

2023 COUNTY LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

To meet the needs of our residents and ensure the health and stability of our communities, and continue our equity efforts, the County of Orange strives to strengthen the social safety net, while remaining fiscally prudent and accountable to taxpayers. As the sixth most densely populated county in the nation, the County is responsible for implementing a variety of state, federal, and local programs for a diverse population. Accordingly, the County has identified the following state policy priorities for 2023.

Homelessness & Housing Funding

Orange County has implemented effective strategies and partnerships to reduce and prevent homelessness by leveraging federal, state, and local funds. The County will advocate for resource flexibility and ongoing federal and state funding, including an extension of Homeless, Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) funds, to prevent individuals and families from becoming unhoused, increase permanent supportive and affordable housing, and address the complex needs of vulnerable populations that include veterans and transitional-aged youth, among others.

Mental Health & Recovery Services Funding

Orange County will support efforts to protect County allocations and advocate for increased funding for mental health and recovery services. Flexible funding and resources that improve cross-sector service coordination and advance key County initiatives, including the Be Well behavioral health campuses, are critical to building a responsive continuum of care for people experiencing substance use, trauma, or other mental health crises. The County will support efforts and proposals to ensure the sufficiency of resources and flexibility needed to effectively implement statewide initiatives, including the Care Act, as well as advance federal, state, and local partnerships to provide evidence-based treatment to justice involved youth and adults with mental illness and substance use disorders.

OC CARES / Justice Reform Funding

The County will continue ongoing efforts to strengthen linkages between the County criminal justice system and various systems of care that provide services to inmates and at-risk individuals to increase self-sufficiency, facilitate successful reentry into the community, and reduce recidivism. The County will advocate for legislative and funding proposals to support the diversion of youth and adults from incarceration while maintaining public safety; increase funding and eligibility for resources including, but not limited to, housing, mental health and substance use disorder services, and youth development programs; and successfully implement statewide initiatives, such as the Division of Juvenile Justice Realignment.

Environment & Sustainability Funding

Orange County will continue to enhance its preparation for, and response to, hazardous weather and environmental events by advocating for proposals that increase investments facilitating clean energy infrastructure development and climate resiliency. The County will additionally support efforts that maintain the integrity of its environmental and coastal resources including, but not limited to, wildfire mitigation, coastal restoration projects, sediment management, addressing water contaminants, and research on coastal development and transportation zones.

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STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES, CONT.

Health & Social Services Funding

Orange County will support investments in public health workforce and infrastructure to improve health equity across the County and effectively respond to public health emergencies. The County will also advocate to protect and increase resources and funding to improve health outcomes and access to services; strengthen the social safety net and increase access to CalFresh and other critical social service programs; successfully implement state initiatives, such as CalAIM and the Master Plan for Aging; and improve system integration and service delivery while mitigating administrative burdens and negative workforce and revenue impacts.

Infrastructure / Cybersecurity Funding

Orange County will continue to advocate for its fair share of state funding from the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) for critical infrastructure projects including cybersecurity, broadband connectivity and road and bridge improvements.