



The Family Focus Initiative

Durham County Department of Social Services began a strategic planning process in 2006 using the Result Based Accountability process. The strategic planning process identified the agency's major outcome goals and measurable indicators of success.

Agency staff identified five agency outcome goals that are consistent with the community's Results Based Accountability Goals:

- ✓ DSS provides excellent customer service
- ✓ DSS customers are healthy
- ✓ DSS customers are safe and stable
- ✓ DSS customers are self-sufficient
- ✓ Children served by DSS are ready for and succeeding in school

The agency has refined 2-8 major indicators for each goal that meet the "public square test" to share our results the community.

This is our first quarterly report to you about our progress. We hope this regular reporting will result in greater community understanding of the challenges faced by the families and individuals that we serve. We also hope these reports will be a catalyst for greater dialogue and engagement by community members in helping us to improve our services and help families to achieve better outcomes.

This issue focuses most on the results in **Medicaid, Work First, Child Care and Child Protective Services.**

We invite you to read more in this report about how we are serving families. Consider how you can get involved to help us achieve our mission of *partnering with families and communities to achieve well-being through prosperity, permanence, safety and support.*

Sammy R. Haithcock
Director



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Investing in Human Capital

The work of DSS is an investment in the economic and social well-being of Durham. At DSS we are:

- Meeting basic economic needs
- Providing access to health care and nutrition to improve health status
- Helping people find jobs, develop strong

work habits and create a career path

- Keeping children, families and elderly and disabled adults safe
- Helping children to be ready for and succeed in school.

The goal of public investment in "human

services" is to help families reach an increasing capacity to be optimally self-reliant and contribute to society. It is a partnership that can work-- if we see public programs as a means to better ends, and a long-term investment that will reap dividends in a stronger, more prosperous community.

DSS Provides Excellent Customer Service



The most important measure of customer service excellence for DSS is that our customers report that they are treated with courtesy and respect by our staff. Customer service survey results indicate that more than 90% of customers were treated with respect and courtesy by our staff.

Medicaid accepts applications by mail and in person. Applications are on the [DSS Internet site](#), at

DSS office locations, and hospitals, Durham libraries, and at partner agencies. Customers may call DSS at 560-8000 for an application.

You may apply in person at 300 N. Duke St between 8:15 AM–5:30 PM. Applicants should expect to wait 20–40 minutes to see a case worker, and a 60 minute interview.

Work First Cash Assistance applications must be made in person at

300 N Duke St. Applicants can expect a 25 minute wait and a 2-3 hour assessment and application interview.

Child Care subsidy is available at Durham's Alliance for Child Care Access (DACCA) at the Jim and Carolyn Hunt Child Care Resource Center at 1201 S. Briggs Avenue. Business hours are 7:30 AM - 5:30 PM.

Customer Service Indicators:

- More than 90% of DSS clients report that they are treated with courtesy and respect by our Reception staff according to customer satisfaction survey results.
- In January 2008, we had 6,174 visits and 4,451 unduplicated clients to our DSS offices.
- The Agency average wait time is 25 minutes and the average visit is 45 minutes long .

The number of office visits is increasing. Compared to FY 07, in FY 08, we will have:

- 8% more clients at Main St.
- 32% more at Duke St.
- 39% more at DACCA

Timely Processing of Assessments, Applications & Reviews

DSS must process 90% of Health Choice, Medicaid and Work First Cash Assistance applications within 45 days, and 90 days for Medicaid

Disability applications. Cases are reviewed every 6- 12 months. 97% of those reviews must be completed timely.

Child Care subsidy applications must be processed within 30 days. Cases are reviewed yearly and must be completed timely.

Child Protective Services (CPS) Investigations should be initiated within 24 hours and completed within 30 days.

Family Assessments should be initiated within 72 hours and completed within 45 days.

