



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report

2017

Appling County
Department of Family and Children Services
1160 W. Parker St.
Baxley, GA. 31513

Appling County DFCS | Vickie Jackson, County Director | 1160 West Parker Street | Baxley, GA 31513
Telephone: 912-366-1021 | Fax: 912-366-1045

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Appling County Dept of Family and Children Services

DFCS Field Operations Annual County Board Report

2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Jimmy McMillan-Chair; Edsel Lewis-Vice Chair; Vickie Dyal; Lake Carter
- The County DFCS Board meets every 4th Thursday of the month at 4:30 pm.
- The County DFCS Board has participated in staff appreciation activities.
- One Board member recently passed away and a request will be made to fill the position.
- The County DFCS Board uses local County Funds for Child Welfare Expenses, Foster Children clothing, haircuts, and allowances. This money has been used for Staff Appreciation Luncheons. The funds have also been used for child care for children in care and for helping out with utilities.

B. County Board's assessment of the effectiveness of the county department's provision of services.

- Staff have been hired, but more workers are needed due to terminations and workers are accepting other positions.
- With OFI, there are too many cases still having to be worked that are outside of the county as there is only one FICM in the office that handles Medicaid and Food Stamps. Last year at this time, there were two FICM's.
- There are not adequate front office personnel. A county funded worker resigned.
- Interviews for a county funded front office position was held in April 2017. The position was approved by the DFCS Board and the County Administrator. However, 8 months later, the position was never filled when a top candidate was selected.
- Having the local line available for the office has been a positive change for the customers. However, there are problems with the equipment that prevents from ringing more than 1 or 2 times so customers are routed to the voicemail and calls have to be returned. One set of the front office

phone equipment was replaced. But the other needs to be replaced as well so staff can answer calls as they are made.

- Appling County had a total of 60 children in legal custody from January 2017-November 2017. 22 children have either returned home or gone on to permanency with a forever family. At the time of this report, there are 38 children in the custody of Appling County DFCS.
- Appling County has four (4) foster homes.
- Appling County has had 3 finalized adoptions during the 2017 year.
- Appling County has had a total of 108 CPS Investigations, 238 Family Support Services Cases, and 24 Family Preservations Cases during 2017.
- There is currently not a breakdown of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases available due to the new GATEWAY system.
- Appling County has had 1 to retire, 3 to resign and 0 to be hired. Appling County is not presently at full staffing level. Appling County needs 2 OFI Workers for Food Stamp and Medicaid, 1 Ongoing Worker and 1 Placement Worker for Social Services.
- Agency Representative attends Family Connection Meetings, MDT's, CHINS Meetings, Law Enforcement Meet-N-Greet, School Meetings, and Regional Stakeholder Meetings to maintain/build relationships.

C. County Board assessment of needs of the community.

- This issue remains the same as the previous year in that funds may not be available to assist with homeless shelters, battered women's shelter, public transportation, etc.
- There has been a Child Advocacy Center established in Wayne County. This facility will serve Appling and Jeff Davis Counties as well in providing forensic interviews, sexual abuse exams and counseling.

D. County Board's recommendation for improved operations of the county department.

- Definitely more case managers and front office staff.
- Workers working cases for the county instead of being shifted to cover additional counties.
- New Front Office telephone equipment

E. The County DFCS Board members have discussed the above issues and are in agreement.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edsel Lewis". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Edsel Lewis, Board Vice-Chairman Signature



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

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Director

ANNUAL REPORT
2017

Atkinson County
Department of Family and Children Services
92 Legion Road
Pearson, Georgia 31642

Atkinson County DFCS | Kelley J. Harmon, MPA, County Director | 92 Legion Road, Pearson GA 31642
Telephone: 912-422-3242 | Fax: 912-422-3538

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ATKINSON COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

The board members who serve the Atkinson County Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) are to be commended for their passion, and diligent efforts in ensuring that policies and procedures were followed to provide quality services to families and children in Atkinson County. For 2017, the board meet the Third Monday of every month. All meetings are held at the Atkinson County DFCS office. Members for this reporting period have served for the past 5 years with the exception of the County Director. This includes the following;

- Marilyn Smith, Chairman
- Neal Gillis
- Deland Bailey
- Peggy Cooper
- Don Mullis
- Kelley Harmon, County Director

For 2017, the board has provided numerous opportunities from securing community support for the agency programs and services to the approval of county funds to support constituent relations activities designed to engage the agency in non traditional community services and activities to enhance the knowledge of support services offered by the agency. We hope to continue to enhance opportunities for DFCS partnership within the community to support Atkinson County moving towards becoming a true Community of Hope.

During Thanksgiving, members thank staff for their efforts with a joint fellowship meal with Coffee County staff, and those who are able, take time out of their busy schedules to come and fellowship with the staff and other partners to share in a time of thanks. The board works untiringly in many other meaningful ways to show their support and appreciation for the commitment of Atkinson County staff towards the goals and mission of DFCS.

B. Board's assessment of the effectiveness of the county department's provision of services:

Case Managers who support Atkinson County Foster Care program were required to visit 27 children for this reporting period. With there being only 1 foster home requiring over 90% of the children in care being placed outside of the county. Efforts are underway to work to increase the foster home population to accommodate children being closer to their home and family connections.

Foster parent meet and greets and monthly foster parent calls with the Resource Development team and the local county directors have continued to improve the relationship between the foster parents and the agency in getting issues resolved quicker as well as preventing new issues from arising. Efforts are underway to work with the SAAG to ensure TPR's are done timely to support timely adoptions. There were no Adoptions finalized for this 2017 reporting period.

In regards to Child Protection, the county average around 1-3 Family Preservation Cases, and 1 Family Support Cases. The CPS reporting call center has continued to improve it's services, thus enhancing user experience in making a CPS report to ensure the safety and protection of children in our community. Continued assessment and adjustments will continue to advance service delivery.

For OFI, we have not been able to provide an accurate count for the number of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases served due to reporting issues experienced with the implementation of service management system GATEWAY. We have been advised that reporting will soon be available, and we will have the opportunity to see and understand the workload from system implementation to when date and time the reporting functionality of the system is available.

The return of OFI services to the local office has continued to be a welcomed benefit and relief to Coffee County residents, and has restored the presence of the county agency back to the community and people it serves. During the implementation of the State's new system for the Office of Family Independence, the average number of people in the office doubled for several months creating issues regarding space and support available to assist clients timely. This challenge was met by agency staff with the same level of professionalism provided since services were returned to the local county office.

Stakeholder Involvement:

The county office is working to develop relationships with Law Enforcement, the School System, including Family Connections, service providers and other human service agencies in the community. Efforts are always underway to nurture and grow these relationships to ensure coordination of services, and to ensure service availability based on needs assessed in a collaborative manner.

Partnership with the School System has been a notable benefit to the agency and the community. The Family Connections Coordinator works closely with the agency in support of meeting foster parent and child needs. This is often done without DFCS assistance, as in the small community, the one foster parent can make a call to the Family Connections Coordinator for whatever her need might be, or she can contact the agency.

Atkinson County DFCS | Kelley J. Harmon, MPA, County Director | 92 Legion Road, Pearson GA 31642
Telephone: 912-422-3242 | Fax: 912-422-3538


C. Board's assessment of community needs:

- Continue efforts with the Regional Resource Development Team to develop additional foster homes for children who have to come into care to reduce the number of children requiring out of county foster home resources.
- The need for substance abuse and domestic violence services for families would be helpful to support educating the community and providing local support not requiring travel outside of the county. Right now, such services are limited and individuals and families must travel in order to participate in needs service programs
- Advocate for after school activities for Atkinson County children. This is especially needed during summer months when school is not in session. Also, adequate role model programs for teens continue to be a huge gap in community services for our youth.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the county department:

- Remove state mandate and restrictions on the approval of how the county can use its own county supplied funds for county approved projects. This is not the most efficient way to manage county funding.
- Continued need to allow additional freedom to county offices to utilize the services of local vendors when appropriate instead of state contracted vendors who are not always cost effective.
- County office lobbies should be equipped with video surveillance cameras and microphones in support of ensuring the safety of County DFCS staff and customers. Staff in Coffee County who service Atkinson County staff have received numerous personal threats while conducting the business of the agency. Staff can be followed to the Atkinson County office and continue to be threat to a staff member.

In summary, the board looks forward to continuing to work in partnership with the agency to create and sustain Atkinson County as a Community of Hope through; strengthening families, supporting self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable children.


Marilyn Smith, Chairperson
Neal Gillis, Co-Chairperson


Kelley J. Harmon, DFCS Director

cc: Rhonda Wheeler, Regional Director

Atkinson County DFCS | Kelley J. Harmon, MPA, County Director | 92 Legion Road, Pearson GA 31642
Telephone: 912-422-3242 | Fax: 912-422-3538



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
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Director

Annual Report 2017

Bacon County
Division of Family and Children Services
417 South Dixon Street
Alma, GA 31510

A. Bacon County DFCS Board, General Summary

- a. Bacon County DFCS Board Members include: Mr. Glenn Lassiter, Chair; Mrs. Linda Staten, Co-Chair, Mr. Tim King, Board Member, Mrs. Jeannie Boatright, Board Member, Mr. Curtis Taylor, Board Member
- b. Meeting Date/Time: The Bacon County DFCS Board meets the second Tuesday of every month at 5:15 p.m..
- c. Activities for the past year: Board members attended monthly meetings and supported the Bacon Co. DFCS in our annual law enforcement meeting, they approved and supported the annual employee appreciation. Several Board Members also spoke with elected officials about the needs of Bacon County DFCS and the community we serve. Board Members also communicated with the Bacon County Board of Commissioners with regards to current upkeep and maintenance of the grounds and building as the Bacon County DFCS is a MIL county.
- d. Use of Local funds: The Bacon County Board approved a large sum of county funds to be utilized for upgrade of the County Office, to include, new chairs, tables and décor. The Board also approved funds to be utilized to assist Bacon County's foster children, family preservation families as well as families in need in the community. The Board also allowed use of county funds to provide a 100% county funded position for the front desk for Bacon County.

B. Effectiveness of the Bacon County DFCS' provision of services:

- a. What's working well:
 - i. OFI's return to local county and increased staffing – improved staff satisfaction as well as customer service – this continues to be a highlight for our County. Bacon County now has three OFI CM's as well as a full time front desk clerical and a Regional Receptionist who answers the local phone line.
 - ii. The Board has heard and reported positive feedback from the community with regards to the local county office being more accessible due to more staffing as well as being able to contact their local office via phone.
 - iii. The staff for foster care placement has been stable over the past year and this has improved outcomes for foster children and families to include more timely services and permanency for the children.
- b. What is not working well:
 - i. Office closure twice a week due to shortage of staff limits effectiveness of services to our community
 - ii. Due to staff shortage, quality of service for both CPS and Clerical areas suffer – sharing leadership, case managers and clerical staff between two rural counties. When there are not enough staff in each county, this requires Supervisors and County Directors to step in and pick up case loads which again, limits their ability to focus on fostering/building relationships with community partners; supervision of the work that is being done to ensure quality, etc...Although the foster care staff have stabilized, the CPS unit continues to suffer with staff turnover to include front line case managers as well as Supervision.
 - iii. With staff shortages comes the lengthy process to have positions refilled. OHRMD and the process to rehire is a barrier and causes burnout for the remaining staff who attempt to cover the workloads vacated by turnover.
- c. Services:
 - i. Child Protective Services: There are currently 50 children in foster care and a total of 15 foster homes with 2 being approved within the past 12 months. The Pierce County DFCS averages approximately 23 intakes a month with approximately 75% being assigned as a Family Support case. We have

averaged 15 family preservation cases for the past 12 months as well. There was a 33% turnover rate in Bacon County DFCS for the past 12 months.

- ii. Office of Family Independence: There were the following renewals and applications received for SNAP: 37 apps / 164 renewals; MA 75 apps/218 renewals; TANF 2 apps/3 renewals This would be considered a normal average for the past 12 months.
- iii. Stakeholder Involvement/Relationships: Bacon County DFCS has worked hard to foster stakeholder relationships. This has improved relations with the School System, Law Enforcement, GALs, Family Connection, etc. Staff attend truancy panels, MDTs with our local CACs, Family Connection meetings, etc. We have fostered meetings between our GALs and foster children so that they children and foster parents have input during legal proceedings. The Agency held a meet and greet breakfast with local law enforcement to foster those very important relationships.

C. The needs of our community:

- a. Effective and quality array of services that are local or easily accessible to our customers to include substance abuse treatment and mental health services. Although there has been improvement with mental health services and our local Unison BH, there continues to be a need for more intensive services to these families. Substance abuse is still rampant within our county and the vast majority of cases receiving active services have some link to substance abuse.
- b. Transportation – specific to meeting everyday needs and not just available to those who have an open CPS or OFI case
- c. More foster homes in county to prevent children from being displaced from their school, community, recreational activities, etc...Due to no RDCM that is local and in close proximity to Bacon County, this continues to be an issue. There are some CPA's that are moving to our area and there is hope that they will be able to assist with increasing the number of foster homes in county which will allow children to be returned to their home county from across the Region/State.
- d. Available and Accessible ABD staff for the elderly/disabled community – between the two sister counties (Pierce/Bacon), there is one ABD customer service representative housed in Pierce County. This leads to frustration for our elderly/disabled community who are likely in more need of assistance to complete appropriate paperwork and more time to understand the process. When there is no ABD CM assigned in county, those who need this service are at a disadvantage.

D. Recommendations for improved operations:

- a. Increase staff in Bacon County: Every office should have one clerical position assigned specifically to that county. An increase in the number of services staff housed in Bacon County – there are currently two assigned to Bacon County due to staff turnover – however, this is slowly improving with the ability to fill positions at this time.
- b. Recruitment of Foster Homes should occur in every county. IMPACT training should be offered on a rotation in each county in close proximity and not just in the “largest” county in the area.
- c. Recruitment of quality service providers in rural areas to address our highest needs of MH, Substance abuse treatment, DV
- d. Each county should have an ABD CM assigned to assist those elderly/disabled adults in applying for or accessing services offered by our Agency. Currently Bacon County has no ABD CM in house and the OFI staff in the office have very limited knowledge of the ABD program area.

In closing, the Board recognizes there has been improvements with the ability to hire and the number of staff has increased. The Board also recognizes this has stabilized the Bacon County DFCS and will have a positive outcome for the community and the families we serve.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Glenn Lassiter", written over a horizontal line.

Glenn Lassiter, Chairman
Bacon County DFCS Board



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report

2017

Baker County
Department of Family and Children Services
322 Sunset Avenue
Newton, Georgia 39870

General Summary of the County DFCS Board:

- The Baker County DFCS Board is made of up five appointed members: Mrs. Cindy Summerlin (Board Chair), Mr. Tim Davi (Board Vice-chair), Mr. Charlie Mathis, Mrs. Rosa Rogers and Ms. Jill Dozier. Director Weeks serves as secretary for the board.
- The Baker County Board meets every other month on the fourth Monday. Meeting dates for 2017 were March 27th, May 22nd, July 24th, August 4th, September 25th and November 27th. A meeting was scheduled for January 23rd, but was not held due to there being no quorum.
- Mrs. Kelley's term expired and she was replaced by Mrs. Summerlin. Mrs. Sheffield resigned from the board and was replaced by Ms. Dozier.
- At the August 4th meeting, new officers were nominated and voted on with Mrs. Summerlin being elected Board Chair and Mr. Davis being elected Board Vice-Chair.

Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Board members had no concern regarding the effectiveness of the county department's provision of services.
- Baker County currently has three OFI case managers and one ABD case manager. Social Services in Baker County is multi-county and shares two Social Services Supervisors and five Social Services Case Managers with Mitchell County. The Baker County office remains closed to the public on Tuesday and Thursday.

Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

- Board members report having received no complaints or concerns from the community or stakeholders.
- Because Baker County is a very rural county and has limited resources which makes providing services very difficult.
- The Annual Law Enforcement Meet and Greet was held on September 22, 2017 and the Baker County Sheriff's Department staff were able to meet the case managers, supervisor and director and were provided business cards with the County Director, Supervisor and Case Managers phone numbers.

Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

- Board members had no recommendation for improvement of operations.


Cindy Summerlin, Board Chair


Debra Weeks, County Director



STATE OF GEORGIA
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Director

Annual Report

2017

Baldwin County
Department of Family and Children Services
154 Roberson Mill Road
Milledgeville, GA 31016

Baldwin County
Annual Report
December 2016

A. General Summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Dr. Janet Harrison; Board Chair, Mrs. Alice Noel; Board Co-Chair, Dr. John Sallstrom; Board Member, Sheriff William Masee; Board Member, Mrs. Mel Jackson; Board Member, Mrs. Eva Stevenson; Board Member, and Mr. Willie Lester; Board Member.
- The Board meets every 1st Monday of the month at 5:15 pm.
- The Board Members attend staff appreciation events, Helping Hands Charity event, Board Association Meetings and Conference in Savannah, and the Regional Board Meetings.

B. The Board's Assessment of effectiveness of the County Department's provision of services:

- This Board is proud of our local county office and the community partnerships they have developed and maintained. These partnerships include Baldwin County Board of Education, Family Connections, Salvation Army, First Baptist Church, First Presbyterian Church, Take Charge/Goodwill, Juvenile Court System, Superior Court System, Local Law Enforcement, Domestic Violence Task Force, CASA, Child and Family Guidance, Strategies, Milledgeville Cares, Georgia College & State University and various faith based organizations.
- This Board feels the agency has a good relationship with the local community partners, especially our local Juvenile Court System, Baldwin County Board of Education, and local Law Enforcement. The Services staff is meeting and surpassing in several fundamental outcome areas. This Board is proud to report Baldwin County has 23 Foster and Adoptive Homes in our county. We acknowledge that we need more homes and our Resource Development Staff is actively recruiting for new Foster Homes. County Director Martin shares the end of the month data regarding fundamental outcome measures in the areas of Every Child Every Month, Every Parent Every Month, Collateral Contacts, Staffing of Cases, Timeliness of Investigations, Timeliness of Family Support Cases, and Response Times for Investigation and Family Support. Baldwin County is consistently at or above the State and Region level in several areas even though staffing is below average. Baldwin County has struggled in meeting requirements in the areas of Every Parent Every Month and Collateral Contacts. The Board feels the data is exceptional under these circumstances.
- Baldwin County's OFI is very pleased to have the work back in the local county. The OFI work for Baldwin County has really improved, but the staff struggle with the abundance of assigned case work in the county. This board is glad to know that the local staff can now process OFI cases to completion. The Board believes that this holds the staff more accountable. We are very proud of the work completed in Baldwin, we are very proud of our local agency. This Board has identified that County Director Martin is very supportive of the staff. She is verily conscientious and is a great leader for our local agency.
- County Director Martin works with the staff very well and has been assisting with supervision and working cases for the past year while vacancies are being filled. Ms. Martin has been very committed to assuring that the work of the CPS and Foster Care Units has been in

compliance even though she has had consistent vacancies in both units. Ms. Martin acknowledged that the CPS supervisors were not committed to assuring that the work was completed timely and in compliance with policies and procedures. As a result of problems identified with the two CPS supervisors, human resources completed an assessment of the county's child welfare operation and concluded that both supervisors were negligent in their duties and responsibilities as supervisors. Due to these circumstances with both supervisors, both were eventually demoted and transferred to other counties within the region. Since that time, Ms. Martin has worked with the Regional Director and HR to fill case manager vacancies and recruit for new CPS supervisors. This Board feels that the Director and staff have done exceptional work and continued to meet the outcome measures. The Board feels that this is an indicator of the quality of services being provided to the children and families in Baldwin County .

- There is great work being done by the staff, even though there are staff shortages / significant turnover in the County. This Board has also identified that morale has improved during recent months in Baldwin County. County Director Martin always shows the staff how much they are appreciated through Staff Appreciations, Thanksgiving Luncheons, Christmas Luncheons, and sometimes provides refreshments at her own expense. The Board members continue to approve funding to support the staff appreciation activities. They attend and engage staff at all agency staff appreciation functions. The board has also initiated projects that have helped to support the work of the staff and agency. The board did a diaper drive and purchased a Stay N' Play in an effort to provide needed resources.

C. The County Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

- As a board, we do believe that it is important for the local county DFCS office to provide the best quality services to the citizens of Baldwin County. We would like to see the work performed in the county meet all the highest standards possible. We also want the office to be staffed sufficiently to accommodate the needs of the community. Our community needs Foster Homes/Group Homes that will take children on an emergency basis; this would prevent children having to stay in hotels for days at a time. Baldwin Co. DFCS staff has stayed at the office over night with a children. This was due to a lack of foster home resources that accept children on an emergency basis or at late hours of the night on weekends.
- Our community desperately needs jobs brought back to the community in order for our citizens to become self-sufficient. There is also a major need to address the Mental Health and Drug Abuse issues in our community.
- Our board feels there should be special enhanced recruitment in order to locate qualified applicants to interview for critical positions that need to be filled in Baldwin Co. The board acknowledges that Human Resources has done a better job of recruiting for the vacancies in Baldwin county during recent months. All of the casemanager position vacancies have been filled and recruitment is ongoing to fill the two CPS supervisor position vacancies.

D. The County Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

- Baldwin County Board recommends adequate staffing for the agency. It would be helpful if there were customized recruiting efforts implemented to establish qualified applicant pools to fill critical

child welfare positions more quickly. Overtime pay should also be considered during times when caseworker positions are vacant and staff are assigned additional workload to cover these vacancies.

The board is very pleased to know that the front desk lines are open. This board feels that Baldwin County also needs 2 administrative positions at the front desk. Our final recommendation is for the State Office to continue to work on providing salary increases for all employees in an effort to better compete with similar private agency or private sector job salaries.

E. Closing:

- In closing, we appreciate the opportunity to make you aware of our local needs, our recommendations, and what is actually going well in Baldwin Co. Our local staff has every intention of providing our community with the needed services. Our remaining Staff is very dedicated to the work we conduct but it becomes difficult due to the lack of appropriate staff. We, Baldwin County DFCS Board, support our County Director and staff. We feel that our County Director is doing a great job leading our county to the next level.

Thank you for your time and consideration with this matter.

Sincerely,


Dr. Janet Hogan Harrison,
Baldwin DFCS Board Chair



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report 2017

Banks County
Department of Family and Children Services
154 Windmill Rd. / P.O. Box 159
Homer, GA 30547

BANKS COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

Board Members:

Brenda Sullivan – Chairperson
Dianne Cochran
Louann Gardiner
Jerry Payne
Al Thomas

The Banks County DFCS Board meets on the third Wednesday of every other month at 2:00 p.m. The local county budget for FY2017 was \$15,000. A total of \$14,435.24 was spent for the fiscal year. Of the total funds spent, \$13,594.10 was used to meet the needs of foster children.

Banks County had an average of 50 children in foster care per month during the past year and finalized 9 adoptions. Banks County currently has 10 foster homes. 115 Investigations were assigned during the year along with 91 Family Supports cases. The county averaged 12 Family Preservation cases per month. According to the FY2016 Descriptive Data Report, Banks County had a monthly average of 21 TANF recipients, 1,173 food stamp (SNAP) households, 875 Family Medicaid households and 527 ABD households.

During the year, 1 Social Services Case Manager transferred to another Region and this position was backfilled. The Resource Development worker was promoted to Foster Care supervisor and the position was backfilled. 2 Banks County Social Services Supervisors are leaving November 15, 2017 to join the Regional team. The County will be unable to replace these supervisors at this time and will have to restructure to ensure all work is covered. Banks County added 2 ABD workers and the CAPS worker moved to the front desk to help with the volume there.

Banks County DFCS continued to partner with Family Connection and local churches to recruit foster families. Two years ago, Banks County only had 2 foster homes but increased to 8 homes last year and currently has 10 homes. The county continues to have strong relationships with law enforcement and the schools which has been vital in our efforts to serve families and protect children. Staff attended local meetings such as The Risk Reduction Committee, Local Interagency Planning Team, Family Connections, etc.

There continues to be a need for well-qualified foster parents. The agency's focus is to keep children in the county if/when foster care services are needed. Most of the children that entered foster care over the last year did so due to drugs (primarily meth). The agency continues to have issues with families living in extended stay motels just off of Interstate 85. Many of the families that live in the hotels are not from Banks County. With the loss of the 2 Social Services Supervisors, Banks County will share work with Stephens County. Moving forward, there will be a Banks/Stephens Investigation Unit, Family Preservation Unit and Foster Care Unit. Banks/Stephens Social Services staff will be considered multi-county and will need to adjust to traveling to/from each county on a regular basis. The Office of Family Independence continues to meet challenges with the new Gateway system.


Secretary
Mark Akridge


Chairperson
Brenda Sullivan



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

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Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Barrow County
Department of Family and Children Services
16 Lee Street
Winder, Georgia 30680

BARROW COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Members: Bobbie Ellington, Chair; Lamar Sims; Dorothy Johnson; Diane Carr; Jennifer Justice (School System); Hannah Chatham (Law Enforcement).
- Meeting Dates (all meetings are held at 9:00am unless specially set): January 10, 2017; February 14, 2017; March 14, 2017, April 11, 2017; May 9, 2017; June 13, 2017; July 11, 2017; August 8, 2017; No September Meeting due to State of Emergency (Hurricane Irma) October 10, 2017; November 14, 2017; December 12, 2017
- Activities for the past year
 - Valentines day doughnuts
 - Staff hosted trick or treating for foster children
 - Participation in Barrow County Senior Citizens Day
 - Child Abuse Awareness events
 - Supported Holiday Staff Breakfasts with Meetings (Thanksgiving and Christmas)
- Use of Local County Funds
 - Temporary Clerical Support support efforts reorganizing Office of Family Independence case files.
 - Provided direct support to foster children and families caring for children in foster care.
 - Supported staff attendance in trainings to include Leadership Barrow tuition.
 - Sponsored a Barrow County Family Connection Meeting
 - GPHSA Training registration

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Successes
 - Case Load ratio.
 - Decrease in turnover. Increase of staff who are eligible for promotions; stability in workforce.
 - Having the main number working and staffed has been an excellent resource to external and internal customers.
- Challenges/Opportunities
 - Keeping cohesiveness with staff when separated in two buildings
 - Working in the current building conditions.

- Facility challenges
- Vacant Supervisory Positions
- Number of children in care as of November 30, 2017: 129
- Number of foster parents as of December 2017: 14
- Number of finalized adoptions: 7
- Number of approved foster homes in past year:
 - Partnership Parents: 8
 - ICPC-Adopt: 2
- Average monthly number of CPS Investigations 24, Family Preservation 37 and Family Support 61
- Number of SNAP Monthly Average Recipients 13,326 , TANF 45, Medicaid Total Recipients Monthly Average 4,963 and ABD 1,018 cases
- Staff turnover rate: Based on Data Provided Barrow County experienced 0% turnover July 2017 and September 2017.
- Stakeholder involvement/relationships
 - Networking with Family Connection
 - LIPT | CHINS | CBRR – Community Based Risk Reduction
 - Lunch & Learn sessions hosted by Juvenile Court Judge Saunders
 - Barrow County Chamber of Commerce / Leadership Barrow

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

(Examples: Treatment resources, literacy, employment rate, transportation, substance abuse, etc.)

- Transportation resources for clients
- Lacking employment opportunities for clients in the community
- Parenting resources – Parent Mentors
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment Services

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

- Proper working facilities that provide for a decent environment, free of animal infestation, free of outside elements. Proper for families to receive appropriate services.

The Board looks forward to your review of this information and continued progress in 2018.

Bobbie Edlington, Chairman

Bartow County
Department of Family and Children Services
47 Brook Drive
Cartersville, GA 30120

BARTOW COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

- A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:
- Makeup - Members/Officers, Length of service on Board, Background:
John Morgan-Board Chair- approximately 20 years
Kay House-Co Chair- approximately 22 years
Jody Elrod-Member-approximately 5 years
Maryland Guthas-Member-approximately 6 years
Mike Abernathy-Member-approximately 5 years
Kimberly Jones-County Director/Secretary-17 months
 - Meeting dates/times and attendance of board members:
1/25/17- Present- Michael Abernathy, Jody Elrod, Maryland Guthas and Kay House
3/22/17- All Board Members were present.
5/24/17- Present-Kay House, Maryland Guthas and Jody Elrod.
7/26/17-Present- Michael Abernathy, Jody Elrod, Kay House, and John Morgan.
9/26/17- Present- Kay House
12/6/2017-All Board Members were present
- ***The Bartow County Board meets every other month***
- Activities for the past year:
Employee Appreciation: October 2017
Adoption Celebration: November 2017
 - Use of Local County Funds:
Reimbursement for a Relative (Involving a CPS child)

Employee Appreciation & Awards

Adoption Celebration

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Successes: Bartow County had great success in partnering with Kennesaw State University and the internship program. Through this, Bartow hired 5 KSU graduates following their internship and subsequent graduation. Bartow held successful celebrations to honor our Foster parent, Adoptive parents and our staff in 2017.
- Challenges/Opportunities: There were early challenges with the roll out of the new Gateway system with our community. The Board notes that this has improved greatly. There were also challenges with the navigation of CAPS.
- Number of children in care: 131
- Number of foster parents: 35
- Number of finalized adoptions: 28 & an additional 10 transferred for the purpose of adoption. 6 of those 10 have finalized, another set to finalize on 12/20 and the other 3 have been filed.
- Number of approved foster homes in past year: 17
- Breakdown of number of CPS, Family Preservation and Family Support: As of 12/6, Bartow received 1,589 reports. 261 were screened out and 48 were screened out and referred for services. 1,043
- Breakdown of number of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases: I was advised by OFI District leadership that this data by county is not currently available via Gateway.
- Staff turnover rate: This is an approximate percentage: Less than 15%
- Stakeholder involvement/relationships: Bartow County has and will continue to build on and strengthen existing relationships with CASA, Courts, Law Enforcement and the schools, to name a few. I would rate the current relationships as GOOD with stakeholders.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

(Examples: Treatment resources, literacy, employment rate, transportation, substance abuse, etc.)

Bartow Transit is available, but the board expressed that it does not service ALL of Bartow. Chair, Mr. Morgan has agreed to follow up and assess. There is a lack of literacy programs for adults, a lack of substance abuse resources for adults and

children. Bartow only source currently is Highland Rivers. The biggest concern expressed was around affordable housing. All of the current resources are full and a large number of families are living in hotels. A final concern was for recently released inmates having a difficult time finding employment and acclimating into the community.


D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

The board did not have any recommendations for improvement, but the County Director recommended ongoing efforts to provide GREAT customer 100% of the time!!

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair

In closing, this report was discussed during our December board meeting and all members had input.

Signature 
John Morgan (Board Chair)

Signature 
Kimberly Jones (County Director)



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Ben Hill County
Department of Family and Children Services
151 Perry House Road
Fitzgerald, Georgia
31750

BEN HILL COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Makeup – Dianne Bullard, eighteen years of service Chairman, Retired DFCS Worker, Rick Bostelman, ten years of service, Retired Funeral Director, Charles C. Hill, Funeral Director, ten years of service, Joyce Jenkins, Secretary, ten years of service, Debra Weil, Loan Accountant, one years of service,
- Meeting dates/times and attendance of board members – Third Wednesday of each month. All board members regularly attend meetings
- Activities for the past year – Board members served on Regional County Board. Involved in Called to Care.
- Use of Local County Funds- No County Funds

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Successes – Worked well with collaborative partners, worked very closely with Red Cross to provide services during Hurricane Irma, Community partners assist during Christmas, Meet and Greet with Law Enforcement conducted to strengthen partnership, worked with Call to Care.
- Challenges/Opportunities – Slowness of computer system, more knowledge regarding Gateway and Solution Based Case Work
- Number of children in care - 98
- Number of foster parents - 5
- Number of finalized adoptions – 0
- Number of approved foster homes in past year - 0
- Breakdown of number of CPS, Family Preservation and Family Support – 136 investigations, 6 Family Preservation and 186 Family Support
- Breakdown of number of SNAP and TANF cases - Monthly average:
SNAP: 1970 TANF: 20
- Staff turnover rate - 3%
- Stakeholder involvement/relationships - Juvenile Court and Legal System, Health Department, School System, Family Connection partnership, Foster Parents, Homeless shelters, Family Violence Shelter, Fatherhood Program

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

- Gangs
- Treatment resources
- Substance abuse

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

- Primary concern was slowness of computer system, which delayed OFI processing, SHINES documentation and SMILE accounting system. County is scheduled to receive bandwidth increase
- The length of time that it entails from when a position is advertised until selected candidate is brought on board

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair



Board Chairperson



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report

2017

Berrien County
Department of Family and Children Services
301 S. Jefferson Street
Nashville, GA 31639

Berrien County ANNUAL REPORT December 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- **Makeup – Mr. Myron Harper, Chairperson; former Berrien County DFCS Director, retired, Board member since 2005**
Mr. Jason Griffin, Co-Chairperson; Local farmer in Berrien County, Board member since 1994
Mrs. Marion Ivery, member; Retired from Berrien County School System, member since 1994
Mrs. Gina Porter, member; Local business owner of D & G Rentals, board member since 2006
Mr. Mike Bennett, member; School bus driver with Berrien County School System and Pastor, Board member since 2012
Mrs. Cheryl Hughes, County Director; since 10/1/17, has worked with DHS for the last 20 years in several positions in Social Services.
Deborah Fortune, Board Secretary, since 3/1/17, has worked with Berrien Co. DFCS for the last 17 years in OFI.
- **Meeting date/times --The Berrien County DFCS meets on the fourth Wednesday of every other month at 9:00 AM. 3/22/17 @ 9:00 AM, all members present except Mrs. Gina Porter; 5/24/17 @ 9:00 AM, all present except Mrs. Gina Porter; 7/26/17 @ 9:00 AM, all present except Mr. Myron Harper; 9/27/17 @ 9:00 AM, all present; 11/29/17 @ 9:00 AM, all present except Mrs. Gina Porter.(date was changed due to Thanksgiving Holiday.**
- **Activities for the past year – The Berrien County DFCS Board has met every other month this year.**
- **Use of local funds Board approved the purchase of 3 color printers, office chairs for workers, the installation of overhead paging system and panic button to be installed at the front desk.**

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- **Successes – The Berrien County DFCS staff are to be commended for a job well done. They respond positively and quickly to state mandated changes, and regardless of the staff shortages or other limitations, they do whatever they can to serve the needs of the community effectively. The board has not received any complaints from the community about the provision of services by the DFCS staff in our county.**
- **Challenges/Opportunities -Berrien County only has 2 current foster homes so the majority of our children are placed with relatives in and outside of**

the county. We are in need of more DFCS foster homes and therapeutic foster homes in our area.

- Our County has great law enforcement support, but resources for law enforcement are limited. Our local law enforcement jurisdictions may have only one or two deputies on duty during a shift. This creates a safety issue for families as well as case management staff when they are in need of law enforcement assistance and an officer is tied up with another matter in another part of the county.
- There are areas in our county where there is no cell phone reception. This poses a safety treat for case management staff out in the community with no access to call for help. There are areas in our community that are very rural and criminal behaviors such as drug deals is common. It is dangerous for our case management staff to drive around in these areas with no cell phone service and it isn't practical for law enforcement to accompany then on every single call.
- Number of children in care 42
- Number of Foster Parents 2
- Number of finalized adoptions 1
- Number of approved foster homes in past year 0
- Breakdown of numbers CPS: Family Preservation 26 cases monthly average, Family Support 166 cases yearly and Investigation 104 cases yearly
- Breakdown of numbers SNAP 1,435, TANF 15, Medicaid unable to access due to Gateway and ABAWD 0, not ABAWD county yet.
- Staff turnover rate is good at this time, in the last year we have lost 4 staff members, 2 that transferred to different counties with the agency, and 2 that left the agency, one for another job and one that moved out of state.
- Stakeholder involvement/relationships: We are very involved with Family Connections and attend their monthly meetings. We meet monthly with CASA. We have made great strides in our relationship with CASA and continue moving forward. We assist the faith based community with local food drops. We are working in partnership with Call To Care to establish a chapter in our county.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns: Rural communities with large land masses and small populations create unique challenges for the provision of services to both social services and OFI clients.

- Resources and services for clients:
- As a very rural county, we have high incidences of substance abuse, domestic violence and mental health issues, but we do not have resources in county to help families address these needs. Families have to travel out of town to go to substance abuse treatment, mental health counseling, or to attend domestic violence support services. There are very few

opportunities for employment in our county. This creates a feeling of helplessness and hopelessness for our already impoverished families.

- There are no public transportation services in our county. Families must travel long distances to access services and basic needs. Commutes of 30 to 45 minutes one way are common for most of our families to access resources.
- Our county does have an after school program and 2 formal daycare providers. There continues to be a lack of child care support which negatively impacts the families in Berrien County and contributes to problems with appropriate supervision of children.
- There are few recreational or entertainment activities in the county. We have a recreation department, but fees are high and scholarships are not offered; this excludes many at risk children from participating. The lack of positive outlets and activities contributes to juvenile delinquency within the county.
- There is no formal food bank in Berrien County. There are three churches that have a limited partnership with the food bank in a neighboring county and work to provide some emergency food support to county residents.
- There is no organizations to provide support for indigent care/transient/homeless populations in the county. Residents in Berrien County have limited support from a neighboring county homeless coalition.
- We have very few foster homes in our county. This means that our children have to move from their schools, churches and recreational programs when they have already been moved from their homes and families. Our rural county gets little recruitment focus from our resource development team. Our county staff do some recruitment as they are able, but more is needed.

D. Board's Recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

- County Directors should be able to participate in community development meetings and events because issues like economic development are pertinent to the families that DFCS serves.
- Recruit for DFCS positions in local newspapers and through local advertisement. Hiring locally might decrease turnover.
- Ideas such as partnering with churches to provide support for foster parents and to recruit foster parents could be done by the director.
- Creating statewide awareness campaigns to educate our communities across the State of the needs of foster children. Awareness activities should include more than simply recruiting for foster parents; they should also highlight the other things that can be done to support and assist children in foster care.
- Protocols should be established to ensure worker safety, especially for social services workers who have to work and travel in very rural areas.

- Partnerships should be made on the State and local level with domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental health providers to have them bring services and resources to rural communities that don't have their own resources (for example, send counselor to our county office one day per week to service local clients instead of expecting clients to go to another county to access the service provider in his/her office).
- Panic button for front desk based on the escalating hostile, aggressive behaviors of clients.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair:

We appreciate your review and consideration of this report. We welcome any feedback you may be willing to provide.



Berrien County DFCS Board Chairperson



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

Annual Report 2017

Bibb County
Department of Family and Children Services
456 Oglethorpe Street
Macon, Georgia 31201



STATE OF GEORGIA

Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

November 21, 2017

Virginia Pryor, Interim Director
Georgia Division of Family and Children Services
2 Peachtree Street/Suite 19.472
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Re: Bibb County DFCS Board Annual Letter

Dear Interim Director Pryor,

A. General summary of the Bibb County DFCS Board:

- Makeup- Members/Officers, Length of service on Board, Background
Dr. Columbus Watkins – Chairman, 35 years-on Board-Bibb Co DFCS, Retired Educator
Mrs. Susan Middleton – Vice Chair, 3 years of service on Board-Bibb Co DFCS, Former school board member & attorney
Colonel Henderson Carswell – 1 year of service on Board-Bibb Co DFCS, active-Bibb Co Sheriff's Office
Ms. Sylvia McGee-2 years of service on Board-Bibb Co DFCS, Retired School Supt. of Bibb Co schools
Mrs. Nancy White- 1 year of service on Board-Bibb Co DFCS, nurse and Exec. Dir of Pilot International-Macon, GA
- Meeting dates & times
The Bibb County DFCS Board currently meets the third Wednesday of each month at 12:30pm. Board members routinely attend the Board meetings.
- Activities for the past year
State Advisory Board member (current)-Dr. Columbus Watkins
Regional Advisory Board member (current)-Mrs. Nancy White
Foster Parent Recruitment Efforts with RD Team (current, ongoing)- Mrs. Susan Middleton
Foster Parent Christmas Dinner (December 2016)- Mrs. Susan Middleton on program
GA Association of DFCS Boards Semi-Annual Meeting attendee (April 2017)- Mrs. Susan Middleton
GHPSA and State Board Conference attendees (August 2017)- Mrs. Sylvia McGee, Mrs. Susan Middleton, Mrs. Nancy White
Law Enforcement Meet and Greet attendee (September 2017)-Colonel Henderson Carswell

- Use of Local County Funds
The use of local county funds is from the Board of Commission and are utilized under the approval of the Bibb Co DFCS Board

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Successes: 5% increase in Response Time met; 100% Family Support Timeliness in the past year; consistently achieved 95% or above for Case Staffings, Collateral Contacts, ECEM, and EPEM to ensure child safety; low turnover rate of 15.91% demonstrating stability of staff to assure timely services; Safe Sleep partnership with Bibb Sheriff's Office and Correct Health to bring sleep awareness/education to pregnant inmates and inmates with small children with upcoming release dates; site location for WIC services for one stop customer access to services; editorial in the Macon Telegraph newspaper in May 2017 supporting the need for more foster parents in Bibb County
- Challenges/Opportunities: 12% increase in the number of foster children; improve the partnership, collaboration, and communication with DJJ
- Number of children in care: 263
- Number of foster parents: 56
- Number of finalized adoptions: 25
- Number of approved foster homes in past year: 22
- Breakdown of number of CPS, Family Preservation and Family Support: CPS- 94, Family Preservation- 135, Family Support- 64
- Breakdown of number of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases: SNAP- 20,945, TANF- 461, Medicaid- 17,328, ABAWD - 0
- Staff turnover rate: 15.91%
- Stakeholder involvement/relationships : Middle GA Domestic Violence Task Force; Juvenile Court Judges' Monthly Breakfast; Mayor's Champions Council; Parenting Treatment Court in conjunction with the Superior Court, District Attorney's Office, Solicitor's Office, and Hephzibah Children's Home; Truancy Task Force with Bibb County Schools; Back to School Bash with Bibb County Schools; Middle GA Regional CSEC Task Force; Bibb County Family Connection; J.U.S.T. Children; 2018 Teen Maze Planning Committee with Macon-Bibb County Health Dept.; Communities in School; United Way Great Start/Parents as Teachers; interns from Mercer University and Middle Georgia State University each school semester; Bibb County Child Fatality Review Committee; Local Interagency Planning Team (LIPT); Crescent House CAC Multidisciplinary Team

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

- All mandated services are being provided and our community partnerships are going well.
- We see the need to have providers in Bibb County that primarily focus on the needs of CSEC (Commercial Sexually Exploited Children) children. Also, regarding CSEC children, training in that area for foster parents so that Bibb County DFCS could recruit more foster homes to place these children or a residential treatment facility. There are some resources here in Bibb County but more resources and providers are needed for adolescent substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health & substance abuse which are prevalent in our cases.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

- The Board is pleased with the effectiveness of the operations of Bibb County DFCS.
- Due to local and national occurrences, escalating violence and aggression in open settings with large populations, the Board of Bibb County DFCS would like more emphasis to be placed on security particularly in the lobby area. The Board recommends active shooter training for staff in 2018. The Agency's efforts about safety are duly noted and encouraged.

Closing: We appreciate the opportunity to voice the strengths as well as the needs of this agency.

Thank you for your time and consideration with this matter.

Sincerely,



Dr. Columbus Watkins
Bibb Co. DFCS Board Chair



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report

2017

Bleckley County
Department of Family and Children Services
140 E Peacock Street
Cochran, GA

BLECKLEY COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General Summary of the Bleckley County DFCS Board

The Bleckley Board meets on the third Thursday of every other month at 2 p.m. at the Bleckley Office. The board is made up of DFCS alumni, leaders of the faith based community and members of the medical field.

Current Board Members:

Ruth Roberson, Chair
Roger Bryant, Vice Chair
Ruby Lawson, LPN
Sue Phillips
Clyde Evans

The board has had many opportunities over the past year, and we will share a few of the highlights of those activities. We were honored to assist with hosting local law enforcement for our "Meet and Greets" with the social services team. We were pleased to be included in the recognition of staff who completed training, as well as staff who were recognized for their years of service. The board was honored to provide opportunities for staff to gather for worker appreciation events, including our annual Christmas festivities. Mr. Roger Bryant has had the honor of serving on the regional DFCS board and attending those meetings led by the Regional Director, Stacey Barfield. Mr. Bryant has also served on the State DFCS Advisory Board, and served on sub-committees of that board as well. Various members of our board are involved in and participate in community events, collaborative meetings, and social organizations that provide a plethora of services to the members of our local community.

Over the past year, local county funds have been used to promote training opportunities for the board, as well as staff members. Our board has been fiscally responsible in the expenditures of our local county funds, and we have always been able to stay within our budget limits. The board reviews and approves a county funds policy annually and guidelines are set in the policy regarding usage of those funds for needs of our children in care. Additional expenditures not covered by the policy or the county budget letter are voted on by the board, as needed.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

Successes

The Bleckley Board has continued to see tremendous improvement in the services offered by the OFI side of the house. Localization of services has improved our ability to make sure that local citizens have access to the federal programs that we provide. Customer complaints have remained low, even during the current transition period from our SUCCESS system to the new Gateway system. We are very excited about the progress made in OFI services, and we have seen improved outcomes for our community because of this. The board recognizes and appreciates the importance of having trained staff housed locally to provide services to our community and believes that this should be the ongoing standard practice of the department.

The board is confident that having local staff available and accessible to our customers has been the key factor in the turnaround for quality and promptness of service provision.

The board also recognizes that the continued support of our governor and state legislature has played a pivotal role to ensure that the agency has been able to hire the staff necessary to effectively and efficiently carry out the work of the agency. Because of this support, we are well on our way to impacting the quality and timeliness of services provided by the social services side of the agency.

Our board has been greatly blessed to have availability of local county funds that allow the board opportunities to show local staff they are appreciated. New staff members are introduced to the board during regular board meetings. Appreciation of the staff is shown through provision of meals during various trainings and staff meetings. These small gestures show the staff that their work is appreciated by the board and their community.

Bleckley County Board is fortunate to have good collaboration within the local board. We are able to work together and discuss issues that impact the Division and our community. Our members are also in tune with local community leadership and partners. Partnerships are vital, and we are fortunate to have a board whose members are trusted and connected within the community. Constituents freely approach board members with issues and concerns that arise, and we are able to work with the County Director to resolve concerns. The board also supports the Law Enforcement Meet and Greets. Our local law enforcement has a good relationship with the Division and is willing to assist case managers in making initial response to families when there are safety concerns.

Challenges/Opportunities

As stated in our last two annual reports, our board strongly believes that the presence of the County Director is vital to improving outcomes, community relations/outreach, and overall staff morale. Our county director continues to serve three counties. As stated in our previous report, the board understands that clustering our counties became necessary during the previous economic downturn. However, in order for us to move forward in better developing community relationships, the board feels strongly that no county director should be responsible for more than two counties. In our previous report, we also expressed concern over the lack of administrative support staff for our director. We are very pleased that Ms. Powell was able to hire an administrative assistant to help her with the day to day administrative duties for the three counties that are assigned to her. Nevertheless, we continue to believe that in order for continued progress to take place, county directors should have no more than two counties assigned to them.

In our report last year, we also shared our deep concern about the current status of the Bleckley County Building. Our building is very outdated and, until this year, the basic upkeep by the landlord has been minimal. The layout of the building is not conducive to the work, and the condition of the building has a very negative effect on the working environment for the staff. Our County Director has gone through the process with the state leasing department to address the issues, and we understand that all of the paper work and approval process has been done in order to move forward with building a new facility. We do not understand why the project continues to be at a standstill. The board firmly believes that this process has taken entirely too long, and our staff are still having to work in a facility that is not conducive to their health or to the objectives of the department.

County Services Data

Number of children in care during the year: 21

Number of foster homes: 7

Number of finalized adoptions: 2

Number of approved foster homes in the past year: 3

CPS Investigations: 23

Family Support Services: 103

Family Preservation Cases: 8

Staff turnover rate: 0%

Stakeholder involvement/Relationships: Our County Director and staff attend various meetings throughout the community to support stakeholder relationships. A few of those opportunities are as follows: Law Enforcement Meet and Greets, Monthly Family Connections Meetings, Monthly Multi-disciplinary Team Meetings, Participation in local school collaborations/meetings, etc.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

The following have been identified by our board as areas of community needs: Literacy, unemployment, poverty, transportation, mental health resources, and substance abuse treatment resources.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

1. The board believes that County Directors should be responsible for no more than two county offices.
2. The Board recommends that immediate action be taken in order to move toward relocating the staff to a new facility.

E. Closing and signature of Board Chair

It is our great honor to submit this annual board report for the Bleckley County Department of Family and Children services.

Sincerely,



Ruth Roberson
Board Chair



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Brantley County
Department of Family and Children Services
510 Bryan Street
Nahunta, GA 31553

BRANTLEY COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Makeup - Members/Officers, Length of service on Board, Background
Mr. Charles Whitfield, Chairman~Minister~30 years
Mrs. Kaye Thomas, Co-Chairman~Retired DFCS Staff/Foster/Adoptive Parent
Mrs. Dorothy Justice, Member, Community Member~10 years
Mr. Joe Carr, Member~Minister~2 years
Mr. Tim Rowell, Member~Minister~10 months
- Meeting dates/times and attendance of board members
Fourth Friday of each month at 1:00pm/Members regularly attend
- Activities for the past year
No activities outside of monthly meetings
- Use of Local County Funds
Maintain in-house food pantry to supplement FS clients with dry goods & canned goods.
Assist customers with utility bills, etc through General Assistance funds.
Supplement state supply budget when specific items are needed for staff.
Cover expenses for foster children that fall outside of normal state covered expenses.
Cover child care expenses in emergency situations when CAPS has not processed approval.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Successes
Continued positive relationships in the community and with community partners.
Improved customer service for OFI clients with open phone lines & service of local community.
- Challenges/Opportunities
Lengthy timeframes for onboarding new hires & filling vacated positions.
Lack of local foster homes & recruitment efforts.
Difficulties in placing "high end" children where their needs can be met

- Number of children in care-78
- Number of foster parents-8 foster homes
- Number of finalized adoptions-2
- Number of approved foster homes in past year-3
- Breakdown of number of CPS, Family Preservation and Family Support
During the Fiscal Year 2017 (July 1-June 30), a total of 358 reports were received for Brantley County. This included 111 Investigations and 152 Family Support cases. Brantley DFCS has averaged a monthly Family Preservation caseload of 24.
- Breakdown of number of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases
January 2017-May 2017 there was a total of 532 SNAP applications with an average of just over 1500 households receiving SNAP benefits. There was a total of 36 TANF applications received with a monthly average of 39 active TANF cases. For Medicaid there was a total of 505 applications with a monthly average of 602 Aged, Blind & Disabled Medicaid (ABD) active cases and a monthly average of 1333 Family Medicaid active cases. Brantley DFCS does not have any ABAWD cases.
- Staff turnover rate
Brantley shows a 30% staff turnover rate. There has been staff turnover in both Office of Financial Independence and Social Services.
- Stakeholder involvement/relationships
Brantley DFCS continues to promote strong positive relationships with our stakeholders and community partners. We have a very good working relationship with our local law enforcement, Georgia State Patrol & GBI. We are involved in numerous meetings throughout the year with our Law Enforcement partners, being they serve such an important role in the carrying out of our job duties, and host an annual "Meet and Greet" breakfast for all law enforcement in an effort to promote continued good working relationships. Staff are involved in a number of community partnerships including Brantley Family Connection, Promises to Children, Satilla Advocacy Center monthly meetings and our Brantley County School System.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

Substance Abuse continues to be the biggest need/concern for Brantley County. There is also a lack of service providers in our rural community or providers who are willing to travel to meet the needs. There is also a need for more recruitment of foster homes to serve Brantley's children since so many of our foster children are placed throughout the state due to shortage of homes and/or shortage of facility settings in our area to take on our children with special needs/behaviors.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department
The Board is aware of the continued issues with our Human Resources Department and the lengthy time delays involved with filling vacated positions. The Board would like to see this issue resolved or improved and feels this would help the county office greatly. The Board is pleased with the ongoing collaboration efforts within the community and would like to see those efforts continue. The Board especially is in favor of our close ties with local law enforcement and wishes for our annual meetings and regular collaborations to continue. Finally The Board wishes to see more foster home recruitment activities in our community involving our local churches and other civic groups. This will most likely increase the foster homes in the county and therefore the county will be able to place more foster children locally.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair

Charles Whitfield
Charles Whitfield, Board Chairman

11-29-17
Date



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report
2017

Brooks County
Department of Family and Children Services
201 S Barnes Street
Quitman, GA 31643

Brooks County Annual Report December 2017

A. General Summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Members/Officers – Rhonda Wheeler, Secretary, County Director for 7 years, with the agency for 25 years.

Lari Hagan, Board Chair, has served on the board since 2006. She assist her husband with running a local produce farm and she owns a local fitness gym, she has resigned her position on the board due to personal issues at the October 2017 meeting.

Mary Thomas has served on the board since 2003, she is a retired educator in our community and an active member of a local church.

Linda Peterson has served on the board since 2013, she is retired Brooks/Lanier County Director.

Jackie McLeod has served on the board since 2008, her background was in education and has since resigned in July 2017 to return to the classroom. Her position has not been filled at this time.

Dorris Thompkins has served on the board since 2010, she is a School Resource Officer for the Brooks County School System through the Brooks County Sheriff's Department.

- Meeting dates/times and attendance of board members.
January 17, 2017 at 2:00 pm – attendees were Mary Thomas, Dorris Thompkins, Linda Peterson and Rhonda Wheeler.

March 21, 2017 at 2:00 pm – attendees were Mary Thomas, Jackie McLeod, Dorris Thompkins, Linda Peterson, Lari Hagan and Gail Finley, SSA.

May 09, 2017 at 2:00 pm – attendees were Mary Thomas, Jackie McLeod, Dorris Thompkins, Linda Peterson, Lari Hagan and Rhonda Wheeler.

July 11, 2017 – Cancelled

October 10, 2017 – at 2:00 pm – attendees were Mary Thomas, Dorris Thompkins, Linda Peterson, Lari Hagan, Gail Finley, SSA and Rhonda Wheeler.

Activities for the Past year – Our local board has participated in staff appreciation in May 2017, they assure that all staff are welcomed when coming on board. They are all active within the community and help answer questions or discussions of the agency when approached.

Use of Local County Funds – Our local county funds have been used to reimburse foster parents for haircuts, allowances, clothes, birthday and Christmas gifts. We have used funds to reimburse for our foster children to participate in school and community activities. We did use county funds to purchase a new sofa, glider and television for the playroom.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Successes–

The Brooks County Office shares a county director with neighboring Lowndes County and has for the last 4 years. Even though this has lessened the time that the county director spends in Brooks it has not lessened her commitment to the Brooks County citizens of the community. The management team from Brooks and Lowndes work together to ensure that vacant caseloads are covered so that the citizens in Brooks County are served in both social services and OFI.

The commitment from leadership to continue to stay focused on the staffing allocations of social services and OFI has continued to improve the workforce job satisfaction at Brooks County DFCS allowing us to put a CPS supervisor and a FC supervisor in the office with staff for each.

The commitment from the Brooks County Commissioners to continue to provide county money for our foster children helps to ensure their needs are being met by the county.

The return of the OFI work to the county office and the ability for customers to be able to communicate face to face with a staff person in the local office has increase customer satisfaction.

The region has created regional teams to address our issues with recruitment of foster/adoptive homes and adoptions. This has allowed for increase in foster/adoptive homes being approved and getting our children permanency sooner.

- Challenges/Opportunities–

Our community continues to lack quality after school programs and formal daycare facilities. Which negatively impacts our children and the lack of supervision.

Our citizens have limited access to resources as most of the resources are located in Lowndes County and the county does not have a formal transportation system. Most citizens use MIDS Transportation for doctor appointments but MIDS has proven to not be reliable to their service.

The hiring process continues to have major issues in regards to the lack of communication and the length of time it takes for employees to be hired. This effects employee morale and candidates to retract their interest in becoming employed with the agency.

- Number of Children in Care – Brooks County has averaged 46 kids in care this year.
- Number of Foster Parents – Brooks County has average 6 foster homes this year.
- Number of finalized adoptions – Brooks County finalized 5 adoptions this year.
- Number of Approved foster homes this year – Brooks approved 1 new foster home this year.
- Breakdown of CPS, Family Preservation and Family Support cases – Brooks averaged 18 CPS Investigations, 10 Family Preservation and 9 Family Support cases per month.

- Breakdown of number of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases – Information is not available.
- Staff turnover rate – Brooks's staff turnover rate for social services was 3 which was a rate of 42.86%. There was no turnover this year in OFI.
- Stakeholder involvement/relationships – Brooks County is a rural area that has close relationships with stakeholders. The staff participate in all meetings with the local school system, law enforcement and DJJ. We participate with the local Family Connections meeting and share DFCS info to all stakeholders on a monthly basis. Family Connections has presented local programs and that staff have participated in survey for Family Connections regarding drug use in the area to help with a grant. Staff also participated in a survey for the local school system to provide feedback regarding their tutoring program ECHOS.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

- As a rural county, we have high incidences of substance abuse, domestic violence and mental health issues, but we have no resources in county to help families address these needs. Families have to travel out of town to receive substance abuse treatment, mental health counseling, or to attend domestic violence support services.
- There are very few opportunities for employment in our county. This creates a feeling of helplessness and hopelessness for our already impoverished families.
- There are no public transportation services in our county. Families must travel long distances to access services and basic needs. Commutes of 30 to 45 minutes one way are common for most of our families to access resources.
- Our county has limited after school programs and no formal daycare providers. This lack of child care support negatively impacts the families in Brooks County and contributes to problems with the appropriate supervision of children.
- Several local churches provide support with emergency food for customers. There is no formal food bank in Brooks County.
- There is no organization to provide support for indigent care/transient/homeless populations in the county. Residents in Brooks County have limited support from a neighboring county homeless coalition.
- There are no emergency Adult Protective Services in our county and our community has high elderly and disabled adult population.
- All children within the Brooks County School System are eligible for the free breakfast and lunch program due to the poverty level of the county.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

- Continue to work with management at the regional level to maintain manageable caseloads for social services and OFI programs should be a priority so that we can ensure the safety and well-being of our residents.
- Staffing allocations should be based on the work in the county. When a worker leaves, the county should have the ability to fill the position in social services, OFI, clerical and administration to ensure the work in the county with our families is successful.

- Directors need more time to participate in community development meetings and events. This need is especially important in Brooks County because there are so few resources.
- Since we are in a “foster care crisis”, there should be specific policy for recruitment and retention of foster homes. There should be training specific to recruitment and retention for staff designated to resource development, and there should be pacing and accountability measures put in place for resource development staff.
- Increasing the per diem for foster parents should also be a priority.
- Increasing child care budgets for rural counties with limited after school care or recreational programs.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair

It is with great pleasure that the board gets to serve our community with the staff at Brooks County DFCS. Rhonda Wheeler was promoted to Regional Director on July 16, 2017 and Gail Finley was promoted to the County Director on 11-16-17.


Lari Hagan, Board Chair


Gail Finley, Board Secretary



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Bulloch DFCS Board (2017 Board Report)

In order to improve the counties operation, the board recommends several proposals:

- a. More in house training for new staff such as having a mentor assigned to them for several months. The board also suggests having training by local providers to educate current staff on resources and how to access these resources.
- b. The board discussed that flex schedules should be explored as an option for staff as this would continue to increase the retention rate of staff. The agency currently does have a worker that is working a different shift of 1:00 PM to 10:00 PM.
- c. Foster homes should continue to be increased for the county as this would eliminate travel for the case managers, but would also promote permanency for the child.
- d. The board discussed that the county director no longer has the ability to pull OFI reports and this impacts the county in the following ways:
 1. The director has to rely on others to pull the reports and there is concern that the numbers are not accurate based on previous reports that were available to the agency.
 2. The director uses these numbers to engage the community in reports as well as requesting additional funds for the county.
 3. The board is an extension of the agency and they too need to be able to discuss things accurately happening within the agency and when reports are not available this hinders their ability to engage the community.
- e. The board also believes that the case managers in OFI should be doing the work of the county first and not work from other counties unless they have time to do so after the county work is done.

The board provided several positive comments regarding the counties departments' provision of services.

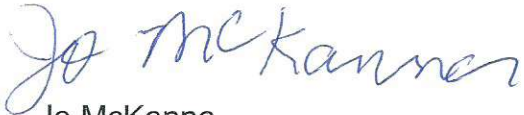
The board thinks that the local office is under excellent supervision. The Director is highly professional and has an excellent relationship with local law enforcement as well as other community partners. The Director is always available to board members and to the staff. She is well prepared for all board meetings and very well qualified for the position. The staff is excellent and does what is expected. The board does consider the substantial raises that were given to the case managers and supervisors to be tremendous boost for the agency as well as recognition for the hard work that the staff performs every day. At the time of this report, there were three vacancies in the services unit. However, offers have been made on two of those positions.

The County Board's assessment of the needs of the community; and,

With such a diversified community, the board continues to emphasize the need for public awareness. The board believes that the general public needs to be more informed about the sensitive and specialized services and resources that the agency provides. A more informed public will eliminate or minimize miscommunication or outdated information.

The board also believes that the agency should continue to be user friendly and offer services to the customer that are not computer literate. These services should be face to face and offered in a way to be non-threatening or intimidating. The board would like to point out that the county office does continue to offer these services to the customer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jo McKanna". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "M".

Jo McKanna
Board Chair

NATHAN DEAL
GOVERNOR



VIRGINIA PRYOR
INTERIM DIRECTOR

Annual Report 2017

**Burke County
Department of Family and Children Services
(DFCS)**

**BURKE COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES
ANNUAL REPORT
DECEMBER 2017**

A. General summary of Burke County DFCS Board:

- Members/Officers:
 - Nancy Sello-White, Chair
 - Jackie Peyton, Vice-Chair
 - Robert Mickey Horton, Member
 - Louia Sapp, Member
 - Sam Cummings, Member
 - Shadawn Wright, Burke County Director

B. Assessment of effectiveness of Burke County Department's provision of services:

- Burke County DFCS is effective in the community and a vital part of serving the county. The department collaborates with other community partners such as the Health Department, Law Enforcement, Board of Education, Department of Juvenile Justice, the Court system, etc. The department responds appropriately to all community requests and address safety concerns timely and effectively.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

- In assessing the needs of the community, it was determined that Burke County is in need of Foster Parents within the county, especially for sibling groups of 2 or more. The department will continue to recruit foster parents to help foster the needs of children in foster care.
- Over the years, Burke County population has increased to 23,000. As a result, there is a high demand for more restaurants, hotels and stores to serve the community. Once resolved, the unemployment rate will curve in Burke County.

D. Board's recommendation for improved operations of the Burke County Department:

- Burke County DFCS will continue to ensure children are safe, the community is supported and there is active engagement with other agencies and/or stakeholders to serve the county effectively.

- To ensure the safety of staff and clients during and after operational hours, security cameras and an alarm system were installed to the county office building. This service provides 24 hours/7 days a week monitoring inside and outside of the building.
- Overall, Burke County DFCS office building is in good condition taken into consideration it is over 30 years old. However, there is a recommendation to have the lobby/waiting area renovated to ensure client privacy at all times.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair:

- Burke County DFCS is thriving and fully supported by the community. The department will continue assessing children safety in a timely manner, support the community and collaborate with other agencies/stakeholders effectively.
- The Burke County DFCS Board meet at the office quarterly. The meeting dates have been scheduled for the upcoming year, and are as follows:

January 16, 2018

April 17, 2018

July 17, 2018

October 16, 2018

Respectfully Submitted,


Nancy Sello-White
Burke County Board Chair


Shadawn Wright
Burke County Director

NATHAN DEAL
GOVERNOR



VIRGINIA PRYOR
INTERIM DIRECTOR

Annual Report 2017

Butts County
Department of Family and Children Services
178 Ernest Biles Dr.
Jackson, GA 30233

LOCAL COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:
Board Members

Name	Length of Service	Background
Rachel Berry-Dumas (chair)	Appointed 7/1/2013	Retired from Monroe County Schools
Mack Davis	Appointed 9/10/2012	Former Director of the Daughtry Foundation
Susanne Earnhart	Appointed 7/11/2005	Co-Owner of WJGA Radio
Belinda Davis	Appointed 5/1/2017	Filed Operations Manager for Southeast Area for the Department of Corrections
Dr. Toni Clark	Appointed 11/13/2017	Owner/Operator of Clark's Learning Center Daycare and Retired from Butts County Board of Education

Meeting Dates

- The board met on the following dates in 2017: February 1, April 5, June 7 and December 6

Activities for the past year

- The agency along with assistance of the board provided a foster parent appreciation dinner event which included a dinner cruise around Lake Jackson. The board also assisted in several staff appreciation events for the Butts County staff. The agency partnered with the Initiative to Prevent Sexual Abuse for the month of April in placing pinwheels at the courthouse as well as sponsoring several sexual abuse trainings in the county. The agency with assistance from the Board will also be holding a Christmas party for our foster children complete with crafts and games.

Use of Local County Funds

- Local county funds were utilized for the above named projects. Local funds also assisted in the distribution of over 20 pack-n-

plays to local residents who did not have a safe sleep surface for children. Local funds were also used to purchase car seats, formula, fire extinguishers, smoke alarms, child proofing equipment, diapers and other necessities to families in need. Activities such as dance, karate, music lessons, etc. were also provided to our foster children with local county funds.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

Successes

- The board cites having a full staffed services unit as a success for the agency. The board is pleased to see adoptions being finalized as well as foster care cases moving towards permanency.

Challenges/Opportunities

- The board cites that a significant challenge is the length of time that it takes to get a new employee on board. They cite that the human resources process must be streamlined and that taking 1-3 months to bring an employee on board is far too long.

Number of children in care

- Butts DFCS currently has 53 children in foster care

Number of foster parents

- Butts DFCS currently has 7 foster homes in the county.

Number of finalized adoptions

- Butts DFCS has finalized 8 adoptions in 2017 with 4 other children that were released on 12/4/2017 to be adopted.

Number of approved foster homes in past year

- No foster homes were approved in the past year

Breakdown of number of CPS, Family Preservation and Family Support

CPS Investigations	61
CPS Family Support Cases	160
CPS Family Preservation Cases	46

Breakdown of number of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases

- OFI data is unavailable due to the Implementation of the Gateway System

Staff turnover rate

- Butts DFCS has remained stable through 2017 and even saw the addition of 4 new positions (adoption worker, family service worker, placement navigator and an additional foster care worker).

Stakeholder involvement/relationships

- The agency has a good working relationship with law enforcement, courts, CASA, Family Connections, DJJ and the school system. The agency has been heavily involved in partnering with the Initiative to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse in getting sexual abuse training into the community.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

(Examples: Treatment resources, literacy, employment rate, transportation, substance abuse, etc.)

