



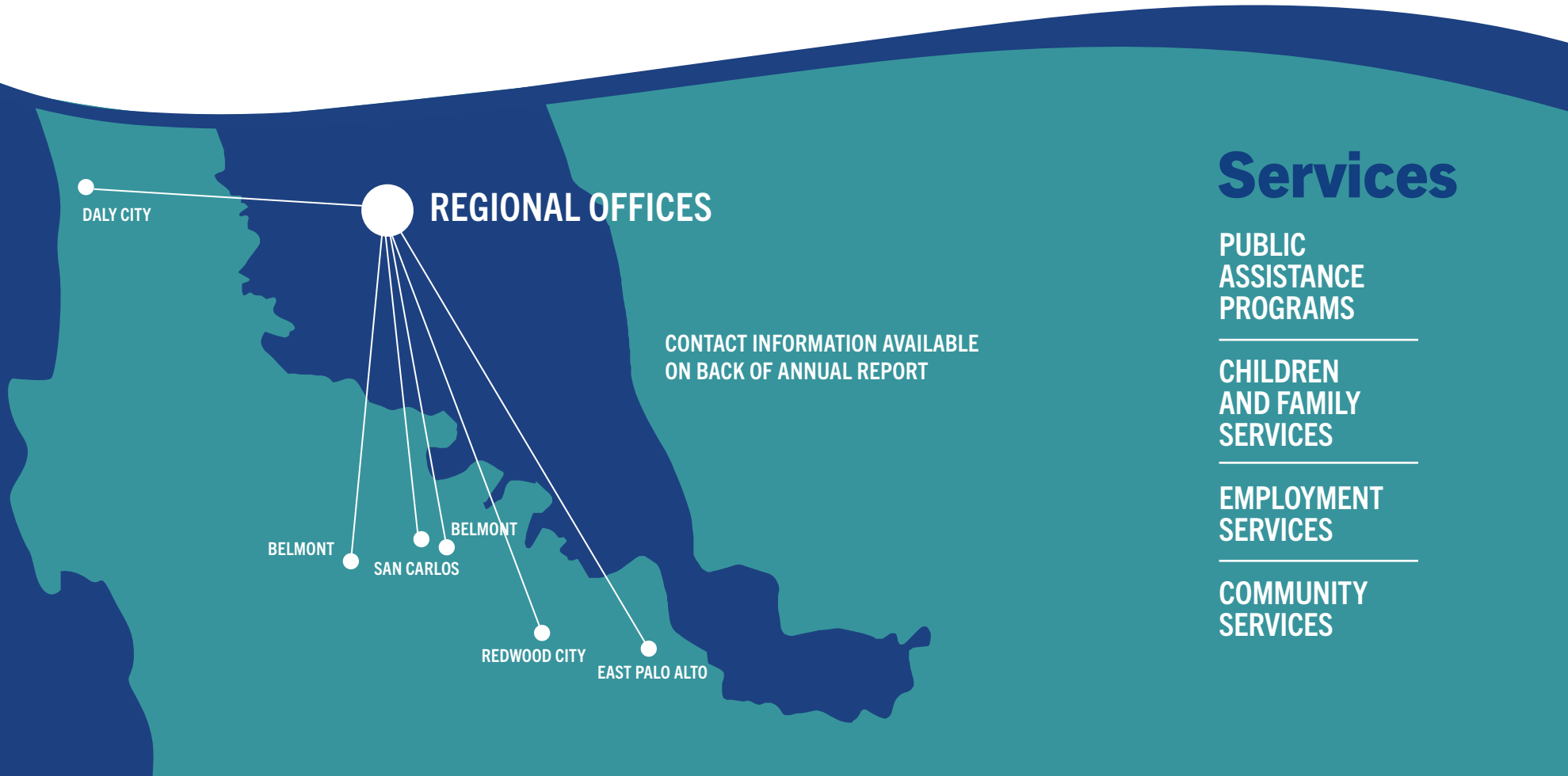
COUNTY OF **SAN MATEO**
HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

Annual Report | January–December 2023

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Services

PUBLIC
ASSISTANCE
PROGRAMS

CHILDREN
AND FAMILY
SERVICES

EMPLOYMENT
SERVICES

COMMUNITY
SERVICES

Vision

All San Mateo County residents enjoy a healthy, safe, prosperous and collaborative community.

Mission

Enhance the well-being of children, adults and families by providing professional, responsive, caring and supportive service.

