Created New Paths to Employment

- ◆ Launched a new job training program to prepare youth and Veterans to work in the field of energy efficiency
- ◆ Provided additional transitional and permanent work opportunities for Welfare-to-Work participants
- ◆ Received initial designation under the new federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)



Human Services Department

Our Goals

Increase economic potential and decrease poverty

Reduce abuse and neglect

Improve well being and quality of life

Improve health and mental health

FY 2014-15: Serving Our Community



79,000

Provided Medi-Cal benefits to 79,000 unduplicated county residents



35,000

Provided CalFresh benefits to 35,000 unduplicated county residents



5,400

Served 5,400 customers at three Career Centers



2,700

Received 2,700 reports of child abuse/neglect



750

Received 750 reports of abuse/neglect of elders and dependent adults



2,900

Provided In-Home Supportive Services to approximately 2,900 unduplicated seniors & dependent adults



40

Gave 40 children a permanent home through adoptions

Relevant Legislation and Policy Changes

◆ **ABX1-1— Streamlined Medi-Cal Renewal process**

- ◆ Effective January 1, 2014, provides an automated Medi-Cal renewal process which simplifies the maintenance of benefits for most recipients and helps prevent interruptions in health coverage

◆ **AB 1468 — CalFresh and CalWORKs Eligibility for Persons with Drug Felony Convictions**

- ◆ Effective April 1, 2015, aligns the State's rules for drug felons with the rules for all other types of felons in regards to eligibility for CalWORKs and CalFresh benefits
- ◆ Enacts changes to the CalWORKs and CalFresh programs to allow individuals with a prior felony drug conviction to be eligible to receive these benefits, as long as the individual is compliant with the terms of his or her probation or parole

◆ **SB 855 - Protections for Commercially Sexually Exploited Children**

- ◆ Signed into California law June 2014
- ◆ Clarifies the State Welfare and Institutions code that commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC), whose parents or guardians failed or were unable to protect him or her, be served through the dependency system rather than the juvenile justice system
- ◆ Establishes a State-funded CESC program to be administered by the California Department of Social Services and provides funding to county child welfare agencies that elect to participate in the CSEC Program; develop collaborative interagency protocols to serve CSEC children; and provide CSEC prevention and intervention services

◆ **SB 878 - In-Home Supportive Services Onsite Provider Orientations**

- ◆ Signed into California law September 2014
- ◆ Requires all prospective In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) providers to attend an in-person enrollment orientation that includes training and materials detailing federal and State requirements regarding minimum wage and overtime pay, including paid travel time and wait time
- ◆ Requires that the recognized provider employee organization be permitted to make a presentation of up to 30 minutes at the orientation

Relevant Legislation and Policy Changes (contd.)

◆ **Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act**

- ◆ Effective July 1, 2015, replaces the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and amends other acts governing the workforce services of key providers
- ◆ Aims to create a streamlined and better coordinated workforce development system
- ◆ Requires regional workforce planning and changes the composition requirements of Workforce Investment Boards
- ◆ Focuses youth program services on out-of-school youth, high school dropout recovery efforts, and attainment of postsecondary credentials

◆ **Modified Categorical Eligibility for CalFresh**

- ◆ Effective July 1, 2014, increases the number of households eligible for CalFresh by increasing the income threshold for eligible households and eliminating the asset test requirement

◆ **Work Incentive Nutritional Supplement (WINS) program**

- ◆ Effective January 1, 2014
- ◆ A food-benefit strategy to increase the State's CalWORKs Work Participation Rate by providing an additional supplemental food benefit to households that receive CalFresh and have an adult that qualifies as a "work-eligible individual" under CalWORKs, but does not receive benefits under the program

◆ **State Fund for Timed-Out, Fleeing Felon, and Long-Term Sanctioned CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work Households**

- ◆ Effective March 1, 2015, CalWORKs cases that include a parent or caretaker who has been sanctioned for failing to comply with Welfare-to-Work program requirements for 12 consecutive months or longer are funded by the State in order to facilitate an increase in the federal Work Participation Rate (a similar funding change was made in early 2014 for timed-out and fleeing felon participants)

Employment & Benefit Services Division

FY 2014-15 Program Highlights

- ◆ Had the highest percentage increase (60%) in Medi-Cal enrollees since the advent of Health Care Reform of the three Central California Alliance counties.
- ◆ Provided additional transitional and permanent work opportunities for Welfare-to-Work participants through Expanded Subsidized Employment, resulting in approximately \$700,000 paid in wage subsidies.
- ◆ Increased CalFresh enrollment to an all time high of over 26,000 individuals in May 2015.
- ◆ Improved customer service through the use of technology, including introducing kiosks and computer access in Customer Service Center lobbies, adding a second Phone Customer Service Center, and utilizing methods of mass communication such as robo-calls and text messaging.
- ◆ Awarded funding through the State CalWORKS Housing Support Program; housed 48 homeless families and provide them with case management and employment services to facilitate housing stability and long term self-sufficiency.

