



## County of San Diego

### SOCIAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

1255 IMPERIAL AVENUE, SUITE 400, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101  
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March 15, 2022

TO: Supervisor Nathan Fletcher, Chair  
Supervisor Nora Vargas, Vice Chair  
Supervisor Joel Anderson  
Supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer  
Supervisor Jim Desmond

FROM: Anahid Brakke, Chair, Social Services Advisory Board  
Chair, Outreach, Accessibility and Enrollment Task Force

### **SOCIAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD (SSAB) OUTREACH, ACCESSIBILITY AND ENROLLMENT AD-HOC TASK FORCE: FINAL REPORT**

As Chair of the County of San Diego Social Services Advisory Board (SSAB) and Chair of the Ad-Hoc Outreach, Accessibility, and Enrollment Task Force, I am providing this letter to serve as the Task Force's final report, as directed by the Board of Supervisors at its regular meeting on April 6, 2021 (Item (10) Board of Supervisors letter recommendation 1.e.).

#### **BACKGROUND**

As directed by the Board of Supervisors, the SSAB created an ad hoc committee called the Outreach, Accessibility, and Enrollment Task Force. The Enrollment Task Force (ETF) is comprised solely of four SSAB members who volunteered to serve: Greg Anglea, Keara (Piña) O'Laughlin, Jan Spencley, and myself. The ETF identified additional key stakeholders to attend as regular guests to provide expertise and input at ETF meetings, including: Health Center Partners of Southern California; Hospital Association of San Diego & Imperial Counties; Legal Aid Society of San Diego; San Diego Housing Federation; SEIU Local 221; and 2-1-1 San Diego.

#### **OVERVIEW**

As an advisory board to the Board of Supervisors and to the County HHSA, the SSAB performs an important role in providing advice on Self Sufficiency Services operations and programs by monitoring trends, providing input and supporting efforts to streamline and remove barriers to eligibility and enrollment.

The title of the Board Letter creating the Enrollment Task Force and this process is, "Making the County Work for Everyone," and the Task Force was charged with identifying solutions that will increase access for underserved and under-enrolled populations. Over the past 10 months, the Task Force has worked with community partners and the consultant to undertake an ambitious series of activities to better understand existing barriers to enrollment and to pursue potential solutions to overcome those barriers. These activities are summarized in Page 5 of the

contractor's report. We thank the many community partners, HHSa staff and ETF members and regular guests for their contribution of time and resources to this project.

### **SSAB Recommendations**

Attached (Attachment 1) you will find the SSAB's prioritization of the county-contracted consultant's recommendations with some additions and consolidations based on the Enrollment Task Force's local experience and expertise. On February 16<sup>th</sup>, the SSAB unanimously approved the Enrollment Task Force's recommendations. The SSAB looks forward to collaborating with HHSa on implementation and achieving progress on these recommendations and has agreed that "Outreach, Accessibility and Enrollment" will be a standing agenda item for future SSAB meetings.

### **Requested Board Actions**

- Accept and approve the recommendations summarized in Attachment 1 to this letter.
- Request staff to develop implementation plans with goals, outcomes, scope, resources needed, and timeline for the top five priorities within 90 days and the additional four highest priorities within six months, unless staff indicate additional time is needed to develop the plans.
- Request staff work with SSAB to further develop and prioritize implementation plans and metrics as needed.
- Request staff work with the Office of Equity & Racial Justice and the Department of Homeless Solutions & Equitable Communities to develop equity indicators to support the implementation plans.
- Request staff to take all recommendations from the County-contracted consultant and Enrollment Task Force into consideration as they seek to improve operations and access.
- Request staff provide monthly updates to SSAB on implementation and progress in meeting agreed upon goals and outcomes.
- Request that SSAB send updates to the Board of Supervisors on implementation progress annually as a docketed item.

In closing, on behalf of the Social Services Advisory Board and its Ad-Hoc Outreach, Accessibility and Enrollment Task Force, we appreciate the opportunity to continue working with the County and community partners to remove barriers to accessing self-sufficiency programs for eligible individuals.

For any questions, please contact me at (619) 501-7917 ext. 101 or [anahid@sdhunger.org](mailto:anahid@sdhunger.org).