Values

- Client Experience
- Employee Excellence
- Community Engagement
- Continuous Improvement
- Results-Focused Innovation
- Responsiveness
- Fiscal Stewardship

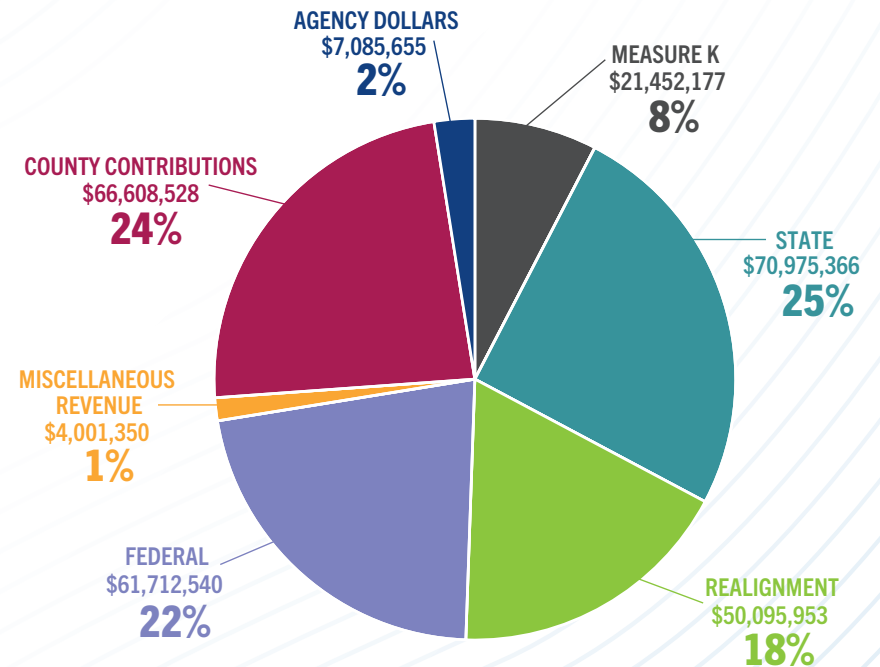


Branches



Financials

TOTAL SOURCES \$281,931,568



Director's Message

As I reflect on the past year – my first at the Human Services Agency (HSA)! - I am filled with gratitude for the dedication and support of our staff, partners and community. The pages of this annual report tell just a few of the stories of how HSA's programs and services help residents move through and beyond challenging times. From striving towards functional zero homelessness to providing services to those in crisis, each story reflects HSA's steadfast commitment to promoting dignity, compassion and empowerment.

In 2023, we navigated challenges with grace and celebrated milestones with gusto. We rang in the new year by providing emergency assistance to residents who were flooded out of their homes during the atmospheric rivers. In the spring, we celebrated the opening of the Navigation Center, which provides 240 safe temporary living spaces for individuals and couples experiencing homelessness along with intensive support services designed to help clients find and maintain stable housing. Over the summer, our staff finished implementing CalSAWS, a new statewide eligibility and case management system that supports key public assistance programs, and former Agency Director Ken Cole retired after dedicating over fifty years to public service. In September, HSA staff convened at the San Mateo County Event Center to celebrate diversity and discuss racial equity, inclusion and belonging. We celebrated and honored veterans in November and distributed hundreds of gifts to children in need through the Children's Fund over the holidays.

In the face of evolving social and economic landscapes, we must continue to innovate and adapt to meet the changing needs of our community. This requires collaboration, creativity and a deep sense of empathy for those we serve. With your ongoing support, I am confident that we will continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who rely on us.



Claire Cunningham
Agency Director



Year in Review

A dramatic series of atmospheric river storms followed by a tragic mass shooting in Half Moon Bay shook up San Mateo County and the Human Services Agency (HSA) at the start of 2023.

HSA activated its Department Operations Center (DOC) throughout both emergencies to provide care and shelter services in collaboration with the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC). HSA developed a hotel system to house individuals and families who were displaced during the storms and the mass shooting. HSA's Center on Homelessness (COH) and other HSA staff serving as Disaster Service Workers responded to support the hotel program and to expand shelter capacity for displaced residents. Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) delivered 250 grocery care packages and served 2,000 meals to impacted children, individuals and families.

By March, spring was in bloom and HSA shined a light on the essential contributions of social workers for their role in addressing systemic inequities, promoting equity and inclusion, and empowering children and families to overcome personal and societal barriers to achieve their full potential. In 2023, Children and Family Services (CFS) fielded 5,349 hotline referrals, certified 49 new resource families, finalized 20 adoptions and over 52% of foster children exited the system within one year to a permanent home.

On April 18, San Mateo County made history as the state-of-the-art Navigation Center officially opened. The Navigation Center includes 240 safe temporary living spaces to serve up to 260 individuals and couples experiencing homelessness in San Mateo County.

Notable onsite amenities include: a dog run, community garden, laundry room and barbecue area. Guests receive intensive on-site support services such as trauma counseling, substance use treatment, health and dental care and additional interventions designed to overcome barriers to seeking permanent housing.