Strategic Priorities for FY 2015-16

- ◆ Provide additional short-term Welfare-to-Work (WTW) activities through the implementation of best practices such as distance learning and expanded subsidized employment to ensure WTW participants are fully engaged and meeting work requirements.
- ◆ Increase coordination of business processes and communication across divisions to ensure that vulnerable individuals and families working with the Adult and Long Term Care and Family and Children's Services Divisions are receiving all of the benefits to which they are entitled.
- ◆ Help General Assistance (GA) recipients reduce their reliance on cash assistance and achieve their employment goals by increasing employment opportunities and supportive services to employable GA clients through the implementation of a new service model that better aligns with Welfare-to-Work.
- ◆ Increase enrollments in the CalFresh program through improved and streamlined business processes, the expanded use of technology such as the use of telephonic signatures, and focused outreach to identified needy areas within the county.

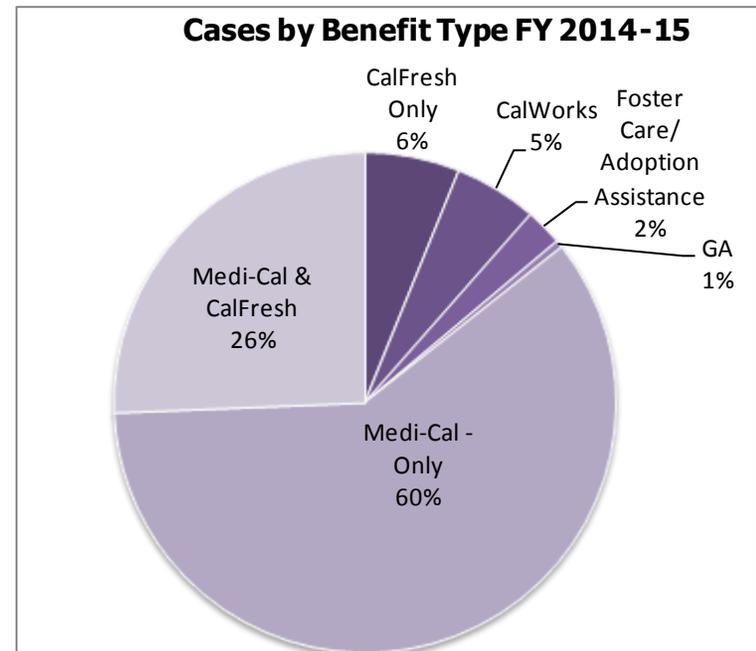
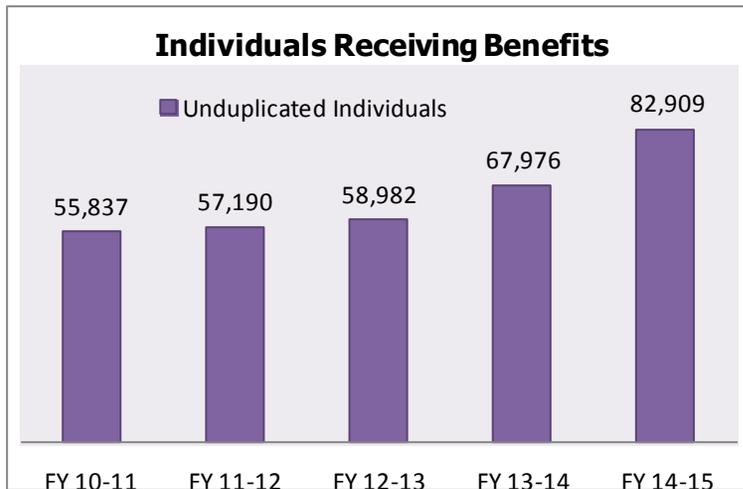
Employment & Benefits Services Division

In FY 2014-15 the **Employment & Benefit Services Division** (EBS) provided public benefit assistance to approximately 83,000 unique individuals representing almost 44,000 households served through:

- ◆ Medi-Cal
- ◆ CalFresh
- ◆ CalWORKs
- ◆ General Assistance
- ◆ Foster Care/Adoption Assistance

In FY 2014-15, approximately 95% of persons receiving benefits received Medi-Cal.

*Over the course of FY 2014-15, **30% of Santa Cruz County residents** received benefits from one or more of HSD's public assistance programs.*

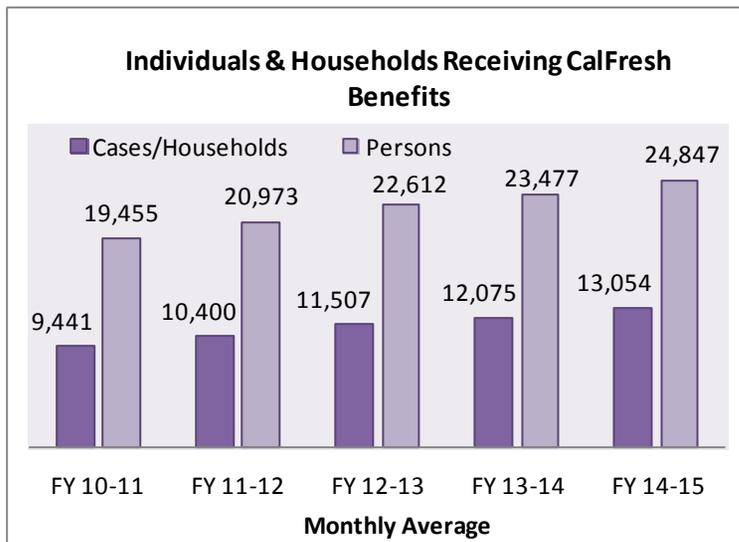


Employment & Benefits Services Division: CalFresh & Medi-Cal

CalFresh, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, and nationally known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), serves as Santa Cruz County residents' first line of defense against hunger and poor nutrition.