Sincerely,



Anahid Brakke  
Chair, Social Services Advisory Board (D4)  
Chair, SSAB Outreach, Accessibility & Enrollment Task Force  
President & CEO, San Diego Hunger Coalition

**CC: SSAB Board Members**

Nick Macchione, Director, Health and Human Services Agency

Rick Wanne, Director, Self-Sufficiency Services

Alberto Banuelos, Assistant Director, Self-Sufficiency Services

Assmaa Elayyat, Chief, Self-Sufficiency Services

**Recommendations for  
Improving Outreach,  
Accessibility and Enrollment  
in County Self-Sufficiency Programs**

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A Report to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors

San Diego County Social Services Advisory Board

March 15, 2022

Acknowledgements

This work and the resulting recommendations would not be possible without the expertise, time, and generous contributions of numerous community stakeholders and community-based organizations across San Diego County. The Social Services Advisory Board acknowledges the following individuals and organizations for their contributions to the process:

Outreach, Accessibility and Enrollment Task Force & Guests:

Enrollment Task Force

- Anahid Brakke, San Diego Hunger Coalition (Chair, SSAB)
- Greg Anglea, Interfaith Community Services (SSAB)
- Jan Spencley, San Diegans for Healthcare Coverage (SSAB)
- Keara O’Laughlin, Center on Policy Initiatives (SSAB)

Community Partner Guests

- Lauren Abrams, Health Center Partners of Southern California
- Jack Dailey, Legal Aid Society San Diego
- Shanti Huyhn, Service Employees International Union 221 Local
- Mehrsa Imani, San Diego Housing Federation
- Dave Lagstein, Service Employees International Union 221 Local
- Karla Samayoa, 2-1-1 San Diego
- Amanda Schultz Brochu, San Diego Hunger Coalition
- Lindsey Wade, Hospital Association of San Diego and Imperial Counties

County of San Diego Representation

- Amanda Berry, County Board of Supervisor Terra Lawson Remer’s Office
- Paola Martinez-Montes, County Board of Supervisor Chair Nathan Fletcher’s Office
- Josh Bohannan, County Board of Supervisor Chair Nathan Fletcher’s Office
- Alberto Banuelos, County of San Diego HHSA, Self Sufficiency
- Assmaa Elayyat, County of San Diego HHSA, Self Sufficiency
- Rick Wanne, County of San Diego HHSA, Self Sufficiency

Additional 54 Community Based Organizations provided input through key stakeholder interviews, surveys, listening sessions, focus groups and site visits:

- A Better Life Together
- All Things are Possible
- Alliance for African Assistance
- Alpha Project
- American Red Cross WIC
- Bayside Community Center

Social Services Advisory Board Ad-Hoc Outreach, Accessibility and Enrollment Task Force  
Final Report: Attachment 1

- Bonita Family Resource Center
- Cal State San Marcos
- Catholic Charities
- Child Development Associates
- Chula Vista Community Collaborative
- City Heights Community Development Corporation
- Clark Middle School
- Clinicas de Salud del Pueblo
- Community Resource Center
- Duwara Consciousness Foundation
- Getting Education Done
- Feeding San Diego
- HHS leadership and staff
- Home Start
- Indian Health Council
- International Rescue Committee
- Jacobs and Cushman San Diego Food Bank
- Jewish Family Service of San Diego
- La Maestra Community Health Centers
- La Verdad Therapy
- MAAC Project
- Mental Health Systems
- MiraCosta Community College
- Neighborhood Health Care
- Palomar Health
- Partnership for the Advancement of a New Americans
- Rady Children's Hospital
- San Diego American Indian Health Center
- San Diego Family Care
- San Diego Regional Center
- San Diego State University
- San Ysidro Health Centers
- SBCS (formerly South Bay Community Services)
- Scripps Health
- Serving Seniors
- Sharp HealthCare
- Somali Family Services
- Southwestern Community College
- St. Vincent de Paul
- True Care
- UCSD Health



- UCSD Basic Needs Center
- Union of Pan Asian Communities
- Vista Community Clinic
- Vista Farmers Market
- Vista Unified School District
- YMCA San Diego
- Youth Will

**The Social Services Advisory Board would also like to acknowledge the more than 7,000 San Diego County residents who generously shared their time, experiences and insights with this board anonymously through surveys, listening sessions and social media engagement. Their personal experiences accessing County services deeply informed the direction of the Task Force and Social Service Advisory Board.**

## Background

The Social Services Advisory Board (SSAB) established a time-limited Outreach Accessibility and Enrollment Task Force (ETF) comprised of HHSA leadership, County staff representatives (represented by SEIU 221 Local), and community-based organizations with experience supporting individuals applying for Self Sufficiency Services.