Collaborative Community Outcomes (CCO) served 66,997 clients throughout the year. The Core Service Agencies served 52,533 clients and 6,976 clients were served by homeless programs. The Children's Fund served 2,540 children in San Mateo County with the largest impact being the Holiday Gift Program.

On May 8, the East Palo Alto regional office officially re-opened to the public after an extensive remodel. The office was completely transformed to enhance safety and privacy. The remodel also created a welcoming family friendly environment for county residents so that everyone who comes through the doors experiences dignity and knows that HSA is here to lend them a helping hand.



Throughout the year, Economic Self-Sufficiency assisted 188,874 Medi-Cal clients, 46,000 CalFresh clients, 2,652 Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants clients and 2,570 CalWORKs clients. A total of 96,016 clients visited our regional offices. HSA's Outreach Team attended 137 community events throughout the year and hosted several events for CalFresh Awareness Month in May.

On July 3, the California Statewide Automated Welfare System (CalSAWS) went live in San Mateo County. The CalSAWS System is an automated, integrated eligibility and case management system that supports key public assistance programs on a cloud-hosted architecture.

After several years of planning, training and implementation, HSA was part of the fourth "wave" of counties joining the system. CalSAWS will make the process of applying and maintaining benefits quicker and more efficient for clients. The user-friendly system's consistent use across California's 58 counties means clients can move to another jurisdiction without any breaks in service.

On July 26, CFS held the 12th annual and youth-led Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Summit for current and former foster youth at Cañada College featuring award winning author and motivational speaker, Dave Pelzer. CFS continues to serve youth with the highest level of need through the County-run Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) and Foster Family Agency.

By the end of July and after 50 years of public service, former agency director, Ken Cole, retired and passed the baton to the new agency director, Claire Cunningham.

On September 27, HSA hosted the first-of-its-kind Equity & Belonging Event with nearly 700 HSA staff and volunteers in attendance.

This split-day event was presented by HSA's Department Equity Team (DET) to celebrate diversity and engage in discussions about countywide and departmental efforts to address racial equity, inclusion and belonging. The event featured key speakers including Supervisor Noelia Corzo and Chief Equity Officer Shireen Malekafzali and included a range of workshops in movement, creation and reflection for shared learning and connection.

On November 8, the San Mateo County Veterans Commission hosted the 8th Annual Veterans Recognition Event. The honorees included Al Adreveno and John Muller, Veterans of the Year; Peggy Toyne, Patriot of the Year; and PGA Hope NorCal, Enterprise of the Year. In 2023, the County Veterans Service Office served 2,888 veterans in San Mateo County.

Employment Services achieved several monumental goals in 2023. Client trainees in the WorkCenter production facility built 703,273 units and shipped 93,402 pallets of goods to partnering vendors. Catering Connection served 69,455 meals and fulfilled 1,247 catering requests throughout San Mateo County. Employment Services Resource Centers experienced a boost in foot traffic with 6,610 visits by community members and hosted 25 employer recruitment events. CalWORKs provided job placements for 333 clients and placed 38 families into permanent housing.



ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Immigrant Achieves Economic Independence Through CAPI

Moving to a new country can be a daunting experience, and even more so when one is moving to the San Francisco Bay Area, one of the most expensive places to live in the world. For a new immigrant who already contends with leaving a familiar life behind, it can be a trying experience to find stable housing and make ends meet in another country.

Nerida Shima is an 83-year-old woman from Peru. She moved to the Bay Area in November 2019, just months before the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the fabric of life around the world. Shortly after, her sponsor was unable to continue supporting her. Due to her age and health conditions, she could not support herself. She was left to live with her daughter-in-law and her family.

Fortunately, the County has programs that could assist people in her situation. The Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI) provides financial assistance to elderly or disabled immigrants who are legally present but ineligible for supplemental security income/state supplementary payment (SSI/SSP) solely because of their immigration status. Nerida learned about CAPI last year through her daughter-in-law's aunt, who was receiving benefits. She decided to apply for CAPI because she wasn't receiving financial assistance and wanted to contribute towards her daughter-in-law's household expenses.

Being on CAPI has allowed her to feel more independent. She is able to purchase medication and food and contributes toward the household expenses. She is grateful for the assistance received from CAPI and shares the following:

“I would like to thank the CAPI program for all your help. My daughter-in-law and I are very thankful to this country and this program for all the help they have provided me because I was left without help from my sponsor. Now I am able to feel self-sufficient and not like a burden.”



Economic Self-Sufficiency

The Economic Self-Sufficiency (ESS) branch ensures that eligible county residents have access to health coverage plans, food and financial support. ESS accomplishes this by administering the public benefits programs Medi-Cal and CalFresh, as well as the temporary cash assistance programs CalWORKs, Foster Care/Adoptions, General Assistance, and Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI).

