

KEEPING LINKED

The Linkages Lady is Here!

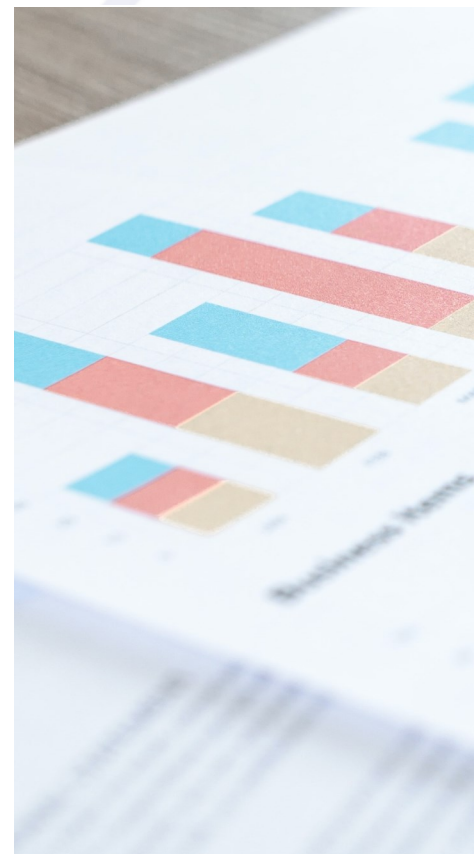
Please join the Child & Family Policy Institute of California (CFPIC) in welcoming Andrea Lewis to the Linkages support team. In her interview she shared that whenever she came to an office she would hear “The Linkages Lady is here” and her passion for Linkages and the work she did on behalf of families was apparent to all.

Andrea comes to CFPIC from Riverside Department of Public Social Services with many years of experience in the public sector. She is a dedicated Social Services professional with over ten years of Eligibility experience including four years as an Eligibility Supervisor, five years in Welfare to Work Employment Services maintaining specialized caseloads in Family Stabilization and Housing support providing services to the community’s most vulnerable people.

Andrea will be supporting Linkages counties, along with Danna Fabella, CFPIC Senior Consultant, through technical support to county Linkages Teams. Andrea’s knowledge of the CalWORKs/TANF (CW) programs will provide CFPIC with the cross-sector expertise needed for a CW and CWS collaboration. This is an exciting addition to our staff and for the Linkages 2.0 Collaboration which focuses on Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Prevention. As you may know, in the Linkages 2.0 framework we see the TANF program as primary prevention through the provision of concrete services (financial aid, Medicaid, etc), as well as secondary or early intervention, through the Family Stabilization, Home Visiting, DV and other

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Andrea's last job with Riverside included:

- **Completing policy reviews for Linkages and Family Stabilization/Housing Support Programs**
- **Accepting new referrals from CSD to DPSS**
- **Case management of 40-90 Cases at a time.**
- **Assisting families with housing and employment needs and other support needs**
- **Assisting with meetings, staff trainings and presentations related to the program**

services provided through the CalWORKs program).

Besides work, Andrea is a mother of three children, the youngest in High School, her son in the Military and oldest daughter attending Community college. Andrea is very excited about starting her work with CFPIC Linkages Project and brings her own experience as a recipient of the CalWORKs program and her current work experience in Linkages at Riverside County to add a very important perspective. As she stated during her interview, it's important that we "Blend our houses" to support families. She understands how finding resources, leveraging each program and advocacy is important in the work with families. Please join us at CFPIC in welcoming Andrea Lewis at Andrea.Lewis@cfpic.org.



Riverside County Social Services Celebrates Staff and Progress at First Linkages Recognition Event

Employees and leaders at Riverside County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) worked together over the last two years to develop the County's Linkages program, which helps customers working with Children's Services gain access to additional supportive programs and services that improve their family's health and wellbeing. The program's goal is to keep families together.

The May 17 event at Children's Services in Banning included social workers, employment counselors, eligibility technicians and department leaders who learned about the many challenges facing customers the department serves and how Linkages is having a life-changing impact on them.

