

Human Services

Over the past year, we have seen a renewed legislative interest in safety-net programs. At the state level, these laws have focused on improving care and encouraging county agencies to take a more holistic view of clients' lives. At the federal level, there have been numerous attempts at safety net reforms that would limit who can receive services. Both approaches are not without challenges. Many state bills, while well intentioned, could shift new costs to counties without increasing revenues. Federal laws that limit county's ability to provide services would not only result in a decrease in revenue, but would likely reduce the number and quality of available services. This could lead to vulnerable families not receiving basic needs such as food, shelter, and access to healthcare. Efforts should be made to preserve current funding streams, and enhance funding for new, innovative approaches to service delivery in human services.

Creating Economic Security and Improving Safety-Net Programs

California has the highest poverty rate in the country, an issue that touches every county in the state. In 2016, 10.2 percent of Contra Costa County residents (approx. 120,000 individuals) lived below the federal poverty line. This includes nearly 34,000 children¹. However, the official poverty line does not capture the true cost of living in the county. The Center for Community and Economic Development estimates that for a single adult living in Contra Costa County to be self-sufficient, they would need to earn about \$28,000 a year—more than double the income of the official poverty threshold. Nearly 19 percent of children in Contra Costa County live in food insecure households². This means that their family can only provide limited access to meals without assistance. According to a recent study by the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano, one in eight residents of the two counties rely on the Food Bank every month. Most of their clients had a child or dependent senior in their household and were either working or actively looking for work. Safety net benefits such as CalFresh (SNAP), CalWORKs (TANF), and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) keep over three million Californians out of poverty every year³. Nationally, low- and middle-income families are increasingly accessing the safety net, as the cost of living has outpaced wage increases⁴. In Contra Costa County, nearly one in four residents are enrolled in Medi-Cal, despite our county having a lower unemployment rate than the national average. These policy positions will support legislation and initiatives that remove barriers to self-sufficiency and create economic inclusion for low-income residents of Contra Costa County.

1. OPPOSE legislative and budgetary actions that result in reduced level of services to families, children, adults and seniors, or that lead to preemption of local control. These actions may adversely impact EHSD's ability to provide services to vulnerable residents.
2. SUPPORT continuous investment in the California Earned Income Tax Credit (CalEITC) and efforts to increase access to California Earned Income Tax Credit, including increases in tax credits and expanding eligibility to all ages. The CalEITC does not reach all workers who are eligible for the federal EITC and California should help reduce tax burdens on the working poor.

