



Social Services

ANNUAL REPORT FY2013

OUR MISSION IS TO PARTNER WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES IN ACHIEVING WELL-BEING THROUGH PROSPERITY, PERMANENCE, SAFETY AND SUPPORT.



Photo courtesy of American Aerial Photos and Durham Convention & Visitors Bureau



Community Partnerships and Employee Commitment: Keys to Success

MICHAEL A. BECKETTS, MSW, MS, DIRECTOR

It is my pleasure to bring forward this year's annual report. On an average day, the work of a social services agency is shaped by three separate elements: the needs of its clients; the quality of its partnerships with community agencies; and the resiliency of its employees. In this, my first year as its director, the Durham County Department of Social Services has seen its share of triumphs and challenges.

This year, the needs of our clients have gone unmatched. While there has been economic growth in many areas, both the needs of our clients and the number of people who accessed social services continued to grow.

We witnessed the abrupt closing of the Lincoln Apartments and major challenges with the state's new NCFASST system that led already food insecure families to need emergency assistance to access food.

The willingness of community partners to come to the table and work with social services during critical times was a significant source of support to our customers and to the Department's staff who work to match the needs of our clients with the availability of community resources. Each partnership—large and small—with the Department is significant as it means that we are better positioned to meet the needs of our customers.

The resiliency of the Department's employees has been clearly evident. When challenges arise, staff members have selflessly risen to the occasion to meet the needs of our customers in a variety of ways. Working with community partners to help families and adults work toward achieving well-being has been another highlight of the year.

As the work continues, the Department is always looking for ways to improve our services and build significant partnerships in the community. The pages of this annual report offer a sample of how we have met some of the community needs.

Please enjoy this report. ●

Overview of Report Structure

The Durham County Department of Social Services is proud to be a part of Durham County government which created a strategic plan in February 2012. That plan, which helps guide our work, highlights five overarching goals we work to achieve:

1. Community and Family Prosperity and Enrichment

- Provide access to educational, vocational, economic and cultural opportunities.
- Empower citizens to select strategies that improve their quality of life.

2. Health and Well-being for All

- Improve the quality of life through preventive, behavioral and physical care services
- Reduce barriers to access services.

3. Safe and Secure Community

Partner with the community to prevent and address unsafe conditions, protect life and property and respond to emergencies.

4. Environmental Stewardship

Protect our environment through planned growth, conservation, preservation, enhancement and restoration of our natural and built resources.

5. Accountable, Efficient and Visionary Government

An effective organization committed to the pursuit of excellence through: collaborative leadership, exceptional customer service, innovation, transparency and fiscal responsibility.

In the pages of this report, you will see how DSS is working to achieve each of these goals as we work toward of mission of partnering with families and communities to achieve well-being through prosperity, permanence, safety and support.

Message from the DSS Board

The 2012-13 fiscal year found the Durham County Department of Social Services writing—with both enthusiasm and anxiety—another chapter about service to our most vulnerable individuals and families.

During the year, we enthusiastically thanked Durham County Commissioner Michael Page for his board service and welcomed the addition of Commissioner Wendy Jacobs to our board. In addition, we enthusiastically embraced the leadership of our agency's new director, Michael Becketts, as he completed his first year of employment. Michael positioned and supported the excellent Social Services staff to provide exceptional service to the residents of Durham County in the most effective manner possible, given our limited resources.

As a result, some programs, policies and procedures were tweaked to maximize efficiencies. In addition, staff training opportunities were enhanced and the staff recruitment and selection processes were modified to achieve greater efficiencies. Additionally, many community partnerships were re-established while new alliances were formed to better serve the community. Enthusiasm grew this year about the move to the new Human Services building in Fall 2013. Yet, in the midst of this enthusiasm, the agency had to keep a watchful eye on the deliberations of the North Carolina General

Assembly as they debated bills that would potentially impact our clients.

Monitoring the state's actions, both in the policy-making arena as well as administratively, was necessary as new bills were passed and the NC Department of Health and Human Services sought to implement new business technologies. On many levels, this caused quite a bit of anxiety as DSS Board and staff had to analyze new bills and make the necessary adjustments to comply. Concurrently, efforts by NC Health and Human Services Department to implement new computer systems to manage Economic Independence Programs such as Food Stamps and Medicaid also increased anxiety levels as all involved continued to work through the "kinks". All of these events required agency staff, county administration and many of our community partners to work together to meet the needs of our vulnerable populations while these new systems stabilize themselves.

