

**THE COUNTY**

# BLADE



VOLUME 37, NO. 1

JANUARY, 2022

## NEGOTIATIONS OVER CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION RULES



**FRESH FINANCIAL  
START FOR 2022**

**WHAT IS AN  
INTERACTIVE  
PROCESS UNDER  
THE ADA?**

**BOLSTER YOUR  
RETIREMENT WITH  
THE DC PLAN**



# SLOCEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## — SLOCEA MISSION STATEMENT —

The mission of the San Luis Obispo County Employees' Association is to advocate for fair compensation, safe working conditions, affordable healthcare, and a secure retirement for our members, who provide vital services to the public.

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## THE COUNTY BLADE

### SLOCEA

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The opinions expressed in **The County Blade** do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the **San Luis Obispo County Employees' Association** unless so specified.

For advertising information, please call Tana Pigeon at 951-686-7575.

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**HAVE A QUESTION?  
CALL SLOCEA  
805-543-2021**

# Negotiations Over Civil Service Commission Rules

Pat McNamara,  
**General  
Manager**



In the November 2021 issue of *The County Blade*, I provided a brief update on the status the Civil Service Commission rules change negotiations (hereafter: “negotiations”) that were initiated by the County on August 10, 2021. We had the first negotiating session on October 14, 2021.

Since my previous report, SLOCEA representatives have participated in two additional negotiations sessions, which took place on November 15, 2021, and December 6, 2021. During each session the parties at the table continued discussion on several proposed rules changes, including the County’s proposals to eliminate the right of County employees to appeal *Needs Improvement Annual Performance Evaluations* (hereafter: “Performance Evaluations”) and *Letters of Reprimand* (hereafter: “LOR”) to the Civil Service Commission. Throughout these discussions no information was presented that would justify eliminating these important appeal rights. Especially given the fact that Performance Evaluation and LOR appeals rarely actually make it to a hearing before the Civil Service Commission.

In fact, in approximately the last eight years, SLOCEA has had only one appeal of a member’s *Performance Evaluation* make it to a hearing before the Commission. Another Union filed one other *Performance Evaluation* appeal, for

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In fact, in approximately the last eight years, SLOCEA has had only one appeal of a member’s *Performance Evaluation* make it to a hearing before the Commission.

”

*a total of just such two cases since 2014, actually going to hearings. Eight other Performance Evaluation appeals filed during this period, were either settled or withdrawn by the employees, long before making it to the Commission’s agenda.*

The one SLOCEA *Performance Evaluation* case that did make it to the Commission for hearing, was a glaring example of the importance of the appeal process as a Check and Balance mechanism for policy compliance. Significantly, the Commission’s FINDINGS and DECISION in that case found that the County department involved, had committed multiple violations of Commission rules:

**Excerpts from the Commission’s written findings:**

“In this case, the Commission finds by a preponderance of the evidence that the Department violated all three of these sections of Rule 13” (referring to CSC Rules 13.01, 13.02, and 13.03).

“Based exclusively upon the

unique facts of this case, the Commission cannot uphold a performance review that fails to follow the rules and cannot reward a Department that has completely frustrated the purpose of timely and candid, employee feedback. The Department simply failed in its obligation to timely review Appellant’s work, instead attempting months later to “reverse engineer” grounds upon which to ding Appellant’s performance”

*“the Commission concludes that Appellant’s [redacted] “Needs Improvement” Performance Evaluation is invalid and is set aside for violating Rule 13 and its subdivisions, and orders that the Performance Evaluation be changed to “Satisfactory”*

*“The Commission further Directs departments to follow the rules and to diligently and timely review the performance of their employees to avoid an outcome like this in the future”*

The multiple violations also constituted violations of the employee’s rights, which the Civil Service System is intended to protect and in this case it did. Public employees will indeed stray from the *straight and narrow*, from time to time. As this case confirmed, this includes County managers. Had the employee in this case not had the opportunity to appeal their *Performance Evaluation*, the Civil Service Commission would never have known that their Rules were being habitually violated by a major County department.

LOR appeals are equally rare in making it before the Civil Service

**CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE**

Commission for a hearing. Since 2014, the Commission has only heard one LOR appeal matter. Ten other LOR appeals filed during this period were settled or withdrawn by the employees before their cases made it to the Commission.

The rarity with which both Performance Evaluation and LOR appeals go before the Commission is an important part of our current discussion. Intimations over the years have been made that *Performance Evaluation* and *LOR* appeals somehow represent a disproportionate portion of the Commission's workload. As noted above such claims are not supported by the facts.

Given the importance of *Performance Evaluation* and *LOR* appeals to County employees, I'm pleased to report that during the December 6, 2021, negotiating session, the County withdrew these two odious proposals. Although, we consider this to be a positive development, certain residual concerns have emerged because of the information that has come to our attention as a result of the current negotiation process.

Prior to any collective bargaining ("negotiation") process, SLOCEA representatives will review data and archival information that might be useful in the discussions related to the proposals submitted at the negotiating table or anticipated to come up during the negotiation process. Preparations for the current (Civil Service Commission Rules change) negotiations were handled in like manner.