¹ 2016 American Community Survey

² 2016 *Map the Meal Gap* by Feeding America

³ 2017 *Just the Facts* by Public Policy Institute of California

⁴ 2018 *The Rise of the Middle Class Safety Net* by Brookings Institute

3. SUPPORT efforts to restore cuts to the Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP) Program, increase grant amounts that would allow improvement of quality of life, and/or reinstate the annual Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). SSI/SSP has not kept pace with the cost-of-living and many elderly and disabled Contra Costa residents cannot afford necessities.
4. SUPPORT efforts to improve and expand emergency food assistance networks' (e.g. local food banks, food pantries) ability to procure, store, and distribute nutritious food to those in need.
5. SUPPORT allowing all individuals in receipt of Unemployment Benefits (UIB) to be automatically eligible for CalFresh. Applying for UI and CalFresh is duplicative because requirements of both program are similar. This would decrease food insecurity for the unemployed in a way that streamlines applications and demands fewer internal resources.
6. SUPPORT efforts to increase CalFresh benefit amounts to better meet recipients' nutritional needs, improve ease and accessibility of the CalFresh application and recertification processes, and adjust CalFresh eligibility requirements to include currently excluded populations with significant need.
7. SUPPORT efforts for a more flexible framework that allows the state to supplement CalFresh benefits if federal assistance is insufficient or unavailable and streamline enrollment. Recent natural disasters have underscored the need for greater flexibility for the state.
8. SUPPORT legislation that would create access to community-supported agriculture through CalFresh. Contra Costa County has many food deserts, and these programs could be leveraged to help residents get access to fresh, healthy food.
9. SUPPORT efforts that would ease data sharing across safety-net programs, including those administered by the Health Department, such as WIC. These programs allow data sharing at the state level, but not at the county level. Identifying eligible, but not enrolled, clients would allow for targeted outreach to improve the lives of children and families.
10. SUPPORT efforts to allow reverse direct certification between CalFresh and children on free and reduced lunch. While families on CalFresh are considered eligible for free and reduced lunch, there are more families who have free and reduced lunch status but are not enrolled in CalFresh. Current outreach and data sharing guidelines are confusing for families and have resulted in under utilization of CalFresh.
11. SUPPORT a waiver that would allow county social services agencies to process CalFresh applications for jail inmates and suspend rather than terminate CalFresh eligibility when a recipient is detained in a county jail. This would allow these applicants to more quickly access resources when released and reduce duplicative administrative work for the county.
12. SUPPORT efforts to allow currently detained inmates to pre-enroll for benefits when they are scheduled to be released. This would ensure more immediate access to support and resources as formerly incarcerated individuals re-enter society. Research has shown that access to benefit programs may help reduce recidivism⁵ and keep our community safer.
13. SUPPORT efforts to expand CalFresh benefits for SSI recipients and their families. This includes increasing the state supplement and allotting permanent funding streams to "hold

⁵ https://wclp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/SB167Skinner_ReEntry_Factsheet.pdf

- harmless” family members of SSI recipients who may be negatively impacted by the SSI cash out. Families receiving CalFresh who are caring for a parent or disabled child on SSI may be pushed deeper into poverty if the hold harmless waivers are not extended.
14. SUPPORT exemptions to the “able-bodied adults without dependents” (ABAWD) CalFresh work requirements. This population faces many barriers to employment, including caring for disabled parents, housing insecurity, and interpersonal violence.
 15. SUPPORT alignment of verification requirements for CalWORKS, CalFRESH and Medi-Cal programs to simplify the customer experience and reduce the potential for error. Consider letting all programs access the Federal Hub used through CalHEERs.
 16. *Currently these programs have different requirements for client verification, though they are all benefit programs. Alignment of verifications would make program administration more efficient and improve the client experience.*
 17. SUPPORT efforts to allow applicants for Medi-Cal and CalFresh to have the same appointment and enrollment process. The eligibility guidelines for both programs are very similar. Requiring separate enrollment processes creates additional administrative work for the county and may delay needed support for vulnerable residents.
 18. SUPPORT efforts to extend eligibility to zero share of Medi-Cal cost when recipients report new earned income. Scheduled increases to state and local minimum wage may impact eligibility to free health care.
 19. SUPPORT fully funding administrative costs for Medi-Cal eligibility and renewal. Despite a strong economy, Medi-Cal enrollment has not dropped significantly over the last three years and high numbers of applications and renewals still come into the county every year.
 20. SUPPORT allowing clinics to collect Medi-Cal payment for same-day mental health visits. Current legislation covers same-day dental referrals, but not mental health. Improving mental health may help ease homelessness and increase self-sufficiency.
 21. SUPPORT allowing clinics to be reimbursed from Medi-Cal for telephonic and online visits during emergencies and disasters. During emergency events patients may not be able to easily come to a clinic office, but technology can allow providers to treat these patients. Recent fires have underscored the need to allow greater flexibility when responding to emergency events.
 22. SUPPORT efforts to extend eligibility of CalWORKs benefit by exempting the first 6 months of earned income received from new employment or wage increases. This is intended to create better financial stability when a family’s income increases due to changes in local and state minimum wage law.
 23. SUPPORT efforts to provide additional funds for family stabilization services for mental health and substance abuse support to include all family members. Taking a holistic approach to creating healthy families increases opportunities for healing and self-sufficiency.