In the midst of this "anxiety," it has been truly remarkable to witness agency staff continue to provide excellent customer service in these conditions and community partners stepping up to fill the gaps. This display of resilience convinces all of us that "we will get through this" and will continue to provide needed services to Durham County residents in the year to come. ●

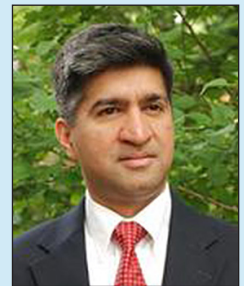
Dr. Tara L. Fikes, Chair

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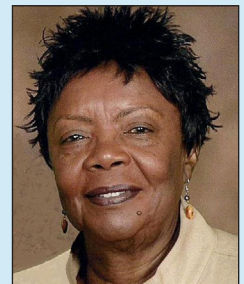
Durham County Social Services Board Members



Dr. Tara L. Fikes, Chair



Newman Aguiar, Vice Chair



Helen J. Berry



Commissioner Wendy Jacobs



Jane Volland

Volunteer Opportunities

Please join with us to improve the lives of children and families in our community. A few of the many ways you can help are listed below. To find out more, please call 919-684-9690.

- **SPONSOR** a family for a Thanksgiving Dinner or for Share Your Christmas. Each year more than 1,000 Durham residents rely on these programs to make their holidays bright.
- **PROVIDE** companionship or assistance with light tasks or duties to a disabled or elderly community member through the Friendly Visitor Program.
- **DONATE** school supplies to the Back to School Supply Drive. ●

NC FAST *North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology*

The biggest change in the Food and Nutrition Program in the past 30 years took place in the 2012-13 fiscal year. In February 2013, the Food and Nutrition Services Program in Durham County fully integrated Phase 1 of the North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology (NC FAST) program. The program is intended to better serve families by allowing staff to spend less time on tasks and processes related to eligibility and more time on families.

NC FAST is changing the way many of our programs have operated for three decades. The goal of NC FAST is to provide better service for DSS customers, allowing families requesting assistance from more than one program to complete all the applications at one time. While there are many long-term benefits to this change, the short-term realities have made NC FAST somewhat challenging this year, causing some delays in providing services to our customers. Although staff members remain committed to doing an excellent job and helping families receive their benefits, some of the issues they have faced have been beyond their control.

To facilitate these changes, this year Durham DSS developed the application room. This area is designated for individuals to apply for assistance using EPASS (Electronic Pre-Assessment Screening Service). EPASS is an electronic tool that allows individuals to pre-screen for eligibility of programs and complete and submit an electronic application from any

computer. In the past year, EPASS applications were only available for Food and Nutrition Services. As enhancements are made to NC FAST, individuals will be able to apply for all programs electronically. Applications submitted via EPASS are then

processed in NC FAST. With eight computers available, DSS was able to streamline the application process for some of the 28,500 applications received for Food and Nutrition Services. ●

Child Support Amnesty Day

The Durham County Department of Social Services is committed to ensuring that children receive the support that they need to start them on the road to happy, healthy and productive lives. Ensuring this support for young people is the driving force behind the excellent work of our Child Support Enforcement team.

Child Support Enforcement (CSE) helps children and families by: locating non-custodial parents; establishing paternity, support and medical obligations; enforcing existing child support orders and collecting and distributing child support payments. Services are available to any parent or legal guardian responsible for a child, regardless of income.

Having consistent child support payments makes a family more stable and gives children the opportunity to lead self-sufficient lives. When we work with noncustodial parents, we encourage them to be there for their children, both financially and emotionally. We let them know that their money helps ensure that their children have more opportunities in life. Our CSE staff members regularly hear from custodial parents that the money we collect allows their children to take field trips or get the school supplies that they need.

In the 2012-13 fiscal year, we implemented an innovative child support amnesty day for non-custodial parents with outstanding arrest warrants for non-payment of support. We did extensive community outreach—including radio and television advertisements, flyers, and congregational announcements—letting folks know that on May 30, 2013, they could come to the Durham County courthouse, pay \$250 in support, and have the arrest warrant recalled.