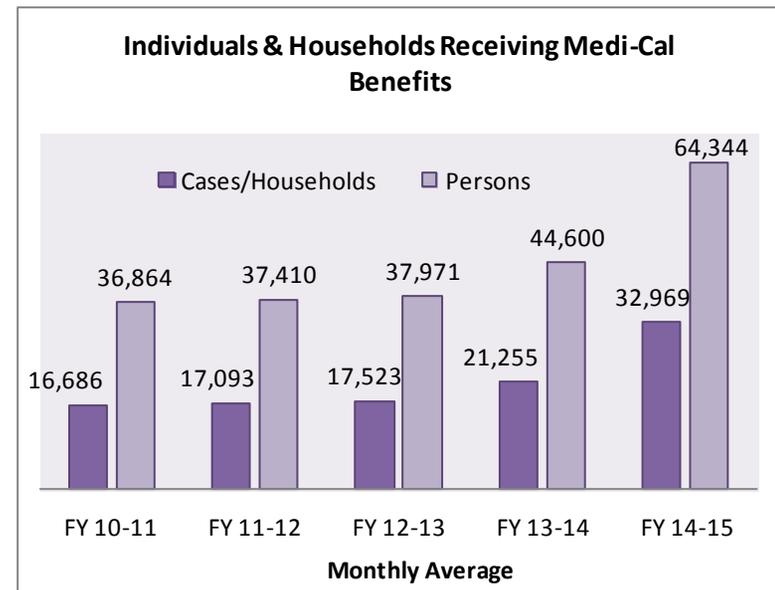
In FY 2014-15 the number of persons receiving CalFresh benefits continued to increase; a monthly average of 24,847 persons received CalFresh food assistance.

*In FY 2014-15, the County issued **\$3.5 million** in CalFresh benefits every month. The total CalFresh benefits issued in FY 2014-15 was approximately **\$42 million**.*



Historically, the **Medi-Cal** program has provided health coverage for low-income families and disabled and aged adults. On January 1, 2014, under Health Care Reform, Medi-Cal became available for childless adults ages 19-64.

- ◆ As a result, on a monthly basis approximately **55% more households** have access to health care via Medi-Cal than in 2013.



Employment & Benefits Services Division: CalWORKs & Welfare-to-Work

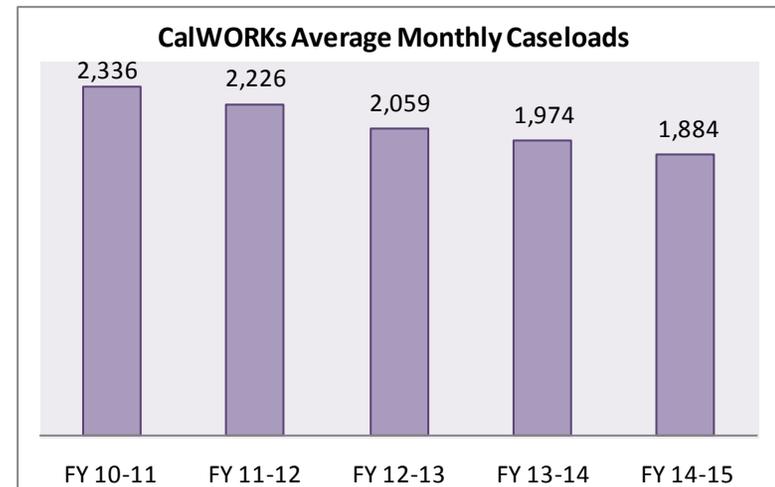
The **California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs)** program offers temporary cash assistance and employment services, known as **Welfare to Work**, to needy families with children under 19 years of age.

Welfare to Work services that assist families to become self-reliant include:

- ◆ Child care
- ◆ Substance abuse and mental health services
- ◆ Transportation reimbursement
- ◆ Job training
- ◆ Educational assistance
- ◆ Subsidized employment

In FY 2014-15:

- ◆ An average of 1,884 households were assisted by CalWORKs on a monthly basis
- ◆ 76% of the persons assisted through the CalWORKs program were children under 18
- ◆ 86% of CalWORKs households were headed by women



*In FY 2014-15 approximately **\$11.5 million** in CalWORKs cash aid benefits and **\$2.5 million** in child care benefits were disbursed, totaling over **\$14 million** going into the Santa Cruz economy.*

General Assistance

The County funded **General Assistance (GA)** program assists indigent adults who are incapacitated, unemployed, and/or homeless, to meet their basic needs until they obtain other assistance or become employed.

