

Forsyth County
Department of
Social
Services
2004-2005
Annual Report

A Message from the Director



Joe Raymond, Director

To the Citizens of Forsyth
County:

It has been my great pleasure to join the staff of the Forsyth County Department of Social Services in May, 2005. I have found the staff to be dedicated professionals who are eager to provide the best service possible. And I have found the community to be vibrant, exciting and willing to work with the Department to assist all who seek our services.

The Department of Social Services has wide ranging responsibilities that produce tangible family specific and broader community results across all social, demographic and economic lines. We estimate that we served between 20-24% of the Forsyth County population with services last year. Additionally, by even conservative estimates, our department brings in over 300 million dollars that ripples many times over throughout our community. This report demonstrates our effective work to:

Vision

To partner with families and the community in achieving safety, permanence, and prosperity.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to ensure that all people of Forsyth County receive quality assistance and services, to help them gain a more meaningful and independent life when possible, and to render these services efficiently.

- provide low income families, adults and children access to health care and food,
- serve as legal guardians for elderly and disabled adults,
- protect children and adults from abuse, neglect and exploitation,
- help non disabled adults become employed and to “Work First”,
- strengthen families whose members face serious emotional, psychological and mental health challenges,
- care for and meet the diverse needs of approximately 400 children in our legal custody, many of whom have special needs,
- find permanent and adoptive homes for children,
- provide low cost, high quality in-home services for elderly and disabled adults,
- assure quality of care for elderly and disabled patients in our nursing and rest homes, and
- support families and individuals with legitimate emergency needs.

This is complex work and carries serious responsibility. I am well aware that the department’s job cannot be accomplished without effective partnerships. As I learn more about our community and our department you may expect that the Department of Social

Services will make new efforts to define “success” and to openly dialogue with the community about our progress and our challenges.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Raymond". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joe Raymond,
October, 2005

A Word from the Board



DSS Board of Social Services

(L.to R) Cynthia Jeffries, Nigel Alston, Jean Irvin, John Sheldon, and Walter Marshall.

From the Chairman of the Board

The 2004-2005 fiscal year saw many changes at the Forsyth County Department of Social Services. Dr. Ann Hamilton retired after nine years of service, and the Board began the process of selecting a new Director.

I am pleased to report that the Board was in complete agreement on the selection of a new director, Joe Raymond. He has the background and leadership skills to serve our community well. His vision will lead the Department to new and greater results in serving individuals and families in Forsyth County.

After two terms on the DSS Board of Social Services, my time on the Board has come to an end. It is good time to leave with new leadership in place and a new building—both of which will serve

our customers well. DSS will always face challenges, but I am more confident than ever that the Department will be able to meet them.

My able colleague, Jean Irvin, is also retiring from the Board, but Florence Corpening, CEO of the YWCA, and Claudette Weston, President of Weston and Associates, two wonderful community leaders, have agreed to join the Board. They will be great assets to the work of the Board which will be led very ably by Cynthia Jeffries.

The Board of Social Services will need the help of every member of our community to address the issues we all face—how to be sure that all children in Forsyth County are in safe environments, that families leaving welfare have the support and services they need, and that our most vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and exploitation. I ask that you continue to support the Department as I most certainly shall.

Sincerely,

Nigel D. Alston

Chairman of the Board

Supporting the Elderly and Disabled to Remain Safe and Secure

Adult Services Division

Adult Protective Services

Adult Protective Services evaluates reports of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of citizens over age 18 who are unable to manage their own resources, carry out activities of daily living, or protect their own interests. Social workers provide access to a continuum of care and resources available in our community.

- Two hundred and thirty-three (233) reports of abuse or neglect were received, a 8 % decrease over 2003-2004.
- One hundred and fifty-eight (158) cases were evaluated, a 7% increase over the prior year.
- Forty-five (45) cases were confirmed as maltreatment compared to 53 in FY 2003-04.
- Seventy-six (76) individuals received prevention services to preclude further issues compared to 70 in the prior year.

In-Home Services

The Adult In-Home Services program provides counseling, case management and supportive services to disabled adults and frail elderly adults and their families. Social Workers assist individuals to live in the least restrictive environment consistent with their needs by providing home management and personal care services for these same individuals.

- Four hundred and nine (409) individuals received in-home services by social workers, an 8 % increase over last year.
- Two hundred and forty-five (245) individuals were provided basic personal care and home management, a 14% increase in services.



Adult Placement

Adult Placement assists the aging and disabled adults who are unable to remain in their homes to find appropriate placement in an assisted living facility or nursing home. The program also provides assistance to the facilities in maintaining and improving the quality of care in their facilities. Adult Placement is responsible for licensing/monitoring assisted living facilities, Adult Day Care/Adult Day Health, Medicaid Enhanced Personal Care in facilities.

The County contracts with three adult day care facilities. Two facilities specialize in adult day health. The adult day health facilities are required to have a registered nurse available to meet with participants during the day.

