



Maintaining a Safety Net for Vulnerable Families in Tough Economic Times

I am pleased to share our FY09/10 Annual Report. Durham County Department of Social Services assists people in need by administering a wide range of public assistance programs. Primarily, we help low-income people as well as families and children in crises.

We help low-income county residents access food, medical and temporary cash assistance. We help families to pay heating bills when they lack the income to pay it themselves. We also collect and distribute child support payments.

In addition, we conduct family assessments when we receive a report of potential child abuse or neglect and aim to provide services to strengthen family safety and support. Too often, the silent victims of family violence and volatile family dynamics are children. When necessary, we remove children from their families - either temporarily or for the long term - when the children are not being properly cared for by their families.

I became Director on September 14, 2009. During my time here, poverty rates have gone up to 13.8%; unemployment rates are up from 3.8% in April 2008 to 7% in September; the number of homeless individuals and families is up 26% in the past year while foreclosures continue to escalate. Subsidized child care for low income workers is capped and is in wait list status. For most, child care is unaffordable with the average cost of child care ranging from \$8,619 per year for four year olds to \$9,550 per year for infants. Even the face of poverty has changed. Those seeking our services now include former blue and white collar workers whose jobs have been lost due to a contracting job market.

The Federal Government's response to some of these changes has been to expand eligibility for safety net programs such as Food and Nutrition Services, Medicaid and even the provision of short-term economic stimulus funds to provide child care for the working poor and in home services for the elderly.

I am pleased to share data on the outcome of services provided to our most vulnerable citizens. There continues to be a reduction in the number of children entering foster care, an increase in the number of finalized adoptions as well as an expanded placement of children with grandparents and other kin when the biological parents cannot provide care for them. Support for children is further enhanced by collection of child support. More than \$16.5 million are collected annually from non-custodial parents to support their children. Without this support, many more children would require support from public assistance. We not only facilitate collection of financial support for children, child support enforcement staff advocate for and support funding for strong fatherhood programs.

We continue to support a growing number of our seniors to remain in their homes with the provision of transportation, in home aide services, and delivery of meals. The demand for emergency assistance for families and individuals in retaining housing and acquiring utilities continue to outstrip our capacity. Federal, state and local funding is not sufficient to meet the need.

Our Work First Program staff successfully places individuals in jobs. Medical Assistance and Food & Nutrition Staff receive accolades for meeting timelines for providing their services while maintaining accuracy.

These are just a few highlights from the annual report. We strive to provide safety net services to the citizens of Durham County in a timely, efficient and customer friendly manner. I hope you find the report useful. We welcome comments and questions about its contents.

Gerri Robinson, MSW, Director

Partnering to achieve our mission



Our mission is to *partner* with families and communities in achieving well-being through prosperity, permanence, safety and support. We know we cannot improve results for families by ourselves. Many partnerships, both formal and informal, allow us to work in collaboration with a wide variety of organizations to improve results for the families we serve.

This requires intensive time from our staff to attend meetings to develop working protocols, to strengthen collegial relationships and to assess our progress. Below is a list of the agencies with which we partner. It not only reflects our commitment to our community, but the community's need for our expertise and input.

Local DSS Partners: Connected to Our Community

Economic Stability

- Regional Initiatives Task Force/United Way of the Greater Triangle
- Durham's Economic Prosperity Results Based Accountability Committee
- North Carolina Child Support Council
- Strong Couples/Strong Children
- Job Link Leadership Team
- Workforce Development Board
- Durham Economic Resource Center (DERC)
- Durham Prisoner ReEntry Resource Roundtable (DPRRT)
- Mayor's Domestic Violence Task Force
- Durham Housing Authority Program Coordination Committee

Health Care

- Access to Healthcare Committee
- Health Service Advisory Committee
- Mental Health Advisory

Committee

- SHIPP (Medicare D)
- RX Team Network
- Local Access to Coordinated Healthcare (LATCH)
- Obesity & Chronic Illness Committee
- Duke University Medical Center

Child Welfare

- Durham's System of Care (and various associated workgroups)
- Child and Family Support Team (CFST) Supervisor Group
- Community Advisory Board for Durham Connects
- Child Fatality Task Force
- Durham T.R.Y. Together for Resilient Youth
- Durham Coalition on Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (DCAPP)
- Infant Mortality Task Force
- Drug Court Foundation Board

Child Care and Development

- Durham's Partnership for Children Executive Board

- Durham RBA Children Ready for and Succeeding in School
- East Durham Children's Initiative (and subcommittees)
- More at Four/School Readiness Committee
- Operation Breakthrough Human Services Policy Council
- Durham Public Schools

Housing/Emergency Needs/Homelessness

- Special Needs Disaster Shelter Committee
- Emergency Energy Fund Committee
- Salvation Army Advisory Board
- Durham's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness
- Project Homeless Connect
- Council to End Homelessness in Durham
- Homeless Prevention and Re-housing Program (HPRP) Advisory Committee

Seniors/Adult Services

- HIP Seniors Initiative

- Senior Consumer Fraud Task Force
- Adult Foster Care Committee
- Local Interagency Coordination Council

Universities

- NCCU Social Work Advisory Board
- NC Child Welfare Education Collaborative Selection Committee
- UNC-CH School of Social Work Recruitment Committee
- UNC School of Social Work Field Advisory Board

Community-wide

- Durham Public Information Officers' Council
- County Green Team
- United Way of the Greater Triangle Certification Committee
- Durham County District Court Improvement Committee

Message from the DSS Board

We are pleased to present this Annual Report to share our successes and challenges from fiscal year 2010. It was a challenging year for the families we serve, reflected in the growing demand for agency services.