Child support amnesty day was designed to not only collect money for custodial parents but also to give non-custodial parents a fresh start on their child support cases. We know that some people get a job between the time they miss court and the time that they appear and will be able to pay their support going forward.

This effort was successful as 20 people showed up. We got the word out in the community that this was not a child support sting but rather an effort to create a win-win situation. We look forward to continuing and expanding this effort in the years to come. ●



DSS Customers Are Healthy

Have you ever wondered how you would pay your medical bills if you did not have health insurance?

Cynthia Cason, Program Manager for DSS's Medicaid Programs since 2003, says that she and her 75 staff engage daily with Durham County citizens who face this question. Cason said they are committed to assisting families to access health care. Her motto has been, "It's a Great Day in Medicaid." She says it is always a great day when you are helping families better their lives by assisting them obtain health care coverage.

Hats off to the staff members who come to work each day and make it happen for so many families. It takes a special staff, staff who care about the

lives of the families in our community. Due to the economy and many changes over the year, we are serving families who have never had to come to DSS requesting assistance.

Many of them have similar stories to the mother—whose child has severe medical problems—who was laid off from her job and lost her health insurance. The mother was relieved to know that her child could continue to receive the critical care he needed because she was found to be eligible for Medicaid.

We receive many "thank you's" from families who are grateful to have the medical coverage to carry their loved ones to the doctor.

As we continue to transition into the NC Fast System and adjust to the changes as a result of the Affordable Health Care Act, we are hopeful that these changes will result in streamlined processes for families to receive better health care coverage. We are preparing for assistance to more families because even though Medicaid and NC Health Choice cover over 48,000 Durham County residents, there are still over 15% of our citizens who face the harsh reality of being uninsured. As the state continues its discussion on whether to expand Medicaid, we stand ready to assist more of our citizens in obtaining health care coverage. ●

BUILDING AWARENESS








More than 50 people joined together on Saturday morning May 18th for the annual Walk for the Children. The walk—which happens in May because it is National Foster Care Month—promotes community awareness about children in care and recruits qualified foster families. Durham County government employees, foster parents and children, community partners, and neighbors from throughout Durham walked roundtrip from DSS's Main Street parking lot to Foster Street.

More than 75 people signed up to participate in the 14th Annual Child Abuse Prevention Walk on the morning of April 25th. Walkers wearing blue ribbons and carrying blue pinwheels helped increase community awareness that child maltreatment can be prevented with education, support and collaborative community efforts.

In celebration of February's American Heart Month, some DSS employees wore red on Valentine's Day.

Creative Problem Solving at Lincoln Apartments

Visionary, accessible and flexible... these are qualities that DSS works to achieve in all of our operations. And embodying those qualities led to our agency being recognized with the Durham County Government Anchor Award from the Board of County

Commissioners and the County Manager in November 2012.

The Anchor Award is used to reward exemplary customer service, innovation and significant achievements provided by Durham County employees. County Manager Mike Ruffin was impressed

with the understanding by DSS of the situation with the low-income Lincoln Apartments residents who were given a notice of eviction with little time to find new housing.

In September 2012, there was notice of a mass eviction of residents of the Lincoln Apartments complex in East Durham which housed approximately 80 low-income families. While many people on any given day may receive an eviction notice, it is an unusual circumstance for an entire apartment development to be put on notice. In this, a community crisis was born.

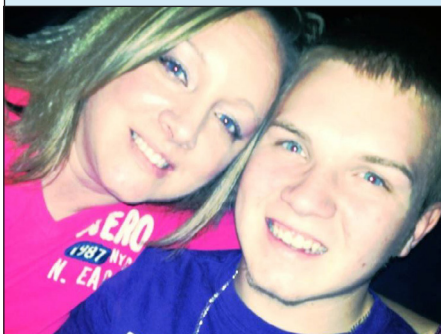
Utilizing creativity and collaboration, our Adult Access, Family Crisis, and Information Technology units worked with various community organizations, the County Manager's Office and the City of Durham to successfully manage the effort to help nearly 80 affected families and determine if and how DSS and others could help meet the needs of the families.

Thanks to the Durham County Housing Authority, DSS staff members were able to set up a mobile office at McDougald Terrace, a public housing project close to Lincoln Apartments, so that folks could easily access services. Using laptops and Wi-Fi, our workers made our operations mobile. We coordinated the inclusion of community partners so that the range of client needs could be met.