632

General Assistance (GA) Clients Assisted

2,570

CalWORKs Clients Assisted

2,652

Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI) Clients Assisted



96,016

Client Visits at Regional Lobbies

137

Community Outreach Events Completed

213,198

Service Center Calls Received



188,874

Medi-Cal Clients Assisted



46,000

CalFresh Clients Assisted



EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

A Path to Self-Sufficiency

Growing up in Redwood City, Robert Ramirez always felt a deep connection to San Mateo County. “My family moved here when I was two years old, and this has always been my home,” said Robert.

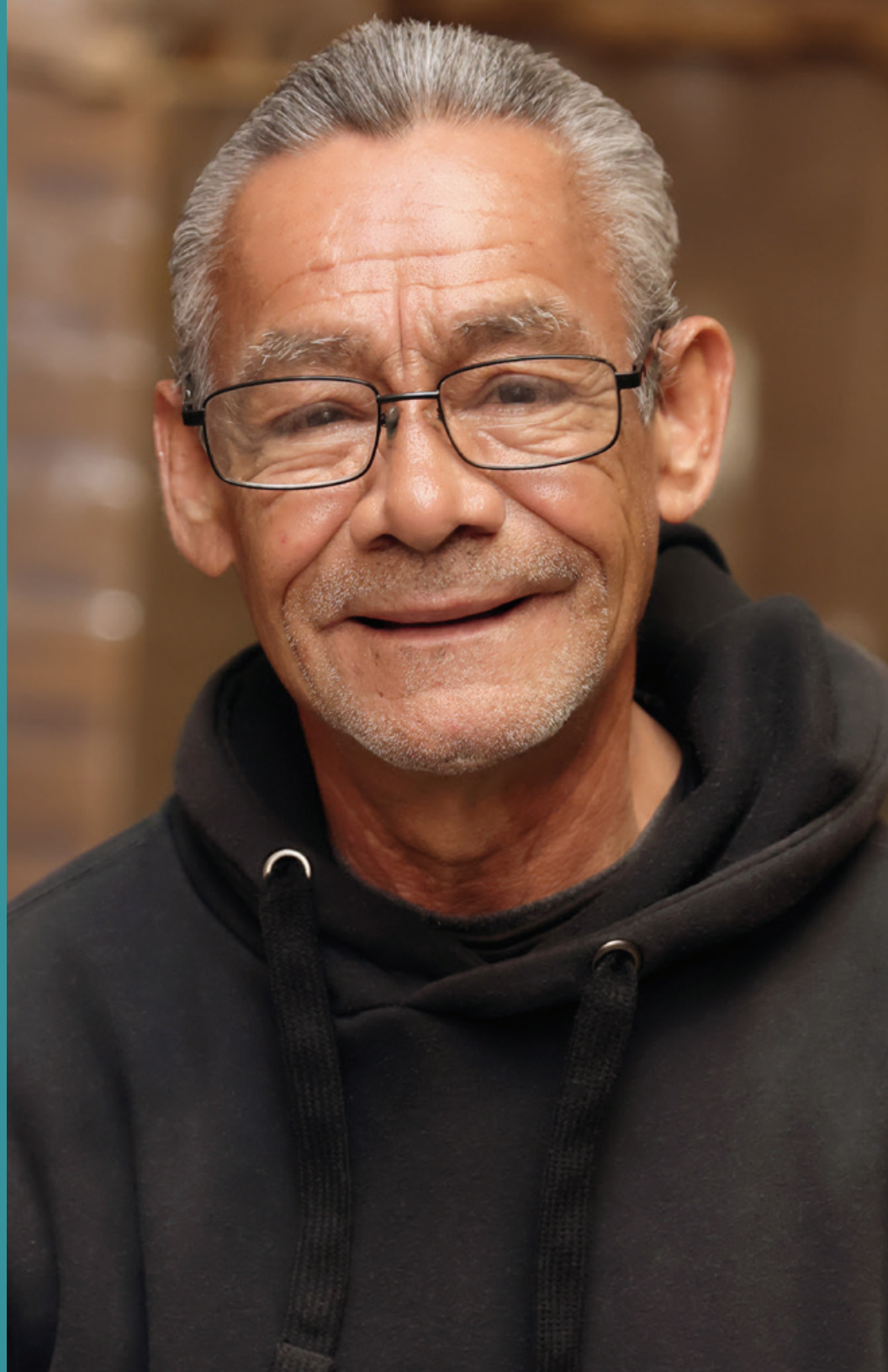
Robert had a 26-year career in the auto industry, but after several volatile economic cycles he knew it was time for a change. He transitioned to the shipping and logistics industry working for FedEx, but he was laid off after four years of working there. “I’ve always been a hard worker, and it was very difficult for me emotionally to lose my job,” said Robert.

In December 2021, Robert was no longer able to pay his rent and began living out of his car. He reached out to Fair Oaks Community Center, and they connected him to LifeMoves. He was able to access temporary housing and begin his path to recovery. “The community stepped up to help me out when I was most vulnerable,” said Robert.