Rosa Cisneros, a Moreno Valley mother featured in this [DPSS video](#), spoke to a packed room and praised Linkages for helping her navigate the child welfare system and access a myriad of needed services. Through the program, DPSS staff helped Cisneros maintain custody of her children after she suffered from domestic violence in November 2021.

A DPSS social worker referred Cisneros to Linkages, which helped her access wraparound services including childcare, CalWORKs, CalFresh, and Medi-Cal. Wide-ranging assistance helped Cisneros find stability for herself and her family.

“Working with Linkages made my case go smoother. I was able to get all the help and programs I needed to move forward. I was able to get a therapist. Being able to talk with someone about the situation I was going through allowed me to get a better perspective and improve as a person,” Cisneros told Felix Minjarez, a Welfare-to-Work manager who leads the Linkages program.

Cisneros was among a dozen speakers at DPSS’ first Linkages Recognition Event, which included leaders from Children’s Services and the Self Sufficiency divisions, and employees from Staff Development, Welfare-to-Work, CalWORKs and Children’s Services.

“This has been a big work in progress for us and to see it grow over the last two years has been rewarding,” said Deputy Director Sandra Bowlan from the Self Sufficiency Division. “It’s been an incredible collaboration between teams and divisions to ensure we’re providing the best services to customers.”

Multiple staff members received certificates of appreciation for their work advancing the Linkages program.

“Please know that the work you’re doing in partnership with one another is truly making a difference for the children and families we serve,” said Children’s Services Deputy Director Michelle Wohl.

The Linkages Recognition Event included speakers addressing trauma awareness/education, child welfare policies in California, and how economic conditions such as housing instability and reductions in public benefits and personal income are risk factors that can lead to increased involvement by child welfare professionals. Data shows even modest increases in child support payments result in a decrease in maltreatment reports. County leaders say it underscores the importance of Integrated Services in Riverside County, including programs such as Linkages, which can help reduce child protective services cases.

“When our families come to us in crisis, often times they have many unmet needs,” said Riverside County Assistant CEO Sayori Baldwin who visited the Linkages event. “Collaboration is essential to empower and assist those who we serve.”

As DPSS employees work together to strengthen the Linkages program, Rosa Cisneros reflects back to her time in the program - a program that helped put her and her family on a new and improved path forward.

“Linkages is definitely there for us as families and for our kids,” she said. “I’m independent now. I own my own business and I am able to take care of myself. I feel proud of myself.”



Rosa Cisneros (left),
Linkages client

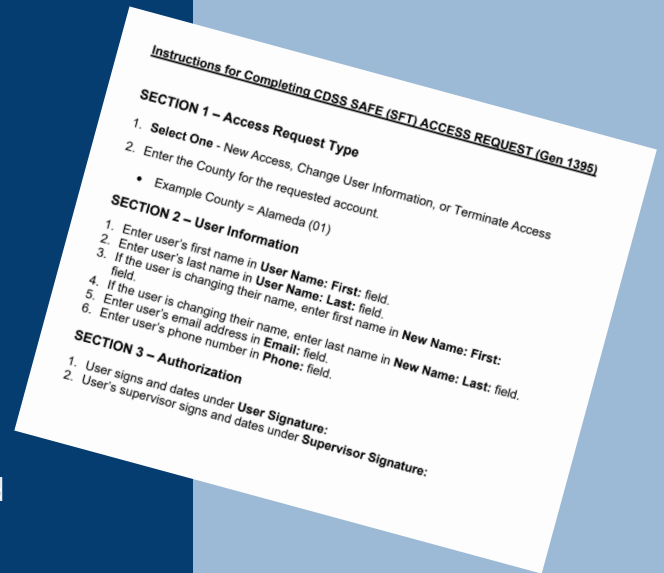
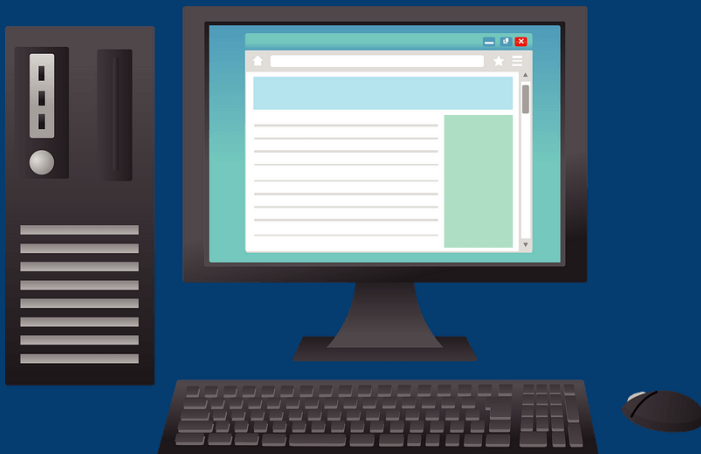
SAFE Site