- The Board cites that treatment resources as well as transportation as a community need. Due to Butts County being a rural county it is often times hard to find providers that will travel to the county in order to offer substance abuse services, counseling and transportation to our clients.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

- The Board recommends looking into a security system for the office that includes security cameras. The back of the office is in a secluded area surrounded by woods that could be dangerous for staff members working late at night or by themselves in the office. The board is pleased with the work that the agency has done in ensuring that services and resources are provided to the families of Butts County.


Rachel Berry Dumas – Board Chair



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report 2017

Calhoun County
Department of Family and Children Services
28239 Main Street
PO Box 9
Morgan, GA 39866

Our Commitment to Georgia Citizens

Vision

Stronger Families for a Stronger Georgia.

Mission

Strengthen Georgia by providing individuals and families' access to services that promote self-sufficiency, independence, and protect Georgia's vulnerable children and adults.

Core Values

- Provide access to resources that offer support and empower Georgians and their families.
- Deliver services professionally and treat all clients with dignity and respect.
- Manage business operations effectively and efficiently by aligning resources across the agency.
- Promote accountability, transparency and quality in all services we deliver and programs we administer.
- Develop our employees at all levels of the agency.

**CALHOUN COUNTY
ANNUAL REPORT
DECEMBER 2017**

A. Current Board Member's

- Mavis Johnson, Chairperson
- Sheila Peak, Vice Chairperson
- Misty Joiner
- Tracey Shedrick
- Casey Taylor

Calhoun County DFCS Board Meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday, of every other month at 4:30 pm.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

Successes, The local churches in Calhoun County did a (Backpack for Hope) drive for the children, that was held on December 9th at the Football field in Edison Ga, they collected over 760 backpacks filled with all kinds of goodies for the kids. Calhoun has opened Agape in Arlington Ga, which is a program a lot like the Boys and Girls Club. Calhoun county is in need of programs like these.

Having a front desk worker in Calhoun has made our clients very happy, they really appreciate having someone to answer a phone when they call and have a worker at the front desk that can help with their issue. Having a full staff in office has been an issue in the past we now have 6 employees sitting in Calhoun.

Challenges/Opportunities, Calhoun being in such a major farming rural area we struggle with job opportunities for the none farming citizen in Calhoun. Child Care institutes for the working families. Not a lot or resources in or area.

Number of Children in Care, we had 7 children in care

Number of Foster Parents, Calhoun has 4 foster parents

Number of finalized adoptions, have had 0 finalized adoptions

Number of approved foster homes in past year, 2 approved foster homes

Breakdown of number of CPS, Family Preservation and Family Support

Staff turnover rate, no turnover rate in the past year we have gained employees

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns- Still have the same concerns for after school activities in Calhoun. Just not many programs available in our area for the kids.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations for the County Department: We have no recommendations for improvement we know how hard and diligent the staff works to provide and protect the citizens of this county. At any point when we have an idea to help we share the information at our meetings.

E. I would like to thank the Calhoun County DFCS Board, for their loyalty they continue to give the Division of Family and Children Services staff and the citizen of this county. I have said many times, being an effective board member requires collaboration and creative thinking to ensure our resources are used effectively and efficiently. You listen and consider all

information presented, before developing a plan of action. Our board realizes the struggle for resources in our area. I believe together we can find creative solutions to address those challenges while maintaining the superior quality of service to the client and citizens of Calhoun County. Thank you for all you do.

Mavis Johnson, Chairperson

Jackie Bridges, Director



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Ginger Pryor
Acting Director

Annual Report

2017

Camden County
Department of Family and Children Services
721 Charles Gilman Jr. Avenue
Kingsland, Georgia
31548

CAMDEN COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board

- **Makeup - Members/Officers, Length of service on Board, Background**

Katherine Dixon, Board Chair and School System Counselor, 25 years service

Rick Douylliez, Board Vice Chair and Clergy, 18 years service

Richard Bradham, Board Member/Board Member of Region XII DFCS Board and Medical Supply Business Owner, 5 years service

McArthur Hill, Board Member and retired U.S. Army Veteran, 16 years service

Mary Carole Linker, retired DFCS Social Services, 2 years service

- **Meeting dates/times and attendance of board members**

Camden County DFCS Board meets 4-6 times per year at 8:30 a.m. on designated Tuesdays. In the case of scheduling conflicts, meeting dates are adjusted as needed and agreed upon by majority vote of the Board.

Meeting dates for 2017 were as follows:

February 28, 2017

May 9, 2017

August 31, 2017

November 15, 2017

- **Activities for the past year**

Agency activities include staff implementation of Solution Based Casework and OFI's transition from SUCCESS to GATEWAY.

Outreach activities for the past year include Child Abuse Awareness Pinwheel Ceremony (April 2017), Foster Parent Appreciation Banquet (May 2017), Law Enforcement Meet & Greet (September 2017), and Region Stakeholder Meeting for Camden, Glynn & McIntosh (October 2017).

- **Use of Local County Funds**

County funds were utilized to provide County Supplement pay and assist in funding expenditures for Staff Appreciation, Region Stakeholder Meeting, IMPACT and Foster Children Services.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- **Successes**

Camden County DFCS finalized 20 adoptions in 2017. Camden

DFCS has the highest number within the state of children placed in the county (84%). In addition, Camden DFCS maintained 95% or higher in Every Child Every Month and Case Manager Staffings.

- **Challenges/Opportunities**

Challenges faced in 2017 include:

- Loss of County Director as of 7/31/2017
- No in-house OFI Supervisor until 10/1/2017
- Staff turnover in OFI
- Implementation of Solution Based Casework
- Transition from SUCCESS to GATEWAY
- Increased number of children entering foster care in August/September 2017 (21 children)
- Increased number of Mental Health and Substance Abuse problems within the community
- Under 95% for Every Parent Every Month due to challenges of locating them due to transient lifestyles
- Under 95% for Collaterals due to overload of work and inability of Case Manager to complete

Opportunities presented in 2017 include:

- 11 trained case managers
- 2 veteran supervisors
- Hiring of new County Director as of 12/16/2017

- **Number of children in care**

88 children average

- **Number of foster parents**

- 25 Partnership Parent Homes
- 9 Resource Parent Homes
- 1 Relative Adopt Home
- 1 ICPC Partnership Parent
- 1 ICPC Resource Parent

- **Number of finalized adoptions**

20 adoptions finalized

- **Number of approved foster homes in past year**

11 approved foster homes

- **Breakdown of number of CPS, Family Preservation and Family Support**

719 Intakes Received

450 Cases Assigned/Tracked

- 253 Tracked to FSS

- 197 Tracked to INV

24 Open Ongoing

51 Cases moved to Ongoing Services in 2017

- **Breakdown of number of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases**
Information unavailable at this time due to transition to GATEWAY.
- **Staff turnover rate**
 - Social Services**
 - 2 Resignations
 - 1 Transfer
 - OFI**
 - 2 Resignations
 - 2 Transfers
 - Administration**
 - 1 Transfer
- **Stakeholder involvement/relationships**
 - Annual stakeholder meeting in Glynn County
 - 3 monthly CCI/CPA stakeholder meetings with Methodist home involvement
 - Law Enforcement Meet & Greet

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

The Camden County DFCS Board recognizes the following needs within the community: lack of adequate mental health and substance abuse services, lack of public transportation and lack of affordable childcare. The increased rate of adult meth and opioid addiction is a growing concern which has resulted in an increase in child abuse/neglect reports and the number of children entering foster care. While medical care for the uninsured has improved with the opening of two clinics, the availability of dental care for the uninsured and underinsured is a continuing concern. Medicaid dental care continues to be an issue as Camden County has only one dentist who accepts Medicaid and this dentist sees only foster children on Medicaid. The growing homeless rate, both reported and unreported, is also concerning.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

The Camden County DFCS Board makes the following recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

Staffing

Fill vacancies that come up in a proactive manner for all agency positions. Allow the immediate hiring of personnel to fill open positions. The staff allocation process was more effective and timely when performed at the county level as opposed to the regional.

Provide clerical help to the County Director and Supervisors.

Provide "after hours" team with adequate monetary compensation. "Comp" time is not a viable compensation as the agency is understaffed and the workload is

too great.

Revise the interoffice flowchart of responsibilities to reflect that all staff housed within the local office are responsible/accountable to the County Director.

Resources

Realign formula for disbursing federal and state funding for childcare assistance to provide financial assistance for a wider range of income levels, thereby assisting more families and resulting in greater impact.

Communications

Improve communications and provide more effective communication among state, regional and local DFCS agencies.

Safety

Worker safety in office has been partially addressed with physical modifications made to the lobby area of the office. It is recommended that safety be further enhanced by equipping the three internal doors within the lobby with key fob entry. Worker safety in the field is currently addressed by having law enforcement accompany social services workers on calls when deemed necessary. Panic buttons for staff use out in the field are expected to be in place after the first of the new year.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair

The information contained within this Annual Report was obtained through discussion in a DFCS Board meeting held November 15, 2017 with a majority of board members in attendance and full input from all members. Opportunity for additional input, review and revision was given.

The Annual Report submitted today was approved on ???????? by an electronic vote of all Board members.

Respectfully Submitted,



Katherine Dixon
DFCS Board Chair
Camden County



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

Annual Report
2017

Candler County
Department of Family and Children Services
750 South Leroy Street
Metter, Georgia 30439

CANDLER COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

General summary of the Candler DFCS Board:

The Candler board meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 10:00 AM at the Candler DFCS office. The board's makeup is consistent with the demographics of the community with no members being in service less than two years.

Charles Collum, Chair
Judy Jones, Vice-Chair
Jerry Gibson, Regional Board Representative
Lena Braziel
Yadira Morales
Rose Morris, Secretary

The board was involved in several activities in the past year including: Safe at Home campaign, Human Trafficking Awareness and National Child Abuse Prevention month. They supported the County Administrator in approving funds for purchases and updates needed and offered general support to the staff which included support the use of Happy Faces for the Foster Care worker. In support of the Blue Print for Change pillars of Robust Workforce Development and Constituent Engagement, it was determined that the lobby furniture needed improving and staff desk and appropriate desk chairs for increased computer activity were needed. Approving the use of funds for this was a morale boost for staff and customers alike. The County Administrator kept the board informed of DFCS initiatives, the new social services model Solution Based Casework, system changes to GATEWAY and community needed information such as the differences between Good Samaritan Shelters and Red Cross Shelters during the Hurricane Irma aftermath and SNAP benefits updates so that board members were able to answer questions and give clarification to members of the community when asked about DFCS responsibilities.

Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

We believe that some of the improvements that we had seen in the past in regards to timeliness of service to customers has unfortunately back tracked due to the GATEWAY conversion. We recognize that there is daily oversight over this process and we hope to see continued improvement in the coming months. We are pleased to see that, even though there has been turnover in Social Services, investigations are still being completed timely; however, we are concerned that the one Foster Care worker may become overwhelmed with the continued rise in the numbers of Candler County foster children and concerned about partner engagement particularly with Law Enforcement. At the time of this report, Candler had increased from having a total number of children served in 2016 as nine to having 27 children in care as of October 2017. We had reported stability in stakeholder confidence last year; however, of the three new Social Services staff hired, only one remains.

In the last two years, the turnover rate of Social Services is at 75%. Two of the staff left for job promotion to other agency and one to be a foster parent and pursue education. We hope that the increases in salary will assist in job pool applications and retaining staff; although, it has been brought to our attention that this increase may have assisted in creating regional budget difficulties. For OFI, of the original five staff, only one remains which would equate to 80% turnover. There was one termination and three left for other employment. OFI is in a hiring freeze but can replace a position that was hired in this fiscal year. To the positive, there are three new employees and two transfers in and all staff appear to be of a positive mindset and doing well. The Board supported the County Administrator in positive guidance to staff to encourage team building.

The County Administrator is involved in all aspects of the community including outreach to faith based partners and she is willing to address any organization or entity to discuss the needs of DFCS staff and DFCS families. She also recognizes the need for partners to have DFCS access and ensures that DFCS representatives are present at partner meetings or local government council meetings as needed. Mrs. Morris was actively involved with the community Archway meetings as they worked on an online community resource guide. As she has assumed a new regional role, the County Director of Tattnall County and of the Evans/Candler Social Services staff ensures that staff are in attendance in meetings directly involving children and Mrs. Morris attends the stakeholder meetings.

The general statistics of the county for 2017 are as follows:

Number of children in foster care-27

Number of foster parents-5

Number of finalized adoptions-0

Number of approved foster homes in past year-0 but one is pending

Number of CPS investigations-35

Number of Family Preservation/Family Support-70

There was no dependable statistics available from either State Office or locally at the time of the report for: SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases

The County Boards assessment of the needs of the Community:

We continue to focus on the needs identified in our first report: telephone wait time, homeless, uninsured, affordable daycare and literacy and language barriers. In that report we explained what those needs were and how they impacted the overall community. In this report we would like to share how there has been action and improvement in some of those items. We were able to removed telephone wait times and ability to contact DFCS.

- Homeless-DFCS still partners with other agencies to try and find resources but this is still a struggle. In addition to the new apartment complex opening last year, a few of the churches have begun to look at how to aid families.
- Uninsured –We will be moving this off the list. The hospital is still in operation and East Georgia Healthcare is active in the community. Candler citizens also have access to Mercy Clinic in Vidalia. Partners call the County Administrator if there is a citizen in question of possibly an unprocessed application or review.
- Affordable daycare—We will be removing this from the list as well. There have been no complaints noted in regards to the ChildCare program and there is a child care community worker located in Metter. She is actually the child care worker that was in the Candler DFCS office.

- Literacy-- Language barriers topic was removed as a success of last year outreach. Literacy remains a community topic and the school system is working in this area.
- Substance Abuse—This topic is being added as a result of the review of the why behind the increase of children in foster care. Of the 27 children currently in foster care, 10 are a direct result of their parents substance abuse.

The County Board's recommendations for improved operations of the county department:

We have continued to see improvement in staff relationships and realize that the customer services issues have been a product of adapting to a new system. The ability to have a same day worker in the office has helped customers whose benefits were delayed. We are aware of the region's five year plan to decrease the number of counties per County Director. The FY2018 budget was explained to us and we know why a County Director has not been hired. The increase in OFI staff has improved the office situation for both staff and customers and we hope that any future vacancies will be filled.

We appreciate the open communication and transparency the County Administrator displays and the depth of her discussions. Due to this, we completed an analysis of the reasons for the increase of foster children in Candler County. We are concerned that out of 27, 10 are due to substance abuse and 10 to inadequate housing/poverty related issues that could not be resolved. This is an area we intend to learn more about in order to make recommendations.

Conclusion:

We, the members of the Candler DFCS board, are willing to partner with the County Administrator and staff to not only move the Blueprint for Change forward but look forward to the expanding of the Community of Hope to a State of Hope. She advised us of the departure of Director Bobby Cagle but also assured us that he left a good foundation and a good leadership team to ensure that the progress that has been made continues for the good of the families the agency serves.



Judy Jones, Candler DFCS Board Vice-Chair



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

Annual Report 2017

Carroll County
Department of Family and Children Services
165 Independence Drive
Carrollton, Georgia
30116

Carroll County Annual Report December 2017

Date: December 4, 2017

To: Virginia Pryor, Interim State DFCS Director

From: Carroll County DFCS Board Members: Emily Cole, Chair Dr. Terie Smith-Phillips
 Vincent Dortch Latasha Vaughn
 Kim Jones Libby Smith, Director

Subject: Carroll County FY17 Annual County Board Report

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

Carroll County Board meets the first Wednesday of every other month. If items of importance, such as approval of this report, arise between regular meetings, we address them via email and report in the next regular meeting's minutes. Carroll County Board welcomed new member, Latasha Vaughn.

B. Assessment of the effectiveness of Carroll County's provision of services:

Carroll County is greatly blessed with strong community partnerships which help our clients assess and access needed services. Carroll County has just under 250 children in foster care and lacks adequate placement options. Carroll County has increased the number of foster homes from 22 to 30 over this year. We have finalized 12 adoptions. We average 70 Investigations, 130 Family Support and 70 Family Preservation cases each month. OFI data is unavailable due to the Implementation of the Gateway system. Carroll County's staff turnover rate has continued to reduce from 58% in 2015 to 35% in 2017. There continues to be a struggle with bringing on new staff and promoting timely within DHS. Carroll County DFCS continues to build on existing relationships with stakeholders by participating on local boards and collaborative meetings.

C. Assessment needs of the community:

The Carroll County Board recognizes the lack of foster homes as a crisis along with the inexperienced work force within DFCS. Carroll County has a need for residential options for homeless families. The Board has partnered with DFCS and Promise 686/Care Portal to bring greater awareness to the community regarding the lack of placement options and needs of families. Due to number of reports received after hours, Carroll County DFCS implemented a 3-11pm shift of CPS Assessors to greatly reduce the strain of on call responsibilities to daytime staff. Carroll County also identified two full time Placement Navigator positions to focus on finding placement for children entering foster care or children in need of a new placement. This has reduced the number of children in hotel placements but there are still far too few placement options for teenagers. A technology solution is recommended to prevent staff spending hours "calling down a list" of potential placements day after day. DFCS also partnered with Carrollton Police Department to provide new tennis shoes to foster and children in need and with Carrollton Sertoma Club to provide a Kick Off to Summer gift for all children in foster care.

D. Recommendations:

The Carroll County Board definitely sees the need for case managers to have manageable caseloads which the delays in Human Resources definitely impact. Ensuring placement options for all children in foster care statewide is essential to the success and safety of our children. Having the flexibility to use county funds without state oversight and restrictions would greatly benefit the operations and morale within the office. Frequently local businesses could be used to purchase items at a more economical cost than those with a state contract.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to share our recommendations for improving the services offered to our communities in Carroll County.

Submitted:  _____

Board Chair, Emily Cole



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Catoosa County
Department of Family and Children Services
700 City Hall Drive
Fort Oglethorpe, GA
30742

Catoosa County

ANNUAL REPORT

DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- The Catoosa County DFCS Board consists of the following members: Ricky Kittle (Chair), Suzanne Chovanec, DeLaine Hunter, and Chris Lyons. There is currently one vacancy.
- The board meets on the last Thursday of each month at 3 pm.
- The board approved county funds to be used for many activities throughout the year:
 - Christmas party for foster children
 - Foster Parent meeting in February
 - Support of a regional Adoption Conference
 - Pinwheels for Prevention
 - Blue Ribbon Luncheon for child abuse awareness
 - Breakfast for Catoosa Collaborative
 - Support of Believe to Achieve basketball camp for foster children
 - Teen Maze
 - Law Enforcement Meet & Greet
 - Employee Appreciation Day
 - Senior Expo
 - Fall Festival for foster children

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- The county has been successful in appreciating staff, supporting regional events, and helping with foster children local events.
- The county budget has been a challenge due to the increase in children in foster care..
- Catoosa County currently has 160 children in foster care.
- Catoosa has 19 foster homes.
- The county has reached out to the community through awareness projects like the Blue Ribbon Luncheon and Pinwheels for Prevention. The county has also participated in the Chamber LEAD academy to help raise awareness of services.
- Catoosa also supports Hickory Grove Community of Hope in partnership with the Northwest Georgia System of Care.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

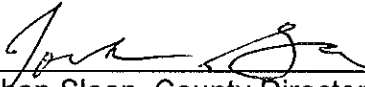
The community is in great need of more foster homes, housing, a reduction of teen pregnancies, homeless young adults, transportation. The county also needs higher level care facility for foster children and inpatient substance abuse.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

Although there has been improvements in staffing, the board believes a reduction of caseloads would improve quality of services to the community. The board also believes an increase in salary would reduce turnover and improve stability of services.



Ricky Kittle, Board Chair



Jonathan Sloan, County Director



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Charlton County
Department of Family and Children Services
32 Oakwood Street
Folkston, GA 31537

CHARLTON COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Makeup - Members/Officers, Length of service on Board, Background
Mr. Robert Atwater, Chairman~Community member/business owner~17 years
Mrs. Claudette Smith, Co-Chairman~Retired DFCS Staff~14 years
Mrs. Vonceil Crawford, Member, Retired Educator~16 years
Mrs. Donna Eunice, Member~Retired Educator~12 years
Mrs. Annette Dell, Member~Retired DFCS Staff~4 years
- Meeting dates/times and attendance of board members
Third Tuesday of each month at 10:00am/Members regularly attend
- Activities for the past year
No activities outside of monthly meetings
- Use of Local County Funds
Assist customers with utility bills, etc through General Assistance funds.
Supplement state supply budget when specific items are needed for staff.
Cover expenses for foster children that fall outside of normal state covered expenses.
Cover child care expenses in emergency situations when CAPS has not processed approval.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Successes
Continued positive relationships in the community and with community partners.
Improved customer service for OFI clients with open phone lines & service of local community.
- Challenges/Opportunities
Lengthy timeframes for onboarding new hires & filling vacated positions.
Lack of local foster homes & recruitment efforts.
Difficulties in placing "high end" children where their needs can be met
Lack of transportation and services for the south end of Charlton County (Georgia Bend area)—approximately 45 miles one way from DFCS office.

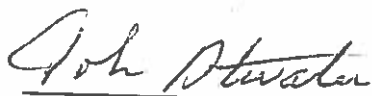
- Number of children in care-33
- Number of foster parents-8 foster homes
- Number of finalized adoptions-3
- Number of approved foster homes in past year-4
- Breakdown of number of CPS, Family Preservation and Family Support
During the Fiscal Year 2017 (July 1-June 30), a total of 190 reports were received for Charlton County. This included 60 Investigations and 62 Family Support cases. Charlton DFCS has averaged a monthly Family Preservation caseload of 13.
- Breakdown of number of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases
January 2017-May 2017 there was a total of 283 SNAP applications with a monthly average of just over 650 households receiving SNAP benefits. There was a total of 18 TANF applications received with a monthly average of 11 active TANF cases. For Medicaid there was a total of 338 applications with a monthly average of 412 Aged, Blind & Disabled Medicaid (ABD) active cases and a monthly average of 577 Family Medicaid active cases. Charlton DFCS does not have any ABAWD cases.
- Staff turnover rate
Charlton DFCS had 0% staff turnover rate during this reporting period.
- Stakeholder involvement/relationships
Charlton DFCS continues to promote strong positive relationships with our stakeholders and community partners. We have a very good working relationship with our local law enforcement, Georgia State Patrol & GBI. We are involved in numerous meetings throughout the year with our Law Enforcement partners, being they serve such an important role in the carrying out of our job duties, and host an annual "Meet and Greet" breakfast for all law enforcement in an effort to promote continued good working relationships. Staff are involved in a number of community partnerships including Charlton Family Connection, Satilla Advocacy Center monthly meetings and our Charlton County School System.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

Substance Abuse continues to be the biggest need/concern for Charlton County. There is also a lack of service providers in our rural community or providers who are willing to travel to meet the needs especially in the south end of the county located approximately 45 miles from Charlton DFCS. There is also a need for more recruitment of foster homes to serve Charlton's children since so many of our foster children are placed throughout the state due to shortage of homes and/or shortage of facility settings in our area to take on our children with special needs/behaviors.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department
The Board is aware of the continued issues with our Human Resources Department and the lengthy time delays involved with filling vacated positions. The Board would like to see this issue resolved or improved and feels this would help the county office greatly. The Board is pleased with the ongoing collaboration efforts within the community and would like to see those efforts continue. The Board especially is in favor of our close ties with local law enforcement and wishes for our annual meetings and regular collaborations to continue. Finally The Board wishes to see more foster home recruitment activities in our community involving our local churches and other civic groups. This will most likely increase the foster homes in the county and therefore the county will be able to place more foster children locally.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair



John Atwater, Board Chairman

11/21/17

Date



NATHAN DEAL
GOVERNOR

VIRGINIA PRYOR
INTERIM DIRECTOR

Annual Report 2017

Chatham County
Department of Family and Children Services
761 Wheaton Street
Savannah, GA 31401

BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE + A STATE OF HOPE ✦

SAFE CHILDREN. STRENGTHENED FAMILIES. STRONGER GEORGIA.
CHATHAM COUNTY DFCS | 761 WHEATON STREET | SAVANNAH, GA 31401

CHATHAM COUNTY
ANNUAL REPORT
DECEMBER 2017

A. County DFCS Board:

Larry Dane-Kellogg, Chairman, appointed January 2003. Mr. Kellogg is a former employee of Chatham County DFCS. Mr. Kellogg holds a Master of Social Work Degree from the University of Georgia. He has held several jobs in his field. He currently works at with the Veterans Administration working with the homeless Veterans of Savannah Chatham County.

Dr. Roenia Deloach, Assistant Chairman, appointed July 1, 2007. Dr. Deloach is the Associate Professor, Interim Department Chairperson of Social Work; Social Work Graduate Studies at Savannah State University in the Social Work Department. Dr. Deloach holds a PhD, and Master's Degree of Social Work, Ohio State University; Bachelor's Degree of Social from Jackson State University. Dr. Deloach is instrumental in helping 4E students obtain internships with the agency.

Dr. Quentina Miller-Fields appointed July 1, 2007. Dr. Fields is the Director of Student Affairs with the Chatham County Board of Education. Dr. Fields works very close with Chatham County Department of Family and Children Services by protecting the children of the schools. In 2008, Dr. Fields was honored with the Gwendolyn P. Goodman "Champion for Children" Award.

Rev. Aaron James, Sr., appointed January 16, 2015. Rev. James holds a Bachelor's degree, Philosophy and Religious Studies from Roberts Wesleyan College, Bachelor's degree, Business Administration and Management, from Roberts Wesleyan College, Master of Divinity from Faith Evangelical College and Seminary. Rev. James moved to Savannah, Georgia from Syracuse, New York in 2011. He is the Senior Pastor at Risen Life Christian Church of Savannah, GA.

Ms. Tracey Sapp, appointed March 2017. Ms. Sapp is a former employee of Chatham County DFCS and Savannah Chatham County Public School System where she served as a K-8 public school teacher. Additionally, Ms. Sapp served as an online school educator with Georgia Cyber Academy from 2008-2014. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Georgia Southern University, A Masters of Education in Administration from Cambridge University, and is in pursuit of a Doctorate of Organizational Management from the University of Phoenix. Ms. Tracey Sapp moved to Savannah, Georgia from Millen, Georgia in 1992. She is the owner and operator of the Eliteminds Tutorial Learning Center in which she provides alternative schooling option for children who struggle to find academic success in the traditional public-school setting.

The Chatham County DFCS Board's meetings are held the 4th Wednesday at 8:00 a.m.

Below are the 2017 meetings and the Board Members who were in attendance:

January 25, 2017
Mrs. Roenia Deloach
Mrs. Quentina Miller-Fields
Rev. Aaron James

July 26, 2017
No Meeting Scheduled
Summer Break

February 22, 2017
Canceled

August 23, 2017
No Meeting Scheduled
Summer Break

March 22, 2017
Canceled

September 27, 2017
Mr. Larry Dane-Kellogg
Mrs. Quentina Miller-Fields
Ms. Tracey Sapp

April 26, 2017
Mr. Larry Dane-Kellogg
Dr. Roenia Deloach
Dr. Quentina Miller-Fields
Ms. Tracey Sapp

October 26, 2017
Mr. Larry Dane-Kellogg
Mrs. Quentina Miller-Fields

May 24, 2017
Mr. Larry Dane-Kellogg
Ms. Tracey Sapp

November 22, 2017
Mr. Larry Dane-Kellogg
Mrs. Roenia Deloach
Mrs. Quentina Miller-Fields

June 28, 2017
Canceled

December 27, 2017
No Meeting Schedule
Holidays

Activities:

On October 26, 2017, the Board of Directors scheduled a meeting with the County Commissioners to discuss the termination of the Memorandum of Understanding which provided County Funding to Chatham County DFCS.

County Funds:

The Board of Directors oversees the usage of County Funds. All expenses over \$500 must have the board's approval before being disbursed. Expenditures for foster children included clothing, bedding, childcare, medication, school expenses.

Foster parents were reimbursed for incidental purchased for foster children, haircuts, diapers, formula, car seats, clothing, and school expenses.

County Funds also provided assistance to the citizens of Chatham County with payment of rent, electricity, water, and medication.

On June 2, 2017 Chatham County DFCS was notified of the termination of the Memorandum of Understanding with Chatham County. Chatham County will no longer provide annual funding to Chatham County DFCS.

There was a total of 16 resignations from Social Services during 2017.

Mr. Shawn Brown, Director is involved with the following stakeholders:

Safety Net Council

Family Treatment court

MARC -Multi Agency Resource Center

Juvenile Court Stakeholder Meetings

Child Sex Trafficking Taskforce

Department of Behavioral Health

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

There is a total of 414 children in foster care. There are 69 foster homes. The department needs more foster homes. Children are placed outside of the county and requires a large amount of travel for visits each month.

The Adoptions Unit found forever homes for 20 children during 2017.

Social Services breakdown of number of cases:

Investigations 193

CPS Ongoing 197

Family Support 152

Office of Family Independence has gone through several changes throughout the years. The last change took place this year where they moved from SUCCESS to Gateway. The statistic information is not readily available with Gateway as it was with SUCCESS. The OFI case managers are being tasked to learn the new system and provide the benefits to customers in a timely manner.

C. Assessment of community needs/concerns:

The county needs to improve on the following services:

Affordable housing

Substance abuse – more available counseling

Transportation – lower cost

Utility bills – lower bills especially for seniors

D. Recommendations of improved operations of the County Department

-Internal improvements are needed in Customer Service. Staff is required to complete Customer Service training before the end of the year.

-Case Managers need training on entering payments to ensure accurate and timely payments/reimbursements

E. Closing

Overall, the Chatham County Department Board of Directors commend the Social Services Case Workers on the dedication that is shown for the children of Chatham County. As with all services there is room for improvement. We feel that with more staff, which would lower caseloads the department could be one if not the top department in the State.

Approval Signature:



Larry Dane-Kellogg, Chairperson
Chatham County DFCS Board of Directors

*Chattahoochee County Department of
Family and Children Services
Annual Board Report
December, 2017*

- The Chattahoochee County DFCS Board is comprised of the following members:
 - Mrs. Madelyn Cumby, Chairperson
 - Mrs. Julia Liles, Vice-Chair
 - Ms. Louise Gardner
 - Mrs. Fannie Thornton
 - Ms. Cornelia King

- The Chattahoochee County DFCS Board meets monthly on the fourth (4th) Tuesday of each month at 4:00 p.m. at the Chattahoochee County DFCS Conference Room. There is no meeting held in the month of December.
- This Board is very pleased that CD Donna Tennison was finally promoted to the County Director position after serving as the Interim Director for both Chattahoochee and Marion Counties for several years and certainly deserved this promotion. Mrs. Tennison is very knowledgeable in all program areas and ensures that this Board is kept well-informed.
- During the past year, this Board has met consistently. In partnership with the County Director, we are kept informed of agency accomplishments, needs, problems, and upcoming programs. This Board has offered its assistance and participation whenever possible. During this year, the Board has received the annual County DFCS Board Training, training on The Blueprint for Change, and training on The Safe to Sleep Initiative. During the past year, members of this Board have served as charged.
- The Chattahoochee County DFCS Board finds that the Chattahoochee Co. DFCS continues to work in compliance with all State and County guidelines. This office maintains excellent customer service with both its internal and external customers. It is noted that partner agencies, customers, and agencies outside this community speak highly of the service and cooperation they receive when working with Chattahoochee County DFCS staff.
 - Chattahoochee County DFCS is performing well in the area of service delivery to all customers. During this year we experienced a shortage of OFI staff due to a resignation. We have since filled the position. The OFI

staff consistently meet, or exceed all OFI guidelines for SOP, timeliness, and accuracy. This agency currently does not have a Social Services Supervisor and CD Tennison has had to act in this role in addition to her other duties. The Social Services staff consistently meet performance indicators. This agency has suffered the loss of most of its veteran staff, but has worked hard to rebuild and meet all agency goals.

- During 2017, this Board has had discussion on the following topics of concern:
 - Lack of safety measures for workers traveling into remote rural areas where they feel unsafe.
 - This Board approved funds for the purchase of a color printer and cartridges in April, 2017. This purchase has been made.
 - In July, 2017 CD Tennison provided annual training to all Board members on the Rules and Regulations of County DFCS Boards.
 - In September, 2017, CD Tennison informed the Board of the agency;s need for two car seats to be used when transporting children. These seats will remain with the agency for this purpose. This purchase was approved.
- During this year, Vice-Chairperson, Judy Liles served as a member of the Regional DFCS Board, but was unable to attend many of the meetings due to illness of a family member. In our November, 2017 meeting Judy Liles submitted her resignation from this Board. CD Tennison has notified the Chattahoochee Co. Commission Chair and requested a replacement.

It is the observation of this Board that CD Tennison and the Chattahoochee Co. DFCS staff work very well together. CD Tennison strongly believes in the "TEAM" concept, and it is evident in the day-to-day operations at the office. The "team" works together across county and programmatic lines to ensure that goals are met, and that customers are served.

- CD Tennison continues to work hard to build and strengthen relationships with agency partners. There has been much growth in this area during CD Tennison's tenure.
- Chattahoochee County remains in need of local foster homes. DFCS staff continue to advocate for local foster homes by sharing the need with local churches and at all collaborative meetings.
- CD Tennison and staff work diligently each year ensure that every child in Chattahoochee County has a "merry" Christmas. Each year, CD Tennison and staff, friends, family, local churches and agency partners work together to purchase, wrap, and deliver toys to local foster and needy children. Each year, this is one of the agency's most successful projects.

In addition to the successes, there are some challenges. Chattahoochee County is a very small, rural county. In recent times, we have experienced a large increase in illegal

drug activity which has impacted the lives of numerous children. During this year, Chattahoochee County has had more children in Foster Care than in past years. The lack of local foster homes only complicates this issue.

C. Community Needs/Concerns:

- Local Foster Homes

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

- The Board requests consideration for the safety of staff members traveling to homes in remote areas of the county. This Board is aware of the "panic button", but phone service is limited, at best, in the remote areas of the county. We are very concerned for the safety of our workers who routinely travel into these areas. Please consider alternatives for workers in remote areas of the State. When our case managers fear for their safety, they tend to seek other employment. We want to keep the good staff that we have.

E. This Board feels that Chattahoochee County DFCS is one of the best child welfare agencies in the world. We will continue to work together to become "The BEST"!

Signature: _____

Madelyn Cumby

Chattahoochee County DFCS Board Chairperson

Chattooga County Department of Family and Children Services
Annual Board Report
2017 (Calendar Year)

The Chattooga County Department of Family and Children Services County Board is made up of five members representing the community. These members are Clemmie Black-Board Chair, Ginger Copeland-Vice Chair, John Sterner, Brenda Park (term ended June 2017), Melvin Mosley (term began July 2017) and Johnny Brimer. The Board meets every other month on the odd months of the year. The county does receive county funds in which the Board approves all expenditures.

The Board has assessed the effectiveness of the Chattooga County DFCS provision of services. The Board feels like the following are working well at Chattooga County DFCS;

- Retaining staff, retaining efforts and in-house training of new staff
- Use of the county supplement as a recruitment and retention tool for staff
- Responding to reports regarding safety of children and assessing their needs
- Continued work with families to keep children safely with their families
- Working OFI cases and resolving OFI case issues
- Partnering with the community, foster parents and faith based community
- County staff involvement with foster/adoptive families
- Moving children to permanency in a timely manner
- Having an onsite food pantry
- Having an onsite supply closet for basic needs
- Staff are accessible and always kept general incoming call line to the office
- Continuous campaign for safe sleep for babies in the community
- County staff's willingness to help other county DFCS offices who are short staffed
- Great teamwork of this staff and positive attitude among staff
- Great customer service consistently
- Moved to a county based One Caseworker, One Family Model for OFI
- In house OFI Supervision
- In house ABD Staff
- Utilize leadership opportunities to both serve and for training statewide

The Board feels like the following areas could use some improvement;

- Better phone service on the OFI phone line
- Make Centralized Intake more user friendly

- Reduce caseloads across the Region/State as manageable caseloads would go a long way in retaining staff.
- Increased pay for staff and incremental raises as well as cost of living raises
- Less time for the hiring process

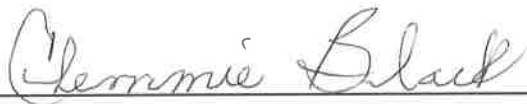
The Board sees the needs of our community as being;

- More resources for families for transportation, mental health and parenting resources
- The need for more education on safe sleep practices for babies and other safety issues
- The need for more resources for substance abuse treatment-both inpatient and outpatient
- The need for more foster and adoptive resources
- The need for more job opportunities and jobs with higher wages

The Board recommends the following for improved operations;

- Continued participation in the Panic Button Rollout
- The ability to backfill positions as soon as anyone leaves in all areas
- Faster internet

The Board approved this report on November 15, 2017.



Clemmie Black, Board Chair



Kim Ballard Humphrey, County Director and Secretary

**CHEROKEE
COUNTY
ANNUAL REPORT
DECEMBER 2017**

A. General Summary of the County DFCS Board:

The Cherokee County Department of Family and Children Services County Board consists of seven members representing the community. The members are: Angela Kuter, Chair, Janice Prather, Vice-Chair, Jeff Moon, Donna Ratliff, Nina Morris, Ann Bradshaw, and Major Ollie Cushing. The Board meets monthly and has regular attendance from all Board members.

Some examples of activities this year using county funds are recognition of Child Abuse Awareness Month, Foster Parent Appreciation Banquet, one-time salary supplement for staff, additional home studies for Resource Development, and additional clothing allowances and enrichment/extra curricular activities for foster children.

B. Assessment of Effectiveness of County's Provision of Services:

2017 successes include increased retention through additional support; caseload reductions; and increased pay for staff through supplements.

The main challenge this year was having three Directors during the first eight months. Stability in this position will go a long way towards staff retention.

Cherokee averaged 275 children per month in Foster Care. We had approximately 40 Foster Homes opened each month. 33 adoptions were finalized in 2017. 1,503 cases have been assessed for CPS and Family Support, with 175 cases being assessed for Family Preservation.

The staff turnover rate for 2017 was 23%. This is a 61% reduction from 2016, when the turnover rate was 84%.

Our current stakeholder relationships include local law enforcement agencies, Juvenile and Superior Courts, Chamber of Commerce, YMCA, Cherokee County Domestic Violence Center, Cherokee Focus, professional organizations such as the Rotary Club, CASA, the school system, Kennesaw State University, the faith-based community, private providers, MUST Ministries, and the Salvation Army.

C. Board's Assessment of Community Needs/Concerns:

Needs for the community include a new building for the Department that facilitates all staff having their own work space and sufficient parking, continued progress in the Blueprint for Change model; continued increase in placement resources for foster children within the county to keep children in their home community, and having substance abuse/mental health/sex offender options for adults and youth in the county.

D. Board's Recommendations for Improvements:

Continue to increase placement resources for Foster Children within the county.
Increase placement resource for children with relative and fictive kin placements.
Continue to work with the County government to move forward with a new building.
And, continue to provide support to staff to improve staff retention.

E. Closing and Signature of the Board Chair:

The County, along with the Board, shall continue to work with community collaboratives to improve outcomes for the families and children in Cherokee County.

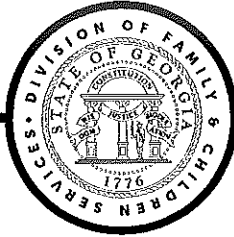
 11-14-17

Angela Kuter Date
Cherokee County Board Chair

 11/14/17

Brooke Ford Date
Cherokee County Director

NATHAN DEAL
GOVERNOR



VIRGINIA PRYOR
INTERIM DIRECTOR

Annual Board Report 2017

Clarke County
Department of Family and Children Services
284 N. Avenue
Athens, GA 30601

Clarke County Annual Report December 2017

A. General summary of the Clarke County DFCS Board:

The Clarke County Board consists of 6 members.

1. Emily Boness, Board Chair
2. Emily Coleman
3. Kirrena Gallagher
4. Andrea Lingard, Board Vice-Chair
5. Jim Gaudin
6. Jane Okrasinski

This year the board met 6 times on the following dates

1. January 18th, 2017
2. March 15th, 2017
3. May 17th, 2017
4. June 28th, 2017
5. September 6th, 2017
6. November 15th, 2017

In addition, the board had a small appreciation event for staff on May 25th, 2017.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of Department's provision of services:

The Clarke County Department is strong and performing well, building on initiatives from previous years. The continued focus on a few specific areas allows the Department to have a clear message in the community about its goals as well as its needs.

One way the Department is effectively engaged with the community is its continued involvement with the community's initiative to become a trauma informed community. The Director continues to participate in community meetings to provide expertise and to better understand the services and training that are available. The Director encourages community leaders to develop a consistent and evidence-based response to trauma as well as to have those services available to all those who need them.

Another area of innovation that continued in 2017 is the Home in 5 collaborative. The Home in 5 is a public-private partnership to increase foster care awareness, foster homes, and support in our Region. By providing awareness, education, and support, the community has become more informed and about the need for foster care homes and how to become involved in helping foster care children, including supporting existing foster homes. This year the board heard from a local non-profit, "Chosen for Life" about their work. The organization provides an innovative way to support foster families by creating a "support team" for each family. This presentation sparked ideas with board members about how to replicate the model in a non-secular way for other audiences, including schools.

The board continued a few initiatives that have been well received by staff. First, the county continues to provide a pay supplement to staff after their first 90 days of employment, as well as bi-annual supplements. Supplements are also provided to staff who can speak a second language and two staff members currently receive that supplement. The board also provides funds for staff to attend training and conferences to improve their knowledge base and expertise, as well as to network with other professionals in the field. The county continues to provide for Masters of Social Work students to receive supervision. Finally, to help case workers with their timeliness, the county board allocates funds for dictation services.

There are a few areas in which the Department sees room for improvement and seeks the support of the State office to implement change. For example, the board is disappointed to learn of a freeze in hiring new staff to fill empty positions. The inability to hire new staff to fill positions makes it difficult to complete the work in a timely and effective fashion. While the increase in pay for existing staff was needed, it should not come at the expense of hiring new staff. In addition, we hope that voluntary overtime for staff is limited and that no more mandatory overtime is implemented.

Secondly, the Department and board would like to see the kinship laws and policies changed to make it easier for families to get approved. There are policy barriers that make it difficult for kin to step in to serve as foster families, and the board believes this works as a detriment to children in foster care.

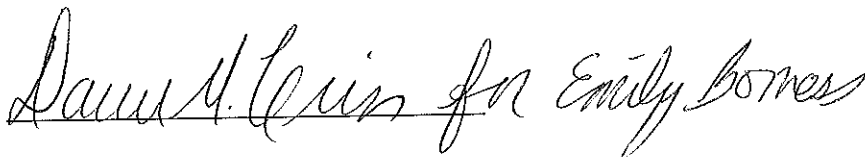
Next year the Board will sponsor a staff appreciation event in February which will include food and a talent show.

C. Board assessment of community needs and concerns:

The Clarke County Department and its board have a well-developed understanding for the community needs. One big need is for more local foster homes. The Home in 5 initiative is working on closing the gap this but there is still a need for local foster homes.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the Department:

Last year the board recommended that the Department continue to strive to bring caseloads in line with the 1:15 ratio for frontline staff. This year, the board recommends that the standard be 1:10. This is because the work involved with adhering to the juvenile code is substantial and requires more time. Thus, caseworkers should have fewer cases to ensure they are meeting all the code's requirements and best serving the needs of children and families.



Emily Boness,

Clarke County DFCS Board Chair

original
mailed
11/29/17

COPY

November 21, 2017

TO: Ginger Pryor, State DFCS Director
2 Peachtree Street
19-490
Atlanta, GA 30303

FROM: Clay County DFCS Board

RE: Annual DFCS Board Report – Clay County DFCS

The Clay County DFCS Board has been supportive in the work of the agency in a number of ways. Each board member lives in the community and is aware of the demographics and needs of the community. Additionally, each board member is involved in serving and promoting the growth and well-being of children and families. In their various capacities, the members promote the work and efforts of the local DFCS staff. The Clay County Board works well together and meetings are scheduled on a bi-monthly basis to discuss both the needs of the community and of the staff.

A major strength for our local DFCS staff is that of continuity and longevity of service. The staff is not only familiar with the services they provide but to the community they provide it to. This promotes the quality of customer service and affords better networking with the community. The staff also work very well together to get the job done!

One of the biggest positives for 2017 is that in the past, we have had to share a social services supervisor with 4 other counties. This year, we were able to hire a social services supervisor by promoting a long term case manager here locally. We are excited for her counterpart to be hired so that the 5 counties in our cluster will share 2 social services supervisor instead of the 1 supervisor we have had for years. This will allow the supervisor to focus more on the families here at home.

One of the areas that we need to change is that the office is only open 3 days a week to the public and we need it to be open 5 days a week. This access is desperately needed for the people in Clay County. We feel that it would greatly enhance the services to the county. In a small, rural community, the DFCS office is really a source of support, and it is important that our constituents are able to access the staff there. It's easier to talk to someone you know about your business rather than a stranger on

the phone. Having the phone lines back in the county has helped, but our staff continue to have to travel to other offices on the days that the office is closed which is prohibitive to excellent customer service.

The County Director position continues to be posted and reposted. This is much needed as we have had an interim county director for several years now. She has done as much as she can do with covering both this position as well as another one, but we are looking forward to having someone here full time and the stability that brings with it. Additionally, Clay and Quitman Counties have always worked well together so a joint appointment for county director for these counties is understandable. However, we have now been grouped with Randolph County as well and we feel that this is just too much for one County Director to handle and due to the size of Randolph County, the person who is hired will likely end up spending much of his/her time there.

Finally, the building here in Clay County is in need of some upkeep. The outside really looks bad and is not at all inviting. In fact, it is hard to distinguish it as a DFCS office. The parking lot is full of potholes which could be dangerous not only to vehicles but also to foot traffic. It desperately needs some paint and some landscaping at a minimum. It is also time for interior improvements such as paint and carpet.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss Clay County's strengths and needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jacqueline McClendon Vice-Chairman". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Libby Neves

Clay County DFCS Board Chairman



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Clayton County
Department of Family and Children Services
877 Battle Creek Rd
Jonesboro, Georgia
30236



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Dear Director of State of Georgia Division of Family & Children Services:

We respectfully submit this 2017 annual report pursuant to Senate Bill 138. This report is to provide both a review and recommendations on Clayton county's achievement of the agency's vision and work toward the continued improvement of the administration of child welfare functions within the county.

The Clayton DFCS Board is comprised of four members lead by Chairman, Tia M. Simon and Vice Chairman, Keisha Wright Hill. The other members are, Barbara Pulliam and Quen Howard. The Board meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 9:30a.m on the second floor Clayton County Department of Family and Children Services building located at 877 Battle Creek Road in Jonesboro, GA. The Board's primary function is to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Clayton DFCS' provision of services. In doing so, the board has identified the following as being successful:

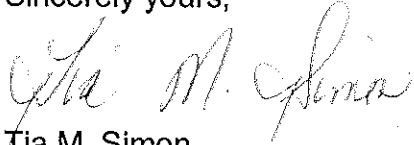
1. The 19 percent pay raise for the DFCS case workers has boosted moral and reduced the turnover rate.
2. The appointment of our new County Director, Dr. Nia Cantey. The ease and ability to merge our visions and goals together to improve the services that the agency provides to the constituents of Clayton County. We are excited to have her on board.
3. The quarterly Clayton County DFCS Board activities that include but are not limited to: staff appreciation luncheons, Easter egg hunt for children in care, turkey giveaway to fostering families and the fall festival open to all the children in care or recipients of services.

Currently, the Clayton DFCS office has fallen behind in timely initial assessments and processing food stamp renewals. This may be due to new hire training process and the amount of caseworkers that are on leave. The Clayton Board has identified four (4) key focus areas where it believes opportunities exists for improving the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the Clayton DFCS office. They are as follows:

1. Increase the amount of case managers that are assigned from other counties to assist Clayton County case managers with timely initial assessments.
2. Increase the Administrators salaries, the 19 percent raise did not include the administration staff which in some, case managers now earn more than the department administrators.
3. Staff safety has become an issue. Contract a new security company or request fully equipped and trained security officers to safeguard the building and the staff.
4. The Social Services Department is in need of a medical liaison (with credentials) to support the county director and other staff with making decisions regarding prescriptions for the children in care. Financial support from the state is desired to create and maintain the position.

In all, Clayton County DFCS has done exceptionally well with aiding and assisting the children and families of not only Clayton County, but other counties as well. The Board and I appreciate your continued support. We look forward to another year of working with you and the entire DFCS staff.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tia M. Simon".

Tia M. Simon
Clayton County DFCS Board Chair
December 11, 2017



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report 2017

Clinch County
Department of Family and Children Services
17 E Shirley Road
Homerville, GA 31634

CLINCH COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT December 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Makeup – Mrs. Lorraine Richardson, Chairperson – 17 years of service and background is a retired local business owner and a leader in the faith community; Mrs. Wenda Fender, Co-Chairperson – 3 years of service and background is a current local business owner; Mrs. Dorothy Griffis, member – 14 years of service and background is retired school teacher; Ms. Sarah Thornton, member – 12 years of service and background is retired health department registered nurse; Mrs. Katie Rice, member – 1 year of service and background is retired school teacher; Mrs. Natalie Howell, County Director and Judy Daugharty, Administrative Support III.
- Meeting dates/times – The Clinch County DFCS Board meets on the third Tuesday of every month at 11:00 A.M. All board members regularly attend meetings.
- Activities for the past year – The Clinch County DFCS Board has met every month this year.
- Use of local county funds – County funds are used primarily for child welfare expenses and office supplies. See attached addendum.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Successes – We have a great team at our local office. They work hard to provide the best services possible with the resources they have. The OFI staff are all veteran workers, and can provide great service in a timely manner. The board rarely received complaints from the community about the provision of services by the DFCS staff in our county. The opening of the front desk phone lines has been a positive improvement in regards to the agency's ability to provide customer service to the community.
- Challenges - Due to very limited clerical staff in our office and region, we currently close to the public 2 days per week, this of course limits effectiveness of our service provision to the community.

Our social services staff have served two counties this year, which is a decrease from four that they served in previous years. With the decrease in counties covered, they are better able to participate in community meetings and events in each county.

Nearly all of our foster children are located outside of our county. We are in need of more DFCS foster homes and therapeutic foster homes in our area.

- Number of children in care – 28
- Number of foster parents – 2 approved foster homes

- Number of finalized adoptions - 0
- Number of approved foster homes in past year – 1 home
- Breakdown of number of CPS, Family Preservation and Family Support – During FY 17, we averaged 3 CPS Investigations per month, 3 Family Support cases per month, and 4 Family Preservation cases per month.
- Breakdown of number of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases – This information is not able to be obtained out of Gateway at this time.
- Staff turnover rate – There has been very minimal staff turnover at Clinch DFCS. Most of the staff have been employed with the agency for over 5 years.
- Stakeholder involvement/relationships - Clinch DFCS has a strong relationship with the Clinch Family Connection. We have a healthy working relationship with our local schools, law enforcement, and courts.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns: Rural communities with large land masses and small populations create unique challenges for the provision of services to both social services and OFI clients.

- Personnel and staffing needs:
 - We are grateful for the increase in positions allotted to our county over the last year. However, the recruitment and ongoing process has been challenging to navigate. There have been difficulties in getting positions posted on the website, difficulty keeping them posted on the website, difficulty obtaining a viable hiring pool, then there are long wait times for fingerprints and drug screens to be scheduled and long waits for approval to hire.

We were approved four social services case manager positions and one social service technician position in July of 2016. It has taken a year and a half to get the technician and three of the case managers hired. We are still advertising for the final position. With these delays, although we have positions, we still have not had the help we need on board to provide assistance to families.

- Resources and services for clients:
 - As a very rural county, we have high incidences of substance abuse, domestic violence and mental health issues, but we have limited resources in county to help families address these needs. We do have one satellite mental health office in the county that is able to provide basic services to our families with mental health needs; however, there are no resources in county for domestic violence, parenting support, or intensive substance abuse treatment. Families have to travel out of town to obtain these services.

- There are very few opportunities for employment in our county. This creates a feeling of helplessness and hopelessness for our already impoverished families.
 - There are no public transportation services in our counties. Families must travel long distances to access services and basic needs. Commutes of 30 to 45 minutes one way are common for most of our families to access resources.
 - Our county has no after school programs and only one formal daycare provider. This lack of child care support negatively impacts the families in Clinch County and contributes to problems with appropriate supervision of children.
 - There are few recreational or entertainment activities in the county. We have a recreation department, but fees are high and scholarships are not offered; this excludes many at risk children from participating. The lack of positive outlets and activities contributes to juvenile delinquency within the county.
 - There is no formal food bank in Clinch County. There are a few churches that have a limited partnership with the food bank in a neighboring county and work to provide some emergency food support to county residents.
 - There is no organization to provide support for indigent care/transient/homeless populations in the county. Residents in Clinch County have limited support from a neighboring county homeless coalition.
 - We have very few foster homes in our county. This means that our children have to move from their schools, churches and recreational programs when they have already been moved from their homes and families.
- Safety concerns for staff in our County:
 - Our county has great law enforcement support, but resources for law enforcement are limited. Our local law enforcement jurisdictions may have only one or two deputies on duty during a shift. This creates a safety issue for families as well as case management staff when they are in need of law enforcement assistance and an officer is tied up with another matter in another part of the county.
 - There are areas in our county where there is no cell phone reception. This poses a safety threat for case management staff out in the community with no access to call for help. There are areas in our community that are very rural and criminal behaviors such as growing marijuana or making methamphetamine is common. It is dangerous for our case management staff to drive around in these areas with no cell phone service and it isn't practical for law enforcement to accompany them on every single call.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

- Annual performance based pay increases along with cost of living increases should be placed in effect for all DFCS staff.

- Every county should have at least one clerical/support staff person that is not responsible for other program specific duties (i.e. and Office Manager). Having additional clerical and support staff would benefit our county tremendously.
- Allow social services staff to carry pepper spray for personal safety.
- Have metal detectors at the entrance of all county offices.
- Allot limited funding for DFCS offices to have an annual staff appreciation event.
- Enhance partnerships with volunteer organizations (Experience Works, Telemon, etc.) and advertise the need for volunteer support in local DFCS offices.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair:

We appreciate your review and consideration of this report. We welcome any feedback you may be willing to provide.


Clinch County DFCS Board Chairperson



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report

Cobb Department of Family and Children Services 325 Fairground Street Marietta, Georgia 30060 December 13, 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- **Makeup – Members/Officers**
 1. Dan Post, Jr – Chairman
 2. Betsy Madrerohon – Vice Chairman
 3. Dayton Hibbs – Member
 4. Everett Cebula – Member
 5. Sandy Woltering – Member
 6. Ana Murphy – Member
 7. Monte Wilson – Member

- **Meeting dates/times**
 1. January 12, 2017 – 8:15 AM
 2. February 9, 2017 – 8:15 AM
 3. March 9, 2017 – 8:15 AM
 4. April 13, 2017 – 8:15 AM
 5. May 11, 2017 – 8:15 AM
 6. June 8, 2017 – 1:00 PM
 7. July 13, 2017 – 8:15 AM
 8. August 10, 2017 – 8:15 AM
 9. September 14, 2017 – 8:15 AM
 10. October 12, 2017 – 8:15 AM
 11. November 6, 2017 – 10:30 AM
 12. December 19, 2017 – 10 AM

- **Activities for the past year**
 1. The Board has sponsored two billboards throughout the county to promote the State's Safe Sleep campaign. These campaigns are ongoing and hope to be extended into 2018 to include water safety.
 2. The Board supported a Special County Compensation to Services staff in June and December in effort to support stability and retention of Services staff.
 3. GPHSA – Board Member and Director attended the August GPHSA meeting in Savannah, GA
 4. GA Association of DFCS Boards – Board Member and Director attended the GA Association meeting in Macon, GA in April
 5. The Board approved funding for meals and activities for the Cobb County Foster and Adoptive Parent Association.
 6. Board Members attended the Employee Appreciation Luncheon in May.
 7. Board Meeting was held at Cobb Annex during the June Board Meeting to attend the Graduation Celebration for Foster Children.
 8. Trunk or Treat – Members of the Board participated in this event, decorating the trunk of their vehicle and handing out candy to foster children.
 9. The Board approved funding to purchase seven security radios to enhance the communication, security, and safety of our staff and clients.
 10. Holiday Breakfast Full Staff Meeting – Board attended and Board Meeting followed. Breakfast and Board Meeting held at the Marietta First United Methodist Church.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services

What's working well –

- The communication between the county and the Advisory Board has been very effective. There is always the sharing of pertinent information that keeps both the board and the agency updated on issues that need to be addressed during and between meetings to ensure consistency in our communication with stakeholders in our community.
- The Board continues to play a vital role in improving constituent engagement with our stakeholders. This effort is realized with involvement from County Law Enforcement, School System, and Healthcare representatives on our Advisory Board.
- The Board has allocated and approved one county position in the county budget: Volunteer Resource Coordinator. This position was allocated to assist with our Secret Santa program and community outreach to secure resources and funding for our foster children.
- Training – Our District/Region participates in the Metro District of Education and Professional Development Education Center of Excellence (MDDEPD) so all activities related to onboarding which includes ordering equipment and

- CICC still sends cases to the County that lack sufficient information to locate, make contact and or assess in a timely manner.
- Special Investigation Unit (SIU) has not been able to maintain a sufficient work force to really support the counties and take ownership of the Special Investigations as had been planned.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

- Cobb has a large homeless population that includes families with children. There are not enough shelters in Cobb that accept families.
- Drug usage by teens has increased and there are not enough residential treatment programs in Cobb.
- There is a need for more Domestic Violence Shelters as the current shelter remains at capacity.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

- Cobb is at capacity for their current office space. Out sourcing has helped them eliminate a crisis situation. They are currently in the last year of their lease of office space on the CCYA campus (expires 2018). Additional office space will be needed within the next two years based on current workloads and anticipated trends.
- Continue community engagement of the Hospitals, Courts, Cobb County Commissioners, and Schools etc.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair



Dan Post, Jr – Chairman of Cobb DFCS Board

12/15/17

Date



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

ANNUAL REPORT

2017

Coffee County
Department of Family and Children Services
1300 W. Baker Hwy
Douglas, Georgia 31533

Coffee County DFCS | Kelley J. Harmon, MPA, County Director | 1300 W. Baker Hwy, Douglas GA 31533
Telephone: 912-389-4152 | Fax: 912-389-4132

An Equal Opportunity Employer

COFFEE COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

The board members who serve the Coffee County Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) are to be commended for their passion, and diligent efforts in ensuring that policies and procedures were followed to provide quality services to families and children in Coffee County. For 2017, the board meets the first Tuesday of every other. With the onboarding of the full time County Director, the board will now meet the First Tuesday of each month. All meetings are held at the Coffee County DFCS office. Members for this reporting period include the following who have served for over 5 years;

- Dr. Wilma Lott, Chairman
- Mr. Jimmy Roberts
- Mrs. Nina Lott
- Mary Ann Huff
- Jenny McIver
- Kelley Harmon, Secretary

For 2017, the board has provided numerous opportunities from securing community support for the agency programs and services to the approval of county funds to support constituent relations activities designed to engage the agency in non-traditional community services and activities to enhance the knowledge of support services offered by the agency. We hope to continue to enhance opportunities for DFCS partnership within the community to support Coffee County moving towards becoming a true Community of Hope.

During Thanksgiving, members thank staff for their efforts with fellowship meals, and take time out of their busy schedules to come and fellowship with the staff and other partners to share in a time of thanks. The board works untiringly in many other meaningful ways to show their support and appreciation for the commitment of Coffee County staff towards the goals and mission of DFCS.

B. The County Board's assessment of the effectiveness of the county department's provision of services:

Case Managers in Coffee County Foster Care program were required to visit 192 children for this reporting period. With there being only 20 foster homes, one can understand that there are a number of children being placed outside of the county. Efforts are underway to work to bring children back to the county, with emphasis being placed on relative placement resources, as well as

increasing foster home population to accommodate children who can, being closer to their home and family connections.

Foster parent meet and greets and monthly foster parent calls with the Resource Development team and the local county directors has continued to improve the relationship between the foster parents and the agency in getting issues resolved quicker as well as preventing new issues from arising in the future: however, with the influx of new staff due to turnover, it is imperative that we look at new ways of engaging our foster families in understanding our staffing plight in areas such as ours, as well as elicit their support with helping us train staff regarding the needs of such providers. Attention is needed to support timely Adoptions, as there are a number of TPR's that have not been finalized. Efforts are underway to work with the SAAG to ensure these are done timely. With this challenge, there were no Adoptions finalized for this 2017 reporting period.

In regards to Child Protection, at the end of the year, there were on average 37 Family Preservation Cases, and 23 Family Support Cases. 9 of the total Family Support case were opened by the submission of this report for the month of December, with that number expecting to climb for by the end of the month. CPS reporting call center has continued to improve its services, thus enhancing user experience in making a CPS report to ensure the safety and protection of children in our community. Continued assessment and adjustments will continue to advance service delivery.

For OFI, we have not been able to provide an accurate count for the number of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases served due to reporting issues experienced with the implementation of service management system GATEWAY. We have been advised that reporting will soon be available, and we will have the opportunity to see and understand the workload from system implementation to when date and time the reporting functionality of the system is available.

The return of OFI services to the local office has continued to be a welcomed benefit and relief to Coffee County residents, and has restored the presence of the county agency back to the community and people it serves. Coffee County DFCS staff see on an average 150+ people on a daily basis, not including phone calls. During the implementation of the State's new system for the Office of Family Independence, the average number of people in the office doubled for several months creating issues regarding space and support available to assist clients timely. This challenge was met by agency staff with the same level of professionalism provided since services were returned to the local county office.

Stakeholder Involvement:

The county office has enjoyed a great partnership with Law Enforcement, the School System, including Family Connections, service providers and other

Coffee County DFCS | Kelley J. Harmon, MPA, County Director | 1300 W. Baker Hwy, Douglas GA 31533
Telephone: 912-389-4152 | Fax: 912-389-4132

human service agencies in the community. Efforts are always underway to nurture and grow these relationships to ensure coordination of services, and to ensure service availability based on needs assessed in a collaborative manner.

C. The County Board's assessment of the needs of the community:

- Continue efforts with the Regional Resource Development Team to develop additional foster homes for children who have to come into care to reduce the number of children requiring out of county foster home resources.
- Enhance efforts to recruit providers available to work with Coffee County families in Coffee County. The need for intensive substance abuse and domestic violence services for families to support the large Methamphetamine, Opioid, and domestic violence population which has greatly increased the number of children required to come into foster care.
- Advocate for after school activities for Coffee County children. This is especially needed during summer months when school is not in session. Also, adequate role model programs for teens continue to be a huge gap in community services for our youth.
- Increased staffing levels in OFI and Social services to have more manageable caseloads as well as improve work quality, reduce error rates, and improve staff morale.

D. The County Board's recommendations for improved operations of the county department – including recommendations regarding staffing levels and worker safety, as well as other areas:

- State should support county offices by providing more staff in OFI and particularly Social services to support staff having manageable caseloads, improve the quality of services provided, and to support staff retention.
- Remove state mandate and restrictions on the approval of how the county can use its own county supplied funds for county approved projects. This is not the most efficient way to manage county funding.
- Continued need to allow additional freedom to county offices to utilize the services of local vendors when appropriate instead of state contracted vendors who are not always cost effective.
- County office lobbies should be equipped with video surveillance cameras and microphones in support of ensuring the safety of County DFCS staff and customers. Coffee County staff have received numerous personal threats while conducting the business of the agency. There was also a box left outside the office front door one afternoon creating a bomb scare for every one. The box did not contain a bomb; however, a message was being sent to the agency with the box being filled with dirty

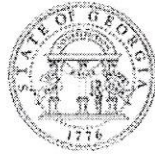
diapers. Staff have also encountered threats outside of their work hours at grocery stores, etc. All incidents were reported to local law enforcement agencies and regional management staff.

In summary, the board looks forward to continuing to work in partnership with the agency to create and sustain Coffee County as a Community of Hope through; strengthening families, supporting self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable children.


Dr. Wilma Lott, Chairperson


Kelley J. Harmon, DFCS Director

cc: Rhonda Wheeler, Regional Director



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Colquitt County
Department of Family and Children Services
449 N. Main St., Suite A
Moultrie, Georgia
31768

COLQUITT COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

Earnest Saunders, Chairperson – Mr. Saunders has served on the board for over 30 years. Mr. Saunders has been a member of Oakgrove Baptist Church for 70 years. He is a member of the Deacon Board. Mr. Saunders is an active farmer in the community.

Richard Edwards, Co-Chairperson – Mr. Edwards has served on the board for over 30 years. Mr. Edwards is a member of Trinity Baptist Church and currently the Chairman of the Deacon Board.

Dorothy Crapps – Ms. Crapps has served on the board for four years. Ms. Crapps volunteers at the Soup Kitchen & Colquitt Regional Hospital. She served 28 years with the Division of Social Services in New Jersey. Member of Women of Excellence with State of Georgia National Baptist working with women who have been incarcerated

Pamela Heidelberg – Ms. Heidelberg has served on the board since September 2016. Ms. Heidelberg is a school Social Worker with the Colquitt Co. Board of Education.

Joanne Jordan – Ms. Jordan has served on the board for over 30 years. Ms. Jordan is a member of Mother Easter Baptist Church. Ms. Jordan is an outstanding leader in our community based on her faith and the guidance that she shares in helping our children here in Colquitt Co.

The board meets the 2nd Thursday in the month at 2:00 PM in the board room on the 2nd floor of the Colquitt Co. DFCS office.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

Successes

New OFI System, "Gateway", new Social Service Practice Model – Solution Based Case Management, "SBC", 25 finalized adoptions, more community based outreach through school, law enforcement and community events.

Challenges/Opportunities

Learning Curve with the new Gateway System has caused a delay in benefits for clients but this is slowly improving as OFI staff become more familiar with the system.

Lack of foster homes causes children to have to leave their community/school as well as causes case managers to have to spend more time on the road with traveling around the state to see the children.

Number of children in care - 114

Number of foster parents – 15

Number of finalized adoptions – 25

Number of approved foster homes in past year - 0

Breakdown of number of :

CPS – Investigations – 180

Family Support - 244

Family Preservation – average of 50 each month

Staff turnover rate

Of the total 44 staff during the year, we have only had 4 staff turn over

Stakeholder involvement/relationships

Community Events with Law Enforcement (Trunk or Trick)

Part of Family Connection Collaborative

Part of the Truancy Hearing with the Board of Education

Speaking to Community groups on mandated reporter training and child abuse

School Counselors

Family Connections

Community Action Council

Meeting with private adoption agency – “The Open Door Adoption Agency” to build a connection with their adoptive families.