The economic environment has shed light on the challenges that low income families face in putting food on the table, encouraging school success, accessing medical care, paying rent and utility bills and a host of related family stresses. When parents struggle to make ends meet, the entire family suffers in

a variety of ways that can impede a family's efforts to foster safety, permanence, self-sufficiency, school success and well being.

The DSS Board reviews agency results at our monthly meetings, including in-depth discussions of one program area each month. This provides us with a deeper understanding of the challenges and successes of the individuals and families we serve.

We are committed to our role in providing oversight to the agency and advocating for the families served by the agency. In the past year, we are

particularly proud of our work to promote the importance of parental choice in selecting a child care provider, raising awareness about the reduction in child abuse and neglect rates and in promoting the need for more support for the many grandparents and other relatives who have stepped forward to raise or support grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

The DSS Board is proud of the challenging and demanding work of the staff at the Durham County Department of Social Services and we are grateful for the positive impact they

have on children, families and elderly and disabled adults. This report will shed light on their role and influence in our community.

***Gladys Dunston,
Chair***

Durham County Social Services Board



**Gladys
Dunston, Chair**



**Gloria Green,
Vice-Chair**



Stan Holt

Photo Not Available

**Carolyn Carver-
Tann**



**Commissioner
Joe W. Bowser**



Result: DSS Customers are Healthy

Indicator 1: Increase the participation rate of potentially eligible Food Assistance (Food Stamps) households receiving Food Assistance.

At the end of June 2010, the FNS participation rate was 88%, an increase of 14% in one year. Our “participation rate” is the number of people receiving FNS from among the pool of those “potentially eligible” based on 2000 Census data (% of persons below 130% of the federal poverty rate that are receiving FNS).

Putting Food on the Table:

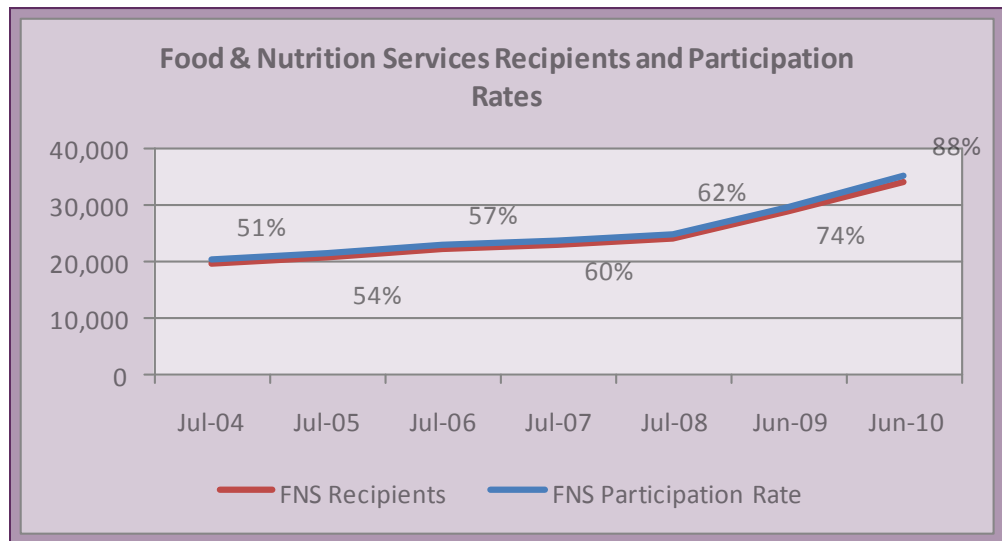
In FY 2010

15,259 Avg. Monthly Households

32,059 Avg. Monthly Individuals

\$52,059,403 Total Value of Food Assistance Issued

(up from \$37,098,181 in FY09)



Indicator 2: The number of individuals enrolled in Medicaid and NC Health Choice for Children will increase.

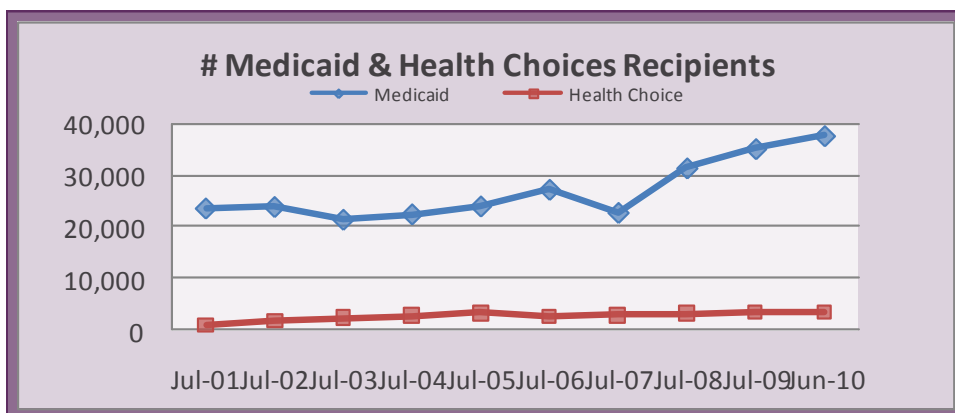
47,424 individuals on average each month received Medicaid in FY09 and another 5,003 children on average were enrolled in NC Health Choice for Children. The number of individuals enrolled in Medicaid and NC Health Choice rose to 48,282 and 5,252 respectively in FY10 for a total of 53,534 residents relying on Medicaid for their health care coverage.

Providing Access to Health Care

15.43% of Durham’s residents were eligible for and receiving Medicaid in FY10

\$275,440,656 was spent on Medicaid expenditures in Durham County in FY10.

