



Kent County Department of Social Services 2014 ANNUAL REPORT



Maryland Department of Human Resources

Vision

We envision Kent County as a safe community, free from exploitation, neglect and abuse, where individuals take responsibility for themselves and their families by striving for independence.

Mission

Kent County Department of Social Services promotes personal responsibility, dignity and self-sufficiency, protects vulnerable children and adults and preserves families. We accomplish this in partnership with our customers and stakeholders.

FY 2014 Kent County DSS Advisory Board Members

Dr. Joseph D. Irr, Chair
Gail Yerkie, Vice Chair
Rosalie Kuechler, Treasurer
Ronald Fithian,
County Commissioner
Ernie Crofoot,
Commissioner Designee
Carolyn Brooks
Jana Carter
Glenn Michael
Rev. Mary Walker
Robin Wood
Marcie Woodward

Director's Message

It is my great pleasure to present the Kent County Department of Social Services (KCDSS) annual report for fiscal year 2014.

This has been a year of accomplishment for us! We achieved re-accreditation with the Council on Accreditation, an international child and family service and behavioral health accrediting organization. Continued accreditation recognizes the quality with which we administer our programs and deliver services to the Kent County community. We were also recognized by the State Employee Risk Management Association for the development of our safety and security protocols related to Family Involvement Meetings and supervised visitation. This year, we continued building infrastructure for increased supportive services to children in Kent County by securing a second grant from the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention to expand the availability of our Victim Advocate/Child Advocacy Center Coordinator.

2014 was also a year of change. We implemented Alternative Response, a new way of responding to certain low-risk reports of child abuse and neglect. This new service option allows us to tailor our response to each family in order to increase productive engagement. We also began implementing the Adult Services Policy and Practice Initiative, which involves prioritizing our adult caseload, implementing more family involvement in adult cases, and developing an agency-wide response to worker traumatic stress. Finally, we joined the rest of the state in implementing the Affordable Care Act and the expanded Medicaid eligibility that took effect in Maryland on January 1, 2014.

It is through the hard work and commitment of the KCDSS staff with the support of our advisory board and community partners, including government agencies, non-profit and faith-based organizations, resource families, generous individuals and our county government, that we are able to serve the citizens of Kent County. My sincerest thanks to each of you.

Linda C. Webb, LCSW, Director

Achievements

- Achieved re-accreditation through the Council on Accreditation signifying our ongoing achievement of standards of quality in program and service delivery, as well as our business processes.
- Secured a second grant from the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention to increase the availability of our Victim Advocate/Coordinator.
- Recognized with a DHR Silver Spoon Award for performance in Food Supplement Program application timeliness, percent of cases reviewed and staff training activities.
- Recognized with a Best Practice Award by the State Employee Risk Management Association for safety and security protocols developed for Family Involvement Meetings and supervised visitation.
- Recognized with a Paul Hastings Award by the Maryland Association of Social Service Boards for our Emergency Shelter Operations and amateur radio licensing initiative.

Community Connections

- Implemented a number of initiatives as a part of our strategic plan.
 - ◇ Launched an agency Facebook Page that provides customers and job seekers access to job openings, community information and events.
 - ◇ Delivered 10 formal presentations to the community and participated in 56 outreach activities.
 - ◇ The Kent County Social Services Board established the Kent County Community Assistance Fund, a component fund within the Maryland Association of Social Service Boards Foundation. This fund was created to enable the board to raise funds for important DSS programs and services not receiving government funding, such as our Child Advocacy Center.
- Served 12 families through the Adopt-a-Family Holiday Program, which matches families referred by employees with community sponsors. Eleven community members and/or organizations served as sponsors who purchased gifts for the families. 114 applications were referred to the Star Democrat's Brighter Christmas Fund, and 202 individuals and families were referred to the Lions Clubs of Kent County for the Christmas Basket Program.
- Partnered with the Kent County Health Department to administer and support the Pregnancy and Tobacco Cessation Help (PATCH) program. Activities to assist tobacco users quit and referrals to cessation programs were promoted throughout the year.

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- Provided 199 pounds of food, donated by KCDSS employees, to the Community Food Pantry of Kent County in recognition of the Governor's Day to Serve. This donation provided 159 meals to Kent County residents.
 - Partnered with the Presbyterian Church of Chestertown to provide Christmas gifts to adults in our guardianship.
 - Raised and donated \$1,035 to Rebuilding Together Kent County through employee fund-raising activities.

Services Division

The Services Division takes pride in protecting and supporting children, families and adults in order to achieve safety, permanency and well-being. Services are culturally competent and individualized, recognizing and honoring differences in traditions, values and beliefs. Family Centered Practice is our focus and workers utilize strategies that engage, involve, strengthen and support families.

From July 2013 through June 2014, we:

- Conducted 97 Child Protective Service investigations and 17 Adult Protective Service investigations.
- Served 15 child victims of sexual abuse and/or severe physical abuse through the Child Advocacy Center.
- Implemented Alternative Response, an approach designed to increase child safety by engaging families with our staff and our community partners through referrals. Through these collaborative connections, families identify issues and concerns and find solutions that will meet their needs using available supports and services. From April to June 2014, 68% of families screened in for Child Protective Services received an Alternative Response instead of an Investigative Response.
- Met our Place Matters goal of completing Child Protective Services investigations in less than 60 days for Alternative Response cases.
- Conducted 32 Family Involvement Meetings (FIM's), safely diverting 16 children from Out of Home placement. FIM's are conducted with family members and their support network at key child welfare decision points for In Home and Out of Home cases.
- Supported, celebrated and engaged our resource parents by assisting with the Foster Parent Association Holiday Party; organizing and participating in local and regional resource parent recognition dinners; and holding other social events for youth in foster care, children who have been adopted, and adoptive and resource parents, including a Ravens Draft party trip and a bowling party.
- Sponsored participation of two foster youth in the regional Summer Employment Program.