When staff was asked to volunteer for this project, many people stepped forward to help. Some worked on their flex day so that they could assure continuity of services, ensuring that clients would not have to start working with one DSS staffer and then start up with someone else the next day. Thanks to incredible partnerships and the commitment of our staff, many families were able to access stable affordable housing.

Our department is committed to continually moving in the direction to find innovative ways to provide effective services to our clients. ●

FAMILY THROUGH GUARDIANSHIP



Charity Dixon-Bonifacio believes in the power of unconditional love. She has seen it make a difference in the lives of the more than 10 children she has fostered over the past 15 years. And every day, she has the opportunity to see how the love she and her husband, Michael Bonifacio, offer has transformed the life of Robert*, the child for whom they are the legal guardians.

Responsible for making decisions that ensure Robert's health and well-being, the couple act as parents to the child whose own

parents were unable to do so. When Robert and his brother came into DSS care, some of the boys' relatives—including Ms. Dixon-Bonifacio—stepped up and were willing to care for the children. After completing a home study and the required paperwork, the boys were placed with Ms. Dixon-Bonifacio, who cared for them on and off as the children came in and out of the system. Because of the abuse the children experienced, they ended up needing inpatient treatment, something still needed by Robert's brother.

"When [Robert] came out of treatment, he was placed in a foster care home in Durham," says Ms. Dixon-Bonifacio. "But he wanted to come back to our house; it was the only place he said felt like home and the only place he had ever felt settled." Since Robert's mother did not want her parental rights terminated, the decision was made for guardianship which was achieved in February 2013. Guardianship offers a more stable plan than foster care, thus providing more permanency for the child.

"To be a good guardian, you need to make sure that you set your expectations properly," says Ms. Dixon-Bonifacio. "You have to be ready to understand what unconditional love is. You need to offer stable surroundings and be ready to allow the child a relationship with their parent." She says that she doesn't "expect the glory of being a parent," likening the relationship to that of a step-parent.

"We are invested in him to make sure that his life turns out as good as it could," she says. "I'm happy with guardianship because it feels secure and we don't have to worry about his stability; nothing is going to change now."

She says that she, her husband and Robert all feel as though they have been together their entire lives even though she and her husband have been together for seven years and the boys have been in her life for 10 years. "My husband fell in love with them when he first met them," she says. "Robert feels like my child; he even has some of my behaviors." She says that Robert has taken on some of her husband's mannerisms. "When he laughs about a joke, he holds half his mouth open like my husband does," she says. "We're outspoken and we talk about everything, including feelings, school problems and girls."

She adds, "DSS did a great job making sure the boys got the treatment that they needed. With Robert and everything he has been through, it's amazing to see how he has flourished. He's a normal teenage boy." ●

*Name has been changed to protect the child's privacy.