24. SUPPORT efforts to ensure that no CalWORKs grant falls below 50% of the federal poverty line. This could include an increase to the CalWORKS Maximum Aid Payment (MAP) and the annual funding of a CalWORKS cost of living adjustment (COLA). MAP has not increased in ten years despite a rapidly rising cost of living in the Bay Area. This would help prevent families from falling into deep poverty, which can cause toxic stress on children and impede their ability to lead self-sufficient lives as adults.
25. SUPPORT efforts to increase County flexibility in the use of CalWORKs funds and in program requirements in order to better support the transition of welfare dependent families from welfare-to-work to self-sufficiency. Legislative changes to support these initiatives could include the following:
26. Welfare-to-Work. Extending the length of time families can receive Welfare to Work services (job training and search and other employment related services) including job retention services and eliminating the 24-month “time clock”. Currently CalWORKS recipients are eligible to receive supportive services and Welfare-to-Work services for up to 48 months if they are in compliance with CalWORKS rules. Helping people move from poverty and significant education gaps to full time employment in jobs that pay a high enough wage to be self-sufficient is difficult. It can take longer than 48 months and allowing for the flexibility to extend supportive services and training past the 48 month time limit would help. We should allow participants to engage in activities according to their family needs rather than add additional restrictions on the Welfare-to-Work program.
- a. Diversion: Removing the criteria that someone has to be apparently eligible to CalWORKs in order to qualify for diversion and base the criteria on the client’s circumstance and ability to maintain the situation on their own without the need of continued assistance. This includes efforts to increase the amount of the diversion payment and allowing families to reapply for CalWORKs during their diversion period without penalty.
 - b. Expanding job retention services;
 - c. Exempting the hard-to-serve from Welfare-to-Work activities and the 20% exemption or providing flexibility in the time limit (dependent upon terms and conditions of TANF authorization). Developing an eligibility definition to 250% of the federal poverty level (FPL) would ensure more families meet income eligibility requirements.
 - d. *All of these measures would make it easier for CalWORKs families to enter employment services, become employed, and continue with the support they need in order to maintain their jobs.*
27. SUPPORT establishing a General Assistance Program with a state share of funding. *The General Assistance Program is 100% County funded. Moving it to the State would relieve pressure on the County budget and appropriately direct costs to the State.*

28. SUPPORT efforts to create whole family care through a more comprehensive safety net of services that enable families to be stable and have economic opportunities. Healthy infant and toddler brain development is dependent on the health and security of their family.

Increasing Access to Housing and Ending Homelessness

According to the Self-Sufficiency Standard, a family of four in Contra Costa County would need to earn \$71,700 annually to cover basic costs for housing, food, health care, transportation, childcare, and taxes. This is equivalent to more than three full-time jobs at the California minimum wage. The cost of living in Contra Costa County has increased exponentially. Fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment is now \$2,173 a month, a 74 percent increase from 2007⁶. Further, Contra Costa County is home to over 2,200 homeless individuals, many of whom are minors and transition age youth⁷. Human Services has partnered with the Health Department to develop more robust services for the homeless, however, most of these programs are contingent on grant funding rather than permanent investments. These policy positions support legislation and initiatives that strengthen housing justice to ensure all Contra Costa residents have access to safe shelter.