In relation to the County's proposal to eliminate the right to LOR appeals, we reviewed past cases and related data, which included an LOR appeal filed in 2018 on behalf of a SLOCEA member. During the **prehearing meeting** for the case, the presiding HR Analyst told the SLOCEA Labor Representative assigned to the case, in the presence of the appellant-member, that the Civil Service Commission is "irritated by Letters of Reprimand hearings".

Additionally, in our review of

archival documents related to *Performance Evaluations appeals*, we took note of certain statements written by the Civil Service Commission in one of its decisions following a *Performance Evaluation* appeal heard by the Commission. The statements were taken as a stern warning as to the Commission's expectations related to the frequency of future filings of *Performance Evaluation* appeals:

**Excerpts from the Commission's Decision:**

"the Commission finds that in nearly all cases, performance reviews are justified, and should not be appealed"

"Based upon historically rare incidents of employee appeals of performance reviews to the Commission, the Commission expects that trend of rarity to continue"

It also came to our attention that during the Civil Service Commission's monthly meeting held on November 17, 2021, the Commissioners took up the scheduling of an employee's *Performance Evaluation appeal*. During this discussion the Commission's counsel stated there was "*global frustration on performance review appeals taking up space*". SLOCEA presumes the "global frustration" comment to mean that frustration exists within the Commission in dealing with *Performance Evaluation* appeals. This interpretation is reinforced by one of the statements made by a commissioner present in the meeting that seemed to harbor personal biased towards hearing *Performance Evaluation* appeals:

"I don't have time to commit two days to this if it's a problem with needs improvement. If it's a problem with

termination or a demotion, I get it".

The sentiment expressed through all these sources, much of which is public record, seems to indicate a clear bias by the Commission with respect to *Performance evaluation* and *LOR* appeals. Accordingly, SLOCEA has become concerned that County employees who need to appeal a Performance Evaluation or LOR, may be unable to receive a fair and impartial hearing from at least some of the current members of the Commission.

Although, these types of appeals may not constitute a priority with the Civil Service Commission, they are nonetheless very important to County employees. Especially, given that San Luis Obispo County is a progressive discipline County. Low-level discipline such as an LOR, establishes the first step towards more severe discipline later in an employee's career. The outcome of these cases is serious business and can affect the employee's entire career, as well as their morale for years to come. Likewise, *Needs Improvement* performance evaluations frequently lead to Performance Improvement Plans (PIP) and eventually, formal discipline in a good number of cases.

Given the sustained utterances, writings, and expressions of bias mentioned above, our confidence in the Civil Service Commission's ability to remain fair and impartial has waned, especially as it relates to appeals of *Performance Evaluations* and *Letters of Reprimand*. That said, the negotiating process is intended to open the lines of dialogue and foster opportunities to achieve mutually beneficial solutions to such problems. Towards that goal, our current efforts at the negotiating table will continue.

God Bless!

## HOLIDAY HOURS

The SLOCEA office will be closed Monday, January 17, 2022, for Martin Luther King Jr. Day

# What Is An Interactive Process Under The ADA?

**THERESA SCHULTZ,**  
*Senior Labor Representative*



The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) prohibit discrimination of an employee's disability and mandate employers to participate in a good faith **Interactive Process** with the employee to determine if a reasonable accommodation can be made for the employee with a temporary or permanent disability, impairment, or condition.

The Interactive Process is initiated when an employee notifies or discloses to their employer that they have a physical or mental disability, impairment or condition which hinders their ability to perform one or more functions of their job. A reasonable accommodation is an adjustment that can be made to a job or work environment that permits the employee with a disability to perform the essential functions of a job.

When this information is communicated to a supervisor or management, it triggers the Interactive Process. Medical certification from the employee's healthcare provider is required and will be used to help establish the disability and what type of accommodation(s) may prove beneficial.



As a public employee, you have a right to have union representation in the Interactive Process meeting.



Accommodations must be considered reasonable and not cause the employer any undue hardship. Examples of accommodations may include:

- Job restructuring
- Acquiring or modifying

- equipment or devices
- Adjusting or modifying examinations, training materials, or policies
- Providing readers and interpreters
- Reassignment to a vacant position
- Part-time or modified work schedules
- Alcohol or Drug rehabilitation programs
- Paid or unpaid leave

Additionally, an employee who has exhausted their protected leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and has a need for additional time off due to their continued medical condition, may request a temporary accommodation under the ADA to extend their leave of absence.

As a public employee, you have a right to have union representation in the Interactive Process meeting. SLOCEA can assist members negotiate reasonable accommodations in their workplace and assist them throughout the Interactive Process. Members should contact SLOCEA if their employer contacts them regarding a scheduled Interactive Process meeting.