- ◆ In FY 2014-15, the estimated average monthly GA caseload was 170.

Family and Children's Services Division

FY 2014-15 Program Highlights

- ◆ Completed the 2015 Child Welfare Services Self-Assessment and System Improvement Plan; met or exceed State and federal standards on 16 of the 19 outcome measures.
- ◆ Developed a tri-county Memorandum of Understanding with Monterey and San Benito Counties to plan for the provision of services to commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC).
- ◆ Increased recruitment efforts to address social worker turnover and vacancies; hired 14 new Senior Social Workers for child welfare programs.

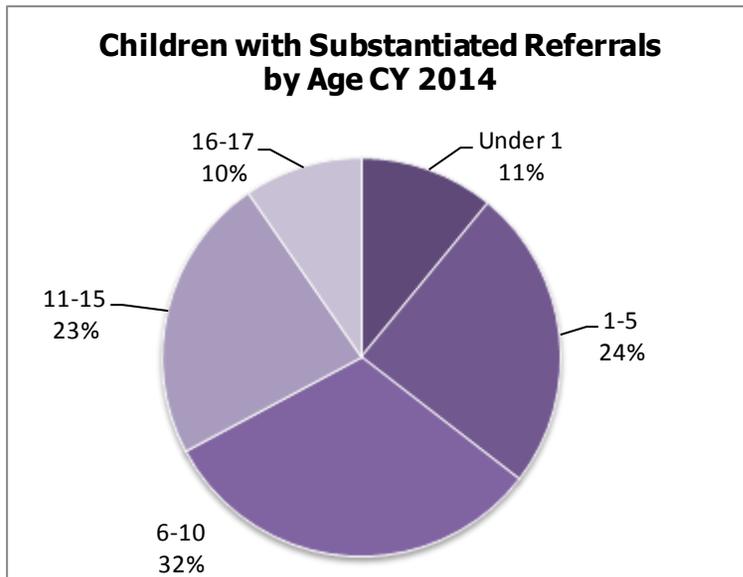
Strategic Priorities for FY 2015-16

- ◆ Implement improvement strategies based on the new 2015 System Improvement Plan (SIP), and report on these efforts quarterly to the SIP Steering Committee.
- ◆ Redistribute social worker tasks, resulting in separate social work units to provide Family Maintenance/Family Reunification and Permanency/Adoptions services. The redistribution is designed to streamline social worker functions and improve permanency outcomes for families.
- ◆ In collaboration with Monterey and San Benito Counties, implement a community protocol for the provision of services to commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC).
- ◆ Sustain key elements of the Foster Ed program, which provides specialized educational assistance for children in foster care, when grant funding expires on June 30, 2015.
- ◆ Enhance the engagement of families in the child welfare system by implementing a parent partner program, strengthening services to incarcerated parents, and improving the engagement of fathers.
- ◆ Implement State-mandated child welfare services' quality assurance case reviews.

Family and Children's Services Division: Child Welfare Services

Family & Children's Services (FCS) provides child welfare services to children who have been abused, neglected, or who are at risk of abuse or neglect.

- ◆ In 2014, FCS received referrals regarding potential abuse or neglect for an estimated 2,695 unduplicated children.



Types of Child Welfare Services

- ◆ *Emergency Response & Dependency Investigations*
- ◆ *Family Maintenance or Family Preservation*
- ◆ *Family Reunification & Permanency Planning*
- ◆ *Licensing & Adoptions*

Self-Assessment

According to the 2015 Self-Assessment for Child Welfare Services, FCS exceeded 16 of 19 national and State standards, including:

- ◆ More than 95% of children who experienced maltreatment did not experience a second incident of substantiated maltreatment within 6 months
- ◆ No child in foster care experienced substantiated abuse or neglect while in foster care
- ◆ More than 91% of children who reunify with their parents do not re-enter foster care within the next 12 months

Family and Children’s Services Division: Foster Care

Foster care provides children who have been removed from their parents due to abuse or neglect with a temporary safe and nurturing home environment while their parents receive counseling and other services aimed at enabling them to be reunited with their children.

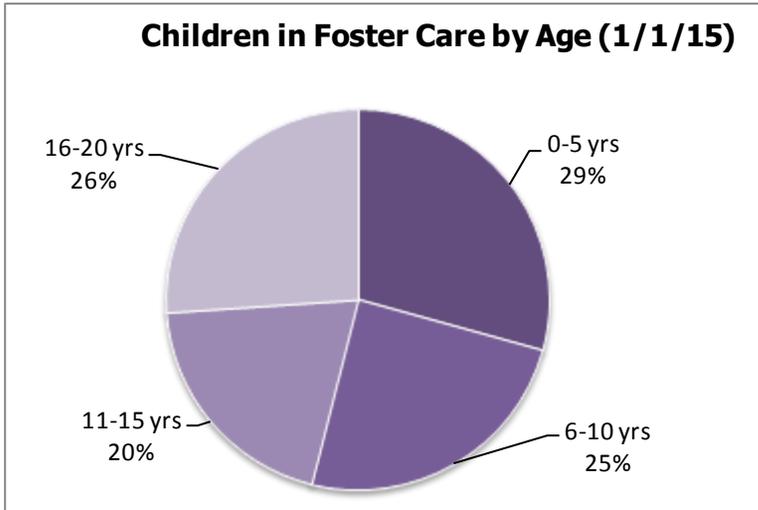
- ◆ In FY 2014-15, a monthly average of 257 children were in out-of-home placement, half of whom were placed with relatives
- ◆ In January 2015, approximately three out of four children were placed with some or all of their siblings

If parents cannot provide a safe environment, the children must be placed in foster care or relatives’ homes until they can safely be returned to their own homes or placed with an adoptive family.