29. SUPPORT efforts to revise the definition of “homelessness” in the Welfare & Institutions Codes to include families who have received eviction notices due to a verified financial hardship or are temporarily staying in someone else’s home, thus allowing early intervention assistance for CalWORKs families. *Current law prevents CalWORKs from providing homeless assistance until the CalWORKs family is actually “on the street.” This rule change would enable the County to work with CalWORKs families who are being threatened with homelessness to prevent the eviction and, presumably, better maintain the family members’ employment status.*
30. *SUPPORT increase of daily rate available under Temporary Homeless Assistance for CalWORKs families. Current rates do not reflect the cost of shelter in California.*
31. SUPPORT efforts to secure permanent housing assistance for CalWORKs participants, including initiatives to create support for shared housing. Permanent housing is key to improving the overall health and wellbeing of vulnerable populations.
32. *SUPPORT* efforts that would create state grants and/or navigation services to establish or expand programs that provide specified housing assistance and supportive services to homeless youth. California has the highest rate of youth homelessness in the country⁸.
33. SUPPORT efforts that would help to stabilize and provide housing supports for at-risk Adult Protective Services clients. Homeless among seniors is increasing in the Bay Area, and affordable housing that is also accessible to seniors’ needs is in increasingly short supply.
34. *SUPPORT* increased investments in housing for victims of domestic violence and human trafficking including the preservation of emergency and long-term housing options for victims.

Creating Quality Early Care and Education

⁶ HUD Fair Market Rent data

⁷ 2018 Point in Time County by Contra Costa Council on Homelessness

⁸ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2017). The 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Care for a preschool age child in Contra Costa now tops over \$10,000 a year⁹. Access to quality early care and education is critical for children's development and allows parents to work and attend school. Community Services currently serves over 2,000 children and their families each year, providing high quality childcare and early education. Though we have been successful in obtaining grant funds to offer care to more children, this is still woefully short of demand. Our county would need to triple available childcare openings to meet the needs of Contra Costa families¹⁰. These policy positions support legislation and initiatives that promote healthy child development and the financial security of working families.

35. OPPOSE legislation, rules, regulations or policies that restrict or affect the amount of funds available to, or the local autonomy of, First 5 Commissions to allocate their funds in accordance with local needs. This gives First 5 Commissions greater spending flexibility to respond to the unique needs of every community.
36. OPPOSE any legislation that increases tobacco taxes but fails to include language to replace any funds subsequently lost to The California Children and Families Act/Trust Fund for local services funded by tobacco taxes (Proposition 10 in 1998 and Proposition 99 in 1988).
37. SUPPORT efforts by the Contra Costa County's executive directors and program administrators of all Child Care and Development Programs to advocate for funding adequate to maintain quality standards and ensure staff retention. Budgets in these programs have stagnated or reduced. An increase would greatly help low-income people find work and stay in jobs.
38. SUPPORT efforts to increase the number of subsidized childcare slots to address the shortage of over 20,000 slots serving children 0-12 years of age in Contra Costa County; and SUPPORT efforts to enhance the quality of early learning programs and maintain local Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) for early learning providers. Affordable childcare is key to low-income workers remaining employed and there is a significant dearth of subsidized childcare slots. Increasing quality of early learning is important to developing skills in the next generation.
39. SUPPORT legislation to expand early childcare and education and increase funding for preschool and early learning, including the restoration of State Quality Childcare Funds. Contra Costa County is experiencing a severe shortage of childcare availability, and quality childcare is a foundation for success and stability as children develop.
40. SUPPORT the funding for Facility Restoration and Repair (FRR) through the California Department of Education. Increasing the funding amounts for facility restoration of early childhood education would allow for improved facilities at Head Start sites. Contra Costa County has several childcare facilities in modular buildings not meant for long-term use and other facilities in need of repairs.