**MORE INFORMATION ON THIS IMPORTANT TOPIC CAN BE FOUND AT:**

- **JOB ACCOMMODATION NETWORK: [ASKJAN.ORG](http://ASKJAN.ORG)**
- **U.S. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION (EEOC): [EEOC.GOV/LAWS/GUIDANCE/YOUR-EMPLOYMENT-RIGHTS-INDIVIDUAL-DISABILITY](http://EEOC.GOV/LAWS/GUIDANCE/YOUR-EMPLOYMENT-RIGHTS-INDIVIDUAL-DISABILITY)**
- **DEPARTMENT OF FAIR EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING (DFEH): [DFEH.CA.GOV/ACCOMMODATION/](http://DFEH.CA.GOV/ACCOMMODATION/)**



# Bolster Your Retirement With The DC Plan

**Carl Nelson**



**R**etirement planning is based on “The 3-Legged Stool” of **Pensions, Social Security, and personal savings**. Working for SLO County, two legs of your retirement income stool are in-place – your Defined Benefit Pension and your Social Security benefit. The traditional view of public sector employees was that they would work a full career and retire with a reasonable lifetime pension benefit plus social security. But this may not be true for all.

## SOCIAL SECURITY COVERAGE

All SLO County employees participate in social security, but some other public sector employers opted-out of SS coverage. As a result, some of you who worked for other agencies SS benefit may be limited by The Windfall Elimination Provision or the Government Pension Offset SS rules. For those employees who may not receive their full SS benefit, you may want to add to your personal savings.

## SHORTER CAREERS COVERED BY PENSION SYSTEM

Some employees may work for SLO County or in other public sector jobs covered by a pension system for only part of their career. You may retire with only 10 or so years of pension service credits instead of 20 or 30 years. Since your pension depends on years of service multiplied by your highest rate of pay multiplied by a retirement factor (e.g., 2.0%), a shorter career means a smaller pension.

## POST-PEPRA DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION FORMULAS

Employees who started prior to 2010 are covered under the Tier 1 pension benefit for Miscellaneous employees - the 2.0% at 55 pension. Employees hired in 2010-2012 or who may have “Reciprocity” from another retirement system, are in the Tier 2 pension benefit for Miscellaneous employees - the 2.0% at 60 pension. Tier 3 was required state-wide by the Public Employees Pension Reform Act (PEPRA) for new hires starting in 2013. The Tier 3 pension benefit for Miscellaneous employees is the 2.0% at 62 pension. Tier 3 is still a solid pension benefit that will pay you a lifetime income no matter how long

you live. However, those of you in Tier 3 may want to add to your personal savings to supplement that pension.

## AN EXAMPLE OF SAVING TO SUPPLEMENT YOUR RETIREMENT

If an employee started saving \$200/ paycheck in the DC Plan, increased it by 3% each year, and assuming a 4% investment return – they could have close to \$190,000 after 20 years. If they then retired and wanted to prudently draw down that \$190,000 balance over 30 years (assuming a 3% investment return in retirement) they could supplement their pension by about \$9,500 per year.

## DEFERRED COMPENSATION PLAN

Personal savings - the third leg supporting your retirement income - can be enhanced by participating in the Deferred Compensation Plan. Your employer’s DC Plan is a “457” plan for tax-deferred savings similar to a 401(k) or an IRA. If you don’t save in the DC Plan out of worries over “locking up” money in the DC Plan while you are still working, the DC Plan does have a loan provision so you can access some of your savings if needed. Nationwide Retirement administers the DC Plan and you can call Loren Farfan at 818/642-8191.

## A TRUE STATEMENT...:

As I have said repeatedly in the 40 years that I have worked with retirement systems and pensions – I have never yet met a person who regretted saving money.



**Carl Nelson, CFA**

*Executive Director and Chief Investment Officer  
San Luis Obispo County Pension Trust  
805/781-5465  
www.SLOCPT.org*

# Fresh Start For 2022

## KEVIN TEIXEIRA



Let's put a financial plan in place.

2022 is right around the corner. That can mean a few of the same

things for many of us. Start eating healthier. Start exercising more. It should also include looking at your current financial plan and seeing how you can improve on it as well. Here are just a few ideas of what we can do.

Are you taking advantage of all of the tax-beneficial options available to you? If you are then great, but if you aren't, then why not? Having your money grow tax free is a great thing and makes a huge difference down the road.

Some SLOCEA members that I have met with were unaware that you can have more than one retirement account. You can have a 401k and

an IRA. You can have a traditional IRA and a Roth IRA. Little bits of information like this can make a big impact on your savings goals.

Inflation has clearly had an impact over the past few months. What are some things that you are doing to take advantage of it? There are certain assets that perform well during times of economic inflation.

In closing, I hope that you all have a great Holiday Season and a Happy New Year! It has been great to meet many of you and I look forward to a long lasting relationship with you.

Email me today at kevin@

“

Are you taking advantage of all of the tax-beneficial options available to you?

”

teixeiracapital.com to request your complimentary meeting.

Feel free to visit our company website at [www.teixeiracapital.com](http://www.teixeiracapital.com) to view more information about our company.