- Fifty-three (53) adult care homes were monitored in Forsyth County this year.
- One hundred and thirty-six (136) clients received enhanced care in facilities, compared to 152 in the prior fiscal year. This program is for residents needing assistance with daily needs such as eating, toileting, and ambulation.
- Ninety-nine (99) complaints were received and investigated within the fiscal year.

Guardianship

The Department served as the Court appointed guardian for 103 adults during FY 2004-05 who have declared incompetent by the Clerk of Court and who have no other responsible able or willing to be appointed their guardian.



Medicaid for the Elderly and Disabled

Medicaid pays medical bills for low-income people who are elderly (65 years of age or older) or disabled (permanently and totally disabled for work for at least twelve months). Medicaid dollars are used to pay for the cost of care in a long-term facility, in an assisted living facility, or in private living arrangements.

- Adults receiving Medicaid in 2004-05 was 12,547, an increase of 18% over 2003-2004 and almost a 30% increase in two years.

VAST

The Vulnerable Adults Service Team is a community team made up of community partners that joins together to staff cases of adults who are at high risk of exploitation, abuse or neglect. In FY 04-05, this team assessed 18 individuals.

Every Child Deserves a Family

In order to better serve the families and children of Forsyth County, the Family and Children's Services Division created a new investigative assessment unit this year. The unit is specifically focused on investigations of child abuse, rather than neglect, and generally involves partnering with law enforcement and the medical community.

Established in January, 2005, the unit specializes in investigating physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or any report of abuse involving a day care center. Law enforcement and medical partners have found it is easier to work as a team with social workers they are getting to know through this process.



The creation of this unit also falls in line with the state's evolution towards the new Multiple Response System (MRS) that is being implemented across North Carolina. The investigative track is one of two ways a report of abuse or neglect

can be addressed with a family. Although MRS will not be implemented state wide until January 2006, by creating the new unit now, Forsyth County DSS hopes to make the transition to the new processes much easier.

Child Protective Services

The Child Protective Services Program investigates reports of abuse and neglect of children under the age of 18. Social workers evaluate the degree of danger or risk to the child and the family's ability to provide care with a goal of keeping children safe but allowing them to remain in their homes if at all possible.

- Total number of reports of abuse or neglect received in FY 2004-05 was 3,083, a 25% increase over FY 2003-04.
- Of these reports, 1,880 reports were investigated involving 3,953 children, 22% increase in the number of children involved over the prior year.
- 20.4% of reports investigated were substantiated --about the same as last year.

Case Planning/Case Management

The Case Planning/Case Management services are provided to families in which child abuse and/or neglect have been substantiated and whose children are not in the custody of the Department of Social Services. These services are provided to a family for up to six months.



Family Counseling

The Family Counseling Unit provides intensive therapeutic counseling to children who have been victims of abuse or neglect, and to members of their families. In addition, it also provides counseling services to sex abuse victims, their caretakers, and children who may have sexual behavior problems.

- Family counseling served 176 families, an increase of 31% over FY 2003-04.



Foster Care

Foster care provides for the care of children who have been separated from their families due to abuse or neglect. Our goal for children is a permanent placement for a child within 12 months of entering custody of the agency.

Unfortunately, the number of children in DSS custody rose dramatically this year. The number of children entering care grew faster than the those exiting foster care.

- Three hundred and sixty (360) children were in the custody of DSS, an increase of 22% from the prior year.
- Two hundred and twenty-seven (227) children entered agency custody, an increase of 88% over the prior year.

- One hundred and fifty-eight (158) children left care during this period an increase of 27% over FY 2003-2004.
- The average length of time children were in agency custody was 23.7 months, a decrease of 15% from the prior year.

Foster Home Services

Foster Home Services recruits, licenses/re-licenses, trains and supervises foster parents in Forsyth County. Prospective foster parents are provided training on what to expect in fostering the emotional and physical health of a child who has been separated from their family.

There were 98 foster care homes in the county at the end of the fiscal year, a decrease of 11%. Twenty-four (24) new foster care homes were licensed during the year which is about the same as last year. The decrease in licensed homes is troubling since it is on top of a decrease in FY 2003-2004 and occurs at a time when the need for foster parents is increasing in our community.

Adoptions

The Adoptions Unit recruits and assesses prospective adoptive families, counsels with birth parents regarding releasing children for adoption, works with children whose permanent plan is adoptive placement, provides services to families who are in the process of adopting a particular child, and provides supportive services to families once an adoption has been finalized. Forty-nine (49) adoptions were finalized during this fiscal year, an increase of 14% over the prior year.

Stabilizing and Serving Families

The Temporary Economic Assistance and Maintenance (TEAM) Division provides a variety of programs to help support families in need of basic services such as assistance in purchasing food, cash assistance, and other support services to assist working families to remain employed.



Intake

Over 9,080 individuals were provided services to determine eligibility for Work First Cash Assistance, Family and Children's Medicaid, and NC Health Choice, a decrease of 9% over FY 2003-04.

An additional 587 children were served at the Downtown Health Plaza to determine eligibility for Medicaid, a 23% decrease over last year.