Program	Indicator	Baseline	FY 08:
Medicaid	90% Medicaid Applications are processed within 45 days	FY 07: 95%	Jul-Feb: 92%
Health Choice	90% Health Choice Applications are processed within 45 days	FY 07: 94%	Jul-Feb: 93%
	90% Disability Applications are processed within 45 days	FY 07: 98%	Jul-Feb: 96%
Work First	90% Work First Applications are processed within 45 days	FY 07: 97%	Jul-Feb: 93%
CPS	% of Family Assessments are initiated within 72 hours	FY 07: NA	Jul-Mar: 92%
	% of Investigations are initiated within 24 hours	FY 07: NA	Jul-Mar: 94%

DSS Customers are Safe and Stable

Child Protective Services (CPS) staff assess reports of suspected abuse, neglect or dependency of children. Child abuse can be physical, sexual or emotional in nature. Child neglect can include the failure to provide for basic needs, inadequate supervision, or inappropriate discipline. Situations involving substance abuse and domestic violence are considered serious child neglect. Child dependency occurs when a youth does not have an able parent or caretaker. Any person with cause to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected is required by law to report

it. Child abuse and neglect are rarely one isolated incident. All of our staff are trained to recognize the signs of abuse and neglect. We conduct a thorough "investigation" of all valid reports of suspected child abuse. This include notification to law enforcement. We conduct a "family assessment" of all valid reports of suspected child neglect and dependency. The family assessment process is focused on identifying services to help parents protect their children. An individualized plan is developed for each child.

Substance abuse treatment, parenting education and support, and family therapy are common components

We closely monitor situations where children are at risk for maltreatment. We follow System of Care principles and practices in this work, often establishing Child and Family Teams to ensure collaboration and teamwork among all who can provide assistance.

Most at risk children can be protected from further maltreatment without suffering the trauma of being removed from their homes.

Keeping Families Together Whenever Possible

Strong families build strong communities. When children cannot remain safely in their homes, Team Decision Making meetings (TDM's) are convened. This can include extended family (grandparents, aunts and uncles, adult siblings), close neighbors and friends, clergy, teachers and community professionals. The team is responsible for developing an alternative plan that meets the child's needs for safety, health, education and well-being.

As a result of the TDM, often arrangements are made for children to reside with relatives or kinship caregivers, at least temporarily. Children who cannot be protected by their parents, relatives or kin enter the foster care system where they are cared for and nurtured by trained, licensed foster parents. The juvenile court system becomes involved with all children and youth who enter foster care.

The TDM procedure puts

our goal of preventing the separation of a child from their family whenever possible into practice. TDM's recognize the importance of maintaining extended family connections. It also allows for sensitive decisions regarding a child's living arrangements to be made in an open environment with input and ideas from everyone concerned.

Safe & Stable Indicators:

- 95.6% of abused, neglected and dependent children are not repeat victims. Durham County DSS has consistently had a lower percentage rate of "repeat maltreatment" than the statewide rate.
- Only 14.6% of children placed in an approved kinship caretaker arrangements enter DSS custody within 12 months
- In FY07, there were 2,138 children the subject of child abuse and neglect investigative assessments made by DSS and 386 children were substantiated as abused or neglected.
- 49.6% of those substantiated and needing treatment were 0-6 years old; 23.5% were 7-12 years old and 26.9% were 13+ years old.



GAP Program— *Providing Support to Kinship Caregivers*

With the support of the Boards of Social Services and County Commissioners, we have implemented the State's first child welfare kinship care program. The program provides child care subsidy, financial support, and on-going advocacy for guardianship arrangements resulting from CPS interventions to prevent youth from entering foster care.

The Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP) began in January 2008. The program helps court appointed guardians to fulfill their long-term commitments to children who would otherwise enter foster care. Program supports include funds to meet the child's needs for education, health and self-esteem, such as tutoring, summer camp, clothing and uninsured

medical expenses. GAP allows relatives and kin to make a "long and strong" commitment to a child that they would otherwise be unable to make, such as grandparents living on fixed incomes.