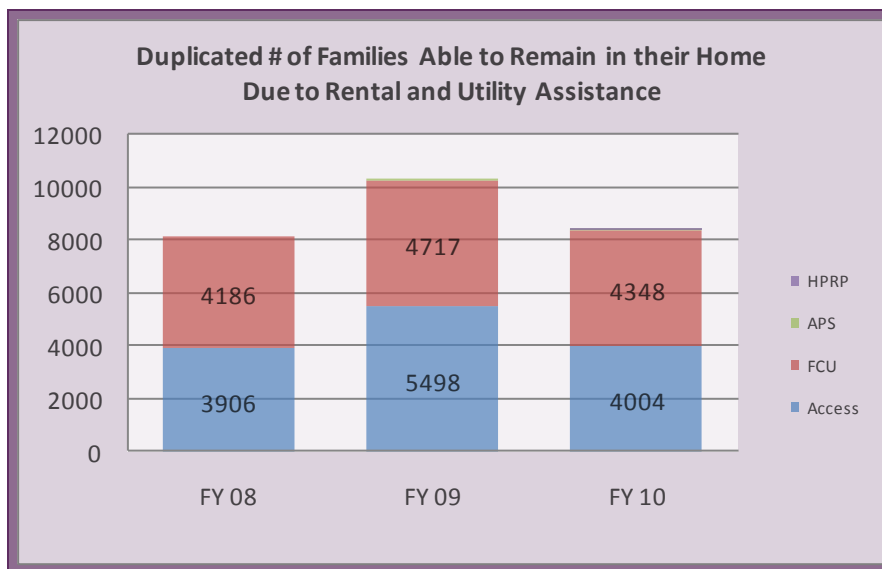
Funds pay health care providers, pharmacies and medical care facilities.



Result: DSS Customers are Safe & Stable

Indicator 1: # of people remaining in their home due to rental and utility assistance.

Helping to pay rent and utilities helps to keep families in their homes, preventing homelessness. The Family Crisis Unit and Adult Access provided this direct assistance to 8,420 families in FY10.



Requesting Emergency Assistance

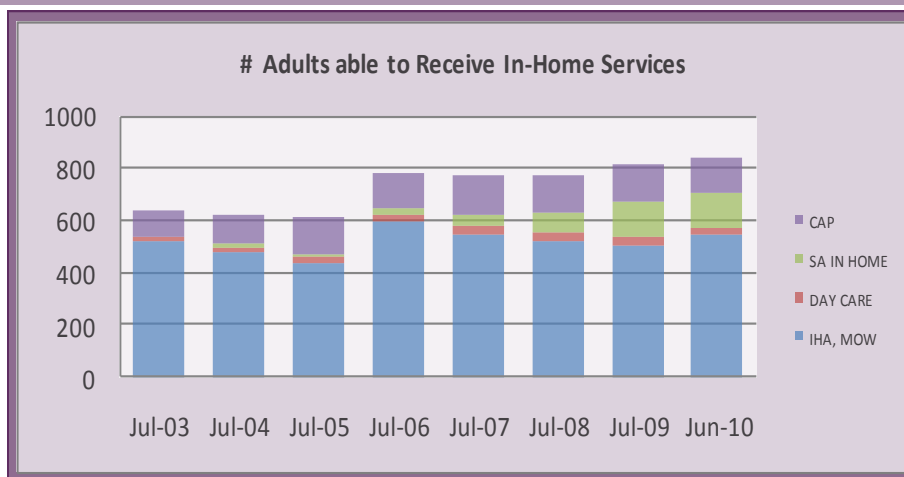
Some families receive more than one service, which is why we report on “duplicated numbers” to show the number of times we help families remain in their homes.

of Adult Protective Services Reports and Evaluations

	Rep	Evals
FY 08	319	166
FY09	344	178
FY10	474	255

Indicator 2: Adults remain in their community

Through the Community Alternatives Program, State/County Special Assistance In-Home services, Adult Day Care, In-Home Assistance and Meals on Wheels, more than 800 of our elderly and disabled adults are able to remain in their homes with support and out of more expensive institutional care.



Result: DSS Customers are Safe & Stable



Indicator 3: % of abused, neglected and dependent children are not repeat victims

The rate of repeat substantiation of abuse neglect or dependency is extraordinarily low in Durham County.

<u>Review Period</u>	<u>Repeat Substantiation Rate</u>
Jul 2005 – Jun 2006	6.33% (as of Sep 30, 2006)
Jul 2006 – Jun 2007	0.00% (as of Sep 30, 2007)
Jul 2007 – Jun 2008	1.58% (as of Sep 30, 2008)
July 2008—June 2009	1.04% (as of Sep 30, 2009)

Child Protective Services Reports and Investigations/ Assessments

	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Invest/Assess</u>
FY 08	2992	1722
FY09	2792	1654
FY10	2856	1687

Indicator 4: % of children in foster care are not maltreated

Durham County has had no reports of children in foster care being maltreated in more than five years.

of children in DSS custody (avg.)

FY 07	256
FY 08	245
FY 09	232
FY 10	211

Do you have love in your heart and room in your home? Become a Licensed Foster or Adoptive Parent

We need more foster families to reach our goal of one licensed foster parent for every two foster children. There are currently 187 children in foster care in Durham County and we have 82 licensed foster homes. We need at least 14 additional licensed homes to meet our goal.