Worked with “The Forgotten Initiative” (community group who support foster children, foster parents and staff)

Piloted the “Care Portal” web portal (faith based program) – first county in the state

Investigation Unit worked the Teen Maze School Event – partnering with the hospital regarding teen pregnancy and safe sleep

Held a Foster Parent Community Recruitment event – held at local school – all school social workers participated/assisted with the event. School social workers have started helping recruit foster homes.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

We are also in need of more foster homes and a local transportation system in the community.


D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

What was achieved over the last year:

1. The agency is now fully staffed in the investigation unit.
2. The agency has a 1 to 15 ratio in Investigation & Family Preservation and a 1 to 20(approximate) ratio in Foster Care
3. Supervisors & Case managers in Social Services and OFI received salary increases comparable to the job market.

Areas needs improvement:

1. Panic Button
2. Evaluate other positions from clerical to county director for the salary increase comparable to the job market


Earnest Saunders, Chairperson



NATHAN DEAL
GOVERNOR

VIRGINIA PRYOR
INTERIM DIRECTOR

Annual Report 2017

Columbia County Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS)

BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE + A STATE OF HOPE =

SAFE CHILDREN. STRENGTHENED FAMILIES. STRONGER GEORGIA.

COLUMBIA CO. DFCS | BRANDI C. THREAT, COUNTY DIRECTOR | 6358 COLUMBIA RD. | P.O. BOX 340 | APPLING, GA 30802

Columbia County Department of Family and Children Services Annual Report December 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Members/Officers
 - Dr. Charles Holloman, Chairman (Deceased)
 - Ms. Jewel Allen, Co-Chairman
 - Ms. Nina Hebbard – Member (Resigned due to medical reason)
 - Mr. Vernon Thomas - Member
 - Capt. J.C. Williams – Member (Resigned/Retired)
 - Mrs. Sheila Wahman – New Member (replaced Dr. Holloman's term)
 - Col. Janis Tyrell-Smith – New Member (replaced Ms. Hebbard's term)
 - Mrs. Gwen Fryer – New Member (replaced Capt. Williams' term)

- Columbia Co. DFCS meet every other month on the 4th Monday of each month.

- Board is very supportive of the agency when needed. Christmas Luncheon is an activity this year that the Board is supporting.

B. Assessment of the effectiveness of Columbia County Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) provision of services.

Columbia County DFCS is centrally located within the county and serves the citizens in the cities of Appling, Evans, Grovetown, Harlem, and Martinez. The county is growing and is supported by our local DFCS Board and County Commissioners. The agency has a great working relationship with the Juvenile Court System, Child Enrichment/CASA, Columbia County School System, and other community partners. In assessing the effectiveness of the agency's provision of services, we come to a consensus that the agency is doing well in meeting the needs of both our external and internal customers. Changes have been made statewide to bring the work back to the county and our agency as a same day service case manager assigned to meet with our customers that come in to build relationships with our families as well as provide better customer service. The transition from SUCCESS to GATEWAY has been challenging as well but taking the time to explain the process to some has helped with understanding of lack of receipt of benefits. Also staff allocation has been given back to the Region to manage and this allows for decisions to be made regarding staffing needs in the region to support the work and provide better services to our families. Accountability can be measured. The agency is more conscientious of the safety of not only our most vulnerable children but our staff as well. Security



system and panic buttons had been installed in the agency as well for the safety of staff.

C. Board's Assessment of Community needs/concerns

Columbia County DFCS Board have identified the needs of the community to include resources to meet substance abusing juveniles, development of foster homes willing to accept children with special needs, mental health issues, and teenagers. Also there is a need for providers who accept Tri-Care to collaborate and work in partnership in assisting the agency in providing services to our military children and families that enter care. Crisis Stabilization Facilities need to be developed that truly assess our children and stabilize them instead of worrying about bed space and funding. In addition, the agency has partnered with Family Connections in receipt of a Grant to provide a home to our homeless youth. Targeted group of children are from ages 17-21 who are couch surfing. Also a high school and an elementary school has been adopted by local organizations to ensure that the children are fed during the weekend by providing them a lunch that they take home every Friday.

An additional concern is the increase in population and anticipated continued growth in our community over the next couple of year due to Cyber Command. This means that there will be more military families with children in our community. The county has already begun to redistrict the schools and building more schools (two levels) for our children. Columbia County DFCS will need to be able to keep up with the demand of our community.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department.

Columbia County DFCS Board recommends that the Division continue to keep the safety and well-being of our workers in the forefront. That they are provided with the tools necessary to do the work and receive a competitive salary and develop a promotional track to help with retention of workers. Although front line staff and supervisors received a salary increase, not all staff were privy to this an only received 2% merit increase, if they met certain requirements. In addition, continue to provide training to develop the skill set required to do the job. Workers need to feel that they are valued and an asset to the Division.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair

Columbia County DFCS will continue assessing children safety in a timely manner, support the community and collaborate with other agencies/stakeholders effectively.

SIGNATURE PAGE

Jewel Allen
Ms. Jewel Allen, Co-Chairman

Brandi C. Wheat
County Director

Cook County
Division of Family and Children Services
1010 South Hutchinson Street
Adel, Georgia
31620

Annual Report 2017

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Director

STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services



COOK COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

General Summary of the County DFCS Board:

The Cook County DFCS board is made up of five members with back grounds in social services, business, and the faith based community.

Mr. Paul Witherspoon is the current chairman of the Cook DFCS board. There are three men and two females serving on the board.

The Cook County DFCS board meets the fourth Friday of every other month at noon at Cook County DFCS.

The board prides itself with serving the Cook County DFCS staff as well as providing support to families and children in Cook County. The Cook board also provides for regular staff appreciation events and holiday events to encourage morale in the office.

The Cook DFCS board supports the yearly Cook County Law Enforcement/School Meet and Greet with the agency, which has become a highly successful collaborative event.

In March this year, the Cook DFCS board sponsored the Cook DFCS/Law Enforcement Appreciation Dinner. This was an opportunity to show appreciation to these two agencies for their efforts in serving and protecting Cook County families and children. This was a highly successful event with approximately one hundred people attending.

The Cook board oversees the approval of county funds to support agency staff as well as provide needed assistance to Cook County families, foster children, and children with open DFCS cases.

The Cook County Board of Commissioners have consistently supported the agencies efforts and goals financially over the years.

The Cook DFCS board has strived to promote state initiatives such as Safe Sleep, Domestic Violence Awareness and Adoption and Fostering by raising public awareness through local newspaper ads and signs.

The Cook DFCS board is also represented on the Region 11 State DFCS Advisory Board which meets quarterly.

Assessment of effectiveness of County DFCS provision of services:

Cook County currently has thirty nine children in foster care. There are seven foster homes in Cook County which means the majority of children require placement in neighboring county foster homes. The number of foster homes approved in 2017 in Cook County was seven.

Cook County had one finalized adoption during the past year but also has five TPR packets pending court hearings.

For Social Services, Cook County had 279 CPS reports in 2017. 150 were handled as investigations while 129 were handled as Family Support cases.

Cook County had 152 Family Preservation cases during the year.

In OFI, Cook County averaged 5280 individuals receiving SNAP, Medicaid, TANF, and ABAWD benefits monthly.

Cook County had a 36 % staff turnover rate during the year. Seven of those were in social services and four were in OFI. Three social services staff and one OFI staff left for promotions in other counties.

Another challenge for Cook County this year was the tornado and hurricane events which greatly damaged the community. The tornado in particular killed eight persons and destroyed the largest mobile home park in the county. Hundreds of people were displaced in shelters across the county for several days.

Because of the Blueprint For Change, Cook County DFCS now looks much different in 2017.

In 2016, Cook County had 23 DFCS staff. In 2015, there were 14 DFCS staff. As of 2017, there are 29 DFCS staff in Cook County. This has helped the agency manage the increased work load in the county.

There is also a county director present three days per week as well as being accessible 24 hours a day.

Cook County DFCS and its community stakeholders are very involved in servicing the community. Law Enforcement, CASA, the Cook County School system and DFCS frequently work together on child abuse cases.

The agency has a very good working relationship with the school system. The agency provides yearly mandated reporter training as well as training on SBC to the school social work staff.

The agency attends and is involved with Cook County Family Connections meetings and projects which this year focused on promoting medical care access to families and children in the community.

Finally, the agency has reached out to the faith based community to help establish a Called To Care Chapter in Cook County. Called to Care is a faith based initiative through the local churches who are interested in serving the needs of foster children and foster parents.

There are presently eight chapters of Called to Care in eight counties in Region 11.

Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

Service provision for substance abuse, domestic violence and mental health are limited in Cook County for families and children. Also there is limited access to medical care in the county. The hospital in Cook County recently closed its emergency room due to huge financial losses.

The hospital was recently purchased by Tift Regional Hospital and there is hope the emergency room will be re-opened. Most people must drive 25 miles to Tift or Lowndes County to access medical care.

Children brought into foster care in Cook County will likely be placed out of county because of the lack of foster homes in the county. This disrupts their connections to their community, school, church and friends.

Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

Cook County is a close knit community of 17,000 people that has limited resources. The local DFCS office is a critical part of the community. It is a main point of contact for people in the community to go to when they need assistance or have questions about resources.

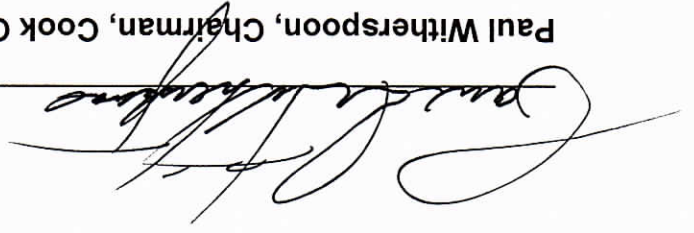
Continuing to fill and even add positions to the county office will ensure timely service provision to the community. At one time this office housed 37 staff. It is also critical that Cook County develop stronger foster home resources to place local children in the community so they will not have to be placed outside the county for care.

Hiring time needs to be reduced in the ORHMD process from the current 60 days or more to 30 days or less. The average time from interview to start date for a new staff person is 90 days. This affects staff morale and service provision. Cook County continues to share its county director as well as social service staff with Echols County due to the lack of social services staff in Echols.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair:

Cook County DFCS as an agency finds itself in much better overall condition in 2017 than it has been since 2015. The agency has a larger staff to serve the families of Cook County as well as protect vulnerable children when the need arises.

The board remains very grateful for the support of state leadership as well as well as the Governor's office for agency improvements.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Witherspoon", is written over a horizontal line.

Paul Witherspoon, Chairman, Cook County DFCS Board

STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

Annual Report
2017

Crawford County
Department of Family and Children Services
360 North Dugger Ave
Roberta, Georgia 31078

A. General Summary of the County DFCS Board:

Makeup-Members/Officers:

The Board is made up of five (4) members: a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and three (2) regular members. Board Members are:

Mrs. Barbara Harris, Chairperson
Mr. Alfornia Hatcher, Vice-Chairperson
Mrs. Lynn Davidson
Mrs. Libby Jones

Meetings dates/times:

The Board meets the last Friday of every month at 3:00 p.m.

Activities for the past year:

The Board Chairperson, Mrs. Barbara Harris, Vice Chairman, Mr. Alfornia Hatcher, Mrs. Lynn Davidson, and Mrs. Libby Jones wasn't able to attend the Georgia Association of DFCS Boards semi-annual meeting in Macon, Ga on April 12, 2017.

The annual Staff Appreciation Day was held for the Crawford County DFCS staff on July 27, 2017 supported by the Board.

Mrs. Lynn Davidson attended the annual Thanksgiving Dinner that was held on November 20, 2017 at Crawford County DFCS. Ms. Davidson and DFCS staff came together to celebrate Thanksgiving.

On October 27, 2017 the Director with Crawford County DFCS met with Ms. Barbara Harris, Board Chairperson, and Board of Commissioner Manager, Fabian Hollis request for financial assistance for the October 1, 2017 thru October 30, 2018 county budget.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision services:

a. What's working well-

In Child Welfare, the number of foster children in care has dropped, along with the number of substantiated cases of abuse and neglect. Case managers has successfully assessed all the children safety in our Family Preservation cases as

well as our Foster Care cases each month since February 2017. Case managers have improved tremendously in meeting response time in a timely manner, and they are closing Investigation/ Family Support cases within the 45 day. Case managers has been consistent in making contacts with their families and entering the documentation into Shines the 1st two weeks of each month. In OFI, case managers are working long hours to complete all Food Stamps and Medicaid cases. Case managers are following-up with their clients to obtain the necessary verification to complete the cases, and they are working hard to get assistance in resolving those systematic issues that are hindering our clients from receiving their benefits in a timely manner.

b. What's not working-

Recently, a new system called Gateway was implemented to process and complete all OFI benefits. Gateway has replaced the Success system which processed and completed all OFI benefits. Unfortunately, case managers are having a hard time learning the system which has hindered the productivity. Also, the Gateway system had some major issues that weren't identified prior to the system being implemented. This has hindered many families from receiving their benefits in a timely manner.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

As stated above, case managers could benefits from additional training regarding the Gateway system. More hands on support is needed to help the OFI case managers complete the past due and current Food Stamps and Medicaid cases.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

OFI staff need more support and training to successfully complete the Food Stamps and Medicaid cases in a timely manner.

Refer clients to the local Churches for assistant with food for their families.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair:

For several months, families within the community went through a difficult time as they were having a hard time feeding their families due to the delay in receiving their

Food Stamps benefits. The board realized that OFI staff and the families in Crawford County suffered during the implementation of the new Gateway system. The board talked about reaching out to their local churches for help in feeding the families in Crawford County. We will continue to look for ways to serve our children and families in Crawford County, and support Crawford County staff as they continue to serve our families.

The Crawford County DFCS board members would like to thank you for your continued support in protecting children and causing a positive change in the lives of citizens throughout the State of Georgia.



Mrs. Barbara Harris, Chairperson

NATHAN DEAL
GOVERNOR



VIRGINIA PRYOR
INTERIM DIRECTOR

**To: Ginger Pryor, Interim DFCS Division Director,
Department of Family and Children Services**

**From: Jena Jones, Crisp County Director
Crisp County Department of Family and Children Services**

Date: December 5, 2017

Subject: DFCS Field Operations Annual County Board Report

A. General summary of the Crisp County DFCS Board:

The Crisp County Board plays a vital role in helping to make the Division of Family and Children Services' programs more meaningful and efficient as designed to serve families and children. The Board is an active liaison as a representative of the community and the public. The County Board is also expected to assist in interpreting human service programs to local officials to gain support, secure additional funding for specific needs beyond state appropriations, and set standards for the expenditure of county funds.

The DFCS staff and Board Members work together toward helping make an impact on the overall welfare of Georgia's citizens as they advocate for financial supports, resources, and activities for the County Staff.

Crisp County Board Members/Officers

Anne Green- Chairperson
Melinda Whiddon-Vice Chairperson
Betty Baker-Board Member
Dorothy Schofield-Board Member
Gabiella Demery-Board Member
Ketorie Scales-Board Member
Lynn West-Board Member

Board Meeting dates and times

Board meetings are held bi-monthly, on the third Tuesday in the month, at 4:00 p.m. in the conference room. Dates for upcoming Crisp County Board meetings are posted in the county lobby, local commissioner's office, and throughout the county office. Open to the public.

The following is a list of our upcoming board meetings.

January 16, 2018
March 20, 2018
May 15, 2018
July 17, 2018
September 18, 2018
November 20, 2018

Activities for the past year for Crisp County Board members and county staff:

- Board members and staff attends Annual County Board training
Assist the County Director in building staff morale and motivating employees
- Board members and staff attend the county staff appreciation events, and holiday events
- Melinda Whiddon, Vice-Chairperson attends the Regional Advisory Board meetings quarterly
- Blue Print for Change- County Director provides updates and ongoing discussion with the Crisp County Board Members and Crisp County Commissioners
- County staff participates in annual can food and toy drive
- Gateway Advocacy Center annual food and toy drive
New-Red Cross Shelter
Crisp County local schools, churches participate in annual drive for food and toys
- Crisp County Staff and Board Members participate – Annual Meet and Greet with Law Enforcement
-

The Crisp County Director, in collaboration with the Local County Advisory Board proactively seeks out additional funding each year from local entities to supplement their budgets in meeting specific needs. These local funds are subject to the same internal control policy and procedures governing state and federal fund.

Local entity funds can be used for specific needs when state funds are not allowed, or there is a need to supplement state funds. Expenditures must be specified and be approved in the county's budget and Board Members approval must be documented in the board minutes.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of Crisp County Department's provision of services:

What's working well?

- New- Kiosk's in county office area provides self-service for customers
 - OFI and SS customer service together works well
 - All expedited customers that come into the local office for SNAP, family Medicaid, and TANF are now served faster and more efficiently.
 - Each County has OFI and ABD supervisor on site daily in the county office
 - 5 New OFI case manager and 1 Foster Care Case Manager
 - SNAP applications can now be completed on line
 - Annual Secret Santa for Foster Children
 - The employment of Mental Health Adults in the janitorial services Office of Family Independence (OFI) and Social Services (SS) have great customer service with community stakeholders, School Systems Court, CASA, Board members, MDT members, Church members, Lion's club.
 - Foster care team has adoptions worked securing permanency for foster resources for children.
 - Continuous improvement of securing safe and stable placements
 - Place foster children in the community with relatives and or fictive kin
- What is not working well?
- - Lag time New hire onboarding process of new employees
 - CICC reports lacking all household information when sending
 - Report's to the county and LE which creates lag time for response to ensuring immediate safety of child/ren

Crisp County 2017 Data

Foster Care	CPS Investigation	CPS Ongoing	Family Support	Foster Parents	Approved Foster Home 2017	Adoptions 2017	SNAP	TANF	Medicaid	ABD
92	113	34	226	3	2	2	3431	93	1,067	427

Examples of these expenditures are:

- Regular Operating Cost •
- Equipment •
- Travel
-
- Foster Care Expenses (including haircuts, allowances, musical instruments/lessons, diapers, school activity fees, camps, photo packages, etc.) •
-
- General Assistance to Clients (Indigent Care) •
-
- Training/Staff Appreciation/DFCS related meeting expenses (including training material, meals/refreshments with an agenda.) •
-
- Certificates or plaques of merit, achievement or retirement, etc. following Policy 803 of the DHR Personnel Policies titled to Incentive Pay and Meritorious Awards •
-
- Plaques to a retiring employee (Retirement Reception must be funded from outside of state or county funds.) •
-
- Funds received from Interest on local County CD's and Savings accounts should remain on the DFCS' books, and can be used for Staff
-
- Appreciation Day/Luncheons where a meeting and luncheon occurs.

An agenda for the meeting should be attached to the payment as supporting documentation.

C. Crisp County Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

- Shelter's for homeless disabled adults and veteran families.
- Public transportation for community and disabled.
- Medicaid transportation.
- Local Child care, early childhood program's.
- Utility assistance Program-LIHEAP Program
- More community resources for TANF worker's to be employed.
- Additional Foster Homes for local foster children.
- Healthcare resources for the community.
- Adoptive families for foster children need permanent homes.

D. Crisp County Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

Worker's self-protection with Law enforcement assistance- safety in the community

Continue to expand the Poverty Food Pantry

Building Security on site and afterhours for staff safety with Law Enforcement


Crisp County Board Chair


Crisp County Director

Annual Report

2017

Dade County

Division of Family and Children Services

71 Case Ave

Trenton, GA 30752

Dade County Annual Report December 2017

The Dade County Division of Family and Children Services is a five-person board with representatives of the community. The board meets bi-monthly on the 3rd Wednesday every other month to discuss operations of the department and needs of the staff. The division receives County money annually and the board is responsible for approval of expenditures. The board is comprised of the following members

John Bradfrod---Board Chairperson
Sue Gray---Board Vice Chairperson
Joe D'Agostino
Sandy Pullen
Tinena Bice

The Board has been involved in the following activities during the calendar year of 2017.

- Staff appreciation Activities
- Foster Parent Appreciation
- Adoption Signings
- Law Enforcement Meet and Greet
- Child abuse Prevention Activities

The Board has reviewed and assess the effectiveness of Dade DFCS provisions of services and has assessed the following as working well:

- Retention and training of staff
- Community partnerships and relationships
- Cooperation and teamwork among staff members and management
- Assessment of child safety
- Staff accessibility to internal and external stakeholders
- Staff knowledge of community resources and services
- Staff commitment to assisting as needed throughout the region in both OFI and Social Services
- Support to foster parents such as; increased per-diems and stability in Resource Development in Dade County.

The Board assessed the following as areas of improvement:

- Inhouse OFI staff
- In house supervision for OFI staff
- Additional staff retention throughout the region to equalize case loads

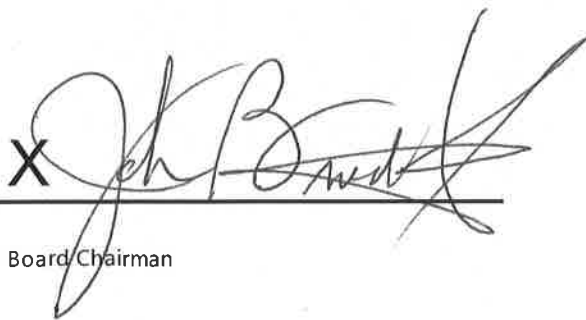
The Board assessed and recommends the following as needs of the Community:

- Additional foster home and resources for foster parents
- Enhanced transportation services for the community
- Additional services providers and resources to help address severe mental health and substance abuse needs in both adults and adolescents.

The Board assessed and recommends the following for improved operations:

- In house OFI Staff and supervision for OFI staff
- Additional OFI and Social Services Staff throughout the region to ensure county staff are available and able to serve their home county
- Supervision for Services Staff

This report was reviewed by board members and approved on

X 
Board Chairman



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

DAWSON COUNTY DFCS BOARD ANNUAL REPORT

December 13, 2017

- A. The Dawson County Board of Family and Children Services is comprised of a 5 member board as outlined below:

Seat 1: Joan Gilleland, Chair / Former DFCS employee, community liason
Seat 2: Joey Bearden / Retired
Seat 3: Tina Brady / Community Liason
Seat 4: Edwin looper / Community Liason
Seat 5: Vickie Porter / Community Liason

The Board meets every other month, except as needed for specially called meetings. The Board meets the first Wednesday of "odd numbered" months (Jan., Mar., May, etc.) at 9:00 am in the DFCS conference room in the county office.

Board activities and involvement this past year have included participation in the quarterly Regional Board meetings, attendance and completion of Stewards Of Children / Child Sexual Abuse Prevention and Awareness training. and community outreach.

- B. The County office has been effective in it's mission of ensuring child safety and serving individuals and families in need. This is evidenced by data on the www.fosteringcourtimprovement.org website. The office remains a leader within the Region and assists in supporting other counties within the Region. The office is fully staffed and has gained new positions over the past year in Child Welfare Services. The case loads are within reason as the staff work diligently to resolve issues for families in an expedient manner. The county staff have assisted neighboring counties in the Region in managing their workload and ensuring child safety and family well-being both in Child Protective Services and in Permanency cases. The county has an excellent partnership with stakeholders in the community to include law enforcement, the courts, the District Attorney's office, the school system, Family Connections, services providers and CASA.

The County Director has prudently managed the County Funds provided by the County, remaining under budget month over month.

The Board believes that while the County Director is performing his duties and has demonstrated leadership and operational and services improvement during his tenure that ideally he would not be serving in three counties. The County Director has expressed that he enjoys the responsibility of the three counties, however it does restrict his ability to have more direct hands-on involvement in the community.

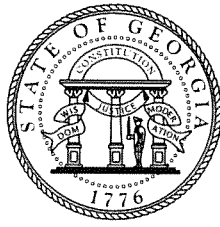
The Board believed in response to “what is not working well” is the Regional Board structure. The County Board believed the functions and activities of the Regional Board were duplicative of the County Board and do not find value in the structure. Secondly the Board stated foster family recruitment, locally and statewide, is not working well and review of the marketing and recruitment campaign is warranted.

- C. The Board repeats the need for more aggressive recruitment of foster families and development of communities of care. The community lacks public transportation and affordable housing. The Board would like the community to have more CASA volunteers as well.
- D. The Board does not have any specific recommendations for improved operations of the local office. The Director maintains clear communication with the Board and is very responsive to any requests of the Board.

Presented by: Chairperson Joan Gilleland, Joey Bearden, Tina Brady, Edwin Looper, Vickie Porter and County Director Scott Wilbanks.

Secretary
Scott Wilbanks, Ed.D.
County Director

Chairperson
Joan Gilleland



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report 2017

Decatur County
Department of Family and Children Services
505 Wheat Avenue
Bainbridge, GA 39819

Our Commitment to Georgia Citizens

Vision

Stronger Families for a Stronger Georgia.

Mission

Strengthen Georgia by providing individuals and families' access to services that promote self-sufficiency, independence, and protect Georgia's vulnerable children and adults.

Core Values

- Provide access to resources that offer support and empower Georgians and their families.
- Deliver services professionally and treat all clients with dignity and respect.
- Manage business operations effectively and efficiently by aligning resources across the agency.
- Promote accountability, transparency and quality in all services we deliver and programs we administer.
- Develop our employees at all levels of the agency.

**DECATUR COUNTY
ANNUAL REPORT
DECEMBER 2017**

A. Current Board Member's

- Lauren Turner, Chairperson
- Sandra Brown
- Doris Cosby
- Theodora Gordon, Vice Chairperson
- Karen Malone
- Erica Mills
- Rev. John D. Thomas

Decatur County DFCS Board Meetings are held the 2nd Monday, of every month at 1:30 pm. If a Holiday falls on that day it is schedule for the following Monday.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

Successes, would be the Annual Little Black Dress event, they did a raffle for a Green Egg Smoker and donate the collection to Decatur County Family & Children Services.

First Methodist Church of Bainbridge did a Sock & Underwear and Pajamas donation. Bainbridge Outreach Mission Donated diapers

Decatur County had 72 children in care: 183 Family Support cases: 117 investigations and an average of 17 Family Preservations cases a month.

Number of Foster Parents Decatur currently has 16 foster parents

Number of finalized adoptions 0

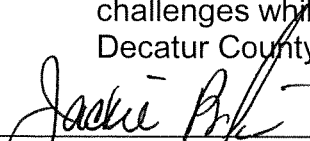
Number of approved foster homes in past year 1 approved home.

Staff turnover rate for Decatur has been zero turn over, we have gained 4 new workers.

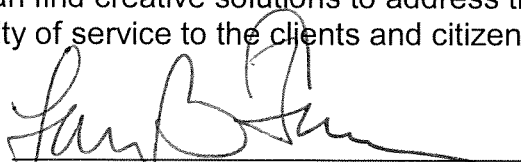
C. Decatur County Board has no recommendations for improvement, they know how hard we work at our jobs and care for the citizens and children in our county. Extra funding would be the only thing that would help the office.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations for the County Department: We have no recommendations for improvement we know how hard and diligent the staff works to provide and protect the citizens of this county. At any point when we have an idea to help we share the information at our meetings.

E. I would like to thank the Decatur County DFCS Board, for their loyalty they continue to give the Division of Family and Children Services staff and the citizen of this county. I have said many times, being an effective board member requires collaboration and creative thinking to ensure our resources are used effectively and efficiently. You listen and consider all information presented, before developing a plan of action. Our board realizes the struggle for resources in our area. I believe together we can find creative solutions to address those challenges while maintaining the superior quality of service to the clients and citizens of Decatur County. Thank you for all you do.



Lauren Turner, Chairperson



Jackie Bridges, Director



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

Annual Report 2017

Dekalb County
Department of Family and Children Services
178 Sams Street
Decatur, GA 30030



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Director

DeKalb DFCS Annual County Board Report December 2017

VISION

Stronger Families for a Stronger Georgia

MISSION

Strengthen Georgia by providing Individuals and Families access to services that promote self-sufficiency, independence, and protect Georgia's vulnerable children and adults.

CORE VALUES

- Provide access to resources that offer support and empower Georgians and their families.
- Deliver services professionally and treat all clients with dignity and respect.
- Promote accountability, transparency and quality in all services we deliver and programs we administer.
- Develop our employees at all levels of the agency.

DEKALB COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY & CHILDREN SERVICES

It is the Mission of the DeKalb County Department of Family and Children Services to promote the social and economic well-being of the vulnerable adults and families of DeKalb County by providing exceptional services by highly trained and qualified staff. The agency is committed to providing service in a professional manner, and being accountable to the DeKalb County residents that we serve. The target group consists of deprived, neglected, and abused children and their families.

DeKalb DFCS: AT-A-GLANCE

Established in 1937

- Program areas: Office of Child Protection
Office of Family Independence
Operations Management
- Market Served: DeKalb County
- Employees 500+
- Board Meetings: Third Thursday every other month

3 Office Locations

- Main Office 178 Sams Street
Decatur, GA 30030
- Regional Accounting 2910 Miller Road
Decatur, GA 30035
- DeKalb Access & Resource
Center 949 N. Hairston Road
Stone Mountain, GA 30083

Report from DeKalb DFCS Board:

A. The County Board's assessment of the effectiveness of the county department's provision of services;

The Board's Assessment is that the DeKalb Department's delivery of service is good but that there are a number of challenges to overcome in order to move performance to great.

The Board believes that the Blueprint for Change will provide an opportunity to focus on key stakeholder groups segmented as internal resources, customers, community partners and community resources. Internal flux has contributed to recent disruption of internal resources and this flux creates gaps in maintaining strong linkages with each of the other segments.

The Board in partnership with new leadership and management will ensure that the Department's execution plan in the next year recognizes each segment and includes deliverables that measure where the Department is with each segment, improvement tasks needed and priorities for action to allow for the best use of resources and immediate attention.

What is working well

The ARC – Community Outreach/Presence, Fatherhood Initiative, Food Pantry

Implementation of Stakeholder Meeting that includes SAAGs, School System, Juvenile Court Judges, DeKalb Medical, CASA and Law Enforcement

Increased efforts in engaging Foster Parents including holding a Family Team Meeting for staff and Foster Parents, monthly conference calls, and a Regional Foster Care Website.

Implementation of Staff engagement initiatives such as – Brown bag lunches with the director, Safety Committee, Staff Appreciation Committee, and continuous staff engagement.

Stabilized County Director position and senior leadership positions and realignment of the management structure to support new challenges and meet future needs and expectations.

Improvements Needed-

More deliberate promotion of job descriptions, career ladders and skill sets required to be a high achieving child welfare professional in each specific work category.

Strengthen the County Board/Recruitment of new members.

Outreach to community and stakeholders to advertise, identify and attract qualified staff. Identification and implementation of best child welfare practices applicable to employee retention in each work category.

Defining high value strategies needed to move children toward permanency and dashboard strategies along with progress.

Fully defining current and relevant Department performance measures that are aligned with the Blueprint for Change, top level outcomes driven by Kenny A, as well as Department's mission, vision and values.

Determine building lease and land use options. Create action plan and milestones that will result in best impact on Department and budget.

Publicize recommendations of Retention Committee and survey results. Create diverse implementation team that reports progress to management and updates Board.

**B. The County Board's assessment of the needs of the community;
Community Needs-**

Location/Presence in Northern end of County.

Recruit and retain Non-English Speaking Staff –Child Welfare & Family Independence.

Greater understanding of the Agency and more opportunities to partner.

Create action plan to road show Board and Management to heighten interest and attract new Members with requisite backgrounds and ability to drive needed change.

Identify additional Placement Resources needed and process to address in specific time frame.

**C. The county Board's recommendations for improved operations of
the county department ;**

Attracting and Retaining qualified staff

Moving children toward permanency

Enhancing Community Perception

Fully achieving all fundamental performance measures

Finalizing building lease

Andrea Tulloch
Region 14 Director



Ronald Mangum, Board Chair
DeKalb County DFCS

DEKALB COUNTY BOARD MEMBERS:

Allyson Gevertz
Dr. Jane Wilkov
Pastor Chris Case
Gary Yandura

As part of DeKalb DFCS' mission "to provide exceptional services through highly trained and qualified staff", the DeKalb DFCS Board is committed to providing excellence in service through uncompromising principles, first class leadership, and an unparalleled desire for DeKalb County to be the best.



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

Annual Report

2017

Dodge County
Department of Family and Children Services
1111 Plaza Avenue
Eastman, GA 31023

**To: Virginia Pryor, Interim DFCS Director
2 Peachtree Street
19-490
Atlanta, Georgia 30303**

**From: Kay Jones, Dodge County DFCS
Board Chair**

Date: December 8, 2017

**Subject: DFCS Annual County Board Report
Dodge County DFCS
1111 Plaza Avenue
Eastman, GA 31023**

A. General Summary of the Dodge County DFCS Board

The Dodge County DFCS Board of Directors is made up of the following members:

Mrs. Kay Jones, Chair, has served on the board since 2005. She is a retired DFCS social services supervisor. She works for the courts with independent adoptions. She is also involved in community faith based organizations.

Mr. Danny Warren, has served on the board since 1998. He is a retired merchant. He also has a faith based background. He is an adoptive parent of a special needs child. He has attended Leadership Dodge.

Mrs. Robin Peacock has served on the board since 2015. She is a retired DFCS OFI supervisor. She is also involved in community faith based organizations. She also serves on the regional DFCS board.

Mr. Spencer Barron has served on the board since 2016. He is retired from Georgia Bureau of Investigations. He currently works with the Dodge County/Eastman Development Authority. He is also involved in community faith based organizations.

Mrs. Margo Watson was appointed to our board at the December 4th County Commissioner's meeting. She will be filling the unexpired term of Jessie Mincey. She currently works with the Dodge County School System.

The Dodge County DFCS Board of Directors meets on the last Tuesday of every other month at 11:00 a.m. at the Dodge DFCS office. They have completed the following report as required by Senate Bill 138. The information has been reviewed and approved by the board prior to submission.

Activities for the past year has been our annual Meet and Greet with local law enforcement and our social services team, meeting all new staff, and Mrs. Robin Peacock, board member, has served on the regional board. Some of our staff worked with Red Cross at several of our shelters that were opened in Laurens County, Dublin, GA, for evacuees from Hurricane IRMA.

Our local county funds are used for expenses which the state doesn't cover such as the part of the board per diem and travel, foster care expenses, staff appreciation, miscellaneous expenses which the state doesn't cover.

B. Assessment of the provision of services by the Dodge County DFCS Office

Stable staff located at the Dodge County DFCS office. Several employees have been with Dodge County DFCS for 10 plus years and are known in the community. This provides a stable agency in Dodge County with contacts throughout the community.

Localization of OFI services or The One Caseworker, One Family practice help provide more convenient, consistent services to the customers in Dodge County. Customers in the community are aware of who their worker is and where to go to for answers concerning their benefits. This provides a much better and quicker access to needed services. There are fewer complaints. This also provides a more manageable workload for the case managers. The movement towards local supervision with all OFI staff under one supervisor has increased confidence. There has been less confusion for the case managers as they are all under the same expectation. They are able to see their supervisor face to face on a regular basis. This has increased morale for OFI staff.

Social services has seen positive improvements during the last year. We have been able to hire a placement supervisor. We also have several new workers who have been able to begin their training soon after being hired. Our veteran workers are meeting response times and cases are being processed timely in our county. With in-house supervision and the mentoring from our veteran workers, we are progressing smoothly. The veteran workers can share knowledge of the community and community partners of who to contact concerning cases. This is a work in progress. As soon as the new workers finish training, everyone will be trained and ready to carry a caseload.

There is community outreach by the agency, law enforcement “meet and greet” for the past three years has helped increase communication between DFCS and law enforcement. There is an open line of communication between law enforcement agencies in the community and the agency at all times.

Prior to moving back to localized services, customers were struggling in being able to access benefits as well as information concerning who was working their case. Dodge County has struggled with social services provision due to lack of local staff dedicated to this community. Due to new workers being in training, the case managers are being pulled over several counties to work. This also affects the case managers’ ability to develop and maintain collaborative relationships with community partners such as schools, law enforcement, public health and the courts. It is believed that staff should be dedicated to the community in which they serve.

Dodge County had a total of 52 children in legal custody from January 2017 – November 2017. 14 children have either returned home or gone on to permanency with a forever family. At the time of this report, there were 38 children in the custody of Dodge County DFCS.

Dodge County has six foster homes. Any child that has to come into foster care, may be placed outside of the county. Although we were fortunate to approve five foster homes during the 2017 year, there is limited resources to develop local foster homes. Resource Development is housed out of a county 30 miles away and the staff is so limited that the resource development case managers are having to work three, four, and sometimes six counties. Dodge County has had two finalized adoptions during the 2017 year.

Dodge County has had a total of 67 CPS investigations, 131 family support services cases, and nine family preservation cases.

Service providers are few in the Dodge County area. The ones that the State approves become overloaded and unable to take on more cases. The process of contracting with service providers is extremely cumbersome and does not take into account our local needs. Dodge County has a hospital, urgent care facility, community mental health services, private drug rehabilitation facilities, and many physicians.

Dodge County is not able to provide a breakdown of the number of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases. The new GATEWAY system does not have the availability to pull these figures at this time.

Dodge County has had one employee transfer to another county. There has been one hire in the social services field. OFI has had two case managers to meet the high demand in the local office. There is a current freeze on hiring at this time.

A law enforcement meet and greet has been held for the past three years. This has helped increase communication between DFCS and law enforcement. There is an open line of communication between law enforcement agencies in the community and the agency at all times.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

Dodge County is a rural county with limited job opportunities. Dodge County has a high poverty rate which may contribute to increased crime, teenage pregnancy, and child abuse and drug dependency. Transportation is a barrier to services and employment opportunities.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

One County Director for no more than two Counties.

Increased community involvement. This cannot happen until there is actually dedicated staff for Dodge County.

Resource Development staff to not have no more than three counties so that they can focus on Dodge County foster home recruitment.

Community involvement to address the issues of problem/troubled youth as DFCS is not equipped to deal with violent youth..

E. Closing and Signature of Board Chair

It is a pleasure to submit this annual report for the Dodge County Department of Family and Children Services.

Sincerely,

KAY JONES

Kay Jones
Board Chair

Note: Please accept typed signature instead of handwritten signature due to report prepared and approved via email due to deadline/meeting dates.

NATHAN DEAL
GOVERNOR



VIRGINIA PRYOR
INTERIM DIRECTOR

**To: Ginger Pryor, Interim DFCS Division Director,
Department of Family and Children Services**

**From: Jena Jones, Crisp County Director
Dooly County Department of Family and Children Services**

Date: December 7, 2017

Subject: DFCS Field Operations Annual County Board Report

A. General summary of the Dooly County DFCS Board:

The Dooly County Board plays a vital role in helping to make the Division of Family and Children Services' programs more meaningful and efficient as designed to serve families and children. The Board is an active liaison as a representative of the community and the public. The County Board is also expected to assist in interpreting human service programs to local officials to gain support, secure additional funding for specific needs beyond state appropriations, and set standards for the expenditure of county funds.

The DFCS staff and Board Members work together toward helping make an impact on the overall welfare of Georgia's citizens as they advocate for financial supports, resources, and activities for the County Staff.

Dooly County Board Members/Officers

Patsy Carter- Chairperson
Dale Clemons-Vice Chairperson
Judy Burton-Board Member
Meredith Lester-Board Member

Board Meeting dates and times

Board meetings are held bi-monthly, on the third Thursday in the month, at 4:00 p.m. in the conference room. Dates for upcoming Dooly County Board meetings are posted in the county lobby, local commissioner's office, and throughout the county office. Open to the public.

The following is a list of our upcoming board meetings.

January 18, 2018
March 15, 2018
May 17, 2018
July 19, 2018
September 20, 2018
November 15, 2018

Activities for the past year for Dooly County Board members and county staff:

- Board members and staff attends Annual County Board training
- Assist the County Director in building staff morale and motivating employees
- Board members and staff attend the county staff appreciation events, and holiday events
- Jena Jones, County Director attends the Regional Advisory Board meetings
- Blue Print for Change- County Director provides updates and ongoing discussion with the Crisp County Board Members and Crisp County Commissioners
- County staff participates in annual can food and toy drive with Family Connections
- Gateway Advocacy Center annual food and toy drive
- New-Red Cross Shelter
- Dooly County local schools, churches participate in annual drive for food and toys
- Dooly County Staff and Board Members participate – Annual Meet and Greet with Law Enforcement
-

The Dooly County Director, in collaboration with the Local County Advisory Board proactively seeks out additional funding each year from local entities to supplement their budgets in meeting specific needs. These local funds are subject to the same internal control policy and procedures governing state and federal fund.

Local entity funds can be used for specific needs when state funds are not allowed, or there is a need to supplement state funds. Expenditures must be specified and be approved in the county's budget and Board Members approval must be documented in the board minutes.

Examples of these expenditures are:

- Regular Operating Cost •
- Equipment •
- Travel
-
- Foster Care Expenses (including haircuts, allowances, musical instruments/lessons, diapers, school activity fees, camps, photo packages, etc.) •
-
- General Assistance to Clients (Indigent Care) •
-
- Training/Staff Appreciation/DFCS related meeting expenses (including training material, meals/refreshments with an agenda.) •
-
- Certificates or plaques of merit, achievement or retirement, etc. following Policy 803 of the DHR Personnel Policies titled to Incentive Pay and Meritorious Awards •
-
- Plaques to a retiring employee (Retirement Reception must be funded from outside of state or county funds.) •
-
- Funds received from Interest on local County CD's and Savings accounts should remain on the DFCS' books, and can be used for Staff
-
- Appreciation Day/Luncheons where a meeting and luncheon occurs.

An agenda for the meeting should be attached to the payment as supporting documentation.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of Dooly County Department's provision of services:

What's working well?

- New- Kiosk's in county office area provides self-service for customers
- OFI and SS customer service together works well
- All expedited customers that come into the local office for SNAP, family Medicaid, and TANF are now served faster and more efficiently.
- County has OFI supervisor on site daily in the county office
- 1 New OFI case manager
- SNAP applications can now be completed on line
- Annual Secret Santa for Foster Children
- The employment of Mental Health Adults in the janitorial services Office of Family Independence (OFI) and Social Services (SS) have great customer service with community stakeholders, School Systems Court, CASA, Board members, MDT members, Church members, Lion's club.
- Foster care team has adoptions worked securing permanency for foster resources for children.
- Continuous improvement of securing safe and stable placements
- Place foster children in the community with relatives and or fictive kin

- What is not working well?
-
- Lag time New hire onboarding process of new employees
- CICC reports lacking all household information when sending
- Report's to the county and LE which creates lag time for response to ensuring immediate safety of child/ren

Dooly County 2017 Data

Foster Care	CPS Investigation	CPS Ongoing	Family Support	Foster Parents	Approved Foster Home 2017	Adoptions 2017	SNAP	TANF	Medicaid	ABD
12	29	15	63	1	0	2	1,394	31	486	242

BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE → A STATE OF HOPE =
SAFE CHILDREN. STRENGTHENED FAMILIES. STRONGER GEORGIA.

C. Dooly County Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

- Shelter's for homeless disabled adults and veteran families.
- Public transportation for community and disabled.
- Medicaid transportation.
- Local Child care, early childhood program's.
- Utility assistance Program-LIHEAP Program
- More community resources for TANF worker's to be employed.
- Additional Foster Homes for local foster children.
- Healthcare resources for the community.
- Adoptive families for foster children need permanent homes.

D. Dooly County Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

Worker's self-protection with Law enforcement assistance- safety in the community

Continue to expand the Poverty Food Pantry

Building Security on site and afterhours for staff safety with Law Enforcement


Dooly County Board Chair


Dooly County Director

BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE ★ A STATE OF HOPE ☞
SAFE CHILDREN. STRENGTHENED FAMILIES. STRONGER GEORGIA.



STATE OF GEORGIA

Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Dougherty County Department of Family and Children Services County Board Annual Report, December 7, 2016

Dr. Bill Edge, Chairman Dr. Carolyn Hand Mrs. Catherine Hill
Rev. Henry Mathis Ms. Norma Gaines-Heath

As per Senate Bill 138, below is an annual report on behalf of Dougherty County DFCS, Albany, Georgia 31706:

- **Assessment of the Effectiveness of the County Department's Provision of Services**

It has been a pleasure to work with Dougherty County and the local County Board. We have serviced and supported the DFCS team, as well as the community and especially our leadership in this county.

Under the leadership of County Director, Pamela E. Lofton, we have seen perseverance when faced with challenges. Some of these challenges have been staff retention. Although able to hire in vacant positions, the challenge was retaining staff while new hires completed training. We also lack experience with our supervisory staff. Another challenge was the inability to hire clerical positions across the agency. This caused some complications and some delays in the day to day work flow. Challenges came about with changes in the Practice Model, workloads increased and was an adjustment to the County. Caseload sizes are increasing and more children are coming into foster care. There is a challenge working with the court and the new Special Assistants to the Attorney General. The County is limited to court only one day a week.

- **Needs of the Community**

The biggest need identified in this community is a need for quality service providers to offer needed services such as affordable and suitable housing, parenting, therapy, counseling and substance abuse for our children.

- **Recommendations for Improved Operations of the County Department**

Because retention and the ability to hire is such a critical need in a County this size for Social Service, OFI and Clerical Support it would be the Board's recommendation that the County Department have the ability to continue to hire and fill vacancies based on a specified staffing level chart as needed. The Board would recommend that the County Department have the ability to offer a range of increment salary increases to retain staff. These increments are to be based on work performance, specialization, and commitment to the agency.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Dr. Bill Edge, Chairman
Dougherty DFCS County Board

Dougherty County DFCS/ Pamela Lofton, County Director

200 W. Oglethorpe Blvd. P.O. Box 3249 | Albany, Georgia 31706 | Telephone: 229-430-3200 | Fax: 229-430-4355



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Board Report
2017

Douglas County
Department of Family and Children Service
8473 Duralee Lane
Douglasville, Georgia 30135

Douglas County
Annual Board Report
December 2016

A. General Summary of the County DFCS Board

Members: Dorothy Sparks, Chairperson
Julia McElhannon
Ruby Merritt
Betty Danley
Mark Alcares

The Board is comprised of Douglas County citizens with background in Education, DFCS, Nursing, and Coroner's office.

Meeting Dates: The Board Meetings are conducted the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 8:30 a.m. at the Douglas County DFCS Office. Director Wimpy shares all pertinent information with the Board Members. Board discussions are centered around financial report on county funds, personnel reports, social services data, OFI data and information concerning changes to the Department including the Blue Print for Change, Solution Based Case Work, Safe Sleep campaign, Gateway, and community issues.

Activities attended by Board members have included participation in the Regional Board, stakeholder meetings, and DFCS Road Show,

B. Assessment of Effectiveness of County Department's provision of services

Douglas County has continued to see an increase in CPS investigations and foster care cases. OFI has also seen an increase in food stamp and Medicaid applications. The number of Staff in social services as remained constant in number but the hiring process has been extremely cumbersome and stalls the critical needs of replacing staff. On average the process has taken 5 months during this past year. When the training component is added for new services staff, the time to replace a vacant position is a minimum of 9 months and can be as long as 12 months.

For Social Services, For SFY 17, CPS assessed 1448 referrals for our county. After the initial assessment, 472 were tracked as investigations and 976 were tracked as family support cases. The number of assessments was a neutral change from SFY 16. The case managers, supervisors and County Director have a strong relationship with the court to provide services to families with children entering foster care being the last possible choice for a family. During SFY 17. Douglas County had 75 children enter foster care and 68 children were either reunited with parents or found permanency during the year. The average number of children in foster care was 183 during this time. For SFY 17, social services staff fluctuated through out the year with a high of 25 in November 2016 and a low of 20 in September 2016. The staff number for SFY 2017 represents 5 less staff than Douglas County had in SFY 2016.

OFI made a transition to the use of the new system Gateway. During the early part of 2017, staff received training on the new system and fully implemented into Gateway by mid-year. The OFI team in Douglas works hand in hand with Social Services in our diligent effort to locate families and providing vital services for our families through the benefit programs. Both sections are progressive in finding solutions to problems. Also during this year, Douglas DFCS went back to having a main line at the local office for our consumers to call locally. This has impacted our ability to help clients on the local level and easy access to local case managers.

C. Board's Assessment of Community needs/concerns

The Board does express concern the local office is not able to replace staff when there are vacancies. There is a lengthy lag time from when a position is vacated and the ability to fill position. Once permission has been received, the process through Human Resources further lengthens the time to fill a vacancy. The lack of having staff causes an overload for the remaining staff. The staff already work tirelessly to meet the expectations of the work. Many staff find the stress level and the amount of hours, difficult to handle in balancing the demands of work life and need to care for their own families. The Board was encouraged by the raise given to Social Services staff and OFI staff and supports continued raises in the future.

The Staff of the Douglas County DFCS office are dedicated to their work. This office has numerous staff that are veteran workers with well over 10 years. The Administration at this office provides a good working environment which includes appreciation of staff, cook outs for staff, Popcorn Wednesday, and an atmosphere of trust and comradery with all staff. Director Wimpy, SS Administrator Leilani Casey, OFI Administrators Janedra Jackson and Cathy Corley are very supportive of the all staff and build moral among the workers. The staff provide an excellent level of customer service and will seek answers to questions for customers. The Board is appreciative of the rental cars for the staff maintained at the office. This lessens the wear and tear and reduces the need to purchases fuel for their personal vehicles.

Many of the staff are involved in community projects to include CORE, Drug Court, Zero to Three, and Project Christmas for Foster Children.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operation of the County Department

- As the Board, we would like to see a change in the hiring of staff. It is not beneficial for the families in this community or the staff that remain dedicated to this office to have to wait 6 months or more to hire only a portion of employees lost. The lag time to hire staff causes stress and overload for the remaining case managers in the office.
- Recommend the practice of overfilling a percentage of positions in the county. This would allow for the County to have trained staff already available during time of turnover.
- Although the social services front line staff and front line supervisors received a significant raise in July 2017, Administrators and County Director have only received a minimal raise. The Board suggest the agency look at implementing step raises throughout an employee's career to assist in retaining employees and also awarding/recognizing those employees who maintain their dedication to the work of the agency.

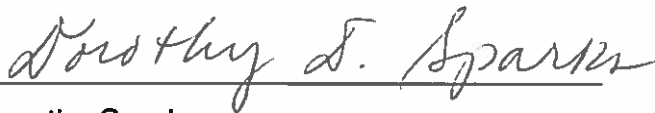
- We as a Board feel the State Office should take time to support local staff and understand the work that is being done in the County and the barriers that staff face daily in providing services to foster children. Douglas County has seen an increase in children entering foster care with significant mental health needs and extreme behavior needs. Further the Board is recommending an increase in the mental health services provided within this community.
- Need increased focus on recruitment of foster homes within the Douglas County community. Due to the lack of foster homes within the County and local placements for children with significant mental health and behavioral needs, workers are spending relentless hours searching for placements. The Board recommends that DFCS look at training local foster homes as Therapeutic foster homes. Placements outside of the county have a significant impact on the children and the staff providing services to the children.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair

The Douglas County DFCS Board is privileged to work with a group of staff and Leaders that show compassion for each other and their community. During stressful times, the leadership provides moral support as well as being involved in assisting workers meet the expectations of the job.

Respectfully submitted

Douglas County DFCS Board



Dorothy Sparks

Chairperson



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Early County
Department of Family and Children Services
11860 Columbia Street
Blakely, Georgia
39823

LOCAL COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Ms. Beauty Smith, Vice Chair. Faith based community member.
- Mr. Danny Chandler, Board Chair. Farmer, active in the community.
- Ms. Shalanda Carstaphen, Board Member. Retired and active in the community.
- Ms. Tammy Storey and Ms. Casidy Enfinger were both appointed as Board Members this year.
- The board meets the fourth Tuesday of each month at 10:00 am.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Clients and community partners were happy to have OFI casemanagers resume working local cases.
- Having someone to assist walk-in clients is an improvement to customer service.
- There are 19 children in foster care.
- The county currently has no CPS cases, 2 Family Preservation and 19 Family Support cases.
- Staff turnover has not been a concern for this county.
- Early County maintains positive relationships with their community partners.
- Limited community programs for youth.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

Early County is a small, rural county with limited resources. Graduation rates, poverty and teen pregnancy are long-term concerns. Mental health and substance abuse treatment is limited within the county, with providers either having to come to the client or the client travel to a nearby county.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department.

At this time, the County Director position is vacant. Filling that position would be the priority of the board.

Echols County
Division of Family and Children Services
106 Church of God Street
Statenville, Georgia
31648

Annual Report 2017

Bobby D. Cagle

STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services



Nathan Deal
Governor

ECHOLS COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

General Summary of the County DFCS Board:

The Echols County DFCS board is made up of five members with backgrounds in medicine, education, law enforcement and the faith based community. Mr. Leon Worth is the chairman of the board, serving on the board over 30 years. There are three men and two females on the board.

The Echols County DFCS board meets the third Tuesday of every month at 9 a.m. at Echols County DFCS.

The board prides itself with serving the Echols County DFCS staff as well as providing support to the children in the Echols County School System. The Echols board provides for regular staff appreciation events as well as supporting local law enforcement in providing various types of educational and prevention materials for the school resource officer.

The Echols board supports the yearly Echols County Law Enforcement/School Meet and Greet with the agency, which has become a highly successful collaborative event.

For the past 30 years, the board has sponsored a legislative luncheon for judges, state representatives, state senators, the DA's office, local law enforcement and state office/regional/local DFCS staff to promote agency collaboration, express appreciation and continue to voice the needs of this community of 4100 people.

It was well attended last year with over 100 persons participating.

The Echols board oversees the approval of county funds to support the agency staff in every way possible to assist them to be productive and efficient in their work.

The Echols County Commissioners have consistently supported the agencies efforts and goals financially over the years.

The Echols DFCS board strives to promote state initiatives such as Safe Sleep, Adoption and Fostering by raising public awareness through local newspaper ads.

The Echols board is also represented on the Region 11 State DFCS Advisory board which meets quarterly.

The board has chosen to show empathy and compassion to those in the community who are sick or who have lost loved ones by sending cards to families that convey the boards concern during their difficult time.

Assessment of effectiveness of County DFCS provision of services:

Echols County currently has five children in foster care. There are no foster homes currently in Echols County which means children are required to be placed in neighboring county foster homes.

Echols County had no finalized adoptions during the past year.

For Social Services, Echols County had forty seven CPS reports in 2017, with twenty six of these being handled as Family Support cases.

Echols County had ten Family Preservation cases during the year.

In OFI, Echols County averaged 604 individuals receiving either SNAP, Medicaid, TANF, and ABAWD monthly.

Echols County had no staff turnover rate during the year because there were no positions allocated to be hired for the county. The office was manned by a Rev-Max person, a FICM, and a SSCM for Resource Development.

The office was forced to be closed two days a week because it had no full time front desk person to oversee the lobby. This was the biggest challenge for the county remaining accessible to its community. Echols County has a considerable migrant population.

Fifty seven percent of the children who attend the Echols County school system are Hispanic.

Another challenge for Echols County this year was the tornado and hurricane events which greatly damaged the community. The community was without access to clean water or electricity for several weeks during the two events.

Because of the Blueprint For Change, Echols County DFCS now looks much different today.

There are now eight staff persons at the office full time. There is a full time SSCM to handle CPS cases. There are two FICM's. There is a front desk person to work the lobby. There are two Resource Development staff located there as well as two Rev-Max staff. The office is also served by part time Social Services, Rev-Max and OFI Supervisors.

There is also a county director present two days per week as well as being accessible 24 hours a day.

The Echols County Family Connection Coordinator is also housed in this office. Echols County DFCS and its community stakeholders are very involved in servicing the community. Law Enforcement and DFCS frequently work together on child abuse cases.

For the first time since 2007, Echols County has a Child Abuse Protocol in place that was developed with assistance from the District

Attorney's Office.

The agency has a very good working relationship with the school system. The agency has provided mandated reporter training as well as training on SBC to the school social staff. The school and the agency work well together. addressing any child abuse reports.

The agency attends and is involved in the Echols County Family Connections meetings and projects, which this year focused on promoting literacy in the community for children.

Finally, the agency has reached out to the faith based community to help establish a Called To Care Chapter for Echols County. Called to Care is a faith based initiative through the local churches that are interested in serving the needs of foster children and foster parents. They also assist in recruiting efforts for foster parents for the county.

There are presently eight chapters of Called To Care in eight counties in Region 11.

Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

Service provision for substance abuse, domestic violence and mental health are not available in Echols County for families and children. Families must have transportation to drive 30-40 miles one way to nearby Lowndes County to access those services.

There is no public transportation in Echols County and there is no community food bank.

Children brought into foster care in Echols County will have to be placed out of county because there are no foster homes in the county. This disrupts their connection to their community, school, church and friends.

Echols County does not have a Head Start center for its children.

Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

Echols County is a close knit community of 4100 people that has limited resources. The local DFC office is a critical part of the community. It is the main point of contact for people in the community to go to when they need assistance or have questions about resources.

This is the primary reason the board would like the county office to return to being opened five days a week.

Closing and signature of the Board Chair:

Echols County DFCS as an agency finds itself in much better overall condition in 2017 than it has been since 2012. The agency has staff to serve the families of Echols County as well as protect vulnerable children when the need arises.

As a result, of this, the number of families and children being served has consistently shown an increase in the county's monthly numbers.

The board is very grateful for the support of state leadership as well as the Governor's office for the improvements provided to the agency.



Leon Worth, Chairman, Echols County DFCS Board 2017

Effingham County Department of Family and Children Services

Annual Board Report

December 2017

General Summary of the Board:

Members:

Linda McDaniel, Board Chair

Margie Sullivan, Vice Chair

William Carter

Kay Jones

Bruce Peth

Meeting dates/times

The Board meets monthly on the second Monday of the month at 1:00pm.

Assessment of Effectiveness of the Effingham County Departments Provision of Services:

What works well:

- Community Partnerships and communication of initiatives and changes within the local Department.
- Relationships with other entities such as law enforcement, DJJ, and the school is very good. There is mutual respect.
- The Board feels as if the local Department does well with service implementation and deals quickly with any complaints or problems.

Opportunities for Improvement

- The Community needs effective, low-cost mental health and drug treatment services.
- More Foster Homes are needed to enable children to remain in the community.
- Building security is a major concern as the building was built in 1975 and has no modern security systems in place.

Board's Recommendations for Improved Operations:

The Board greatly appreciates the salary increase for case managers and supervisors but would like to see Administrative staff such as County Directors and Office Managers receive a raise to bring salaries more in line with the private sector.

We would also like to encourage the Division to continue to work to lower caseloads to ensure effective service delivery to the families and children served by local Departments.

Signatures:

Linda McDavid, Chair
Margie A. Sullivan - Vice Chair
Bruce Felt
Kay R. Jones
Will R. [Signature]



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report
2017

Emanuel County
Department of Family and Children Services
143 N. Anderson Dr.
Swainsboro, Georgia 30401

EMANUEL COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

General summary of the Emanuel DFCS Board:

The Emanuel board meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 10:00 AM at the Emanuel DFCS office. The board's makeup is consistent with the demographics of the community with only two members serving less than five years.

Dr. Betty Brown, Chair
Dr. K.E McNeal, Vice-Chair and Regional Board Representative
Nellie Davis
David Parham
Barbara Daniel
Cecilia Schenck, Secretary

The board supported professionalism training for Staff Appreciation, supported the County Director in approving funds for purchases and updates needed and offered general support to the staff. The County Director kept the board informed of DFCS initiatives, system changes so that board members were able to answer questions and give clarification to members of the community when asked about DFCS responsibilities. The Board members attended 90% of the meetings this year and feel they have more input in the County decision process.

Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

We believe there have been many improvements over the last year. The Director makes a point to introduce each new staff member to the board and we are pleased to have new Social Services staff and Supervisor. Emanuel Social Services consists of a Supervisor, five Case Managers and one Social Services Tech. OFI staff consists of three case managers, one front desk case manager and a Supervisor who covers Emanuel, Candler and Evans counties. There was very little turnover of staff. One Social Services Case manager resigned and replaced. One OFI case manager passed away during the year but was not replaced. One OFI case manager was transferred to another county but was not replaced.

Emanuel DFCS has a strong partnership with Sunshine House, CASA and Family Connections.

Emanuel will join Care Portal beginning January 2018. This will be a resource for families in the community and assist Case Managers in supporting them in becoming successful parents.

We believe that having a Meet and Greet with Law Enforcement allowed new staff and supervisors an opportunity to build relationships that will assist them in better service to the families.

From July 2016 – June 2017 Emanuel County DFCS
43 children in foster care
5 Foster Homes
1 Adoptions Finalized
0 Foster Homes Opened
70 CPS Screen outs
180 FSS
70 Investigations

At this time OFI is unable to provide numbers to report.

The County Boards assessment of the needs of the Community:

In our last report, we had identified needs in our community. The small towns and rural area of Emanuel County still has a struggle with poverty. The school system has all students on the free lunch program again this year and the local hospital continues to fight to stay open . More help is needed and the Board is looking into contacting Faith based groups in this on going struggle.

The County Board's recommendations for improved operations of the county department:

Overall, we believe that the local DFCS office is doing well with the resources that they have. We are very pleased with the fact that customers are able to call into the county's direct line and have better face-to-face services.

The Board feels that pay raises need to be balanced with the work expectations for those who were not given market value raises this year (support staff, SS tech and County Director). They are still concerned that the County Director is shared by two other counties and feel Emanuel should have a dedicated County Director.

We are concerned about the lack of foster homes in Emanuel County and feel there should be more recruitment of foster home in Emanuel county.

Conclusion:

We, the members of the Emanuel DFCS board, are willing to partner with the County Director and staff to provide support to the community to have safe and healthy families in Emanuel county. We have seen much improvement over the last year and have no reason not to expect that to continue.

Dr. Betty Brown, Emanuel DFCS Board Chair



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

Annual Report
2017

Evans County
Department of Family and Children Services
201 Freeman Street, BSMT
Claxton, Georgia 30417

EVANS COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

General summary of the Evans DFCS Board:

The Evans board meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 9:00 AM at the Evans DFCS office. The board's makeup is consistent with the demographics of the community with only one member being in service less than five years.

Larry Garrison, Chair and Regional Board Representative
Emily Downs, Vice-Chair
Darlene Sapp
Mae Eva Edwards
Barbara Sutton
Rose Morris, Secretary

The board was involved in several activities in the past year including: Safe at Home campaign, Human Trafficking Awareness and National Child Abuse Prevention month. They supported the County Administrator in approving funds for purchases and updates needed and offered general support to the staff. In support of the Blueprint for Change pillars of Robust Workforce Development and Consistent Engagement, it was determined that the lobby furniture and computer desks needed improving and staff desk and appropriate chairs for increased computer activity were needed. Approving the use of funds for this was a morale boost for staff and customers alike. The County Administrator kept the board informed of DFCS initiatives, the new social services model Solution Based Casework and system changes to GATEWAY. This included community needed information such as the differences between Shelters and Red Cross Shelters during the Hurricane Irma aftermath and SNAP benefit updates so that board members were able to answer questions and give clarification to members of the community when asked about DFCS responsibilities.

Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

We believe that some of the improvements that we had seen in the past in regards to timeliness of services to customers has unfortunately back tracked due to the GATEWAY conversion. We recognize that there is daily oversight over this process and we hope to see continued improvement in the coming months. We are pleased to see that Social Services has had no turnover and they work as a team so that investigations are completed timely. We think that having local workers (OFI/SS) providing service to local families is helping bridge some gaps. We hope that when the budget situation is better we can have a local foster care worker because we believe this will assist in retaining foster parents. At the time of this report, Evans had increased from having a total number of children served in foster care for the FY2016 year as nine to having 13 children in care for the month of October 2017. Evans County had only two foster parent families and since their homes were full the children had to be served out of county. We have since gained another foster home. We believe that there must be a good retention strategy before recruitment can take place.

We are pleased with the increase in pay for these staff and are sure this will help with retention. There has been no OFI turnover in the last year and they work well together. We

attribute the success of the office in general to the good working relationship between OFI and Social Services.

The County Administrator is involved in all aspects of the community including outreach to faith based partners and she is willing to address any organization or entity to discuss the needs of DFCS staff and DFCS families. She also recognizes the need for partners to have DFCS access and ensures that DFCS representatives are present at partner meetings or local government council meetings as needed. As she has assumed a new regional role, the County Director of Tattnall County and of the Evans/Candler Social Services staff ensures that staff are in attendance in meetings directly involving children and Mrs. Morris attends the stakeholder meetings.

When we looked at what was not working as well, we feel the need to note a concern in regards to the lack of daycare options for foster children that reside in the county. It was brought to our attention that the only daycare that accepts CAPS in Evans County put a temporary acceptance hold on foster children because bills had been left owing and of the three bills one was from another county in the region where another was from a county outside the region. We must retain resources for our foster children and at the time of this report Mrs. Morris was working on the resolution of this issue so that it does not happen again. We had listed the need for Evans County to have dedicated Resource Development staff person that local residents interested in Foster Care can meet with in this section on the last report. Since that time, Mrs. Morris has scheduled a meeting with the Resource Development worker and Family Connections Coordinator to address this issue.

The general statistics of the county are as follows:

Number of children in foster care—13

Number of foster parents—3

Number of finalized adoptions—0

Number of approved foster homes in the past year—1 with 1 pending

Number of CPS investigations—19

Number of Family Preservation/Family Support—61

There was no dependable yearly or average statistics available from either State Office of locally at the time of the report for : SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases.

The County Boards assessment of the needs of the Community:

We continue to focus on the needs identified in our first report: homeless, uninsured/lack of physicians, mental health and literacy. In that report we explained what those needs were and how they impacted the overall community. In this report we would like to share how there has been action and improvement in some of those items. We removed Homeless, Uninsured and added Substance Abuse.

- Homeless-DFCS still does not have a direct resource to address housing. The Georgia Initiative for Community Housing is still conducting a survey of every home structure in Evans County. The update is that a low income housing option was offered in Evans County and the citizens in that location did not want it there. The County Administrator will remain involved in the GICH initiative but we will remove this item from the list.
- Uninsured (hospital struggling/lack of physicians and inaccurate Medicaid data due to cases being counted outside of the county)—The hospital is still struggling but it continues to have public support to remain in the county. Unfortunately, the physician pool, especially for children continues to decline. The School Based Health Center is

a reality for 2017-2018 school year and the County Administrator remains involved in the discussions. We will remove "Uninsured" however we remain concerned about over all health because the Medicaid low reimbursement rate is limiting the number of Medicaid patients seen in doctor's office and there is not a dentist left in Evans County who accepts Medicaid. This means that dental care for some is not being provided because transportation out of the county is an issue.

