



Lake County
Department of Social Services

Overview of Programs and Services

CONTACT INFORMATION

Department of Social Services (800) 628-5288
15975 Anderson Ranch Parkway (707) 995-4200
P.O. Box 9000 (707) 995-4204 Fax
Lower Lake, CA 95457

Administration/Administrative Services (707) 995-4260
15975 Anderson Ranch Parkway (707) 995-4294 Fax
Lower Lake, CA 95457

Adult Services (888) 221-2204
16170 D Main Street (707) 995-4680
Lower Lake, CA 95457 (707) 995-4661 Fax

Area Agency on Aging of Lake and Mendocino Counties
16170 D Main Street (707) 995-4680
Lower Lake, CA 95457 (707) 995-4662 Fax

CalWORKs and Other Program Assistance (800) 628-5288
15975 Anderson Ranch Parkway (707) 995-4200
Lower Lake, CA 95457 (707) 995-4204 Fax

Child Welfare Services (800) 386-4090
926 South Forbes Street (707) 262-0235
Lakeport, CA 95453 (707) 262-0299 Fax

Employment Services (707) 995-9015
9055 Hwy 53 (707) 995-9055 Fax
Lower Lake, CA 95457

Housing Programs (707) 995-4200
15975 Anderson Ranch Parkway (707) 995-4253 Fax
Lower Lake, CA 95457

ADULT SERVICES

Adult Services programs are designed to protect, support and advocate for disabled and elderly adults. The Adult Services division is made up of multiple programs: Adult Protective Services, In-Home Supportive Services, IHSS Public Authority, Public Administrator, Public Guardian and the Area Agency on Aging of Lake & Mendocino Counties.

Adult Protective Services (APS)

Lake County Adult Protective Services (APS) is committed to helping adults age 65 and older, as well as dependent adults, whose physical or mental limitations restrict their day-to-day life activities, live in a safe environment. Social Workers investigate allegations of abuse, exploitation and abandonment, and also help provide information and referrals for housing, food, clothing and case management. Our goal is to ensure the safety and well-being of older and dependent adults in Lake County. With the support of families, the community and agency partners, our clients can live independently and safely within their homes and communities.

Area Agency on Aging of Lake and Mendocino Counties (AAA)

LCDSS administers the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for Lake and Mendocino Counties. The AAA and Adult Services staff work together to address the needs of older adults in Lake and Mendocino Counties. The AAA provides leadership and advocacy; develops community-based systems of care that provide services which support independence and dignity; protects the quality of life and prevents abuse of older person and person with functional impairments; and promotes citizen involvement and participation.

In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)

In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) is designed to provide services to low-income aged, blind and disabled persons who, without these services, would be unable to remain in their homes and would require placement in costlier long-term institutional care. IHSS can include assistance with meal preparation, laundry, shopping, transportation, bathing, dressing, and bowel and bladder care.

IHSS Public Authority

The IHSS Public Authority (PA) was designed to enhance services to IHSS providers and recipients. PA staff maintains an IHSS provider registry and referral system to match screened and trained IHSS providers with recipients needing assistance finding a provider. The PA serves as the employer of record for IHSS providers, maintains a registry of screened care providers, and offers training to providers and recipients. To be included on the registry, providers must pass reference checks, and a criminal background check.

Public Administrator

The Public Administrator is authorized to protect the assets of decedents when no executor or administrator has been appointed to the estate, when property belonging to the person's estate is at risk of loss, damage or misappropriation or when ordered to by the court. The Public Administrator has the responsibility of attempting to locate a will, the next of kin and protect all assets of the estate.

The duties of the Public Administrator are to protect the decedent's property from waste, loss or theft; make appropriate burial arrangements; conduct a thorough investigation to discover all assets; and, pay outstanding obligations, including taxes. The Public Administrator liquidates and disburses the estate according to the decedent's will, if there is one, or according to probate code.