I look forward to hearing from you today. Thank you.

Kevin Teixeira is an Investment Adviser Representative with Teixeira Wealth Management LLC, offering investment advisory services in the state of CA. These services are strictly intended for individuals residing in the specific state(s) referenced.



Get a fresh financial start in 2022 by shoring up your retirement plans.



# Planning to Retire?

## Plan to join SLOCREA: SLO County Retired Employees' Association!

**Miki Gillman,  
SLOCREA  
President**



**C**heck out our website at [www.slocrea.org](http://www.slocrea.org). We

have links to many organizations important to Seniors, people considering retiring, &/or people needing info for aging relatives. Please let us know of any other links you'd like to see on our website.

Also on our website we have a brochure containing a new member application. We are an all-volunteer organization for everyone who receives a pension from SLO County Pension Trust. Everyone. Including DROPpers! Yes, if you are in DROP, you are qualified right now to join SLOCREA! Divorced and widowed spouses are also qualified to join. We are pleased that many new retirees are indeed getting application forms from our website.

### SHOUT OUT

Our January 2022 shout out goes to Animal Services staff. They provide an amazing array of services for domestic animals and the public. You can adopt a dog, cat or certain other animals from them, get your dog or cat neutered or spayed or euthanized if needed, plus many other services. Thank you for your service to animals and people!



“ We are an all-volunteer organization for everyone who receives a pension from SLO County Pension Trust. ”

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## FIRST YEAR FREE

Our offer of automatic first year free membership for new retirees who express interest in SLOCREA is off to a good start. All we need from a new retiree (or DROPper) is your contact information: Name, address, telephone number, and email address. We also want to know from which department you are retiring. It's that simple.

After your 1st year of membership you can renew at the \$15.00 per year rate or renew at the \$40.00 for 3 years rate. Your choice.

## MEETINGS

We had a very successful December meeting via Zoom. Brynn Albanese played her violin, sang and talked to us about how she uses music to help heal people. She also gives live outdoor concerts, mostly in the Cambria area, but other places too. Check her website [www.brynnalbanese.com](http://www.brynnalbanese.com) for details.

During the meeting, members offered suggestions for future meeting topics and meeting venues. We are now busy exploring those possibilities.

Our next meeting will be Monday March 8, 2022, likely via Zoom, but possibly at a venue with an outdoor option. We'll let you know. Topic to be determined.

We will have a Zoom Board Meeting Monday February 8th. We will also have a Board meeting directly following the March 8th General Meeting.

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I'm sure the pandemic wreaked havoc on some of your exercise routines and now would be a good time to re-start your favorite exercise routine or try a new one.

”

## TIME TO GET MOVING!

January is the #1 month for people to start (or re-start) exercise routines. The numerous possibilities include walking, hiking, running, swimming, pickle ball, tennis, kayaking, surfing, stand-up paddle boarding, and dragon boating. Pick something fun! Walking is the easiest and least expensive and is a good choice for beginners. It's really good for overall health, too. You can do it in your own neighborhood or your office neighborhood, or the beach. The Central Coast offers many scenic places to walk or hike. Same for running.

Most of these activities can be done in small groups, medium-sized groups, or large groups. You have a lot of choices. Paddle Boards, Surf Boards, & Kayaks can all be rented in our coastal towns.

Some pricier exercises include Pilates, Tai Chi, Qi Gong and Yoga. They tend to require a teacher, who tends to want to be paid. Some of these classes are offered on Zoom nowadays.

I know a lot of you already exercise regularly. I'm sure the pandemic wreaked havoc on some of your exercise routines and now would be a good time to re-start your favorite exercise routine or try a new one. You want to be as physically healthy as possible when you retire, so you can enjoy it.

## RETIREMENT PLANNING

January is also a great month to go see the good people at Pension Trust, so you can develop a plan for ensuring that your retirement will be a wonderful one.

Feel free to contact me at [mikigillman@gmail.com](mailto:mikigillman@gmail.com) to let me know which department you'd like to see get a shout out or to suggest a topic you'd be interested in my writing about.

Wishing You All a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

Any opinions expressed in this article are solely those of its author and are subject to change without notice.

**Did you know we're  
on social media?**

**Follow us here!**



**your\_slocea**



**SLOCEA**



**@Your\_SLOCEA**

## DID YOU KNOW?



### EMPLOYEES CANNOT REFUSE AN ORDER TO COOPERATE IN AN ADMINISTRATIVE DISCIPLINARY INVESTIGATION

An employee under investigation for potential misconduct does not have the “right to remain silent”, as they would in a criminal matter. The employee has a duty to cooperate in an administrative investigative interview and is advised to answer all questions truthfully.

However, the employee does have Weingarten rights to have their union representative present and does not have to answer the employer's questions until the requested union rep is present.