- Mental health—The Georgia APEX Project (G.A.P) that was initiated in Evans County has been a successful venture for all schools. The Rural Health Research Institute remains involved in Evans County. The local hospital added a wing for mental health/aging and this has increased the resources for the county. The County Administrator remains involved in all collaboratives.
- Literacy —Ogeechee Technical College and Family Connections partnerships are still emphasizing the impact of education on the local workforce. Evans County Board and schools are still putting an emphasis on all aspects of education from reading abilities in the lower elementary to increasing the graduation rates at the high school level. Our County Administrator remains involved in TIGER C.A.F.E which is a school stakeholder meeting to foster community support to help meet their goals. This group has already put in motion literacy awareness and initiatives from the last year's sessions.
- Substance Abuse—Substance abuse of the caregiver is impacting the number of children coming into foster care.

The County Board's recommendations for improved operations of the county department:

The ability to have a same day worker in the office has helped customers whose benefits were delayed. We are aware of the region's five year plan to decrease the number of counties per County Director. The FY2018 budget was explained to us and we know why a County Director has not been hired.

We remain concerned about the lack of foster homes in Evans County. We are encouraged by new partnerships for outreach and retention and hope they are successful. The Evans Board will begin monitoring the "why" behind why children are coming into care and will support efforts to reduce this.

Conclusion:

We, the members of the Evans DFCS board, are willing to partner with the County Administrator and staff to not only move the Blueprint for Change forward but look forward to the expanding of the Community of Hope to a State of Hope. Mrs. Morris advised us of the departure of Director Bobby Cagle but also assured us that he left a good foundation and a good leadership team to ensure that the progress that has been made continues for the good of the families the agency serves.



Larry Garrison, Evans DFCS Board Chair

Fannin County Division of Family and Children Services

Annual Board Report for 2017

The Fannin County Division of Family and Children Services Board is made up of five members representing the overall community. These members are:

- *Ruth Burns, Board Chair, representing the pediatric health care providers, serving forty-nine years on the Fannin County Board
- *Frances Queen, Vice Chair, representing school personnel, serving forty-five years on the Fannin County Board
- *Robert Craig, representing school personnel, serving five years on the Fannin County Board
- *Bob Welch, representing the faith-based community, serving twenty-six years on the Fannin County Board
- *James Jones, representing the foster parent community, as a former foster parent, serving three years on the Fannin County Board

The Board met the fourth Thursday of each month, except for November and December:

- *January 26, 2017 Meeting---All board members present
- *February 23, 2017 Meeting---All board members present
- *April 27, 2017 Meeting---Present were Ruth Burns, James Jones, and Bob Welch
- *May 25, 2017 Meeting---All board members present
- *June 22, 2017 Meeting---Present were Ruth Burns, Frances Queen, James Jones, and Robert Craig
- *July 27, 2017 Meeting---Present were Ruth Burns, James Jones, and Bob Welch
- *September 28, 2017 Meeting---All board members present
- *October 26, 2017 Meeting---Present were Ruth Burns, Frances Queen, Bob Welch, and James Jones
- *The November Meeting is scheduled for November 27th, at 4:00 p.m.

*The December Meeting is scheduled for December 7, 2017, at 4:30 p.m.

Meetings for November and December are special scheduled with appropriate notification published. The Board is responsible for approving all expenditures of county funds which the agency receives.

General Summary of the County DFCS Board Use of Local County Funds:

The Fannin County Board was charged with delegating the usage of the annual allocation of county funds in the amount of \$50,558. The Board allocated the utilization of funds as follows:

- *Matched State funding to provide Fannin DFCS with an additional OFI worker.
- *Supplemented the State's clothing allowance by \$400 per foster child; along, with an additional supplemental winter and holiday clothing allowance, ranging from \$75 to \$150, based upon specified age grouping.
- *Provided mileage and hotel reimbursement for foster parents and relative placement resources to transport foster children for visitation, special award ceremonies, and special medical appointments.
- *County funds were allocated for diapers, haircuts, school fees/supplies, school pictures, and a \$20 per month allowance for children age 13+.
- *County funds were allocated for additional SAT/ACT testing as needed beyond the limited two exams covered by Independent Living Program funds.
- *The Board approved the purchase of plaques for the 2017 foster care graduates.
- *County funds were allocated to cover the cost of day care expenses as needed by the agency for children during emergency removals and placement disruptions.
- *Funds to allow DFCS staff to participate and represent Fannin DFCS in the GPHSA quarterly meetings and the AFPAG conference
- *Special need items for foster children as travel insurance for out of county travel, special lodging expenses foster children required to allow for special travel needs.
- *Travel and rental expenses to allow the pickup of toys from the St. Vincent de Paul Organization for Fannin's foster children.
- *The food cost for the September 2017 "Meet and Greet Program" for the law enforcement gift baskets; and, the December "Meet and Greet Program" meal for foster parents and children.

*The Board matched the employee council's funds to sponsor the October staff appreciation program, which included a hayride at Burt's Pumpkin Farm; lunch at Amicalola State Park; and, the team building program presented by the park.

*The Board also allocated county funds to help support regional events, as the food items for the OFI appreciation gift bags; food items for the region's basketball camp for foster children; resource development recruitment events; the region's display at the adoption road show; the cost of the foster care day at the Atlanta Zoo for foster families and children; and, the food for the 2017 Roadshow, which Fannin County hosted.

The Fannin County Board played a vital role in supporting the success of Fannin County DFCS. Along with providing and allocating county funds, the Board was proactive as an advocate and participant in all Agency events. The Board spoke to the new county commissioner board regarding their financial support to the agency. The Board met and welcomed all new employees. The Board also encouraged supervisors and staff members to attend monthly meetings to present program updates regarding their work activities, especially regarding new initiatives.

Board Assessment of Effectiveness of County's Provision of Services:

The Board has assessed the effectiveness of the Fannin County Division of Family and Children Services' provision of services, as listed in its daily operations:

Agency successes in 2017:

*The following initiatives of "safe sleep", "buckle up", "pool safety", and "not leaving a child in a hot car" were very successful in Fannin County during 2017, with no child death's related to these areas.

*Fannin County hosted the 2017 Roadshow for Region 1. The roadshow was an overall success, with a large turnout to each of the respected events.

*Fannin County staff were active in the local Community Services Conference; the Community Leadership Conference; Team Maze; the Atlanta Zoo trip for foster families and children; displaying a child abuse prevention display; Family Connection Monthly Meetings; and, supporting the resource development booths at the Safe Zone and their display/float in the Light Up Fannin Parade. Also, service staff traveled to each of the local law enforcement offices to present a "Meet and Greet" baskets and provide discussion on how to improve working relationship at all levels. Staff also participated in coordinating the annual Christmas party for the foster parents and children of Fannin County.

*Maintaining and working closely with a strong foster parent association, dedicated to meeting the needs of the agency's foster children.

*The return of OFI services to the county level, complaints have declined with customers having a worker whom they can contact and meet with face-to-face. Customers' OFI cases are processed more timely, with local OFI staff resolving OFI case issues within their local control. The transition to the Gateway System has gone well for both staff and customers. The OFI staff at the local level provided SNAP services to 1,499 households in Fannin County each month or 2,757 individuals, issuing benefits totaling \$4,107,093 annually; TANF benefits each month to six (6) households or thirteen (13) individuals, and providing program benefits totaling \$20,664; Medicaid benefits were provided to 990 households; and, 652 individuals received ABAWD benefits.

*The agency's response to reports regarding safety of children and assessing the needs of the family. The implementation of Solution Based Casework Model being receptive with positive outcomes from staff, the community, and families.

*The agency's partnership with the community, foster parents, and local community service providers to provide a higher level of services to customers.

*County staff's willingness to help other county DFCS offices as requested.

*The establishment of an employee council which boosted staff morale by holding office decorating contests, arranging monthly secret pal exchange of gifts, arranging monthly meals for staff gathering, providing donuts at random times for breakfast, birthday celebration, and special recognition for special accomplishments.

*Fannin County placement staff served a total of eighty-six (86) children in the foster care program throughout 2017, currently having a total of forty-nine (49) children in the program.

*The agency celebrated six (6) foster children achieving permanency through adoptions in 2017.

2017 challenges/opportunities for Fannin DFCS:

*One of the biggest challenges Fannin County faced was the lack of sufficient foster homes to house the county's foster children in county. Fannin County staff embraced the State's initiative to place children with relatives and fictive kinships (families whom the children have close ties which are not biologically related), accomplishing a yearly percentage rate of 44% for relative placements. Also, the resource development unit recruited eight (8) new foster homes within the county, bring the total of available foster homes to fifteen (15). Fannin County has developed a close working relationship with Open Arms of Blue Ridge, which is an in-county child placing institute for teen girls, as another local resource for the teen female population of foster children. Fannin County currently maintains a 69% of its foster children placed inside the county. In county placement aides in parent and relative visitation; parents' participation in their children's care; and, the children's connections to their home community and school.

*Staff at the local level was presented with the opportunity to build upon stakeholder relationships with law enforcement, the school system, the court system, local medical providers, CASA, etc., due to new workers in the department and with stakeholders. Staff also had an opportunity to education stakeholders regarding program changes in practice as Solution Base Case Work and Gateway. In return, service providers were educated DFCS staff regarding their changes in program practices. This presented opportunity to improve involvement throughout the service community.

Board's Assessment of Community Needs:

To identify the needs for Fannin County, the Board utilized information from their personal community involvement with local citizens and the results of community needs identified from the survey conducted by Family Connection. The following needs were identified:

*Sufficient number of staff in all program areas, including OFI.

*The agency needs to continue with the implemented plan to work on positive and timely customer service requests.

*CAPS services are extremely difficult to obtain and is not user friendly; with funding being insufficient to serve the number of families needing the service.

*The lack of child care resources throughout the community, currently there is only one day care in the county. The county also needs a child care resource for older youth, ages twelve plus.

*The need for more foster and adoptive resources.

*The need for more job opportunities and jobs with higher wages.

*Lack of flexible transportation services.

*Lack of a family/sibling visitation center and program.

Board's Recommendations for Improved Operations for the Agency:

Reviewing the needs of the community, the Board recommends the following operational improvements for Fannin County:

*Collaborating with Family Connection, North Georgia Mountain Crisis Network, CASA, and the Courts to obtain funding to establish a visitation program and center.

*The need to fill positions left vacant through staff turnover, the office had an employee turnover of 17% in 2017.

***Increasing the agency's positive public exposure by participating in community meetings and events to educate and answer questions regarding practice changes, program policy, and guidelines regarding OI benefits for the various programs.**

***Continuing the "Meet and Greet" with law enforcement to educate, be educated, and maintain an ongoing work improvement initiative. Encourage an increase in law enforcement officers accompanying workers on home visits to improve worker safety in the field.**

The Board approved this report on November 27, 2017.



Ruth Burns




Frances Queen, Vice Chair




Bob Welch, Board Member



Robert Craig, Board Member

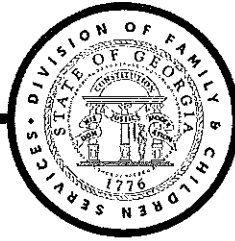


James Jones, Board Member



Kathy Henson, County Director and Secretary

NATHAN DEAL
GOVERNOR



VIRGINIA PRYOR
INTERIM DIRECTOR

Annual Report 2017

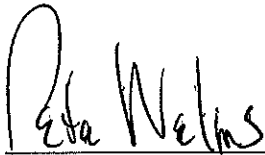
Fayette County
Department of Family and Children Services
905 Highway 85 South
Fayetteville, GA 30215

over the OFI sections in the offices. Some staff are not even supervised locally. We are all charged with ensuring that our community's families and children are cared for and do have a responsibility to respond to the community when the system or processes are questioned. Keeping the County Director informed and part of the protocol is critical.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to share our recommendations for improving the services offered to our communities in Fayette County.

Approved and Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pete Nelms". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

Pete Nelms
Fayette County DFCS Board Chair

FAYETTE COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of Fayette County DFCS Board:

- Makeup - Members/Officers
- Meeting dates/times
- Activities for the past year
-

The Board of Fayette County DFCS is comprised of various community members as follows: Pete Nelms, Board Chair; Angela Hinton Fonda, Board Vice-Chair, and Karen Spangler, Cathy Berggren, and Anthony Rhodes all serving as board members. Susan Boggs serves as secretary. Fayette County Board meets the second Tuesday of each quarter beginning in January. If items of importance, such as approval of this report, arise between regular meetings, we address them via email and report in the next regular meeting's minutes. The Board has sponsored several lunch & learn opportunities for staff this year, as well as the county's annual Prevent Child Abuse Event.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

The Fayette County DFCS Board places a high priority on the well-being and morale of our employees. The Board once again approved a stipend for employees in hopes of retaining employees on a long term basis. Our staffing levels are pretty stable and the Board always looks for ways to improve our staffing levels and workloads. The Board places a high priority on the safety of our facility and employees. The Board did approve the installation of additional security equipment for the facility that will provide a safer workplace for our employees and those that come to it seeking services.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

The main stay of connectivity in our community is the Real Life Center. The Center provides key services that DFCS cannot provide or additional services once clients have exhausted DFCS resources. Our Regional Director, Jeffery Brown visited the center in 2017. As part of connecting DFCS with the community, the Director of Real Life Center is a Fayette DFCS Board member. The economy continues to improve in Fayette County, the State of Georgia, and the nation. We know from experience that a good economy brings the promise of better job opportunities, better pay and other benefits to those that seek them. We also know that good economies will come and go. Economic downturns are inevitable. Fayette DFCS continues to identify community needs during both good economies and economic downturns through building strong community relationships.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

While the Fayette County DFCS office does not have a great deal of turnover, being able to fill positions has become a hardship. The Human Resources department has taken as much as four months to bring new or transferred staff into the office. Mainstreaming this process for a more effective and efficient hiring process is a critical need. The County Director does not have authority



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report

2017

Floyd County
Division of Family and Children Services
450 Riverside Pkwy, Suite 110
Rome, Georgia 30161

FLOYD COUNTY DFCS BOARD ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

The following outlines the annual county board report including a general summary of the county DFCS Board, an assessment of the effectiveness of the county division's provision of services, an assessment of the needs of the community and the county board's recommendations for improved operations of the county division.

General summary of the Floyd County DFCS Board:

Floyd County DFCS Board Members meet bi-monthly (every two months). 2017 Board members include Mr. Mitchell Jolly (Chairperson), Mrs. Tonya Davis (Vice Chairperson), Mrs. Elaine Thomas (term expired 6/30/2016), Mrs. Ojilvia Lom, Mr. Charles Love and Mrs. Barbara Earle (appointed 7/1/2017). In addition, Mr. Scotty Hancock serves as a representative from the Floyd County Board of Commissioners.

Through guidance and support of the Floyd County DFCS Board, county funds were utilized to improve the day-to-day functioning and support of the County in the following areas:

- Part-Time Data Transcriptionist provides up to 29hrs of weekly support to Social Services staff through data-transcription, child protective services screenings, timely processing of invoices and county reimbursements to foster placements, etc.
- County Programs Specialist administers county-specific programs for Floyd County residents, including General Assistance Program (emergency financial assistance provided through County Funds), County Clinic eligibility determinations (medical financial assistance through Floyd Medical Center) and Indigent/Pauper Burials (in partnership with local funeral homes).
- Increased county-specific reimbursements to foster caregivers and relative/fictive caregivers caring for children in the custody of Floyd County.
- Financial support and Partnership with Restoration Rome to create the onsite Comprehensive Care Center, to include visitation, parent coaching program and foster care intake.

The County Board's assessment of the effectiveness of the provision of services:

Floyd County DFCS has achieved great successes and overcome many challenges in 2017! We are continuing our vision and commitment to building a stronger, more skilled team of leaders into 2018. We have expanded our teams within each program area of Social Services, OFI and Administrative Team. Hiring of new staff and coaching/mentoring of our veteran team has improved the quality of services we provide to our community children and families.

Our Child Protective Services team has increased timely response times by 17% compared to 2016, achieving our highest of 97% in October 2017. Response times are the urgent responses by our agency in assessing the safety of children subject to a report of maltreatment. We value every child's safety and begin immediate efforts to locate and assure safety at the receipt of every report. In addition, we have increased the timeliness of our CPS Investigations and safely reduced entry of children into foster care by 14%. Our Family Preservation team has also decreased the length of time of our involvement with families by implementing services in a more timely manner.

Our Permanency team has safely decreased the number of children in foster care by 23%, with a high of 434 children in care in 2016 compared to our current foster care population of 333 children. These efforts are made possible by the diligence of our CPS and FPU teams in preventing entry of children, safely keeping them with their family whenever possible, as well as our Permanency team's efforts to implement services to parents to achieve timely reunification and the focused effort on

achieving adoption finalization for our children. We have achieved 76 adoptions in 2017 (compared to 61 adoptions in 2016).

Floyd County DFCS is implementing Solution Based Casework as our practice model in working children and families. We believe improved family engagement and partnership will improve the outcomes for children, families and our community. We are working to train and certify all Social Services staff in the practice of Solution Based Casework and have already completed 11 certifications so far this year. We will ensure our remaining team members achieve certification in 2018.

Floyd County DFCS has expanded our Employee Council, increasing the frequency of employee appreciation events and participation of all staff within the agency. On a monthly basis, we recognize "Shining Stars", individuals nominated by their peers for their hardwork, dedication, passion and teamwork. In addition, we have held employee activities throughout the year to increase morale and promote self-care, such as holidays snacks/luncheons, decorating contests, fun activities like treasure hunts and Secret Santa, and festivals focused on efforts to share work responsibilities and team building!

Our Child Protective Services team still maintains higher than recommended caseloads, ranging from 35-45 cases per Case Manager and has depended upon contracted PRN staff to ensure timely safety assessment and contact with families. In addition, our Family Preservation and Permanency Units struggled with high caseloads the majority of 2017. This resulted in all of our Social Services Supervisors carrying their own caseloads to serve our children and families. Though this was a significant challenge; it provided an opportunity for Supervisors to ensure one-on-one, in field training and mentoring of our new Case Managers. Over the course of the year, we have been able to significantly reduce average caseloads in our Family Preservation and Permanency Units down to an average of 25 per Case Manager. This reduction has directly improved our team's ability to provide timely, effective services to families, improve assessment of safety and facilitate permanency.

Floyd County continues to be in a state of crisis need for local foster homes. Over the past year, there has been an increase from 31 to 36 approved DFCS foster and adoptive homes. We work together with several Child Placing Agencies (20 homes) and Open Door Home; however, the number of child in need far exceeds the number of homes currently available. We have increased efforts to locate suitable, appropriate relatives and fictive caregivers to support children staying within their local community. We continue to partner with local child welfare organizations, businesses and child placing agencies in joint recruitment campaigns, as well as joint training sessions and foster parent appreciation activities. We maintain approximately 30-35% of our children placed locally, which has increased compared to 2016.

We continue to experience significant delays in partnering with DHS Office of Human Resources for the posting/hiring/onboarding of staff, which has presented barriers in reducing caseloads and affecting our work with children and families. We are currently hiring for vacant positions including, 9 Case Managers, 1 FC Supervisor, 1 Well-Being Administrator and 2 Client Support Workers within Social Services. We have improved our partnership with local Colleges and Universities, increasing recruitment of applicants, as well as utilizing interns to support our team.

Floyd County DFCS maintains strong partnership with local community stakeholders, including Juvenile Court, Law Enforcement and County/City School Systems. In addition, we partner with other child and family serving organizations, such as Faith Coalition for Families, Rome-Floyd Commission on Children and Youth, Floyd Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Harbor House Child Advocacy Center, Restoration Rome and Exchange Club Family Resource Center. We have further

strengthened our partnerships with local businesses to meet the needs of our children and families, support and recognize our staff, along with supporting our annual Cheerful Givers program.

Floyd County DFCS has furthered our partnership with Restoration Rome, which now provides an onsite supervised visitation program funded through Promoting Safe and Stable Families grant funding. Restoration Rome continues to expand their preventative and foster/adoptive support services to our community. In addition, we rely on our strong partnership with Exchange Club Family Resource Center for their preventative and parent education/coaching programs, also funded through Promoting Safe and Stable Families grant funding.

The County Board's assessment of the needs of the community:

Though our Floyd County community has many support services, we are seeing an increased need for mental health treatment services for our children and youth, as well as substance abuse treatment and recovery supports for our parents and caregivers struggling with addiction. DFCS will work with local mental health and substance abuse treatment providers to evaluate opportunities to improve service delivery, increase communication and partnership for our families.

Floyd County continues to have a need for more local foster homes. When children are unable to safely remain with their caregivers or family members, it is especially critical for them to remain connected to their community. Local foster homes provide children with opportunities to remain in their school and surrounded by community supports, which increases the likelihood of timely reunification. DFCS will continue to partner with private child placing agencies for joint recruitment and retention efforts. DFCS will continue efforts with Restoration Rome to expand support services for foster families, relative and fictive caregivers.

The County Board's recommendations for improved operations of the county department:

Floyd County DFCS will continue to utilize surplus Fund Balance funds to support increased reimbursement to foster caregivers, supporting the care of children in foster care and retention of families. In addition, funds will be utilized to support expanded programming and services at Restoration Rome, to include creation of an onsite DFCS Satellite location. Board Members will continue assessing effective use of these monies to support current needs of the County.

Floyd County DFCS has vacant positions within our Social Services programs. Floyd County DFCS continues to request the support of DHS Office of Human Resources in reducing the delay in posting/hiring and onboarding of staff to fill vacant positions. In addition, Floyd County DFCS will maintain ongoing efforts to recruit and retain skilled, qualified staff. Our workforce directly affects the services provided to children and families.

This report has been reviewed and approved by Floyd County DFCS Board Members on December 13, 2017 and is respectfully submitted for review to Division Director Ginger Pryor on December 15, 2017.

Reviewed and acknowledged by Floyd County DFCS Board Chairperson and Secretary

Mitchell Jolly

Mitchell Jolly, Board Chairperson

Lindsay M. Jacobs Howerton

Lindsay Howerton, Board Secretary

NATHAN DEAL
GOVERNOR



VIRGINIA PRYOR
INTERIM DIRECTOR

Annual Report 2017

**Forsyth County
Department of Family and Children Services
426 Canton Road
Cumming, GA 30040**

BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE ✦ A STATE OF HOPE ✦

SAFE CHILDREN. STRENGTHENED FAMILIES. STRONGER GEORGIA.

Forsyth County DFCS | Margaret Dawe, County Director | 426 Canton Road | P.O. Box 21 | Cumming, GA 30028

Telephone: 770-781-6717 | Fax: 770-781-6751

FORSYTH COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

The Forsyth County Division of Family and Children Services Board is comprised of four members that meet monthly at the local DFCS office on the second Wednesday at 10 AM. These members include Chairperson Peggy Green, Bonnie Martin, Sarah Pedarre' and Laura Skinner. It should be noted that there has been a vacancy on the Board since 7-1-17. The 2017 meeting dates were as follows: 1-18-17, 2-8-17, 3-8-17, 4-19-17, 5-10-17, 6-21-17, 7-12-17, 8-9-17, 10-11-17, 11-8-17, and 12-13-17. The Board provides ongoing support for the agency by being an important advocate with community partners to further the mission of the agency.

The Forsyth County office has been effective in its mission of ensuring child safety and serving individuals and families in need as evidenced by data on the Fostering Court Improvement website (www.fosteringcourtimprovement.org). Specifically our county ranks higher than State average in permanency achieved within 12 months of removal as well as children discharged for reunification. In addition, the median length of stay for children in care in Forsyth was 9.2 months through March 2017 compared to the State average of 13.5 months for the same time period. Lastly our county ranks higher than State average in adoption finalizations within 24 months.

The Forsyth County Division of Family and Children Services is a collaborative partner with multiple agencies that serve children and families in our community. The agencies include the Forsyth County Juvenile Court and Superior Court, CASA, SAFFT, Forsyth County Sheriff's Office, City of Cumming Police Department, Forsyth County School System, Child Advocacy Center, Forsyth County Community Connection, Department of Juvenile Justice, Health Department, Avita, Family Haven, United Way, Northside Hospital Forsyth, Bald Ridge Lodge, Jesse's House, and The Place. The Agency's collaboration with these stakeholders is important and ongoing in meeting the needs of children and families in the community.

In 2017, the Agency has maintained their involvement with multiple partners in the community. The Agency has maintained a strong relationship with the Juvenile Court due to the needs of the families that the Agency serves on a daily basis. The Agency continues to participate in the At-Risk Children's Committee (ARCC) to discuss how to better serve children and families in the community. The Agency continues to have a strong partnership with CASA by working

together to serve children in the agency's custody. The Agency participates in Stakeholder and Family Connection meetings. The Agency also attends the Child Advocacy Center MDT meetings, Domestic Violence Task Force meetings, Child Fatality Review meetings, and Georgia Prevention Initiative meetings. There is recognition of the importance of continuous collaboration with community partners in serving our children and families. There is a belief that the community is stronger when agencies come together to identify and meet needs in the community.

The Board recognizes the need for continued recruitment of foster homes in our community. The Agency has increased to 50 active foster homes this year from 40 in 2016. However, there is a need to continue recruiting new foster parents especially for older children and sibling groups. Currently 59% of the children in the custody of the Agency are placed outside of the county. The Agency is collaborating with Forsyth County Community Connection to recruit additional homes to meet the above-mentioned needs. The Board continues to support all efforts to recruit and maintain foster parents due to the benefits to the children and families in our community.


The Board acknowledges that the Office of Family Independence (OFI) has grown substantially in the local office this year. These staff are continuing to process applications for SNAP, Medical Assistance, TANF, and Childcare for the citizens of Forsyth County. The Board believes that the process of same-day service as well as personal interaction with the local OFI case managers are beneficial to the community. The Board is encouraged about the new Gateway system and its potential for enhancing service delivery.

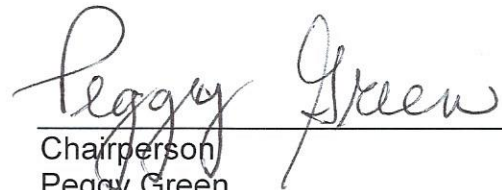
The Agency has taken active steps in 2017 to stabilize their workforce; however, turnover is still an issue at the agency given the demands of the job. The Board recognizes that the recent salary increases for Social Services case managers and supervisors were helpful; however, this action was not completely sufficient in stemming the turnover. Currently the majority of staff reside outside of the county and commute to work in Forsyth County. The Board is concerned about salary discrepancies above the Social Services Supervisor level and its impact on morale. The Board is pleased that Forsyth County has continued to fund a 5% supplement for Social Services staff employed with the agency for twelve months or longer. The Board will continue to advocate for the supplement for all agency employees including OFI staff. In order to address the county funding issues, the Board believes that the Agency should be a separate line item in the county budget rather than receiving funding directly from the Social Services Committee. The Board will continue to pursue this matter, as the Agency should not have to compete with non-profit agencies in the county for funding.

Forsyth County DFCS Board Annual Report
Page 3

The Board remains concerned about the issue of limited office space to accommodate current and future staff. The Board supports an upgrade of the current office space as well as the acquisition of a new building as soon as possible. There is concern that the Agency's lease still has not been signed by the State Properties Commission, and this negatively impacts the Agency's ability to upgrade their existing building.

Presented by: Chairperson Peggy Green, Bonnie Martin, Sarah Pedarre', Laura Skinner, and County Director Margaret Dawe.


Secretary
Margaret Dawe, LMSW


Chairperson
Peggy Green



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

2017 Franklin County Annual Board Report

The Franklin County Board meets monthly on the third Wednesday of the month. The Board is comprised of community members, Margaret Ayers, Chairperson, Marie Loftis, vice-chairperson, Andrea Smith, Peggy Berryman, and Ken Dove. The Board reviews the work and expenditures of the county office. County Funds are expended primarily on the needs of children in foster care.

The Franklin County Department of Family and Children Services has managed county needs effectively during 2017. A number of changes have taken place this year and the local office has worked to adapt as needed while still serving the local population. The County has trained staff in the new Solution Based Casework practice model and moved them into the certification phase. OFI staff have been trained in the Georgia Gateway computer system and are in the transition phase.

The County Board's assessment of the effectiveness of the county department's provision of services

Social Services

Franklin County social services programs are served by staff who serve both Franklin and neighboring Hart County on a regular basis. All supervisory staff including the County Director maintain a regular presence in each office to ensure availability to case managers and the community. During 2017, a number of staffing changes have taken place. A Social Services Administrator position was approved for the first time and filled by an internal promotion. Two other internal promotions were granted advancing case management staff into supervision. All staff are completing required training and are able to meet the needs of the community. Turnover remained very low with only one case manager leaving the department.

Social Services staff have achieved particular success in finalizing adoptions this year. Two foster care case managers were assigned to specialize in this work resulting in thirteen finalized adoptions this year with several more in progress. Franklin County staff managed 57 new investigations opened through October and 178 new Family Support cases. During the first full year of the Child Abuse Registry there were no substantiated case determinations overturned through the appeals process. Foster care case managers worked with 64 Franklin County cases during the year in addition to assigned cases for Hart County. Social Services also participated in the Community risk reduction team which was implemented. This team is comprised of multiple community agencies and worked to provide support and intervene with families and youth in need of support, thereby preventing the need for court action or more formal agency intervention.

Franklin County DFCS | Bryant Rogowski, County Director | 1133 Hull Street | P. O. Box 279 | Carnesville, GA 30521

An Equal Opportunity Employer

Office of Family Independence

All staff have been trained to utilize the new Georgia Gateway computer system and are currently engaged in the transition. This system is designed to be more client friendly and will offer more efficient benefit processing.

The County Board's assessment of the needs of the community

Franklin County continues to recruit and train foster homes. Ongoing recruitment remains a strong need. Three new foster homes were opened this year. Currently there are 17 open foster homes in the county with 50 bed spaces. The majority of these spaces are occupied. There is also a continued need for mental health and other appropriate services to youth with behavioral issues. Better coordination and cooperative implementation of services between agencies and other providers is needed. The risk reduction team is a part of this effort.

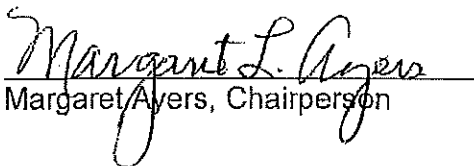
The County Board's recommendations for improved operations of the county department – including recommendations regarding staffing levels and worker safety, as well as other areas.

The Board supports continued hiring of staff to ensure that once optimal staff to work ratios are met, they can be maintained. The Board appreciates the increased base pay implemented for front line staff and supervisors. The Board recommends that corrections be made to ensure that all staff regardless of job title are paid appropriately. Recognition should be given to staff with longer tenure and managers should not receive less compensation than subordinates due to job title.

Positive and regular communication between the Department and local law enforcement ensures staff safety. Law enforcement staff are available and willing to assist Department workers whenever a concern about safety in the field arises.

This report is being submitted to comply with the requirements of the child welfare reform law, Senate Bill 138. The Board supports the strengthening of local Department offices through improved allocation of resources.

Submitted,


Margaret Ayers, Chairperson

Gilmer County

Annual Board Report

December 2017

A. General Summary of the Gilmer County DFCS Board:

Beth Macarthur- Chairperson

Katherine Meyer- Vice Chairperson

Anita Summers- Treasurer

Larry Naylor

Shane Bowman

Jennifer Farmer- Secretary

Meeting dates/times:

Gilmer DFCS board meets on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 12:00pm.

Activities for the past year:

Gilmer Sheriff's office conducted tactical defense training to staff.

Gilmer Co board representative Katherine Meyer and CD Jennifer Farmer participate quarterly in Regional Advisory Board meetings.

Social Work Appreciation month was celebrated with a variety of activities throughout the month.

Child Abuse Proclamation Singing was held and board members participated.

Pinwheel Ceremony was conducted in honor of Child Abuse Awareness Month and board members participated.

Foster parent Proclamation signing was held and board members participated.

Foster parent appreciation day at the Atlanta Zoo was held to celebrate and honor Foster Parent Appreciation Month.

Participated in Roadshow Events in our Region, board representation was at the Town Hall meeting.

Law Enforcement Recognition and Appreciation event was held in the community.

Gilmer Board celebrated Gilmer DFCS team with an appreciation lunch at ETC pavilion where door prizes were given.

A trunk or treat was held for our Foster children in the county, Believe to Achieve Region wide camp held in the summer in which board supported snacks and drinks to campers.

We welcomed new board member Shane Bowman to the team

Thanksgiving Luncheon was held with all office staff and board members.

Gilmer DFCS participated in the Festival of Trees by decorating a Christmas tree at the public library. The ornaments that decorated the tree represented and celebrated the many children who had received permanency this past year.

Gilmer staff had snack day and gift exchange to celebrate the Christmas season.

Gilmer foster children had a breakfast with Santa where gifts were given out.

B. Assessment of the effectiveness of Gilmer County provision of services:

What's working well-

Support to staff- Gilmer Co board has always supported the staff. The board gives back their monthly \$15.00 into a fund that supports us. They provide an employee appreciation luncheon every year in the month of September where employees feel supported and appreciated. They donate plaques to employees with 5yo increments of service to the division, purchase t-shirts or whatever is needed to encourage and boost morale.

Source of communication to the community- all of the board members are members of churches or civic organization in the county and community. They are able to be a positive source and advocate for the division. The communication between board members and County Director about events or activities in the community is invaluable.

Support of Foster Families- Gilmer board supports foster families in everything they do for our foster children. County Director and the team can always count on the support when items or monies are requested for assistance. Gilmer currently has 12 open foster homes in the county. We have had 4 new foster homes open up in 2017.

Staff Turnover rate is average for Gilmer Co. In 2017 we have had 4 resignations from the agency.

Adoptions finalized- 4

Children receiving permanency in 2017 for Gilmer Co- 57 which represents some purposeful, intense work completed by case managers and supervisors. Working as a team is crucial.

Currently Gilmer Co has 38 children in foster care, drastically down from the 71 we had in care at this time in 2016. CD attributes this again to the hard work of the team.

2017 CPS staff worked approx. 291 cases involving neglect/maltreatment to a child.

Family preservation throughout the year ranged from 10-17 cases at any given time.

What's not working well-

Gilmer County board feels everything is working well at this time and if they had to pick something it would be the continued need for a better facility. This is a continuous

project with some recent movement and we hope to be in a brand new building shared with Child Support Enforcement in late 2018 or early 2019.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

County Director will continue speaking with stakeholders and community partners about the great opportunities for Gilmer DFCS. The "State of Hope" will continue to be messaged throughout the community.

Gilmer staff will again receive tactical defense training in 2018 on some basic self-defense moves, new things to be aware of and some additional de-escalating techniques.

County board feels and County Director agrees to continue using the local Gilmer newspaper by putting in articles about the good things our county office is doing at least once a quarter.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Division:

Safety of our workers both in the building and out in the field continue to be of concern to our board members. The panic button is being re-introduced to the region and the hope is it will become a reality soon. The panic button will be located on each case manager's cell phone and their location will be tracked by GPS should they find themselves in an unsafe situation.

Gilmer staff will continue to be trained annually on some basic self-defense moves and de-escalating techniques.

Old, outdated windows in the building were replaced with new windows this year.

County Director will continue to utilize the Gilmer newspaper to showcase the good things accomplished and opportunities of this division.

County board and staff are very excited to have the case workers needed to adequately do the job set before them. This has provided relief to case managers and lessened case load size so they accomplish true social work.

In closing, I along with Chairperson Beth Macarthur wish to submit this report with input from all board members. We have met as a collective group and voted on it at our monthly board meeting held on 11/15/17.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Farmer
County Director
Gilmer Co DFCS



Beth Macarthur
Gilmer Co DFCS Board Chairperson



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report

2017

Glascocock County
Department of Family and Children Services
674 W Main St. / PO Box 225
Gibson, GA 30810

GlascocK COUNTY

ANNUAL REPORT

DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCSs Board:

The GlascocK County Board consists of the following members:

Ms. Kathy Hawkins, Board Chair

Ms. Mattie Harris

Ms. Peggy Lyons

Ms. Debbie Milburn

Ms. Nora Lord

The Board meets the third Monday of the month, every other month, at 4:30 pm. January 23, 2017, March 20, 2016, May 15, 2017, July 17, 2017, September 18, 2017, November 20, 2017

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

GlascocK County Department of Family and Children services provides effective services to the customers. Work coming back to the local offices has improved customer service to those served. There have been some complaints of employees not answering the phones in the county office as they should. Issues are addressed by County Director immediately.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

GlascocK County has limited resources. Community members need to become more knowledgeable about the services that are available within and outside the county. There is a need for transportation services locally. There are limited employment opportunities for the community.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

Overall operations are rated as pretty good. There are some improvements needed in Customer Service area.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair

The county office houses a total of 4 employees. The office hours are Monday through Friday 8 am to 5 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kathy Hawkins
Board Chair



Trina T Lee
Jefferson County Director



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

To: Virginia Pryor, Department of Family and Children Services State Director

From: Glynn County DFCS Board of Directors

Date: December 8, 2017

Subject: Glynn County Annual Board Report Fiscal Year 2017

A. General Summary of the Glynn County DFCS Board:

• **Members:**

Dr. Regina Johnson, Chair
Versie Thomas, Vice Chair
Dorothy Stevens, Board Member
Mary Harris, Board Member
Tony Kreimborg, Board Member
Kristal Jones, County Director
Amanda Snipes, Office Manager/Recorder

• **Meeting Dates:**

Glynn County Board meets Monthly
Fourth Wednesday at 1:00 PM at Glynn DFCS

• **Activities for the Past Year:**

Sponsorships and Participation

CASA Fashion Show
Family Connections Partnership
YMCA Tribute to Women
Coastal Coalition for Children
Communities in Schools
Amity House Domestic Violence
Manna House
Child Abuse Awareness Month
National Adoption Month
GPHSA Annual Conference
GPHSA Semi-Annual Meeting
Foster Parent Appreciation

Coastal Area Action Authority

B. Assessment of the Effectiveness of Glynn County DFCS provision of services:

The following areas work well:

- The leadership and commitment of the County Director, Kristal Jones, and her leadership team work well to provide service to the community and have been instrumental in improving the community's perceived image of the agency. Their visibility in the community has strengthened bonds with community partners and created new ones for the support of families we serve.
- The agency's timely response to the emergent needs reported to the agency has protected the vulnerable children and adults within our community.
- The development of a strong and committed team of Social Services staff under the leadership of County Director Jones, has worked tirelessly to achieve permanency for children in the agency's custody. Glynn County has led the region in Fiscal Years 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 in the number of finalized adoptions (total of) and is also leading the region in the current fiscal year. Glynn has managed to accomplish this in spite of turnover and high caseloads.

The following areas are not working well:

- The sharing of the Glynn Office Manager with McIntosh County since the state has separated the two counties is not effective to carry out the responsibilities and duties of Glynn County DFCS. Separation of services is essential and this immediate request is being made.
- The loss of four case manager positions, one supervisor position and one administrative position without a substantial decrease in the number of families we serve has led to workers who are handling caseloads that far exceed the Federal Regulations and supervisors who are carrying cases.
- The increased usage of illegal and mind-altering substances leaves our front desk clerks and staff vulnerable. An OFI Supervisor attacked and a threat of harm made on our social service team.
- The key fob system in the Glynn building is costly to maintain and there is no contract when we have issues. The 3-year-old building has had incidents each of the last two years with doors not working.
- The relationship with the juvenile court system is strained in spite of efforts to resolve issues of policy, procedure and personnel as it relates to child safety issues.

C. Glynn County Board's Assessment of the community needs and concerns:

The Glynn Board has identified the following concerns/needs for our community:

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Treatment - Substance abuse and mental health issues substantially impact a parent's capacity to care for their children. In addition, there are inadequate treatment facilities in Glynn County. There are also limited contracted providers to address mental health needs. Often feedback from potential providers is the complexity in working with the state to secure contracts for service provision.
- Insufficient foster homes and group homes in the Glynn County community for teenagers and children with higher needs.
- Public Transportation System as well as limited contract providers to provide transport to families is causing issues with families getting to visitation and court ordered services. – Glynn Co. is a large geographic county which encompasses two barrier islands. (Jekyll Island and St. Simons Island) Lack of public transportation is often a barrier for parents who are working to reunify with their children and for parents getting to their places of employment. The current DHS Transportation System requires substantial advanced notice to "schedule" trip and clients often report the wait for hours to be picked up and are then required to ride the system for hours before being dropped off. The current system has only one provider to transport children in the Glynn County area unless they are also providing supervision of the visits. So as parents gain unsupervised visitation transportation becomes an issue.
- Staff Turnover
- Lack of valuable statistical information relating to the Glynn residents served shared in the community as it relates to family independence, i.e. Medicaid, food stamps and TANF.

D. Glynn County's Board recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

The Glynn Board recommends the following for improved operations to support the Division's Blueprint for Change:

- Immediate consideration and implementation of armed security in the Glynn DFCS office and staff training for safety protocol.
- Allocation of staff funding to support manageable case and workloads and supervision to allow Glynn County to compare with the federal standards of 1:15. Glynn County Social Services Staff has an average caseload of 28. More manageable workloads will improve the quality of time a case manager can spend with children and families, will improve staff retention and overall support resulting in better/sustained outcomes for families and children.
- Continued monitoring of the Key fob and security systems so that Glynn county has a working first line of protection for staff.

Glynn Board Summary Statement:

Glynn County Director, Krystal Jones has graciously, effectively and efficiently carried out her duties with a commitment to self sufficiency and safety for families and children in our community. This was coupled with the management of staff with attention to productivity and morale as well as facility maintenance since her appointment in June 2013. Ms. Jones has done a remarkable job!

The fact that the agency has been faced with policy and philosophical differences between CASA and Juvenile Court, Ms. Jones and staff have worked tirelessly to assure safety as it related to the placement of children and a good working relationship with community partners.

In addition she has offered administrative and programmatic support of two large geographical counties which led to the separation of county responsibilities and her reassignment. We wholeheartedly support and commend County Director, Kristal Jones, for her leadership and successful performance and positive outcome for the families in our community.

Recognizing that change is inevitable as we grow and address diversity of needs, we look forward to working with our new County Director, Dana Gellermann, who joined the Glynn Family August of 2017.

Respectfully,

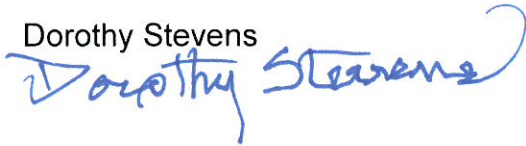
Dr. Regina H. Johnson, Chair



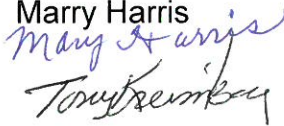
Versie Thomas, Vice-Chair



Dorothy Stevens



Marry Harris



Tony Kreimborg

Gordon County Department of Family and Children Services
Annual Board Report
2017 (Calendar Year)

General Summary of the Gordon County DFCS Board:

The Gordon County Department of Family and Children Services County Board is made up of five members representing the community. These members are Dianne Kirby, Board Chair; Bruce Potts; Sheila Callaway; Robert Hughes; and Mitch Talley. Robert Hughes replaced Tony Pyle and will serve out Mr. Pyle's original term as approved by the County Commissioners in September. The Board meets quarterly (four times a year). The board supported many activities throughout the year including but not limited to learning opportunities for staff, sponsoring foster children for Christmas, and raising money for all of our foster parents and children to attend a regional celebration at the Atlanta Zoo. Based on their commitment to the staff, our children, and the community, and for going above and beyond, the Gordon County Board was nominated for and won Board of the Year for 2017. They were recognized and presented with a plaque along with a check for \$500 at the annual GPHSA Conference in August. The board members voted to give the \$500 to our employee counsel to help cover the cost of our Thanksgiving luncheon this year. We receive county funds from the Gordon County Commissioners and the board approves all expenditures over \$200.00.

The Board has assessed the effectiveness of the Gordon County DFCS provision of services. The Board feels that Gordon County has done well in the following areas:

- Providing accessibility (to Child Protective Services staff) for stakeholders in emergency situations prior to calling Centralized Intake
- Providing training for school social workers and counselors on a yearly basis
- Recruitment and retention of foster families, consistent ongoing support. Gordon County currently has 30 foster homes (9 opened this year) and five adoptive homes. Additionally we have 14 new inquires.
- Maintaining a high morale of staff through teamwork, active employee council, multiple celebrations throughout the year, and a family environment
- Significant pay raises were received by all OFI and Social Services front line Case Managers and Supervisors which should increase staff retention.
- Seven vacant Social Services Case Manager positions have been filled (leaving no current vacancies).
- One Social Services Case Manager for the Regional After Hours Unit (AHU) has been hired and trained.
- Currently the AHU Gordon/Murray team is covering on-call duties Monday through Friday. Once the AHU is fully staffed, the Gordon dayshift will no longer be responsible for after hours on-call duties.
- High participation with GPHSA through regular attendance at conferences, Board meetings, and various workgroups and committees. We continue to have 100% membership in GPHSA.
- Continued positive relationships in the community including the school systems, emergency services such as law enforcement, juvenile court, and domestic violence partners

- Full participation in the local Multidisciplinary Team meetings monthly which has improved the lines of communication between DFCS, law enforcement, Child Advocacy Center, schools, and the District Attorney's office.
- The county's main phone line was reactivated and customers are now able to reach our staff rather than calling a statewide centralized number.
- Currently installing a new security system with increased number of cameras to increase level of security in the building and in the parking lot.

Compared to data from 2016, we have seen increases in the numbers of CPS Investigations (by 47%), Foster Care entries (by 20%), and in Family Preservation (by 47%). The number of Family Support cases decreased by 27% compared to the 2016 data.

OFI rolled out a new computer system this year (GA Gateway). They are having some issues pulling data from GA Gateway that would provide the number of families served in each program area. They have provided the number of applicants/renewals for the month of September 2017 as a snapshot: SNAP (Food Stamps)=759; TANF=11; and Medicaid=1,100

The Board feels like the following areas could use improvement:

- Staff retention. We lost four of the seven SSCMs that we had last year (while already having 4 vacant SSCM positions) resulting in a 57% turnover rate in case management.
- Reduced caseloads in all program areas within Social Services and OFI
- Timeliness of permanency for children in DFCS custody. The number of adoptions decreased from 22 in 2016 to eight this year.
- Social Services caseload sizes have been among the highest in the region.
- Access to local services, especially for the elderly population

The Board sees the needs of the community as:

- Maintaining consistent mental health providers
- Further education regarding safe sleep environment for babies.
- Transportation
- Improved access to the Housing Authority and more affordable rental property
- Substance abuse treatment

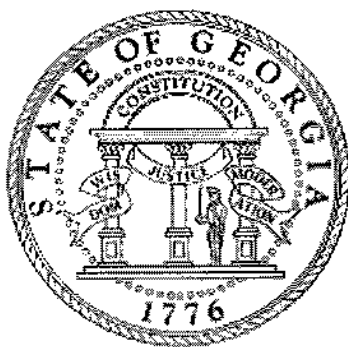
The Board recommends the following for improved operations within the County Department:

- Ability to backfill positions immediately upon vacancy
- Increased clerical staff to assist with internal control plan and clerical duties within social services program areas

The Board approved this report on December 5, 2017.


Dianne Kirby, Board Chair


Rachel Brooks, County Director and Secretary



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report
2016

Grady County
Department of Family and Children Services
250 2nd Ave SE
Cairo, GA 39828

Grady County DFCS
Annual Report
December 2016

Grady County Department of Family and Children Services Board consist of Mrs. Carolyn Hopkins, Chairperson, Ms. Geraldine Faulk, Vice Chairperson, Mrs. Lanola Dunlap, Mr. Howard Cochran, and Mrs. Linda Johnson. The board meets the 4th Tuesday of the month at 9:30 a.m. This past year, Ms. Geraldine Faulk and Mrs. Linda Johnson attended the Georgia Association of DFCS Boards in Macon, GA in the spring of the year. The board actively participated in the County Director interviews and hiring process.

The board feels the following events and items have helped improve the office and the delivery of services in the community:

LIPT meetings have resumed

Grady County DFCS is more visible in the community and participate in more community events

Grady County DFCS is getting more staff and the staff will be working Grady County work

The telephone lines are now open to the public and are answered in the local office
Interim Director Holloway assisted office morale by having the office painted and having a staff appreciation luncheon

Grady County has staff that serve on the Board of Directors for Family Connections

Grady County DFCS has very dedicated and hardworking staff

Grady County DFCS now has its own county director.

Things that Grady County DFCS needs to improve on are

County Director needs to become a member of a community Civic Club

We need more local foster parents to work locally with the children who come into care

More local recruitment and Community appeal for foster homes using the Community Scroll and local churches

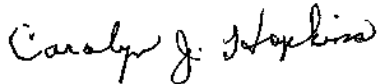
While the relationship with the Grady County Sheriff Department has improved, work needs to continue with the Cairo Police Department.

Grady County Department of Family and Children Services Board understands that the greatest need in our community at this time is an increased number of local foster homes and better mental health services in our community. As more children with special needs have come into care, the board also recognizes the need for increased county funds to assist in meeting the needs of these children.

The Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department is to get the new staff trained as quickly as possible and continue to use the county funds in a fiscally responsible manner. The office needs to continue to reach out into the community and be visible in the community.

With the staff coming on board and Grady County DFCS now back to serving Grady County, it is felt that 2017 will be an even better year and work will be accomplished in making Grady County a stronger and safer place for families.

Respectively submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carolyn J. Hopkins".

Carolyn Hopkins, Chairperson
Grady County DFCS Board



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Greene County
Division of Family and Children Services
1951 South Main Street
Greensboro, Georgia 30642

GREENE COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Makeup-Members/Officers, Length of Service on Board, Background

Last Name	First Name	Initial Appointment	Term End	Background/ Position	Comments
Bradley	Carrie	1985	June 30, 2020	Local Private business/Board Chair	Passed away Sept. 2017
Johnson	Barbara	July 1, 2012	June 30, 2017	School/Retired Educator/Vice-Chair	
Keck	Margaret	July 1, 2014	June 30, 2019	Public health Care Provider/Board Member	Resigned 10/31/17; moved out of town
Scott	Jimmy	1983	June 30, 2019	Local community activist/Board Member	Resigned 7/2017 due to health/personal reasons
Southerland	Dr. James	1986	June 30, 2018	Health Care Provider/Board Member	

Meeting dates/times and attendance of board members:

The Greene County DFCS Advisory Board meets quarterly on the 4th Wednesday at 3:00 pm.

Meeting dates/time and attendance:

Board Meeting Date	Board member attendance
Jan. 25, 2017	Dr. James Southerland, Barbara Johnson, Jimmy Scott, Margaret Keck
May 24, 2017 (rescheduled from 4/26/17)	Dr. James Southerland, Barbara Johnson, Margaret Keck, Carrie Bradley
July 26, 2017	Carrie Bradley, Barbara Johnson, Dr. James Southerland, Margaret Keck
Oct. 31, 2017 (rescheduled from 10/25/17)	Canceled due to lack of a quorum

- Activities for the past year: **Greene Co. Advisory Board members are knowledgeable about services offered, and have advocated in the local community on behalf of the local county office. Some board members are active in the Georgia Professional Human Services Association, and Board members actively engage staff by participating and supporting activities to boost staff morale.**
- Use of Local County Funds:
The Advisory Board set standards for expenditure of county funds to support the citizens and improve staff morale. The Advisory Board worked with the County Director to ensure appropriate use of county funds. Greene County DFCS Advisory Board approved an increase of \$50 per month salary supplement to support staff recruitment and retention. This action increased the employee monthly county supplement amount from \$100 to \$150 monthly for each employee.

- Number of children in care: **29**
- Number of foster homes: **8**
- Number of finalized adoptions:
- Number of approved foster homes in past year: **2**
- Breakdown of number of CPS, Family Preservation and Family Support: Greene Co. served children during FY 16:
 - CPS: **64**
 - FPS: **118**
 - FSS: **39**
- Breakdown of number of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases during FY16:
 - SNAP: **1, 344 families, 2, 681 recipients**
 - TANF: **10 families, 19 recipients**
 - Medicaid: **772 families**
 - ABAWD: **n/a**
- Staff turnover rate- SSCM turnover rate in OFI and Social Services was **0%** as of **September 2017**
- Stakeholder involvement/relationships
ATLAS Ministries, Family Connection, First Call Pregnancy Center

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns. Board Assessment of Community needs/concern

- 1. More foster care homes so children can be placed locally and stay in their community.**
- 2. Needs Assessment of all stakeholders to assess needs of the community**

D. Board's recommendation for improved operations of the County Department

- 1. Ongoing partnership/collaboration with local agencies: Boys and Girls Club, Family Connections, County Recreation Dept, Faith Community, ATLAS, PARENTS AS TEACHERS, Victory Train, First Call, the Greene County School District, and local food pantries to promote stronger families.**
- 2. Annual Needs assessment to assess strengths and weaknesses of the department.**
- 3. Less cumbersome/less restrictive process placing orders to acquire needed equipment/supplies to support staff/families and ultimately more effective delivery of services to families.**

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair





STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Director

Gwinnett County Annual Board Report December 2017

A. General Summary of the County DFCS Board:

1. The Advisory Board is comprised of 7 members and they are as follows:
 - Debbie Heard – Board Chair/ District 4
 - Dr. Ken Reed – Board Co-Chair/ District 1
 - Pat Swan – Chairman's Appointment
 - Davida Baker – District 2
 - Maj. Christopher Rafanelli – District 3
 - Bobby Gueh – School Counselor (Gwinnett County Schools)
 - Lt. Stephen Land – Law Enforcement
2. The County Advisory Board meetings are scheduled on the last Monday of each month at 4:00 p.m.
3. The board has sponsored twelve employee appreciation activities during 2017.
4. The board has also sponsored four digital Billboards throughout the county to promote the state's Safe Sleep and Water Safety campaign. These campaigns are ongoing and will be extending into 2018.
5. One of the Board Members participated in the State Board forum in Savannah, Georgia, August 2017.
6. The County Advisory Board was instrumental in supporting the move into the new facility in 2017.
7. The board members are planning to promote more awareness to recruit therapeutic foster homes/parents within the county in 2018. This effort is being strengthened by utilizing billboards and other communication outlets within Gwinnett County.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Departments provision of service:

1. What's working well

- The communication between the county and advisory board has been very effective. There is always the sharing of pertinent information that keeps both the board and agency updated on issues that need to be addressed during and between meetings to ensure consistency in our communication with stakeholders in our community.
- The Board meetings are consistently productive, as the members are actively involved in all efforts to support the children and families of Gwinnett County.

- This team collaboratively offers the county ideas to support the Blueprint for Change. Specifically, as it pertains to building and sustaining a Robust and Able Workforce.
- The Board continues to play a vital role in improving constituent engagement with our stakeholders. This effort is realized with involvement from County Law Enforcement and School System representatives. Many of the aforementioned partners share seats on the Gwinnett County Coalition Board of Directors, and/or have opportunity to influence or enrich other agencies and/or organizations within the community.

2. What's not working well

- The Board continues to express concerns about the increased number of customer service complaints with our County OFI services. This has been an ongoing concern for the past couple of years. Although there has been marked improvement in areas of concern, there is opportunity to build on the momentum of improvement already realized in customer service delivery for both Social Services and the Office of Family Independence.
- The Board has allocated and approved 1 position in the county budget. This position was allotted to enhance our efforts to prevent unnecessary entries into the County foster care system. However, the hiring and on-boarding process for this position has been stalled by Human Resources. There is great concern around the State's hiring processes which impede the County's ability to build a sustainable workforce. The time it takes to approve any position is cumbersome and lengthy, with no sense of urgency. It is taking too long to process applicants. Thus, leaving viable candidates to take other opportunities outside the agency upon being offered positions.
- Lastly, the county's turnover rate continues to be of concern. The Board recognizes the States' efforts to improve the retention rate has been ongoing.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

1. The number of children entering Foster Care in Gwinnett County has stabilized over the last year. However, there has been a significant increase in children entering the system throughout the state of Georgia.
2. There are concerns regarding the number of Gwinnett County Foster Children placed out of county. This anomaly could be having a direct impact on children being reunified with their families. Thus, the need to recruit more foster homes (including therapeutic homes) within the county is a must to off-set the increase in our children in foster care. There is also a tremendous degrading on the ability of the case workers to provide the best care and support to the children and those families caring for them because of time constraints due to children being placed in distant county foster homes.
3. The assurance that all customers visiting the local offices for OFI services are being assisted in a timely manner the same day. There have been some occurrences of customers having to wait for hours to be assisted by our OFI staff.
4. There is an increased awareness of sex trafficking in the county. Gwinnett DFCS needs to become more aware and able to support this population of teens that could come to the agency's attention for services.

5. The County has also seen an increase in opioid cases in the county. There needs to be an effort to increase awareness around this crisis in our community. This should be done in partnership with other community stakeholders.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

1. The County MUST improve the hiring/on-boarding process to get new staff and positions approved timely. The County cannot afford to miss opportunities to bring on talented staff to support the children and families in Gwinnett County.
2. The County must continue to put intense focus on the number of children in foster care. To off-set this growing population, there has to be more purposeful engagement with the county's juvenile judicial stakeholders. It's critical to keep the data in front of all of the stakeholders so they will understand the impact it has on permanency. This effort also includes more recruitment and training for therapeutic foster parents/homes in the community.
3. The County must continue to invest in the development of supervisors and managerial staff in the agency. This role is critical to retention, as well as, to customer service delivery in OFI and Social Services programs.
4. The Advisory Board recommends the agency explore collaboration and establish partnerships with other statewide and federal agencies to address the growing population of homeless as it impacts the capability and well-being of families living in safe, stable and nurturing environments.
5. The Advisory Board would like to recommend that administrative support be examined for efficiencies and be allocated to each division to handle routine paperwork to aid the case managers.

E. Closing and signatures of the Board Chair:

The Advisory Board continues to be pleased with the direction the County is taking to better support the families in Gwinnett. The year 2017 was the first full year that Gwinnett County DFCS was under the leadership of Director Travis Moses, and the Advisory Board is extremely pleased with his leadership and the direction that the County has taken during this time period. Director Moses has been directly involved and engaged with the Advisory Board, seeking input and giving suggestions and proposals in order to enable Gwinnett County DFCS better serve its citizens and employees. He has provided practical solutions and reasonable ideas in order to make services more streamlined for families in need, discourage employee attrition and encourage employee recruitment, and provide a positive, functional environment in which all stakeholders can strive. The Advisory Board is grateful for Director Moses's leadership.

The Board will continue to support the County and identify resources that will support and encourage staff development, employee retention, and campaigns that promote safety, permanency, and the wellbeing of families and children in Gwinnett County.



Board Chair, Debbie Heard

12-8-17

Date



Gwinnett County Director, Travis Moses

12-8-17

Date

CC:

Sabrina Watson, Region 13 Director

Lynn Barmore, Metro District Director

Annual Report of the Habersham County DFCS Board Submitted December 2017

The DFCS Board of Habersham County, Georgia offers the following report regarding the effectiveness of Habersham DFCS at providing services to its citizens, our assessment of the needs of our community, and our recommendations for improving the operations of this agency. This report was developed with input from all Habersham County DFCS board members and is submitted with the approval of Board members.

Effectiveness of Provision of Services

Board members are pleased with the efforts being made by the employees of Habersham County DFCS, and in particular with the leadership of County Director Laura Johnson. Board members believe the County agency is currently headed in a positive direction under her leadership.

Employees continue to be stretched in their efforts to effectively meet the needs of Habersham County citizens. **The agency's ratio of children in foster care to foster care workers is currently 40:1** (worse than last year's ratio of 38:1), and **the agency's ratio of Child Protective Services cases to CPS caseworkers is now 25:1** (approximately equal to last year's ratio). The preferred ratio for both positions is 15:1. These high ratios make it difficult for workers to serve their customers adequately, require them to work overtime hours, and could foreseeably contribute to high levels of burnout and employee turnover. The stress of long work hours combined with the relatively low salaries of these workers risks positioning DFCS employees to become *consumers* of services rather than *providers* of services as a result of financial hardship and overwork that contribute to personal and family stress. **It is a situation that we believe is neither safe (for children or caseworkers) nor sustainable.**

Board members are encouraged by the hiring of a Resource Developer earlier this year to develop and support foster homes. This individual has worked diligently to increase foster home beds in our county and to support foster parents, and her efforts are beginning to pay off—although there is still a critical shortage of beds due to a substantial increase in the number of children in care.

In our view, the agency's most pressing need is for the immediate employment of a CPS supervisor to work solely within Habersham County. Due to a hiring freeze, **Habersham DFCS is not being allowed to replace the current CPS supervisor, who will be leaving in the near future to accept another DFCS position outside of Habersham County.** Consequently, CPS investigators will be supervised by an individual who will work in both Rabun and Habersham Counties. Given the enormous rise in the number of CPS cases in Habersham County over the past 12 months, **we believe this situation to be potentially dangerous to children in our county.**

As noted in last year's report, **the State's hiring process is mired in bureaucratic inefficiency.** To our knowledge, no progress has been made. Simply getting a vacancy posted on the DHS website can take weeks. Once a candidate is interviewed and chosen, **it can take more than two months before that person is able to begin work.** In the meantime, the most qualified and capable candidates often find alternative employment. **These delays are completely unacceptable, and the State should take immediate action to remediate this situation.**

In addition to maintaining a grossly inefficient hiring process, the Board believes that **the State has overstepped its bounds by interfering with the use of County funds**. State Fiscal Services has limited the county's ability to provide gift certificates to foster families using County funds, and events costing over \$500 must be approved at the state level. It is the Board's position that the use of County funds should not be restricted by the State unless such restrictions are clearly necessary to preserve the ethical integrity of State employees.

Community Needs

The needs of our community in relation to DFCS fall into three significant areas: the need for a full-time leadership; the need for additional foster care beds; and the need for increased law-enforcement education.

Full-time Leadership

In 2015, the Board communicated its position regarding our need for a director who is dedicated to the needs of Habersham County citizens to Mr. Kenny Jarvis, the former Region 2 Director. No progress has been made on this issue. The Board maintains its position that Habersham County, a county with over 44,000 citizens, needs a dedicated director to meet the needs of its increasingly diverse and expanding population.

As previously noted, Habersham DFCS has been told that it may not replace the CPS supervisor who is leaving. This position is far too critical—and the number of CPS cases in Habersham County is far too high—to attempt to share these responsibilities with an employee of a neighboring county. Our community needs a CPS supervisor to be hired without delay.

Foster Care Beds

Habersham County currently has only 29 total beds for foster care (up from 7 beds last year), although our county has 83 children in foster care (up from 38 children in care at the time of last year's report). Consequently, a substantial number of children are being housed in other counties, a situation that puts undue strain on children and on caseworkers and makes it more difficult for biological parents to visit their children. As noted, the employment of a resource developer is beginning to yield positive results in this area. Board members are monitoring progress in this area on a monthly basis.

Law Enforcement Education

Members of local law enforcement could benefit from education on how to report abuse, when to report abuse, and what happens when abuse is reported.

Recommendations for Improvement

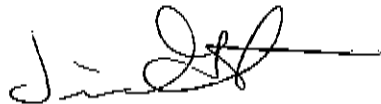
Our recommendations for improving the operations of the Habersham County DFCS are as follows:

- We recommend that Habersham DFCS be allowed to hire a CPS investigator immediately.

- We recommend that the State's hiring process be streamlined to facilitate the employment of qualified personnel in a timely manner.
- We applaud the recent increases in compensation given to DFCS employees, and we recommend continued increases for all DFCS employees in order to attract the best available candidates.
- We recommend that a dedicated County Director for Habersham County be employed.
- We recommend that sufficient state funds be allocated to improve the personal safety of DFCS employees. Projects that need to be undertaken immediately are:
 - Public restrooms need to be added to the lobby area. Currently, customers who need to use restroom facilities must be allowed into office areas of the building, giving them unhindered access to DFCS employees, offices, and confidential materials.
 - Renovations to the building need to be made so that public meetings (e.g., Board meetings) can be held without allowing community members to potentially gain access to offices and confidential materials used by DFCS employees.
 - One-way window film should be placed on all exterior windows to prevent people from seeing inside the building.
 - Bullet-resistant glass should be installed in the lobby area.

Respectfully Submitted by the Habersham County DFCS Board:

Fran Chastain
Sandy Foster
Jim Gant, Chair
Stephanie Tolbert
Rick Wood



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STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Hall County
Department of Family and Children Services
970 McEver Road Ext.
Gainesville, GA
30504

LOCAL COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Makeup - Members/Officers, Length of service on Board, Background
 -
- Meeting dates/times and attendance of board members
 - Second Tuesday of each month at 9:00am
- Activities for the past year
 - Selection of New County Director
 - Approval of funds for professional development and services to families
 - Advocacy with County Commission
 - Attendance at staff events/ foster parent events
- Use of Local County Funds
 - Professional Development/Training opportunities for staff
 - Increased support to local foster parents
 - Staff morale/team building events
 - Direct service to customers

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Successes: The County has been able to hire additional staff. Focused on professional development of staff at all levels. Working towards placing more Hall County children in the community. Increased supports to Hall County foster parents. Partnership with local supervised visitation and service center (SAFFT). Partnership to focus on increasing awareness of resources for foster parent and keeping children in the community.
- Challenges/Opportunities: High caseloads and turnover rate. New staff that do not have the skills to fully operate at the highest level. The number of no reasonable efforts findings that can impact funding.
- Number of children in care: 280
- Number of foster parents: 62
- Number of finalized adoptions: 33 (calendar year)
- Number of approved foster homes in past year: 15
- Breakdown of number of CPS, Family Preservation and Family Support:
 - Monthly Average CPS Assessments: Investigations- 100/ FSS- 100
 - Monthly Average Family Preservation: 80
- Breakdown of number of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases:
 - SNAP:
 - TANF:
 - Medicaid:
 - ABAWD: 264

- Staff turnover rate: 44%
- Stakeholder involvement/relationships: Positive relationships with the school system, law enforcement, SAFFT (local supervised visitation center and service provider), Community Service Board, Center for Hope and Healing. Additional work needs to be done to improve the relationship/ trust level with the Juvenile Court. However, the County collaborated with DJJ and the court system to address dual commitment children to ensure they are served at the highest level possible.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

(Examples: Treatment resources, literacy, employment rate, transportation, substance abuse, etc.)

- Increased resources/supports for local foster parents
- Lack of affordable housing
- Resources/Services for Spanish speaking population (therapy, parenting, etc.)
- Psychological providers that accept Medicaid
- More accessible services/supports for the aging population and those that are impoverished.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

- Stabilization of the workforce/retention and continued professional development of the workforce—staff morale.
- Human Resource operations to be more streamlined for hiring, disciplinary action, and compensation.
- Specialized staffings for high level need families and situations (safety, wellbeing and permanency issues).