GAP is funded by funds that would have been spent to provide foster care services for participating youth.

Child Protective Services

Assesses reports of abuse, neglect or dependency of children. Provides family support to assure child safety. To make a report call 560-8424; after hours call 911.

Foster Care & Adoption

Provides services to children when they must be removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect. Includes supportive services for foster and adoptive parents. Call 560-8467.

What are Medicaid and Health Choice?

Medicaid provides medical coverage, based on income and assets, for families with children and adults 65 and older or disabled (including Long Term Care).

Health Choice for Children is North Carolina's version of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) for children in families up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.

For families with children under 18 call 560-8754, 560-8786 or 560-8769.

For Adult Medicaid call 560-8770, 560-8376 or 560-8793.

DSS Customers are Healthy

DSS provides access to health care coverage by determining eligibility for Medicaid and Health Choice for Children. In partnership with other agencies we conduct outreach to enroll potentially eligible residents. DSS staff encourage recipients to sign with a managed care provider to improve their health care management because those who receive regular check-ups and have someone who oversees their care have better health outcomes.

Approximately 33,000 Durham Residents receive Medicaid and Health

Choice. While 13% of Durham residents receive partial to full medical coverage through these programs, another 38,135 residents under age 64 are uninsured. From July 2007– March 2008, over 1,600 applications have been made from outreach efforts at local hospitals and health care centers.

In Durham 23,900 or 84% of Managed Care eligibles are enrolled in Carolina Access, North Carolina's Medicaid Managed Care program.

Conducting outreach is a priority to help connect more of our residents to health

care coverage. We have staff located at our major hospitals - Durham Regional, Duke University Medical Center and the Veteran's Administration Medical Center - as well as at Lincoln Community Health Center, who take Medicaid and Health Choice applications on site. Medicaid and Health Choice applications can also be downloaded from the DSS website and mailed back to the agency. Anyone can request a mail-in application to avoid a lengthy visit at our office. Application processing times begin the day in which a completed application is received by DSS.

	Jun 2006	Jun 2007	Mar 2008
# of Health Choice recipients	3,270	2,828	3,007
# of Medicaid recipients	27,414	29,399	30,454
<i>% of all NC Health Choice recipients are Durham residents</i>	<i>2.50%</i>	<i>2.48%</i>	<i>2.51%</i>
<i>% of all NC Medicaid recipients are Durham residents</i>	<i>2.41%</i>	<i>2.41%</i>	<i>2.44%</i>
<i>% of Durham's residents receive Medicaid and Health Choice</i>	<i>12.6%</i>	<i>13.1%</i>	<i>13.3%</i>

DSS Customers are Self-Sufficient

Helping people find jobs, develop strong work habits and create a career path is at the heart of the Work First program. Work First staff assess family strengths and connect families to community resources to help them secure and retain employment.

The Work First Program was established under "welfare reform" in the mid-1990's and has transformed the way the

agency works with families. Adults are subject to stringent work requirements and cash assistance is time-limited. Our staff work closely with recipients to help them find and keep jobs so that they are not dependent on the program for financial support.

Staff work with a variety of partners including job developers from the Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce, and the

Employment Security Commission, and representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Durham Crisis Response, the Durham Center and Durham Congregations in Action.

Since the start of the program, the number of families that have moved from welfare to work is substantial. In 2001 there were 3,052 Work First cases. In February 2008, we had 563 "child only"

Self-Sufficiency Indicators

- 143 Work First clients entered employment from July 2007– February 2008.
- 96% of Work First participants stay off welfare after going to work
- 77.78% of Work First participants were employed six months after leaving Work First July 2007– February 2008.

DSS Customers are Self-Sufficient (continued)

cases and 106 “employment clients” which means there is an adult in the case subject to a work requirement.