Please consider whether your family has the love in your hearts and room in your home! Call **560-8092** for more information and to learn about the training and licensure process.

in custody per capita in Durham

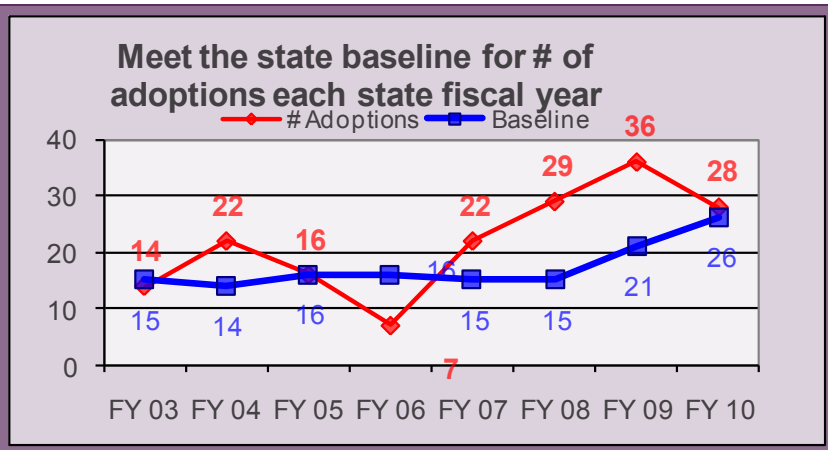
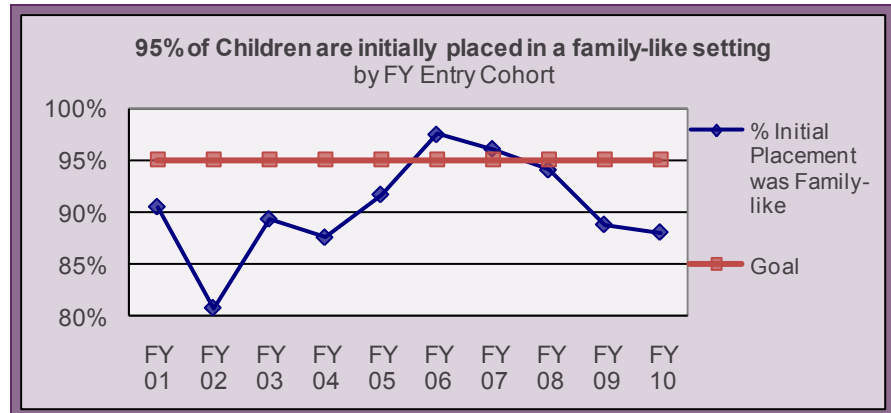
FY 08 =	4.1
FY 09 =	3.9
FY 10 =	3.5



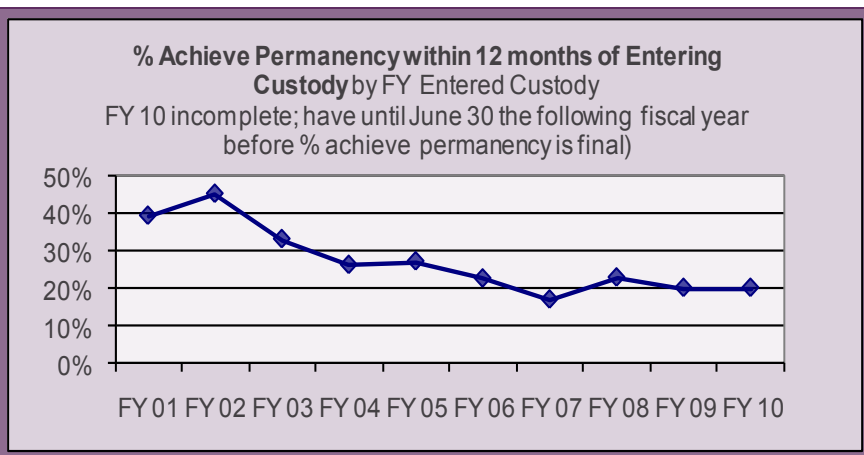
Result: DSS Clients are Safe & Stable



Indicator 5: 95% of children are initially placed in a family-like setting
 In FY 10 **88%** of children were initially placed in family-like settings.



Durham County DSS has exceeded the State baseline for adoptions each year since FY07. Our goals have been increased by the State as a result of our success in prior years and we continue to exceed the state goal.



Indicator 6: % of children in custody achieve permanency within 12 months exceeds the Statewide rate.

We work to prevent children from coming into custody by engaging strong community supports for families. We use the Guardianship Assistance Program to give financial support to relative caregivers. Therefore the children that do come into care often have multiple barriers to achieving permanency in one year. Of children legally free for adoption, 69% were adopted within 12 months (goal is 60%) .



Result: Children are Ready for & Succeeding in School

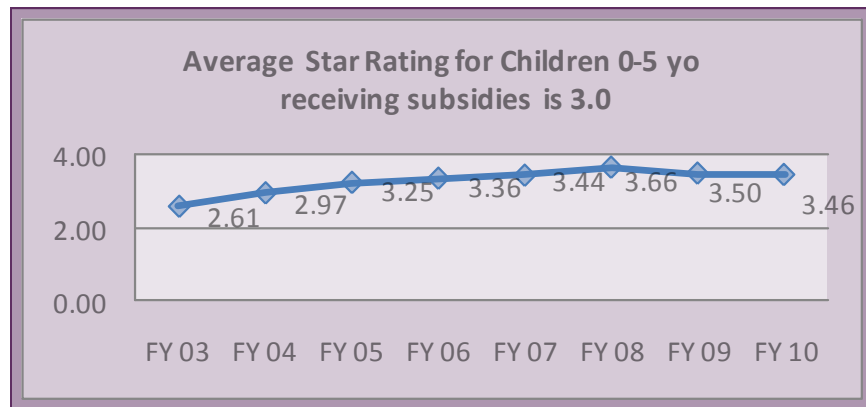
Access to Care

Only 28% of children age 0-5 eligible for subsidized child care actually use it.