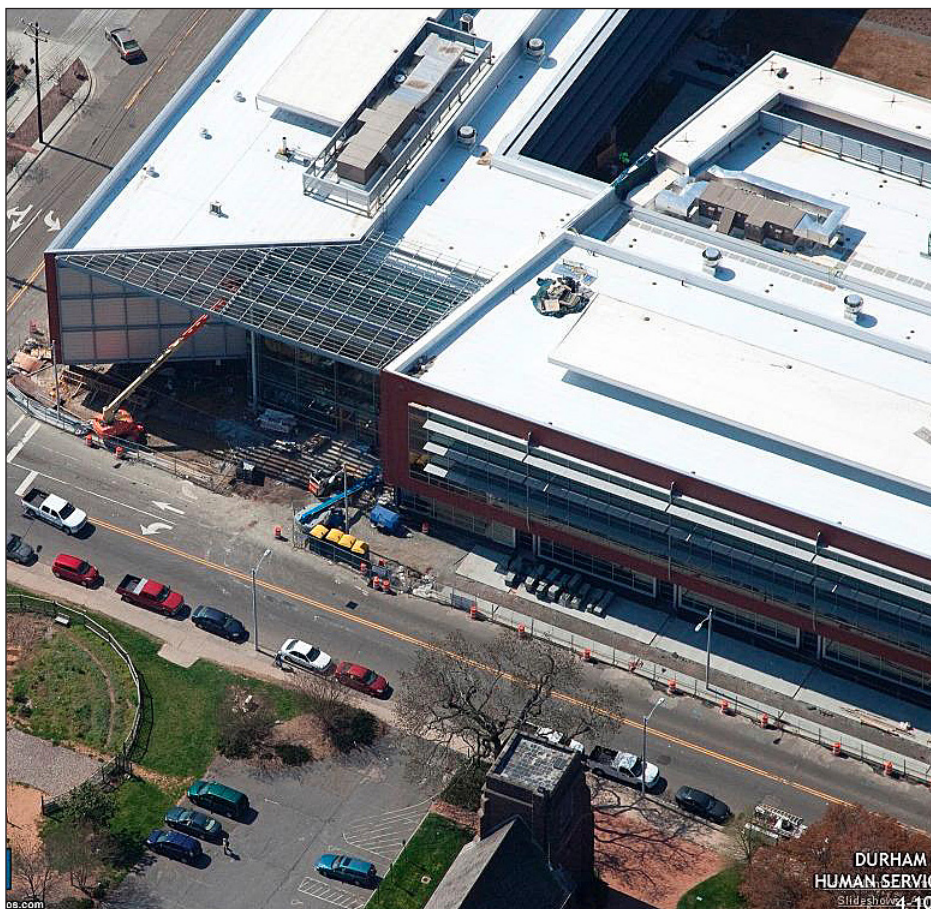
ON THE MOVE

While planning for Durham's new Human Services Building began in October 2003, the 2012-13 fiscal year was the home stretch to get ready for DSS's October 2013 move. In the new, nearly 300,000 square-foot building at 414 E. Main Street, DSS will be able to consolidate all services which had been housed in two separate locations.

In addition, DSS will be co-located with the Durham County Department of Public Health, Durham County Veteran Services, and Alliance Behavioral Health, offering a one-stop shop for human services in Durham. Staff will be able to collaborate more readily and refer clients down the hall or to a different floor, rather than to a different building.

The building itself is truly a 21st-century space, incorporating a significant number of green features. In fact, the county is seeking LEED® Gold certification—the second highest level—from the U.S. Green Building Council for the building.

The true value of the building will lie in offering a well-designed space that provides for the human services needs of the residents of Durham County. We look forward to serving Durham from our new home. ●

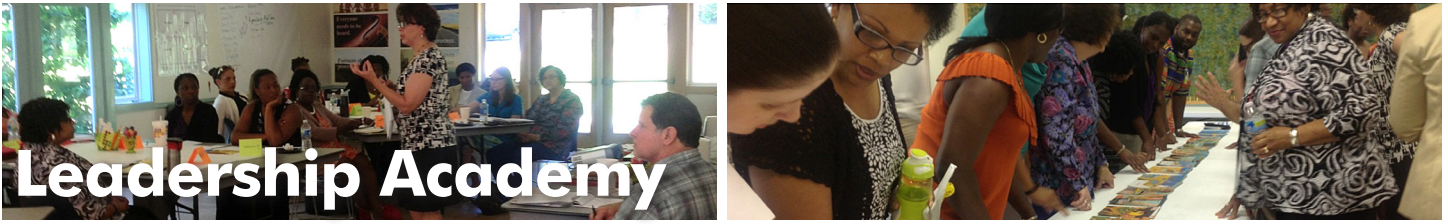


The new DSS building provides a one-stop shop for human services in Durham County.

Being Green

In addition to being committed to caring for the residents of Durham, Durham DSS is committed to caring for our planet. This year, DSS utilized a myriad of ways to be friendly to the environment. Just a few examples of what DSS did this year, thanks to our Going Green committee:

- Reused or recycled: cans and bottles; cardboard; paper; Ni-Cad batteries; packaging peanuts; pens, markers, dry erase markers, highlighters, mechanical pencils, (i.e., any writing implement made of plastic); tape dispensers and cores; toner cartridges; and office supplies.
- Used compostable products for our meeting supplies (e.g., forks, spoons, plates, cups.)
- Returned fluorescent light bulbs to General Services for proper disposal.
- Gave broken/damaged binders to General Services for their use.
- Asked the janitorial service to turn off lights at the end of the evening.
- Utilized four flex fuel vehicles in our fleet.
- Reused parts of broken furniture to repair other furniture.
- Purchased printers/copiers with an automatic "sleep" or "turnoff" mode that kicks in after a period of inactivity.
- Saved about 1,500 pages of paper by utilizing online service requests in place of carbon copy paper. ●



Leadership Academy

Great leaders guide great organizations. The commitment to having DSS in the forefront of well-run agencies guided the development and implementation of the DSS Supervisory Leadership Academy. Born from the vision of Catherine Williamson-Hardy, Assistant Director of Customer Accountability and Program Development, the Academy has the goal of developing excellent leaders who propel the agency and continue to develop other strong leaders.