Forever Families Adoption Program

Adoption services are provided to children who are unable to stay with their families. Additional services include:

- ◆ Recruiting and screening prospective adoptive parents
- ◆ Finalizing adoptions
- ◆ Providing post adoption services



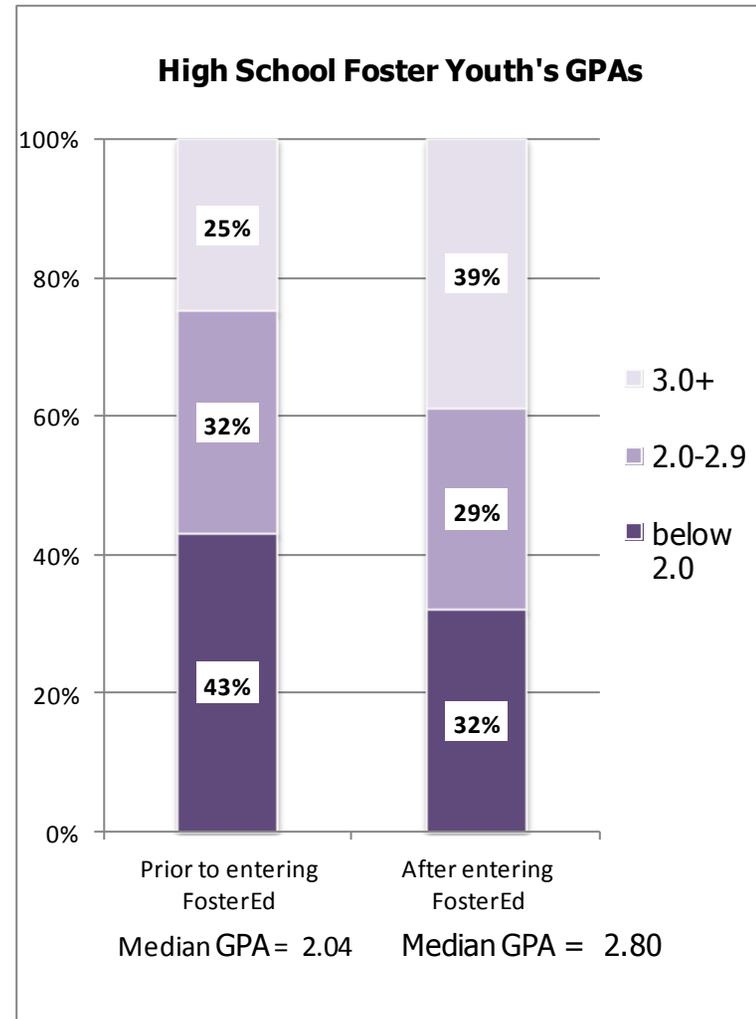
Adoptions & Adoption Assistance	FY 14-15
Finalized Adoptions	40
Average Monthly Adoption Assistance Cases	591

Family and Children’s Services Division: FosterEd

An initiative of the National Center for Youth Law, **Foster Ed** is administered in Santa Cruz County through a collaborative effort between the County, the Santa Cruz County Office of Education, the Juvenile Court, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Pajaro Valley Unified School District, and the Parents Center.

The initiative’s goal is to promote the educational success of children involved in the Child Welfare System through:

- ◆ The creation of an Educational Support Team consisting of members of the partner agencies, parents, caregivers, foster youth, teachers, and other supportive adults
- ◆ Educational needs assessments and individualized educational improvement plans for each participating child



Adult & Long Term Care

FY 2014-15 Program Highlights

- ◆ Awarded a Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Proposition 63 grant from the Department of Veteran's Affairs to assist Veterans who suffer from chronic mental illness and are unable to seek services in a traditional setting to file benefit claims.
- ◆ Increased the rate of APS referrals that became cases from 74% to 87%, through enhanced outreach efforts and relationships with community partners.
- ◆ Doubled the percentage of IHSS providers enrolled in health coverage from 16% in the fall of 2013 to 34% in June 2015.
- ◆ Initiated regular meetings with the Alliance for Health to provide more intensive and coordinated care and long-term support services to IHSS recipients with the highest service needs.
- ◆ Expanded the provision of Veteran's services in South County from one day a week to two, resulting in increased program visibility and access to services.