LifeMoves connected Robert to the Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) at the County of San Mateo. He enrolled in the Housing and Opportunities to Maximize Employment (HOME) program which helps unsheltered residents overcome barriers to employment and help secure and maintain employment. The program helps clients become self-sufficient and gain work in the community through job counseling, development and retention.

Robert was placed in the WorkCenter to rejoin the workforce and rebuild his confidence. “Robert was a team player and was always punctual, hardworking, task-oriented, reliable, responsible and exhibited strong leadership qualities,” said Rhonda Rayburn, vocational rehabilitation counselor.

After two separate tours of service at VRS, Robert was able to access community employment at Delta Star as a machine operator. “I connected with Delta Star at a job fair hosted by San Mateo County Resource Center. I was at the right place at the right time,” said Robert. “I have a union job that offers a good salary, healthcare and a retirement plan. Every day when I wake up in the morning and know I’m going to work, I feel good.”



Employment Services

Employment Services is committed to its core mission of job placement, job retention and connection to services. We offer special programs for people with disabilities or other barriers to work. Resources and programs include CalWORKs Employment Services and Child Care, Resource Centers, Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Service Connect (re-entry services).



1,247 Catering Connection Requests Completed

69,455 Meals Served



703,273 Units Built in WorkCenter by Clients

93,402 Pallets of Units Shipped to Vendors

38 CalWORKs Families Placed in Permanent Housing



333 Client Job Placements Completed

25 Employer Recruitment Events Completed

6610 Resource Center Visits by Community Members

49 Client Certification



27 Forklift Certifications

22 Food Safety Certifications

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Finding My Voice

Marlene was in foster care from the age of 13 until she aged out of the system at 21. Reflecting on her time in foster care, Marlene believes that her journey has been a beautiful and ongoing process of learning and growth. She is committed to becoming the best version of herself every day so that she can give back to other youth. “Marlene began finding her voice when she began stepping into leadership roles mentoring foster youth,” said Steve Axberg, employment services specialist.

Since January 2023, Marlene has been working as a Supported Training and Employment Program (STEP) intern with Children and Family Services Independent Living Program (ILP), which supports current and former foster youth with life skills and goals. In her role, Marlene developed her communication skills and built relationships with external partners to provide opportunities and identify resources for youth.

Marlene is creative and utilizes her skills to develop outreach materials for workshops and activities. Edward Manio, ILP partner, said, “Marlene has been a wonderful asset to the ILP team. Her creativity and ability to think outside of the box and come up with unique ideas have helped liven up our workshops and events. Marlene is the true definition of a team player.”

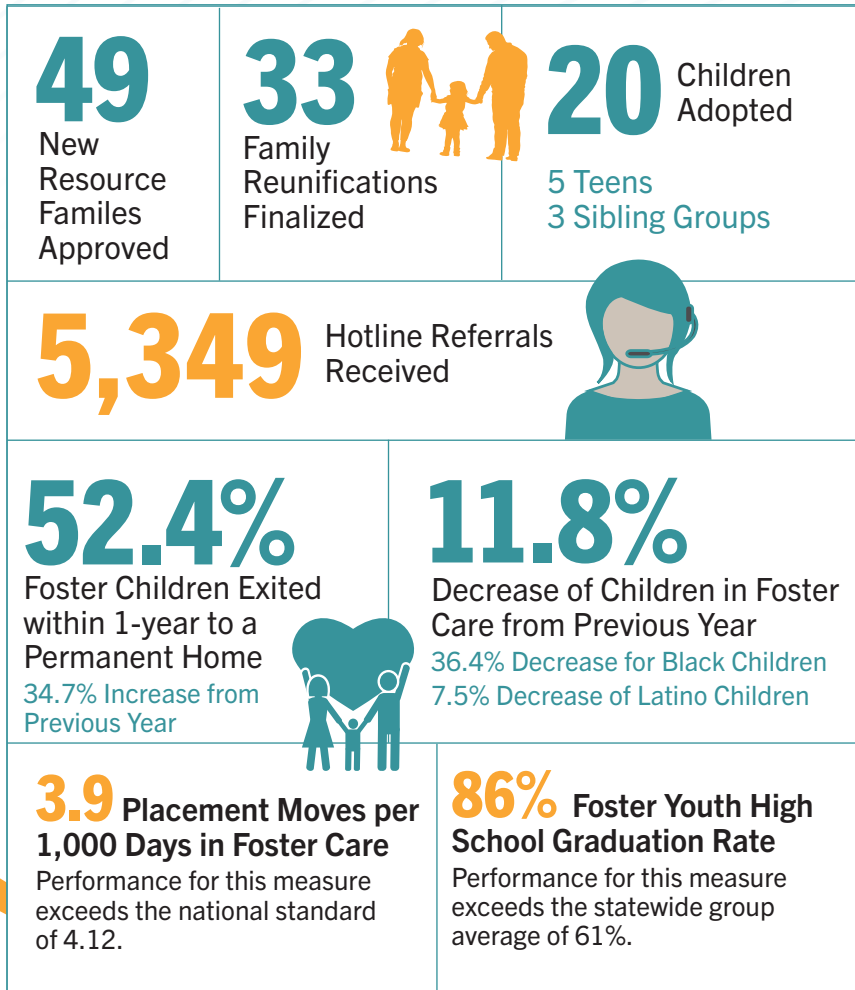
Additionally, Marlene holds a leadership position as a co-chair on the Foster Youth Advisory Board (FYAB). This role allows her to amplify the voice of foster youth and support other youth in building skills to advocate for themselves to improve their situation. Marlene has ambitious plans for her future, including pursuing a bachelor’s degree in psychology and a minor in communications. She intends to enroll in a master’s program and become a licensed therapist. Marlene aspires to establish a non-profit organization for youth and expand her public speaking engagements across the United States.