78% of children in the same age group rely on Family, Friend & Neighbor Care due to the inability of low wage earners to access regulated child care even when subsidy is provided. The cost of care continues to be a major factor.

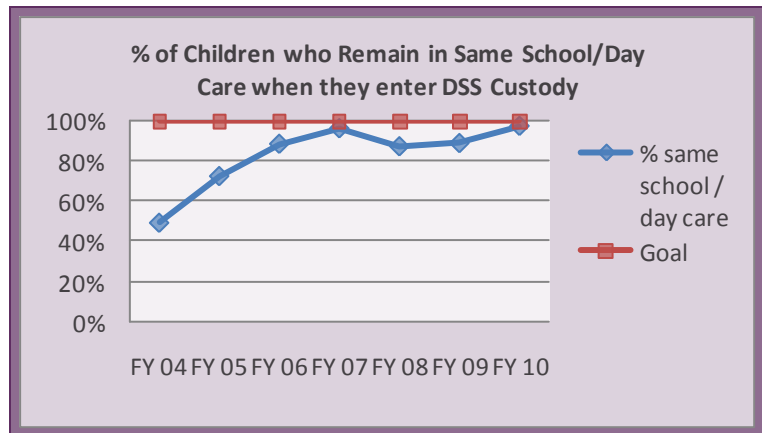
Indicator 1: Average star rating placement for 0-5 year olds receiving subsidized child care placements

87.1% of the 28% of children receiving subsidized child care are in centers or homes with **3-star or higher quality ratings**. Parents are allowed to choose a child care arrangement from a variety of providers including licensed and unlicensed home arrangements.



Indicator 2: % of foster care children remain in their same school or day care

97.5% of children entering foster care remained in their same school or day care, providing stability that promotes school success

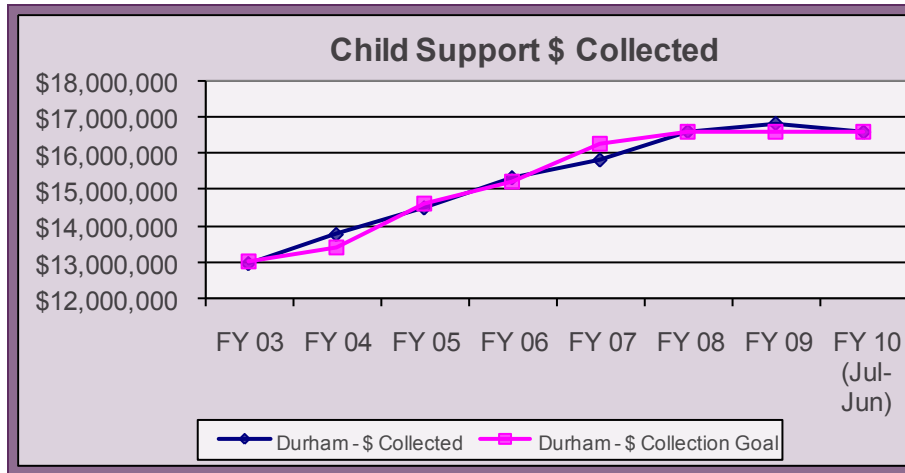


Indicator 3: % of Adolescent Parenting participants graduate from high school

100% of Adolescent Parenting participants graduated from high school in FY '10. In addition, **66% of students in Truancy Court** that received support from DSS school-based social workers at Hillside High School, Southern High School, Neal Middle School and Lowes Grove Middle School were promoted to the next grade.

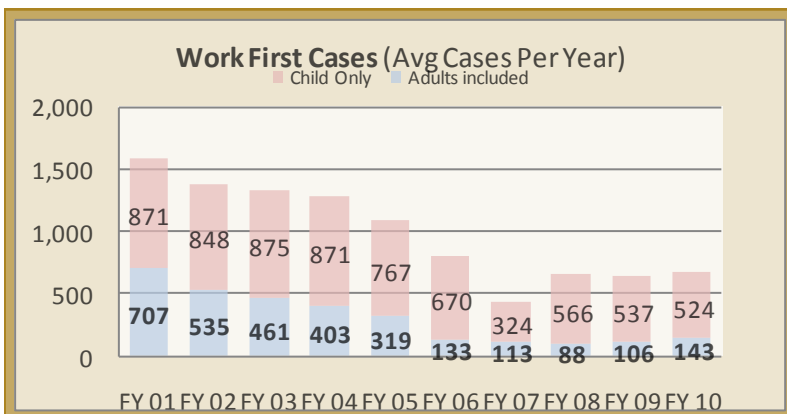
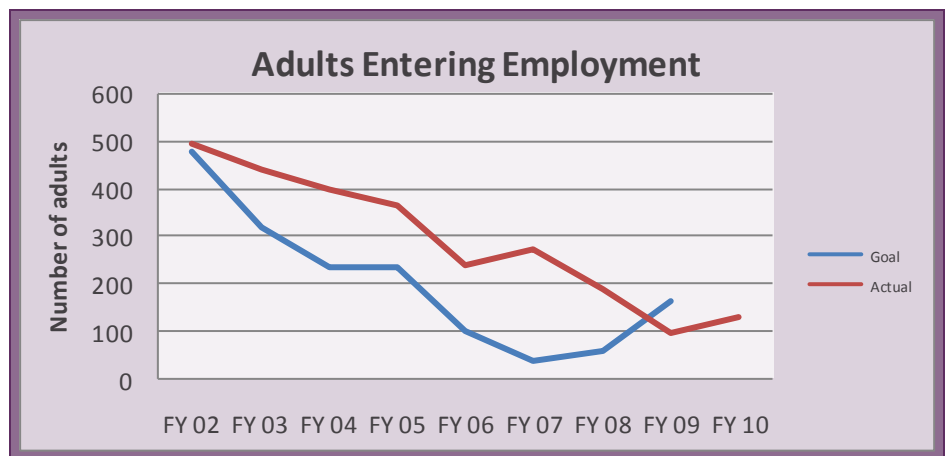
Result: DSS Clients are Self-Sufficient

Indicator 1: Meet State goal to collect \$16,614,186 in child support payments. In FY10 \$16,591,677 was collected, just short of our goal.