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair

NATHAN DEAL
GOVERNOR



VIRGINIA PRYOR
INTERIM DIRECTOR

Aging Services | Child Support Services | Family & Children Services
Ollivette Long, MSCP – Director of Washington & Hancock Co DFCS
1124 S. Harris St PO Box 108 Sandersville, GA 31082
478-553-2376 (O) - 470-733-4677 (Cell) 478-240-3031 (fax)

Annual Report 2017

Hancock County
Department of Family and Children Services
12744 Broad St.
Sparta, GA 31087

Hancock County Annual Report December 2017

A. General summary of the county DFCS Board:

Makeup: 4 members

Meeting Dates: Quarterly at the local office at 4:00PM

Activities for 2017: Quarterly board meetings

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

In 2017, Hancock County board continued to educate the community about all program areas of DFCS. There has been a conscious effort made to assure quality and timely service delivery. Clients continue to embrace technology by taking advantage of faster service by utilizing lobby computers and online applications. The staff uses technology to document work more effectively while also being safer in the field. The agency continues to maintain positive relationships with community partners.

C. Board's Assessment of community needs/concerns

Hancock County has a population of approximately 9,440 citizens. There continues to be few local resources in the area and families continue to travel to outside counties for employment opportunities, high-end medical needs, shopping, and etc. Parents with children being served by foster care were required to complete family plans. The family plans most often included obtaining and maintaining stable employment and housing, domestic violence, and completing substance abuse treatment. Family plans were not often completed timely due to lack of local resources and private transportation. The Agency has continued to assist the families financially, i.e., paying rent and utility deposits, paying for transportation to

neighboring counties where services were being provided and paying private providers for services.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

The staffing situation is currently two Case Managers – one for CPS and one for Foster Care – We are currently in the process of hiring a Social Service Supervisor that supervises both program areas. The county has been given permission to hire two CPS Case Managers. Which will be a tremendous help in assisting current case managers and the supervisor with day to day duties and to maintain a more manageable work load.

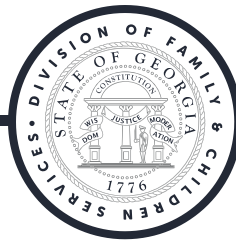
There is one OFI Supervisor that covers Washington and Hancock. There is a shortage of staff in OFI and a need of at least one case manager in all program areas - i.e., CAPS, ABD, and Medicaid.

E. Closing and Signature of the Board Chair

The board will continue to support staff as needed.

In kindest regards, Hancock County Board

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joyanne R. Jackson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".



Haralson County DFCS Annual Board Report December 2017

The Haralson County DFCS Board is made up of a variety of members from this community:

- Linda Ware- Bremen Food Bank
- Joyce Williams- retiree
- Lisa Smith- school counselor
- Brian Walker- Fire Chief EMA Director for Haralson County
- Susan Ollis, County Director
- Keith Pesnell – Bremen Police Chief
- Duane McManus - Pastor

Throughout this year, a variety of topics have been discussed to highlight the happenings through Georgia and Haralson County:

- Safe Sleep Campaign continues through 2017, to include sharing of data
- Gateway (replacing SUCCESS)
- Solution Based Casework
- Family/ Accountability Drug Court for Tallapoosa Circuit Juvenile Court- DFCS and Juvenile Court have been collaborating through gathering information, arranging a 3 month pilot of the “assessment” stage, and initiating contact regarding the grant writing.

The Board typically meets quarterly at the Haralson County DFCS office. Meetings were held on the following dates: 1/11/17, 4/12/17, 8/8/17, and 10/11/17. The Annual Report was e-mailed to all Board Members and discussed.

Assessment of effectiveness of County Department’s provision of services:

The local Department is running as smoothly and effectively as possible considering the funding, resources and man power. There is very little “negative talk” in the community regarding the Department, although there continues to be some confusion about services available. The process to make reports of child abuse or neglect has improved over the last few years, but there continues to be the perception that “it is regulated to death” which interferes with a quick response to reports. Community stakeholders, specifically law enforcement and the school system, do have contact numbers to reach Haralson County staff if immediate assistance is needed.

There continues to be some staff turnover in Services due to the demands and stress of the job. OFI staff are experiencing many challenges related to the Gateway program.

Haralson County DFCS now has a County Receptionist which has improved customer service. This was noted as a need on the 2016 Board Report. .
Haralson County has 22 Resource Homes.

CPS

Screened Out- 142

Tracked assigned to Investigations- 153

Tracked assigned to Family Support- 280

Foster Care

of children served in Foster Care- 159

of children ending FY 17- 94

Board's assessment of community needs/ concerns:

Haralson County has a high rate of poverty which has resulted in substandard living conditions. There is an increase in people moving in from other counties due to cheap rent from landlords who are not properly and safety maintaining these rental units. It also appears these transient people are avoiding the Department and avoiding being held accountable by participating in services they may need. Families lack motivation and are not making choices that could improve their current situation. They take the free government services which they then rely on, and aren't willing to make changes to become self-sufficient. Resources are limited in Haralson County. There is limited substance abuse treatment available. Several churches in the community are now offering Celebrate Recovery, but this is an outpatient, voluntary support group. There is no public transportation available in Haralson County.

Haralson County needs to have more foster homes to ensure all Haralson County children can be placed in their community.

Many parents need positive role models for parenting, being a good employee and good neighbor. There needs to be more "One Spot Shop" to provide a variety of services to the community (food/ clothing/ other assistance).

Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

The Department should put effort into the families in which a difference can be made, those families who want to improve their current situation. The State

should consider conditions for receiving benefits- if individuals aren't interested in improving their current situation, decrease and cut services to them.

Haralson County DFCS should consider a PR Blitz. This could focus on the services offered by DFCS, what that looks like for the community, the process of reporting child abuse and neglect, and how services to families has improved.

This positive self-promotion would improve relationships with stakeholders and the community.

Closing and signature of the Board Chair:

Brian Walker, Board Chairman

BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE + A STATE OF HOPE =

SAFE CHILDREN. STRENGTHENED FAMILIES. STRONGER GEORGIA.

SUSAN OLLIS, DIRECTOR; HARALSON COUNTY DFCS; P O BOX 324; 21 MAGNOLIA ST, BUCHANAN, GA, 30113



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Harris County
Department of Family and Children Services
134 North College Street
Hamilton, GA 31811

HARRIS COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT

DECEMBER 2017

Board Summary

During the last calendar year, the Harris County DFCS Board has been active as well as supportive to the Agency and its mission. The Board meets the fourth Monday of every other month at 9:00 AM to discuss the agency's case data and seasonal trends that affect the service outcomes.

Our Board consist of Board Chairperson, Ms. Mary Ann Cheek; Vice Chairperson, Mrs. Lillie Williams; and members Mrs. Debbie Blackmar, Ms. Phoebe Dawson and Mrs. Janice Harris. All five members meet the requirements listed in Senate Bill 138 Section. The Harris County Board consist of representatives from the faith based community, the school system, the medical field, the Social Work profession, and DFCS/DHR background.

The Board has been actively involved in high profile cases that resulted in a high level of community involvement. The Board provided valuable feedback by way of community contacts and resources. The Board has shown concern for the lack of front line staff resulting in high caseloads, case manager oversight and staff retention. Historically, this has caused an impact on the level of service provided to the Harris County Community. The Board members have also participated in annual GPHSA trainings and seminars for updates and changes as well as new developments for the Division going forward.

The Harris County Board is very focused on the safety of children and the service delivery to families. Each Board member has demonstrated a willingness to serve in their capacity and make a difference in the Harris County community.

A. The County Board's assessment of the effectiveness of the County Department's provision of services.

The agency as well as the Board has been very impressed with the relationship between DFCS and the Harris County School System as it relates to child safety. The School System has a longstanding relationship with the county office. The School system has experienced staff that have demonstrated a good working relationship with the Agency. This has helped maintain compliance and consistency with DHR policies and the School System protocol.

The Harris County Community has several community agencies that assist families with utility assistance, food, clothing and other basic needs. The faith based community has also proven to be a valuable resource for the families in Harris County. DFCS will continue to partner with the faith based community to strive for stronger families and a stronger Georgia.

The local family connections collaborative continues to be one of the biggest resources as it relates to community based needs and services. The local collaborative also sponsors every Harris County foster child for Christmas yearly. The relationship with our collaborative partners has added value to our true mission and proven to be successful. Job opportunities, medical care resources, continued educational resources, counseling resources and other needs and services resources.

The Harris County office has a very good working relationship with law enforcement, juvenile court as well as the District Attorney's office. As first responders, the legal entities have worked diligently to foster a working relationship and resolve any concerns that may affect the delivery of service to our community.

1. Number of children in care - 19
2. Number of foster parents - 14
3. Number of finalized Adoptions - 0
4. Number of approved Foster Homes in the past year - 5
5. Breakdown of CPS FC and Family Preservation cases - 8
6. Staff turnover - 1 staff terminated and 2 retirement

B. The Boards assessment of the needs in the community

The Harris County community has several resources but can always use more. A long-term commitment to reeducating young parents on enhancing their parenting skills would be very beneficial. The community can also benefit from a fatherhood program that helps teenage fathers with their children. An inpatient and outpatient substance abuse treatment program assessable to the county residences to help treat and rehabilitate all community citizens.

C. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the county department

The Harris County DFCS Board has consistently expressed concerns about the lack of front-line staff in Social Services as well as OFI. The lack of front-line staff can and will affect the service delivery to the citizens of our community. The Harris county office has lacked the sufficient staff to accommodate the daily impact of our community for a number of years due to budget constraints. As it relates to OFI, it's still the belief that our elderly population have been left behind due the modern-day technology and the requirements to apply for services online, process applications, and the overall fear of operating a computer. This can and has caused a level of fear for the elderly population.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve in our community and work individually and collectively with the staff at Harris County DFCS. We will continue to endorse the integrity of our Board Members and the Harris County DFCS staff.



Mary Ann Cheek, Board Chairperson
Harris County DFCS Board
P.O. Box 1217
Pine Mountain, GA 31822

CC: Derick Pinkney, Harris County DFCS Director
Stacey Barfield, Region 8 Regional Director
Lillie Williams, Board Vice-Chairperson
Debbie Blackmar, DFCS Board
Janice Harris, DFCS Board
Phoebe Dawson, DFCS Board



STATE OF GEORGIA

Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

2017 Hart County Annual Board Report

The Hart County Board meets quarterly on the fourth Wednesday of January, April, July, and October. The Board is currently comprised of community members, Shelvy Myers, Earnestine White, Bennie Harper, Pam Gordon, and Chris Pritchett. The Board reviews the work and expenditures of the county office. County Funds are expended primarily on the needs of children in foster care.

The Hart County Department of Family and Children Services has managed county needs effectively during 2017. A number of changes have taken place this year and the local office has worked to adapt as needed while still serving the local population. The County has trained staff in the new Solution Based Casework practice model and moved them into the certification phase. OFI staff have been trained in the Georgia Gateway computer system and are in the transition phase.

The County Board's assessment of the effectiveness of the county department's provision of services

Social Services

Hart County social services programs are implemented by staff who serve both Hart and neighboring Franklin County on a regular basis. All supervisory staff including the County Director maintain a regular presence in each office to ensure availability to case managers and the community. During 2017, a number of staffing changes have taken place. A Social Services Administrator position was approved for the first time and filled by an internal promotion. Two other internal promotions were granted advancing case management staff into supervision. All staff are trained and able to meet the needs of the community. Turnover remained very low with only one case manager leaving the department.

Social Services staff have achieved particular success in finalizing adoptions this year. Two foster care case managers have been assigned to specialize in this work resulting in thirteen finalized adoptions with several more in progress. Hart County staff managed 45 new investigations opened through September and 132 new Family Support cases. During the first full year of the Child Abuse Registry there were no substantiated case determinations overturned through the appeals process. Foster care case managers worked with 35 Hart County cases during the year in addition to assigned cases for Franklin County. Social Services also participated in the community risk reduction team which was implemented. This team is comprised of multiple community agencies and works to provide support and intervention to families and youth in need early on, preventing the need for court action or more formal agency intervention in many cases.

Office of Family Independence

All staff have been trained to utilize the new Georgia Gateway computer system and are currently engaged in the transition. This system is designed to be more client friendly and will offer more efficient benefit processing.

The County Board's assessment of the needs of the community

Hart County continues to recruit and train foster homes. Ongoing recruitment remains a strong need. Seven new foster homes were opened during the year. Currently there are twenty open foster homes in the county with 53 bed spaces. The majority of these spaces are occupied. There is also a continued need for mental health and other appropriate services to youth with behavioral issues. Better coordination and cooperative implementation of services between agencies and other providers is needed.

The County Board's recommendations for improved operations of the county department – including recommendations regarding staffing levels and worker safety, as well as other areas.

The Board supports continued hiring of staff to ensure that once optimal staff to work ratios are met, they can be maintained. The Board appreciates the increased base pay implemented for front line staff and supervisors. The Board recommends that corrections be made to ensure that all staff regardless of job title are paid appropriately. Recognition should be given to staff with longer tenure and managers should not receive less compensation than subordinates.

Positive and regular communication between the Department and local law enforcement ensures staff safety. Law enforcement staff are available and willing to assist Department workers whenever a concern about safety in the environment arises.

This report is being submitted to comply with the requirements of the child welfare reform law, Senate Bill 138.

Submitted,



Earnestine White, Chairperson



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Heard County
Department of Family and Children Services
1188 Franklin Parkway
Franklin, Georgia 30217

Heard COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Makeup - Members/Officers, Length of service on Board, Background
- Meeting dates/times and attendance of board members
- Activities for the past year
- Use of Local County Funds

Heard County DFCS Board is made up of 5 members. The County Director serves as the secretary to the Board. Willie Bradfield is the Chairman of the Board. He has served on the Board over 18 years. He retired from Heard County Board of Commissioners, Board of Education and he is a retired Foster Parent. Marcia Harper is the Vice Chair and has served on the Board over 18 years. She is a retired Realtor and is the Secretary for Glenloch Baptist Church. Carolyn Lane has served on the Board since 2009 and is a retired educator. Debbie Rogers has served on the Board since 2013 and is a retired educator. Fred Harcrow has served on the Board since 2014. He is retired from the USPS and is a former Foster Parent.

Heard County Board meets the second Tuesday of every month. If items of importance, such as approval of this report, arise between regular meetings, we address them via email and report in the next regular meeting's minutes.

County Director can approve the use of county funded expenditures up to \$1,000.00 and anything over \$ 1,000.00 requires Board approval.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Successes
- Challenges/Opportunities
- Number of children in care
- Number of foster parents
- Number of finalized adoptions
- Number of approved foster homes in past year
- Breakdown of number of CPS, Family Preservation and Family Support
- Breakdown of number of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases
- Staff turnover rate
- Stakeholder involvement/relationships

Heard County has 8 children in care and average about 15 Investigations/Family Support and FPS cases per month. There are no new foster homes in the last year, and there have been 0 adoptions finalized due to having no children free for adoption.

For the month of October 2017, Heard County had 53 new Food Stamp Applications approved, 147 Family Medicaid Applications completed, 9 TANF Applications completed, and a total of 59 Active Food Stamp Cases with customers coded as ABAWDS.

Heard County is greatly blessed with strong community partnerships which help our clients assess and access needed services as well as helps with staff retention.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

The Heard County Board recognizes the lack of foster homes as a crisis not just for Heard County but the state as a whole. They also are very concerned about the morale in OFI. There is only one OFI case manager and she not only has her tasks to do daily but handle walk in customers. The workload is very hard to manage and provide great customer service.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

- It is critical to county operations to have flexibility to use county funds without state oversight and restrictions. Frequently local businesses could be used to purchase items at a more economical cost than those with a state contract.
- OFI oversight in the county needs to be brought back under the leadership of the local County Director. All applications and renewals needs to be handled by the local county OFI staff.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to share our recommendations for improving the services offered to our communities in Heard County.


Board Chair



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal

Bobby D. Cagle

Governor

Annual Report

2017

Houston County

Department of Family and Children Services
92 Cohen Walker Drive
Warner Robins, Georgia
31088

Director Virginia Pryor
Georgia Division of Family and Children Services
2 Peachtree Street/Suite 19.472
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Re: Houston DFCS Board Annual Letter for 2017

Dear Director Pryor,

General Summary of the County DFCS Board:

As required in Senate Bill 138, the Houston County Department of Family and Children Services Board is writing this letter to report out on the effectiveness of services in Houston County, the needs of our community and our recommendations for improved operations. We appreciate this opportunity to provide our recommendations.

The Houston County Board meets every other month on the last Thursday of the month. The board consists of three men and two women. Some of our board members have been on the board for over 20 years while others only recently joined within the last few years. Our board is comprised of several current and retired professionals in various industries including but not limited to the school system, the Air Force Base, Social Services and Blue Bird. We are all very involved in this community and giving back through our churches and civic organizations.

Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

This Board is exceptionally proud of our local county office and the work they do every day on behalf of the citizens of Houston County. The agency has maintained and developed some excellent partnerships. The agency has excellent partnerships with Robins Air Force Base, the District Attorney's Office, the Juvenile Court, the County Commissioners Office, CASA and the local Child Advocacy Center among others. Houston County DFCS is also known for its exceptional customer service and works very hard to provide the best service possible.

Board's assessment of the community needs/concerns

As a board we do believe it is important that the local county DFCS office be providing the services to the citizens of Houston County. We would like to see the county office be staffed sufficiently to accommodate the needs of the community. As a board we are

concerned about turnover in Social Services and OFI and the inability of the county to hire due to budget constraints. It was our understanding that the agency as a whole received a large budget increase this year however we are not seeing this extended to Houston County in the form of staff. We would like to see the money be used for county staff positions and not used for other purposes or other staff at levels other than county level. We are also concerned about the increasing number of customers in the lobby with very few agency staff being provided to manage the front desk and answer all the calls coming in on a daily basis. We are also seeing a serious lack of foster parent resources in Houston County and would like to see some local television, and other advertisement campaigns, designed specifically around local needs.

Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

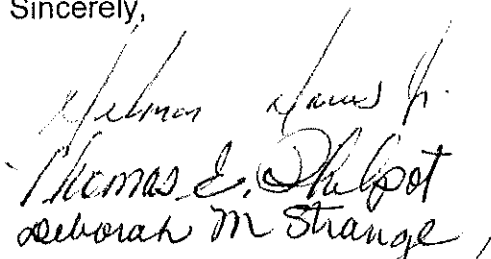
Houston County is a very large and fast growing community. In addition to having the staffing levels equipped to service the needs of the citizens within this growing community, we would also like to see salaries rise at all levels, not just a certain few in Services, so that we can both attract new staff, keep veteran staff and compete with the private sector. We would also like to see the State advocate for raises for all department staff each year equal to what is given to the private sector and/or what is given to state school employees. The board recommends more clerical staff be provided to both OFI and Services so that case managers and supervisors have additional time to focus on the needs and services to the local citizens of Houston County. We would also recommend giving Houston County DFCS the ability to develop campaigns and use local TV advertising specifically designed around the need for foster parents in the local area.

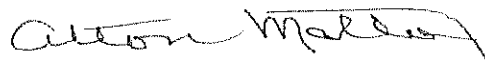
Closing and signatures of the Board

In closing we appreciate the opportunity to be heard and to share the strengths as well as the needs of Houston County DFCS.

Thank you for your time and consideration with this matter.

Sincerely,


Thomas E. Halpot
Deborah M. Strange,
Houston County DFCS Board





STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Irwin County
Department of Family and Children Services
108 North Irwin Avenue
Ocilla, Georgia
31774

IRWIN COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Makeup – Howell Taylor, eighteen years of service Chairman, Retired Insurance Agent, Allan Smith, eighteen years of service, Retired School Superintendent, Daisy Taylor, Retired School Teacher, eighteen years of service, Irishtine Williams, Retired School Teacher, ten years of service, Walter Sumner, CPA accountant, five years of service, Mary Lynn Bracewell, Retired County Director, one year of service,
- Meeting dates/times and attendance of board members – Third Wednesday of each month. All board members regularly attend meetings
- Activities for the past year – Board members served on Regional County Board. Involved in Called to Care.
- Use of Local County Funds – Student Worker, Foster Families and Needy Families.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Successes – Worked well with collaborative partners, worked very closely with Red Cross to provide services during Hurricane Irma, Community partners assist during Christmas, Meet and Greet with Law Enforcement conducted to strengthen partnership, worked with Call to Care.
- Challenges/Opportunities – Slowness of computer system, more knowledge regarding Gateway and Solution Based Case Work
- Number of children in care - 39
- Number of foster parents - 4
- Number of finalized adoptions – 0
- Number of approved foster homes in past year - 2
- Breakdown of number of CPS, Family Preservation and Family Support – 109 investigations, 6 Family Preservation and 54 Family Support
- Breakdown of number of SNAP and TANF cases - Monthly average:
SNAP: 900 TANF: 15
- Staff turnover rate - 3%
- Stakeholder involvement/relationships - Juvenile Court and Legal System, Health Department, School System, Family Connection partnership, Foster Parents, Homeless shelters, Family Violence Shelter, Fatherhood Program

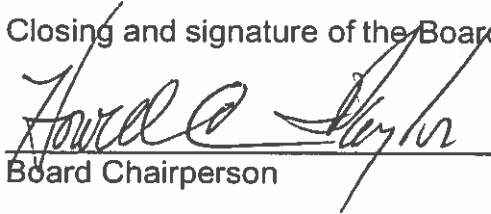
C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

- Gangs
- Treatment resources
- Substance abuse

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

- Primary concern was slowness of computer system, which delayed OFI processing, SHINES documentation and SMILE accounting system. County is scheduled to receive bandwidth increase
- The length of time that it entails from when a position is advertised until selected candidate is brought on board

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair


Board Chairperson



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Jackson County
Department of Family and Children Services
456 Athens Street
Jefferson, Georgia 30549

JACKSON COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- **Members:** Jennie Parham, Chair; Henry Slocum; Shirley Kinney; James Deaton; Carolyn Thurmond.
- **All meetings occur at 10:00 unless specially set. Dates:** January 25, 2017; March 22, 2017; May 24, 2017; July 26, 2017; September 27, 2017; November 15, 2017
- **Activities for the past year**
 - **Board support for Staff Meeting Holiday Breakfast (Thanksgiving and Christmas)**
 - **Networking and advocacy to raise awareness of Child Abuse Prevention**
 - **Networking and advocacy to raise awareness of the needs of the foster care system in Jackson County.**
- **Use of Local County Funds**
 - **Support for Temporary staff to support OFI clerical duties**
 - **Direct support to foster children**
 - **Specialized trainings and conference attendance for staff**
 - **Support use of call in dictation service to help staff stay current with documentation**

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- **Successes**
 - **Increase in staff**
 - **Increase in staff receiving promotions related to Training Certification and Length of Service.**
 - **Main phone line to the office staffed and resource for the community.**
 - **Stability in front desk staff creating welcome environment for customers.**
- **Challenges/Opportunities**
 - **Position vacancies – Case Managers in critical areas (Foster Care); Social Services Administrator remains vacant.**
 - **Building capacity issues. (Main Conference room will not hold a full staff meeting effectively)**

- Number of children in care: 174
- Number of foster parents: 15
- Number of finalized adoptions: 10
- Number of approved foster homes in past year: 7
- Average Monthly number of CPS Investigations: 34, Family Preservation 30 and Family Support 52
- Office of Family Independence Totals (Based on June 2016 data provided)
Number of SNAP Total Recipients: 7296, TANF 44, Medicaid 2100; ABD 296
- Staff turnover rate: Data provided for July 2017 and September 2017 indicates a 0% turnover
- Stakeholder involvement/relationships
 - Jackson County Multi-Disciplinary Team
 - Jackson County Schools Attendance Review Board
 - LIPT/CHINS
 - Jackson County Family Connection Collaborative

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns


(Examples: Treatment resources, literacy, employment rate, transportation, substance abuse, etc.)

- Transportation needs
- Local substance abuse treatment centers and increased Mental Health Supports
- Partnership with the local accountability court.
- Parent Mentors are a need in the county.
- Continued foster home development

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

- Building issues (Building has areas in disrepair, the bathroom facilities are often out of order as the building is older and has reached capacity with occupants. The building is not ADA accessible in all areas.)
- The Board would like to see permanency with the County Director

The Jackson County DFCS Board looks forward to your review of the information. The Board looks forward to continued progress in 2017.


Jennie Parham, Chair



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Jasper County
Department of Family and Children Services
226 Funderburg Drive
Monticello, Ga.
31064

Jasper County Annual Report December 2017

Jasper County DFCS Board:

- The Board is comprised of 5 Members that include:
Joan Bell- Board Chairperson
Larue Camp- Board Member
May Alice Carter- Board Member
Martha Digby- Board Member
Bonnie Walsh- Board Member
- The Jasper County Board meets every third Tuesday at 4:30pm. Meeting dates for 2017 were 1/17/17, 2/21/17, 3/21/17, 4/18/17, 5/16/17, 6/20/17, 8/15/17, 9/19/17, 10/17/17 and 11/21/17.
- The Agency and Board are both extremely involved in community events. This past year DFCS participated in LIPT, Truancy Committee, CHNS Committee, Family Connection, The Domestic Violence Task Force, Back to School Rally, and Community Health Fair.
- County Funds are primarily to cover foster children expenses beyond what the state reimburses, a few community support projects and minor administrative costs.

Successes

- The relationship of the Agency with the Board, Community Partners and Families continues to improve. Communication and Teamwork are stronger than it has been in many years.
- County Director and Social Services Staff are more involved in the daily office operations as well as the community, which has also improved relationships.
- Service Providers for the area continue to be identified.
- The County is looking into establishing an after-school program.
- Family Treatment County is now an option for our substance abusing parents.

Challenges/Opportunities

- This Board does not agree with the Division having control and discretion over how the county funds are spent. The process to use county funds is excessive, which prohibits opportunities to help the community's needy.
- The Board would like to be able to manage the County Funds at the county level.
- The Board does not feel the state is truly interested in what they have to say, even when the opportunity is presented at joint events such as the GPHSA Conference.
- The hiring process is excessively slow which creates a hardship for the rest of the County Office Staff.
- There is not sufficient staff to serve the Constituents.
- Caseloads are too high.

- Multi- County work assignment with Jasper County has been taxing on County Child Welfare Staff and taken County Director away from being able to manage as sufficiently as before.
- Recent staff turnover rate has increased at an alarming rate.

Number of Children in Care

- Jasper County Started 2017 with 17 children in Foster Care. As of 12.1.17 that number has grown to 34.

Number of Approved Foster Homes in Past Year

- Jasper County DFCS currently has 11 active DFCS Homes

Number of finalized adoptions

- Jasper had four adoption finalizations in 2017.

Breakdown number of CPS, Family Preservation and Family Support

- CPS Investigations: 7
- Family Support Assessments: 14
- Family Preservation Cases: 22

Staff Turnover Rate

Jasper had a turnover rate of 25%.

Stakeholder Involvement/ Relationships

- This agency has a positive working relationship with all our community partners. This agency and law enforcement work together to investigate cases of abuse and neglect. The agency works closely with The Family Treatment Court and the rest of the legal community. The Agency, County Director and Board all support various community based programs that include; Family Connection, Local Interagency Planning Teams, The Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Domestic Violence Task Force, just to name a few. DFCS was represented at the annual Back to School Rally, Family Connection Events, The Ethan Richardson Foundation (childhood cancer awareness), and the Health Fair.

Board's Assessment of Community Needs/Concerns

- Service Providers (Community Service Boards) willing to come to Jasper to provide Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment to county residents.
- Transportation Services
- Employment Opportunities
- Families have to travel to neighboring counties to obtain needed services. Many of our Families do not have the resources (such as transportation) available to utilize these services.
- There is not sufficient staff to work with the families of Jasper County, as needed. Continued vigilance towards child safety assessments could be impacted.
- Worker Safety is a concern. Staff travel across the state to serve our children. They are often interacting with our families in unstable

environments, at times with people that have mental health or substance abuse issues. The County Office needs renovations and additional safety features to better protect staff.

- There are not enough local foster homes to serve Jasper's Foster Children so that they can remain in-county for services.
- The growing drug epidemic is having a strong negative impact on the community.

Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

- Additional Staff should be hired so that caseloads can be lowered and families can be adequately served.
- Shorter turnarounds for hiring new staff are needed.
- Agency needs to become more pro-active in the recruitment process for new staff. Adequate applicant pools are a challenge and delay the hiring process.
- Addressing the deficient within the OFI system is needed. County residents are reporting waiting in long lines to determine the status of their delayed benefits.
- Recruitment for additional local foster homes is greatly needed.
- Consider doing away with the combined or Multi- County Agencies. Staff are challenged to manage their daily loads.

We, the Jasper County Division of Family and Children Services Board appreciate being given the opportunity to be heard. We are available and willing to discuss our findings in greater detail if needed.

Sincerely,

Joan Bell

Joan Bell
Chairperson of the Jasper County DFCS Board



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report

2017

Jeff Davis County
Department of Family and Children Services
40 East Sycamore St.
Hazlehurst, GA. 31539

Jeff Davis County DFCS | Vickie Jackson, County Director | 40 E. Sycamore Street | Hazlehurst, GA 31539
Telephone: 912-375-3942 | Fax: 912-375-7997

An Equal Opportunity Employer

Jeff Davis County Dept of Family and Children Services

DFCS Field Operations Annual County Board Report

2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Patsy Brantley-Chair; Kay Purser-Vice Chair; Georgia Mae Mincey; Thomas McDew; Sharon Ussery
- The County DFCS Board meets every 3rd Thursday of the month at 2:00 pm.
- The County DFCS Board has participated in staff appreciation activities.
- The County DFCS Board uses local County Funds for Child Welfare Expenses, Foster Children clothing, haircuts, and allowances. This money has also been used for Staff Appreciation Luncheons. The funds have been used for child care for children in care and for helping out with utilities.

B. County Board's assessment of the effectiveness of the county department's provision of services.

- The agency has explored different types of recruitment efforts due to agency having difficult time filling approved positions. More workers are still needed. Newspaper job announcements have been posted and DFCS Agency Representative has attended job fairs.
- Need Food Stamp and Medicaid workers to be able to provide local services instead of having some workers to work cases from other counties.
- There are not adequate front office personnel. Having the local line available for the office has been a positive change for the customers. However, additional staff is needed to answer the phone and provide adequate customer service at the window. The agency has one front office worker. This item was a need in the previous year and continues to be a need.
- Jeff Davis County had a total of 66 children in legal custody from January 2017-November 2017. 13 children have either returned home or gone on to permanency with a forever family. At the time of this report, there are 53 children in the custody of Jeff Davis County DFCS.

- Jeff Davis County DFCS currently has 13 foster homes.
- Jeff Davis County has had 7 finalized adoptions during the 2017 year.
- Jeff Davis County has had a total of 93 CPS Investigations, 179 Family Support Services Cases, and 17 Family Preservation Cases during 2017.
- There is currently not a breakdown of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD Cases available due to the new GATEWAY system.
- Jeff Davis County has had 0 to retire, 0 resign and 2 to be hired. Jeff Davis County is not presently at full staffing level. Jeff Davis needs 2 placement workers for Social Services.
- Agency Representative attends Family Connection Meetings, MDT's, CHINS Meetings, Law Enforcement Meet-N-Greet, School Meetings, and Regional Stakeholder Meetings to maintain/build relationships.

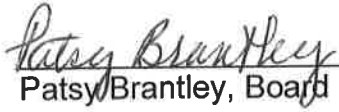
C. County Board assessment of needs of the community.

- This issue remains the same as the previous year in that funds may not be available to assist with homeless shelters, battered women's shelter, public transportation, etc.
- There has been a Child Advocacy Center established in Wayne County. This facility will serve Appling and Jeff Davis Counties as well in providing forensic interviews, sexual abuse exams and counseling.

D. County Board's recommendation for improved operations of the county department.

- Definitely more case managers because vacancies haven't been filled and more front office staff. Job interviews were conducted in April 2017 for a vacant SSCM position. The top candidate was selected. However, by the time the position was offered 6 months later, the candidate had found employment elsewhere.
- Workers working cases for the local county instead of outside work being shifted to a worker in the local office. There's a worker in Jeff Davis DFCS who works Food Stamps and Medicaid cases for another county.
- Utilize County funds for part-time worker to cover the front office.
- Relook at Cash Match funded position to maintain local work.

E. The County DFCS Board members have discussed the above issues and are in agreement.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patsy Brantley". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Patsy Brantley, Board Chairman Signature



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal

Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Director

Annual Report
2017

Jefferson County
Department of Family and Children Services
2459 US Highway 1 North
Louisville, GA 30434-0570

JEFFERSON COUNTY

ANNUAL REPORT

DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

The Jefferson County Board consists of the following members:

Ms. Corrine Mack, Board Chair
Ms. Betty Perez, Member
Mr. L.C. Smith, Vice Chair
Ms. Earnestine Kemp - Member
Ms. Patsy Johnson – Member

The Board meets the fourth Tuesday of the month, every other month, at 10:00 a.m. February 21, 2017 April 25, 2017, June 27, 2017 August 22, 2017 October 23, 2017 December 12, 2017

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

Jefferson County Department of Family and Children services provides effective services to the customers. Bringing back work to the local office has been a big improvement in customer service. Issues that come up are addressed in a timely manner. Jefferson County DFCS has reached out to involve the community and build a better relationship with Law Enforcement.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

Jefferson County is a poor community and has limited resources. Community members need to become more knowledgeable about the services that are available within and outside the county. The biggest need at this time are there a very few employment opportunities for the community. The board members are also concerned about the number of young children that are being left home alone due to parents having to work and no funding for childcare.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

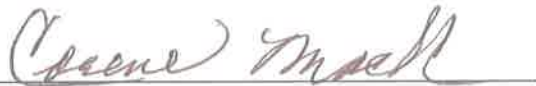
There are no recommended improvements for the County Department. Customer service is a work in progress. Board members are happy to see that the department has built a better relationship with community partners and a better relationship with Law enforcement.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair

The Board would like the staff to continue assessing children safety in a timely manner, supporting the community and collaborating with other agencies/stakeholders.

The county office houses a total of 11 employees. The office hours are Monday through Friday 8 am to 5 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

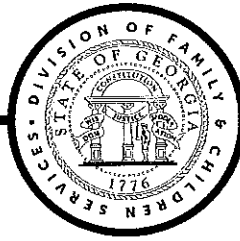


Corrine Mack
Board Chair



Trina T Lee
Jefferson County Director

NATHAN DEAL
GOVERNOR



VIRGINIA PRYOR
INTERIM DIRECTOR

Annual Report 2017

Jenkins County
Department of Family and
Children Services
618 S. Main Street Millen,
Ga. 30442

JENKINS COUNTY

ANNUAL REPORT

DECEMBER 2017

A. General Summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Members
 - Charles Drummer, Chair
 - Member since 2-1-2003
 - Works with BOE
 - Pam Brown
 - Member since 11-1-2015
 - Retired from DFCS
 - Art Johnson
 - Member since 1-2-2010
 - Retired from the County
 - Emma Whitters
 - Member since 1-21-2004
 - Retired from the BOE
 - Bonnie Wiggins
 - Member since 1-2-2004
 - Retired from DFCS
- Meeting Dates/Times and Attendance
 - January 16, 2017 – Mr. Drummer, Ms. Brown, Ms. Wiggins
 - February 6, 2017 – Mr. Drummer, Ms. Whitters, Ms. Wiggins, Ms. Johnson
 - March 17, 2017 – No Meeting held, director on Medical Leave
 - May 15, 2017 – No attendees
 - June 19, 2017 – No attendees
 - July 17, 2017 – Ms. Brown, Ms. Wiggins
 - August 21, 2017 – Ms. Brown
 - September 18, 2017 – Mr. Drummer, Ms. Brown, Ms. Wiggins
 - October 16, 2017 – Mr. Drummer, Ms. Brown, Ms. Johnson, Ms. Wiggins
 - November 13, 2017 – Ms. Brown, Ms. Johnson, Ms. Whitters
 - December 2017 – No board meeting held (at request of board)
- Activities for the past year

The board has provided monies for staff appreciation events and dinners for the staff. They are very supportive of staff and their needs.
- Use of Local County Funds

Local County Funds have been used to pay electric bills, rent, clothing for Foster children, bedding for relatives taking in foster children, paying relative Care monies when funds were delayed. The board is always helpful in ensuring children and families are taken care of.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Departments provision of services:

- Successes
Through the county boards help, Jenkins county has avoided placing Children in care; they have ensured the safety of children and providing families with monies to get through tough times.
- Challenges/Opportunities
This year Jenkins county has seen a significant rise in methamphetamine use; which has cause more children to come into care. The board stays informed of the workloads of case manager and how they are doing. They also stay informed of the family's progress and challenges they have.
- Number of Children in Care
Currently Jenkins County has 16 children in care. At the beginning of 2017, there was only 1 child in custody.
- Number of Foster Parents / Home finalized this year
Jenkins County currently has three foster homes. Two of those foster homes were opened in November 2017
- Number of Finalized Adoptions
No adoptions were finalized in Jenkins County during this year
- Statistics regarding CPS, Family Preservation, and Family Support Cases
 - CPS: 83 Cases
 - Family Support: 53 Cases.
 - Family Preservation: 8 Cases
- Statistics for SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, and ABAWD Cases
 - SNAP: 6,523 Cases
 - TANF: 203 Cases
 - Medicaid: 2,549 Cases
 - ABAWD: 0 cases
- Staff Turnover Rate
There has been no staff turnover this year.
- Stakeholder involvement/relationships
Jenkins county has a good relationship with our Stakeholders. The following agencies are involved and provide services/assistance to the agency as needed. The agency is fully engaged and has a strong relationship with Law Enforcement, Family Connections, the Hospital, The Women's group, the Courts, DJJ, the City, the School System, and the County Commissioners.

Board's Assessment of community needs/concerns

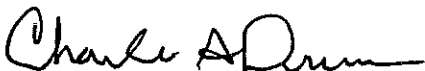
The County Board feels the county needs more job opportunities; as well as training for individuals with job readiness. Most individuals must go outside of the County to Bulloch, Chatham, Burke, or Richmond Counties to work. The county also needs more child care businesses for those who work. The County Board is also concerned over

the 90% increase in the number of children placed in care due to drug abuse by their parents. These parents must go outside of the county for treatment and for regular drug screens.

Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

The board feels the county is running efficiently with the resources it has at hand. They had no recommendations for improved operations. They are pleased with the work the County Director is doing, and the relationships formed within the county.

Jenkins County's population per the 2010 Census was 8,340 people living here. There has been a steady decline in the populations since 1910 when the census reported 11,520 individuals living here. Due to the lack of jobs and resources here is the main reason for the decline. The county is not suited for younger individuals; but more toward those who are more mature and who have grown up here. The county truly cares about one another, and are very helpful and giving. It has been a pleasure to serve county in partnership with the board and our stakeholders. We continue to strive to work with families to help them become and stronger and more self-sufficient; and to ensure are children are safe and well.

 12-13-17
Mr. Charles Drummer, Board Chair



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report
2017

Johnson County
Department of Family and Children Services
44 West Court Street
Wrightsville, Georgia 31096

Johnson COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

General summary of the Johnson DFCS Board:

The Johnson board meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 1:30 PM at the Johnson DFCS office. The board's makeup is consistent with the demographics of the community.

Christy Jackson, Chair and Regional
Annie Graddy, Regional Board Representative
Judy Phillips
Cecilia Schenck, Secretary

Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

The board was involved in supporting professionalism training for Staff Appreciation, supported the County Director in approving funds for purchases and updates needed and offered general support to the staff. The County Director kept the board informed of DFCS initiatives, system changes and community needs

We believe there have been many improvements over the last year. The Director makes a point to introduce each new staff member to the board and we are pleased to have new Social Services staff. Johnson DFCS Social Services consists of two Case Managers and a Supervisor who covers Johnson and Laurens. OFI staff consists of three case managers, one front desk case manager and a Supervisor who covers Johnson, Treutlen and Toombs counties. There was very little turnover of staff. One Social Services Case manager resigned and replaced. OFI case managers remain the same and veteran staff.

Johnson DFCS has a strong partnership with Stepping Stone, CASA and Family Connections. The Johnson County DFCS office has CASA housed in the office unlike so many other DFCS offices.

Johnson will join Care Portal beginning January 2018. This will be a resource for families in the community and assist Case Managers in supporting them in becoming successful parents.

We believe that having a Meet and Greet with Law Enforcement allowed new staff and supervisors an opportunity to build relationships that will assist them in better service to the families.

From July 2016 – June 2017 Johnson County DFCS
13 children in foster care
3 Foster Homes
1 Adoptions Finalized
35 CPS Screen outs
62 FSS
22 Investigations

At this time OFI is unable to provide numbers to report.

The County Boards assessment of the needs of the Community:

The Board identified the needs of the community as more industry and jobs, public transportation and Mental Health Services

The County Board's recommendations for improved operations of the county department:

Overall, we believe that the local DFCS office is doing well with the resources that they have.

When we looked at what was not working this year, we feel the need for a full time County Director rather than sharing with two other counties is important. It is important that local people be able to talk to someone familiar with their questions and needs. The increase in staff hopefully will help with this problem.

Conclusion:

We, the members of the Johnson DFCS board, are willing to partner with the County Administrator and staff to move the Blueprint for Change forward. We have seen much improvement over the last year and have no reason not to expect to see good things continue to come in the future as long as the DFCS leadership stays on task and focused on the needs of families and the needs of the staff.

Christy Jackson, Johnson DFCS Board Chair

**Jones Co DFCS
Board Annual
Report 2017**



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

Jones Co DFCS Board Annual Report 2017:

A. Jones County DFCS Board:

- Board Members are: Janice Roberts- Board Chair, Frances Roberts, Calvin Pitts, Emory Lamar, and Beth Hamrick
- The board meetings are held quarterly at the Jones County Department of Family and Children Services.

B. Assessment of the effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Strengths:

Foster Homes: Jones County is a Class II county by size and has worked diligently to maintain 38 Partnership parents, 8 foster and adopt homes, 4 relative foster homes, and one adopt homes. The board members feel the contributing factors to this retention of homes and foster parents are staffs' commitments, partnership, and communication they have with the foster parents and to the children being served in foster care.

Community Relationship: The relationship between the agency and community partners continues to improve and the partnership is evidence in the work that is completed in the community. The Board members feel Jones Co DFCS has a good relationship with Jones County Board of Education, Jones County Sheriff's Department, Jones County Board of Commissioners, Gray Police Department, and the Georgia Bureau of Investigations. With the continued rise in reports, mandated reporters within the community are reporting cases as they should be via the web site and by phone. This leads the Board to agree the community places confidence in the agency's ability to respond appropriately and handle situations of reports of child abuse or neglect in the community.

Law Enforcement and the agency work jointly to complete cases that involve abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse. They are very responsive to the agency's calls for assistance. Jones County DFCS has a remarkable relationship with the court system, CASA, and Jones County Family Connections.

Staff from Jones County DFCS serve on the Family Dependency Treatment Court, CHINS Bi-Monthly Staffing Meeting, LIPT monthly meetings, Family Connections, and the Quarterly Ocmulgee Domestic Violence Task Force meetings. All of which are critical to the positive outcomes of the safety and well-being of the children and families the agency serves. These connections and partnership has improved the lives of those involved and has shortened the time children are placed out of the home.

County Budget: Jones county Commissioners have demonstrated their support for Jones Co DFCS and the work that is being done continuously over the years. The county funds received by the agency is \$50,000 a year. The money is helpful in the overall operations of the agency often covering expenses not covered by state funds. The budget has been on target or under budget leaving the agency with a considerable fund balance due to the accumulation of funds. From these funds, staff receive a monthly supplement based on length of service with the agency which has proven to retain staff as they feel appreciated.

Outcome Measures: The outcome measures for Jones County are consistently at or above the Region 6 or state averages monthly. The areas are Every Parent Every Month (EPEM), Every Child Every Month (ECEM), Collateral Contacts (COL C), Staffing Cases Every Month (SCEM), Timeliness of Investigations and Family Support Services and Response times being met. The Board feels this indicates the quality of services the community receives from the staff of Jones Co DFCS and again shortens the time children are placed out of the home.

Communication with the Board: Overall, the Board members indicate they are well informed regarding information at all levels of the department to include local, region, and state. They continue to enjoy attending conferences and being made aware of

training opportunities. The Board members are supportive of the Meet and Greet that is held yearly with Jones County's Law Enforcement and community partners.

- **Needs:**

Area of Improvement: Past area of improvement has been with the relationship of the Gray Police Department with the agency. This has improved as CD Cunningham has met with leaders and now feel there is a better understanding of policy and procedure. Gray Police Officers are now contacting the agency for any assistance or questions they may have in regards to children and families in the community. The agency has contacted the Gray Police for several incidents in the office and they have responded very quickly and offered support.

The main area of improvement is a concern for staff safety. There have been two incidents in the office that has been discussed with the board. Both incidents involved clients that suffered untreated mental health illnesses. Both clients threatened staff with bodily harm to include one of these clients having a weapon. The Board discussed with CD Cunningham having the front lobby reassessed to make it safer for staff and customers visiting the building for services. .

One action the Board was very supportive of was as part of the Meet and Greet, Jones County DFCS staff participated in an Active Shooter Training. The training was very informative and offered safety tips to handle situations that involve safety.

C. Jones County Board's assessment of the needs of the Community:

- *Transportation:* Jones Co transit is the only public transportation in Jones County. For residents that have medical needs, there is the Medicaid transport that bills Medicaid for the services. For the most part, there is a lack of public transportation in this community. There are areas of Jones County that is close to the Bibb County line where the residents can take advantage of the transportation system that Bibb has to offer.
- *Housing:* There is limited housing in Jones County that offers subsidized rent and within this arena there are long waiting list which makes it very difficult to obtain. At this time there is not a housing authority in the area.
- *Substance Abuse Treatment:* Director Cunningham has shared the increase in reports that involve drug abuse with parents using with their teenagers as well as infants being

born drug exposed. Over 55% of the cases received by the agency in a three month period involved infants testing positive for illegal drugs. The agency has seen an increase in methamphetamine abuse and opiate abuse. The Board agrees and sees the need for outpatient and inpatient treatment facilities in the area. This is a recognized issue not only in Jones County but across the State of Georgia. Jones County has seen a rise in teenagers testing positive for illegal drugs and has quickly realized there are limited to almost no resources for teenagers suffering from addiction. The funds utilized for in home services are maxed out quickly as the services that are placed in the home are very expensive.

D. Board's recommendations for improvement operations of the county department

Recommendation: The Board has identified a need that they feel will improve the overall operations of this agency as needing a supervisor that is dedicated Assessment Unit. CD Cunningham has been actively supervising the Assessment Unit and completing director responsibilities. With the new Solution Based Casework and Blueprint for a Change projects, the demand for a better workforce is directly related to having adequate supervision.

Respectfully Submitted,



Janice Roberts

Jones County DFCS Board Chair



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report

2017

Lanier County

Department of Family and Children Services
5 Roquemore Circle
Lakeland, GA 31635

LANIER COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT December 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Makeup – Mrs. Deborah Browning, Chairperson – 9 years of service and background is retired DFCS employee; Mrs. Donna Sirmans, Co-Chairperson – 10 years of service and background is personal care home owner/operator; Mrs. Lavann Gaskins, member – 17 years of service and background is retired Federal Agriculture Stabilization Program Manager; Mrs. Cynthia Rice, member – 13 years of service and background is retired school administrator/principal; Mrs. JoNan Holbrook, member – 1 year of service and background is retired school teacher; Mrs. Natalie Howell, County Director and Judy Daugharty, Administrative Support III.
- Meeting dates/times – The Lanier County DFCS Board meets on the third Monday of every month at 3:30 P.M. All board members regularly attend meetings.
- Activities for the past year – The Lanier County DFCS Board has met every month this year.
- Use of local county funds – Half of the county funds are used for child welfare expenses and office supplies. See attached addendum. The other half is used to pay a Lanier County High School Work Study Student to work part time at the reception desk.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Successes – The Lanier County DFCS staff are to be commended for a job well done. They respond positively and quickly to state mandated changes, and regardless of the staff shortages or other limitations, they do whatever they can to serve the needs of the community effectively. We are most fortunate to have quality personnel in the Lanier County DFCS office. The board has received minimal complaints from the community about the provision of services by the DFCS staff in our county. The opening of the front desk phone lines has been a positive improvement in regards to the agency's ability to provide customer service to the community.
- Challenges - Due to very limited clerical staff in our office and region, we currently close to the public 2 days per week, this of course limits effectiveness of our service provision to the community.

Our social services staff have served two counties this year, which is a decrease from four that they served in previous years. With the decrease in counties covered, they are better able to participate in community meetings and events in each county.

Nearly all of our foster children are located outside of our county. We are in need of more DFCS foster homes and therapeutic foster homes in our area.

- Number of children in care – 50
- Number of foster parents – 5 approved foster homes
- Number of finalized adoptions - 6
- Number of approved foster homes in past year – 2 homes
- Breakdown of number of CPS, Family Preservation and Family Support – During FY 17, we averaged 6 CPS Investigations per month, 9 Family Support cases per month, and 9 Family Preservation cases per month.
- Breakdown of number of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases - This information is not able to be obtained out of Gateway at this time.
- Staff turnover rate – There has been minimal staff turnover at Lanier DFCS this year. Most of the staff have been employed for at least one year.
- Stakeholder involvement/relationships – Lanier DFCS has a strong relationship with the Lanier Family Connection and the Lanier Called to Care group. We have a healthy working relationship with our local schools, law enforcement, and courts.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns: Rural communities with large land masses and small populations create unique challenges for the provision of services to both social services and OFI clients.

- Personnel and staffing needs:

- We are grateful for the increase in positions allotted to our county over the last year. However, the recruitment and ongoing process has been challenging to navigate. There have been difficulties in getting positions posted on the website, difficulty keeping them posted on the website, difficulty obtaining a viable hiring pool, then there are long wait times for fingerprints and drug screens to be scheduled and long waits for approval to hire.

We were approved four social services case manager positions and one social service technician position in July of 2016. It has taken a year and a half to get the technician and three of the case managers hired. We are still advertising for the final position. With these delays, although we have positions, we still have not had the help we need on board to provide assistance to families.

- Resources and services for clients:

- As a very rural county, we have high incidences of substance abuse, domestic violence and mental health issues, but we have no resources in county to help

families address these needs. Families have to travel out of town to go to substance abuse treatment, mental health counseling, or to attend domestic violence support services.

- There are very few opportunities for employment in our county. This creates a feeling of helplessness and hopelessness for our already impoverished families.
 - There are no public transportation services in our counties. Families must travel long distances to access services and basic needs. Commutes of 30 to 45 minutes one way are common for most of our families to go access resources.
 - Our county has no after school programs and no formal daycare providers. This lack of child care support negatively impacts the families in Lanier County and contributes to problems with appropriate supervision of children.
 - There are few recreational or entertainment activities in the county. We have a recreation department, but fees are high and scholarships are not offered; this excludes many at risk children from participating. The lack of positive outlets and activities contributes to juvenile delinquency within the county.
 - There is no formal food bank in Lanier County. There are three churches that have a limited partnership with the food bank in a neighboring county and work to provide some emergency food support to county residents.
 - There is no organization to provide support for indigent care/transient/homeless populations in the county. Residents in Lanier County have limited support from a neighboring county homeless coalition.
 - We have very few foster homes in our county. This means that our children have to move from their schools, churches and recreational programs when they have already been moved from their homes and families.
- Safety concerns for staff in our County:
 - Our county has great law enforcement support, but resources for law enforcement are limited. Our local law enforcement jurisdictions may have only one or two deputies on duty during a shift. This creates a safety issue for families as well as case management staff when they are in need of law enforcement assistance and an officer is tied up with another matter in another part of the county.
 - There are areas in our county where there is no cell phone reception. This poses a safety threat for case management staff out in the community with no access to call for help. It is dangerous for our case management staff to drive around in these areas with no cell phone service and it isn't practical for law enforcement to accompany them on every single call.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

- Every county should have at least one clerical/support staff person that is not responsible for other program specific duties. Having additional clerical and support staff would benefit our county tremendously.

- Increasing annual clothing allowances for children in foster care should be a priority.
- Creating statewide awareness campaigns to educate our communities across the State on the needs of foster children. Awareness activities should include more than simply recruiting for foster parents; they should also highlight other things that can be done to support and assist children in foster care.
- Protocols should be established to ensure worker safety, especially for social services workers to have to work and travel in very rural areas.
- Partnerships should be made on the State and local level with domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental health providers to have them bring services and resources to rural communities that don't have their own resources (For example, send a counselor to our county office one day per week to service local clients instead of expecting clients to go to another county to access that service provider in his/her office).

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair:

We appreciate your review and consideration of this report. We welcome any feedback you may be willing to provide.



Lanier County DFCS Board Chairperson



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report
2017

Laurens County
Department of Family and Children Services
904 Claxton Dairy Rd.
Dublin, Georgia 31021

LAURENS COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2016

General summary of the Laurens DFCS Board:

The Laurens board meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at 9:00 AM at the Laurens DFCS office. The board's makeup is consistent with the demographics of the community.

William Slade, Chair
Brenda Smith, CoChair
Christopher Council , Regional Board Representative
Margaret Pauldo
Claude Vines
Cecilia Schenck, Secretary

The board was involved in supporting professionalism training for Staff Appreciation, supported the County Director in approving funds for purchases and updates needed and offered general support to the staff. The County Director kept the board informed of DFCS initiatives, system changes and community needs.

Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

We believe there have been many improvements over the last year. We are pleased that we are fully staffed in Social Services and OFI with very little to no turnover in Laurens County. One Family One Worker in OFI seems to be benefiting customers and staff, as well as the front desk phone line being open and staff in the lobby to help the customers. We, as board members, have strengthened our resolve to do our part to support staff so that they have a better connection to us and each other.

The Laurens County DFCS office has leadership housed in the office unlike so many other DFCS offices. To provide support to the staff we partner with Family Connections, Stepping Stone, Healthy Start, CASA, WINGS, Mental Health and local churches. During this year Laurens DFCS was on of the first DFCS offices in the state to partner with Care Portal. This is going well and is a great resource for our community.

From July 2016 – June 2017 Laurens County DFCS

156 children in foster care

21 Foster Homes

7 Adoptions Finalized

6 Foster Homes Opened

142 CPS Screen outs

314 FSS

128 Investigations

At this time OFI is unable to provide numbers to report.

The County Boards assessment of the needs of the Community:

The Board identified the needs of the community as more industry and jobs, public transportation and more mentoring programs for teens who may be involved in DJJ or headed in that direction.

The County Board's recommendations for improved operations of the county department:

Overall, we believe that the local DFCS office is doing well with the resources that they have.

When we looked at what was not working this year, we feel the need for a full time County Director rather than sharing with two other counties is important. The high case loads are also a concern. We have new staff but they are now needing to be trained. It is important that local people be able to talk to someone familiar with their questions and needs. The increase in staff hopefully will help with this problem.

Due to the number of calls to Law Enforcement to respond to the DFCS lobby and several of them were due to customers fighting. One of those fights were violent and resulted in injury to a customer. Due to the climate of the lobby the Board feels there is a need for a security guard or a law enforcement presence. Customers and Staff do not feel safe. In the meantime our Regional C3 coordinator will conduct refresher verbal judo training. Also Co Chair Board Member Brenda Smith and County Director will reach out to Dublin Police Chief to find out what he is able to do to assist.

Now that Laurens DFCS is fully staffed, Board members feel there is a need to retain staff and boost morale. Their suggestions to do this is to have monthly snacks, annual staff appreciation and music therapy via intercom to calm staff and customers.

We would like to see in the coming year a full time Director, a Security Guard in the lobby and more staff events to boost morale such as monthly snacks and yearly staff appreciation events.

Conclusion:

We, the members of the Laurens DFCS board, are willing to partner with the County Director and staff to move the Blueprint for Change forward. We have seen much improvement over the last year and have no reason not to expect to see that continue this year.

Brenda Smith, Board CoChair

Lee County Department of Family and Children Services

2017 Field Operations Annual County Board Report

Lee County DFCS Board:

Charles Moore – Chief of Police –Board Chairperson

Bobby Watkins- EMS Director – Vice Chairperson

Robert Lee – Lee County DFCS – Secretary

Joyce Lowthian – Appraiser I – Board Member

Malden Batten – Apostle/Clergy – Board member

Jennifer Goode –Secretary, Lee County School System– Board Member

Lee County Board meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday of every month at 1:00 p.m.

County Board's assessment of the effectiveness of the county department's provision of services:

There have been significant improvement in providing timely and needed services to the families of Lee County. The board believes that the provision to families will continue to see marked improvement as the agency moves to "One Worker, One Family."

The board is encouraged by the states effort to increase the amount of social services case managers hired to serve Lee County. Lee County has been able to add one additional case managers over the last year. The board recognizes how this allotment will go a long way in decreasing case load sizes and therefore allowing case managers to ensure children are safe.

The board continues to recognize the struggles of the case managers as the majority of them work multi-county. Lee County had 132 investigations and 101 Family Support cases in 2017. The county averaged between 35 and 40 children in Foster Care throughout the year. There was an average of 15 and 20 Family Preservation cases open during any particular month in 2017.

There is a strong partnership between Lee County Division of Family and Children Services and other stakeholders in the community. Law Enforcement and the Division work closely to ensure children are protected and families have needed services. The Division works closely with the school counselors and Social Worker regarding the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

Lee County Division of Family and Children Services partnered with the Family Connections and the Kiwanis Club to assist with the Backpack Blessings Program that delivers food to the schools which assist needy families. Lee County has partnered with Big House to provide clothing to those in need. Big

House is able to utilize an office at the DFCS building to set up their shop in order to serve the families through DFCS support.

Lee County DFCS is supported by our Local Board and County Commissioners and each Lee County employee is provided a supplement that is funded by the county. This supplement as well as other supports provided to the staff has meant turnover is way below the state average. This lack of turnover means staff are able to better serve the community and cuts way down on costs associated with new employee recruitment and training.

Lee County DFCS provides ongoing support to our foster parents as well as our foster children. Lee County honored all the foster parents in May with a foster parent appreciation dinner. Lee County through the Leesburg Police Department has an exciting program to provide gifts to all our foster children during Christmas. The board provides ongoing support for the children in foster care by approving funds to support our children's activities and to enhance their daily lives.

County Board's assessment of the needs to the community:

Poverty, lack of jobs, teenage pregnancy and lack of adequate support for youth serve as barriers to the health, economic and social well-being of Lee County citizens. Greater cooperation among local leaders and other concerned citizens can lead to a cultural shift that can successfully address these issues and produce positive and sustainable outcomes.

There is an extreme shortage of foster homes in Lee County and most of our children that come into care are placed outside the county. There are only four active foster homes in Lee County and all of those homes are currently filled to capacity. Lee County DFCS was recently assigned a Resource Development Case Manager to assist with the development and retention of foster homes.

There is limited access to local mental health services. Many of the families served by Lee County DFCS have some issues related to the need for ongoing mental health services and assessments. The families in Lee County must travel out of county to meet their mental health needs

County Board's recommendation for improved operations of the county department:

1. The state will continue to allocate enough case managers in each county to meet the needs of the community they serve.

2. There needs to be more resources put into obtaining and maintaining quality foster homes in Lee County.
3. Increased statewide contracts with local mental health service providers to ensure the emotional/psychological needs of the families in Lee County are met.
4. Lee County DFCS will work on strengthening their relationship with the Faith Based Community in Lee County

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles Moore". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Board Chairperson
Charles Moore

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ANNUAL REPORT SUBMISSION:

In following Senate Bill 138, DFCS County Boards are required to submit an annual report to the State DFCS Director. This memo outlines and provides limited guidance on the annual report process.

Annual Report Process:

Involves each DFCS County Board completing and submitting an annual report by December 15th to the State DFCS Director.

Utilize template below:

- A. General summary of County Board;
- B. The County Board's assessment of the effectiveness of the county department's provision of services (i.e. what is working well and what is not working as well, etc.);
- C. The County Board's assessment of the needs of the community; and,
- D. The County Board's recommendations for improved operations of the county department - including recommendations regarding staffing levels and worker safety, as well as other areas.
- E. Closing and signature of Board Chair

Responsibilities:

The annual report process includes the following responsibilities:

- A. The County Board Chairperson is responsible for ensuring that the county's annual report is completed with input from all board members and the County Director (using the attached template).
- B. As the County Board secretary, the County Director is charged with assisting with the preparation and dissemination of the typed WORD document which will include the above listed information provided by the County Board.
- C. The County Board reviews the final report at a scheduled board meeting and votes on it prior to its submission by the County Director to the Regional Director. The RD will provide a copy to the Regional Advisory Board Chair for review.
- D. In the event a meeting is not able to be scheduled, alternative means - including sharing via email - are explored and utilized to ensure all board members review and are in agreement with the report prior to its submission.
- E. Regional Director will submit the annual report via mail (or delivery) to LaMarva Ivory, Project Director, 2 Peachtree Street, 19-486, Atlanta, Georgia 30303.
- F. The annual report is due in the State Director's office by December 15th.
- G. The County Director also provides an electronic copy of the annual report via email to the appropriate Regional Director.



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Liberty County
Department of Family and Children Services
112 West Oglethorpe HWY
Hinesville, Georgia 31313

LOCAL COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

1. Makeup - Members/Officers

John Henderson: Board Chairperson

Maxine Fallin: Board Vice-Chairperson

Cathy Atkins: Board Member, Region 12

Regional Board Member, State Advisory Board-Chairperson

Mike Alamo: Board Member

Donna Popour: Board Member

2. Meeting dates/times

The regularly scheduled meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month at 2:00 PM

3. Activities for the past year include:

- Planning and participation in the annual Staff Appreciation Luncheon**
- Planning and participation in the annual foster children's Christmas party**
- Planning and participation in the staff Christmas luncheon**
- Planning and participation of the County Funds Budget proposal to the Liberty County Board of Commissioners**
- Participated in meetings with Liberty County officials to explore the option of Liberty County Board of Commissioners managing all or part of the allocated County Funds for Liberty County DFCS to increase ease of access and use of the funds**
- Attendance of GPHSA Conferences**
- Attending various community functions and fund raisers to represent and advocate for the agency**
- Attending Progress Through People's Luncheons**
- Mrs. Atkins' participation on the Regional and State Advisory Board's**
- Attendance of the Chamber of Commerce Member's annual banquet**
- Participation in the annual Keep Liberty Beautiful event**
- Planning and support of annual Law Enforcement Meet and Greet meeting and review of building security access methods**
- Participation in the interview process and selecting a new County Director as a result of Mr. Brown transferring to Chatham DFCS. LaToya Hunt has been selected and will begin as the County Director on 12/16/17.**

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

1. What's working well-

- Communication and teamwork between the Board and the County Officials**
- The Board's communication with the County Director and Regional Director**

- Staff participating in presentations of Liberty DFCS' service delivery in Board Meetings
- We have an active Board that is involved in the community
- Overall all positive staff morale in the office
- Positive community partnerships
- Positive partnership with the Long County DFCS Board. This is critical do to this being a multi county agency.
- Coordination between county OFI and Social Services staff

2. What's not working-

- Complications with using county funds to purchase items needed for staff enrichment and productivity and in a timely manner
- The ability to purchase staff identification materials and resources to make it easier for our staff to be recognized in the community while on official business or participating in a community events
- The office lobby, parking lots, and visitation rooms need to be protected and monitored by video surveillance to increase safety of staff and community members using the facility. In addition,

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

- Continue communication between Liberty DFCS and community members served
- Increased use of local communication and media sources about local DFCS programs, events, needs, and accomplishments
- Increase the number of local foster homes
- Additional supports and services for military families suffering from deployments and soldiers suffering from PTSD
- Additional resources for the homeless
- Resources for CSEC cases
- Increase Faith Based support to include: food pantries and mentoring for children and families
- The Board recommended that additional OFI workers, Social Services Case Managers, and a Permanency Supervisor needs to be hired to replace staff that have transferred or resigned.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

- Make it easier to access county funding for items and projects approved the Liberty DFCS County Board
- Increase building and staff security by training Customer Service and new Social Services staff conflict resolution skills and the instillation of a video surveillance system and updated security system.
- Improve use of local social media to inform the community of services specifically offered at the Liberty DFCS Office, community partnership

opportunities, celebration of program accomplishments, and celebration of community partnership initiatives that have taken place

- Additional funding from municipalities within the county and further explore the option of County Funds being managed by the Liberty County Board of Commissioners Office

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shawn M. Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Shawn M. Brown, M.A.

Former Secretary/Liberty County Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Henderson". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Henderson

Chairperson

NATHAN DEAL
GOVERNOR



VIRGINIA PRYOR
INTERIM DIRECTOR

Annual Report 2017

**Lincoln County
Department of Family and Children Services
171 N. Peachtree St.
Lincolnton, GA 30817**

BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE + A STATE OF HOPE =

SAFE CHILDREN. STRENGTHENED FAMILIES. STRONGER GEORGIA.

WILKES, LINCOLN, TALIAFERRO COUNTY DFCS – J. GRANT MCCURLEY, DIRECTOR - 48 LEXINGTON AVE. | WASHINGTON, GA 30673

Lincoln County Annual Report December 2017

A. General summary of the county DFCS Board:

Makeup: 5 members

Meeting Dates: Every quarter at 11 AM

Activities for 2017: Board Meetings every quarter, Board Members attend staff appreciation activities

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

In 2017, the Lincoln County board continued to educate the community about all program areas of DFCS. This includes safe sleep and bullying education and recruitment of foster/adoptive homes. There has been a conscious effort made to assure quality and timely service delivery. Clients continue to embrace technology by taking advantage of faster service by utilizing lobby computers and online applications. Staff uses technology to document work more effectively while also being safer in the field. The agency continues to maintain positive relationships with community partners and stakeholders. Local stakeholders are the juvenile court, the school system, family connection, law enforcement, and the health department. There are no mental health or substance abuse service providers in the county. Families have to travel out of the county to obtain these services. There were 20 CPS reports, 11 Family Preservation cases, and 34 Family Support cases so far this year. There were 799 SNAP cases, 10 TANF cases, 465 Medicaid cases, and 245 ABD cases in the county. There are three foster homes in the county. There were no adoptions finalized. There has been no staff turnover in OFI staff and there has been two services staff resign, however those two positions have been filled.