DSS collaborated with Chris Howell, an education specialist and Dan Comer, a consultant/trainer—both at the UNC School of Social Work—to custom design a program to help DSS supervisors enhance their capacity to be excellent leaders and ultimately better serve our clients. This academy was designed to add to the supervisor’s “tool box” those skills that enhance the ability to teach, coach, motivate and lead. In June 2013, agency leaders were involved in Taking Leadership Personally,

the second phase of training which focused on how to be an effective leader during challenging times such as times of change, staffing shortages, and/or budget cuts.

Training supervisors and managers will result in cost savings for the agency because it reduces issues of lost productivity, ill-will, and turnover. Supervisors involved in the training sessions came away with insights and tools that are enhancing their ability to be more effective supervisors.

Victor Isler, Program Manager of DSS’s Child Placement and Permanency Services unit, says that the training helped him increase his effectiveness as a manager. “We looked at organizational change, which is a delicate process,” he said. “But when it’s handled correctly, you maximize the outcome for your unit and create a clear path for change.”



Traditionally, workers become supervisors because of the quality of their work and their expert knowledge of a subject area. But now, with blended DSS teams working together because of NC Fast, supervisors have been faced with not being the expert in any given topic. “In developing this curriculum, we wanted to make sure

that people learn that really excellent leaders ask lots and lots of questions,” says trainer Chris Howell. “Participants realized that they can be good leaders coming from a place of not knowing all of the answers and can instead help their

employees to find their own answers.”

Candice Leathers, Income Maintenance Supervisor II, said that she manages her employees differently as a result of the training. “I try to encourage my workers more and recognize the ‘lollipop moment’ which is any time I have the opportunity to praise someone for a job well done,” she said. “The training itself was great as was the opportunity to learn from the other DSS managers in it, who all had different skills and experiences.”

“My hope is that the supervisors who went through the training will begin to engage their workers around finding their own answers,” said Ms. Howell. “And workers will be more empowered to build on that with the families that they serve, in the process modeling good leadership for their families.” ●

IN THE NEWS

Thanks to the generous community spirit of *The Durham Herald-Sun*, DSS Director Michael Becketts now has a monthly column, “Social Services Today” in the newspaper. Started in January, the column offers Mr. Becketts a regular outlet to share news of the agency with community members.

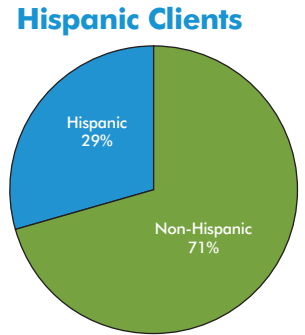
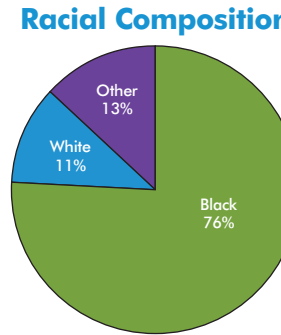
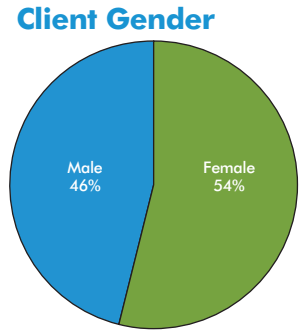
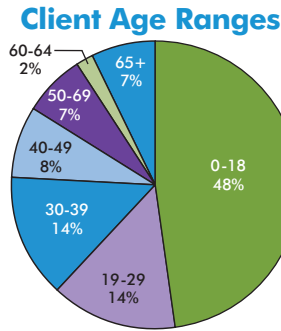
The Herald-Sun

“I’m grateful to the *Herald-Sun* for offering us the opportunity to communicate with Durham residents,” said Mr. Becketts. “Transparency is an important value to us so being able to share information directly through the media is vital.”