# Labor Representation Report

For the period November 16, 2021 – December 15, 2021

## Meetings And Business

- Held a Board of Directors meeting
- Held a Member Benefit Committee meeting
- Attended two Civil Service Commission meetings
- Opened and closed nominations for Negotiating Committees
- Consulted with SLOCEA's General Counsel on various labor matters

## Meet And Confer

- County Negotiations: Participated in Civil Service Commission rule changes negotiations Session #3 on 12/6/2021

## Representation Report

- 108 Total member consultations: Represents 42 different members in 14 different departments
- 17 Members with case consultations
- 25 Members with various consultations
- 22 Cases carried over from previous period
- 02 New cases opened
- 05 Cases resolved and closed
- 17 Overall cases handled the past month
- 25 Cases currently active

## Member Consultations And Representation

- 7 MOU enforcement/Policies/County Code inquiries
- 6 COVID related issues
- 5 Medical leave of absence/FMLA/ADA
- 4 Workplace/Supervisory Issues
- 3 Investigative matters
- 3 Formal disciplinary matters
- 3 CSC Rules (evaluations/re-classification)
- 3 Workload issues
- 2 Informal disciplinary matters
- 6 Miscellaneous matters

## DON'T MISS THESE MEETINGS!



### SLOCEA Board of Directors' Meeting

Wednesday, January 19, 2022 @ 5:45 p.m.  
Location TBD. Contact the SLOCEA office at 805-543-2021 for additional information.

### SLO County Board of Supervisors Meetings

All BOS meetings are conducted in person. Watch live online by going to the County's home page and clicking "Watch Live Video".

- Tuesday, January 11, 2022 @ 9:00 AM
- Tuesday, January 25, 2022 @ 9:00 AM

### SLOCREA Meetings

- SLOCREA Board Meeting – Monday, February 8, 2022 @ 1:30 PM via Zoom
- SLOCREA General Meeting – Monday, March 14, 2022 @ 12:00 PM via Zoom

Subject to change – Please email [slocrea@slocrea.org](mailto:slocrea@slocrea.org) for additional information.

### SLO County Pension Trust Board of Trustees Meeting

Monday, January 24, 2022 @ 9:30 AM – Contact Pension Trust at 805-781-5000 for location details.



# 3 – 2 Majority Redraws Seats for County Supervisor Maps

**Brian Floyd**

Every ten years following release of the decennial Census data, political districts across the United States are redrawn. Congressional, state legislative, county supervisorial, and city council districts all get reconfigured to balance the 2020 population count of each jurisdiction.

In California, seats for the U.S. House, State Assembly, and State Senate are drawn by the Citizens Redistricting Commission and not the State Legislature as it is done in most states. This was mandated by a voter approved initiative in 2008. In San Luis Obispo, the Board of Supervisors adopts the maps for the five supervisorial districts they represent.

On December 14, 2021, Supervisors Debbie Arnold, Lynn Compton, and John Peschong voted to approve the SLO County District maps for the next decade that appear to favor conservatives. Supervisors Bruce Gibson and Dawn Ortiz-Legg opposed the approved map.

The map approved is known as

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Should the Patten Map districts hold, the government of San Luis Obispo will likely continue to be led by a conservative majority that has not been especially friendly to organized labor in the past.

”

the Patten Map. It was proposed by Arroyo Grande resident Richard Patten and had the backing of the SLO County Republican Party. The Patten Map was one of two final maps the Board of Supervisors considered for elections throughout the 2020s. The other map was submitted by the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce.

Whether or not this map narrowly approved by the 3 – 2 vote will take or remain in effect is to be seen. At the time of this writing, SLO Citizens for Good Government intends to file suit to overturn these district maps. The group bills itself as a “bipartisan coalition of San Luis Obispo

County residents” with a mission of “bringing back fair, responsible, good government to San Luis Obispo County.”

SLO Citizens for Good Government alleges that Supervisors Arnold, Compton, and Peschong violated state law when approving the maps because they created three districts strongly leaning Republican in a county that has more registered Democratic voters.

SLO Citizens for Good Government specifically alleges the adopted Patten Map “cracks long-standing communities of interest, dilutes the voice of Latino voters in South County, and radically rearranges long-standing communities of interest.” If so, this would be a violation of California’s Fair Maps Act.

What happens here depends on many factors and not solely a judge’s interpretation of the law, but any partisan political leanings they might hold.

SLOCEA and its members would be wise to follow any redistricting lawsuit closely. Should the Patten Map districts hold, the government of San Luis Obispo will likely continue to be led by a conservative majority that has not been especially friendly to organized labor in the past.



SLO Citizens for Good Government alleges the Patten Map “cracks long-standing communities of interest, dilutes the voice of Latino voters in South County, and radically rearranges long-standing communities of interest.”

# Anthem's Employee Assistance Program Service Summary

**KATHRYN CURRAN,**  
*County Human Resources Department*

**W**hen you need help facing life's many challenges, Anthem's confidential Employee Assistance Program (Anthem EAP) is a valuable benefit available to you and your household members. Whether you're looking for a counselor, struggling to find local child care, planning for retirement or coping with an addiction, EAP is available 24/7, 365 days a year to help.