Strategic Priorities for FY 2015-16

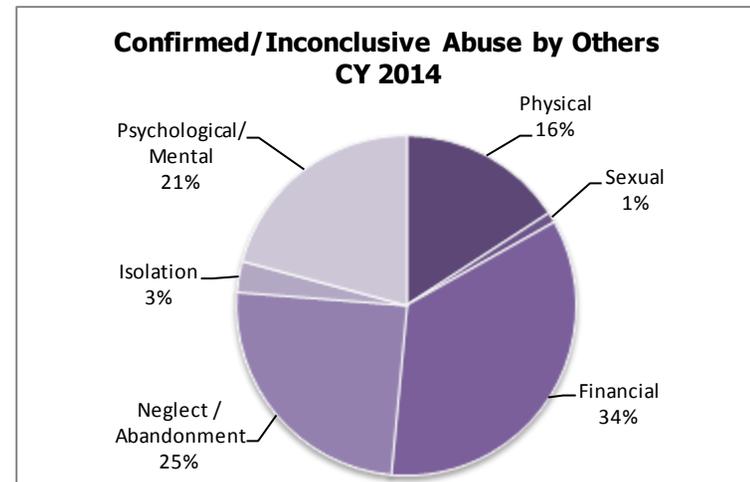
- ◆ Work with community partners to prevent and reduce chronic homelessness, especially for seniors, persons with disabilities, and Veterans.
- ◆ Continue working with the Alliance for Health to effectively care for IHSS recipients with high service needs and assess how nurses might be used to more efficiently coordinate these clients' services.
- ◆ Increase access to services and encourage more appropriate utilization of existing services to Veterans and especially those Veterans who are unable or unwilling to seek services in a traditional manner.
- ◆ Increase CalFresh participation among IHSS recipients, providers, and APS clients.
- ◆ Implement the MHSA funded project by hiring a part time accredited contractor to assist Veterans in the field to complete benefits claims applications.

Adult & Long Term Care: Adult Protective Services

Adult Protective Services (APS) provides intervention services to protect elderly or dependent adults from abuse, neglect, or exploitation. In FY 2014-2015:

- ◆ Approximately three-quarters of APS cases were elders; the remaining were dependent adults
- ◆ More than 80% of APS referrals received an in-person investigation
- ◆ Approximately one-half of all allegations of abuse were *abuse by others*; the remaining cases were *self abuse* including self-neglect and health and hazards in the home

APS Referrals	FY 2014-15
Abuse/Neglect Referrals Received	754
Abuse/Neglect In-Person Investigations Completed	619
Clients Served (unduplicated count)	595



Financial Abuse

Financial exploitation of both elderly and dependent adults represents more than one-third of all APS reports of abuse that were either confirmed or determined inconclusive, the largest category of APS reports of abuse by others. Individuals exploited in this manner risk losing their homes as well as significant assets.

Strategies to combat financial abuse include:

- ◆ Respond to reports of potential financial abuse cases with the District Attorney's Office and law enforcement as members of the Financial Abuse Specialist Team (FAST)
- ◆ Provide training to banks and credit unions

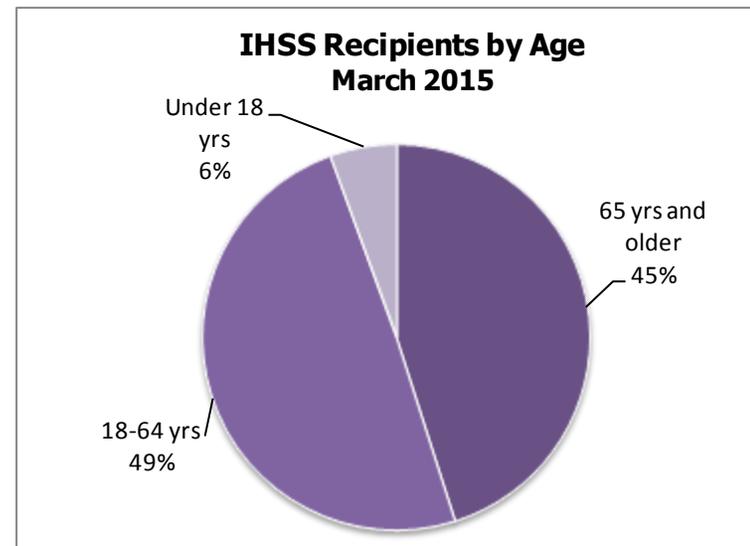
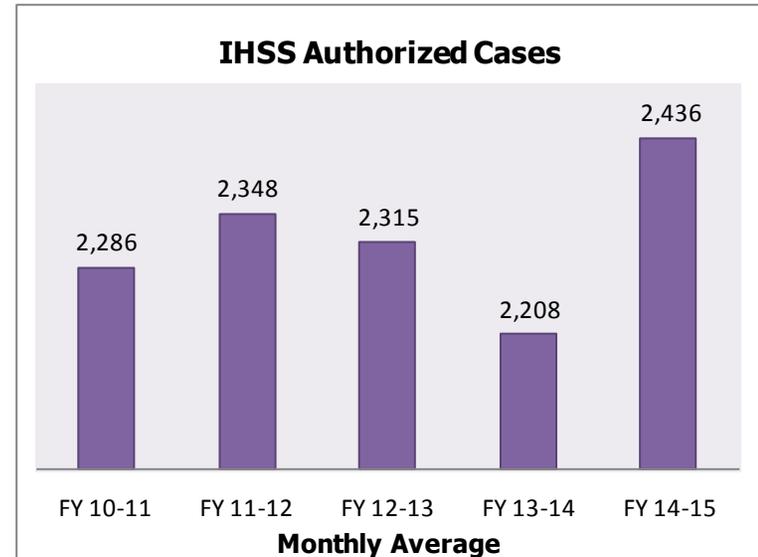
Adult & Long Term Care: In-Home Supportive Services Program