C. Board's Assessment of community needs/concerns

Lincoln County has a population of approximately 7,500 citizens. There continues to be few local resources in the area and families continue to travel to outside counties for employment opportunities, high-end medical needs, shopping, substance abuse and mental health services. Parents with children being served by foster care were required to complete family plans in order to be reunified with their children. The family plan often included obtaining and maintaining stable employment and housing, domestic violence counseling, and completing substance abuse treatment. Family plans were not often completed timely due to lack of local resources. The Agency has continued to assist families financially, i.e., paying rent and utility deposits, paying for transportation to neighboring counties where services were being provided, and private service providers. The unemployment rate is 4.5%.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

The staffing situation is currently three Case Managers (splitting their time between Wilkes, Lincoln, and Taliaferro Counties) - two for CPS and one for Foster Care – and one Social Services Supervisor that supervises both program areas. There is one Social Service Tech that is shared with Wilkes and Taliaferro Counties. There continues to be one OFI Supervisor that covers Wilkes, Lincoln, and Taliaferro counties. There are two OFI staff assigned to the office. The front desk duties are now being fulfilled by a Experience Work employee. CAPS, ABD Medicaid, and APS staff are not assigned to the county. Currently the office is opened on Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays, the board has discussed opening the office five days per week.

E. Closing and Signature of the Board Chair

The board will continue to support staff as needed.

In kindest regards, Lincoln County Board



Denise Freeman, Chairman



G. Grant McCurley, County Director

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Responsibilities:

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- C. The County Board reviews the final report at a scheduled board meeting and votes on it prior to its submission by the County Director to the Regional Director. The RD will provide a copy to the Regional Advisory Board Chair for review.**
- D. In the event a meeting is not able to be scheduled, alternative means - including sharing via email - are explored and utilized to ensure all board members review and are in agreement with the report prior to its submission.**
- E. Regional Director will submit the annual report via mail (or delivery) to LaMarva Ivory, Project Director, 2 Peachtree Street, 19-486, Atlanta, Georgia 30303.**
- F. The annual report is due in the State Director's office by December 15th.**
- G. The County Director also provides an electronic copy of the annual report via email to the appropriate Regional Director.**



Annual Report

2017

Long County
Department of Family and Children Services
590 North Macon St.
Ludowici, Georgia 31316

LOCAL COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

1. Makeup - Members/Officers

Thomas Sollosi: Board Chairperson, Region 12

Regional Board Member

Zephyrie Farlow: Board Vice- Chairperson

Madie Anderson: Board Member

Kathryn Griffin: Board Member

Ivy Lana Skipper: Board Member

2. Meeting dates/times

The regularly scheduled meetings are held the every-other month on the fourth Thursday at 3:30 PM, on the even numbered months.

3. Activities for the past year include:

- Planning and participation in the annual Staff Appreciation Luncheon**
- Support for the annual foster children's Christmas party**
- Planning and participation in the staff Christmas luncheon**
- Planning of the County Funds Budget proposal for the Long County Board of Commissioners**
- Mr. Sollosi's participation on the Regional Board**
- Planning and support of annual Law Enforcement Meet and Greet meeting**

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

1. What's working well-

- County Commissions annual financial support of the agency**
- Local community partnerships**
- The Board's communication with the County Director and staff**
- Coordination between county OFI and Social Services staff**
- Positive community partnerships**
- Board members that are active in the community**
- Overall positive staff morale**

2. What's not working-

- The County Commissioners providing maintenance on the building in a timely manner.
- The building security system is antiquated, doesn't function properly, and needs to be updated/replaced to increase staff safety
- There are too many restrictions and too much red tape when it comes to using "Board Approved County Funds" to better equip and appreciate staff
- The building security system is aged, functionality is poor, and replacement is needed for the security of the staff and clients.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

- Continue to improve communication and resolution to maintenance issues between Long DFCS and the Long County Commissioners
- Recruitment of foster Parent to increase the number of local foster homes
- Additional supports and services for military families suffering from deployments and soldiers suffering from PTSD
- Research resources to reduce homelessness, lack of community transportation, and limited employment opportunities
- Resources for CSEC cases
- Increase Faith Based support to include: food pantries, clothes, and mentoring for children and families

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

- Make it easier to access county funding for Long County Board approved purchases and projects
- Increase building and staff security by training Customer Service and new Social Services staff conflict resolution skills and the instillation of a new video surveillance system
- Improve use of local social media to inform the community of services specially offered at the Long County DFCS office.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair

Sincerely,



Shelia Dease-Dinkins
Secretary/Long County Interim Director



Tom Sollosi
Chairperson



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report
2017

Lowndes County
Department of Family and Children Services
206 S Patterson Street
Valdosta, GA 31601

Lowndes County DFCS | Rhonda Wheeler, County Director | 206 South Patterson St. 2nd Floor | Valdosta, GA 31601
Telephone: 229-333-5200 | Fax: 229-245-2428

An Equal Opportunity Employer

Lowndes County Annual Board Report December 2017

A. General Summary of the County DFCS Board:

- **Members/Officers – Rhonda Wheeler, Secretary, Rhonda Wheeler, Secretary, County Director for 7 years, with the agency for 25 years.**

Lonnie Denton, Board Chair, has served on the board since 1989. He is a retired retail store manager and actively involved in a local prison ministry.

Patricia Iverson has served on the board since 1997 and she is a retired educator in our community.

Captain Raymond Conner has served on the board since 2007 and he is currently a Captain in our local police department.

Elsie Napier has served on the board since 2016, she is retired from public health and currently working part-time with our health department.

Rebecca Powell has served on the board since October 2017, she is a retired educator who has returned to part-time work as a teacher.

- **Meeting dates/times and attendance of board members**

January 18, 2017 at 3:00 pm – attendees were Lonnie Denton, Patricia Iverson, Captain Raymond Conner, Elsie Napier and Gail Finley, SSA.

March 15, 2017 at 3:00 pm – attendees were Lonnie Denton, Patricia Iverson, Captain Raymond Conner, Elsie Napier and Rhonda Wheeler.

July 18, 2017 at 3:00 pm – attendees were Lonnie Denton, Patricia Iverson, Captain Raymond Conner, Elsie Napier and Gail Finley, SSA.

September 20, 2017 at 3:00 pm – attendees were Lonnie Denton, Patricia Iverson, Captain Raymond Conner, Elsie Napier and Gail Finley, SSA.

October 18, 2017 at 3:00 pm – attendees were Lonnie Denton, Patricia Iverson, Captain Raymond Conner, Elsie Napier, Rebecca Powell and Gail Finley, SSA.

Activities for the Past year - Our local board has participated in staff appreciation in April 2017, they assure that all staff are welcomed when coming on board. They are all active within the community and help answer questions or discussions of the agency when approached.

Use of Local County Funds – Our local county funds have been used to reimburse foster parents for haircuts, allowances, clothes, birthday and Christmas gifts. We have used funds to reimburse for our foster children to participate in school and community activities.

Our Law Enforcement Meet and Greet was held on September 18, 2017.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Successes –

The Lowndes County Office shares a county director with neighboring Brooks County and has for the last 4 years. The management team from Brooks and Lowndes work together to ensure that vacant caseloads are covered so that the citizens in Lowndes/Brooks County are served in both Social Services and OFI.

The commitment from leadership to continue to stay focused on the staffing allocations of Social Services and OFI has continued to improve the workforce job satisfaction at Lowndes County DFCS.

The commitment from the Lowndes County Commissioners to continue to provide county money for our foster children helps to ensure their needs are being met by the county. The county money assist foster children with clothing, supplies, and extra-curricular activities such as sports, band, chorus and school pictures.

The return of the OFI work to the county office and the ability for customers to be able to communicate face to face with a staff person in the local office has increase customer satisfaction. We average over 400 customers in our lobby on a weekly basis.

The region has created regional teams to address our issues with recruitment of foster/adoptive homes and adoptions. This has allowed for increase in foster/adoptive homes being approved and getting our children permanency sooner. We have 33 foster homes in Lowndes County. There were 8 foster homes approved since January 1, 2017 and 7 adoptions finalized.

Lowndes County staff has a great relationship with our community partners. In partnership, we work together to ensure that all families have necessary resources and services. We have local CAC, domestic violence shelter, food bank, homeless shelter and many private providers that meet the needs of our children and families.

- Challenges/Opportunities –

1. Transportation: Our citizens have limited public transportation in Lowndes County; however they are able to utilize the MIDS Transportation for medical appointments if they have Medicaid. There are numerous issues with this service not being reliable.

2. Hiring Process: The hiring process continues to have a major impact on selected individuals for employment. In turn, this effects employee morale and candidates to retract their interest in becoming employed with the agency. Since January 1, 2017, Lowndes County received a total of 1169 Investigations, 631 Family Support cases and an average between 64-89 Family Preservation cases. Lowndes County staff turnover rate for 2017 is at 28% compared to 2016 at 25.33%.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

- As a rural county, we have high incidences of substance abuse, homeless and mental health issues, but we have limited resources in the county to help families address these needs.
- There are no public transportation services in our county.
- There is no organization to provide support for indigent care/transient/homeless populations in the county.
- There are no emergency Adult Protective Services in our county and our community has high elderly and disabled adult population.

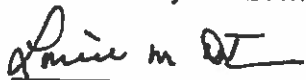
D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

- Continue to work with management at the regional level to maintain manageable caseloads for social services and OFI programs should be a priority so that we can ensure the safety and well-being of our residents.
- Staffing allocations should be based on the work in the county. When a worker leaves the county should have the ability to fill the position in social services, OFI, clerical and administration to ensure the work in the county continues.
- Directors need more time to participate in community development meetings and events. This would allow the continuation of building rapport with our community partners and stakeholders.
- Recruitment of local foster care homes, there should be specific policy for recruitment and retention of local foster homes. There should be training specific to recruitment and retention for staff designated to resource development, and there should be pacing and accountability measures put in place for resource development staff in an effort to keep our foster children close to normal as possible to schools, family, friends and church.
- Increasing the per diem for foster parents should also be a priority.
- Increasing child care budgets for rural counties with limited after school care or recreational programs. Child Care for our at risk children to provide academic enhancement; health and wellness, cultural activity, transportation, etc.... Also opportunity for working families to have child care before/after school and during work hours.


E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair

It is with great pleasure that the board gets to serve our community with the staff at Lowndes County DFCS. Rhonda Wheeler was promoted to Regional Director on July 16, 2017 and Gail Finley was promoted to the County Director on 11-16-17.

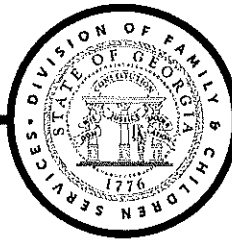
Submitted by the Lowndes County Department of Family and Children Services Board:



Lonnie Denton, Board Chair


Gail Finley, Board Secretary

NATHAN DEAL
GOVERNOR



VIRGINIA PRYOR
INTERIM DIRECTOR

Annual Report 2017

Lumpkin County
Department of Family and Children Services
175 Tipton Drive
Dahlonega, Georgia 30533

- A. The Lumpkin County Board of Family and Children Services is comprised of a five-member board as outlined below:

Seat 1: Betty Fitts, Chair / Retired DFCS County Director and community liaison

Seat 2: Brigitte Barker / Family Connections Executive Director

Seat 3: LaGala Fugate / Lumpkin County Middle School counselor

Seat 4: Patricia Hawkins / Retired public school educator and community liaison

Seat 5: Vacant

The Board meets every other month, except as needed for specially called meetings. The Board meets the second Wednesday of “even numbered” months (Feb., April, June, etc.) at 10:00 am in the DFCS conference room in the county office.

Board activities and involvement this past year have included participation in the quarterly Regional Board meetings; attendance at the Georgia Professional Human Services Association annual conference and attendance at the Regional C3 Community Stakeholders meeting; support of staff through approval of ergonomically office chairs for the conference room and ongoing staff appreciation lunches throughout the year.

- B. The County office has been effective in its mission of ensuring child safety and serving individuals and families in need. This is evidenced by data on the www.fosteringcourtimprovement.org website. The office remains a leader within the Region and assists in supporting other counties within the Region.

The office is fully staffed and has gained new positions over the past year in Child Welfare Services. The case loads are rising due to the increased number of children entering foster care. The case loads are currently within reason (25 or below) although not yet at the Governor's stated goal of 15 per case manager. The county staff have assisted neighboring counties in the Region in managing their workload and ensuring child safety and family well-being both in Child Protective Services and in Permanency cases. The county has an excellent partnership with stakeholders in the community to include law enforcement, the courts, the District Attorney's office, the school system, Family Connections, services providers and CASA.

The County Director has prudently managed the County Funds provided by the county, remaining under budget month over month.


The Board believes that while the County Director is performing his duties and has demonstrated leadership and operational and services improvement during his tenure that ideally, he would not be serving in three counties. The County Director has expressed that he enjoys the responsibility of the three counties, however it does restrict his ability to have more direct hands-on involvement in the community.


- C. The Board notes that staffing loads for case manager continue to be of a concern due to the number of children entering care and the recent hiring freeze in the region.

The Board continues to believe there is a need for more aggressive recruitment of foster families and development of communities of care. The community lacks public transportation and affordable housing.

- D. The Board does not have any specific recommendations for improved operations of the local office. The Director maintains clear communication with the Board and is very responsive to any requests of the board.

Presented by: Chairperson Betty Fitts, LaGala Fugate, Brigette Barker, Patricia Hawkins, Acting County Director, Tina Teater and County Director Scott Wilbanks


Secretary
Tina Teater, M. Ed. For
Scott Wilbanks, Ed. D.



Chair
Betty Fitts

Lumpkin County DFCS Board Meeting
November 8, 2017@ 10:00 a.m.

Present: Betty Fitts, Chair; Interim Director Tina Teater, Social Services Supervisor Makala Hamilton, Brigitte Barker, Patricia Hawkins.

1. Call to order by Chair Fitts
2. Agenda approved with a 1st by Ms. Barker and a 2nd by Chair Fitts.
3. Minutes were read and approved with a 1st by Ms. Hawkins and a 2nd by Ms. Barker.
4. The county budget was reviewed and approved with a 1st by Ms. Baker and a 2nd by Chair Fitts.
Director Teater requested \$350.00 from county funds to pay for a Christmas/appreciation luncheon for the Lumpkin County DFCS staff. Ms. Barker made a motion to approve the request and it was seconded by Chair Fitts. Unanimous approval.
Director Teater also requested county funds to help with purchasing Christmas gifts for our foster children. She requested \$50.00 for each child in care. Ms. Baker made a motion to approve with a 2nd by Chair Fitts.
The annual Buck Jones Memorial Toy Run was discussed with the need for volunteers stressed. Ms. Barker will check on getting the middle school students to assist in areas as needed. Director Teater also described how the department worked with Clark Howard to provide Christmas gifts to foster kids.
5. The Social Services Report and Staff Updates were reviewed. Director Teater noted an increase in children entering care and explained some of the reasons behind the increase. The county currently has forty-two children in care but has also had several adoptions finalized recently. The county had twenty-five intakes in October that were handled by two investigators. These investigators also supported Dawson and White Counties. The need for foster parents was discussed with follow-up pending on several ideas. Ms. Hawkins suggested the department attend women group meeting to share the needs. Director Teater will have RD Blake Bramblett contact her to discuss getting this set up. Director Teater will contact Scott Wilbanks on plans to get area teachers involved. The board was also advised of current office staffing and the recent hiring freeze in the region.
6. The next meeting is scheduled for January 10, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.
7. A motion was made to adjourn by Ms. Barker with a 2nd by Ms. Hawkins.


Betty Fitts, Chair


Tina Teater, Interim Director



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report 2017

Macon County
Department of Family and Children Services
413 Clifton Bradley Road
Oglethorpe, Ga. 31068

Macon County Annual Report December 2017

A. General summary of the Macon County DFCS Board:

- **Members/Offices:** Gary Slaton, Sally McIntosh, Vickie Felton, Willie Daniels, Lorraine Lewis
- **Meetings** take place on the 3rd Thursday, every other month, 5:00 pm, at Macon County DFCS
- **Activities for the past year :** Impact Class for Schley and Macon, assist families at Christmas, staff appreciation, booth at Health Fair on Safe Sleep for Babies, booth at Back to Schol Bash

B. Assessment of effectiveness of Macon County DFCS provision of services:

- **What's working well?** new Gateway System for OFI, Solution Base Case Work for CPS, low foster care numbers, 83% of our foster children either with a relative or in an adoptive home, no foster children in group homes at present time
- **What's not working?** length of time it has taken to hire a County Director (have had Interim Director for over 14 months), length of time it takes to replace a case manager

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns: public transportation issue in small towns, no in county substance abuse program, drug issues in community, no county hospital, lack of school teachers for county school system

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department: none at this time

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair



Gary Slaton
Chairperson



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Elbert County
Annual Report
December 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Meeting dates/times – First Wednesday of each month at 9:30 AM; all members attend regularly; throughout the year the Members have done outreach with It's My Turn Now booklets and completed outreach in their church to increase awareness and support for the need of foster homes, Ms. Fortson has arranged speaking opportunities with the local Rotary Club and obtained sponsors for Christmas gifts for Foster Children, Ms. Phelps and Mr. Davis attended the semi-annual Board meeting
 - i. Chair – Rudine Phelps; appointed 2011; retired teacher
 - ii. Co-Chair – Leigh Dye; appointed 2015; retired teacher
 - iii. Member – Kathy Seymour; appointed 2015; retired DFCS
 - iv. Member – Randolph Davis; appointed 2016; retired teacher
 - v. Member – Susan Forton; appointed 2017; community liason

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Success – a consistent OFI Supervisor has been selected; A full time office manager has been selected
- Challenges – Elbert Social Services continues to share supervision with Oglethorpe for Child Protective Services and Madison and Oglethorpe for Foster Care. The County Director continues to serve for Elbert, Madison, and Oglethorpe
- Number of children in care 32
- Number of Finalized Adoptions 6
- Number of Foster Homes 4
- Number of Foster Homes Approved 1
- Number of approved foster homes in past year 1
- CPS data
 - i. Investigations 90
 - ii. Family Support 90
 - iii. Family Preservation 10
- OFI data
 - i. SNAP 5342
 - ii. TANF 48
 - iii. Medicaid 3083
 - iv. ABAWD 0
- Staff turnover rate 28%
- Stakeholder relationships
 - i. School – Elbert works closely with the School Social Worker to ensure family and children needs are met

- ii. Law Enforcement – Elbert works closely with local law enforcement to ensure children are safe and criminal action is taken when appropriate
- iii. SAAG – a new SAAG was assigned this year and staff meet with her regularly to ensure the court process flows smoothly
- iv. CASA – Foster Care arranges a quarterly permanency staffing to ensure that all information is shared, as well as discuss the needs of the children as frequently as needed

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

Elbert Community has a number of resources to support customers free of charge. Elbert County Family Connection manages a PSSF grant to offer parenting for children under 5 and offers a reading program through the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. The local domestic violence shelter offers groups twice per month at the DFCS office, parenting support, and counseling. Project FREE offers parenting support in the community based on the level of need. Advantage counseling also offers counseling based on the need, along with psychiatric services. Celebrate Recovery is offered in the community for citizens struggling with addiction. The local Child Advocacy Center opened an additional office in the community to provide additional support for forensic evaluations and counseling.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

The Board continues to recommend additional support for recruitment of foster parents. Concerns continue with the level of involvement the County Director is able to offer managing 3 counties.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair

Overall Elbert continue to serve the community well and work closely with stakeholders and agencies. The greatest need is staff to serve in the roll to recruit foster parents.



Rudine Phelps
Chair



Kristy Daniels
Secretary



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Madison County
Annual Report
December 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Meeting dates/times – Third Friday of each month at 8:00 AM; all members attend regularly; throughout the year the Members have done outreach with It's My Turn Now booklets and completed outreach in their church to increase awareness and support for the need of foster homes; All members regularly attend GPHSA meetings along with the semi-annual Board meeting; Ms. Collins regularly involves her youth group and church to support needs of foster children;
 - i. Chair – Shelia Collins; appointed 1998
 - ii. Co-Chair – Randy Archer; appointed 2014
 - iii. Member – Anne Stone; appointed 1982
 - iv. Member – John Hoyt Reed; appointed 1998
 - v. Member – Donald Morgan; appointed 2016

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Success – additional staff have been added to the county office
- Challenges – The County Director and Resource Development Case Manager continues to serve for Elbert, Madison, and Oglethorpe. The number of children in foster care continues to grow to double in the past 2 years.
- Number of children in care 35
- Number of Finalized Adoptions 2
- Number of Foster Homes 24
- Number of approved foster homes in past year 2
- CPS data
 - i. Investigations 100
 - ii. Family Support 188
 - iii. Family Preservation 26
- OFI data
 - i. SNAP 4497
 - ii. TANF 55
 - iii. Medicaid 1840
 - iv. ABAWD 0
- Staff turnover rate 0%
- Stakeholder relationships
 - i. School – Madison works closely with the School Counselors to ensure family and children needs are met

- ii. Law Enforcement – Madison works closely with local law enforcement to ensure children are safe and criminal action is taken when appropriate. The drug investigator offered additional training for staff.
- iii. CASA – Foster Care arranges a quarterly permanency staffing to ensure that all information is shared, as well as discuss the needs of the children as frequently as needed

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

Project FREE offers parenting support. The Child Advocacy Center added an in-home parenting program to serve the community. The local food pantry offers additional support to those in need.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

The Board continues to recommend additional support for recruitment of foster parents. Although there are 24 homes, they only serve 2 Madison County children. Concerns continue with the level of involvement the County Director is able to offer managing 3 counties. The Board also continues to have concerns about the conditions of the building.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair

Overall Madison continue to serve the community well and work closely with stakeholders and agencies. Additional foster homes are still a great need.



Shelia Collins
Chair



Kristy Daniels
Secretary



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Oglethorpe County
Annual Report
December 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Meeting dates/times – Second Thursday of each month at 10:00 AM; all members attend regularly; throughout the year the Members have done outreach with It's My Turn Now booklets and completed outreach in their church to increase awareness and support for the need of foster homes, Ms. Hunter retired from the Board after 30+ years of service.
 - i. Chair – Carole Morgan; appointed 1991; retired teacher
 - ii. Co-Chair – Robert Charles Daniels; appointed 2012
 - iii. Member – Angie Haynie; appointed 2014; retired teacher
 - iv. Member – William Decker; appointed 2015; retired teacher
 - v. Member – Robin Hawkins; appointed 2017; former CASA

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Success – additional staff have been added to the office in OFI and Services
- Challenges – Oglethorpe Social Services continues to share supervision with Elbert for Child Protective Services and Madison and Elbert for Foster Care. The County Director and Resource Development continues to serve for Elbert, Madison, and Oglethorpe
- Number of children in care 6
- Number of Finalized Adoptions 3
- Number of Foster Homes 3
- Number of approved foster homes in past year 1
- CPS data
 - i. Investigations 59
 - ii. Family Support 78
 - iii. Family Preservation 29
- OFI data
 - i. SNAP 1896
 - ii. TANF 17
 - iii. Medicaid 383
 - iv. ABAWD 0
- Staff turnover rate 0%
- Stakeholder relationships
 - i. School – Oglethorpe works closely with the School Social Worker to ensure family and children needs are met
 - ii. Law Enforcement – Oglethorpe works closely with local law enforcement to ensure children are safe and criminal action is taken when appropriate

- iii. CASA – Foster Care arranges a quarterly permanency staffing to ensure that all information is shared, as well as discuss the needs of the children as frequently as needed

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

Oglethorpe community has a number of resources to support customers free of charge. Project FREE offers parenting support. Advantage counseling also offers counseling. Community Christmas also offers gifts at Christmas to all foster children and children in the community that meet the requirements, as well as additional supports throughout the year. The community still struggles with having a central local food pantry, although there are several additional help in the community through the churches.

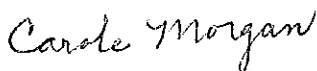
D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

The Board continues to recommend additional support for recruitment of foster parents. Concerns continue with the level of involvement the County Director is able to offer managing 3 counties.

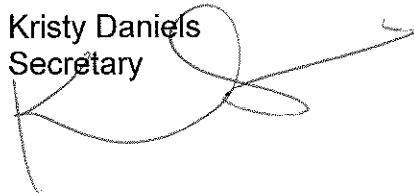
E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair

Overall Oglethorpe continue to serve the community well and work closely with stakeholders and agencies. The greatest need is staff to serve in the roll to recruit foster parents.

Carole Morgan
Chair



Kristy Daniels
Secretary



*Marion County Department of
Family and Children Services
Annual Board Report
December, 2017*

- The Marion County DFCS Board is comprised of the following members:
- Mrs. Joyce Henson, Chairperson
- Mrs. Brenda Humber, Vice-Chair
- Mrs. Annie Sales
- Mrs. Annie Porter

This Board has one vacancy due to the resignation of Mrs. Bernice McCall in July, 2017. The County Director, Mrs. Donna Tennison, has notified the Chairman of the Marion County Board of Commissioners of this resignation, and has requested another appointment to fill the vacancy. Names were suggested to be considered as possible replacements. This Board is currently awaiting a response/notification of a new Board appointee. Mrs. Annie Porter was added to our Board in May, 2017.

- The Marion County DFCS Board meets monthly on the fourth (4th) Tuesday of each month at 9:00 a.m. at the Marion County DFCS Conference Room. There is no meeting held in the month of December.
- Board members were delighted that Mrs. Donna Tennison was finally promoted to County Director. She had served as Interim Director for both Chattahoochee and Marion Counties for several years and certainly deserved this promotion. Our Board members are proud of her hard work and dedication. She is very knowledgeable in all program areas and ensures that this Board is kept well-informed.
- During the past year, this Board has met consistently. In partnership with the County Director, we are kept informed of agency accomplishments, needs, problems, and upcoming programs. This Board has offered its assistance and participation whenever possible. There were no issues during the year regarding reports to the Board except for current OFI reports which was due to the agency's transition to Gateway. During this year, the Board has received the annual County DFCS Board Training, training on The Blueprint for Change, and training on The Safe to Sleep Initiative.
- Marion Co. DFCS has experienced a shortage of staff during this year. As a result of a recent retirement and resignation, this office currently has no clerical

staff to manage the front desk and perform other mandatory clerical tasks. This shortage of staff is of great concern to this Board as it can adversely impact services to customers. It is our hope that this position be filled as soon as possible.

- During 2017, this Board has had discussion on the following topics of concern:
 - Lack of safety measures for workers traveling into remote rural areas where they feel unsafe,
 - Board approved funds for the purchase of a color printer and cartridges in April, 2017. This purchase has not yet been made due to difference in price quote. Vendor is to notify agency when price is decreased. Plans are to purchase in the near future.
 - Board approved the rental of a water fountain for staff use. This is currently in process.
 - In July, 2017, CD Tennison provided annual training to all Board members on the Rules and Regulations of County DFCS Boards. In this meeting, Board members voted unanimously to give CD Tennison permission to spend up to \$1500.00 for purchases that need to be made. CD Tennison will follow-up with Board members by next meeting with verification of purchases. This was done in an effort to save time and to eliminate the need to contact Board members immediately. Board member, Bernice McCall resigned during the July, 2017 board meeting due to health-related issues. The County Commission has been notified of the vacancy and is currently seeking a replacement.
 - In September, 2017, CD Tennison informed the Board that the agency was in need of two car seats to be used to transport children. These seats will remain with the agency. This purchase was approved.

During this year, Chairperson, Joyce Henson also served as a member of the Regional DFCS Board and attended all meetings.

The Marion County DFCS Board finds that Marion Co. DFCS continues to work in compliance with all State and County guidelines. This office maintains excellent customer service with both its internal and external customers. It is noted that partner agencies, customers, and agencies outside this community speak highly of the service and cooperation they receive when working with Marion County DFCS staff.

- Marion County DFCS is performing well in the area of service delivery to all customers. OFI Administrator, Tanya Meeks, and the OFI staff consistently meet, or exceed all OFI guidelines for SOP, timeliness, and accuracy. Marion County DFCS has been operating without a Social Services Supervisor for several months. CD Tennison has served in this capacity during this time. CD Tennison and the Social Services staff have worked extremely hard through some very adverse circumstances to meet local

and State guidelines. This agency continues to function well even in the midst of staff shortage. It is the desire of this Board that needed staff be provided to this agency as soon as possible.

- It is the observation of this Board that CD Tennison and the Marion Co. DFCS staff work very well together. CD Tennison strongly believes in the "TEAM" concept, and it is evident in the day-to-day operations at the office. The "team" works together across county and programmatic lines to ensure that goals are met, and that customers are served.
- Marion County remains in need of local foster homes. DFCS staff, with the assistance of Resource Development, continue to advocate for local foster homes by sharing the need with local churches and at all collaborative meetings.
- CD Tennison and staff work diligently each year ensure that every child in Marion County has a "merry" Christmas. Each year, CD Tennison and staff set up "Santa's Workshop" in the DFCS conference room. There, staff, friends, family, local churches and agency partners work together to purchase, wrap, and deliver toys to local foster and needy children. Each year, this is one of the agency's most successful projects.

In addition to the successes, there are some challenges. Marion County is a very small, rural county. In recent times, we have experienced a large increase in illegal drug activity which has impacted the lives of numerous children. During this year, Marion County has had more children in Foster Care than in past years. The lack of local foster homes only complicates this issue.

C. Community Needs/Concerns:

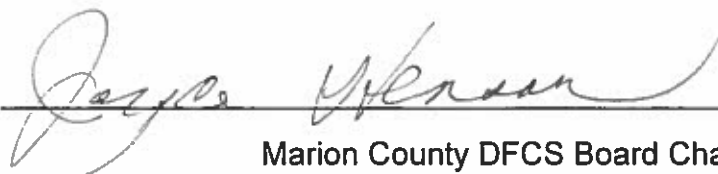
- Local Foster Homes

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

- The Board requests consideration for the safety of staff members traveling to homes in remote areas of the county. This Board is aware of the "panic button", but phone service is limited, at best, in the remote areas of the county. We are very concerned for the safety of our workers who routinely travel into these areas. Please consider alternatives for workers in remote areas of the State. When our case managers fear for their safety, they seek other employment. We want to keep the good staff that we have.

E. This Board feels that Marion County DFCS is one of the best child welfare agencies in the world. We will continue to work together and become "The BEST"!

Signature: _____



Marion County DFCS Board Chairperson



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal

Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Director

Annual Report
2017

McDuffie County
Department of Family and Children Services
307 Greenway St.
Thomson, GA 30824

McDUFFIE COUNTY

ANNUAL REPORT

DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCSs Board:

Ms. Lisa Johnson, Board Chair
Ms. Helen Williams, Vice-Chair
Ms. Tommie Ann Burnley
Ms. Susan Tutt
Ms. Pam Walker

The Board meets bi-monthly on the second Thursday of the month at 3:30 pm. February 9, 2017, April 13, 2017, June 8, 2017, August 10, 2017, October 12, 2017, and December 14, 2017.

County funds are utilized for foster children needs and staff meetings/ events to improve staff morale. They also cover cost of supplies needed in the office. Employees who remain with the agency 6 months receive a supplement to their salary that was approved by the Board.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

The services provided by the McDuffie County Department of Family and Children are effective to the community. Community partners work together to ensure families receive the best services available. Most complaints are able to be handled in house by staff. The addition of the Panic Button for CPS field staff is seen as a major step to ensuring staff safety. There is a 24 hour intake line, for anyone who has a concern of child abuse or neglect, to contact and make a child protective services report.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

Local agencies work together and maintain open lines of communication. Local agencies work together to ensure the needs of the families are being met. Front desk staff and phone access have proved to be a successful opportunity for customers to access needed services.

McDuffie County currently has 21 CPS and OFI staff members. There have been three CPS staff resign and one transfer this year and one OFI staff member transferred to another county.

There are currently forty-eight children in foster care in McDuffie County. There are 3 foster homes and one adoptive home. There have been 5 adoption finalizations this year.

The following information is based on data from SYF16

Child Protective Services Data

Family Preservation Cases: 26

CPS Investigations: 133

Family Support Service: 90

Office of Family Independence Data

SNAP: 6,042 (monthly average recipients)

TANF: 103 (monthly average recipients)

Medicaid and ABAWD: 2,567 (average monthly cases)

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

Provide activities to increase staff morale which will in turn increase staff retention. Through retention and increased morale, the agency will in turn gain quality staff to serve the families of McDuffie County.

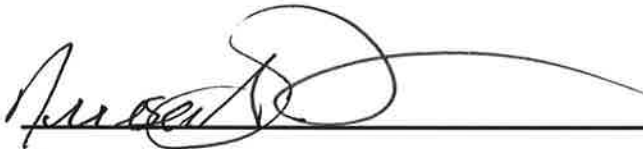
Board Members were very excited to hear about the Panic Button becoming available for front line staff.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair

The McDuffie County Department of Family and Children Services is open Monday through Friday from 8 am to 5 pm.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa Johnson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a solid horizontal line.

Board Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script, which is highly stylized and difficult to decipher. It appears to start with a large "A" and ends with a long horizontal flourish. The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a solid horizontal line.

County Director



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

McIntosh County
Department of Family and Children Services
1221 North Way
Darien, Georgia
31305

MCINTOSH COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- **Makeup - Members/Officers, Length of service on Board, Background**

Elizabeth Jones, Chair: 7 years, retired DFCS SS CM
Dr. Paul Bodamer, Vice Chair, 10 years, retired Podiatrist,
Sherry Waters, Board Member, 1 year, retired DFCS SSS
Cornelia Bailey, Board Member (Deceased Oct. 2017)
Phyllis Strange, Board Member, 1 year, retired DFCS OFI CM
Kristal Jones, County Director / Secretary
Amanda Snipes, Office Manager/Recorder

- **Meeting dates/times and attendance of board members**
McIntosh County Board meets bi-monthly (every other month) the fourth Tuesday at 9:00 AM at McIntosh DFCS. Effective Jan. 2018 the time will change to 1:00 P. M. All board members are active attendees.
- **Activities for the past year:**
 - Family Connections Partnership
 - Child Abuse Awareness Month
 - National Adoption Month
 - Foster Parent Appreciation
 - Staff Appreciation
 - Law Enforcement Meet and Greet
 - Back To School Event
 - Emergency Management Community Planning
 - LIPT Meetings
 - Child Abuse Prevention Protocol
 - Judicial - CHINS / Citizens Panels
 - SBC Activities / Champions
- **Use of Local County Funds**

1. Supplemental supplies, community based events / trainings, community and staff appreciation.
2. General Family Assistance/Emergency Support Services /Indigent Burials
3. Foster Care Program Incidentals/Medical/Emergency Items
4. Foster Parent Support, Family Visitation and Family Preservation Services
(Only if not provide through state funds)

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Successes

May 2017 McIntosh and Glynn Counties were separated after years of being managed collectively by one County Director and staff assigned to work both counties. While staff were dedicated to each county, due to the volume of work in Glynn County, the McIntosh community did not get the attention they needed. With the continued leadership and commitment of the County Director, Kristal Jones, she and her team have substantially improved the community's perceived image of the agency and the overall performance of service deliverables.

Caseloads have decreased for case managers, therefore they have been able to provide better quality service to the children and families.

Effective collaboration with community partners has maximized access to resources that support and empower the families within our community.

- Challenges/Opportunities

The approval and accounting process for purchasing needed supplies for staff, county operations, and emergency support items for families should be streamlined and made easier for the county to access.

Substance Abuse resources to include drug screeners available at any time to the county.

- Number of children in care: Jan 2017 – (15), Dec. 2017 – (28)
- Number of foster parents (3 families)
- Number of finalized adoptions (0 for 2017)
- Number of approved foster homes in past year (2 families)
- Breakdown of number of :
 - CPS – ave. 10 per month
 - Family Preservation – ave 4 per month
 - Family Support – ave 5 per month
- Breakdown of number of :
 - SNAP – 2480 Recipients TANF – 15
 - Medicaid - 785 Family Med. and 300 ABD ABAWD - 0
- Staff turnover rate – since May 2017 when staff were separated from Glynn, no staff have exited
- Stakeholder involvement/relationships
 - McIntosh DFCS is actively involved with all law enforcement disciplines, the schools, the Family Connection Collaborative, community partners and has a great working relationship and partnership.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

(Examples: Treatment resources, literacy, employment rate, transportation, substance abuse, etc.)

The McIntosh County community works well together to meet as many of the needs of their families as possible. There are a number of churches who have formed a strong collaborative and offer food, clothing, and at times temporary housing for those in need. However, the community is primarily rural in nature with very few formal service providers. There has been a substantial increase in drug usage in the county and there are no treatment options locally. There are a few treatment providers in neighboring counties, but transportation also is a barrier. Public transportation is not available.

Substance abuse and mental health issues substantially impact a parent's capacity to care for their children. There are no contracted providers to address mental health or substance abuse needs in McIntosh County.

In addition, McIntosh County needs additional foster homes.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

An easier more efficient, less restrictive process for allowing the County Director to purchase needed items for families in an emergency.

Allow the local county DFCS to contract with service providers in the county instead of only the contractors the state has approved.

Train staff who can administer random drug screens for clients in order to truly get a "random" screen whenever needed. McIntosh DFCS currently has access to providers who come to the county once a week. This is insufficient and delays service provision and possibly could leave a child in an unsafe situation.

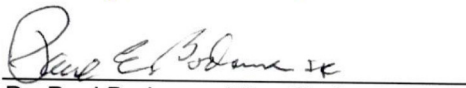
Armed security in the county office for staff safety.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair

The McIntosh Board commends County Director, Kristal Jones, for her leadership and we fully support and are grateful to both she and her team for the positive outcomes for the families in McIntosh County.

Respectfully,


Elizabeth Jones, Chair

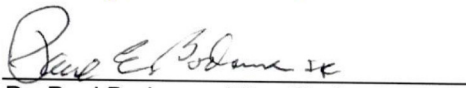

Dr. Paul Bodamer, Vice Chair


Sherry Waters, Board Member


Phyllis Strange, Board Member

Respectfully,


Elizabeth Jones, Chair


Dr. Paul Bodamer, Vice Chair


Sherry Waters, Board Member


Phyllis Strange, Board Member



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Miller County
Department of Family and Children Services
69 Thompson Town Rd.
Colquitt, Georgia
39837

LOCAL COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Ms. Karen Tabb, Board Member. Local small business owner.
- Ms. Estelle Thompson, Vice-Chair. Active in the faith community.
- Mr. Grant Burnell, Board Member. Retired business owner and active in the community.
- Ms. Mildred Bowen, Board Chair.
- Mr. Cory Thomas, Board Member. City manager for Colquitt.
- The board meets the last Tuesday of every other month at 4:00 pm.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Clients and community partners were happy to have OFI casemanagers resume working local cases.
- Having someone to assist walk-in clients is an improvement to customer service.
- There are 13 children in foster care.
- The county currently has no CPS cases, no Family Preservation and 19 Family Support cases.
- Staff turnover has not been a concern for this county.
- Miller County maintains positive relationships with their community partners.
- Limited community programs for youth.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

Miller County is a small, rural county with limited resources. Graduation rates and teen pregnancy are long-term concerns. Mental health and substance abuse treatment is limited within the county, with providers either having to come to the client or the client travel to a nearby county.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department.

At this time, the County Director position is vacant. Filling that position would be the priority of the board.

, Board Chair



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report

2017

Mitchell County
Department of Family and Children Services
90 West Oakland Avenue
Camilla, Georgia 31730

General Summary of the County DFCS Board:

- The Mitchell County DFCS Board is made of up five appointed members: Mr. Willie Marcus (Board Chair), Mrs. Brenda Pollock (Board Vice-chair), Mrs. Shirley Williams, Ms. Mollie Pollock and Mrs. Betty Davis. Director Weeks serves as secretary for the board.
- The Mitchell County Board meets every month on the fourth Tuesday. Meeting dates for 2017 were January 24th, February 28rd, March 28nd, April 25th, May 23th, June 27th, July 25th and September 26th. A meeting was scheduled for August 22nd, October 24th and November 28th, but was not held due to there being no quorum.

Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Board members had no concern regarding the effectiveness of the county department's provision of services.
- Mitchell County currently has three OFI case managers, three ABD case managers and one OFI Supervisor that is multi-county. Mitchell County has two full time Social Services Supervisors and seven Social Services Case Managers. Social Services staff in Mitchell County also cover Baker County. During the past year, Mitchell County has lost two social services case manager positions and one OFIC case manager positions.

Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

- Board members have received no complaints or concerns from the community or stakeholders.
- The Annual Law Enforcement Meet and Greet was held on September 19, 2016. Staff from the Camilla Police Department, Magistrate Judge's office and Mitchell County Sheriff's Department were able to meet with case managers, supervisors and director and were provided business cards with the County Director, Supervisor and Case Managers phone numbers. Information regarding the different options of making reports of child abuse and neglect was also provided. Law enforcement reported having no concerns with the agency.

Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department.

- Board members had no recommendation for improvement of operations.


Willie Marcus, Board Chair


Debra Weeks, County Director

Monroe County DFCS Annual Report November 2017

Summary of the Monroe County DFACS Board

Our Board is made up of 5 members from different communities within the county. Mrs. Georgia Evans is our President, with Lisa Davis as our Vice-President. The other members include Richard Dumas, Herbert Gantt and Mrs. Haygood. We meet on the 4th Monday of each month at 12:30 pm. We had 2 members attend the conference in Savannah this past August and 3 that attended the annual Board Meeting in April.

Effectiveness of Local County Department's Provision of Services


Our Monroe County Board feels that our county office does an extremely well job with our constituents and the partnerships in the community. We have a wonderful relationship with the Child Abuse Reporting Enforcement committee and the Monroe County Work Force Development which works with us in helping our constituents find jobs. There are no known complaints from our foster families, especially since they received an increase in the per diem this past year. The Board believes that the increase in salary for our workers have also helped with their effectiveness and increased morale. This year a new Boys and Girls Club was started in our county, and DFACS is happy to be working

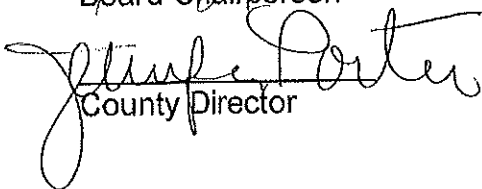
Needs of the Community

As a board, we are mindful of what our DFCS office is doing in regard to the services they provide. We realize how important it is that we maintain close relationships with our citizens. We are mindful that our community needs either more mental health places or better transportation to these places in other counties. It was passed that Monroe County would keep our local hospital open for at least another year. Having good local health care is a problem that not only we have but also most rural counties in Georgia. It is a crucial need to find more foster families. However, the new program called Kinship State Project should help with this problem.

Recommendations for Improved Operations of the County Department

The biggest problem that our county office has faced this year is the slowness of the hiring process. The positions have either been frozen for an extended period of time or each step in the process has taken many weeks. We feel that it is imperative that we be adequately staffed in order for the workload to be performed in a timely manner as required. We recommend that HR try to have the process be quicker. Another recommendation is to have more improvements in our building.


Board Chairperson


County Director



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Annual Report

2017

Montgomery
County
Department of Family and Children Services
130 E. Spring Street
Mount Vernon,
Georgia 30445

MONTGOMERY COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

The Montgomery County Department of Family and Children Services holds its regular meeting on the third Tuesday of each month at 9:00 am. During the past year, board activities include participation in the local CASA fund raiser. The Montgomery County Board is comprised of 5 members. Below is a list of members and their respective offices:

Board Members
James Days- Chair
Belinda Brantley-Vice
Fred Carter
Kay McDonald
Gwen Rivers

Summary of County DFCS Department Assessment:

Social Services

Region IX implementation of the clustering of counties has been as positive change for the provision of services to agency customers. The hiring of additional staff along with the clustering of counties have improved staff morale as well as improvement in the outcomes for families being served by the agency. The board is hopeful the division will continue to provide the necessary resources to ensure the county offices are sufficiently staffed and workers have the recommended case to staff ratio. Below is a summary of the information for services:

Foster Children – 2
CPS Cases – 11
Family Support Cases – 8
Foster Homes Open – 3
Foster Homes – 5
Staff Turnover – 0

Stakeholder Engagement

The county director is very involved in the local community and participates in quarterly stakeholder meetings. The local DFCS office partners with numerous local and State agencies. Below is a list non-exhausted list of community partners. In addition, the Toombs County office has implemented the Care Portal Initiative in which local churches can provide support to the local DFCS staff and families by meeting the needs of foster children in the agency's care.

Family connections
Chins Committee
LIPT Committee
CASA
Sunshine House
Law Enforcement
Department of Juvenile Justice

Office of Family Independence

We are delighted that the division has re-directed the work back to the local offices. This change has decreased the number of constituent complaints as well as having a positive effect on staff morale. In addition, we are hopeful the new integrated eligibility system will further improve and enhance the provision of service delivery for agency customers. Other positive changes in the OFI program include the same day service worker and the new model office implementation. Below is a summary of the most current OFI information:

Applications:

Food Stamps – 48
Medicaid – 81
TANF – 3
Total – 132

Renewals:

Food Stamps – 117
Medicaid – 130
TANF – 1
Total – 248

Summary of Community Needs

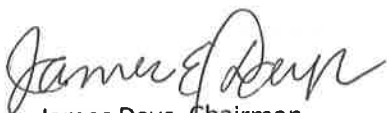
Montgomery County is an impoverished community, with high unemployment, very little community resources and a large population of illiterate individuals. This population of residents count on the local DFCS benefits and services to provide for their basic needs. The local DFCS serves a referral source for many patrons who are seeking assistance for a number family related issues. These services would fall in the general services category and does serve a vital role in small communities regarding prevention strategies.

Recommendation for Improved Operations of the Montgomery County Department Including Recommendations for Staffing Levels.

Continue hiring of additional Social Services and OFI staff specifically an ABD case manager to ensure the agency has sufficient staff to process benefits timely as well as increase the morale of staff by reducing high caseloads.

Opening the hours of operation back to full time to allow for more access for customers to come into the office for needed services. This is especially necessary for elderly individuals who do not have the skills to apply or renew their benefits online.

The Board is recommending that additional county directors be hired for Region IX and that the Montgomery County DFCS be paired with no more than one additional office. The Montgomery Board feels county offices in closer proximity such as the Wheeler, Toombs or Treutlen County offices would be the most appropriate.



James Days, Chairman
Montgomery County DFCS Board



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Morgan County
Division of Family and Children Services
2005 South Main Street
Suite 100
Madison, Georgia 30650

MORGAN COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Makeup - Members/Officers, Length of service on Board, Background

Last Name	First Name	Initial Appointment	Term End	Background/ Position	Comments
Andrews	Kassandra	2014	6/30/2020	Child care provider/Board member	
Benford	Pamela	7/2009	6/30/2019	School Personnel/Board Chair	
Sheree	Evans	7/2011	5/30/2021	Local Private Business Owner/Board Member	
Velde	Hardy	7/1/2017	6/30/2018	Leader within Faith Based Community/Board Member	Morgan Board of Commissioner's Mtg. 7/05/17, V. Hardy appointed to fill vacancy of Mary Ann Rainey; term scheduled to expire 6/30/2018
Sandra	Moss	7/1/2017	6/30/2022	Alumni of Child Welfare/Board Member	Morgan Board of Commissioner's Mtg. 7/05/17, S. Moss appointed to fill vacancy of Debbie Tamplin; term scheduled to expire 6/30/2022

- Meeting dates/times and attendance of board members
The Morgan County DFCS Advisory Board meets quarterly on the 4th Tuesday at 3:00 pm

Meeting dates/time and attendance:

Board Meeting Date	Board member attendance
Feb. 1, 2017 (rescheduled from 1/24/17)	Pamela Benford., Mary Rainey, Debbie Tamplin, Sheree Evans, Kassandra Andrews
April 25, 2017	Pamela Benford., Debbie Tamplin, Sheree Evans, Kassandra Andrews
July 25, 2017	Pamela Benford., Sheree Evans, Kassandra Andrews, Velde Hardy, Sandra Moss
Oct. 24, 2017	Pamela Benford., Sheree Evans, Kassandra Andrews, Velde Hardy, Sandra Moss

- **Activities for the past year – Two new Board members were welcomed and received orientation in July after resignation of one member and term expiration of another board member. Participation in the Child Abuse Awareness Month campaign including The Proclamation signing by the Mayor and County Commission Chairman in collaboration with Family Connection in April. The Board Members provided snacks for Staff members on Valentine’s Day and on August 3rd as a Morale Booster. Board members assisted with obtaining treats for Foster children that were going to Trick or Treat in the DFCS office. Board members attended the Semiannual Conference in April and the Annual GPHSA conference in August. Two Board members attended the September Meet and Greet for Law Enforcement and the School System. Board members participated in the Child Abuse Protocol meeting in October.**
- **Use of Local County Funds**

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- **Successes**
- **Challenges/Opportunities**
- **Number of children in care: 50**
- **Number of foster homes: 20**
- **Number of finalized adoptions:**
- **Number of approved foster homes in past year:9**
- **Breakdown of number of CPS, Family Preservation and Family Support: Morgan Co Served during FY16:**
 - **CPS:96**
 - **FPS: 217**
 - **FSS:80**
- **Breakdown of number of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases during FY16:**
 - **SNAP: 1, 286 families, 2648 recipients**
 - **TANF:10 families, 19 recipients**
 - **Medicaid:837 families**
 - **ABAWD: n/a**
- **Staff turnover rate:- SSCM turnover rate in OFI and Social Services was 0% as of September 2017**
- **Stakeholder involvement/relationships**

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

The Board’s assessment of community needs includes the lack of decent affordable housing, affordable being less than \$600.00 per month. The high unemployment rate affects community members being able to afford appropriate housing as well as meeting their other basic needs. There is an increase in substance abuse, one major factor in the community that’s contributing to an increase in abuse and neglect cases. We are seeing more babies born with drugs in their system. Drug Treatment Court has been in operation for this county a little over a year. We could use more local foster homes to keep children in their community and schools. Transportation still affects many residents due to unavailable transportation after 4:00 p.m. Morgan County is a large land area and creates issues for those leavong at the edges of the county. Internet service is still not available in the outermost areas of the county. We still have large sections of Morgan County residents that live below the poverty line in

in their community and schools. Transportation still affects many residents due to unavailable transportation after 4:00 p.m. Morgan County is a large land area and creates issues for those living at the edges of the county. Internet service is still not available in the outermost areas of the county. We still have large sections of Morgan County residents that live below the poverty line in Morgan County but resources are limited.

- D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:**
Due to all of the required meetings and trainings of the County Director, we feel that an Assistant Director would be helpful to have someone available to provide assistance when the Director is out of town. It is a monumental task already to supervise two counties but the added issue of not being on site leaves the staff and community at a disadvantage. We were certainly grateful for permission to fill all of our vacant positions earlier this year but since a lot of them are new to DFCS and unfamiliar with Morgan County, they need someone else, along with their immediate supervisor to assist them. Having another well trained person available to help guide them may help with retention of great employees.

Community members are pleased that they have local case managers now and can go into the local office and speak to someone about issues with their benefits. Having the option of seeing someone or using the Gateway website helps more people access the services that they need.

- E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair**
DFCS Board members recognize that there are many issues that face our residents and as a board we want to help support our local office and staff in supporting those that need assistance. We also serve as advocates and a referral source for those that don't know about the vast array of services offered and who to call to find out about those services. We are all honored to serve on the board and help guide decisions that affect our fellow Morgan Countians.

Jamala Benford, Board Chair



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

Annual Report

2017

Murray County
Division of Family and Children Services
830 G.I. Maddox Parkway
Chatsworth, Georgia 30705

Murray County Division of Family and Children Services

Annual Board Report

December 2017

A. General summary of Murray County DFCS Board:

Murray County DFCS Board consists of five board members and normally schedules meetings every other month on the fourth Monday. Due to the promotion of former County Director Jennifer Brogdon to a regional role, the meeting day has fallen on other days of the week, as the interim director is responsible for duties in two counties.

The Murray DFCS Board consists of Chairperson, Phenna Petty, Co-Chairperson, Alan Kendrick, Brett Morrison, Beth Vice, and Tara Robinette.

The Board is very accessible outside of normal meeting times. They are quick to respond to inquiries and requests that come from the County Director and Interim Director by email and/or phone. The Board is extremely supportive of the efforts of those employed by Murray DFCS.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

The Murray County DFCS Board is not aware of any concerns regarding the effectiveness of services that are initiated and provided within the county office. The Board is aware that the leadership team in Murray County makes consistent diligent efforts to resolve customer concerns/complaints within a timely manner, while making themselves available for inquiries.

C. Board assessment of community needs/concerns:

Murray County DFCS Board has assessed the continued needs of this community. The board has identified that we need continued and ongoing recruitment of foster/adoptive families. Having our foster children placed locally would greatly impact permanency outcomes for our families.

Our population, including some stakeholders, appear to have a lack of understanding as to the role of DFCS. Having better education for our community regarding "what DFCS is" and "what role does DFCS play" would be very beneficial. Education would greatly impact how the population views DFCS interventions/investigations and how foster care is envisioned.

Murray County would benefit from stronger mental health services, in-patient substance abuse treatment for parents, trauma based intervention, and sex offender treatment for children. There are no mental health providers located within the county lines and most service providers are also not located within Murray County. There are limited resources for children, a lack of resources for adults who need education services, and our public transportation is limited.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

The board recommends that the hiring and terminating process should be much faster. The board recommends that policy be changed to allow elderly citizens to be eligible for more

SNAP (food stamp) assistance. The board recommends that there be continued support in staff allocations for Murray County from the state and regional levels, so that caseload sizes are reduced and are maintained at a manageable level.


The board recommends that decisions made involving the use of county funds not be governed in the manner it currently is. The board feels that once they have voted and approved the use of county funds, their decision should be final.

The board also recommends that the policy regarding the purchase of gift cards be revised.

E. Closing and signature of Board Chair and Director

Murray's *Blueprint for Change* is active and in motion. Murray has increased its staff resources to begin lowering caseload sizes. With Region 1's leadership classes, the monthly summits, and the mentoring program, Murray staff have and will continue its *Robust Workforce Development* opportunities.

Murray DFCS is currently certified in and practicing Solution Based Casework (SBC) in the Family Preservation Unit. SBC is our Division's Practice Model. Our foster care and CPS staff should be certified in January 2018. This model serves as our foundation for child safety and will assist us in making families stronger.



Murray DFCS Board Chair/Date



Murray DFCS Interim County Director/Date

Nathan Deal
Governor



Robyn A. Crittenden
Commissioner

Georgia Department of Human Services
Aging Services | Child Support Services | Family & Children Services

Annual Report

2017

Muscogee County
Department of Family and Children Services
2100 Comer Avenue
Columbus, GA 31904

Division of Family & Children Services
Muscogee County DFCS • Delbert Montgomery, Director
2100 Comer Ave. • Columbus, GA 31904

MUSCOGEE COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT December 2017

A. General Summary of the County DFCS Board:

During the last calendar year, the Muscogee County DFCS Board has attempted to support the county as much as possible. Currently, we meet the second Wednesday every month at 4:00 PM to discuss the agency's financial, personnel, economic, and social services data, as well as various things that influence the service outcomes for our clients. During this past year there have been new members added to the DFCS Board. Due to busy schedules and unexpected conflicts, it has been difficult to have quorum. We have receive detailed reports from the Social Services, Office of Family Independence, and Financial Operations departmental leadership. We use this information to make determine how things are going for the constituents of county and the personnel in the DFCS office.

The Muscogee County DFCS Board Members include: Mrs. Evergreen Covington, who resigned from the board on March 22nd 2017, Dr. Deepali Agarwal, Mrs. Barbara Story-Jones, Ms. Jennifer Melvin, Mrs. Charonda Huff, and Ms. Tolua Pualloa. Each of the active members meet the requirements listed in Senate Bill 138 Section 2.

The Board has been actively involved by assisting with agency by providing community connections when necessary. The Board has expressed its concern about the retention of staff and the ability to hire new staff to address the increasing turnover. Some of the Board members have participated in GPHSA trainings and seminars to gain insight of the various counties across the state. They have also been updated on the many changes and new developments for the Division that are taking place to include the new practice mode. Each Board member has consistently exhibited a commitment to assist the county to the best of their ability and be a strong voice in their community.

The county have used local funds to assist families in need to utility of rent assistance. There have also been times when the funds were needed to assist with emergency services needed to assist with the placement of a child in care. The board has approved use of the county local funds for training programs for the county staff.

B. Assessment of the Effectiveness of County Department's Provision of Services:

The board believes that the Muscogee County DFCS continues to work very well in all areas of service. The county continues to work well with the faith-based community and have had multiple meetings with law enforcement and the judicial community to increase partnerships. Currently, the county reports having 456 children in care. It appears that whenever children reach permanency and the number of children in care decreases; more children are brought into care of the agency. However, we are excited to hear that in 2017 there were 29 adoptions finalized and 26 custody for the purpose of adoptions established. Currently, the county has 100 foster homes and added 10 new homes in 2017. The county stated with the new Gateway system for the Office of Family and Independence, they are unable to provide a breakdown of number of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases. However, leadership from OFI briefs the board monthly and provides updates about the section. We have noticed that the Foster Care and Investigation numbers continue to climb; the Social Service updates lead the board to believe that the family preservation caseloads are hanging steady and are not seeing the same increase.

While the board is unable to provide a staff turnover rate, we are able to clearly see turnover continues to be an issue. As stated previously, the inability to have a rapid recruitment process is of concern to the county board. We fear this will lead to an increased caseload for staff, which in return will cause more turnover.

There are several faith-based agencies within the community that work with the Muscogee County DFCS Office in helping families in utility and rental assistance, food, clothing, as well as other basic needs. Muscogee County has a strong relationship with a local church to provide the most utility and rental assistance as possible. Because of their dedication and assistance, the faith based community has demonstrated to be a vital resource for the families of Muscogee County. The Muscogee County DFCS office works very closely with law enforcement, the Juvenile court, as well as the District Attorney's office, when it comes to ensuring the safety and well-being of the children in the community. The Muscogee County DFCS office is continuously working to build strong, long-lasting relationships with any and all agencies in the community that will be of benefit to the families in need in our area.

C. Board's Assessment of Community Needs/Concerns:

The Muscogee County Board believes there should be some type of Substance Abuse Program for parents. We were excited to hear from the county director that the county is establishing a position to work with the County Family Drug Court. We believe this will be very beneficial to assisting families. The board believes child care options would be of great assistance in decreasing the number of lack of supervision cases in the county.

D. Board's Recommendations for Improved Operations of the County

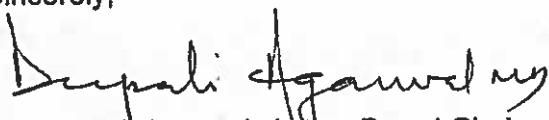
Department:

While we believe the county is doing an excellent job regarding operations, we also believe there is always room for improvement. The board believes there can be greater communication between the agency and community partners. We still believe that the community at large are not aware of all the resources and great work the local DFCS office is doing. The board still wants to see a greater partnership between the Muscogee DFCS office and the Muscogee School District. Desiring for the two agencies to work even more closely together than they do now. We would like to see the county develop a procedure or program to have greater engagement of fathers. We will believe that is something missing, which could be of great impact to the children being served.

We believe the county can operate at a higher level by retaining staff and by the agency having a faster recruitment process to fill vacant positions. We are concerned about the number of vacant positions and the length of time of these vacancies. We believe it is imperative for the county to rapidly fill their current case manager and supervisory leadership positions. This will ensure case managers are not carrying large – unbearable caseloads as they did in past years.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve in our community and work alongside the staff of Muscogee County DFCS.

Sincerely,



Dr. Deepali Agarwal, Acting Board Chairperson
Muscogee County DFCS Board
2100 Comer Avenue
Columbus, Ga. 31904

CC: Delbert Montgomery, Muscogee County DFCS Director
Stacy Barfield, Region 8 Interim Regional Director
Barbara Story-Jones, DFCS Board Member
Jennifer Melvin, DFCS Board Member
Charonda Huff, DFCS Board Member
Tolua Puailoa, DFCS Board Member



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Newton County
Department of Family and Children Services
411 Mill Street
Covington, Georgia
30015

NEWTON COUNTY DFCS ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

The Newton County DFCS Advisory Board currently is comprised of four active board members. The Advisory Board assists the County Director in promoting a positive perception of the agency in the community as well as assists the DFCS County Director with the business operations of the Newton County DFCS office. The Advisory Board also assists the Director in educating the community around the services and resources offered by the Newton County Department of Family & Children Services. The Advisory Board promotes and advocates for the needs of the DFCS office, clients, staff, and the community. The Chair of the Newton County DFCS Advisory Board is Chief Stacey Cotton with the Covington Police Department. The Co-Chair of the Board is Mrs. Kim Degonia. Mrs. Degonia serves as a Magistrate Judge at the Newton County Magistrate Court. The additional two board members are Mrs. Ruby Burchette and Mr. James Russell. Mrs. Ruby Burchette is a retired Educator that has devoted much of her professional career serving children. She has a penchant for serving as an advocate and mentor for children. Mr. James Russell also serves the Newton County community as a pastor of a local church. The Newton County DFCS Advisory Board currently meets every 2nd Monday of each month beginning at 8:30am. The meetings take place at the Newton County DFCS office in the boardroom and are open to the public.

The Newton County DFCS office has sponsored or participated in many activities throughout the calendar year 2017. These activities serve the purpose of fortifying partnerships with the children and families served, the greater community, and with the various stakeholders that are vested in meeting the needs of children and families in the Newton County community. The 2017 activities include the following:

- The Newton County DFCS office sponsored a balloon release and Child Abuse proclamation reading in the community on April 25, 2017. The proclamation was presented to the County Director by the Chair of the County Commission office at a regularly scheduled Commissioner's meeting. The proclamation was read at each event urging all Newton County citizens to support the agency in helping to prevent child abuse and neglect.
- The Covington Police Department trained the Newton County DFCS staff on September 27, 2017 on Active Shooter at the annual Law Enforcement Meet & Greet. Chief Stacey Cotton provided two of his officers to conduct the training.

The training was timely and informative as the agency had hired several new case managers since last year's training.

- The Newton County DFCS office partnered with Ex-Professional NFL Football player Nevin McCaskill to sponsor community children and children on our CPS caseloads at Mr. McCaskill's 1-day training skills camp. The skills camp takes the youth through a 1-day training and mentoring opportunity for those youth extremely interested in playing football.
- The Newton County DFCS Director and staff have partnered with the Juvenile Court Judge Sheri Roberts in the roll-out of the Newton County Family Treatment Court program to work with those parents struggling with substance abuse issues.
- The Newton County DFCS Director, Mr. William D. Thomas, also participated in the kick-off of the Juvenile Court's Juvenile alternatives to Detention initiative in March 2017.
- The Newton County DFCS staff was trained on Shelter Care operations by the State office on November 6, 2017 to prepare staff with the skills to work with the Red Cross in a shelter during a natural disaster.
- The Newton County DFCS office continued its collaboration and partnership with the non-profit organization Action Ministries in 2017. Action Ministries works to address the prevalent issues of hunger and homelessness. Action Ministries provided Newton DFCS with boxes of non-perishable food items to distribute to families that interface with the agency that are struggling to feed their children.
- The Newton County DFCS office partnered with the Newton County Sheriff's Department to sponsor a Back to School/Community Health Fair. This was the Sheriff's Department's sixth time holding this community event and Newton DFCS's 2nd time partnering with this endeavor. The 2017 event took place on July 22, 2017 at Newton County High School. Newton DFCS coordinated the health fair component of the event as well as provided the food, inflatables, and haircuts for children in the community.
- The Department receives many donations from citizens to support children and families. Such support includes monetary support, toys for children and sponsoring families during Thanksgiving and Christmas. To say thank you to these agencies the Newton County DFCS office held its 1st Annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon on July 27, 2017 to show our appreciation for the support given to help our children and families.
- The Newton County DFCS office sponsored its 3rd Annual Care-Bag Drive for the Department's foster care youth on November 18, 2017. The event receives donations from the community such as new or gently used luggage, toiletries, and essential items needed by our foster children when they are initially placed in foster care or during a move to a new placement.
- The Newton County DFCS office collaborated with the Covington Police Department on December 7, 2017 for Shop with a Cop. This is an annual event sponsored by the Covington Police Department to spread joy by having an officer

to shop with a child in foster care for toys at the local Walmart. The event is a special event in our community that really speaks to the Covington Police Department's motto of community service and support.

- The Newton County DFCS office sponsored a Christmas party for our foster children on December 1, 2017 at Eastside High School. The school partners with the agency on an annual basis to promote this fun party for our children. Many of the teachers, students, and the principal look forward annually to this heartwarming event to spread joy to our foster children during the Christmas Holiday.
- The Newton County DFCS office also hired an unarmed security guard in 2017 to promote safety for our customers and staff.

Use of County Funds

Local County Funds have been utilized in 2017 to support staff, foster parents, foster children, community events, and for funding our security guard. Local funds have been used for the following:

- Local Storage unit
- Furniture replacement for foster parent (furniture damaged by foster child)
- Band fees for foster child
- Staff Appreciation events
- Payment for SAT testing for foster child
- Clothing for foster children
- Daycare for clients
- Power charges for staff to charge their phones in the field
- Student dues for a senior in foster care
- Practicing with the Pros sponsorship
- Items for Back to School event
- Law Enforcement Meet & Greet
- Security Guard funding

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

The Newton County DFCS office has experienced many successes during 2017. The County Director and leadership continued to place a strong emphasis on community involvement and community engagement in 2017. The Department continues to focus on building collaborative partnerships with stakeholders, children, and families in order to create a community based child welfare system in Newton County.

The Newton County DFCS office also, through a strategic focus on family stabilization, has seen a decrease in the number of children in foster care. Through intensive efforts to stabilize families in the Family Support, Investigation, and Family Preservation Services units, we have

seen less children entering foster care through the utilization of community involvement, Family Team Meetings, and Pre-Removal Family Team Meetings. These meetings are critical in utilizing a community approach to help the family. In January 2017 the Department had 156 children in foster care and in December 2017 there are a total of 128 children in out of home care. We will continue these efforts to prevent removals when we can and to stabilize families through enhancing the parental capacities of parents/caregivers. Some additional successes include the following:

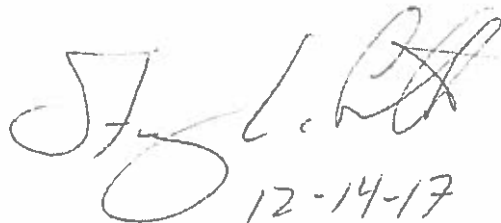
- The Department's continued utilization of the Court Liaison position that was created to assist in bridging the gap and improving communication between the DFCS office and the Juvenile Court. This position has continued to be instrumental in helping to prevent the unnecessary removal of children from their homes and placement into foster care, specifically for those parents that have challenges with their youth involved in delinquency proceedings. The Court Liaison attends all court hearings and represents the Department in assisting the Court with finding solutions for these challenging situations that come before the Judge.
- The development and implementation of the county's Family Treatment Court is a huge success for the county. This option will serve in assisting those parents/caregivers struggling with substance addiction.
- Staff Morale and Appreciation continues to remain a priority for the County Director and this Advisory Board. Despite low pay, high caseloads, and long hours, our staff turnover is below the state average. The turnover rate has also decreased due to the increase of front line case manager salaries in 2017.
- Additional successes for the Department during 2017 include serving 8,802 households in our SNAP program, 129 families in our TANF program, and managing 5,972 Medicaid cases. In addition, we currently have 128 foster care children, 49 CPS Investigation cases, 46 Family Preservation Services cases, and 75 Family Support cases. We also finalized 11 adoptions.
- Because Department staff work extremely long, hard hours, the Director works very hard to show appreciation through a variety of actions:
 - Continuing county supplement to staff.
 - Staff Appreciation events such as meals, movie nights, and recognition events.