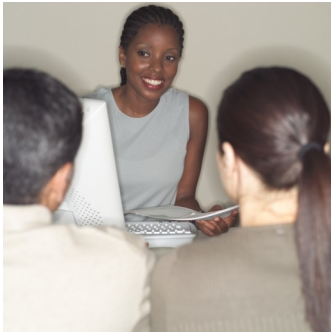


Indicator 2: Increase the number of Work First clients entering employment.

The State has not set goals the last two years. Durham DSS placed 128 clients in jobs in FY10.



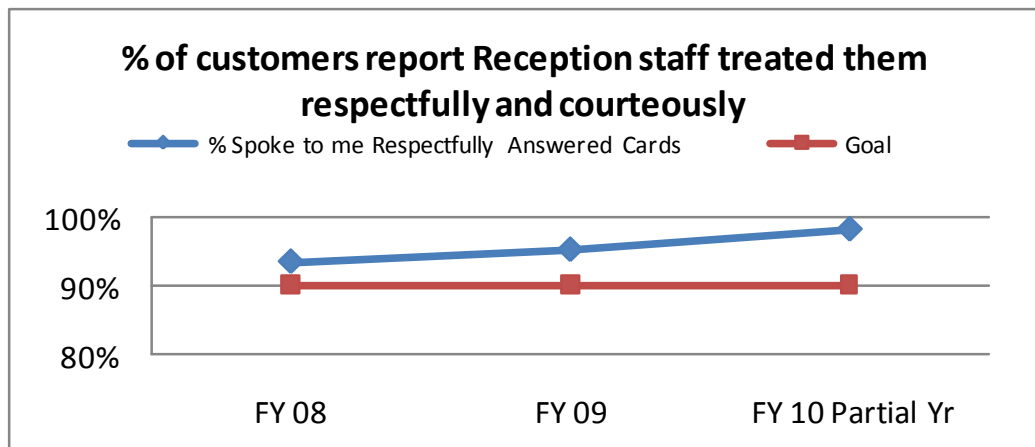
In FY10 there were 667 Work First cash assistance cases, 143 of which included adults with a work requirement; the other 524 are child-only cases. The Work First caseload has declined substantially since welfare reform was enacted in 1995 in North Carolina and has seen a slight increase during this recession.



Result: DSS Customers Report Receiving Excellent Customer Service

Indicator 1: Ratings on customer satisfaction surveys of DSS clients, employees, community partners will be above 90%.

Our satisfaction rating in FY10 for reception staff averaged **96.6% for clients** reporting that they are treated with courtesy and respect.



Customer Feedback

We value feedback from our clients and partners. A committee is working to strengthen our customer service survey process.

Indicator 2: Average processing time to complete an application, investigation, or perform work processes meets state goals.

We exceeded all state goals for processing applications timely for Food and Nutrition Services, Medicaid and Work First

Staff earned a **100% Accuracy Rate in Food and Nutrition Services** (Food Stamps) while managing a significant increase in caseload.

Aligning Resources to Improve Practice



Over the past year Durham County DSS has reorganized to help us improve our practice.

A new unit responsible for quality assurance, training and contract monitoring has been established. This staff works to assure we monitor case records monthly and report back to programs with recommendations for

systemic improvements. They provide new hire and refresher program training to assure staff have the training and tools to do their work. They have also begun monitoring contractor performance based on the Scope of Work of each contract. In addition, we have centralized the Hearings and Appeals process.

We have also assessed soft skills training needs and have aligned with courses offered by County and State HR with an emphasis on leveraging - and not duplicating - resources in a time of shrinking budgets.

This work is designed to promote best practice and improve our overall agency performance.

Transparency in Contract Processes

Durham County DSS is committed to an open, transparent and accountable system for managing our contracts.

The agency contracts with a wide range of providers who help us to achieve our goals for families. Contractors range from those providing in-home aides for elderly and disabled residents to therapeutic foster care to interpreting and translating services.

With guidance from an Advisory Committee comprised of DSS management staff and other community agency leaders, the agency has developed a system for monitoring contracts and has developed a process for initiating Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for all services that will be contracted for FY2012.

Contract Monitoring Plans are in place for all contracts in FY2011

and monitoring began in October 2010.

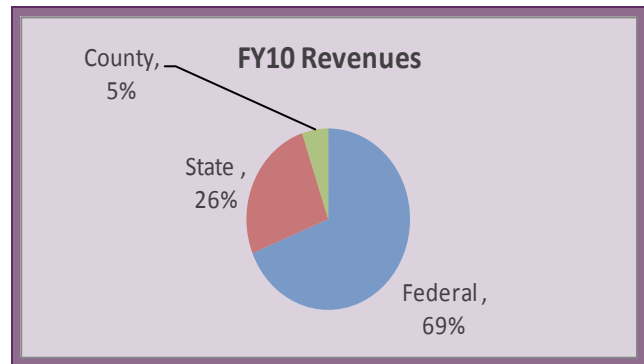
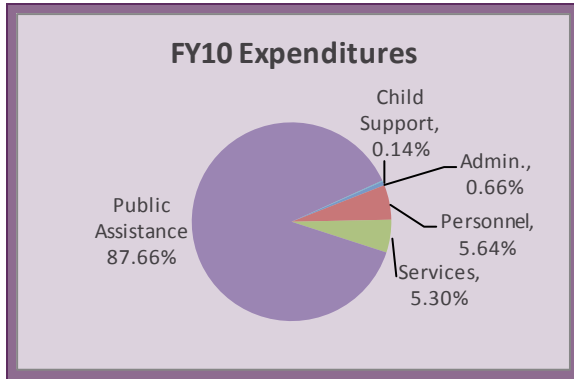
RFPs will be released in November for services needed in FY2012. Selection teams will be assembled to review proposals and to make selection recommendations to the Director.