The **In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)** program supports safe, independent living for low-income frail, elderly adults and disabled persons of all ages by providing a variety of services including:

- ◆ Basic housekeeping
- ◆ Meal preparation and clean-up
- ◆ Personal care

In FY 2014-15:

- ◆ IHSS recipients were authorized to receive an average of 101 hours of assistance per month
- ◆ More than 2,000 persons were listed as IHSS providers
- ◆ An average of 67 individuals attended orientations every month to become a new provider

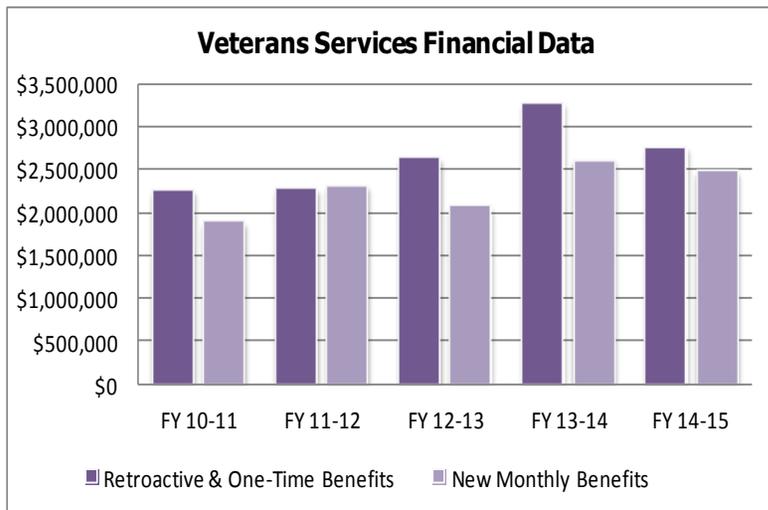


Adult & Long Term Care: Veterans Services Office

The **Veterans Services Office (VSO)** provides Santa Cruz County Veterans and their families with a range of services, including:

- ◆ Assisting Veterans to access government benefits accrued through military service
- ◆ Providing information, referrals, and advocacy assistance
- ◆ Providing assistance with claims and appeals

In FY 2014-15, the VSO generated almost \$2.8 million in new monthly benefits and almost \$2.5 million in retroactive and one-time benefits for County Veterans and their dependents.



Palo Alto Veterans Administration Medical Services

The VSO coordinates transportation to medical services for the County’s most vulnerable Veterans through the Veterans Administration (VA).

- ◆ In FY 2014-15, the VSO arranged round trip transportation to the Palo Alto VA Medical Center for 185 Veterans.

Medical Outreach Team

The VA Medical Outreach Team provides County Veterans with initial access to VA healthcare, medical screenings, referrals to medical and mental health care specialists, and substance abuse disorder and rehabilitation programs within the Palo Alto VA Health Care System.

- ◆ In FY 2014-15 the VA Medical Outreach Team provided health care assistance to an estimated 46 individuals each month at the Veterans Memorial Building.

Workforce Investment Board

FY 2014-15 Program Highlights

- ◆ Met all federally mandated performance measures resulting in an initial designation under the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) which allows for the seamless provision of funding and support.
- ◆ Hosted 31 on-site job recruitments resulting in over 130 program participants filling critical job openings with area employers.
- ◆ Completed a procurement for Goodwill Shoreline WIOA Adult & Dislocated Worker services which will enable funds to be shifted away from administrative costs and to direct services for job seekers.
- ◆ Utilized a \$50,000 Proposition 39 pre-apprenticeship grant to design a job training program to prepare Veterans and at-risk youth to be employed in the energy efficiency field and to pilot a 16 week training program.
- ◆ Recruited for and hired a new WIB director.

Strategic Priorities for FY 2015-16

- ◆ Enhance the effectiveness of the Workforce Investment Board's (WIB) programs by working with contractors and partner agencies to increase both the level of services and the coordinated manner in which they are provided.
- ◆ Refine the WIB's assessment system to better track client's progress towards defined goals.
- ◆ Apply for a follow-up Proposition 39 pre-apprenticeship grant to bring the pilot training program to full implementation.
- ◆ Strengthen local businesses by creating workforce services that are more responsive to their needs and building relationships that facilitate employers' use of WIB services.
- ◆ Prevent layoffs by increasing the number of businesses whose employees receive job retention services such as skills upgrading and training.
- ◆ Provide youth with services that are relevant to the current local labor market.