The ETF was led by an ad hoc SSAB committee, membership outlined above, and met bi-weekly for 10 months (May, 2021-February, 2022). Its primary activities included:

- The Task Force gathered data in the form of listening sessions with community residents and community-based organizations. All listening sessions were attended by at least one ETF member. Listening sessions conducted directly by the ETF include:
  - Four community resident listening sessions hosted in partnership with Supervisor Lawson Remer's Office in English and Spanish, June, 2021.
  - Listening session facilitated with County Self Sufficiency Staff, conducted by SEIU 221 Local, September, 2021.
  - Listening sessions with CalFresh application assistors, conducted by San Diego Hunger Coalition, September, 2021.
  - Listening session with Medi-Cal application assistors at community clinics and hospitals, conducted by San Diegans for Healthcare Coverage, September, 2021.
- The Task Force provided input and direction to HHSA to support the procurement of external contractors and facilitators, including:
  - Developed the list of required qualifications for the Request for Proposal (RFP) to acquire a contracted consultant.
  - Directed the procurement of a third-party consultant with expertise in racial equity and inclusion to facilitate the remaining Task Force meetings as the group began its review and prioritization of consultant's recommendations.

- Provided input to Kone Consulting in the form of existing data and on-the-ground expertise; examples include:
  - Identified the individuals and groups to be contacted for the County-contracted consultant's stakeholder interviews, August, 2021.
  - Provided feedback on the consultant's survey questions; identified community members to test the online survey and provide feedback before it went live; and strategized on how to ensure broad dissemination of the survey through trusted community partners. The Task Force provided feedback on virtual and in-person site visit planning, August-September, 2021.
  - Reviewed and provided feedback on the County contracted consultant's draft survey questions and assisted with distributing the customer and community-based organization surveys through their networks, September, 2021.
  - The Task Force provided input three focus groups and coordinated logistics with the hosting community-based organization(s), October, 2021
  
- Review and analysis of Kone findings; and
- Development of recommendations.

Since May 2021, The Enrollment Task Force has provided monthly status reports to the Board of Supervisors describing the Task Force and Consultant's progress in the form of memos and has provided regular monthly updates to the SSAB at public meetings.

Upon receiving the final report and recommendations from Kone Consulting on 1/31/2022, the ETF conducted a series of three two-hour meetings, facilitated by an external racial equity consultant to support the review, analysis and prioritization of recommendations for presentation to the SSAB and County Board of Supervisors.

On February 16, 2022, the SSAB unanimously approved recommendations brought forward by the ETF, presented below.



## Recommendations

SSAB Priority Level	<b>Social Services Advisory Board Recommendations</b> Based on Koné Consulting’s final report and recommendations from the SSAB’s Ad-Hoc Outreach, Accessibility & Enrollment Task Force	<b>Koné Consulting                      Final Recommendations</b> <i>(see pages 10-11 of report)</i>	
		Categories	Numbers
<b>TOP 9 PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS – Ranked in order of importance</b>			
<b># 1</b>	1. Establish County and CBO initiative to reduce denied applications – with an emphasis on denials related to failure to provide verification. The initiative should include the following activities, as well as any other priorities identified by the County and CBOs during planning and implementation.  As part of initiative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct refresher training for staff on alternatives to paper for verification and create desk guides.</li> <li>• When waivers expire, consider expanding focus to include denials due to failure to interview.</li> <li>• Create additional two-way communication channels (text, chat and video conferencing) so customers can easily ask follow-up questions about their case and check the status of their application.</li> </ul>	Applications & Eligibility Processing	8 + 9 + 16 + 21
<b># 2</b>	2. Simplify eligibility and redetermination processes and paperwork, including a focus on cash programs (eg, General Relief, Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants, County Medical Services, etc.).	Renewals, Recertifications & Change Reporting	13 + 15 + overarching recommendation
<b># 3</b>	3. Benchmark staff workload levels with other counties and states; consider emerging best practices; and monitor, report and balance workload ratios across FRCs and other County sites. Continue to monitor and increase “first contact resolution.”	HHS County Staffing & Workload Levels	23
<b># 4</b>	4. Increase equity of access to County Self-Sufficiency Services by (1) hiring more bilingual staff so they are consistently accessible and (2) by improving wait times and quality of third-party translation services to better serve clients in threshold and other languages and to lessen the impact on worker performance.	Program Access/Equity	19 + 20
<b># 5</b>	5. Give trained CBO assisters access to a private, universalized customer and case manager dashboards or databases and data sharing agreements, so CBOs can check on application status themselves and assist their customers with paperwork, appointments, and due date. Pursue and advocate for this feature in the CalSAWS platform.	Applications & Eligibility Processing	7