⁹ California Child Care Portfolio

¹⁰ Lucille Packard Foundation

41. SUPPORT alignment of family eligibility for subsidized childcare with cost of living adjustments and higher minimum wage rates. The cost of childcare has risen substantially in the bay area and is an obstacle for families to continue to work or attend school.
42. SUPPORT efforts that encourage access to early education home visiting programming. This will support families in providing an environment that promotes healthy growth and development of their young children.
43. SUPPORT efforts that would allow CalWORKs Welfare to Work participants to participate and achieve high school equivalency program without having their 24-month clock be impacted during their time in the program. On average, high school graduates earn more than \$10,000 more than those without a diploma. Supporting education is a sustainable pathway to self-sufficiency.
44. SUPPORT efforts to continue subsidized childcare for CalWORKs recipients who time out while enrolled in a job training or education program. This will allow families to complete job training and education programs, improving their chances of being self-sufficient in the future.
45. SUPPORT legislation to continue subsidized childcare for CalWORKs recipients who find become employed and are above the income threshold. Once employed, families may need additional time to find new childcare arrangements. Stopping subsidized childcare may jeopardize family's ability to remain employed.
46. SUPPORT efforts to ensure funding of childcare for CalWORKs and former CalWORKs families at levels sufficient to meet demand. The State of California has not fully funded the cost of childcare for the "working poor." Additional funding would allow more CalWORKs and post-CalWORKs families to become and/or stay employed.

Protecting Aging Adults and Individuals with Disabilities

Contra Costa County has one of the highest concentrations of older adults in the country¹¹. Our dependency ratio (the number of working adults to those under 18 and over 65-years-old), will rise to a nearly one to one ratio by 2060. According to the California Elder Economic Security Index (a county-specific measure of the minimum income necessary to cover basic needs for retired older adults), the average senior in our county would need over double their Social Security payment in order to be self-sufficient. Over one in ten Contra Costa residents has a disability, many of whom live in poverty¹². Although in-home support services for these populations are among the fastest growing within Human Services, state funding for aging adults and individuals with disabilities was severely cut during the recession and continues to impact our ability to recruit and retain social workers and home care workers. These policy positions support legislation and initiatives that invest in services and supports for our rapidly growing elder population.

47. SUPPORT simplification of IHSS service hour calculation and allocation to insure compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and efficiently provide services to consumers. Recent changes in the administrative budget and database system have created unfunded mandates within IHSS.

¹¹ U.S. Census

¹² 2016 American Community Survey

48. SUPPORT efforts to allow counties to use alternative reassessment approaches, including but not limited to telephonic reassessments. IHSS serves many people with disabilities that do not change year over year (e.g., quadriplegics) and an in-person visit is not necessary to reauthorize their eligibility. An increased aging population in Contra Costa County has resulted in unprecedented numbers of IHSS applications, making timely year-over-year in-person assessments more difficult.
49. SUPPORT legislative efforts that allow for coordination of services and data, across state and county departments that support aging and elder populations. Elders often are served in multiple county systems, and increased coordination would support the holistic care of our aging population.
50. SUPPORT creation of funding opportunities and policies which promote the development of aging-friendly communities. Rising costs of living create barriers to aging in place, potentially displacing seniors from their support systems and care providers. While housing is an issue for many in Contra Costa County, there is an even greater shortage of ADA accessible and senior-friendly affordable housing.
51. SUPPORT legislation and investments related to long-term care, senior housing affordability, medical service access, transportation, isolation and other quality of life issues to support aging with dignity.
52. SUPPORT efforts to develop emergency temporary shelter and/or short-term options for Adult Protective Services population and consider options that include but are not limited to, licensing of facilities specifically for this population and exploring Medi-Cal billing options to support clients in hospitals and other care facilities pending a more permanent housing placement. Accessible housing is in increasingly short supply throughout the Bay Area.
53. SUPPORT research that describes and assesses local service needs and gaps impacting aging residents and that proposes specific and actionable local strategies to address these needs. Contra Costa County has one of the largest populations of seniors in the United States and more assessment is needed to understand the best practices for how to support this community.
54. SUPPORT efforts that identify, eliminate and prevent in-home neglect of the elderly and dependent adults; and scams and fraud (internet and otherwise) targeted at the elderly and dependent adults.
55. SUPPORT legislative efforts that would enhance confidentiality of DMV records for Adult Protective Services social workers (a practice already in place for Child Protective Services social workers).

56. SUPPORT legislation that would reduce Medi-Cal share of cost for adults 65 and older, as well as disabled individuals. Current guidelines for the aged and disabled population burdens them with a higher share of cost than those who are not elderly or disabled.