Public Guardian

The Public Guardian serves as the court-appointed Conservator for adults who are determined to be gravely disabled due to a mental or medical illness and, as a result, are unable to provide for their own basic needs. There are two types of Conservatorships; Probate Conservatorships and Lanterman-Petris-Short (LPS) Conservatorships. Probate Conservatorships are established for individuals determined gravely disabled as a result of a medical illness. LPS Conservatorships are established for individuals who are determined gravely disabled as a result of mental illness.

The Public Guardian works in partnership with Lake County Behavioral Health for all LPS Conservatorships. An LPS Conservatorship lasts for one year; if necessary, the Public Guardian can petition the Court to renew the conservatorship. The Public Guardian is generally appointed as conservator when there are no family members who are willing or able to be appointed. A conservator may be responsible for the estate, the person, or both the estate and the person.

ELIGIBILITY SERVICES

There are numerous programs that make up the Eligibility Services division of LCDSS; services provided by these programs can include monetary assistance, assistance with food and medical coverage. Families or individuals in need of services must complete and submit an application. Staff reviews the application and assists the applicant in determining what services are available through LCDSS and provides information on additional services offered through community based agencies. Staff also makes the determination if the applicant meets emergency assistance criteria. Except for emergency situations, applicants must provide proof that they meet the specific income and eligibility requirements linked to the program(s) applied for before assistance can be granted.

CalFresh

CalFresh also known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), historically and commonly known as the Food Stamp Program, is designed to help meet the nutritional needs of people with low income. It supports healthy living which is important to agriculture in California and it is better viewed as a health and nutrition program. CalFresh may not be used for items such as liquor, cigarettes, household supplies, or hot foods. The CalFresh allotments are determined on a semi-annual basis utilizing income information received from the family.

While Food Stamps were once provided in coupon form, the state began delivering nutrition assistance benefits via EBT Cards (similar to ATM cards) in 1996. The EBT Program was implemented in Lake County on July 1, 2004. The cards are accepted at grocers and retailers throughout the State and across the country. The account balance is automatically adjusted according to purchases. The EBT system increases security and reliability of benefits, modernizes benefit redemption and reduces stigma attached to purchases made with paper coupons.

California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs)

Assistance available through the CalWORKs program is time limited for adults; it is designed to provide eligible, needy families with temporary cash assistance and services. Once a family has met the eligibility requirements, cash payments are made on a monthly basis to help pay for housing, food, utilities and other necessary expenses. The amount of assistance a family receives is determined by many factors including family size and income. Additional payments can also be made if there are special circumstances such as pregnancy or homelessness. Assistance payments are recalculated on a semi-annual basis utilizing updated information received from the family. Most CalWORKs recipients are also eligible for assistance through the Medi-Cal and CalFresh programs.

CalWORKs recipients have the option of receiving their cash benefits through an EBT card or they may have benefit direct deposited into their bank account. The EBT card can be used at designated retailers or ATMs to access their monthly cash grant and CalFresh benefits.

CalWORKs Diversion

Some applicants for the CalWORKs program may only require one-time assistance with a payment or service and are not in need of extended assistance payments. The Diversion Program is intended to address this kind of situation. The CalWORKs applicant must still meet all eligibility and income criteria for the CalWORKs program in order to be eligible for a Diversion payment. The amount of a Diversion payment is determined based on the family's immediate needs, such as paying for a car repair or covering household bills. Before a diversion payment is issued, the family must verify they are employed or have other specific means of continued support.

County Medical Services Program

The County Medical Services Program (CMSP) is a medical coverage program subscribed to by many rural California counties. The purpose of CMSP is to provide essential health care services to indigent adults who are not eligible for benefits under the Medi-Cal program and whose income is insufficient to pay medical bills while still meeting their basic needs. Eligibility for CMSP is very similar to the Medi-Cal program with the additional requirement of a denied application for a market place plan through Covered California during open enrollment prior to the approval of CMSP. The CMSP benefits include many of those covered by the Medi-Cal program, with the exception of pregnancy-related services, long-term care, and services provided by chiropractors, acupuncturists, and psychologists.