The State Division of Social Services sets goals for the program that are indicators of self-sufficiency. Providing employment services is an important measure and in Durham 100% of two-parent families meet this requirement and 92.7% of all parents meet this goal, exceeding the State goal of 80%. Our state goal for the number of adults entering employment is 56 and we’ve already helped 143 adults enter employment

July 2007–February 2008. Last year 247 adults found work through our program. Plus 96% of those who have left the program have remained off at least one year.

Our job developers have placed individuals in jobs ranging from minimum wage to over \$40,000 a year. Our goal is to place individuals in employment that pays a living wage.

To help families make a successful transition from welfare to self-sufficiency, we also help them get connected to other vital financial and social support services, particularly child

care subsidy, Medicaid and Food and Nutrition Services (food stamps). We also encourage families to take advantage of the Earned Income Tax Credit, the Child Tax Credit and other tax credits that can help lift a family out of poverty.

Our largest challenge is helping families fill the “hardship gap” between their wages and the finances required to make ends meet. As fuel costs rise, food costs increase and other economic indicators signal rough times ahead, more families will face this challenge.



What is Work First?

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Work First Cash provides temporary financial and employment assistance to promote self-sufficiency for primary caretakers of children under 18 and who meet income and resource guidelines. Call 560-8347 or 560-8350.

Children are Ready for & Succeeding in School

At a recent summit with community leaders, the #1 priority for our community was children being ready for and succeeding in school. At DSS there are many programs, large and small, that impact school success.

In the youngest years, child care subsidy has a significant impact. Through Durham’s Alliance for Child Care Access, we provide access to high quality child care programs. In February 2008, 3,203 children received subsidy to help pay for child care, and 95% of children 0-5 years old were in 3-star or higher rated child care centers or homes. Being in high quality care gives a child a much greater chance of

success in school – and later in life.

Children in foster care are at great risk of facing challenges in school. Having often survived abuse or neglect, they often lack early nurturing, development and support for school success. One of the goals is for children in care to maintain as much stability as possible, including remaining in their same school so that the stability of friendships and teachers can be a source of strength and support.

DSS also monitors graduation rates for children in foster care and the teen parents in the Adolescent Parenting Program (APP). Foster youth ages 13-21 are

encouraged to participate in the LINKS program to help them to develop skills to make a successful transition from foster care to independence, especially for those who do not have adoption as a goal. The LINKS program places heavy emphasis on graduating from high school and even has funding available for college. Finances should not be a deterrent for any foster child seeking a college degree.

The APP program provides first-time pregnant and parenting teens with support to prevent a second pregnancy, complete high school and strengthen parenting skills.



Ready for and Succeeding in School Indicators

- Average star rating for 0-5 year olds receiving subsidized child care is 3.65
- 90% of children entering foster care in FY08 remained in their same school or day care
- 100% of high school seniors in APP and LINKS graduated in 2007.

Durham County Social Services

220 E. Main St. (Child Welfare, Child Support & Adult Services)
300 N. Duke St. (Public Assistance & Crisis Services)
1201 S. Briggs Ave., Suite 101 (Child Care)

Phone: 919-560-8000 (English & Spanish)
email: dss@durhamcountync.gov

Investing in Human Capital



Durham
Social Services

1918-2008
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
for 90 Years

It's Something to Celebrate.



Vision

A community where families achieve well-being.

Mission

Partnering with families and communities in achieving well-being through prosperity, permanence, safety and support.

Upcoming DSS Events

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

- April 24, 2008—Prevent Child Abuse Walk

May is Foster Care Month & Older Americans Month

- May 8, 2008—Foster Parent Appreciation Banquet
- May 17, 2008 – 9:00 AM Foster Care **Walk for the Children**. Call Sandra Reddish at 560-8486
- May 22, 2008- **DSS Partnership Series Workshop**: Adult Services and Emergency Assistance; Register: 560-8082
- May 8, 2008—**Celebration of Life**

June is Hunger In America Month

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