Investing in Violence Prevention

We aim to prevent, interrupt and end child abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, elder abuse and human trafficking in Contra Costa County. From August 2017 to August 2018, Employment & Human Services received approximately 8,500 reports of child abuse and over 600 reports of elder abuse. In 2017 over 600 child abuse cases were investigated. Through a federal grant administered through the Alliance to End Abuse, we know that around 200 survivors of human trafficking are identified and receive services in our County annually. Between July 2016 and June 2017 our local Domestic Violence agency (STAND! for Families Free of Violence) received over 14,000 crisis calls and provided case management services to over 1,000 adults and 40 children. We recognize the interconnectedness of all forms of violence and seek to address the root causes and underlying cultural norms that contribute to violence. We seek to prevent all forms of violence; support whole-person services for victims, offenders and their families; and differentiate responses for individuals based on risk assessment. We value respect and dignity for all. These policy positions support legislation and initiatives that create a safer and more just community.

57. SUPPORT efforts that seek to; address the impact of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, elder abuse and child abuse; implement culturally relevant, trauma-informed responses; connect victims to services; and prevent interpersonal violence.
58. SUPPORT efforts that differentiate risk and provide differential response based on risk and needs for individuals affected by interpersonal violence. *Differentiating risk and needs allows for more appropriate, individual and realistic responses to individuals navigating the systems. Differentiating risk and needs based off assessments decreases the chance of further violence.*
59. SUPPORT efforts to increase cross-agency and cross-system collaboration on interpersonal violence cases including the sharing of confidential or protected information in multidisciplinary team settings in order to increase support for survivors.
60. SUPPORT efforts that foster collaboration across protective and criminal systems which allow for facilitation of cross-reporting of interpersonal violence.
61. SUPPORT efforts to increase language access and cultural responsive services for survivors of interpersonal violence. *We know that victims and offenders are more likely to seek support if services are culturally responsive, language appropriate and trauma informed.*
62. SUPPORT efforts to address and prevent the underlying causes, stressors and triggers that lead to violence.
63. SUPPORT efforts that ensure all survivors of interpersonal violence, and their families, feel safe to access services. *We value wrap around supportive services for victims, offenders and their families.*
64. SUPPPORT efforts that seek to provide support and services for individuals who experience secondary or vicarious trauma. *We support efforts that seek to change the cultural norms that do not permit, encourage or openly engage staff to seek services. We*

believe that staff who are exposed to secondary trauma deserve to receive the same whole person care we advocate for on behalf of survivors.

65. SUPPORT efforts to promote safety of Adult Protective Services workers conducting required unannounced home visits by allowing them to request and receive from law enforcement criminal record checks through the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS). *This would primarily be used for reported abusers in the household.*
66. SUPPORT efforts that seek to identify and eliminate elder financial abuse and elder exposure to crime that may be committed through conservatorships, powers of attorney, notaries and others who have the right to control elder assets, including through solutions that allow access for Adult Protective Services to access financial records for investigation of financial abuse and exploitation. *Financial abuse is a fast-growing form of abuse of seniors and adults with disabilities and current law does not authorize financial institutions to grant access to financial records necessary to investigate the reported abuse without the consent of the account holder or authorized representative.*
67. SUPPORT efforts to establish an “umbrella code” or other efficient data-sharing systems for the reporting of incidents of elder abuse to the Department of Justice, thus more accurately recording the incidence of abuse. Current reporting policies within California’s law enforcement community and social services departments are uncoordinated in regards to the reporting of adult abuse. Under an “umbrella code,” law enforcement agencies and social services departments would uniformly report incidents of elder abuse and California would have much better data for policy and budget development purposes.
68. SUPPORT efforts that focus on dependent adult and elder abuse prevention including, but not limited to, providing respite for caregivers.
69. SUPPORT efforts that prevent domestic violence and domestic violence homicide including assessment of risk for assault or lethal force (including stalking and strangulation) throughout the criminal justice system. *Lethality risk assessments have been found to increase awareness for law enforcement officers and service providers; increase awareness for victims and the likelihood of victims engaging in formal services; force professionals to look more closely at domestic violence cases and; create shared language among providers and professionals.*
70. SUPPORT efforts to increase understanding of the lethality risks of strangulation and to document incidences of strangulation.