SSAB Priority Level	Social Services Advisory Board Recommendations Based on Koné Consulting’s final report and recommendations from the SSAB’s Ad-Hoc Outreach, Accessibility & Enrollment Task Force	Koné Consulting Final Recommendations <i>(see pages 10-11 of report)</i>	
		Categories	Numbers
# 6	6. With a clear statement from the County and through outreach with trusted community partners, address fears among customers living in immigrant, refugee and mixed status households about the use of public benefits affecting their pathways to citizenship (ie, concerns about the Public Charge rule).	Program Access/Equity	22
# 7	7. Assess and adjust the training model to ensure Human Services Specialists are empowered and equipped to provide excellent customer service. Include intermittent on-the-job training between program trainings to give trainees experience in an FRC earlier. Create desk guides for difficult forms HHSa cannot fix with examples of completed forms.	HHSa County Staffing & Workload Levels	25 + 18
# 8	8. Expand availability of County application assistance by increasing outstationed eligibility workers in high-impact locations.	Program Outreach	17
# 9	9. Review the compensation study for eligibility staff to make sure pay is commensurate with neighboring counties and the County of San Diego's cost of living.	HHSa County Staffing & Workload Levels	new / based on prior Kone drafts
<b>HIGH PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS – not ranked</b>			
HIGH	10. The study team and SSAB encourage HHSa and the County Board of Supervisors to embrace the County’s deserved leadership role by advocating for meaningful program improvements at the State and Federal level that will enable local systems improvements. In particular, HHSa should advocate for the continued with the positive changes in service delivery created by the pandemic (e.g. eliminating interviews).	Other Overarching Recommendations	From Kone's Overarching Recommendations
HIGH	11. Leverage and expand partnerships with CBOs that serve prioritized subgroups and are trusted messengers in those communities.	Program Outreach	1
HIGH	12. Create digestible fact sheets and ensure availability in multiple languages	Program Outreach	4
<b>MEDIUM PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS – not ranked</b>			
MEDIUM	13. Align County and CBO approaches to outreach with customer preferences	Program Outreach	2
MEDIUM	14. Conduct cross-program outreach using electronic communication channels	Program Outreach	3

SSAB Priority Level	Social Services Advisory Board Recommendations Based on Koné Consulting’s final report and recommendations from the SSAB’s Ad-Hoc Outreach, Accessibility & Enrollment Task Force	Koné Consulting Final Recommendations <i>(see pages 10-11 of report)</i>	
		Categories	Numbers
MEDIUM	15. Leverage and expand mobile outreach unit and inter-disciplinary street outreach teams that include HHSA, CBOs, and other agencies.	Program Outreach	5
MEDIUM	16. Streamline phone applications by replicating 211’s abbreviated rights and responsibilities approach.	Applications & Eligibility Processing	10
MEDIUM	17. Continue the positive trend related to program churn in CalWORKs, CalFresh, and Medi-Cal.	Renewals, Recertifications & Change Reporting	11
MEDIUM	18. Create an HHSA welcome packet with all of the information customers need to successfully continue their benefits.	Renewals, Recertifications & Change Reporting	12
MEDIUM	19. Leverage best practices using behavioral economics principles for renewal reminders like HHSA’s text reminders and robocalls.	Renewals, Recertifications & Change Reporting	14
MEDIUM	20. Explore new ways to motivate staff and create incentives for high performers	HHSA County Staffing & Workload Levels	24
MEDIUM	21. HHSA should continue collaboration and building trust with community partners through a lens of equity and inclusion	Other Overarching Recommendations	
MEDIUM	22. HHSA should begin involving customers as advisors when improving the system.	Other Overarching Recommendations	
MEDIUM	23. HHSA would benefit from procuring organizational development support to help leadership promote the culture and procedural changes throughout the organization.	Other Overarching Recommendations	
<b>LOW PRIORITY RECOMMENDATION</b>			
LOW	24. Pursue with California Department of Social Services (CDSS) a demonstration of a simplified universal application paper packet that uses plain talk in multiple languages, gives applicants a clear explanation of what to expect in the process, and is supported by a mobile-friendly online application with easy-to-understand instructions.	Applications & Eligibility Processing	6