“My journey is my story, and in every story, there are chapters. In each chapter, it shows different eras of my life,” Marlene says. “I am learning to enjoy the process because at the end of the story, I know every obstacle or accomplishment will lead me to where I am meant to be.”



Children and Family Services

Children and Family Services (CFS) is committed to protecting the welfare of children and improving the health and strength of families in San Mateo County. We collaborate with our community partners to serve the children and youth of San Mateo County within an integrated system of care. Services include Foster Care, Child Protective Services, Adoptions, Family Resource Centers, Youth Services and Safe Surrender.



COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

Commitment to Service

In 2023, the County of San Mateo recognized Al Adreveno and John Muller as the Veterans of the Year.

Al Adreveno was born on July 17, 1923, and he is currently 100 years old! Al grew up in Colma, California, and attended College of San Mateo. After graduating, he was called to active duty by the United States Army to serve in World War II.

“When I went overseas, it was on a special assignment to the Philippines. After Japan surrendered, a group of us were sent to Korea as occupation troops. I was there for a few months, and when my time came up, I was discharged and sent home.”

Al returned to his farming roots in Colma. He got married, and they had a daughter together and began carving their own path in Half Moon Bay running a flower nursery. Following Half Moon Bay’s incorporation, he served on the city council for three terms and was appointed as the mayor for four of those years.

John Muller was born and raised on a dairy farm in San Gregorio. John was in the first graduating class from Half Moon Bay High School in 1963. Thereafter, John enlisted in the United States Navy and was thrust into the Vietnam War. “I was aboard the USS George K. MacKenzie and was sent to the Pacific. Tragically one night, some of our naval pilots were shot down,” John said with tears. “We spent about two and a half years there, and the war just kept on getting bigger and bigger.”

John was discharged in December 1966 and returned home to the Coastsides. He met his eventual wife, Eda, the daughter of Al Adreveno, and joined them in the agricultural business.

The family has been leaders in the farming community across the country and is dedicated to public service. “My in-laws instilled in me the value of being of service. I joined the board for the Agriculture Education Foundation Leadership Program—it’s the premiere leadership program in the country—and was blessed to take part in programs all over America,” said John. “We have instilled giving back to all members of our family. If you are not giving, you’re not living.”



Collaborative Community Outcomes

Collaborative Community Outcomes (CCO) branch creates strategic partnerships with external organizations towards the goals of ending homelessness, promoting veterans' benefits and providing a safety net for the County's vulnerable residents.



AGENCY ADMINISTRATION

The Big Lift

In July of 2023 the County Executive's Office (CEO) identified the Human Services Agency (HSA) as the lead for The Big Lift initiative. The Big Lift is a bold, collective impact effort launched in 2012 by the County of San Mateo, San Mateo County Office of Education and Silicon Valley Community Foundation.

"In our mission to enhance the well-being of children, adults and families by providing professional, responsive, caring and supportive services, HSA is proud to lead the vision of The Big Lift to transform early learning so that all of San Mateo County's children can succeed," said Claire Cunningham, HSA agency director.

Since its inception, The Big Lift has been dedicated to fostering collaboration and unifying stakeholders who share a common commitment to the goal of advancing third-grade literacy. The initiative focuses on enhancing educational outcomes for students who, both historically and presently, have encountered significant barriers within the public education system.

Although San Mateo County is one of the most affluent counties in the nation, only 57 percent of third graders and 27 percent of students whose families are socioeconomically disadvantaged are reading at grade level.