The Data/Evaluation Linkages Task Group, including members from the CDSS Research, Automation and Data Division (RADD), created a CalWORKs & CWS cross-over Report. While this data is not intended to provide the identification of families for the initial coordination of case management (since it is based on data from a previous quarter), it can assist in planning and reviewing whether you have identified all Linkages eligible families and can be used for evaluation. Additionally, a secure portal was created to allow counties to receive their own cross-over data.

You may now sign up to view your county-specific Linkages data. The data will be available on the SAFE Site. Please pick up to two representatives to register for SAFE Site access. Register by returning a completed [Gen 1395 form](#) to Amber.Hobart@dss.ca.gov. Please follow the [Gen 1395 instructions](#) that and reference your county code [here](#).

As mentioned earlier, the data are based on quarterly cycles and are posted about 6 months after the quarter. Additionally, the data is only posted for a limited amount of time (approximately 30 days). Those registered to the SAFE Site will receive emails informing you when data is posted and when it will be taken down.

Thanks to the Family Engagement and Empowerment Division (FEED) for working on this for Linkages!



State of California – Health and Human Services Agency California Department of Social Services

CDSS SAFE (SFT) ACCESS REQUEST

The CDSS SAFE (SFT) Access Form (GEN 1395) is used to authorize, change, or terminate access to the CD Secure Access File Exchange (SAFE) system. It must be signed by the requesting user and a supervisor before the user obtains access. When an employee separates from the Department, a request to terminate access must be submitted as soon as possible and no later than one business day after the employee's separation date. All completed forms are to be filed locally.

SECTION 1 – Access Request Type

Select Only One / Complete Business Information:

New Access _____
Change User Information _____
Terminate Access _____

Business Unit _____
SFT Program _____
County _____

SECTION 2 – User Information

User Name: First: _____ Last: _____
New Name: First: _____ Last: _____
(If Applicable)

Email: _____ Phone: _____

SECTION 3 – Authorization

User Signature: _____ Date: _____
Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____
Business Manager Signature: _____ Date: _____

GEN 1395 (7/21)

Statewide In-Person or Regional Convening?

That question was posed to the Linkages Oversight Committee in May and it was felt that, given the budget issues, restrictions on travel, and staffing concerns, it would be better to hold in-person one (1) day regional meetings.

However, at the June Coordinator's Call the strong consensus was to hold a Statewide in-person convening since the sharing that

works and to network with other Linkages Coordinators and teams across the State. They learn not only from counties in their Region but across the State.

The July Oversight Committee heard what the Coordinators had to say but felt that if we are going to hold an in-person Statewide Convening it would be best to wait until Spring 2024. It would give the counties a better feel for the impact on the roll out of new systems and staffing. Moreover, CFPIC, as a result of TA calls planned over the next several months, will have a better understanding of which counties might be ready to be on panels to present and share their Linkages practices.



We will continue to hold bi-monthly "Peer Conversations" on specific topics and will determine if Coordinators would also like to hold Regional Zoom calls. If so, we will be asking for volunteers from each of the Regions to help us plan.

Thanks to all of you for your hard work!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Linkages Coordinator Call: Staffing

August 25th @ 11:00 AM

[Register Here!](#)

If you have any suggestions or contributions for the next newsletter, let us know! Email Danna Fabella at danna.fabella@cfpic.org.

LINKAGES.CFPIC.ORG