Workforce Investment Board

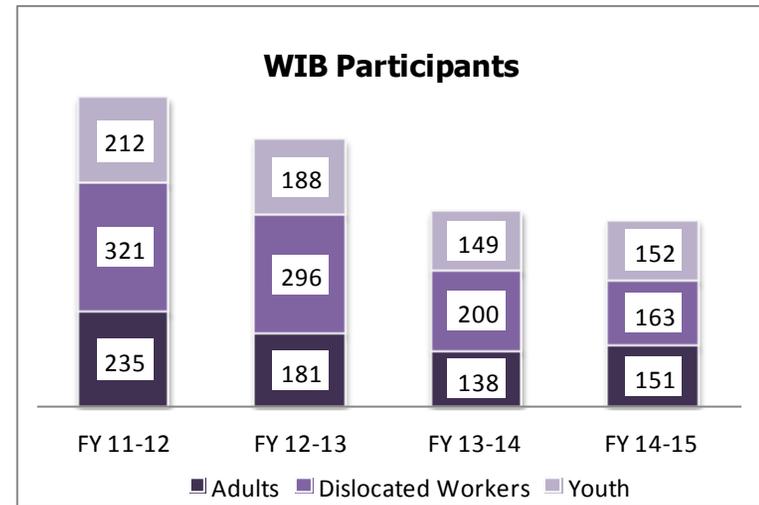
The **Workforce Investment Board** (WIB) helps connect local job seekers with employers who are seeking qualified job applicants.

The WIB collaborates with members of the business and education communities, local government, and community members, to respond to the needs of local employers and County residents seeking employment.

Adult & Dislocated Worker Services

The WIB assists businesses as well as workers who will be dislocated as a result of layoffs, plant closures, or downsizing. Rapid Response Services include assistance with:

- ◆ Filing unemployment claims
- ◆ Searching for employment
- ◆ Utilizing labor market information
- ◆ Accessing retraining services



Sueños Youth Employment Program

The **Sueños** program provides disadvantaged youth in the Watsonville and Freedom areas with:

- ◆ Work experience placement
- ◆ Basic skills development
- ◆ Mentoring
- ◆ Leadership Services

In FY 2014-15, the WIB exceeded all of its performance goals for the **Sueños** program:

- ◆ 78% of program participants were placed in employment or post-secondary education
- ◆ 91% attained a degree or technical certification
- ◆ 82% gained literacy and math skills

Community Partners

In partnership with the community, HSD provides services that support and protect adults, children and families, the elderly and dependent adults, and provides resources and job training opportunities for persons who are unemployed.

The Human Services Department contracts with nonprofit agencies and organizations to provide services and support to the community, including:

Cabrillo College
Community Action Board
Community Bridges
El Pajaro Community Development Center
Encompass Community Services
Families In Transition
Goodwill Industries, Inc. DBA Shoreline
Homeless Services Center
Meridian Psychotherapy
Monarch Services/Servicios Monarca

Pajaro Valley Shelter Services
Parents Center
Santa Cruz County Office of Education
Second Harvest Food Bank
Shoreline Occupational Services
United Way of Santa Cruz County
Walnut Avenue Women's Center
Watsonville Law Center
Youth Resources Bank

The Human Services Department participates in and supports a variety of coalitions and collaborative workgroups, including:

211 and Community Assessment
Project Steering Committees
Benefits Collaborative
Child Welfare System Improvement
Plan Steering Committee
Children's Network

Community Data Mapping Project
Cradle to Career Initiative
Financial Abuse Specialist Team
First Five Commission
Go For Health Collaborative
Health Improvement Partnership

Healthy Kids
Homeless Action Partnership
Homeless Strategic Planning
Committee
Project Homeless Connect
Substance Abuse Strategic Plan

Report Child Abuse
1-877-505-3299

Report Elder Abuse
1-866-580-4357

Contact the Human Services Department

Visit our website at www.santacruzhumanservices.org

For Public Assistance Programs, call the Benefits Customer Phone Service Center at 1-888-421-8080 or TTY 454-4763
Or
Apply for CalFresh, Medi-Cal, and CalWORKs Online at www.MyBenefitsCalWIN.org

Family & Children's Services	1400 Emeline Avenue, Santa Cruz 18 W. Beach Street, Watsonville	454-4222 763-8850	TTY 454-4233
Adult & Long Term Care	1400 Emeline Avenue, Santa Cruz 18 W. Beach Street, Watsonville	454-4101	TTY 763-8828
Employment & Benefit Services	1020 Emeline Avenue, Santa Cruz 18 W. Beach Street, Watsonville	888-421-8080	TTY 454-4763
Veterans Services	842 Front Street, Santa Cruz 215 E. Beach Street, Watsonville	458-7110	

Workforce Santa Cruz County Career Centers

Watsonville

18 W. Beach Street
763-8700
TTY 464-4358

Shoreline Santa Cruz

350 Encinal Street
423-8611

Capitola

2045 40th Avenue
464-6286
TTY 464-4358

Dedicated to making a difference - Serving people in need in Santa Cruz