Following a comprehensive strategic planning process in 2023, The Big Lift renewed its commitment to increasing third-grade reading proficiency in San Mateo County through the implementation of evidence-based strategies. In this next phase, The Big Lift will sharpen its focus on early literacy by supporting the implementation of teaching practices aligned with the science of reading in preschool to third-grade classrooms and partnering with families to provide resources and tools to bolster their children's literacy development. It will encourage regular attendance in school and provide academic and enrichment programs to prevent summer learning loss.

The Big Lift will develop and operationalize an equity framework as the foundation for this work. This framework will serve as a critical tool in addressing the glaring disparities in third-grade reading outcomes and provide valuable insights into areas in which systemic or structural adjustments are necessary.



Agency Administration

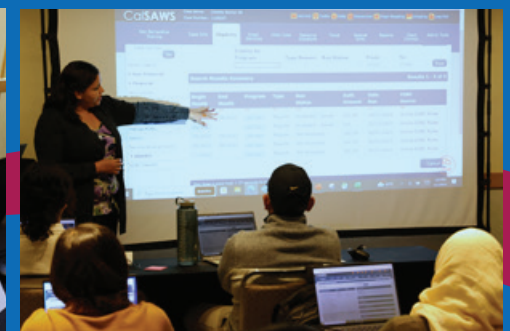
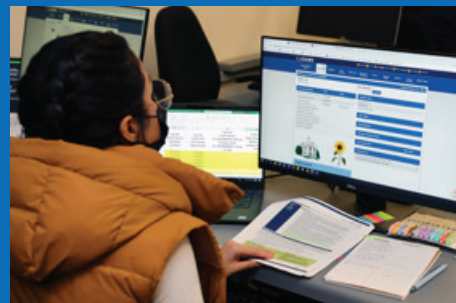
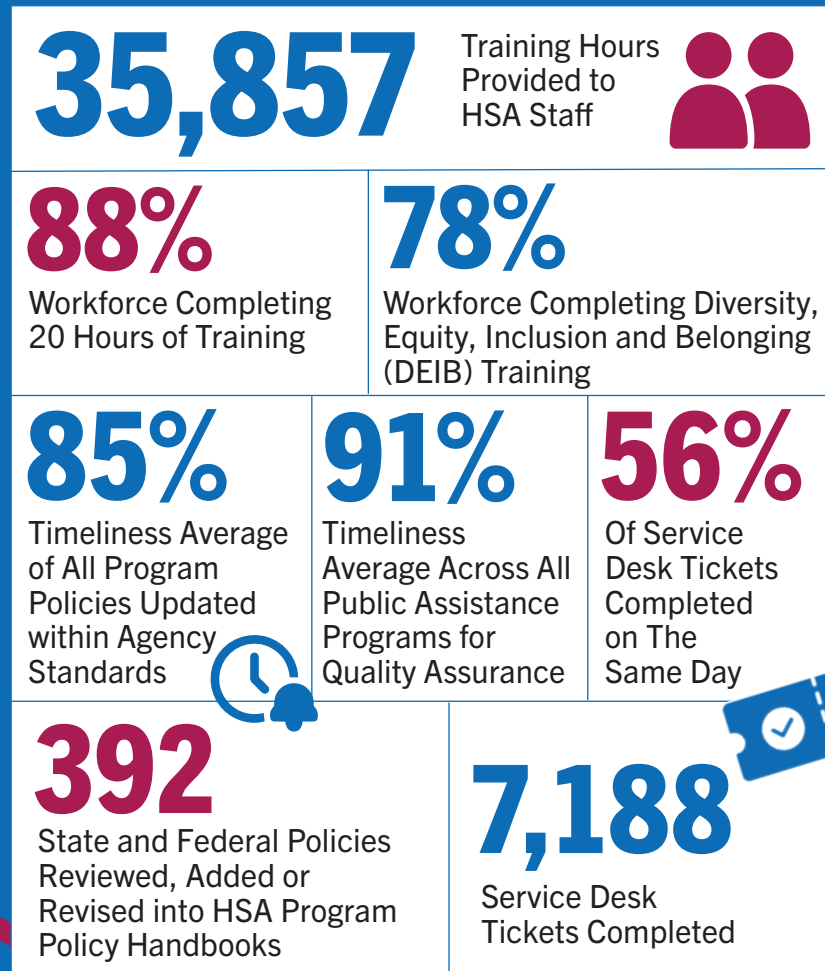
Agency Administration includes the Office of the Agency Director, which provides vision and leadership for HSA; The Big Lift, which promotes third-grade reading proficiency in San Mateo County; and Financial Services, which develops and monitors the budget, all to increase excellence in the delivery of coordinated human services.