Ensuring Equity for Immigrant Communities

Contra Costa County is extremely diverse. Nearly one in four Contra Costa residents is an immigrant¹³. Immigrants contribute to our local economy as employees, homeowners, business owners, and consumers. Recent federal policies have aimed to decrease immigrant’s access to the

¹³ 2016 American Community Survey

safety net. Research has shown that fear of immigration enforcement can increase immigrants' vulnerability to crime and decrease their utilization of health care and other services, straining emergency systems when care can no longer be delayed. The policy positions support legislation and initiatives to create a more welcoming county and defend the rights of all immigrants in our community.

71. SUPPORT the expansion of benefits and services for immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Nearly one-quarter of Contra Costa residents are immigrants. These residents contribute to our communities and need access to vital services to ensure the health and well-being of all.
72. SUPPORT the use of state funds to pay for CalFresh benefits for those Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACAs) and PRUCOL (Permanent Residents Under the Color of Law) who would otherwise be ineligible for CalFresh.
73. *SUPPORT efforts to increase language access and cultural responsive services for survivors of interpersonal violence.*
74. *SUPPORT efforts that would require the California Department of Social Services to translate all state-provided materials used by In-Home Support Services providers into the threshold languages. Contra Costa is a diverse county, and having materials that include the languages spoken by many county residents may increase access to these vital programs.*
75. *OPPOSE any changes to "public charge" rules that may penalize immigrants for using vital services they are legally allowed to access. The county has reaffirmed our commitment to providing a safe, welcoming atmosphere for immigrants. Additional changes in public charge regulations would further jeopardize the health and well-being of our county.*

Investing in Healthy Families

The majority of households in Contra Costa County are families¹⁴. Nearly 15% of children in our county have experienced two or more adverse or traumatic events¹⁵, including bullying and abuse by a family member. County services help ensure the safety of children, as well as provide support for parents to give their children more stable homes. These policy positions support legislation and initiatives that promote stability for children who have experienced abuse and trauma, as well as enhance family supports to reunify.

76. SUPPORT continued and improved funding for substance abuse treatment and mental health services including those that provide alternatives to incarceration and Laura's Law.
77. SUPPORT increased funding for Foster Parent Recruitment and Retention. Under the Continuum of Care reform, more children need to be placed in home-based foster care rather than congregate group homes. Recruiting and retaining quality foster parents is critically important to maintain stability for children who have experienced abuse and trauma.

¹⁴ 2016 American Community Survey

¹⁵ Lucille Packard Foundation

78. *SUPPORT efforts to limit hospital discharges for children under the care of CFS when there is no safe and sustainable placement for the child secured. This may help increase placement stability for children and reduce homelessness for youth. Homeless youth are more likely to be victimized than children who have home placements.*
79. SUPPORT continued and improved funding for implementation of Continuum of Care Reform. This reform has created a greater need for more home-based foster care placement options, especially for children with severe mental health or behavioral issues. In order to provide stability for these children, more funding is needed to support case management and secure quality foster parents.
80. SUPPORT reforms to the Private Adoption Agency Reimbursement Program (PAARP) that will reduce counties financial liability when claims exceed funding from the state. In fiscal year 2017-18, counties were required to cover nearly \$7 million in overages.
81. SUPPORT child-specific approval for kinship caregivers (and non-related extended family members) to enable relatives to care for their related child/children, if in the child's best interest.
82. SUPPORT efforts to allow foster care payments for children who are with their parents in a family-based treatment facility. These facilities allow parents seeking mental health and substance abuse treatment to live with their children, which disqualifies the family from maintenance services generally provided to children in foster care. However, research generally shows improved outcomes for both children and parents when they are allowed to stay together during treatment.
83. SUPPORT efforts that would amend the definition of "relative" as applied to state funded Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payments (Kin-Gap) to be consistent with the federally funded Kin-Gap. This will allow all Kinship guardianship cases to be treated uniformly and allow more families to experience independence, normalcy and other benefits of permanence as legal guardians.