Some challenges that exist are as follows:

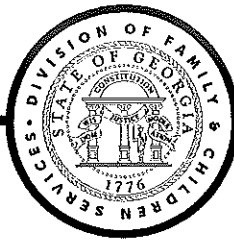
- There continues to be a lack of foster homes in Newton County to support children remaining in their own communities during a foster care episode. There are currently 19 foster homes in Newton County. Although 18 homes were approved in the past year, some other homes were closed due to various reasons. Some of our older youth have to unfortunately be placed outside of the county, often more than 2 hours away, because of the challenge of finding a placement for them in the county.

- Even with the development and implementation of the Family Treatment Court to address parental substance abuse, there continues to be a need for increased rehabilitation resources for parents who are alcohol and substance abusers.
- C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:
- The community's need for DFCS support currently cannot be well met due to lack of staff and funding for community outreach.
 - The Department has had challenges in placing youth with higher end needs such as behavioral needs and special needs. Some of these youth unfortunately are placed into DFCS foster care due to the parents' inability, whether emotional or financial, to continue to meet the behavioral/mental health needs of the youth.
 - Although staffing has improved for the 2017 calendar year, there needs to be continued efforts from the State office to increase staff salaries so that they are competitive with other State markets for Child Welfare salaries.
- D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:
- CPS investigations, Family Preservation Services, and Foster Care/Adoption programs are all in dire need of additional staffing to equalize caseload sizes. Although staffing patterns have improved Newton County DFCS is in need of an additional supervisor for its CPS program continuum and an additional CPS Administrator to focus solely on the provision of foster care services.
 - The Department is in need of a simple numbering system in the front lobby that would help to reduce long lines and frustration for clients. The board has approved this expense, but it has not been allowed to move forward.
- E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair:

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we are extremely concerned with the State's Human Resources partnership. When there is an opening, there is sometimes a significant delay in getting the position posted timely, the receipt of resumes/applicants for interviewing, and the offer made to the selected applicant. This delay hinders his ability to keep staffing levels adequate. There may be a lengthy (2-3 months or longer) period before the position can be filled. This is unacceptable as the process of posting the position, interviewing, and making a job offer may take 30-60 days. This unnecessary delay creates an avalanche of work for the current employees and makes our ability to serve the community's families and children difficult if not impossible. These delays along with necessary training requirements may make a position non-productive for almost a year. This is also compounded when the position is a supervisory one, not only are the job duties going undone but a lack of proper supervision of direct reports opens the agency for liability exposures that are unnecessary.



12-14-17



**OCONEE COUNTY
ANNUAL BOARD REPORT
DECEMBER 2017**

A. General summary of County Board:

a. Beverly Griffin, Board Chair	term ending	June 2019
b. Mary Jo Gerlach	term ending	June 2018
c. Rosemarie Newman	term ending	June 2021
d. Tish Rumsey	term ending	June 2020
e. David Jackson	term ending	June 2021

The Oconee County Board was meeting quarterly and as of July 2016 and is now meeting bi-monthly. Scheduled meetings have been held: 1/12/17, 03/09/17, 05/11/17, 07/13/17, 09/14/17 and 11/16/17

The following activities have had Board Member participation:

- 1/1/17 & 6/21/17 DFCS Board Association Executive Board meeting in Conyers
- 2/2/17 attended volunteer training (to cover front desk)
- 2/11/17 Valentine celebration for staff with treats for staff in office provided by board
- 2/27/17 & 2/28/17 volunteered to cover front desk while staff were in training
- 4/11/17 Executive Committee meeting – DFCS Boards Assn. – Macon
- 4/12/17 Semi-annual meeting DFCS Board Assn. - Macon
- 4/18/17 Oconee County DFCS Budget Hearing at Oconee County Courthouse
- 4/25/17 Oconee County Child Abuse Awareness Celebration
- 6/16/17 Executive Committee meeting DFCS Boards Assn. – Covington
- 6/19/17 DFCS Regional Board meeting
- 8/29/17 Executive Committee meeting DFCS Boards Assn.- Savannah
- 8/30&31/17 Joint meeting: DFCS Boards Assn (Annual Meeting) and GPHSA – Savannah
- 10/27/17 Halloween celebration for staff with treats provided by board

B. Assessment of effectiveness of Oconee County's provision of services:

What's Working Well

1. Social Services caseload sizes have remained at 18 cases per Case Manager.
2. The housing of some of the Clarke County staff in Oconee County among the Oconee County staff has allowed improved support for the staff and families. Having this additional coverage and support also allows the families of Oconee County and the community stakeholders of Oconee County to have one consistent DFCS representative to contact for each program area (OFI & SS)
3. By having Oconee County managed by the same management team as Clarke County, there is consistency in the child welfare practices which makes for better relationships with the in-home providers, CASA program, Family Protection Center, Child Advocacy Center and District Attorney. These are all critical in expediting safety and permanency for children and families.
4. Staffing conditions/supports provided by each county to the other, all Oconee County cases have been primarily assigned to one CM for each program.

What's Not Working

1. The Board feels the largest barrier to improved services to the children of Oconee County continues to be the excessive turnover rate due to low pay, unrealistic work expectations for staff and the lack of recognition for the difficulty of the job. Even though staff have received raises their salaries do not come close to those in other settings. It is very disheartening that the average tenure of new staff is about the length of time it takes to get a staff member fully trained.
2. The barriers and difficulty placed on management and staff from the combining of a large urban department and a small rural department. Oconee has been combined with other counties for years and this had overall worked well. This time being placed with a much

larger county has placed more barriers and a longer adjustment time than in previous situations.

3. The Board feels that the Oconee County Department of Family and Children Services is in danger of losing its identity and major county support by being overshadowed by Clarke County.
4. The hiring freeze has eliminated all gains made in getting staffing ratios to where they need to be.
5. This report! First the board has no idea if this report was even read or by whom. We have received no feedback on our report or if other reports statewide were considered in departmental changes or policies. Are the reports helpful and what if any actions were taken based on the reports? The timing of this report is very difficult for volunteers to handle as this is a particularly busy time of the year for people who provide volunteer services.

C. Board's assessment of community needs and concerns

- a. Oconee County Department of Family Children Services frequently confronts substance abuse and Intimate Partner Violence. The Oconee County Community has access to resources to address both of these issues well inside the county and in neighboring Clarke County, however there is a lack of transportation for those families with no personal transportation. Families need access to medical services, mental health services and employment.
- b. Oconee County continues to have a severe shortage of foster homes for the number of children in care. More resources are needed to support sibling groups, very young children who are too young or medically fragile to attend a traditional child care setting. Current foster families need more supports to afford them more respite so they are able to care for children better and longer.
- c. Oconee's staffing ratios fall short of state recommended caseload levels to get these to the state recommended levels more staff need to be added.

D. Board's Recommendations for improved operations of the county department:

- a. Oconee County Department of Family and Children Services enjoys a strong relationship with the school system, Board of Commissioners and community stakeholders. These relationships

are difficult to maintain with constant turnover. Relationships with local law enforcement and the Juvenile Court Judge will be vital going forward in the work to protect children.

- b. Increase the salary, benefits and incentives to attract and retain quality staff.
 - i. Pay fees for testing, supervision and registration for staff who wish to pursue LCSW/LMSW credentials
 - ii. Become more competitive with other government and private Social Worker salaries based on the education and experience level of staff. In GA, the salary of a Licensed Clinical Social Worker ranges from \$53,557 - \$66,126 as compared to the salaries of the agency \$28,005 - \$34,039.
 - iii. Allow flexibility within the county department leadership to negotiate salaries in order to have competitive hiring.
 - iv. Respect personal time of staff by establishing standards that limit the number of hours employees are expected to work in a day up to no more than 10 hours per day before being compensated financially or have the employee relieved of their burden for the day
- c. Hire additional staff – lift hiring freeze.
 - i. Continue supports for additional staffing to cover after-hours duties in addition to compensating for overtime worked rather than accruing leave time for which they cannot find personal time to use
 - ii. Bring caseloads and supervision in line with the 1:15 ratio recommendation for the frontline staff across the state
 - iii. Strengthen relationships with stakeholders by retaining staff in the local community and concentrating staff's work to only one county
 - iv. Hire support staff to solely support the needs of foster families as an effort to recruit and retain quality foster homes.
- d. Address workplace safety
 - i. Provide annual self-defense training to teach staff what to do should they find themselves in a combative situation where they cannot escape without defending themselves.

E. Closing:

The Oconee County Department of Family Children Services Board would like to publicly thank the Oconee Staff for their dedication and hard work to

provide the highest quality of services possible to the families of Oconee County.

We appreciate the opportunity to have our thoughts and recommendations heard and considered in providing services for the families in need in Georgia.

Dawn M. Lewis for Beverly Griffin

Beverly Griffin,

Board Chair, Oconee County DFCS



To: Virginia Pryor, Interim Division Director
State of Georgia Department of Family and Children Services

From: Paulding County Division of Family & Children Services Board Members
James Provost, County Director

Date: December 13, 2017

Subject: Paulding County Division of Family & Children Services Field Operations Annual
County Board Report

A. General Summary of the Division of Family & Children Services Board:

1. Members and Officers

- a. Renee Hightower – Board Chair
- b. Brenda Thornton – Member
- c. Randall Hambrick – Member
- d. Nina Lauter – Member
- e. Kathy Carter – Member

2. Meeting Dates/Time:

- a. The Board meets quarterly. The 2017 dates are as follows: January 4th, May 17th, August 16th, and November 15th.

3. Activities for the past year 2017

- a. Board members supported the following events and purchases for 2017
 - Child Abuse Prevention Month
 - Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner
 - Back to School Event
 - Employee Appreciation Week
 - Adoption Celebration for Adoption Month

B. The County Board's assessment of the effectiveness of the county department's provision of services (i.e. what is working well and what is not working as well, etc.):

1. Paulding County Division of Family & Children Services staff continue to actively seek opportunities for community involvement, education and engagement.

- a. At the beginning of the school year, engagement meetings were held with counselors and social workers from Paulding County Schools in an effort to build partnerships with the schools in our area and educate school counselors around

the process of reporting cases of child abuse and neglect as well as to discuss the Blue Print for Change, Solution Based Casework, Graduation rates and the Initial Safety Assessment.

- b. Paulding County Division of Family and Children Services participates in training throughout the year with the CASA volunteers to build partnerships and educate on Court Improvement, Foster Care, reporting, the Blue Print for Change and Solution Based casework.
- c. The County Director, Administrators, Supervisors and Case Managers actively participate in various ongoing community meetings such as the Paulding Family Connection, formerly known as the Paulding Family Connection Children's Cabinet, Northwest Georgia System of Care and Community of Hope, Court Improvement, Multi-Disciplinary Team Meeting, Paulding County DV Taskforce, Paulding Local Inter-Agency Planning Team, Paulding County CHINS Committee, and the Paulding County Child Fatality Review Board.
- d. Despite the County and State's efforts, families in the community continue to report long wait times for services such as food stamps, Medicaid, and TANF. The lobby is small and customers are frustrated by the overcrowding and lack of privacy. The Model Office, through Georgia Gateway does present challenges in implementation due to the lack of space.
 1. Bringing these services back to the individual counties has offered some relief with the frustration and has allowed for a more personal access to services.
 2. The county continues to provide and improve excellent customer service when offering service to our constituents. When issues are identified, they are addressed as quickly as possible.
 3. The Board also believes that having the appropriate space is needed to adequately fulfill the needs of the community in this area as well. We currently have increased case managers, added two same day case managers, and added another Supervisor. We will continue to strive to meet and exceed the state mandated SOP.

C. The County Board's assessment of the needs of the community:

1. The county continues to need additional foster homes. Paulding County currently has approximately 122 children in foster care and approximately 30 approved foster homes. Paulding County has the highest number of CPA homes in the region, yet this still does not meet the need for the number of children in foster care to stay placed within our county.
 - a. Paulding County in partnership with the resource development unit and community partners has formed a recruitment team for ongoing recruitment initiatives which has resulted in additional foster homes for our community. The team meets monthly.
 - b. The lack of available homes for large sibling groups and teenagers has resulted in having to hotel children on a temporary basis while an appropriate placement can be located. This is costly and incorporates the cost of the hotel, supervision and other costs in maintaining a child or children in a hotel room, and children do not receive timely and consistent services. Due to the shortage of available and appropriate foster homes, case managers are traveling all across the state every month to see children in their placements.

This takes up a large portion of time for the case managers and a large amount of money is being spent each month; ensuring that children in care are able to maintain a connection to their community as well as visit with parents and siblings on a regular basis.

- c. Children with high end mental health needs have placements outside of the county, region and state. There are not enough resources locally for these children.
2. Paulding County continues to have a need for additional resources for substance abuse and mental health treatment available in the community.
 - a. Substance abuse continues to be a leading cause for children entering foster care in Paulding County.
 - b. The county also has a lack of affordable public transportation which limits our families from being able to access appropriate services once identified.
- D. The County Board's recommendations for improved operations of the county department – including recommendations regarding substance abuse and foster home retention and recruitment.
1. Paulding County continues to have a need for foster and adoptive homes to meet the needs of our children in care.
 - a. The non availability of approved homes and the difficulty in retention of those homes has the board along with the community partners, inspired to develop a new community resource in partnership with the faith based community. Foster Paulding has been formed and is looking at providing support to the existing DFCS and CPA homes in the county and connecting foster families to local churches or adding to the support if the family has a home church.
 - b. We have continued to partner with our CPAs in recruitment efforts for Paulding County and we present children at these monthly meetings that we need to bring back home to the community.
 2. Substance abuse is still a leading cause of children coming into foster care in Paulding County.
 - a. The Board has formed a team to look at developing a Family Based Recovery program that has been successful in Connecticut.
 - b. The Board has met with local providers in the community interested in partnering on this program to ask for proposals.
 - c. One board member has experience in grant writing and has offered to write for grants to help fund this program.
 - d. This program offers in home treatment, which resolves some of the transportation issues for families related to substance abuse treatment.
 - e. Paulding County and the board will continue to partner and work towards implementing this program in 2018.

E. Closing and Signature of the Board Chair:

In closing, 2017 has been a year of growth in Paulding County Division of Family and Children Services. Paulding County has increased our staff, added two more supervisors and another Administrator. We continue to learn and implement Solution Based Casework and embrace the Blue Print for Change. We were the first county in the region to have SBC certified staff. We have implemented many new strategies, including a pre-custody staffing in hopes of engaging families from the beginning and not bringing anymore children in care than there has to be. We look forward with excitement to the impact on our practice with children and families in our community and the implementation of new programs. Paulding will continue to collaborate with our partners to ensure that we are the best "Child Welfare System" in the country.

Board Chair resigned – January 2018 meeting board will elect a new chair
Renee Hightower
Board Chair
Paulding County Division of Family & Children Services



James M. Provost
County Director

STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

Annual Report
2017

Peach County
Department of Family and Children Services
700 Spruce Street – Wing E
Fort Valley, Georgia 31030

A. General Summary of the County DFCS Board:

Makeup-Members/Officers:

The Board is made up of five (5) members: a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and three (3) regular members. Board Members are:

Dr. Dorothy Conteh, Chairperson
Mr. Robert Ross, Vice-Chairperson
Mrs. Janza Coar
Mr. Dennis Herbert
Mr. Rusty Adams

Meetings dates/times:

The Board meets the 4th Thursday of every month at 10:30 a.m.

Activities for the past year:

The Board Chairperson, Dr. Dorothy Conteh, and Vice Chairman, Robert Ross, attended the Georgia Association of DFCS Boards semi-annual meeting in Macon, Ga on April 12, 2017.

Mr. Herbert attended the Foster Parent Appreciation breakfast/meeting held 5/31/17 at the Railroad Café. DFCS staff and the Board showed their support of the wonderful job the foster parents do for the county.

The Board was represented at the County Commissioner's budget hearing in June, 2017. Dr. Conteh, Board Chairperson, assisted the Director with Peach County DFCS' request for financial assistance for the October 1, 2017 thru September 30, 2018 county budget.

A member of the Board attended the GPHSA Conference held in Savannah, Ga August 29th and 30th.

All Board members attended the Meet and Greet with local Law Enforcement and DFCS staff held September 28, 2017.

The annual Fall Festival was held for the Peach County foster children in October, 2017 supported by the Board.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision services:

a. What's working well-

In Child Welfare, the number of foster children in care has dropped and substantiated reports of abuse/neglect have also been on the decline. In OFI, all caseloads are once again being covered by the assigned case manager. For months some staff were out due to medical reasons and their work was split up amongst case managers who remained on the job. At one time, three casemanagers were on medical leave at the same time. The Board realizes staff at Peach County DFCS have played a big role in all of the above-mentioned success.

b. What's not working-

GATEWAY, the new online application program and system for OFI benefits was newly introduced in 2017. The program still has a few "kinks" which need to be corrected. Benefits are not being received in a timely manner which contributes greatly to other under-lying problems for some families. The emphasis has been put on customers applying for all benefits online, however, the application process, as far as case managers being able to work up cases in a timely manner, needs to be addressed. Unmanageable caseloads could be a factor in cases not being worked up in a timely manner.

Peach County DFCS does not have a full-time on-site OFI Supervisor. Currently, a temporary supervisor comes to the county two or three times per week. OFI staff often have to communicate via telephone or email with the supervisor when issues arise warranting the assistance of the supervisor. Newly hired OFI staff are not provided the availability to confer with the supervisor face-to-face for assistance on a daily basis. Customers requesting to speak with a supervisor are given the supervisor's phone number and the call from this county to the supervisor's home county is a long distance call. The current caseloads and incoming applications for benefits warrant a full-time supervisor in the county office.

Transportation continues to be a barrier for customers in Peach County. The DFCS office is located on the south side of Fort Valley, which is not really centrally located. Also, the City of Byron and the City of Fort Valley make up Peach County and Byron is approximately 13 miles from Fort Valley.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

As stated above, there is a great need for transportation service in Fort Valley and Byron.

The building is quite old and renovations are needed to bring it up to current standards. Restrooms are frequently out of order, the circuit breaker is "thrown" when more than one staff member in a cubicle plugs in an extra electrical item, and there is no working water fountain currently available for use by customers or staff.

There needs to be a full-time OFI Supervisor in Peach County. Customers have to contact the supervisor via phone when the circumstances warrant a supervisor to handle the situation. The customers are instructed to call the supervisors phone if they happen to come in or call on a day she is not in the Peach County office. For many of the customers, the call is a long distance call.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

A full-time OFI Supervisor should be hired for Peach County DFCS.

It should be decided if Peach County DFCS will remain in its current building and if so many of the issues mentioned in item C. should be addressed right away.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair:

As we live in communities with forever evolving and developing social problems, Peach County has an on-going problem with domestic violence, substance abuse and mental health issues. We continue to see more and more unaddressed social problems, as our customers must travel out of county to receive treatment. Transportation appears to be the biggest barrier in addressing these issues, as customers do not have transportation to treatment facilities, which often results in unmet treatment needs. The Board feels that public transportation is a critical need in the Peach Community.

The Peach County DFCS board members would like to thank you for your continued support in protecting children and causing a positive change in the lives of citizens throughout the State of Georgia.

Dr. Dorothy Conteh, Chairperson

Chunfeng Li
12/15/17

Pickens County Division of Family and Children Services

2017 Annual Board Report

The Pickens County Division of Family and Children Services board is comprised of 5 members of the community that now meet monthly, typically on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, at the Pickens County DFCS office. The meetings begin at 8:30 a.m. Members currently serving on the board are Kathy Bruce, Chairperson; Shelley Cantrell, Vice Chair; T.J. Keener; Martha Pool; and Michael White. The County DFCS office receives county funds of which the Board approves all expenditures.

In addition to the above listed members, the Pickens County DFCS Director, Heidi Smith also attends each meeting and serves as Secretary.

At each meeting, a standard agenda is followed that includes the review and approval of the minutes from the previous board meeting and the current financial report; a review and discussion of service provision by the Office of Financial Independence as well as Social Services; discussion of updates on administrative and personnel matters; upcoming events or meetings that affect the county office; as well as any follow-up items needing to be discussed as part of Old Business or new business. Lastly, confirmation of our next board meeting date/time.

Summary of 2017 for Pickens County

Pickens County DFCS started off the year getting settled into the new building. Interim Director, Jennifer Farmer asked to move board meetings from the typical third Wednesday to the second Wednesday so they would not conflict with the date of her scheduled board meetings in Gilmer. County Director Interviews were held in March with second level interviews in April. County Director for Pickens was named as Heidi Smith on April 19th with an appointment date of May 1st. Due to current regional role and responsibilities the role was shared with Interim Director Jennifer Farmer until County Director Heidi Smith took full responsibility for the role on September 1st. The board supported many events during the year including, the purchase of a new microwave, a staff appreciation luncheon with desk plaques for Social work appreciation month, support of the Zoo Atlanta trip for Foster parent appreciation, Foster Parent proclamation signing, support of our Regional "Believe to Achieve" Basketball camp as well as Regional road show, Law Enforcement meet and greet held in September, holiday gathering for staff for the months of October and November, a staff luncheon for staff in December, as well as the Foster child Christmas party hosted by Pleasant Hill Christian Church.

Assessment of the effectiveness of Pickens County provision of services:

What's working well:

- The county office has continued to celebrate our move to the new building at the end of 2016. The new facility has affected service provision by providing staff adequate room and more comfortable facility to conduct business. The board has continued to support our acclimation to the new facility by making suggestions and advocating for needed upgrades and supports.

- The relationship between Pickens DFCS and the community has improved as well as the relationship between the county office and key stakeholders.
- Staff morale has been greatly impacted and improved by the move to and settling into a new building as well as reaching the point of fully staffed in Services program areas.
- The board recognizes the county office to have responded timely to reports of child abuse or neglect for the year and that we have maintained a trend of positive and timely outcomes, and utilizing the courts in a timely fashion when necessary.
- OFI has continued to adapt to changes to our system and though this program is unfortunately not fully staffed, staff are dedicated to meeting the needs of the families in our community and assist them with the system changes.
- The community is quick to offer support pertaining to the needs of families or the safety of children when there are gaps by providing car seats, Christmas gifts, school supplies, coats, etc. as the needs arrive

What's not working well:

- OFI staff as well as families in need would benefit from a full time supervisor and/or administrator in-office.
- Though we have made strides with our new system, Gateway has brought on some frustration with both staff and families when it has hindered timeliness with needed assistance programs. Upgrades and streamlining to this system will greatly benefit all, as well as available over the shoulder support.
- County Director will work in 2018 to provide even more information to the board pertaining to all of our programs from both the Financial and the Services side to bring about more understanding about the day-to-day work conducted in the Pickens office.
- More efforts to recruit and retain local placement resources or more support for relative placement resources to provide more children the opportunity to remain in their community.
- County office could again partner with the Salvation army and bring that valuable resource back to the county as additional means of meeting emergency needs of families.
- More can be done to make our facility a safer place to work by some minor upgrades to the front office and providing awareness to staff and training if needed.

Board's assesment of community needs:

- Increase in localized resources such as affordable mental health, substance abuse treatment, transportation within the community.
- More local foster homes to serve the Pickens county children in foster care.
- The community needs to hear more about the services offered and positive things pertaining to the services of Pickens DFCS.

Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Division:

- The Board have shared that a better understanding of the day-to-day work is helpful as well as continued explanation of provided data will assist them in knowing where we stand as a county office and what our goals are.
- The Board will work individually to assess continued needs of the community and how our office may be a support in meeting those needs.
- The Board has voiced concern for safety of staff in the building and supports a fixed, shatterproof glass enclosure at the front office as opposed to the existing sliding glass window as well as a ledge to provide needed space between front office staff and our consumers.
- The Board will continue to provide support as needed by approving use of county funds to meet the needs of families, promote safety, and support staff in the day-to-day work and as able, participate in office functions to show their appreciation and support to staff.



Kathy Bruce, Board Chair



Heidi Smith, County Director and Secretary



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report 2017

Pierce County
Division of Family and Children Services
621 Hendry Street
Blackshear, GA 31516

A. Pierce County DFCS Board, General Summary

- a. Pierce County DFCS Board Members
 - i. Mrs. Irene Dixon, Chair
 - ii. Mrs. Melba Dean, Co-Chair
 - iii. Mr. David Smith, Board Member
 - iv. Mrs. Janice Davis, Board Member
 - v. Ms. Zina Ponsell, Board Member
- b. Meeting Date/Time: The Pierce County DFCS Board meets the third Wednesday of every month at 10:00 a.m.
- c. Activities for the past year: Board members attended monthly meetings and supported the Pierce Co. DFCS in our annual law enforcement meeting, they approved and supported the annual employee appreciation. The Board also desired the Pierce County Commissioners to be aware of the happenings of the Agency and requested we begin sending a copy of our Board Minutes to the Pierce County Commission. Several Board Members also spoke with elected officials about the needs of Pierce County DFCS and the community we serve.
- d. Use of Local Funds: The County funds have been utilized as a Cash Match clerical/admin assistant position. The County also allotted funds to support dictation services for the social services staff. County funds is also used for a part-time clerical position that focuses on assisting both program areas in filing, tracking, front office coverage, etc. County funds is also utilized to purchase needs for foster children (car seats/cribs/bassinets/etc).

B. Effectiveness of the Pierce County DFCS' provision of services:

- a. What's working well:
 - i. OFI's return to local county – improved staff satisfaction as well as customer service – this continues to be a highlight for our County.
 - ii. The staff for foster care placement has been stable over the past year and this has improved outcomes for foster children and families to include more timely services and permanency for the children
 - iii. Staff work well with community partners and have great relationships with stakeholders
 - iv. Opening phone lines back up at the county office has been a highlight and has greatly improved community relations.
- b. What is not working well:
 - i. Office closure twice a week due to shortage of staff limits effectiveness of services to our community
 - ii. Due to staff shortage, quality of service for both CPS and OFI suffer – sharing leadership, case managers and clerical staff between two rural counties. When there are not enough staff in each county, this requires Supervisors and County Directors to step in and pick up case loads which again, limits their ability to focus on fostering/building relationships with community partners; supervision of the work that is being done to ensure quality, etc... This has improved in the past six months and Pierce Co. DFCS is becoming stabilized.
- c. Services:
 - i. Child Protective Services: There are currently 37 children in foster care and a total of 7 foster homes that can serve up to 15 children. There was 1 foster home approved within the past 12 months. The Pierce County DFCS averages approximately 17 intakes a month with approximately 75% being assigned as a Family Support case. We have averaged 11 family preservation cases for the past 12 months as well. There was a 33% turnover rate in Pierce County DFCS for the past 12 months.

- ii. Office of Family Independence: There were the following renewals and applications received for SNAP: 61 apps / 276 renewals; MA 83 apps/366 renewals; TANF 5 apps/5 renewals This would be considered a normal average for the past 12 months.
- iii. Stakeholder Involvement/Relationships: Pierce County DFCS has worked hard to foster stakeholder relationships. This has improved relations with the School System, Law Enforcement, GALs, Family Connection, etc. Staff attend truancy panels, MDTs with our local CACs, Family Connection meetings, etc. We have fostered meetings between our GALs and foster children so that they children and foster parents have input during legal proceedings. The Agency held a meet and greet breakfast with local law enforcement to foster those very important relationships.

C. The needs of our community:

- a. Effective and quality array of services that are local or easily accessible to our customers to include substance abuse treatment and mental health services.
- b. Transportation – specific to meeting everyday needs and not just available to those who have an open CPS or OFI case
- c. Available and Accessible ABD staff for the elderly/disabled community

D. Recommendations for improved operations:

- a. Staffing
 - i. Every office should have one clerical position assigned specifically to that county: Currently Pierce County has a “cash match” position for a clerical position. This position is being utilized to assist in our sister county, Pierce County, and has also been requested to assist in several other neighboring counties on an as needed basis. The Board strongly recommends that this “cash match” position be absorbed by the State if the position will be required to continue to complete work that is not specific to Pierce County. The Board feels that this will allow the cash match funding to be utilized to hire another part time clerical position which would assist with both OFI and SS clerical needs specifically related to Pierce County.
 - ii. Clerical staff to answer the phones at the local office and open the phones back up at the county office. Currently phones are being answered by a Regional Receptionist who is answering the county lines for four counties, to include, Pierce, Bacon, Brantley and Charlton.
- b. Recruitment of quality service providers in rural areas to address our highest needs of MH, Substance abuse treatment and DV counseling.
- c. Each county should have an ABD CM assigned to assist those elderly/disabled adults in applying for or accessing services offered by our Agency. Pierce County has an ABD CM, but they serve as a customer service agent and handles customer service for the Region and not specifically serve clients in Pierce County.

In closing, the Board recognizes there has been improvements with the ability to hire and the number of staff has increased. The Board also recognizes this has stabilized the Pierce County DFCS and will have a positive outcome for the community and the families we serve. The Board has made recommendation this past fiscal year, specifically in regards to a cash-match position but feels their recommendations were not valued and taken very lightly.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Irene W. Dixon". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Irene Dixon, Chairman
Pierce County DFCS Board



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Pike County
Division of Family and Children Services
7165 Highway 19 South
Zebulon, GA 30295

Pike County Annual Report December 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

The Pike County Division of Family and Children Services board members consist of five member positions. Of the five positions, four positions are filled and one is vacant. The Pike County Commissioners appointed the following members:

Mike Powell, Chairman of the Board

Patricia Beckham, Board Member

Helen Fordham, Board Member

Michael Harris, Board Member

(Vacant Position)

The Pike County DFCS Board meets the fourth Monday of every month at 3:45 p.m. During the past year, there were four meetings canceled due to scheduling conflicts. The Board has been involved with community organizations and stakeholders and serves as a guide for Pike County DFCS. In addition, the Board has provided ongoing support for the staff to ensure partnerships is developed and maintained.

B. Assessment of the effectiveness of County Department's provision services:

The Board is and has been incredibly supportive in all service areas. They recognize and acknowledge the diligent work of the staff and encourage them to provide quality services that strengthen families. Pike DFCS also work in partnership to improve the relationship with Pike County's law enforcement agencies, schools, businesses, faith-based institutions, and the court circuit to build a vibrant, robust community continuously. The Board is looking forward to hearing positive outcomes from the recent implementation of Gateway in OFI and Solution-Based Casework in Services. The Board is pleased with DFCS efforts to decrease the number of children in foster care and family preservation services. Currently, Pike County DFCS has 31 children in foster care and five children who achieved permanency through finalized adoptions. There are six approved foster homes in which two were recruited this year. Unfortunately, OFI data is unavailable due to the implementation of the Gateway system.

Pike County DFCS is focused on developing three stakeholder's relationships: Pike County Schools, Pike County Family Connections, and Pike County Project Manager for the Board of Commissioners. DFCS has quarterly meetings with the Project Manager and School's representatives, and monthly meetings with Family Connections. A strategic plan is being developed with the school system, and a plan had been developed and implemented with Family Connections entitled Stable Self-Sufficient and Productive Families. This year, Pike County

DFCS staff retention rate is 75.00%. Of the 16 staff members, one retired, two resigned, and one transferred to another county within the agency.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

Increased access to behavioral health and treatment providers is a continuous need in rural counties which Pike County is classified. The limitations created for a child and/or families needed a specialized treatment provider or the organization needing a specific resource can be challenging to secure at times. Transportation barriers are endemic to rural counties which may create challenges at times for families to travel to a service provider due to lack of public transit. One area of primary need is the development of new foster homes to decrease the number of children requiring placement out of county due to lack of foster home bed space available locally. Pike County transitioned to a new County Director one year ago. The board appreciates DFCS affording the opportunity and responding positively to the request for Pike County to have a County Director again. The ripple effect of this type of change leads to staff changes as well. During periods of staff change, new staff hires, and a new Director learning each person is a critical key to building positive community relationships. Community relationships are and will be a critical component to the long-term success in a community.

D. The Board is pleased with the hiring of new staff and the addition of a Services Supervisor vested in her role working with the community. Although the Board was frustrated with the length of time it took to fill the County Director position, the board is pleased to have the addition of a County Director that will be specifically for Pike County DFCS.

E. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

As a core staff nucleus has been hired, the development of the CPS staff must be a priority. While experience is a wise instructor, it is the hope of the board that each staff member will realize the importance of professional development is a critical component of their success. The board would like to see the development of additional foster homes to meet the need for child placement of Pike County children in local homes. One recommendation is to continue exploring how to develop community partnerships with the local ministerial association and churches to promote the need for foster homes. Remain active participants in the local Family Connection organization as a community partner and involved with community project teams. While the County Director may not always be able to attend the monthly collaborative meeting due to schedule, a DFCS representative may be designated to represent the agency at a Family Connection monthly collaborative meetings and/or event as an avenue of positive exposure for the agency. As board members become aware of behavioral health, substance abuse, and residential treatment providers the board provides this information to the County Director. This will afford the local staff to explore a potential resource to evaluate if the provider is the right match for the needs of children and/or families in care. The County Director continues team building activities to boost staff morale and support for one another in their work.

F. Closing and signature of the Board Chairman:

The Pike County DFCS Board continues to support the County Director and staff in achieving their goals. The Board is proud of the efforts that staff put forth in serving the citizens of Pike County.

Michael Powell
Pike DFCS Board Chairman

NATHAN DEAL
GOVERNOR



VIRGINIA PRYOR
INTERIM DIRECTOR

Annual Report 2017

Polk County
Department of Family and Children Services
100 County Loop Rd., Cedartown, GA
30125

**Polk County
Annual Report
December 2017**

BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE • A STATE OF HOPE

SAFE CHILDREN. STRENGTHENED FAMILIES. STRONGER GEORGIA.

SUSAN OLLIS, DIRECTOR; POLK COUNTY DFCS; P O BOX 147; 100 COUNTY LOOP RD, CEDARTOWN, GA, 30125

The Polk County DFCS Board is made up of a variety of members from this community:

- Dave Grove- minister
- Tamaka Hudson- Polk County Chamber of Commerce
- Sumter Nelson- retiree
- Kenny Dodd- Polk County Police Chief
- Mark Lumpkin- Polk County Board of Education
- Susan Ollis, County Director

The Board typically meets quarterly at the Polk County DFCS office. Meetings were held on the following dates: 3/14/17, 6/13/17, 10/19/17, & 12/12/17. The completed Annual Report was reviewed at the Board Meeting on 12/12/17 and approved.

Throughout this year, a variety of topics have been discussed to highlight the happenings through Georgia and Polk County.

-Safe Sleep Campaign continues through 2017, to include sharing of data

-Gateway (replacing SUCCESS)

-Solution Based Casework

-Family/ Accountability Drug Court for Tallapoosa Circuit Juvenile Court- DFCS and Juvenile Court have been collaborating through gathering information, arranging a 3 month pilot of the "assessment" stage, and initiating contact regarding the grant writing.

Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

Polk County DFCS does very well with the assessment of children and families, and ensures they are linked to help/ services. Staff have a good relationship with local law enforcement and community providers. There is good communication, both internally and externally. Polk County continues to have some staff turnover this year- transfers to other agencies, newer staff selecting out of this type of work, and a long time staff member passing away. There have been 3 internal promotions. Promoting from within has many positive outcomes- supervisors familiar with the process, community providers and the needs and functioning of this community. Unfortunately, due to a slow Human Resources process, many positions are still vacant which has resulted in higher caseloads and increased stress at all levels. Polk County would provide more effective services to their families if fully staffed and trained.

CPS

Screened Out- 174

Tracked assigned to Investigations- 195

Tracked assigned to Family Support- 419

Foster Care

of children served in Foster Care- 146

of children ending FY 17- 133

Board's assessment of community needs/ concerns:

Polk County has 30 resource homes and continues to have a need for more. The goal is to keep all Polk County children in their home communities. Drug use continues to be a significant problem in this community and is one of the main reasons children enter foster care. Drugs impact employment and result in increased crime rate. Poverty is high in Polk County and there are generations relying on each other to meet their very basic needs. Many grandparents are raising their grandchildren. Some of the family struggles are a low commitment to education, and little incentive to maintain employment. Many in the work force continue to lack motivation to remain employed, and remain drug free. In spite of this, the job market in Polk County is improving. The local school system has increased an emphasis on students being better equipped to join the work force upon graduation from high school.

Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

Polk County DFCS needs to be able to file vacant positions in a timely manner. It is in the best interest of families of Polk County to maintain a strong and healthy work force. The State needs to streamline the hiring process which will result in improved outcomes for our families.

Continue to collaborate with Juvenile Court and other community stakeholders to create a Family/ Accountability Drug Court.

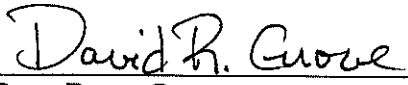
Closing and signature of the Board Chair:



Susan Ollis, Director



Sumter Nelson, Board Chairman



Rev. Dave Grove



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report 2017

Pulaski County
Department of Family and Children Services
180 Broad Street
Hawkinsville, GA

PULASKI COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General Summary of the Pulaski County DFCS Board

The Pulaski Board meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month at 10 a.m. at the Pulaski office. The board is made up of DFCS alumni, leaders of the faith based community, law enforcement and a former foster parent.

Current Board Members:

Marilyn Goodroe, Chair

Jackie Sapp, Vice Chair

Rose Rhodes

Robert Ross

Eugene Bo Turner

The board has had many opportunities over the past year, and we will share a few of the highlights of those activities. We were honored to assist with hosting local law enforcement for our "Meet and Greets" with the social services team. We were pleased to be included in the recognition of staff who completed training, as well as staff who were recognized for their years of service. The board was honored to provide opportunities for staff to gather for worker appreciation events, including our annual Christmas festivities. Ms. Marilyn Goodroe has had the honor of serving on the regional DFCS board and attending those meetings led by the Regional Director, Stacey Barfield. Various members of our board are involved in and participate in community events, collaborative meetings, and social organizations that provide a plethora of services to the members of our local community. Among these services are: Toys for Tots, Jackets for Children, ministry to nursing homes/shut-ins, weekend backpack ministry for school children, and service on the Arts Council.

Over the past year, local county funds have been used to promote training opportunities for the board, as well as staff members. Our board has been fiscally responsible in the expenditures of our local county funds, and we have always been able to stay within our budget limits. The board reviews and approves a county funds policy annually and guidelines are set in the policy regarding usage of those funds for needs of our children in care. Additional expenditures not covered by the policy or the county budget letter are voted on by the board, as needed.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

Successes

The Pulaski Board has continued to see tremendous improvement in the services offered by the OFI side of the house. Localization of services has improved our ability to make sure that local citizens have access to the federal programs that we provide. Customer complaints have remained low, even during the current transition period from our SUCCESS system to the new Gateway system. We are very excited about the progress made in OFI services, and we have seen improved outcomes for our community because of this. The board recognizes and appreciates the importance of having trained staff housed locally to provide services to our

community and believes that this should be the ongoing standard practice of the department. The board is confident that having local staff available and accessible to our customers has been the key factor in the turnaround for quality and promptness of service provision.

The board also recognizes that the overall budget for the Division has seen continued support by state legislature and we would like to acknowledge our appreciation for this. We have had no turnover in either side of the agency over the past year. We credit this to the state's focus on better salaries and staff retention over the past couple of years.

Our board has been greatly blessed to have availability of local county funds that allow the board opportunities to show local staff they are appreciated. This is done through provision of meals for the staff during various training and staff meetings. During worker appreciation month, the board invites the workers to an annual catered breakfast event. These small gestures show the staff that their work is appreciated by the board and their community and plays a small part in retaining our workers locally.

Pulaski County Board is also fortunate to have good collaboration within its local members. We are able to work together and discuss issues that impact the Division and our community. Our members are also in tune with local community leadership and partners. Partnerships are vital and we are fortunate to have a board whose members are trusted and connected within the community. Constituents freely approach board members with issues and concerns that arise, and we are able to work with the County Director to resolve concerns. The board also supports the Annual Law Enforcement Meet and Greet with funding in order to make this collaboration successful. Our local law enforcement has a good relationship with the Division and is willing to assist CMs in making initial response to families when there are safety concerns.

Challenges/Opportunities

As a board, we struggled to identify areas where things were not working well. Last year, we expressed concern over the lack of social services staff in our office. That issue has thankfully been resolved this year. However, there is one area that the board believes can have additional positive impact on the overall functioning of the office and on building collaboration and partnership within our community. We are truly amazed at the ingenuity of the County Director and social services staff who consistently provide timely and efficient work when they are having to cover a three county area. We understand from Director Powell that our Regional Director, Stacey Barfield, is working on a plan to reduce the number of counties that our director oversees from three (Pulaski, Bleckley and Wilcox) to a two county cluster. The board supports this plan, and believes that the sooner we can work to make this happen, we will see positive outcomes with community relationships and oversight of the work.

County Services Data

Number of children in care during the year: 25
Number of foster homes: 6
Number of finalized adoptions: 2
Number of approved foster homes in the past year: 2
CPS Investigations: 13
Family Support Services: 74
Family Preservation Cases: 4
Staff turnover rate: 0%

Stakeholder involvement/Relationships: Our County Director and staff attend various meetings throughout the community to support stakeholder relationships. A few of those opportunities are as follows: Law Enforcement Meet and Greet, Monthly Family Connections Meetings, Monthly Multi-disciplinary Team Meetings, Participation in local school collaborations/meetings, etc.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

The following have been identified by our board as areas of community needs: Literacy, unemployment, poverty, transportation to places outside the county, mental health resources, and substance abuse treatment resources.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

1. The board believes that every county should have a Social Services Supervisor, CPS investigator, Placement Worker, and Family Preservation worker housed in each county, with primary assignment of cases coming from that county. Workers should be shared between counties only when assistance is needed to meet response times or ensure child safety. These workers should be charged with developing and maintaining strong connections with our community partners.
2. County Directors should be responsible for no more than two county offices.

E. Closing and signature of Board Chair

It is our great honor to submit this annual board report for the Pulaski County Department of Family and Children services.

Sincerely,


Marilyn Goodroe
Board Chair



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Putnam County
Department of Family and Children Services
675 Godfrey Road
Eatonton, Georgia
31024

Putnam County Annual Report DECEMBER 2017

Putnam County DFCS Board:

- The Board is comprised of 5 Members that include:
Margaret Merchant - Board Chairperson
Patricia Monday - Board Member
Anna Mullis - Board Member (resigned)
Sandra Parham - Board Member
Georgia Smith - Board Member
- The Putnam County Board meets every other month on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 8:30am. Meeting Dates for 2017 were 1/24/17, 3/28/17, 5/23/17, 7/25/17, 9/26/17, and 11/28/17.
- The Agency and Board are both extremely involved in community events. This past year DFCS participated in LIPT, Family Connection, The Domestic Violence Task Force, Back to School Rally and a Pinwheel Ceremony on the Courthouse lawn.
- County Funds are primarily utilized to cover the agency's one cash-match position. Our agency is fortunate enough to have a bi-lingual program assistant at the front desk to better communicate with our large Hispanic population. The remaining funds are used to cover foster children expenses beyond what the state reimburses, a few community support projects and minor administrative costs.

Successes

- Putnam County DFCS is fortunate to have a bilingual staff member to greet and communicate with customers at the front desk.
- Putnam County DFCS has exceptionally positive working relationships with our community partners.
- Customer Service continues to be a priority.
- Putnam County DFCS has exceptionally positive working relationships with our community partners.
- The County Director demonstrates fiscal responsibility for all funds received.
- Putnam County DFCS was allowed to hire an Administrative Assistant, which has allowed the County Director more opportunities to engage with staff and the families that we serve.

Challenges/Opportunities

- The hiring process is excessively slow which creates a hardship for the rest of the County Office Staff.
- There is not sufficient staff to serve the Constituents.
- Caseloads are too high.
- Multi- County work assignment with Jasper County has been taxing on County Child Welfare Staff and taken County Director away from being able to manage as sufficiently as before.
- Recent staff turnover rate has increased at an alarming rate.

Number of Children in Care

- Putnam County Started 2017 with 25 children in Foster Care. As of 12.1.17 that number has grown to 45.

Number of Approved Foster Homes in Past Year

- Putnam County DFCS currently has 21 active DFCS Homes

Number of finalized adoptions

- Putnam has had one adoption finalization in 2017 and one scheduled for 12.15.17

Breakdown number of CPS, Family Preservation and Family Support

- CPS Investigations: 10
- Family Support Assessments: 15
- Family Preservation Cases: 16

Staff Turnover Rate

Putnam suffered a 31% turnover rate.

Stakeholder Involvement/ Relationships

- This agency has a positive working relationship with all our community partners. This agency and law enforcement work together to investigate cases of abuse and neglect. The agency works closely with The Baldwin Family Treatment Court and the rest of the legal community. The Agency, County Director and Board all support various community based programs that include; Family Connection, Local Interagency Planning Teams, Putnam County and the Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Domestic Violence Task Force, Lifesource Food Drive just to name a few. DFCS was represented at the annual Back to School Rally, Family Connection Events, Domestic Violence Candlelight Vigils, The Ethan Richardson Foundation (childhood cancer awareness), and was a joint partner in a Pinwheel Ceremony to bring Child Abuse Awareness to the community in April.

Board's Assessment of Community Needs/Concerns

- Service Providers (Community Service Boards) willing to come to Putnam to provide Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment to county residents.
- Families have to travel to neighboring counties to obtain needed services. Many of our Families do not have the resources (such as transportation) available to utilize these services.
- There is not sufficient staff to work with the families of Putnam County, as needed. Continued vigilance towards child safety assessments could be impacted.
- Worker Safety is a concern. Staff travel across the state to serve our children. They are often interacting with our families in unstable environments, at times with people that have mental health or substance abuse issues. The County Office needs renovations and additional safety features to better protect staff.

- There are not enough local foster homes to serve Putnam's Foster Children so that they can remain in-county for services.
- Current drug epidemic in the community.
- Lack of Employment Opportunities

Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

- Additional Staff should be hired so that caseloads can be lowered and families can be adequately served.
- Shorter turnarounds for hiring new staff are needed.
- Agency needs to become more pro-active in the recruitment process for new staff. Adequate applicant pools are a challenge and delay the hiring process.
- Addressing the deficient within the OFI system is needed. County residents are reporting waiting in long lines to determine the status of their delayed benefits
- Recruitment for additional local foster homes is greatly needed.
- Consider doing away with the combined or Multi- County Agencies. Staff are challenged to manage their daily loads.

We, the Putnam County Division of Family and Children Services Board appreciate being given the opportunity to be heard. We are available and willing to discuss our findings in greater detail if needed.

Sincerely,

Margaret Merchant

Margaret Merchant
Chairperson of the Putnam County DFCS Board

November 29, 2017

TO: Virginia Pryor, State DFCS Director
2 Peachtree Street
19-490
Atlanta, GA 30303

FROM: Quitman County DFCS Board

RE: Annual DFCS Board Report – Quitman County DFCS

The Quitman County DFCS Board has been supportive in the work of the agency in a number of ways. Each board member lives in the community and is aware of the demographics and needs of the community. Additionally, each board member is involved in serving and promoting the growth and well-being of children and families. In their various capacities, the members promote the work and efforts of the local DFCS staff. The Quitman County Board works well together and meetings are scheduled on a bi-monthly basis to discuss both the needs of the community and of the staff.

Over the past years, the changes in the Quitman County DFCS office have been many. We are very excited about the new staff members who have joined the team this year. Although we lost our dedicated front desk person, we were able to replace her rather quickly. One of the biggest positives for 2017 is that in the past, we have had to share a social services supervisor with 4 other counties. This year, we were able to hire a social services supervisor by promoting a long term case manager here locally. We are excited for her counterpart to be hired so that the 5 counties in our cluster will share 2 social services supervisor instead of the 1 supervisor we have had for years. This will allow the supervisor to focus more on the families here at home.

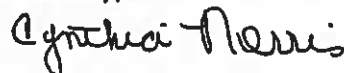
One of the areas that we need to change is that the office is only open 3 days a week to the public and we need it to be open 5 days a week. This access is desperately needed for the people in Clay County. We feel that it would greatly enhance the services to the county. In a small, rural community, the DFCS office is really a source of support, and it is important that our constituents are able to access the staff there. It's easier to talk to someone you know about your business rather than a stranger on the phone. Having the phone lines back in the county has helped, but our staff continue to have to travel to other offices on the days that the office is closed which is prohibitive to excellent customer service.

The County Director position continues to be posted and reposted. This is much needed as we have had an interim county director for several years now. She has done as much as she can do with covering both this position as well as another one, but we are looking forward to having someone here full time and the stability that brings with it. Additionally, Clay and Quitman Counties have always worked well together so a joint appointment for county director for these counties is understandable. However, we have now been grouped with Randolph County as well and we feel that this is just too much for one County Director to handle and due to the size of Randolph County, the person who is hired will likely end up spending much of his/her time there.

Finally, we do have a need for foster homes in Quitman County. At this time, we have none, so we would like to see some active recruiting to serve our children in their own home county. Our population of children in foster care has grown and we would like to be able to serve our children in our community.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss Quitman County's strengths and needs.

Sincerely,



Quitman County DFCS Board



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report

2017

Rabun County Department of Family and Children Services
128 Hiawassee Street
Clayton, Georgia 30525

Rabun County Annual Report December, 2017

A: The Rabun County DFCS board consists of:

**Kathryn English-Chair
Sandi Ledford-Co-Chair
Jim Carver-Member
Penny Bradley-Member
Janice Wayne-Member**

Board Meetings are on the 2nd Tuesday of every other month at 10:00AM at Rabun County DFCS.

Activities have included staff appreciation at Christmas. There has also been a region wide staff appreciation along with various case manager summits throughout the year.

The board also had a Christmas appreciation event for the foster parents during this year.

B: The Rabun County DFCS office has been effective in the mission of protecting children and serving individuals of the county. The services unit has assessed children and families in a timely manner. The CPS unit has gained another investigator which will help to protect our most vulnerable citizens. Children that are in the custody of Rabun County DFCS are assessed each month and their needs met. The placement staff in Rabun County are assisting Habersham County, due to staff shortages in that program area. The board is concerned that OFI case managers are struggling with the new Gateway system.

C: The board is pleased with many occurrences during this year. Rabun County is now fully staffed. The front desk has a dedicated person to assist customers that come into the lobby. This has eased the stress of the OFI team, as they were having to help fill that gap. The board is also pleased with the addition of a CPS investigator, as well as a Foster Care case manager. This has helped ease the stress levels, as well as bring caseloads down to a manageable level. Rabun County also now has a Resource

Developer, which is dedicated to Rabun and Habersham Counties. This position has been vacant for years and with the addition of this position, new homes are being explored and opened. This helps keep Rabun children in their own community.

The Case Managers and Supervisors all received substantial raises. This has made an impact on morale and stability of staff.

A permanent County Director has been in place since August, 2016.

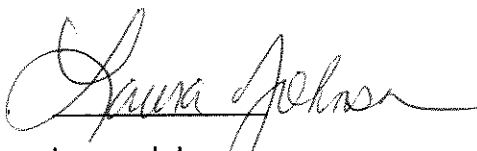
A Social Services administrator has been hired.

Rabun County has not had staff turnover during this year and the morale is very high.

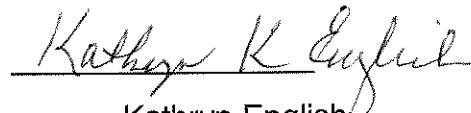
The board is supportive of the "My Father's Kids" program in Rabun. My Father's Kids provides backpacks and duffle bags filled with supplies, which are given to children entering foster care.

D: The board has the following recommendations for the future: The board recommends expediting the human resource process. Many times human resource personnel have been unresponsive or had very delayed responses to inquiries about potential applicants and potential employees, as well as temporary salary supplements. The wait time for an applicant to clear the process is unrealistic and many potential employees are lost to other hiring managers, due to the wait time.

The board also recommends a dedicated Rabun County Director. The current director is not only responsible for Rabun, but for Habersham County. We feel that a Director should be seated in Rabun County only, dedicating time and attention to the staff and citizens of Rabun County.



Laura Johnson
County Director



Kathryn English
Chairperson



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

145 N. Webster Street Randolph County Department of Family & Children Services
Cuthbert, Georgia 39840 (229) 732-3742-Phone (229) 732-5412-Fax

December 13, 2017

TO: Virginia Pryor, State DFCS Director
2 Peachtree Street
19-490
Atlanta, GA 30303

FROM: Randolph County DFCS Board
145 N. Webster Street
Cuthbert, GA 39840

RE: Annual DFCS Board Report – Randolph County DFCS

The Randolph County DFCS Board has been active and supportive in the work of the agency in a number of ways this year. Each board member is well-versed in the demographics and needs of the community and each is involved in serving and promoting the growth and well-being of children and families. In their various capacities, the members promote the work and efforts of the local DFCS staff. Board members have been supportive of this effort in both donations and service. For most of the year, the Board only had three active members. We were able to fill two vacant board member positions last month and look forward to continuing our work with the Department. Our Board works well together and meets on a monthly basis to discuss both the needs of the community and of the staff. We have had in-house training this year and have a member representing our office on the Region 8 Advisory Board.

A major strength for our local DFCS staff is that of continuity and longevity of service. The staff is not only familiar with the services they provide but to the community they provide it to. Longevity promotes the quality of service and affords better networking with the community. We have been pleased with the transition of bringing OFI services back to the local office. This process has been much more effective in serving our community and meeting the needs of our county constituents. We were able to bring back local supervision for our staff. This change has also played an important role in increasing staff morale.

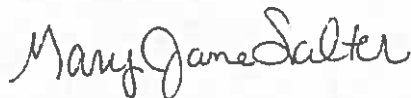
Another positive for Randolph County DFCS has been the ability to hire much needed staff. This year we were able to hire an additional Social Services Case Manager and Social Service Tech. This has proved to be a great asset to our office for many reasons. We were also able to hire a Social Services Supervisor for Randolph, Clay and Quitman counties. In the past we have shared a supervisor with 4 other counties. We are excited for another supervisor to be hired so that the 5 counties in our cluster will now have two supervisors to share rather than the one we have had for years.

Randolph County is still without a permanent County Director. The decision has been made to share a County Director with Clay and Quitman Counties. Although these counties work well together, we feel that having three counties can be too much for one person. Randolph County is the largest of the counties in our cluster and we would like to have someone who would be able to spend the needed time it takes to serve the families in our community. This would be beneficial not only to our community but our staff members as well.

We need more security measures for our office, including better lighting in the parking lot and some type of alarm system in each office. So far we have not had a bad incident in our office, but we want to be prepared and for our staff to feel they have adequate protection. As most other counties, we, too, need at least a couple of specialized foster homes, which are hard to come by in a rural county.

Thank you for the opportunity to reflect on Randolph County's strengths and needs.

Sincerely,



Mary Jane Salter
Randolph County DFCS Board Co-Chairperson



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report

2017

Baldwin County
Department of Family and Children Services
154 Roberson Mill Road
Milledgeville, GA 31016

Baldwin County
Annual Report
December 2016

A. General Summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Dr. Janet Harrison; Board Chair, Mrs. Alice Noel; Board Co-Chair, Dr. John Sallstrom; Board Member, Sheriff William Masee; Board Member, Mrs. Mel Jackson; Board Member, Mrs. Eva Stevenson; Board Member, and Mr. Willie Lester; Board Member.
- The Board meets every 1st Monday of the month at 5:15 pm.
- The Board Members attend staff appreciation events, Helping Hands Charity event, Board Association Meetings and Conference in Savannah, and the Regional Board Meetings.

B. The Board's Assessment of effectiveness of the County Department's provision of services:

- This Board is proud of our local county office and the community partnerships they have developed and maintained. These partnerships include Baldwin County Board of Education, Family Connections, Salvation Army, First Baptist Church, First Presbyterian Church, Take Charge/Goodwill, Juvenile Court System, Superior Court System, Local Law Enforcement, Domestic Violence Task Force, CASA, Child and Family Guidance, Strategies, Milledgeville Cares, Georgia College & State University and various faith based organizations.
- This Board feels the agency has a good relationship with the local community partners, especially our local Juvenile Court System, Baldwin County Board of Education, and local Law Enforcement. The Services staff is meeting and surpassing in several fundamental outcome areas. This Board is proud to report Baldwin County has 23 Foster and Adoptive Homes in our county. We acknowledge that we need more homes and our Resource Development Staff is actively recruiting for new Foster Homes. County Director Martin shares the end of the month data regarding fundamental outcome measures in the areas of Every Child Every Month, Every Parent Every Month, Collateral Contacts, Staffing of Cases, Timeliness of Investigations, Timeliness of Family Support Cases, and Response Times for Investigation and Family Support. Baldwin County is consistently at or above the State and Region level in several areas even though staffing is below average. Baldwin County has struggled in meeting requirements in the areas of Every Parent Every Month and Collateral Contacts. The Board feels the data is exceptional under these circumstances.
- Baldwin County's OFI is very pleased to have the work back in the local county. The OFI work for Baldwin County has really improved, but the staff struggle with the abundance of assigned case work in the county. This board is glad to know that the local staff can now process OFI cases to completion. The Board believes that this holds the staff more accountable. We are very proud of the work completed in Baldwin, we are very proud of our local agency. This Board has identified that County Director Martin is very supportive of the staff. She is verily conscientious and is a great leader for our local agency.
- County Director Martin works with the staff very well and has been assisting with supervision and working cases for the past year while vacancies are being filled. Ms. Martin has been very committed to assuring that the work of the CPS and Foster Care Units has been in

compliance even though she has had consistent vacancies in both units. Ms. Martin acknowledged that the CPS supervisors were not committed to assuring that the work was completed timely and in compliance with policies and procedures. As a result of problems identified with the two CPS supervisors, human resources completed an assessment of the county's child welfare operation and concluded that both supervisors were negligent in their duties and responsibilities as supervisors. Due to these circumstances with both supervisors, both were eventually demoted and transferred to other counties within the region. Since that time, Ms. Martin has worked with the Regional Director and HR to fill case manager vacancies and recruit for new CPS supervisors. This Board feels that the Director and staff have done exceptional work and continued to meet the outcome measures. The Board feels that this is an indicator of the quality of services being provided to the children and families in Baldwin County .

- There is great work being done by the staff, even though there are staff shortages / significant turnover in the County. This Board has also identified that morale has improved during recent months in Baldwin County. County Director Martin always shows the staff how much they are appreciated through Staff Appreciations, Thanksgiving Luncheons, Christmas Luncheons, and sometimes provides refreshments at her own expense. The Board members continue to approve funding to support the staff appreciation activities. They attend and engage staff at all agency staff appreciation functions. The board has also initiated projects that have helped to support the work of the staff and agency. The board did a diaper drive and purchased a Stay N' Play in an effort to provide needed resources.

C. The County Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

- As a board, we do believe that it is important for the local county DFCS office to provide the best quality services to the citizens of Baldwin County. We would like to see the work performed in the county meet all the highest standards possible. We also want the office to be staffed sufficiently to accommodate the needs of the community. Our community needs Foster Homes/Group Homes that will take children on an emergency basis; this would prevent children having to stay in hotels for days at a time. Baldwin Co. DFCS staff has stayed at the office over night with a children. This was due to a lack of foster home resources that accept children on an emergency basis or at late hours of the night on weekends.
- Our community desperately needs jobs brought back to the community in order for our citizens to become self-sufficient. There is also a major need to address the Mental Health and Drug Abuse issues in our community.
- Our board feels there should be special enhanced recruitment in order to locate qualified applicants to interview for critical positions that need to be filled in Baldwin Co. The board acknowledges that Human Resources has done a better job of recruiting for the vacancies in Baldwin county during recent months. All of the casemanager position vacancies have been filled and recruitment is ongoing to fill the two CPS supervisor position vacancies.

D. The County Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

- Baldwin County Board recommends adequate staffing for the agency. It would be helpful if there were customized recruiting efforts implemented to establish qualified applicant pools to fill critical

child welfare positions more quickly. Overtime pay should also be considered during times when caseworker positions are vacant and staff are assigned additional workload to cover these vacancies.

The board is very pleased to know that the front desk lines are open. This board feels that Baldwin County also needs 2 administrative positions at the front desk. Our final recommendation is for the State Office to continue to work on providing salary increases for all employees in an effort to better compete with similar private agency or private sector job salaries.

E. Closing:

- In closing, we appreciate the opportunity to make you aware of our local needs, our recommendations, and what is actually going well in Baldwin Co. Our local staff has every intention of providing our community with the needed services. Our remaining Staff is very dedicated to the work we conduct but it becomes difficult due to the lack of appropriate staff. We, Baldwin County DFCS Board, support our County Director and staff. We feel that our County Director is doing a great job leading our county to the next level.

Thank you for your time and consideration with this matter.

Sincerely,


Dr. Janet Hogan Harrison,
Baldwin DFCS Board Chair



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

Annual Report 2017

Bibb County
Department of Family and Children Services
456 Oglethorpe Street
Macon, Georgia 31201



STATE OF GEORGIA

Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

November 21, 2017

Virginia Pryor, Interim Director
Georgia Division of Family and Children Services
2 Peachtree Street/Suite 19.472
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Re: Bibb County DFCS Board Annual Letter

Dear Interim Director Pryor,

A. General summary of the Bibb County DFCS Board:

- Makeup- Members/Officers, Length of service on Board, Background
Dr. Columbus Watkins – Chairman, 35 years-on Board-Bibb Co DFCS, Retired Educator
Mrs. Susan Middleton – Vice Chair, 3 years of service on Board-Bibb Co DFCS, Former school board member & attorney
Colonel Henderson Carswell – 1 year of service on Board-Bibb Co DFCS, active-Bibb Co Sheriff's Office
Ms. Sylvia McGee-2 years of service on Board-Bibb Co DFCS, Retired School Supt. of Bibb Co schools
Mrs. Nancy White- 1 year of service on Board-Bibb Co DFCS, nurse and Exec. Dir of Pilot International-Macon, GA
- Meeting dates & times
The Bibb County DFCS Board currently meets the third Wednesday of each month at 12:30pm. Board members routinely attend the Board meetings.
- Activities for the past year
State Advisory Board member (current)-Dr. Columbus Watkins
Regional Advisory Board member (current)-Mrs. Nancy White
Foster Parent Recruitment Efforts with RD Team (current, ongoing)- Mrs. Susan Middleton
Foster Parent Christmas Dinner (December 2016)- Mrs. Susan Middleton on program
GA Association of DFCS Boards Semi-Annual Meeting attendee (April 2017)- Mrs. Susan Middleton
GHPSA and State Board Conference attendees (August 2017)- Mrs. Sylvia McGee, Mrs. Susan Middleton, Mrs. Nancy White
Law Enforcement Meet and Greet attendee (September 2017)-Colonel Henderson Carswell

- Use of Local County Funds
The use of local county funds is from the Board of Commission and are utilized under the approval of the Bibb Co DFCS Board

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Successes: 5% increase in Response Time met; 100% Family Support Timeliness in the past year; consistently achieved 95% or above for Case Staffings, Collateral Contacts, ECEM, and EPEM to ensure child safety; low turnover rate of 15.91% demonstrating stability of staff to assure timely services; Safe Sleep partnership with Bibb Sheriff's Office and Correct Health to bring sleep awareness/education to pregnant inmates and inmates with small children with upcoming release dates; site location for WIC services for one stop customer access to services; editorial in the Macon Telegraph newspaper in May 2017 supporting the need for more foster parents in Bibb County
- Challenges/Opportunities: 12% increase in the number of foster children; improve the partnership, collaboration, and communication with DJJ
- Number of children in care: 263
- Number of foster parents: 56
- Number of finalized adoptions: 25
- Number of approved foster homes in past year: 22
- Breakdown of number of CPS, Family Preservation and Family Support: CPS- 94, Family Preservation- 135, Family Support- 64
- Breakdown of number of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases: SNAP- 20,945, TANF- 461, Medicaid- 17,328, ABAWD - 0
- Staff turnover rate: 15.91%
- Stakeholder involvement/relationships : Middle GA Domestic Violence Task Force; Juvenile Court Judges' Monthly Breakfast; Mayor's Champions Council; Parenting Treatment Court in conjunction with the Superior Court, District Attorney's Office, Solicitor's Office, and Hephzibah Children's Home; Truancy Task Force with Bibb County Schools; Back to School Bash with Bibb County Schools; Middle GA Regional CSEC Task Force; Bibb County Family Connection; J.U.S.T. Children; 2018 Teen Maze Planning Committee with Macon-Bibb County Health Dept.; Communities in School; United Way Great Start/Parents as Teachers; interns from Mercer University and Middle Georgia State University each school semester; Bibb County Child Fatality Review Committee; Local Interagency Planning Team (LIPT); Crescent House CAC Multidisciplinary Team

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

- All mandated services are being provided and our community partnerships are going well.
- We see the need to have providers in Bibb County that primarily focus on the needs of CSEC (Commercial Sexually Exploited Children) children. Also, regarding CSEC children, training in that area for foster parents so that Bibb County DFCS could recruit more foster homes to place these children or a residential treatment facility. There are some resources here in Bibb County but more resources and providers are needed for adolescent substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health & substance abuse which are prevalent in our cases.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

- The Board is pleased with the effectiveness of the operations of Bibb County DFCS.
- Due to local and national occurrences, escalating violence and aggression in open settings with large populations, the Board of Bibb County DFCS would like more emphasis to be placed on security particularly in the lobby area. The Board recommends active shooter training for staff in 2018. The Agency's efforts about safety are duly noted and encouraged.

Closing: We appreciate the opportunity to voice the strengths as well as the needs of this agency.

Thank you for your time and consideration with this matter.

Sincerely,



Dr. Columbus Watkins
Bibb Co. DFCS Board Chair

STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

Annual Report
2017

Crawford County
Department of Family and Children Services
360 North Dugger Ave
Roberta, Georgia 31078

A. General Summary of the County DFCS Board:

Makeup-Members/Officers:

The Board is made up of five (4) members: a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and three (2) regular members. Board Members are:

Mrs. Barbara Harris, Chairperson
Mr. Alforia Hatcher, Vice-Chairperson
Mrs. Lynn Davidson
Mrs. Libby Jones

Meetings dates/times:

The Board meets the last Friday of every month at 3:00 p.m.