<p>2,438 Children Served through the Big Lift Initiative</p> 	<p>35,000 Community Information Handbooks Distributed in English and Spanish</p>	
<p>Language Access Services Provided to Clients with Limited English Proficiency and Disabilities:</p> <p>25,369 Verbal Translations and Interpretations (ex. phone calls, office visits)</p> <p>40 Written Translations (ex. forms, notices)</p> <p>29 Auxiliary Aids (ex. TTY, screen readers)</p> 		
<p>1,027 Fair Hearings Processed</p> 	<p>1,139 Investigations Completed by Special Investigations Unit</p>	<p>6 Major Facilities Projects Completed</p> 
<p>\$564,199 in Overpayments Recouped</p> 	<p>5,954 of Invoices Processed</p>	<p>244 Contracts Maintained by Financial Services</p>



Staff Development & Technology Services

The Staff Development and Technology Services (SDTS) branch works collaboratively with other agency branches to support professional development and to create a shift in culture towards greater accountability, engagement and learning. The SDTS branch also provides core technology support to staff across the agency by working in coordination with our county technology partners.



Demographics

County Population

(2020 US Census Survey)

729,181 Residents
7% of residents living below the poverty level

COUNTY AFFORDABILITY

(2023 Housing Needs Dashboard)



\$3,195
Average Asking Rent (2-bedroom)



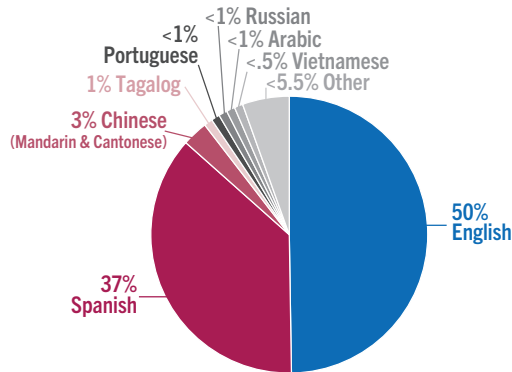
3.7x
Minimum Wage Needed to Afford Average Asking Rent

HSA Clients

(receiving public assistance)

1 in 5 Residents Served
167,058 individuals

PRIMARY LANGUAGE SPOKEN

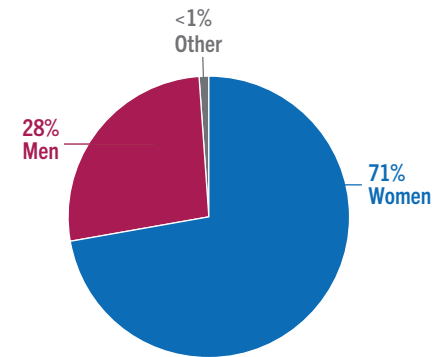


HSA Employees

(as reported in Workday)

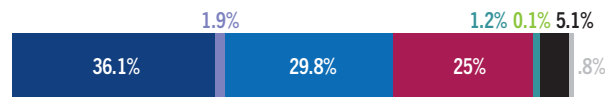
762 Employees

GENDER

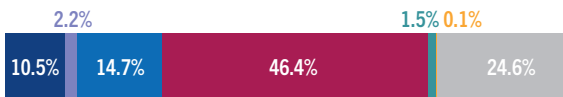


Race and Ethnicity

COUNTY POPULATION



HSA CLIENTS



HSA EMPLOYEES





**APPLY FOR BENEFITS
HOTLINE**

1 (800) 223-8383



**REPORT CHILD ABUSE
HOTLINE**

1 (800) 632-4615



COMMUNITY SERVICES
smc-connect.org

Community Information
Handbook



English



Español

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

1 Davis Drive
Belmont, California 94002
(650) 802-7507
<https://hsa.smcgov.org/>

**HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
REGIONAL OFFICES**

BELMONT
400 Harbor Blvd, Bldg. B
California 94002
(650) 802-6470

DALY CITY
271 92nd Street
California 94015
(650) 301-8440

EAST PALO ALTO
2415 University Avenue
California 94303
(650) 363-4175

REDWOOD CITY
2500 Middlefield Rd
California 94063
(650) 363-4175

SAN CARLOS
550 Quarry Road
California 94070
(650) 802-6450

EMERGENCY SAFETY NET ASSISTANCE

CORE SERVICES AGENCIES

COASTSIDE HOPE
99 Avenue Alhambra
El Granada
(650) 726-9071

DALY CITY COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTER
350 90th Street
Daly City
(650) 991-8007

FAIR OAKS COMMUNITY CENTER
2500 Middlefield Road
Redwood City
(650) 780-7500

PACIFICA RESOURCE CENTER
1809 Palmetto Avenue
Pacifica
(650) 738-7470

PUENTE
620 North Street
Pescadero
(650) 879-1691

SAMARITAN HOUSE
4031 Pacific Boulevard
San Mateo
(650) 347-3648

SAMARITAN HOUSE SOUTH
1836B Bay Road
East Palo Alto
(650) 294-4312

YMCA COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER
1486 Huntington Avenue
South San Francisco
(650) 276-4101



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY