

Quality and Productivity Commission
34th Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
"Leading with Excellence"

2021 APPLICATION

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12-point font):

NAME OF PROJECT: PROCESSING BENEFITS APPLICATIONS DURING COVID-19

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION: MARCH 2020

(Must have been fully implemented for a minimum of at least one year - on or before July 1, 2020)

CHECK HERE IF THIS PROJECT IS BEING SUBMITTED FOR THE **COVID-19 IMPACT AWARD ONLY**. (Projects must be implemented on or before December 31, 2020. **Note:** Projects implemented less than one year ago will not be eligible for any other PQA awards. In addition, once a project is submitted, you cannot submit the same project for awards consideration in subsequent years).

PROJECT STATUS: Ongoing One-time only

HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT? Yes No

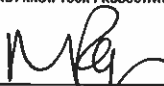

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font.

1 In support of the County's commitment to aid the most vulnerable residents during the
 2 COVID-19 Pandemic, the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) proactively
 3 modified service operations to address the increase in workload. The Department
 4 quickly established a process to continue servicing the community, including the
 5 homeless population, while protecting the health and well-being of our customers and
 6 DPSS workforce. This was accomplished by establishing designated drop-off and
 7 pick-up stations at strategic locations and curbside service to facilitate the submission of
 8 paper applications and the retrieval of mail and Electronic Benefit Transfer cards. For
 9 the period of March 2020 to May 2021, a combined total of 1,840,476 CalFresh (CF),
 10 CalWORKs (CW), Medi-Cal (MC) and General Relief (GR) applications were received,
 11 and more than 1,820,000 applications were processed. As an example of the great
 12 need for DPSS services, during the first two months of the pandemic (March and April
 13 2020), DPSS received an increase of 56% in CF applications, compared to the same
 14 period in 2019. As the pandemic persists, DPSS staff continues to effectively process
 15 applications received online and issue benefits to community customers in need.

BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS Department of Public Social Services 12860 Crossroads Parkway South, City of Industry, CA 91746		TELEPHONE NUMBER (562) 908-8600
PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME Rosa Orozco		TELEPHONE NUMBER 562-908-8655
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE (PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME)		TELEPHONE NUMBER (562) 908-6330
Maria Rivera 		EMAIL MariaRivera@dpss.lacounty.gov
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE		TELEPHONE NUMBER (562) 908-8600
Antonia Jiménez 		

ELECTRONIC/WET, OR SCANNED SIGNATURES ARE ACCEPTABLE**

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1st FACT SHEET – LIMITED UP TO 3 PAGES ONLY: Describe the **challenge(s), solution(s), and benefit(s)** of the project to the County. What quality and/or productivity-related outcome(s) has the project achieved? Provide measures of success and **specify assessment time frame**. Use Arial 12 point font.

CHALLENGE

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department received a significant increase in applications for program benefits starting in March 2020. At the same time, DPSS faced workforce challenges due to staff being personally impacted by the pandemic and the deployment of staff as Disaster Services Workers at Homeless Shelters, food distribution centers, Project RoomKey sites, voting centers, and COVID testing sites. However, the primary challenge faced by the Department was having to swiftly implement a new application process to comply with the State’s Safer at Home Order. Those most impacted were customers without contact information, homeless individuals, and those with no access to the internet.

SOLUTION

To address these challenges, DPSS quickly modified operational processes by:

- Transitioning to a telework environment, which allowed staff to safely work from home and continue processing the increase in applications.
- Providing curbside services to customers. The curbside access made it possible to protect the health and safety of individuals while continuing to provide in-person services to our homeless customers, and those who did not have access to the internet (to apply for DPSS benefits).
- Establishing designated drop-off and pick-up stations at strategic locations to facilitate the submission of paper applications and the retrieval of mail and Electronic Benefit Transfer cards.
- Providing on-site services to those who showed up to our offices through the various protocols established at each office, while maintaining social distancing.

BENEFITS

The Department’s initiative yielded benefits to both internal and external Department customers. The Department’s new application process benefitted homeless individuals and/or customers with no access to internet services or limited technical literacy to continue applying for and receiving uninterrupted benefits during the pandemic. By leveraging existing technology, the Department ensured that staff working either at the office, or remotely, had the necessary resources they needed to continue processing applications while providing excellent customer service to DPSS customers.

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Linkage to the County Strategic Plan – 1 page only. Which County Strategic Plan goal(s) does this project address? Explain how.

The Processing Benefits Applications Project supports Strategic Goal I of the County's Strategic Plan: Making Investment that Transforms Lives by focusing on assisting underserved residents.

Department efforts to ensure that customers continued to receive uninterrupted benefits during the pandemic and our continuous commitment to providing excellent customer service was exemplified via this project.

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COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY): If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. Please indicate whether these benefits apply in total or on a per unit basis, e.g., per capita, per transaction, per case, etc. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation. Use Arial 12-point font

Cost Avoidance: Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these are costs to the County or to other entities.

Cost Savings: A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these were expenditures by the County or by other entities.

Revenue: Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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