Foster Care

At the direction of CWS, Foster Care eligibility staff opens a case for each child placed in Foster Care. Eligibility staff collects birth certificates, social security cards, and immunization records for the child and residency and income information for the parents in order to complete a case. Based on this information, the eligibility worker makes a determination for the appropriate funding source for the case: County, State, or Federal funds are utilized to pay for Foster Care services. Foster Care cases must be recertified every 12 months.

General Relief

The General Relief (GR) program is a county-funded general assistance voucher program for indigent county residents, which offers repayable benefits. The GR Program provides necessary assistance to eligible persons who are without resources to meet their minimum basic needs for food, housing, utilities, clothing and medical care. The employable General Relief recipients shall be prohibited from receiving General Relief for more than three (3) months in any twelve-month period. The medical care is provided through the County Medical Services Program. Unless disabled, GR recipients must participate in the County approved employment plan. Persons in receipt of General Relief based on a disability that is expected to last for more than 12 months must apply for and cooperate fully in the application process for Social Security State Supplemental Income (SSI). If a GR recipient is approved for SSI benefits, the County receives a payment to repay the benefits received. GR recipients may also be eligible to receive assistance under the CalFresh program.

Market Place Plans

Californians who do not qualify for Medi-Cal without a share of cost can now apply for a market place plan with LCDSS. As set forth by the Affordable Care Act, plans are available with or without Advance Premium Tax Credits (APTC) which are subsidies that lower monthly premiums and may include Cost Share Reductions (CSR) which help lower total out-of-pocket expenses. These subsidies are based solely on income. Our Medi-Cal staff can process subsidized and unsubsidized applications. The name of the online market place in California is Covered California.

Medi-Cal

Medi-Cal is California's version of the federal Medicaid Health Care Program. The Medi-Cal program was originally designed to provide health care services to qualified low-income persons; primarily families with children, the aged, blind or disabled. Due to the Affordable Care Act this program has been expanded to include individuals between the ages of 19-64 without children; the income limit has been raised; and resource limits have been eliminated for Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) based Medi-Cal. Families or individuals receiving assistance from CalWORKs, Supplemental Security Income/State Supplemental Program (SSI/SSP), Foster Care or Adoption Assistance Program are usually eligible to receive Medi-Cal benefits.

Some recipients of the Medi-Cal program may have to pay a share of cost before Medi-Cal will provide benefits in a given month. The share of cost is determined based upon the recipient's monthly income. Medi-Cal is a large program made up of many specialized programs, which are designed to benefit applicants in various medical situations. Most of these specialized programs may reduce or eliminate the share of cost for some or all medical services. All applications are evaluated individually and are given the most advantageous type of Medi-Cal for which they qualify.

Currently there is one Medi-Cal Eligibility Worker working at one local community hospital and another working at a community health clinic accepting and processing patient applications for Medi-Cal benefits. The Eligibility Worker accepts and processes the application while the patient receives medical services. This arrangement has been mutually beneficial for the hospitals, the clinics, and the patients: the patient does not need to travel to the LCDSS office to apply for Medi-Cal benefits; and, the hospitals or clinic are able to bill Medi-Cal for the services provided instead of billing the patient directly.

Welfare Fraud Investigations

LCDSS contracts with Lake County Probation to provide Welfare Fraud Investigation services. Three full-time Welfare Fraud Investigators are located at the Moss Avenue facility to receive and respond to allegations of suspected fraud in the CalWORKs and CalFresh programs as well as In Home Supportive Services (IHSS). Upon receipt of a report, Welfare Fraud Investigators investigate the report and notify program staff of the status of the investigation.