Developing Contra Costa County's Workforce

Contra Costa County is home to nearly 600,000 workers¹⁶. Jobs here are growing, and our employment rate is dropping. Still, the economic recovery varies here by region and there are significant barriers to employment for many of our residents. Services targeted to those most in need are essential to ensure that everyone has access to the education, training, and employment support services necessary to gain meaningful and life-supporting employment. This includes taking steps to ensure that the County is appropriately staffed and trained for future needs. The policy positions support legislation and initiatives that enhance economic development programs that promote shared economic prosperity and access to jobs.

84. *SUPPORT efforts to increase coordination between WIOA and title 5 (APS) to support senior employment. Many seniors are seeking employment to make ends meet. Coordination between existing funding streams would create more support for older workers to enter the workforce, gain new skills, and live independently.*
85. *SUPPORT initiatives to support social work education for APS, similar to the Title IV-E MSW program for Child Welfare Agencies. APS is also experiencing a social worker*

¹⁶ 2016 American Community Survey

- shortage and as the population continues to age it is critically important that we have staff able to support the unique needs of elder adults.*
86. *Support efforts to increase the flexibility of Workforce Development Board spending to increase supportive services and respond to local workforce needs.*
 87. *SUPPORT efforts to expand the Workforce Development Board's ability to partner with local community colleges in offer more training and education options with viable career pathways that provide income mobility and livable wages.*
 88. *SUPPORT efforts to Integrate Workforce Development Board services into the CalWORKs program to create robust job training and support services within the county.*
 89. *SUPPORT efforts for continuing training and education for social workers. Social workers serve our community and should have access to the most up-to-date methods to provide quality services.*
 90. SUPPORT efforts to raise wages for the early care and education workforce (such as childcare workers, preschool/infant-toddler teachers). The wages for these positions have not kept pace with other employment opportunities and makes it difficult to recruit and retain quality teachers.
 91. SUPPORT bills to increase teacher training and education, including funding to support current county employees to obtain a teaching credential. There is currently a shortage of quality, credentialed teachers in the county.
 92. SUPPORT funding for statewide Adult Protective Services training. Law enforcement, first responders, and other government workers respond to APS calls but do not necessarily have training on the issues facing indigent adults and elders.
 93. SUPPORT investments in continuous training and coordination of training for all law enforcement officers, District Attorneys, Public Defenders, Probation Officers, Judges and other court staff on issues of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, elder abuse, child abuse, and trauma informed approaches.
 94. SUPPORT efforts that promote training, capacity building and deeper understanding for students, educators and social service staff on trauma informed care, adverse childhood experiences, healthy workplaces and schools.
 95. SUPPORT efforts to increase training on human trafficking (with a specific focus on labor trafficking) for law enforcement, prosecutors and others involved in criminal investigations.
 96. SUPPORT efforts that seek to specialize and build expertise for designated staff and systems (such as developing a commercially sexually exploited youth court or creating human trafficking units) to better support survivors of human trafficking.
 97. SUPPORT efforts to increase funding for the 2020 Census. Contra Costa has been designated as a "hard to count" county by the federal government, and current funding levels may not be adequate to hire the staff needed for an accurate count of our residents.
 98. SUPPORT efforts to protect the visual images of people seeking assistance in public social services facilities. Recently there have been incidences of public filming in social service lobbies across the state, with customers risking being publicly associated with services and becoming vulnerable to exploitation.