- Maintained 9 adults in Adult Public Guardianships.
- Served 87 individuals by helping them remain in their individual homes through the Social Services to Adults and In Home Aide Services programs.
- Maintained 9 children in Out of Home placements, meeting Place Matters goals of children visited each month and number of children exiting to guardianship.

Family Investment Division

The Family Investment Division helps families achieve independence through work, personal responsibility and community involvement. In addition, a variety of family centered supportive services and assistance are provided.

These include Temporary Cash Assistance, Temporary Disability Assistance, Emergency Assistance to Families with Children, Local Emergency Assistance, Food Supplement Assistance, Medical Assistance, Work Readiness and Job Placement programs, Rental Assistance and Child Care Subsidies. Home heating needs are supplemented through our Office of Home Energy Programs.



Silver Spoon Award

From July 2013 through June 2014, we:

- Provided assistance totaling \$1,300,873 to 1,258 Kent County households through the Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) and the Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP).
- Processed 99% of applications within required time frames.
- Issued Food Supplement Program Benefits averaging a total of \$350,049 per month to an average of 1,634 households per month.
- Served an average of 1,572 families receiving Community Medical Assistance and 80 individuals receiving Long Term Care Medical Assistance each month.
- Helped 45 households resolve eviction and utility crises totaling \$10,705 through the Emergency Assistance to Families with Children program.
- Served 92 individuals and families totaling \$25,000 through the Local Emergency Assistance Program. This program also provided support to the Samaritan Group Winter Shelter.
- Exceeded job placement goal by 35%.
- Assisted 31 individuals obtain jobs with wages of \$10 per hour or more. Assisted Two individuals obtain GNA/CNA certifications.
- Connected three individuals exiting public assistance following employment to the Transportation Assistance Program to obtain vehicles of their own.

Child Support Division

The Kent County Office of Child Support Enforcement is committed to raising the standard of living for children by establishing and enforcing their right to receive support from both parents. Child support payments help set the stage for parents to actively contribute to the emotional and psychological needs of their children, helping them develop into healthy, stable and productive citizens. The Child Support Enforcement division provides child support services to both custodial and non-custodial parents. We assist with the establishment of paternity via an affidavit of parentage or by providing genetic testing services, establishing an order for support and health insurance, collection of arrears and modification of an of existing court order.

From October 2013 through September 2014, we:

- Collected over \$ 1.8 million in child support payments, an increase of approximately \$ 74,000 over the previous fiscal year.
- Exceeded our Federal Performance Measures in the establishment of paternity, court orders and payment towards arrears.
- Expanded our partnership with the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR) to assist our non-custodial parents secure employment.
- Continued to be a driving force behind the “Regional Best Practice Forum”, a quarterly collaboration with our regional counterparts to discuss strategies to improve services to custodial and non-custodial parents to ensure the financial stability of their children.



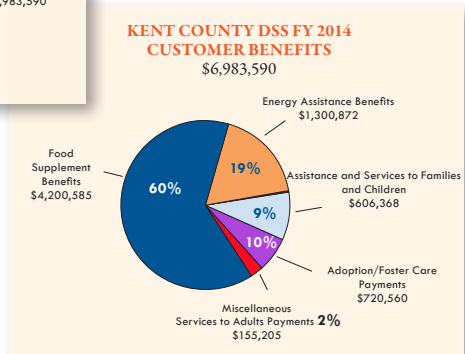
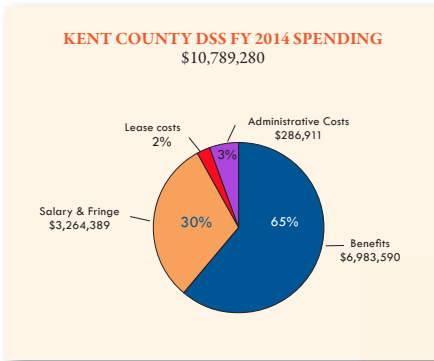
Child Support staff during Child Support Awareness Month

Administration Division

The Administrative Division provides a wide variety of support to Kent County DSS employees, enabling them to provide quality services to our customers and community. Support functions provided by this division include personnel services, budget management, accounting operations, procurement and purchasing, fleet operations, information technology and communications, inventory and supply management, facilities and lease management, and security services.

From July 2013 to June 2014, we:

- Reached our goal of processing 100% of our procurements within required timelines.
- Developed and implemented new procedures that resulted in 100% accuracy of our local inventory records.
- Developed and implemented new procedures that improve the timeliness of performance evaluations and met our goal of 100% timely completion.
- Hired to fill 6 vacancies.
- Acquired and installed 2 new printers and 3 additional Enterprise Content Management System (ECMS) scanners.
- Upgraded all computers to Windows 7 Enterprise and the local leave system to Windows 2013 Server.





Alternative Response Kick-Off with Kent County partners, October 2013



KCDSS staff members deliver donated food to the Community Food Pantry of Kent County, September 2013.



Place Matters Recognition, October 2013.



Customer Service Excellence Awards, October 2013.



SERMA Best Practice Award, May 2014.



Staff from Kent and Queen Anne's Counties receive holiday gifts for youth in foster care from employees of University of Maryland Shore Medical Center at Chestertown, Chester River Home Care & Hospice, Shore Nursing & Rehabilitation at Chestertown and the Chester River Health Foundation.



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