

For Immediate Release

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Riverside County Social Services Closes Offices to Limit COVID-19

The temporary closures aligns with recommendations from public health officials

RIVERSIDE COUNTY, Ca.—To decrease the spread of COVID-19, the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) is closing its public lobbies and officials are encouraging new and existing customers to use online services or the telephone to apply for benefits, renew benefits or find out the status of their case or benefits.

“This is an unprecedented time for all of us,” said DPSS Director Sayori Baldwin. “We are aligning our practices with recommendations from county, state and federal health officials to limit COVID-19 as best we can. We want to avoid spreading an illness that preys on our most vulnerable populations.”

The Riverside County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday ordered county buildings to close in the pandemic’s wake. Schools and colleges in Riverside County have also closed. Californians are being advised to socially distance themselves and stay home. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends gatherings be limited to no more than 10 people and only for essential purposes. Residents and businesses statewide are experiencing the impacts of the closures.

“The working poor will be among those who suffer the most in the economic downturn caused by this virus,” Baldwin said. “We are anticipating an increase in applications for benefits to sustain individuals and families during this challenging time.”

Last year, customers made more than 1.5 million visits to DPSS customer lobbies across Riverside County, the state’s fourth most populous county with 2.5 million residents and one of the nation’s most populous counties. Almost one-third of the county’s residents rely on Medi-Cal (Medicaid) for health coverage.

Baldwin said she is grateful to the 4,300 staff members in her departments who are demonstrating dedication and flexibility in the wake of COVID-19.

“We’re committed to serving those who need us. Our mission to serve the vulnerable won’t ever change,” Baldwin said. “Individuals can apply online via the Internet for benefits and services. They don’t need to worry about coming into our offices.”

Although lobbies will be closed, Baldwin said a very limited number of customers who are unsheltered without telephone access and those who need EBT or BIC cards will still be able to get onsite service.

Those transactions will be conducted outside the buildings to comply with public health recommendations.

To access services:

Self-Sufficiency (Medi-Cal, CalFresh, CalWORKS, Child Care, General Assistance and Welfare to Work), 877-410-

8827 or <https://link.zixcentral.com/u/87c91bf3/uLzU3VVp6hGuHeLMhnsoMg?u=http%3A%2F%2Fdpss.co.riverside.ca.us%2Fself-sufficiency> ; In-Home Supportive Services and Public Authority, call 888-960-4477 or visit Riverside.IHSS.org

For adults 60 and over or adults with a disability who need of other supportive services and resources, including home-delivered meals, or to coordinate drive-through pick-up meals at nutrition sites across the county, contact the Riverside County Office on Aging at 800-510-2020 or 951-867-3800, or visit RCAging.org.