We aim for this process to improve communication with our contractors while being more accountable to the Durham tax payers.



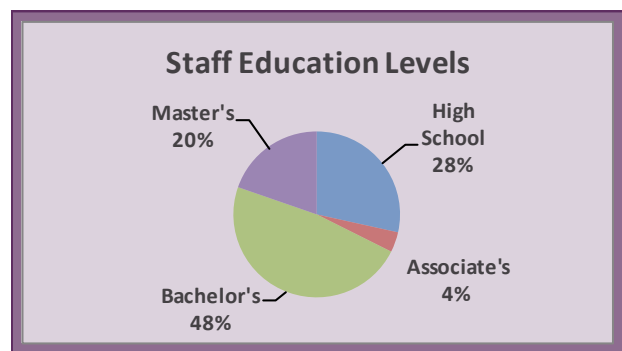
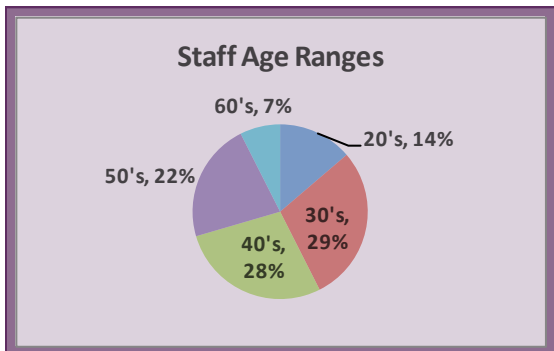
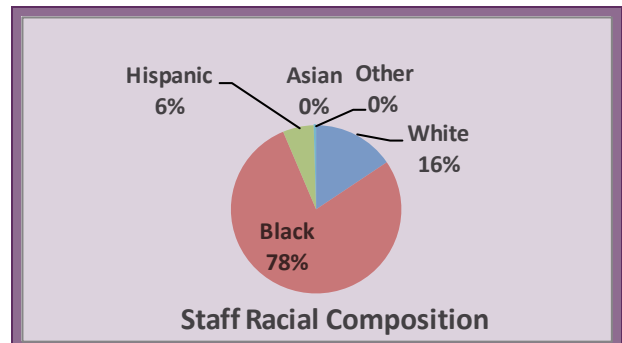
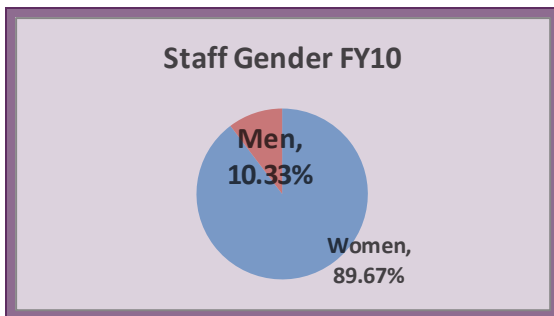
Agency Budget

FY09-10 General Fund & Benefits Fund Expended \$390,443,713.74 and General Fund Revenue & Debt Service collected \$371,174,507.78. Durham County Taxpayers and partner agencies such as Duke University Medical Center and Durham Public Schools contributed \$19,269,205.96.

