



**For Immediate Release**

March 17, 2019

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## **Riverside County Social Services Closes Offices to Limit COVID-19**

*The temporary closures align with recommendations from public health officials*

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 County of Riverside took action today to close all county buildings to slow the spread of the virus. Schools and colleges in Riverside County have also closed. Public Health Officer Dr. Cameron Kaiser ordered gatherings be limited to fewer than 10 people and that residents keep a six foot distance between others when in public. 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 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 will be conducted outside the buildings to comply with public health orders.

To access services:

Self-Sufficiency (Medi-Cal, CalFresh, CalWORKS, Child Care, General Assistance and Welfare to Work), 877-410-9928 or <http://dpss.co.riverside.ca.us/self-sufficiency> ; In-Home Supportive Services and Public Authority, call 888-960-4477 or visit [Riverside.IHSS.org](http://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](http://RCAging.org).

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