Review the diverse services and resources offered by Anthem EAP:

## **COUNSELING**

- One-on-one counseling by phone, in-person and online
- Five free confidential therapy sessions per year with a local provider

## **LEGAL AND FINANCIAL CONSULTATION**

- Phone meeting or in-person meetings
- Online resources including seminars, a library of articles, and free legal forms

## **DEPENDENT CARE AND DAILY LIVING RESOURCES**

- Phone consultation with a work-life specialist
- Information regarding child care, adoption, elder care and assisted living

## **CRISIS CONSULTATION**

- Toll-free number for emergencies available 24/7, 365 days a year

## **ID RECOVERY**

- Identity theft risk level checked by specialists
- Help with reporting to consumer credit agencies
- Assistance with paperwork and negotiating with creditors



## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Call (833) 954-1067 for access to 24/7 counseling services, or visit <http://www.anthemead.com/> to access work and life resources. Use company code "PRISM".

For more information on Anthem EAP, visit the Human Resources webpage at <http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Human-Resources.aspx>



# Sustainable And Scrumptious Local And Seasonal Eating

**Brooke Daphne,**  
**Administrative**  
**Assistant**



**W**ith grocery stores stocked year-round with all our favorite fruits and vegetables, it can be difficult to realize how much of our food is actually out of place. Everyone knows that strawberries bought in summer are naturally sweeter than those found in winter, but did you know that they are also drastically different nutritionally?

A study conducted in 2008 by researchers at Montclair State University found that broccoli grown in its peak season was nearly two times higher in vitamin C than broccoli harvested out of season. Nutrients are also significantly diminished when produce is shipped and stored for big supply chains. Not to mention that food simply tastes better when it's fresh and in season!

With most types of produce readily at our disposal, many of us don't eat foods when they're actually at their

seasonal peak. Big chain grocery stores typically don't sell local produce and produce that has to be shipped across the country or from other parts of the world is harvested early to help maintain freshness in transit, sacrificing nutrients and taste. Food in season means food in abundance, which keeps prices low and saves you money on groceries.

Local foods also have reduced carbon footprints, requiring less fuel to travel from farm to table, and support local farmers and the local economy. If you have a green thumb, you can consider skipping the market altogether and start growing herbs and vegetables in your own backyard!

So, what foods are in season right now? Thankfully, in southern California, our mild climate allows for fruits and vegetables that wouldn't survive harsh winters elsewhere. Leafy greens such as lettuce, kale, spinach, and swiss chard do well in our coastal climate this time of year, and flavorful herbs like cilantro, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, tarragon, and thyme will perfectly

season all your winter dish desires.

Mint is one herb that can be grown year-round on the Central Coast, making a delicious herbal tea that tastes just like Christmas. Hardy root vegetables are perfect for surviving the chilly winter months, so check your local farmer's market for roots and tubers such as carrots, potatoes, beets, turnips, and radishes. You'll also find vegetables like broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, and snap peas growing strong this time of year. While frigid winter typically doesn't make us think of fruit in abundance, it is the best time of year for citrus; clementines, tangerines, mandarins, grapefruit, oranges, lemons, and limes are all ripe for the picking.

There's a plethora of foods at your disposal that are seasonal, locally grown, nutritious, and delicious! Going to the farmer's market may not always be as convenient as going into a big chain grocery store, but you'll find it can be much more rewarding for both your tastebuds and your wallet.



To keep an eye on local foods and their seasons, visit [www.seasonalfoodguide.org](http://www.seasonalfoodguide.org).



# Steward Roster

## Working together to build a UNITED, INFORMED and INVOLVED membership!

The purpose of the Steward Program is to promote open channels of communication between employees and SLOCEA.

The presence of active and effective Stewards at work-site locations increases member participation, helps to educate and

inform the membership and creates a united coalition working to foster improved benefits for its members.