In the past fiscal year, the column has included information about a variety of topics including: changes in DSS’s Food and Nutrition Services program; the impact social workers have, with a feature about a former foster child who is now seeking to be a foster parent himself; child abuse prevention; Adult Protective Services; and Child Support Enforcement. ●

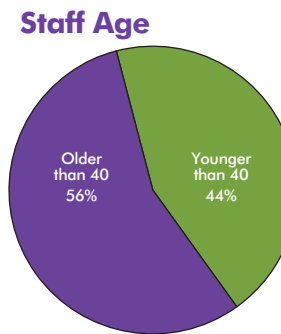
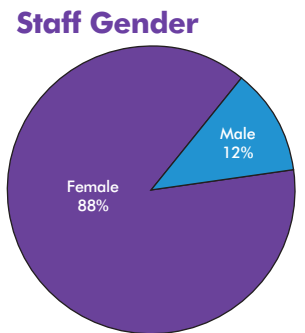
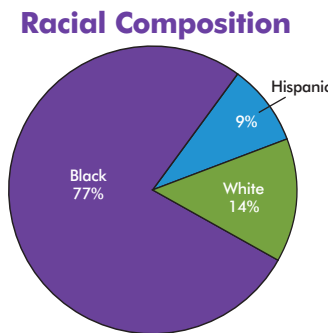
Client Demographics

DSS aims to have our staff demographics reflect our clients. DSS clients tend to be younger than staff since 48% of our clients are under the age of 18. While there are more women on the staff as compared to our client population, the racial composition of our staff closely matches that of our client population.



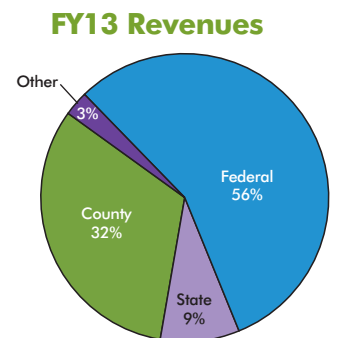
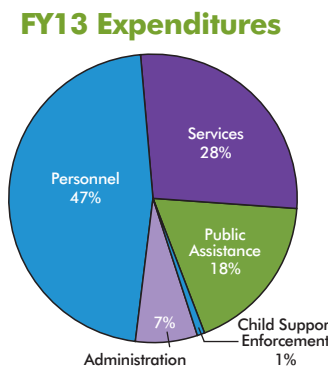
Agency Staff

Durham DSS employs a diverse, well-educated, professional staff dedicated to providing excellent service to our neighbors in need. In Fiscal Year 2013, there were 515 full-time equivalent positions in the agency, in such diverse positions as processing assistants, child support agents, income maintenance caseworkers, social workers, trainers and administrators.



Agency Budget

In Fiscal Year 2013, the General Fund & Benefits Fund expended \$409,785,260.53. The General Fund Revenue & Debt Service collected \$391,014,199.12. Demand for Food and Nutrition and Medicaid services continues to grow. Durham County taxpayers contributed \$18,771,061.41.



It Takes a Village

Collaboration is the key to success for DSS. We work in partnership with a variety of individuals, groups and organizations to better serve Durham’s families. Some of our partnerships are formalized, while others are more casual. Regardless of the form they take, all of these relationships support DSS in our mission to partner with families and

communities to achieve well-being through prosperity, permanence, safety and support.

This list of our agency partners—notable for its breadth and depth—reflects DSS’s commitment to our community and the community’s commitment to individuals and families in need. ●

LOCAL DSS PARTNERS: CONNECTED TO OUR COMMUNITY

Economic Stability

- City of Durham, Office of Economic and Workforce Development
- Durham County Cooperative Extension
- Durham Economic Resource Center (DERC)
- Durham Housing Authority Program Coordination Committee
- Durham Prisoner ReEntry Resource Roundtable (DPRRT)
- Durham Technical Community College
- Durham’s Economic Prosperity Results Based Accountability Committee
- Durham’s Workforce Development Board
- Employment Security Commission (previously known as the Division of Workforce Solutions)
- End Poverty Committee
- Job Link Leadership Team
- North Carolina Child Support Council
- Regional Initiatives Task Force/United Way of the Greater Triangle
- Strong Couples/Strong Children