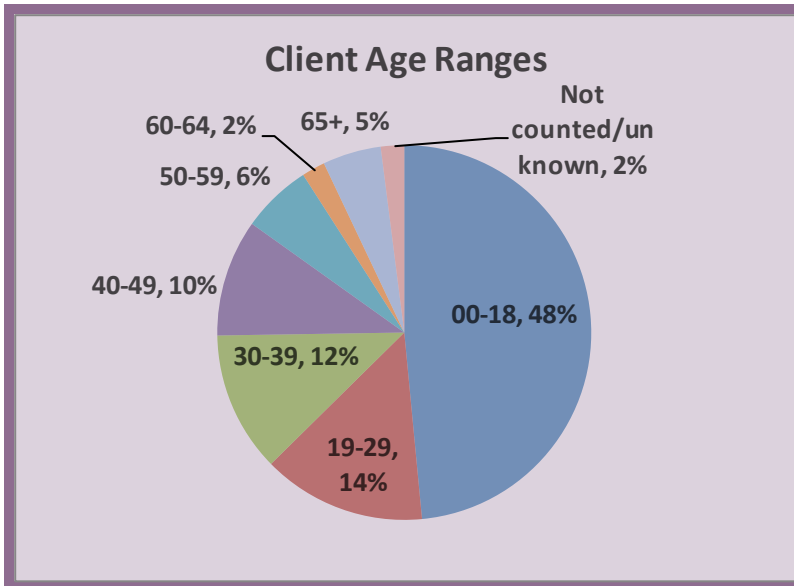


Agency Staff: *Neighbors Helping Neighbors*

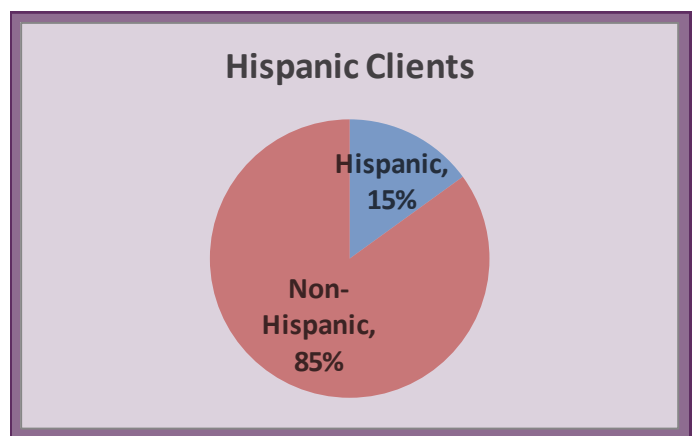
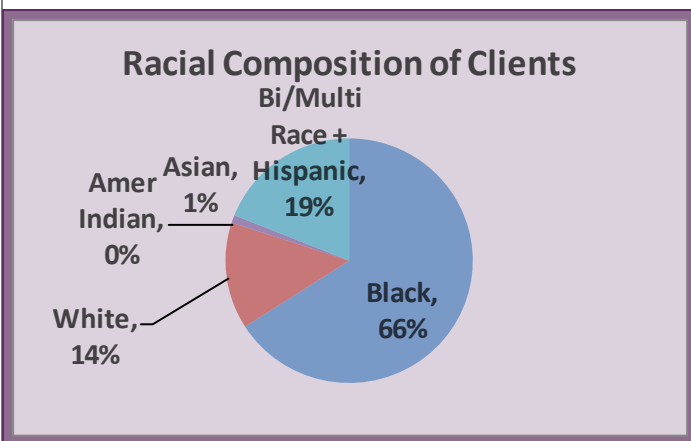
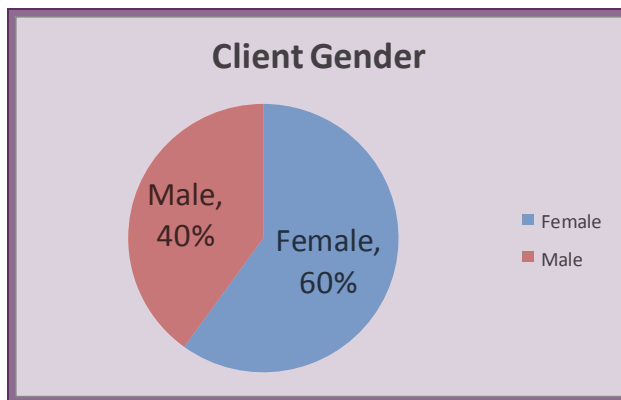
We employ a diverse, well-educated, professional staff dedicated to providing excellent service to our neighbors in need. In FY2010 we had 486 Full Time Equivalent positions in the agency, ranging from Processing Assistants to Child Support Agents, Income Maintenance Caseworkers, Social Workers, Trainers and Administrators.



Client Demographics



We aim to reflect our client demographics in our staff demographics. While our clients are, on average, younger than our staff, that is because 48% of our clients are children under the age of 18. Our staff is more feminine than the population we serve. The racial composition of our staff more closely matches that of our client population.





Aiming for Accreditation

Our agency is currently laying the foundation to seek national accreditation from the Council on Accreditation (COA), the accrediting body for 45 different human services areas, including adult day care, services for the homeless, foster care and credit counseling services.

“By meeting national best practice standards, our agency will be assuring we have the management infrastructure in place to provide the best possible support for

families, improved outcomes and it will foster greater trust and support for our agency in the Durham community,” says Director Gerri Robinson.

The Council on Accreditation operates under the widely held belief that individuals who receive services are the direct beneficiaries when agencies invest in strong management practice, and can validate the impact of their services on those served.

COA is an international, independent, not-for-profit, child- and family -service and behavioral healthcare accrediting organization. It was founded in 1977 by the Child Welfare League of America and Family Service America (now the Alliance for Children and Families).

An organization is evaluated against best-practice standards, which are developed using a consensus model with input from a wide range of service providers, funders, experts, policymakers

and consumers. Staff are currently assessing the agency’s compliance with the standards and a team is being convened to lead this process. We expect to initiate the formal process in early 2011 and achieve accreditation sometime during 2012.

We anticipate this will be a serious commitment in time and work for our staff that is an important investment in our future ability to meet the growing needs of the families we serve.

Sharing Our Success Stories: Improving Results for Children At-Risk of Abuse & Neglect in Durham

The agency sponsored a half-day summit to share results of the years of work by our agency and community partners that have reduced the incidence of child abuse and neglect. More than 100 DSS staff and partners participated. Special thanks to our partners with Durham’s System of Care and Duke’s Center for Child and Family Policy for co-sponsoring the event and for being catalysts to improve results for children.



Durham County DSS has three locations to serve the community:

220 E. Main St. (Child Welfare, Child Support and Adult Services)

300 N. Duke St. (Public Assistance & Crisis Services)

1201 Briggs Avenue, Suite 101 (Child Care)

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



Durham
Social Services

Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Since 1918



Vision

A community where families achieve well-being.

Mission

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

Volunteer Opportunities

It is the holiday season! Please consider sponsoring a family for a **Thanksgiving Dinner** or for **Share Your Christmas**. Each year more than 1,000 Durham residents rely on these programs, coordinated by The Volunteer Center of Durham, to support families in our DSS caseloads. In this recession, we need more sponsors than ever before.

To learn more about how to participate, call 919-684-9690.

Contact Us

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Vacant

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Adult Services & Emergency Assistance:

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Medicaid:

Cynthia Cason, 560-8740

Work First:

Vacant