Work First Program

Work First Employment Services assists families with children in achieving self-sufficiency in order to support themselves and provide for their children. Work First promotes personal responsibility and employment through the provision of family assessment, temporary financial assistance, employment services, and coordination with other supportive services.

- Work First served 1,579 families, a 14% decrease over the prior year.
- Five hundred and forty-seven (547) participants became employed, an increase of 8% from FY 2003-2004.
- About the same number of families left cash assistance and remained off remained off as the prior year (92%).
- Seventy-seven percent (77%) remained employed after six months.



Child Day Care

Child Day Care provides subsidized Day Care for children from birth through ages 12 whose families meet income and program priority criteria. Availability of placements is dependent upon funding and service priorities. Forsyth County had a waiting list for daycare services the entire fiscal year.

- Due to decrease in funds, the number of children provided the day care subsidy fell to 5,702 a decrease of 11% over the prior year.
- \$14,029,301 was spent assisting families to obtain day care in FY 2004-2005, a decrease of 10% from FY 2003-2004.

Food Stamps

The Food Stamp program provides monthly benefits to eligible individuals and households, which are used to purchase food. Benefit amounts are dependent upon the number of people in the household and the amount of monthly income of the household.

- The program served 10,750 households with 22,684 participants—an 11% increase over FY 2003-04.
- The average monthly payment was \$221.

Family and Children's Medicaid

Medicaid provides doctors care and routine preventive care for children and families who meet income eligibility requirements. Inpatient and outpatient hospital care and some prescription drugs are also provided.

- Services were provided to 17,765 families, a decrease of 2% over the prior year.

Energy Assistance

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program provides a one-time cash payment to help eligible families pay their heating bills (if Federal funds are available).

- 16,162 individuals were served.
- \$386,414 was expended.

North Carolina Health Choice for Children

NC Health Choice provides low cost health insurance to children whose families are unable to afford private health insurance, but who do not qualify for Medicaid. Enrollment fees and co-payments, if any, are based on family income.

- Health Choice served 2,409 families, 17% more than in FY 2003-04.
- More than 3,825 children served, an increase of 16%.

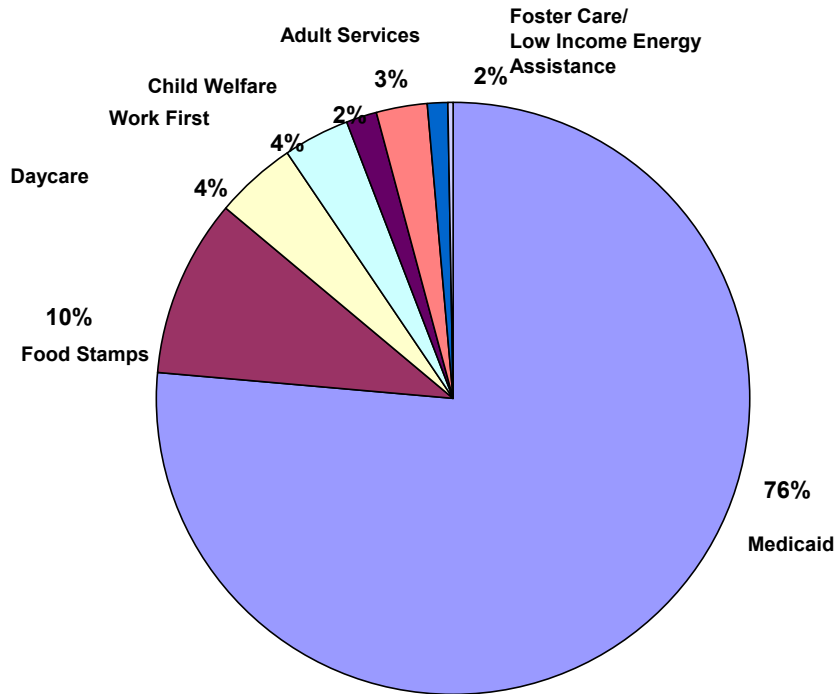
Child Support Enforcement

The Child Support Enforcement Program requires all Work First Family Assistance (WFFA) recipients, whose eligibility has been established due to the absence of one or both parents, to assign all rights to child support to the State of North Carolina. The adult is responsible for providing information concerning the absent parent(s). Child Support provides the services of locating the absent parent(s), establishing paternity and support obligation, collecting support, and enforcing court orders for support.

These services are available to non-public assistance recipients upon application and payment of a nominal fee based upon income.

- Child support served 14,743 families
- The program collected \$17,922,626 in child support for the children of Forsyth County, an increase of 9% over the prior year.

FY 2004-05 PROGRAM EXPENDITURES



The total expenditures for all programs Department of Social Service programs for 2004-2005 was \$323,837,849. Most of the funds budgeted are in the form of payments to individuals and families, payments to service providers, and subsidized payments for services such as child care for eligible families. Monies are primarily federal funds for transfer payments such as Medicaid. The County's cost share varies with different programs.

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