## Listed by Department

### ASSESSOR

**Kelly Michel**

BU 01 - San Luis Obispo  
Appraiser I

### BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

**Joe Ferra**

BU 01 - SLO Health Campus  
Behavioral Health Clinician III

**Robert Ortega**

BU 01 - Atascadero  
Behavioral Health Worker III

**Amber Trigueros**

BU 01 - San Luis Obispo  
Behavioral Health Clinician III

### CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

**Lori Roberts**

BU 01 - San Luis Obispo  
Child Support Specialist II

### DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**Erin Stich**

BU 13 - San Luis Obispo  
Administrative Assistant III

### LIBRARY

**Michael Badalamenti**

BU 05 - San Luis Obispo  
Senior Library Associate

**Margaret Kensinger-Klopfer**

BU 05 - Arroyo Grande &  
San Luis Obispo  
Coordinating Librarian

### PARKS

**Kevin Sulitz**

BU 02 - Salinas District  
Park Ranger I

### PLANNING & BUILDING

**Kevin Method**

BU 01 - Atascadero  
Building Inspector I

### PUBLIC WORKS

**Jim Emley**

BU 02 - San Luis Obispo  
Custodian

**Leann Siebert**

BU 02 - Santa Margarita  
Water Systems Worker I

**Brian Uder**

BU 01 - San Luis Obispo  
Engineer IV

### SHERIFF-CORONER

**Kathleen Curtis-Ames**

BU 13 - Los Osos Sub-Station  
Legal Clerk

**Chris Li**

BU 13 - County Jail  
Correctional Technician II

### SOCIAL SERVICES

**Heather Griffin**

BU 01 - Arroyo Grande  
Employment Resource  
Specialist III

**Emily Landis**

BU 01 - San Luis Obispo  
Program Review Specialist

**Nate Larsen**

BU 01 - San Luis Obispo  
Employment Resource Specialist IV

**Michelle Lowe**

BU 05 - Atascadero  
Employment Services Supervisor

**Mark McCullough**

BU 01 - Nipomo  
Employment Resource Specialist III

**Mike Olsen**

BU 05 - Paso Robles  
Employment Services Supervisor

### SUPERIOR COURT

**Teresa Collins**

BU 19 - San Luis Obispo  
Courtroom Operations Supervisor



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU JANUARY BIRTHDAYS!

Monica Solis	01/01	Cara Goldensmith	01/16
Nathan Nguyen	01/01	Kerri Cuellar	01/16
Shirley Jones	01/01	Sera Levy	01/16
Anna-Marie Hernandez	01/02	Julieanne May	01/18
Amy Owens	01/03	Mona Perkins	01/18
Jennifer Hajdu	01/03	Natalea Daily	01/18
Kindra Pauls	01/03	Tim O'Keeffe	01/18
Nicole Ketterer	01/03	Ezmeralda Cantu	01/19
Andrea Madrigal-Ramsey	01/04	Lauren McGinty	01/19
Chenoa Wilkerson	01/04	Marissa Whitaker	01/19
Christina Soenksen	01/04	Heather Miranda	01/20
Olivia Montiano	01/05	Joanie Ladley	01/20
Stacey Custodio	01/05	Janet Limon	01/21
Adrienne Seiler	01/06	Jean Cassetta	01/21
Carmen Salazar	01/06	Lauren Silva	01/21
John Whitcomb	01/06	Angela Ford	01/22
Laurie Gutierrez	01/06	Daniela Chavez	01/22
Robert Simpson	01/06	Gary Harper	01/23
Sonia Ramirez	01/06	Hannah Sharon	01/23
Kimberly Seaman	01/07	Hilda Sparks	01/23
Robert Clark	01/07	James Blundell	01/23
Sarah Matias	01/08	Matthew Barnard	01/23
Telesforo Galindo	01/08	Molly Heintz	01/23
Aaron Hope	01/09	Neyva Rubio	01/23
Athens Wilson	01/09	Rebecca Whiteside	01/23
Celena Crawford	01/09	Sarah Macias	01/23
Connie Munguia	01/09	Charlene Argie	01/24
Monique Matta	01/09	Justin Smith	01/24
Triesha Miller	01/09	Meronig Simmons	01/24
Alejandro Simental	01/10	Taylor Crabb	01/24
Anabel Vargas	01/11	Vanessa Cortes Lopez	01/24
Denise Ankele	01/11	Frank Rak	01/25
Guadalupe Velazquez Ross	01/11	Zachary Reineke	01/25
Kimberley Hampton	01/11	David Wheeler	01/26
Sylvia Aldana	01/11	Kymberly Kusko	01/26
Trisha McComas	01/11	Patricia Rios	01/27
Dustin Idler	01/12	Sara Craft	01/27
Larry Mickey	01/12	Eva Cheek	01/28
Robin Walker	01/12	Lynda Deringer	01/28
Jose Navarro	01/13	Crystal Cullen	01/29
Joshua Ens	01/13	Donna Hayes	01/29
Lindsey Geibel	01/13	Michelle Cuellar	01/29
Melanee Taylor	01/13	Angelica Ruvalcaba	01/30
Michael Byrd	01/13	Carolina Gutierrez	01/30
Rachel St James	01/13	Jay Wells	01/30
James Hagood	01/14	Kyle May	01/30
Katie Nyback	01/14	Leslie Terry	01/30
Leslie Beierle	01/14	Jim Emley	01/31
Rachel Robles	01/14	Lorena Gomez	01/31
Angie Acosta	01/15		
David Barcellos	01/15		
Lisa Beals	01/15		
Terry Wahler	01/15		

*Correction to the December 2021 edition of the Blade: December Birthdays*  
Javier Godinez 12/6

If your birth date is not listed above it is because we do not have it in our database. Please help us keep our records up to date by contacting us at 805-543-2021.

# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Name	Department
Timothy Virden.....	ACTTC
Emmaline Trockey.....	Assessor
Chelsea Hendron.....	Assessor
Arlene Hernandez-Tapia...	Department of Social Services
Hunter Mueller.....	Health Agency
Jill Costello.....	Health Agency
Ijeoma Njoku.....	Health Agency
Alexa Holguin.....	Health Agency
Jennifer Hajdu.....	Health Agency
Barbara Egan.....	Health Agency
Aidee Ratcliff.....	Health Agency
Nicole Turner.....	Planning & Building
Hannah Miller.....	Planning & Building
Farren Francisco.....	Probation
Amber Griley.....	Public Works
Alejandro Banda.....	Public Works
Garrett Wright.....	Public Works



# Service Anniversaries

The following county, courts and locsd employees will reach a significant service anniversary during the month of JANUARY. We list those employees who have reached their 5th, 10th, 15th and higher years of employment. These anniversaries represent the hire date of our members, not time in service accumulation.

***Congratulations to these employees for their years of service!***

## JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

First Name	Last Name	Department	Years Of Service	First Name	Last Name	Department	Years Of Service
Joseph	Phillips	Public Works ISF	36	Kathy	McGuire	Behavioral Health	15
Terry	Wahler	Planning Department	35	Maria	Prado	Department of Social Services	15
Noelle	Grasmick	SLO County Child Support Servi	32	Maribel	Martinez	Department of Social Services	15
Cynthia	Fraysier	Sheriff-Coroner	29	Michelle	Lowe	Department of Social Services	15
Karen	McCoy	SLO County Child Support Servi	28	Neri	Diaz	Department of Social Services	15
Jeanette	Johnson	Assessor	26	Rebecca	Tanner	Assessor	15
Kermit	Spears	Public Health Department	24	Robyn	Yakush	Department of Social Services	15
Meronic	Simmons	District Attorney	24	Ruby	Remigio	Department of Social Services	15
Thomas	Hart	Public Works ISF	24	Sara	Carrillo	Department of Social Services	15
Maria	Vega	Department of Social Services	23	Veronica	Delgadillo	Department of Social Services	15
Erma	Gonzalez	Public Health Department	22	Cherie	Fields	Public Health Department	10
Jacilyn	DiCarlo	Department of Social Services	22	Eunice	Fader Lopez	Department of Social Services	10
Jay	Hebrard	Fleet Services ISF	22	Jacquelyn	Hillstock	Department of Social Services	10
Kerstin	Hewitt	Public Health Department	22	James	Mudge	Department of Social Services	10
Michael	Hill	Public Works ISF	22	Margarita	Mejorado	Public Health Department	10
Mona	Perkins	Behavioral Health	22	Mary Anne	Van Cleve	Assessor	10
Antoinette	Borraccino	Behavioral Health	21	Michael	Stimmel	Sheriff-Coroner	10
Idee	Shapiro	Behavioral Health	20	Nicole	Ozuna	Department of Social Services	10
Mark	Ayler	ITD	20	Sandra	Hernandez	Department of Social Services	10
Stephen	Schulte	Assessor	20	Tina	Sullivan	Department of Social Services	10
Laura	Smith	Library	19	Vanessa	Gutierrez	Department of Social Services	10
Nancy	Goldsmith	Public Health Department	19	Alison	Haggerty	Department of Social Services	5
Kenneth	Pang	Public Works ISF	18	Angela	Ford	Public Works ISF	5
Linda	Wolff	Public Health Department	18	Ashley	Romero	Department of Social Services	5
Michael	Boyce	Public Works ISF	18	Brandon	Young	Community Parks	5
Leticia	Ramirez	Public Health Department	17	Bret	Bjorkman	Regional Parks	5
Scott	Pagent	Golf Courses	17	Brian	Murillo	Assessor	5
Allison	Kokonas	Department of Social Services	16	Carolina	Gutierrez	Drinking Driver Programs	5
Cara	Goldensmith	Department of Social Services	16	Cindy	Duerksen	Library	5
Charlene	Argie	Department of Social Services	16	Coby	Whitaker	Regional Parks	5
Dawn	Gardner	Department of Social Services	16	Currie	Bailey-Carmon	Department of Social Services	5
Dawn	Tabin	Sheriff-Coroner	16	Derek	Shong	Public Works ISF	5
Keith	Kuiken	Regional Parks	16	Dorothy	Gruett	Library	5
Leslie	Terry	Public Health Department	16	Edward	Griley	Public Works ISF	5
Michelle	Daillak	Department of Social Services	16	Erica	Thatcher	Library	5
Peter	Hague	Public Health Department	16	Jennifer	Weissman	Department of Social Services	5
Todd	Adams	Planning Department	16	Julia	Richardson	Behavioral Health	5
Anabel	Vargas	Department of Social Services	15	Mayra	Lopez	Behavioral Health	5
Araceli	Solorio	Department of Social Services	15	Michelle	Zulim-Clark	Public Health Department	5
Beatriz	Hurtado	Department of Social Services	15	Reghina	Haywood	Department of Social Services	5
Gina	Forgette	Behavioral Health	15	Sean	Galloway	Behavioral Health	5
Jeffrey	Elliott	Behavioral Health	15	Sonia	Diaz	Probation Department	5
				Teri	Warkentin	Department of Social Services	5