Health Care

- Access to Healthcare Committee
- Durham Community Health Network Medical Management Committee
- Duke University Medical Center
- Alliance Behavioral Healthcare (previously known as The Durham Center)
- Durham County Health Department
- Health Service Advisory Committee
- Local Access to Coordinated Healthcare (LATCH)
- Mental Health Advisory Committee
- Obesity & Chronic Illness Committee
- RX Team Network
- SHIPP (Medicare D)
- Lincoln Community Health
- Durham County Wellness Team

Child Welfare

- Center for Child and Family Health
- Child Fatality Task Force
- Durham Coalition on Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (DCAPP)
- Durham Connects’ Community Advisory Board
- Durham’s System of Care (and various associated workgroups)
- Durham T.R.Y. (Together for Resilient Youth)
- Infant Mortality Task Force

Child Care and Development

- Child Care Services Association—Resource and Referral, Smart Start Scholarship Program
- Durham Early Head Start Policy Council
- Durham Public Schools
- Durham RBA Children Ready for and Succeeding in School
- Durham’s Partnership for Children
- East Durham Children’s Initiative
- NC Pre K/School/Readiness Committee
- Operation Breakthrough Policy Council

Housing/Emergency Needs/Homelessness

- Council to End Homelessness in Durham
- Durham’s 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness
- Emergency Energy Fund Committee
- Housing for New Hope
- Salvation Army Advisory Board
- Special Needs Disaster Shelter Committee
- Urban Ministries of Durham

Seniors/Adult Services

- Adult Foster Care Committee
- HIP Seniors Initiative
- Local Interagency Coordination Council
- Senior Consumer Fraud Task Force
- Transportation Advisory Board Committee

Universities

- North Carolina Child Support Council Scholarship Committee
- NCCU Social Work Advisory Board
- NCCU School of Social Work Field Placement
- NC Child Support Committee

Community-wide

- Court Case Managers
- Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Committee
- Durham County Attorney’s Office
- Durham County Court
- Durham County District Court Improvement Committee
- Durham County Fire Marshall and Emergency Disaster Team
- Durham County Green Team
- Durham County Sheriff’s Department
- Durham Crisis Response Center
- Durham Mayor’s Committee for Persons with Disabilities
- Durham Police Department
- Durham Public Information Officers’ Council
- Guardian ad Litem
- Homeless Connect
- Opening Doors
- United Way of the Greater Triangle Certification Committee
- The Volunteer Center of Durham

Productive Partnerships

Internship Partnership with NCCU

The internship partnership between Durham DSS and the Department of Social Work at North Carolina Central University is a true win-win collaboration. DSS provides a training ground where students in both the Bachelor's and Master's of Social Work programs can learn to be effective child welfare workers. In the 2012-13 fiscal year, two undergraduate and two master's students interned at DSS.

"We value all of our internships but we especially value the one with DSS," said Lorraine Graves, MSW, Director, Field Education, Department of Social

Work at NC Central. "We appreciate the training that DSS provides and their investment in partnering with us to train quality students who could end up being their employees."

The interns worked in both the foster care and adoptions unit. Interns who work in child welfare are part of a state program that offers social work students specialized training and certification while they are getting their degree.

"The students loved the hands-on training they received," said Ms. Graves. "They had really good

supervisors who worked with them one-on-one and gave them the input and experience they need to develop into effective child welfare workers." She added that the goal of the collaboration is to ensure that the students have a long career in child welfare. And it seems to be working—all of this year's interns have committed to staying in child welfare.

DSS is pleased to be one of NC Central's largest placement sites and is committed to provide learning experiences for the university's students. ●

SHARE YOUR CHRISTMAS

More than 1,100 families had a brighter 2012 holiday season thanks to Share Your Christmas, a collaboration between Durham DSS and the Volunteer Center of Durham that has been going on since 1976. Low-income Durham residents, referred by a DSS social worker, were matched with nearly 1,900 individuals and groups who donated new gifts.

Our thanks to:

- The nearly 100 volunteers who gave their time to operate this program.
- Northgate Mall which donated Distribution Center space where presents were delivered and picked up.
- *The Herald-Sun* newspaper for providing media coverage for the program and recognition of the sponsors.
- The Volunteer Center of Durham for their collaboration and leadership with this program. ●



Community volunteers and partners joined together for Share Your Christmas, providing gifts to more than 1,100 Durham County families.

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Social Services

Durham County DSS

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Vision: A community where families achieve well-being.

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