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

LCDSS administers the Child Welfare Services (CWS) program under federal and state statutes and regulations. CWS is responsible to obtain or provide interventions and services to address child abuse and neglect; and, increase the well-being of children and families. The four traditional service components of the program were established through State Senate Bill 14, enacted in 1982 to implement federal requirements under Public Law 96-272

- Emergency Response
- Family Maintenance
- Family Reunification
- Permanent Placement

Emergency Response

Emergency Response (ER) services are provided 24 hours a day. When reports of suspected child abuse are received, they are first screened by a Social Worker to determine if there is sufficient evidence of abuse or neglect, to warrant an in-person investigation. Those reports that do not have sufficient evidence are “evaluated out” and a case is not opened. The family may be referred to other community services. If there is sufficient evidence, a Social Worker determines if an investigation needs to occur immediately or within 10 days. This decision is based on whether the child appears to be at imminent or substantial risk of abuse or neglect. Several outcomes can occur as a result of the investigation: the case is closed, the child remains at home and the parents accept services, or the child is removed from the parents.

If the ER Social Worker (or a police officer) determines that the child cannot remain safely at home, immediate steps are taken to remove and place the child in a safe environment, such as emergency foster care. The child can be placed into protective custody for up to 48 hours. During those 48 hours, a Social Worker will assess whether the child can safely be returned home with supportive services or whether the intervention of the juvenile court is needed.

If the Social Worker determines that the protection of the juvenile court is needed, they must prepare and file a petition with the juvenile court within 48 hours after the child has been removed from the parent or guardian. The petition is a legal document containing evidence that court intervention is necessary for the safety of the child. The court process involves a series of hearings and case reviews.

Family Maintenance

Family Maintenance (FM) provides time-limited protective services to families in crisis to prevent or remedy abuse or neglect, allowing Social Workers to work with the family while keeping the child in the home. Services can include counseling, respite care, substance abuse treatment, domestic violence intervention, victim services, and parenting education. FM may be based upon a voluntary agreement with the parents where the court is not involved, or the juvenile court may order services to be provided under Section 300 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. FM Services are provided for 6 months but may be extended if there is evidence that the objectives of the service plan can be achieved within the extended time period. If, after that time, the family is unable to adequately care for the child, the county may petition the juvenile court to place the child in out-of-home (foster) care.

Family Reunification

Family Reunification (FR) provides time-limited intervention and support services to parents and to children who have been removed from the home to make the family environment safe for the child to return. A reunification plan is agreed to by the parents and the FR Social Worker. Services are made available to parents that can include counseling, emergency shelter care, substance abuse treatment, domestic violence intervention, and parent education. These services are limited to 6 to 12 months, depending on the age of the child, but may be extended if there is substantial probability that with continued services the child will be able to return home. The reunification plan must be satisfactorily fulfilled for the children to be returned home.

Permanent Placement

Permanent Placement (PP) services are meant to ensure that children from families where there has been neglect or abuse can grow up in a permanent, safe, and secure living arrangement. When parents fail to successfully reunify with their children within the mandated time frames, the Social Worker is required to develop an alternative permanent living arrangement for the children. Federal policy prefers adoption as a first alternative option. If adoption is not possible, legal guardianship, preferably with a relative, is the second favored choice. If, these options are not available, children may continue in Foster Care with annual permanency reviews until their 18th birthday when they “age out” of the Child Welfare System, although the deadline can be extended.

Adoptions

Lake County Department of Social Services (LCDSS) is a state-licensed public adoption agency. As a public adoption agency, children available are dependents of Lake County Juvenile Court. These children have been removed from their biological parents. LCDSS Adoptions program staff are responsible for assessing if adoption is the best plan for the child. They strive to ensure that a child and adoptive family are well-matched, and that the family will help the child develop to his or her fullest potential.

Services provided through the LCDSS Adoptions Program include:

- Assessment of the child’s needs and capabilities
- Compiling the child’s social and medical history
- Determining and recommending to the Juvenile Court that parental rights should be terminated
- Establishing if the child is legally free for adoption
- Conducting home study evaluations of adoptive parents
- Coordinating placement of a child in a family that will meet the child's needs.

Relinquishment Services are not provided through the LCDSS Adoption Program. Relinquishments and Independent Adoption services are provided by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). CDSS can be reached at (916) 651-7465 or at their website: [CDSS Adoption Services](#)

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

CalWORKs Employment Services

Employment Services activities are designed to assist CalWORKs recipients to obtain and retain employment. All CalWORKs recipients receive an orientation and complete an appraisal of their educational and employment history, recipients are screened for learning disabilities.

Initially, most CalWORKs recipients receive 4-6 weeks of intensive job search and employment related activities. If employment is not obtained during the initial work search period, a vocational assessment is completed. Available services can include vocational training programs, adult education, on-the-job training or unpaid work experience programs. Other Employment Services include domestic abuse counseling and shelter, drug and alcohol treatment, counseling and residential placement, and mental health counseling. While CalWORKs recipients are participating in Employment Services activities, they are entitled to receive supportive service payments to cover childcare expenses, transportation costs and work or training related expenses.

Cal-Learn

As a strategy for reducing long-term welfare dependency, the Cal-Learn program helps pregnant and parenting teens to attend and graduate from high school or its equivalent. This ambitious effort consists of three coordinated services designed to help teens become self-sufficient adults and responsible parents: Intensive case management, payments for necessary child care, transportation and educational expenses, and a system of bonuses and sanctions to encourage school attendance and good grades.

CalWORKs Linkages Program

Linkages is a program in CalWORKs that coordinates Child Welfare Services (CWS); Family Maintenance (FM) or Family Reunification (FR) plans; and, Employment Services plans for families receiving services from both programs. Linkages program facilitates access to a broad array of coordinated services for families with domestic violence, mental health issues, alcohol and drug abuse, and other barriers to self-sufficiency. The program keeps the children safe by helping families to achieve self-sufficiency, stability and well-being through coordinated, family-focused partnerships.

CalWORKs On-the-Job Training (OJT)

The OJT program provides Employment Services participants with the training and work experience necessary to obtain and maintain permanent employment, thereby becoming self-sufficient. Qualifying participants are given the opportunity to apply for training positions in a variety of jobs. LCDSS has an agreement with each worksite to provide OJT participants with training and work experience that prepares them to qualify for permanent employment.

HOUSING PROGRAMS

Housing Choice Voucher Program – Section 8

The Housing Choice Voucher Program – Section 8 is a rental assistance program for low income households. The purpose of this program is to meet three primary goals: provide decent, safe and sanitary housing for very low income households while maintaining their rent payments at an affordable level; promote freedom of housing choice and spatial de-concentration of low-income households of all races and ethnic background; and, provide an incentive to private property owners to rent to low-income households by offering timely rental payments. The Program also supports the local rental market by encouraging unit maintenance by landlords, responsible tenancy by program participants and self-sufficiency among participating families.

Staff is responsible to maintain a waiting list of eligible families and provide outreach to rental property regarding the Section 8 Program. On an annual/interim basis, staff recertify the rental amount, family eligibility, and perform housing quality standards inspections on each residence.

The Housing Choice Voucher Program – Section 8 also encourages economic independence among participating families by operating a Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program for up to 36 Section 8 households. FSS encourages low-income families receiving Section 8 Housing assistance to obtain employment that will lead them to economic independence and self-sufficiency.

All families or individuals receiving Section 8 Housing assistance are eligible to participate in the FSS Program. An interest bearing FSS escrow account is established for each participating family. Funds, based on increases in earned income of the family, are credited to this account during the time the family participates. If the family completes the program and no member of the family is receiving CalWORKs or CalFresh, the amount of the FSS account is paid to the head of the family.

Housing First-Time Homebuyer Program and Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Programs

LCDSS administers the First-Time Homebuyer Program and Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Programs from its office in Lower Lake. These programs can provide low interest loans to low income families or individuals for home buyer assistance or rehab projects.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Benefit Application Website Links

www.coveredca.com

www.c4yourself.com

California Department of Social Services (CDSS):

[CalFresh](#)

[CalWORKS](#)

[Children](#)

[Disability/Adult](#)

[Fraud](#)

[Multiple Programs](#)

California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS):

[Data and Statistics](#)

California Department of Aging:

[Statistics/Demographics/Publications](#)

Federal Census Bureau:

[Data Tool](#)