Activities for the past year:

The Board Chairperson, Mrs. Barbara Harris, Vice Chairman, Mr. Alforia Hatcher, Mrs. Lynn Davidson, and Mrs. Libby Jones wasn't able to attend the Georgia Association of DFCS Boards semi-annual meeting in Macon, Ga on April 12, 2017.

The annual Staff Appreciation Day was held for the Crawford County DFCS staff on July 27, 2017 supported by the Board.

Mrs. Lynn Davidson attended the annual Thanksgiving Dinner that was held on November 20, 2017 at Crawford County DFCS. Ms. Davidson and DFCS staff came together to celebrate Thanksgiving.

On October 27, 2017 the Director with Crawford County DFCS met with Ms. Barbara Harris, Board Chairperson, and Board of Commissioner Manager, Fabian Hollis request for financial assistance for the October 1, 2017 thru October 30, 2018 county budget.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision services:

a. What's working well-

In Child Welfare, the number of foster children in care has dropped, along with the number of substantiated cases of abuse and neglect. Case managers has successfully assessed all the children safety in our Family Preservation cases as

well as our Foster Care cases each month since February 2017. Case managers have improved tremendously in meeting response time in a timely manner, and they are closing Investigation/ Family Support cases within the 45 day. Case managers has been consistent in making contacts with their families and entering the documentation into Shines the 1st two weeks of each month. In OFI, case managers are working long hours to complete all Food Stamps and Medicaid cases. Case managers are following-up with their clients to obtain the necessary verification to complete the cases, and they are working hard to get assistance in resolving those systematic issues that are hindering our clients from receiving their benefits in a timely manner.

b. What's not working-

Recently, a new system called Gateway was implemented to process and complete all OFI benefits. Gateway has replaced the Success system which processed and completed all OFI benefits. Unfortunately, case managers are having a hard time learning the system which has hindered the productivity. Also, the Gateway system had some major issues that weren't identified prior to the system being implemented. This has hindered many families from receiving their benefits in a timely manner.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

As stated above, case managers could benefits from additional training regarding the Gateway system. More hands on support is needed to help the OFI case managers complete the past due and current Food Stamps and Medicaid cases.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

OFI staff need more support and training to successfully complete the Food Stamps and Medicaid cases in a timely manner.

Refer clients to the local Churches for assistant with food for their families.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair:

For several months, families within the community went through a difficult time as they were having a hard time feeding their families due to the delay in receiving their

Food Stamps benefits. The board realized that OFI staff and the families in Crawford County suffered during the implementation of the new Gateway system. The board talked about reaching out to their local churches for help in feeding the families in Crawford County. We will continue to look for ways to serve our children and families in Crawford County, and support Crawford County staff as they continue to serve our families.

The Crawford County DFCS board members would like to thank you for your continued support in protecting children and causing a positive change in the lives of citizens throughout the State of Georgia.



Mrs. Barbara Harris, Chairperson



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal

Bobby D. Cagle

Governor

Annual Report

2017

Houston County

Department of Family and Children Services
92 Cohen Walker Drive
Warner Robins, Georgia
31088

Director Virginia Pryor
Georgia Division of Family and Children Services
2 Peachtree Street/Suite 19.472
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Re: Houston DFCS Board Annual Letter for 2017

Dear Director Pryor,

General Summary of the County DFCS Board:

As required in Senate Bill 138, the Houston County Department of Family and Children Services Board is writing this letter to report out on the effectiveness of services in Houston County, the needs of our community and our recommendations for improved operations. We appreciate this opportunity to provide our recommendations.

The Houston County Board meets every other month on the last Thursday of the month. The board consists of three men and two women. Some of our board members have been on the board for over 20 years while others only recently joined within the last few years. Our board is comprised of several current and retired professionals in various industries including but not limited to the school system, the Air Force Base, Social Services and Blue Bird. We are all very involved in this community and giving back through our churches and civic organizations.

Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

This Board is exceptionally proud of our local county office and the work they do every day on behalf of the citizens of Houston County. The agency has maintained and developed some excellent partnerships. The agency has excellent partnerships with Robins Air Force Base, the District Attorney's Office, the Juvenile Court, the County Commissioners Office, CASA and the local Child Advocacy Center among others. Houston County DFCS is also known for its exceptional customer service and works very hard to provide the best service possible.

Board's assessment of the community needs/concerns

As a board we do believe it is important that the local county DFCS office be providing the services to the citizens of Houston County. We would like to see the county office be staffed sufficiently to accommodate the needs of the community. As a board we are

concerned about turnover in Social Services and OFI and the inability of the county to hire due to budget constraints. It was our understanding that the agency as a whole received a large budget increase this year however we are not seeing this extended to Houston County in the form of staff. We would like to see the money be used for county staff positions and not used for other purposes or other staff at levels other than county level. We are also concerned about the increasing number of customers in the lobby with very few agency staff being provided to manage the front desk and answer all the calls coming in on a daily basis. We are also seeing a serious lack of foster parent resources in Houston County and would like to see some local television, and other advertisement campaigns, designed specifically around local needs.

Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

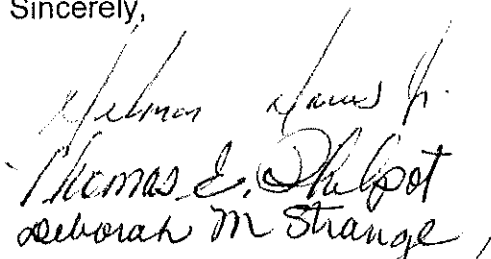
Houston County is a very large and fast growing community. In addition to having the staffing levels equipped to service the needs of the citizens within this growing community, we would also like to see salaries rise at all levels, not just a certain few in Services, so that we can both attract new staff, keep veteran staff and compete with the private sector. We would also like to see the State advocate for raises for all department staff each year equal to what is given to the private sector and/or what is given to state school employees. The board recommends more clerical staff be provided to both OFI and Services so that case managers and supervisors have additional time to focus on the needs and services to the local citizens of Houston County. We would also recommend giving Houston County DFCS the ability to develop campaigns and use local TV advertising specifically designed around the need for foster parents in the local area.

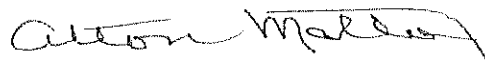
Closing and signatures of the Board

In closing we appreciate the opportunity to be heard and to share the strengths as well as the needs of Houston County DFCS.

Thank you for your time and consideration with this matter.

Sincerely,


Thomas E. Halpot
Deborah M. Strange,
Houston County DFCS Board





STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Jasper County
Department of Family and Children Services
226 Funderburg Drive
Monticello, Ga.
31064

Jasper County Annual Report December 2017

Jasper County DFCS Board:

- The Board is comprised of 5 Members that include:
Joan Bell- Board Chairperson
Larue Camp- Board Member
May Alice Carter- Board Member
Martha Digby- Board Member
Bonnie Walsh- Board Member
- The Jasper County Board meets every third Tuesday at 4:30pm. Meeting dates for 2017 were 1/17/17, 2/21/17, 3/21/17, 4/18/17, 5/16/17, 6/20/17, 8/15/17, 9/19/17, 10/17/17 and 11/21/17.
- The Agency and Board are both extremely involved in community events. This past year DFCS participated in LIPT, Truancy Committee, CHNS Committee, Family Connection, The Domestic Violence Task Force, Back to School Rally, and Community Health Fair.
- County Funds are primarily to cover foster children expenses beyond what the state reimburses, a few community support projects and minor administrative costs.

Successes

- The relationship of the Agency with the Board, Community Partners and Families continues to improve. Communication and Teamwork are stronger than it has been in many years.
- County Director and Social Services Staff are more involved in the daily office operations as well as the community, which has also improved relationships.
- Service Providers for the area continue to be identified.
- The County is looking into establishing an after-school program.
- Family Treatment County is now an option for our substance abusing parents.

Challenges/Opportunities

- This Board does not agree with the Division having control and discretion over how the county funds are spent. The process to use county funds is excessive, which prohibits opportunities to help the community's needy.
- The Board would like to be able to manage the County Funds at the county level.
- The Board does not feel the state is truly interested in what they have to say, even when the opportunity is presented at joint events such as the GPHSA Conference.
- The hiring process is excessively slow which creates a hardship for the rest of the County Office Staff.
- There is not sufficient staff to serve the Constituents.
- Caseloads are too high.

- Multi- County work assignment with Jasper County has been taxing on County Child Welfare Staff and taken County Director away from being able to manage as sufficiently as before.
- Recent staff turnover rate has increased at an alarming rate.

Number of Children in Care

- Jasper County Started 2017 with 17 children in Foster Care. As of 12.1.17 that number has grown to 34.

Number of Approved Foster Homes in Past Year

- Jasper County DFCS currently has 11 active DFCS Homes

Number of finalized adoptions

- Jasper had four adoption finalizations in 2017.

Breakdown number of CPS, Family Preservation and Family Support

- CPS Investigations: 7
- Family Support Assessments: 14
- Family Preservation Cases: 22

Staff Turnover Rate

Jasper had a turnover rate of 25%.

Stakeholder Involvement/ Relationships

- This agency has a positive working relationship with all our community partners. This agency and law enforcement work together to investigate cases of abuse and neglect. The agency works closely with The Family Treatment Court and the rest of the legal community. The Agency, County Director and Board all support various community based programs that include; Family Connection, Local Interagency Planning Teams, The Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Domestic Violence Task Force, just to name a few. DFCS was represented at the annual Back to School Rally, Family Connection Events, The Ethan Richardson Foundation (childhood cancer awareness), and the Health Fair.

Board's Assessment of Community Needs/Concerns

- Service Providers (Community Service Boards) willing to come to Jasper to provide Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment to county residents.
- Transportation Services
- Employment Opportunities
- Families have to travel to neighboring counties to obtain needed services. Many of our Families do not have the resources (such as transportation) available to utilize these services.
- There is not sufficient staff to work with the families of Jasper County, as needed. Continued vigilance towards child safety assessments could be impacted.
- Worker Safety is a concern. Staff travel across the state to serve our children. They are often interacting with our families in unstable

environments, at times with people that have mental health or substance abuse issues. The County Office needs renovations and additional safety features to better protect staff.

- There are not enough local foster homes to serve Jasper's Foster Children so that they can remain in-county for services.
- The growing drug epidemic is having a strong negative impact on the community.

Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

- Additional Staff should be hired so that caseloads can be lowered and families can be adequately served.
- Shorter turnarounds for hiring new staff are needed.
- Agency needs to become more pro-active in the recruitment process for new staff. Adequate applicant pools are a challenge and delay the hiring process.
- Addressing the deficient within the OFI system is needed. County residents are reporting waiting in long lines to determine the status of their delayed benefits.
- Recruitment for additional local foster homes is greatly needed.
- Consider doing away with the combined or Multi- County Agencies. Staff are challenged to manage their daily loads.

We, the Jasper County Division of Family and Children Services Board appreciate being given the opportunity to be heard. We are available and willing to discuss our findings in greater detail if needed.

Sincerely,

Joan Bell

Joan Bell
Chairperson of the Jasper County DFCS Board

**Jones Co DFCS
Board Annual
Report 2017**



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

Jones Co DFCS Board Annual Report 2017:

A. Jones County DFCS Board:

- Board Members are: Janice Roberts- Board Chair, Frances Roberts, Calvin Pitts, Emory Lamar, and Beth Hamrick
- The board meetings are held quarterly at the Jones County Department of Family and Children Services.

B. Assessment of the effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Strengths:

Foster Homes: Jones County is a Class II county by size and has worked diligently to maintain 38 Partnership parents, 8 foster and adopt homes, 4 relative foster homes, and one adopt homes. The board members feel the contributing factors to this retention of homes and foster parents are staffs' commitments, partnership, and communication they have with the foster parents and to the children being served in foster care.

Community Relationship: The relationship between the agency and community partners continues to improve and the partnership is evidence in the work that is completed in the community. The Board members feel Jones Co DFCS has a good relationship with Jones County Board of Education, Jones County Sheriff's Department, Jones County Board of Commissioners, Gray Police Department, and the Georgia Bureau of Investigations. With the continued rise in reports, mandated reporters within the community are reporting cases as they should be via the web site and by phone. This leads the Board to agree the community places confidence in the agency's ability to respond appropriately and handle situations of reports of child abuse or neglect in the community.

Law Enforcement and the agency work jointly to complete cases that involve abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse. They are very responsive to the agency's calls for assistance. Jones County DFCS has a remarkable relationship with the court system, CASA, and Jones County Family Connections.

Staff from Jones County DFCS serve on the Family Dependency Treatment Court, CHINS Bi-Monthly Staffing Meeting, LIPT monthly meetings, Family Connections, and the Quarterly Ocmulgee Domestic Violence Task Force meetings. All of which are critical to the positive outcomes of the safety and well-being of the children and families the agency serves. These connections and partnership has improved the lives of those involved and has shortened the time children are placed out of the home.

County Budget: Jones county Commissioners have demonstrated their support for Jones Co DFCS and the work that is being done continuously over the years. The county funds received by the agency is \$50,000 a year. The money is helpful in the overall operations of the agency often covering expenses not covered by state funds. The budget has been on target or under budget leaving the agency with a considerable fund balance due to the accumulation of funds. From these funds, staff receive a monthly supplement based on length of service with the agency which has proven to retain staff as they feel appreciated.

Outcome Measures: The outcome measures for Jones County are consistently at or above the Region 6 or state averages monthly. The areas are Every Parent Every Month (EPEM), Every Child Every Month (ECEM), Collateral Contacts (COL C), Staffing Cases Every Month (SCEM), Timeliness of Investigations and Family Support Services and Response times being met. The Board feels this indicates the quality of services the community receives from the staff of Jones Co DFCS and again shortens the time children are placed out of the home.

Communication with the Board: Overall, the Board members indicate they are well informed regarding information at all levels of the department to include local, region, and state. They continue to enjoy attending conferences and being made aware of

training opportunities. The Board members are supportive of the Meet and Greet that is held yearly with Jones County's Law Enforcement and community partners.

- **Needs:**

Area of Improvement: Past area of improvement has been with the relationship of the Gray Police Department with the agency. This has improved as CD Cunningham has met with leaders and now feel there is a better understanding of policy and procedure. Gray Police Officers are now contacting the agency for any assistance or questions they may have in regards to children and families in the community. The agency has contacted the Gray Police for several incidents in the office and they have responded very quickly and offered support.

The main area of improvement is a concern for staff safety. There have been two incidents in the office that has been discussed with the board. Both incidents involved clients that suffered untreated mental health illnesses. Both clients threatened staff with bodily harm to include one of these clients having a weapon. The Board discussed with CD Cunningham having the front lobby reassessed to make it safer for staff and customers visiting the building for services. .

One action the Board was very supportive of was as part of the Meet and Greet, Jones County DFCS staff participated in an Active Shooter Training. The training was very informative and offered safety tips to handle situations that involve safety.

C. Jones County Board's assessment of the needs of the Community:

- *Transportation:* Jones Co transit is the only public transportation in Jones County. For residents that have medical needs, there is the Medicaid transport that bills Medicaid for the services. For the most part, there is a lack of public transportation in this community. There are areas of Jones County that is close to the Bibb County line where the residents can take advantage of the transportation system that Bibb has to offer.
- *Housing:* There is limited housing in Jones County that offers subsidized rent and within this arena there are long waiting list which makes it very difficult to obtain. At this time there is not a housing authority in the area.
- *Substance Abuse Treatment:* Director Cunningham has shared the increase in reports that involve drug abuse with parents using with their teenagers as well as infants being

born drug exposed. Over 55% of the cases received by the agency in a three month period involved infants testing positive for illegal drugs. The agency has seen an increase in methamphetamine abuse and opiate abuse. The Board agrees and sees the need for outpatient and inpatient treatment facilities in the area. This is a recognized issue not only in Jones County but across the State of Georgia. Jones County has seen a rise in teenagers testing positive for illegal drugs and has quickly realized there are limited to almost no resources for teenagers suffering from addiction. The funds utilized for in home services are maxed out quickly as the services that are placed in the home are very expensive.

D. Board's recommendations for improvement operations of the county department

Recommendation: The Board has identified a need that they feel will improve the overall operations of this agency as needing a supervisor that is dedicated Assessment Unit. CD Cunningham has been actively supervising the Assessment Unit and completing director responsibilities. With the new Solution Based Casework and Blueprint for a Change projects, the demand for a better workforce is directly related to having adequate supervision.

Respectfully Submitted,



Janice Roberts

Jones County DFCS Board Chair

Monroe County DFCS Annual Report November 2017

Summary of the Monroe County DFACS Board

Our Board is made up of 5 members from different communities within the county. Mrs. Georgia Evans is our President, with Lisa Davis as our Vice-President. The other members include Richard Dumas, Herbert Gantt and Mrs. Haygood. We meet on the 4th Monday of each month at 12:30 pm. We had 2 members attend the conference in Savannah this past August and 3 that attended the annual Board Meeting in April.

Effectiveness of Local County Department's Provision of Services


Our Monroe County Board feels that our county office does an extremely well job with our constituents and the partnerships in the community. We have a wonderful relationship with the Child Abuse Reporting Enforcement committee and the Monroe County Work Force Development which works with us in helping our constituents find jobs. There are no known complaints from our foster families, especially since they received an increase in the per diem this past year. The Board believes that the increase in salary for our workers have also helped with their effectiveness and increased morale. This year a new Boys and Girls Club was started in our county, and DFACS is happy to be working

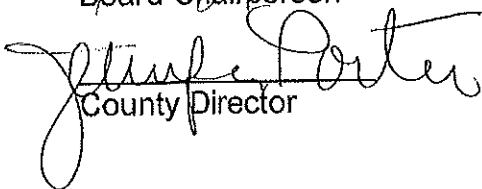
Needs of the Community

As a board, we are mindful of what our DFCS office is doing in regard to the services they provide. We realize how important it is that we maintain close relationships with our citizens. We are mindful that our community needs either more mental health places or better transportation to these places in other counties. It was passed that Monroe County would keep our local hospital open for at least another year. Having good local health care is a problem that not only we have but also most rural counties in Georgia. It is a crucial need to find more foster families. However, the new program called Kinship State Project should help with this problem.

Recommendations for Improved Operations of the County Department

The biggest problem that our county office has faced this year is the slowness of the hiring process. The positions have either been frozen for an extended period of time or each step in the process has taken many weeks. We feel that it is imperative that we be adequately staffed in order for the workload to be performed in a timely manner as required. We recommend that HR try to have the process be quicker. Another recommendation is to have more improvements in our building.


Board Chairperson


County Director

STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

Annual Report
2017

Peach County
Department of Family and Children Services
700 Spruce Street – Wing E
Fort Valley, Georgia 31030

A. General Summary of the County DFCS Board:

Makeup-Members/Officers:

The Board is made up of five (5) members: a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and three (3) regular members. Board Members are:

Dr. Dorothy Conteh, Chairperson
Mr. Robert Ross, Vice-Chairperson
Mrs. Janza Coar
Mr. Dennis Herbert
Mr. Rusty Adams

Meetings dates/times:

The Board meets the 4th Thursday of every month at 10:30 a.m.

Activities for the past year:

The Board Chairperson, Dr. Dorothy Conteh, and Vice Chairman, Robert Ross, attended the Georgia Association of DFCS Boards semi-annual meeting in Macon, Ga on April 12, 2017.

Mr. Herbert attended the Foster Parent Appreciation breakfast/meeting held 5/31/17 at the Railroad Café. DFCS staff and the Board showed their support of the wonderful job the foster parents do for the county.

The Board was represented at the County Commissioner's budget hearing in June, 2017. Dr. Conteh, Board Chairperson, assisted the Director with Peach County DFCS' request for financial assistance for the October 1, 2017 thru September 30, 2018 county budget.

A member of the Board attended the GPHSA Conference held in Savannah, Ga August 29th and 30th.

All Board members attended the Meet and Greet with local Law Enforcement and DFCS staff held September 28, 2017.

The annual Fall Festival was held for the Peach County foster children in October, 2017 supported by the Board.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision services:

a. What's working well-

In Child Welfare, the number of foster children in care has dropped and substantiated reports of abuse/neglect have also been on the decline. In OFI, all caseloads are once again being covered by the assigned case manager. For months some staff were out due to medical reasons and their work was split up amongst case managers who remained on the job. At one time, three casemanagers were on medical leave at the same time. The Board realizes staff at Peach County DFCS have played a big role in all of the above-mentioned success.

b. What's not working-

GATEWAY, the new online application program and system for OFI benefits was newly introduced in 2017. The program still has a few "kinks" which need to be corrected. Benefits are not being received in a timely manner which contributes greatly to other under-lying problems for some families. The emphasis has been put on customers applying for all benefits online, however, the application process, as far as case managers being able to work up cases in a timely manner, needs to be addressed. Unmanageable caseloads could be a factor in cases not being worked up in a timely manner.

Peach County DFCS does not have a full-time on-site OFI Supervisor. Currently, a temporary supervisor comes to the county two or three times per week. OFI staff often have to communicate via telephone or email with the supervisor when issues arise warranting the assistance of the supervisor. Newly hired OFI staff are not provided the availability to confer with the supervisor face-to-face for assistance on a daily basis. Customers requesting to speak with a supervisor are given the supervisor's phone number and the call from this county to the supervisor's home county is a long distance call. The current caseloads and incoming applications for benefits warrant a full-time supervisor in the county office.

Transportation continues to be a barrier for customers in Peach County. The DFCS office is located on the south side of Fort Valley, which is not really centrally located. Also, the City of Byron and the City of Fort Valley make up Peach County and Byron is approximately 13 miles from Fort Valley.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

As stated above, there is a great need for transportation service in Fort Valley and Byron.

The building is quite old and renovations are needed to bring it up to current standards. Restrooms are frequently out of order, the circuit breaker is "thrown" when more than one staff member in a cubicle plugs in an extra electrical item, and there is no working water fountain currently available for use by customers or staff.

There needs to be a full-time OFI Supervisor in Peach County. Customers have to contact the supervisor via phone when the circumstances warrant a supervisor to handle the situation. The customers are instructed to call the supervisors phone if they happen to come in or call on a day she is not in the Peach County office. For many of the customers, the call is a long distance call.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

A full-time OFI Supervisor should be hired for Peach County DFCS.

It should be decided if Peach County DFCS will remain in its current building and if so many of the issues mentioned in item C. should be addressed right away.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair:

As we live in communities with forever evolving and developing social problems, Peach County has an on-going problem with domestic violence, substance abuse and mental health issues. We continue to see more and more unaddressed social problems, as our customers must travel out of county to receive treatment. Transportation appears to be the biggest barrier in addressing these issues, as customers do not have transportation to treatment facilities, which often results in unmet treatment needs. The Board feels that public transportation is a critical need in the Peach Community.

The Peach County DFCS board members would like to thank you for your continued support in protecting children and causing a positive change in the lives of citizens throughout the State of Georgia.

Dr. Dorothy Conteh, Chairperson

Chunfeng Li
12/15/17



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Putnam County
Department of Family and Children Services
675 Godfrey Road
Eatonton, Georgia
31024

Putnam County Annual Report DECEMBER 2017

Putnam County DFCS Board:

- The Board is comprised of 5 Members that include:
Margaret Merchant - Board Chairperson
Patricia Monday - Board Member
Anna Mullis - Board Member (resigned)
Sandra Parham - Board Member
Georgia Smith - Board Member
- The Putnam County Board meets every other month on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 8:30am. Meeting Dates for 2017 were 1/24/17, 3/28/17, 5/23/17, 7/25/17, 9/26/17, and 11/28/17.
- The Agency and Board are both extremely involved in community events. This past year DFCS participated in LIPT, Family Connection, The Domestic Violence Task Force, Back to School Rally and a Pinwheel Ceremony on the Courthouse lawn.
- County Funds are primarily utilized to cover the agency's one cash-match position. Our agency is fortunate enough to have a bi-lingual program assistant at the front desk to better communicate with our large Hispanic population. The remaining funds are used to cover foster children expenses beyond what the state reimburses, a few community support projects and minor administrative costs.

Successes

- Putnam County DFCS is fortunate to have a bilingual staff member to greet and communicate with customers at the front desk.
- Putnam County DFCS has exceptionally positive working relationships with our community partners.
- Customer Service continues to be a priority.
- Putnam County DFCS has exceptionally positive working relationships with our community partners.
- The County Director demonstrates fiscal responsibility for all funds received.
- Putnam County DFCS was allowed to hire an Administrative Assistant, which has allowed the County Director more opportunities to engage with staff and the families that we serve.

Challenges/Opportunities

- The hiring process is excessively slow which creates a hardship for the rest of the County Office Staff.
- There is not sufficient staff to serve the Constituents.
- Caseloads are too high.
- Multi- County work assignment with Jasper County has been taxing on County Child Welfare Staff and taken County Director away from being able to manage as sufficiently as before.
- Recent staff turnover rate has increased at an alarming rate.

Number of Children in Care

- Putnam County Started 2017 with 25 children in Foster Care. As of 12.1.17 that number has grown to 45.

Number of Approved Foster Homes in Past Year

- Putnam County DFCS currently has 21 active DFCS Homes

Number of finalized adoptions

- Putnam has had one adoption finalization in 2017 and one scheduled for 12.15.17

Breakdown number of CPS, Family Preservation and Family Support

- CPS Investigations: 10
- Family Support Assessments: 15
- Family Preservation Cases: 16

Staff Turnover Rate

Putnam suffered a 31% turnover rate.

Stakeholder Involvement/ Relationships

- This agency has a positive working relationship with all our community partners. This agency and law enforcement work together to investigate cases of abuse and neglect. The agency works closely with The Baldwin Family Treatment Court and the rest of the legal community. The Agency, County Director and Board all support various community based programs that include; Family Connection, Local Interagency Planning Teams, Putnam County and the Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Domestic Violence Task Force, Lifesource Food Drive just to name a few. DFCS was represented at the annual Back to School Rally, Family Connection Events, Domestic Violence Candlelight Vigils, The Ethan Richardson Foundation (childhood cancer awareness), and was a joint partner in a Pinwheel Ceremony to bring Child Abuse Awareness to the community in April.

Board's Assessment of Community Needs/Concerns

- Service Providers (Community Service Boards) willing to come to Putnam to provide Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment to county residents.
- Families have to travel to neighboring counties to obtain needed services. Many of our Families do not have the resources (such as transportation) available to utilize these services.
- There is not sufficient staff to work with the families of Putnam County, as needed. Continued vigilance towards child safety assessments could be impacted.
- Worker Safety is a concern. Staff travel across the state to serve our children. They are often interacting with our families in unstable environments, at times with people that have mental health or substance abuse issues. The County Office needs renovations and additional safety features to better protect staff.

- There are not enough local foster homes to serve Putnam's Foster Children so that they can remain in-county for services.
- Current drug epidemic in the community.
- Lack of Employment Opportunities

Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

- Additional Staff should be hired so that caseloads can be lowered and families can be adequately served.
- Shorter turnarounds for hiring new staff are needed.
- Agency needs to become more pro-active in the recruitment process for new staff. Adequate applicant pools are a challenge and delay the hiring process.
- Addressing the deficient within the OFI system is needed. County residents are reporting waiting in long lines to determine the status of their delayed benefits
- Recruitment for additional local foster homes is greatly needed.
- Consider doing away with the combined or Multi- County Agencies. Staff are challenged to manage their daily loads.

We, the Putnam County Division of Family and Children Services Board appreciate being given the opportunity to be heard. We are available and willing to discuss our findings in greater detail if needed.

Sincerely,

Margaret Merchant

Margaret Merchant
Chairperson of the Putnam County DFCS Board



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

Annual Report

2017

Twiggs County
Division of Family and Children Services
14072 US Hwy 80 Suite A
Jeffersonville, GA 31044

TWIGGS COUNTY
ANNUAL REPORT
DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Makeup – Members/Officers
 1. Patricia Gallegly – Board Chair.
 2. Matilda Basley – Vice–Chair
 3. Marilyn Mallory – Board Member
 4. Loretta Faulk – Board Member

- Meeting dates/times:

Board Meetings are held monthly on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 9 am at the Twiggs County DFCS office.

- Activities for the past year:

During the past year, the Board has been very involved with the local office and community. We helped provide staff with a Thanksgiving and Christmas luncheon as an appreciation for the work they are doing. We attended the Semi-Annual DFCS County Board Meeting in April. We attended the Annual GPHSA Conference held in August in Savannah, GA and GPHSA Fall Meeting and Training in St. Simons during the month of November. We advocated for local businesses to help our local office with food donations in November and gifts for the foster children at Christmas time. We supported the staff in April during Child Abuse Prevention Month with community awareness activities such as pinwheels for prevention and wearing our blue ribbons/pins. We participated in the Back-to-School Backpacks for Children drive that was held in the community. We attended and participated in Family Connections meetings.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- What's working well: This Board is proud of Twiggs County DFCS and the community partnerships that have been developed and maintained throughout the years. The relationship between DFCS and the local law enforcement is excellent. The local law enforcement is very involved with the agency and they support the work that is being done by the staff. If their assistance is needed they respond immediately to help ensure the safety of the staff. Our relationship with the County Commissioner's Office is a strong partnership. Family Connections is a partnership that has grown throughout

the years. We support this partnership and participate in this partnership, as one of our board members is a part of the Family Connections Team.

- What's not working: As a Board we are concerned about turnover in both Social Services (SS) and the Office of Family Independence (OFI). We are aware that in the last fiscal year Social Services and OFI staff were given salary increases in hopes of retaining workers and recruiting better qualified applicants, but workers appear to still be leaving at a rapid pace. Workers continue to cite high workloads and job demands that far exceed a 40 hour work week, which greatly impacts their family life.

Another concern is around front desk coverage. The front desk position in Twiggs has been vacant since September 1, 2017. Although approval to fill the position has been given, months have gone by and the position is still not filled. This is a hardship for the one OFI worker that is now left, as she has to work her cases, service all walk-ins, and answer all OFI calls.

- C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns: As a Board we do believe there are needs within this community. Currently, Twiggs County does not have any foster parents. Due to this when children are brought into care they are having to be placed outside of the county. We feel there is a lack of transportation services within our county. We also feel there is a need for an ambulance service within our county. At present time we do not have an ambulance service. We are very concerned with the increase of drug activity in the county. We are aware that the majority of the social services cases that the county handles involves drug issues within the family. This is very concerning to us as a Board.
- D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department: As a Board we have several recommendations. We feel that the process in regards to the recruitment and hiring of new staff needs to be evaluated. We feel that part of the issue regarding the lengthy process has to do with recruitment due to limited qualified applicants applying for the positions. In regards to turnover, we feel that employee salaries need to be evaluated. We feel that increasing pay at all levels will help with sustainability, while also creating a competitive market so that the right people are hired for the job. We also feel that the development of foster homes in this community is a must.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair: In closing, we appreciate you giving us the opportunity to be heard. We have some excellent partnerships in Twiggs County and are extremely proud of the work our DFCS office does.

Patricia Gallegly
Twiggs County DFCS Board Chair

Patricia Gallegly
12/15/17



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

Annual Report 2017

Wilkinson County
Division of Family and Children Services
103 Payne Street
Irwinton, GA 31042

**WILKINSON COUNTY
ANNUAL REPORT
DECEMBER 2017**

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Makeup - Members/Officers
 1. Earl Knight-Board Chair
 2. Betty Cooper-Board Member
 3. Walter Holloway-Board Member
 4. Felton Swicord-Board Member

- **Meeting dates/times:**

Board Meetings are held monthly on the 4th Wednesday of the month at 9:00 am at the Wilkinson County DFCS office.

- **Activities for the past year:**

During this past year the Board has been very involved with the local office and community. We assisted in providing staff with a Thanksgiving and Christmas luncheon, as an appreciation for the work that they do each and every day. We attended the Semi-Annual DFCS County Board Meeting held in April. We had participation at the GPHSA Conference held in August in Savannah, GA., and Board members attended the GPHSA Fall Meeting/Training in St. Simons, GA. We advocated for the Department by working with churches in the community to provide donations for foster children when they first enter care. We advocated for the Department by working with civic organizations to also help provide needed items for families that we are working with, as well as when children first enter care. We attended and participated in Family Connection meetings. The Board supported staff in April during Child Abuse Prevention Month. Pinwheels were displayed in support of prevention and blue ribbons/pins were worn. We also participated the Back-to-School Backpacks for Children Drive in the community. We facilitated with the help of the County Director in writing a letter to the landlord so that needed improvements could be made to the DFCS building. The landlord responded immediately and improvements were made.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

What's working well: This Board is proud of Wilkinson County DFCS and the community partnerships that have been developed and maintained throughout the

years. The relationship between DFCS and the local law enforcement is excellent. The local law enforcement is very involved with the agency and support the work that is being done by the staff. If their assistance is needed they respond immediately to help ensure the safety of the staff. Family Connection is a partnership that has grown throughout the years. We support this partnership and participate in this partnership, as one of our board members is a part of the Family Connection team. We have an excellent relationship with several churches and civic organizations in the community.

What's not working:

As a Board, we are concerned about turnover in both Social Services and in Office of Family Independence. We are aware that in the last fiscal year Social Services and OFI staff were given salary increases in hopes of retaining workers and recruiting better qualified applicants, but workers appear to continue to leave at a rapid pace. Workers cite high workloads and job demands that far exceed a 40-hour work-week, which greatly impacts their family life.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

As a Board, we do believe there are needs within this community. Currently, Wilkinson County only has one foster parent. Because of this, when children are brought into care they are having to be placed outside of the county. We feel there is a huge need for recruitment and development of foster homes in Wilkinson County. We are very concerned with the increase of drug activity in the county. We are aware that the majority of Social Services cases that the county handles involves drug issues within the family. This is very concerning to us as a Board.

D. Board 's recommendation for improved operations of the County

Department:

As a Board, we have several recommendations. We feel that the process in regards to recruitment, and hiring new staff needs to be evaluated. The major issue has to do with Human Resources lengthy hiring process, to include timely job posting, recruitment and on-boarding. We are aware that in the last fiscal year, Social Services and OFI staff were given salary increases in hopes of retaining workers and recruiting better qualified applicants, but workers appear to still be leaving at a rapid pace. Workers continue to cite high workloads and job demands that far exceed a 40 hour work week, which greatly impacts their family life. There is also a desperate need for the development of foster homes in the community. We also feel that new DFCS signage needs to be constructed for outside the building. The current sign is very old and is hard to see from the road.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair.

In closing, we appreciate you giving us the opportunity to be heard. We have some excellent partnerships in Wilkinson County and are extremely proud of the work our DFCS office does.

Earl Knight
Wilkinson County DFCS Board Chair

Earl Knight
12/15/17

*Chattahoochee County Department of
Family and Children Services
Annual Board Report
December, 2017*

- The Chattahoochee County DFCS Board is comprised of the following members:
 - Mrs. Madelyn Cumby, Chairperson
 - Mrs. Julia Liles, Vice-Chair
 - Ms. Louise Gardner
 - Mrs. Fannie Thornton
 - Ms. Cornelia King

- The Chattahoochee County DFCS Board meets monthly on the fourth (4th) Tuesday of each month at 4:00 p.m. at the Chattahoochee County DFCS Conference Room. There is no meeting held in the month of December.
- This Board is very pleased that CD Donna Tennison was finally promoted to the County Director position after serving as the Interim Director for both Chattahoochee and Marion Counties for several years and certainly deserved this promotion. Mrs. Tennison is very knowledgeable in all program areas and ensures that this Board is kept well-informed.
- During the past year, this Board has met consistently. In partnership with the County Director, we are kept informed of agency accomplishments, needs, problems, and upcoming programs. This Board has offered its assistance and participation whenever possible. During this year, the Board has received the annual County DFCS Board Training, training on The Blueprint for Change, and training on The Safe to Sleep Initiative. During the past year, members of this Board have served as charged.
- The Chattahoochee County DFCS Board finds that the Chattahoochee Co. DFCS continues to work in compliance with all State and County guidelines. This office maintains excellent customer service with both its internal and external customers. It is noted that partner agencies, customers, and agencies outside this community speak highly of the service and cooperation they receive when working with Chattahoochee County DFCS staff.
 - Chattahoochee County DFCS is performing well in the area of service delivery to all customers. During this year we experienced a shortage of OFI staff due to a resignation. We have since filled the position. The OFI

staff consistently meet, or exceed all OFI guidelines for SOP, timeliness, and accuracy. This agency currently does not have a Social Services Supervisor and CD Tennison has had to act in this role in addition to her other duties. The Social Services staff consistently meet performance indicators. This agency has suffered the loss of most of its veteran staff, but has worked hard to rebuild and meet all agency goals.

- During 2017, this Board has had discussion on the following topics of concern:
 - Lack of safety measures for workers traveling into remote rural areas where they feel unsafe.
 - This Board approved funds for the purchase of a color printer and cartridges in April, 2017. This purchase has been made.
 - In July, 2017 CD Tennison provided annual training to all Board members on the Rules and Regulations of County DFCS Boards.
 - In September, 2017, CD Tennison informed the Board of the agency;s need for two car seats to be used when transporting children. These seats will remain with the agency for this purpose. This purchase was approved.
- During this year, Vice-Chairperson, Judy Liles served as a member of the Regional DFCS Board, but was unable to attend many of the meetings due to illness of a family member. In our November, 2017 meeting Judy Liles submitted her resignation from this Board. CD Tennison has notified the Chattahoochee Co. Commission Chair and requested a replacement.

It is the observation of this Board that CD Tennison and the Chattahoochee Co. DFCS staff work very well together. CD Tennison strongly believes in the "TEAM" concept, and it is evident in the day-to-day operations at the office. The "team" works together across county and programmatic lines to ensure that goals are met, and that customers are served.

- CD Tennison continues to work hard to build and strengthen relationships with agency partners. There has been much growth in this area during CD Tennison's tenure.
- Chattahoochee County remains in need of local foster homes. DFCS staff continue to advocate for local foster homes by sharing the need with local churches and at all collaborative meetings.
- CD Tennison and staff work diligently each year ensure that every child in Chattahoochee County has a "merry" Christmas. Each year, CD Tennison and staff, friends, family, local churches and agency partners work together to purchase, wrap, and deliver toys to local foster and needy children. Each year, this is one of the agency's most successful projects.

In addition to the successes, there are some challenges. Chattahoochee County is a very small, rural county. In recent times, we have experienced a large increase in illegal

drug activity which has impacted the lives of numerous children. During this year, Chattahoochee County has had more children in Foster Care than in past years. The lack of local foster homes only complicates this issue.

C. Community Needs/Concerns:

- Local Foster Homes

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

- The Board requests consideration for the safety of staff members traveling to homes in remote areas of the county. This Board is aware of the "panic button", but phone service is limited, at best, in the remote areas of the county. We are very concerned for the safety of our workers who routinely travel into these areas. Please consider alternatives for workers in remote areas of the State. When our case managers fear for their safety, they tend to seek other employment. We want to keep the good staff that we have.

E. This Board feels that Chattahoochee County DFCS is one of the best child welfare agencies in the world. We will continue to work together to become "The BEST"!

Signature: _____

Madelyn Cumby

Chattahoochee County DFCS Board Chairperson

original
mailed
11/29/17

COPY

November 21, 2017

TO: Ginger Pryor, State DFCS Director
2 Peachtree Street
19-490
Atlanta, GA 30303

FROM: Clay County DFCS Board

RE: Annual DFCS Board Report – Clay County DFCS

The Clay County DFCS Board has been supportive in the work of the agency in a number of ways. Each board member lives in the community and is aware of the demographics and needs of the community. Additionally, each board member is involved in serving and promoting the growth and well-being of children and families. In their various capacities, the members promote the work and efforts of the local DFCS staff. The Clay County Board works well together and meetings are scheduled on a bi-monthly basis to discuss both the needs of the community and of the staff.

A major strength for our local DFCS staff is that of continuity and longevity of service. The staff is not only familiar with the services they provide but to the community they provide it to. This promotes the quality of customer service and affords better networking with the community. The staff also work very well together to get the job done!

One of the biggest positives for 2017 is that in the past, we have had to share a social services supervisor with 4 other counties. This year, we were able to hire a social services supervisor by promoting a long term case manager here locally. We are excited for her counterpart to be hired so that the 5 counties in our cluster will share 2 social services supervisor instead of the 1 supervisor we have had for years. This will allow the supervisor to focus more on the families here at home.

One of the areas that we need to change is that the office is only open 3 days a week to the public and we need it to be open 5 days a week. This access is desperately needed for the people in Clay County. We feel that it would greatly enhance the services to the county. In a small, rural community, the DFCS office is really a source of support, and it is important that our constituents are able to access the staff there. It's easier to talk to someone you know about your business rather than a stranger on

the phone. Having the phone lines back in the county has helped, but our staff continue to have to travel to other offices on the days that the office is closed which is prohibitive to excellent customer service.

The County Director position continues to be posted and reposted. This is much needed as we have had an interim county director for several years now. She has done as much as she can do with covering both this position as well as another one, but we are looking forward to having someone here full time and the stability that brings with it. Additionally, Clay and Quitman Counties have always worked well together so a joint appointment for county director for these counties is understandable. However, we have now been grouped with Randolph County as well and we feel that this is just too much for one County Director to handle and due to the size of Randolph County, the person who is hired will likely end up spending much of his/her time there.

Finally, the building here in Clay County is in need of some upkeep. The outside really looks bad and is not at all inviting. In fact, it is hard to distinguish it as a DFCS office. The parking lot is full of potholes which could be dangerous not only to vehicles but also to foot traffic. It desperately needs some paint and some landscaping at a minimum. It is also time for interior improvements such as paint and carpet.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss Clay County's strengths and needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jacqueline McClendon Vice-Chairman". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Libby Neves

Clay County DFCS Board Chairman

NATHAN DEAL
GOVERNOR



VIRGINIA PRYOR
INTERIM DIRECTOR

**To: Ginger Pryor, Interim DFCS Division Director,
Department of Family and Children Services**

**From: Jena Jones, Crisp County Director
Dooly County Department of Family and Children Services**

Date: December 7, 2017

Subject: DFCS Field Operations Annual County Board Report

A. General summary of the Dooly County DFCS Board:

The Dooly County Board plays a vital role in helping to make the Division of Family and Children Services' programs more meaningful and efficient as designed to serve families and children. The Board is an active liaison as a representative of the community and the public. The County Board is also expected to assist in interpreting human service programs to local officials to gain support, secure additional funding for specific needs beyond state appropriations, and set standards for the expenditure of county funds.

The DFCS staff and Board Members work together toward helping make an impact on the overall welfare of Georgia's citizens as they advocate for financial supports, resources, and activities for the County Staff.

Dooly County Board Members/Officers

Patsy Carter- Chairperson
Dale Clemons-Vice Chairperson
Judy Burton-Board Member
Meredith Lester-Board Member

Board Meeting dates and times

Board meetings are held bi-monthly, on the third Thursday in the month, at 4:00 p.m. in the conference room. Dates for upcoming Dooly County Board meetings are posted in the county lobby, local commissioner's office, and throughout the county office. Open to the public.

The following is a list of our upcoming board meetings.

January 18, 2018
March 15, 2018
May 17, 2018
July 19, 2018
September 20, 2018
November 15, 2018

Activities for the past year for Dooly County Board members and county staff:

- Board members and staff attends Annual County Board training
- Assist the County Director in building staff morale and motivating employees
- Board members and staff attend the county staff appreciation events, and holiday events
- Jena Jones, County Director attends the Regional Advisory Board meetings
- Blue Print for Change- County Director provides updates and ongoing discussion with the Crisp County Board Members and Crisp County Commissioners
- County staff participates in annual can food and toy drive with Family Connections
- Gateway Advocacy Center annual food and toy drive
- New-Red Cross Shelter
- Dooly County local schools, churches participate in annual drive for food and toys
- Dooly County Staff and Board Members participate – Annual Meet and Greet with Law Enforcement
-

The Dooly County Director, in collaboration with the Local County Advisory Board proactively seeks out additional funding each year from local entities to supplement their budgets in meeting specific needs. These local funds are subject to the same internal control policy and procedures governing state and federal fund.

Local entity funds can be used for specific needs when state funds are not allowed, or there is a need to supplement state funds. Expenditures must be specified and be approved in the county's budget and Board Members approval must be documented in the board minutes.

Examples of these expenditures are:

- Regular Operating Cost •
- Equipment •
- Travel
-
- Foster Care Expenses (including haircuts, allowances, musical instruments/lessons, diapers, school activity fees, camps, photo packages, etc.) •
-
- General Assistance to Clients (Indigent Care) •
-
- Training/Staff Appreciation/DFCS related meeting expenses (including training material, meals/refreshments with an agenda.) •
-
- Certificates or plaques of merit, achievement or retirement, etc. following Policy 803 of the DHR Personnel Policies titled to Incentive Pay and Meritorious Awards •
-
- Plaques to a retiring employee (Retirement Reception must be funded from outside of state or county funds.) •
-
- Funds received from Interest on local County CD's and Savings accounts should remain on the DFCS' books, and can be used for Staff
-
- Appreciation Day/Luncheons where a meeting and luncheon occurs.

An agenda for the meeting should be attached to the payment as supporting documentation.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of Dooly County Department's provision of services:

What's working well?

- New- Kiosk's in county office area provides self-service for customers
- OFI and SS customer service together works well
- All expedited customers that come into the local office for SNAP, family Medicaid, and TANF are now served faster and more efficiently.
- County has OFI supervisor on site daily in the county office
- 1 New OFI case manager
- SNAP applications can now be completed on line
- Annual Secret Santa for Foster Children
- The employment of Mental Health Adults in the janitorial services Office of Family Independence (OFI) and Social Services (SS) have great customer service with community stakeholders, School Systems Court, CASA, Board members, MDT members, Church members, Lion's club.
- Foster care team has adoptions worked securing permanency for foster resources for children.
- Continuous improvement of securing safe and stable placements
- Place foster children in the community with relatives and or fictive kin

- What is not working well?
-
- Lag time New hire onboarding process of new employees
- CICC reports lacking all household information when sending
- Report's to the county and LE which creates lag time for response to ensuring immediate safety of child/ren

Dooly County 2017 Data

Foster Care	CPS Investigation	CPS Ongoing	Family Support	Foster Parents	Approved Foster Home 2017	Adoptions 2017	SNAP	TANF	Medicaid	ABD
12	29	15	63	1	0	2	1,394	31	486	242

BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE → A STATE OF HOPE =
SAFE CHILDREN. STRENGTHENED FAMILIES. STRONGER GEORGIA.

C. Dooly County Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

- Shelter's for homeless disabled adults and veteran families.
- Public transportation for community and disabled.
- Medicaid transportation.
- Local Child care, early childhood program's.
- Utility assistance Program-LIHEAP Program
- More community resources for TANF worker's to be employed.
- Additional Foster Homes for local foster children.
- Healthcare resources for the community.
- Adoptive families for foster children need permanent homes.

D. Dooly County Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

Worker's self-protection with Law enforcement assistance- safety in the community

Continue to expand the Poverty Food Pantry

Building Security on site and afterhours for staff safety with Law Enforcement


Dooly County Board Chair


Dooly County Director

BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE ★ A STATE OF HOPE ☞
SAFE CHILDREN. STRENGTHENED FAMILIES. STRONGER GEORGIA.

NATHAN DEAL
GOVERNOR



VIRGINIA PRYOR
INTERIM DIRECTOR

**To: Ginger Pryor, Interim DFCS Division Director,
Department of Family and Children Services**

**From: Jena Jones, Crisp County Director
Crisp County Department of Family and Children Services**

Date: December 5, 2017

Subject: DFCS Field Operations Annual County Board Report

A. General summary of the Crisp County DFCS Board:

The Crisp County Board plays a vital role in helping to make the Division of Family and Children Services' programs more meaningful and efficient as designed to serve families and children. The Board is an active liaison as a representative of the community and the public. The County Board is also expected to assist in interpreting human service programs to local officials to gain support, secure additional funding for specific needs beyond state appropriations, and set standards for the expenditure of county funds.

The DFCS staff and Board Members work together toward helping make an impact on the overall welfare of Georgia's citizens as they advocate for financial supports, resources, and activities for the County Staff.

Crisp County Board Members/Officers

Anne Green- Chairperson
Melinda Whiddon-Vice Chairperson
Betty Baker-Board Member
Dorothy Schofield-Board Member
Gabiella Demery-Board Member
Ketorie Scales-Board Member
Lynn West-Board Member

Board Meeting dates and times

Board meetings are held bi-monthly, on the third Tuesday in the month, at 4:00 p.m. in the conference room. Dates for upcoming Crisp County Board meetings are posted in the county lobby, local commissioner's office, and throughout the county office. Open to the public.

The following is a list of our upcoming board meetings.

January 16, 2018
March 20, 2018
May 15, 2018
July 17, 2018
September 18, 2018
November 20, 2018

Activities for the past year for Crisp County Board members and county staff:

- Board members and staff attends Annual County Board training
Assist the County Director in building staff morale and motivating employees
- Board members and staff attend the county staff appreciation events, and holiday events
- Melinda Whiddon, Vice-Chairperson attends the Regional Advisory Board meetings quarterly
- Blue Print for Change- County Director provides updates and ongoing discussion with the Crisp County Board Members and Crisp County Commissioners
- County staff participates in annual can food and toy drive
- Gateway Advocacy Center annual food and toy drive
New-Red Cross Shelter
Crisp County local schools, churches participate in annual drive for food and toys
- Crisp County Staff and Board Members participate – Annual Meet and Greet with Law Enforcement
-

The Crisp County Director, in collaboration with the Local County Advisory Board proactively seeks out additional funding each year from local entities to supplement their budgets in meeting specific needs. These local funds are subject to the same internal control policy and procedures governing state and federal fund.

Local entity funds can be used for specific needs when state funds are not allowed, or there is a need to supplement state funds. Expenditures must be specified and be approved in the county's budget and Board Members approval must be documented in the board minutes.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of Crisp County Department's provision of services:

What's working well?

- New- Kiosk's in county office area provides self-service for customers
- OFI and SS customer service together works well
- All expedited customers that come into the local office for SNAP, family Medicaid, and TANF are now served faster and more efficiently.
- Each County has OFI and ABD supervisor on site daily in the county office
- 5 New OFI case manager and 1 Foster Care Case Manager
- SNAP applications can now be completed on line
- Annual Secret Santa for Foster Children
- The employment of Mental Health Adults in the janitorial services Office of Family Independence (OFI) and Social Services (SS) have great customer service with community stakeholders, School Systems Court, CASA, Board members, MDT members, Church members, Lion's club.
- Foster care team has adoptions worked securing permanency for foster resources for children.
- Continuous improvement of securing safe and stable placements
- Place foster children in the community with relatives and or fictive kin
- What is not working well?
-
- Lag time New hire onboarding process of new employees
- CICC reports lacking all household information when sending
- Report's to the county and LE which creates lag time for response to ensuring immediate safety of child/ren

Crisp County 2017 Data

Foster Care	CPS Investigation	CPS Ongoing	Family Support	Foster Parents	Approved Foster Home 2017	Adoptions 2017	SNAP	TANF	Medicaid	ABD
92	113	34	226	3	2	2	3431	93	1,067	427

BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE + A STATE OF HOPE =
SAFE CHILDREN. STRENGTHENED FAMILIES. STRONGER GEORGIA.

Examples of these expenditures are:

- Regular Operating Cost •
- Equipment •
- Travel
-
- Foster Care Expenses (including haircuts, allowances, musical instruments/lessons, diapers, school activity fees, camps, photo packages, etc.) •
-
- General Assistance to Clients (Indigent Care) •
-
- Training/Staff Appreciation/DFCS related meeting expenses (including training material, meals/refreshments with an agenda.) •
-
- Certificates or plaques of merit, achievement or retirement, etc. following Policy 803 of the DHR Personnel Policies titled to Incentive Pay and Meritorious Awards •
-
- Plaques to a retiring employee (Retirement Reception must be funded from outside of state or county funds.) •
-
- Funds received from Interest on local County CD's and Savings accounts should remain on the DFCS' books, and can be used for Staff
-
- Appreciation Day/Luncheons where a meeting and luncheon occurs.

An agenda for the meeting should be attached to the payment as supporting documentation.

C. Crisp County Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

- Shelter's for homeless disabled adults and veteran families.
- Public transportation for community and disabled.
- Medicaid transportation.
- Local Child care, early childhood program's.
- Utility assistance Program-LIHEAP Program
- More community resources for TANF worker's to be employed.
- Additional Foster Homes for local foster children.
- Healthcare resources for the community.
- Adoptive families for foster children need permanent homes.

D. Crisp County Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

Worker's self-protection with Law enforcement assistance- safety in the community

Continue to expand the Poverty Food Pantry

Building Security on site and afterhours for staff safety with Law Enforcement


Crisp County Board Chair


Crisp County Director



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Harris County
Department of Family and Children Services
134 North College Street
Hamilton, GA 31811

HARRIS COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT

DECEMBER 2017

Board Summary

During the last calendar year, the Harris County DFCS Board has been active as well as supportive to the Agency and its mission. The Board meets the fourth Monday of every other month at 9:00 AM to discuss the agency's case data and seasonal trends that affect the service outcomes.

Our Board consist of Board Chairperson, Ms. Mary Ann Cheek; Vice Chairperson, Mrs. Lillie Williams; and members Mrs. Debbie Blackmar, Ms. Phoebe Dawson and Mrs. Janice Harris. All five members meet the requirements listed in Senate Bill 138 Section. The Harris County Board consist of representatives from the faith based community, the school system, the medical field, the Social Work profession, and DFCS/DHR background.

The Board has been actively involved in high profile cases that resulted in a high level of community involvement. The Board provided valuable feedback by way of community contacts and resources. The Board has shown concern for the lack of front line staff resulting in high caseloads, case manager oversight and staff retention. Historically, this has caused an impact on the level of service provided to the Harris County Community. The Board members have also participated in annual GPHSA trainings and seminars for updates and changes as well as new developments for the Division going forward.

The Harris County Board is very focused on the safety of children and the service delivery to families. Each Board member has demonstrated a willingness to serve in their capacity and make a difference in the Harris County community.

A. The County Board's assessment of the effectiveness of the County Department's provision of services.

The agency as well as the Board has been very impressed with the relationship between DFCS and the Harris County School System as it relates to child safety. The School System has a longstanding relationship with the county office. The School system has experienced staff that have demonstrated a good working relationship with the Agency. This has helped maintain compliance and consistency with DHR policies and the School System protocol.

The Harris County Community has several community agencies that assist families with utility assistance, food, clothing and other basic needs. The faith based community has also proven to be a valuable resource for the families in Harris County. DFCS will continue to partner with the faith based community to strive for stronger families and a stronger Georgia.

The local family connections collaborative continues to be one of the biggest resources as it relates to community based needs and services. The local collaborative also sponsors every Harris County foster child for Christmas yearly. The relationship with our collaborative partners has added value to our true mission and proven to be successful. Job opportunities, medical care resources, continued educational resources, counseling resources and other needs and services resources.

The Harris County office has a very good working relationship with law enforcement, juvenile court as well as the District Attorney's office. As first responders, the legal entities have worked diligently to foster a working relationship and resolve any concerns that may affect the delivery of service to our community.

1. Number of children in care - 19
2. Number of foster parents - 14
3. Number of finalized Adoptions - 0
4. Number of approved Foster Homes in the past year - 5
5. Breakdown of CPS FC and Family Preservation cases - 8
6. Staff turnover - 1 staff terminated and 2 retirement


B. The Boards assessment of the needs in the community

The Harris County community has several resources but can always use more. A long-term commitment to reeducating young parents on enhancing their parenting skills would be very beneficial. The community can also benefit from a fatherhood program that helps teenage fathers with their children. An inpatient and outpatient substance abuse treatment program assessable to the county residences to help treat and rehabilitate all community citizens.

C. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the county department

The Harris County DFCS Board has consistently expressed concerns about the lack of front-line staff in Social Services as well as OFI. The lack of front-line staff can and will affect the service delivery to the citizens of our community. The Harris county office has lacked the sufficient staff to accommodate the daily impact of our community for a number of years due to budget constraints. As it relates to OFI, it's still the belief that our elderly population have been left behind due the modern-day technology and the requirements to apply for services online, process applications, and the overall fear of operating a computer. This can and has caused a level of fear for the elderly population.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve in our community and work individually and collectively with the staff at Harris County DFCS. We will continue to endorse the integrity of our Board Members and the Harris County DFCS staff.



Mary Ann Cheek, Board Chairperson
Harris County DFCS Board
P.O. Box 1217
Pine Mountain, GA 31822

CC: Derick Pinkney, Harris County DFCS Director
Stacey Barfield, Region 8 Regional Director
Lillie Williams, Board Vice-Chairperson
Debbie Blackmar, DFCS Board
Janice Harris, DFCS Board
Phoebe Dawson, DFCS Board



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report 2017

Macon County
Department of Family and Children Services
413 Clifton Bradley Road
Oglethorpe, Ga. 31068

Macon County Annual Report December 2017

A. General summary of the Macon County DFCS Board:

- **Members/Offices:** Gary Slaton, Sally McIntosh, Vickie Felton, Willie Daniels, Lorraine Lewis
- **Meetings** take place on the 3rd Thursday, every other month, 5:00 pm, at Macon County DFCS
- **Activities for the past year :** Impact Class for Schley and Macon, assist families at Christmas, staff appreciation, booth at Health Fair on Safe Sleep for Babies, booth at Back to Schol Bash


B. Assessment of effectiveness of Macon County DFCS provision of services:

- **What's working well?** new Gateway System for OFI, Solution Base Case Work for CPS, low foster care numbers, 83% of our foster children either with a relative or in an adoptive home, no foster children in group homes at present time
- **What's not working?** length of time it has taken to hire a County Director (have had Interim Director for over 14 months), length of time it takes to replace a case manager

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns: public transportation issue in small towns, no in county substance abuse program, drug issues in community, no county hospital, lack of school teachers for county school system

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department: none at this time

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair



Gary Slaton
Chairperson

*Marion County Department of
Family and Children Services
Annual Board Report
December, 2017*

- The Marion County DFCS Board is comprised of the following members:
- Mrs. Joyce Henson, Chairperson
- Mrs. Brenda Humber, Vice-Chair
- Mrs. Annie Sales
- Mrs. Annie Porter

This Board has one vacancy due to the resignation of Mrs. Bernice McCall in July, 2017. The County Director, Mrs. Donna Tennison, has notified the Chairman of the Marion County Board of Commissioners of this resignation, and has requested another appointment to fill the vacancy. Names were suggested to be considered as possible replacements. This Board is currently awaiting a response/notification of a new Board appointee. Mrs. Annie Porter was added to our Board in May, 2017.

- The Marion County DFCS Board meets monthly on the fourth (4th) Tuesday of each month at 9:00 a.m. at the Marion County DFCS Conference Room. There is no meeting held in the month of December.
- Board members were delighted that Mrs. Donna Tennison was finally promoted to County Director. She had served as Interim Director for both Chattahoochee and Marion Counties for several years and certainly deserved this promotion. Our Board members are proud of her hard work and dedication. She is very knowledgeable in all program areas and ensures that this Board is kept well-informed.
- During the past year, this Board has met consistently. In partnership with the County Director, we are kept informed of agency accomplishments, needs, problems, and upcoming programs. This Board has offered its assistance and participation whenever possible. There were no issues during the year regarding reports to the Board except for current OFI reports which was due to the agency's transition to Gateway. During this year, the Board has received the annual County DFCS Board Training, training on The Blueprint for Change, and training on The Safe to Sleep Initiative.
- Marion Co. DFCS has experienced a shortage of staff during this year. As a result of a recent retirement and resignation, this office currently has no clerical

staff to manage the front desk and perform other mandatory clerical tasks. This shortage of staff is of great concern to this Board as it can adversely impact services to customers. It is our hope that this position be filled as soon as possible.

- During 2017, this Board has had discussion on the following topics of concern:
 - Lack of safety measures for workers traveling into remote rural areas where they feel unsafe,
 - Board approved funds for the purchase of a color printer and cartridges in April, 2017. This purchase has not yet been made due to difference in price quote. Vendor is to notify agency when price is decreased. Plans are to purchase in the near future.
 - Board approved the rental of a water fountain for staff use. This is currently in process.
 - In July, 2017, CD Tennison provided annual training to all Board members on the Rules and Regulations of County DFCS Boards. In this meeting, Board members voted unanimously to give CD Tennison permission to spend up to \$1500.00 for purchases that need to be made. CD Tennison will follow-up with Board members by next meeting with verification of purchases. This was done in an effort to save time and to eliminate the need to contact Board members immediately. Board member, Bernice McCall resigned during the July, 2017 board meeting due to health-related issues. The County Commission has been notified of the vacancy and is currently seeking a replacement.
 - In September, 2017, CD Tennison informed the Board that the agency was in need of two car seats to be used to transport children. These seats will remain with the agency. This purchase was approved.

During this year, Chairperson, Joyce Henson also served as a member of the Regional DFCS Board and attended all meetings.

The Marion County DFCS Board finds that Marion Co. DFCS continues to work in compliance with all State and County guidelines. This office maintains excellent customer service with both its internal and external customers. It is noted that partner agencies, customers, and agencies outside this community speak highly of the service and cooperation they receive when working with Marion County DFCS staff.

- Marion County DFCS is performing well in the area of service delivery to all customers. OFI Administrator, Tanya Meeks, and the OFI staff consistently meet, or exceed all OFI guidelines for SOP, timeliness, and accuracy. Marion County DFCS has been operating without a Social Services Supervisor for several months. CD Tennison has served in this capacity during this time. CD Tennison and the Social Services staff have worked extremely hard through some very adverse circumstances to meet local

and State guidelines. This agency continues to function well even in the midst of staff shortage. It is the desire of this Board that needed staff be provided to this agency as soon as possible.

- It is the observation of this Board that CD Tennison and the Marion Co. DFCS staff work very well together. CD Tennison strongly believes in the "TEAM" concept, and it is evident in the day-to-day operations at the office. The "team" works together across county and programmatic lines to ensure that goals are met, and that customers are served.
- Marion County remains in need of local foster homes. DFCS staff, with the assistance of Resource Development, continue to advocate for local foster homes by sharing the need with local churches and at all collaborative meetings.
- CD Tennison and staff work diligently each year ensure that every child in Marion County has a "merry" Christmas. Each year, CD Tennison and staff set up "Santa's Workshop" in the DFCS conference room. There, staff, friends, family, local churches and agency partners work together to purchase, wrap, and deliver toys to local foster and needy children. Each year, this is one of the agency's most successful projects.

In addition to the successes, there are some challenges. Marion County is a very small, rural county. In recent times, we have experienced a large increase in illegal drug activity which has impacted the lives of numerous children. During this year, Marion County has had more children in Foster Care than in past years. The lack of local foster homes only complicates this issue.

C. Community Needs/Concerns:

- Local Foster Homes

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

- The Board requests consideration for the safety of staff members traveling to homes in remote areas of the county. This Board is aware of the "panic button", but phone service is limited, at best, in the remote areas of the county. We are very concerned for the safety of our workers who routinely travel into these areas. Please consider alternatives for workers in remote areas of the State. When our case managers fear for their safety, they seek other employment. We want to keep the good staff that we have.

E. This Board feels that Marion County DFCS is one of the best child welfare agencies in the world. We will continue to work together and become "The BEST"!

Signature: _____



Marion County DFCS Board Chairperson

Nathan Deal
Governor



Robyn A. Crittenden
Commissioner

Georgia Department of Human Services
Aging Services | Child Support Services | Family & Children Services

Annual Report

2017

Muscogee County
Department of Family and Children Services
2100 Comer Avenue
Columbus, GA 31904

Division of Family & Children Services
Muscogee County DFCS • Delbert Montgomery, Director
2100 Comer Ave. • Columbus, GA 31904

MUSCOGEE COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT December 2017

A. General Summary of the County DFCS Board:

During the last calendar year, the Muscogee County DFCS Board has attempted to support the county as much as possible. Currently, we meet the second Wednesday every month at 4:00 PM to discuss the agency's financial, personnel, economic, and social services data, as well as various things that influence the service outcomes for our clients. During this past year there have been new members added to the DFCS Board. Due to busy schedules and unexpected conflicts, it has been difficult to have quorum. We have receive detailed reports from the Social Services, Office of Family Independence, and Financial Operations departmental leadership. We use this information to make determine how things are going for the constituents of county and the personnel in the DFCS office.

The Muscogee County DFCS Board Members include: Mrs. Evergreen Covington, who resigned from the board on March 22nd 2017, Dr. Deepali Agarwal, Mrs. Barbara Story-Jones, Ms. Jennifer Melvin, Mrs. Charonda Huff, and Ms. Tolua Pualloa. Each of the active members meet the requirements listed in Senate Bill 138 Section 2.

The Board has been actively involved by assisting with agency by providing community connections when necessary. The Board has expressed its concern about the retention of staff and the ability to hire new staff to address the increasing turnover. Some of the Board members have participated in GPHSA trainings and seminars to gain insight of the various counties across the state. They have also been updated on the many changes and new developments for the Division that are taking place to include the new practice mode. Each Board member has consistently exhibited a commitment to assist the county to the best of their ability and be a strong voice in their community.

The county have used local funds to assist families in need to utility of rent assistance. There have also been times when the funds were needed to assist with emergency services needed to assist with the placement of a child in care. The board has approved use of the county local funds for training programs for the county staff.

B. Assessment of the Effectiveness of County Department's Provision of Services:

The board believes that the Muscogee County DFCS continues to work very well in all areas of service. The county continues to work well with the faith-based community and have had multiple meetings with law enforcement and the judicial community to increase partnerships. Currently, the county reports having 456 children in care. It appears that whenever children reach permanency and the number of children in care decreases; more children are brought into care of the agency. However, we are excited to hear that in 2017 there were 29 adoptions finalized and 26 custody for the purpose of adoptions established. Currently, the county has 100 foster homes and added 10 new homes in 2017. The county stated with the new Gateway system for the Office of Family and Independence, they are unable to provide a breakdown of number of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases. However, leadership from OFI briefs the board monthly and provides updates about the section. We have noticed that the Foster Care and Investigation numbers continue to climb; the Social Service updates lead the board to believe that the family preservation caseloads are hanging steady and are not seeing the same increase.

While the board is unable to provide a staff turnover rate, we are able to clearly see turnover continues to be an issue. As stated previously, the inability to have a rapid recruitment process is of concern to the county board. We fear this will lead to an increased caseload for staff, which in return will cause more turnover.

There are several faith-based agencies within the community that work with the Muscogee County DFCS Office in helping families in utility and rental assistance, food, clothing, as well as other basic needs. Muscogee County has a strong relationship with a local church to provide the most utility and rental assistance as possible. Because of their dedication and assistance, the faith based community has demonstrated to be a vital resource for the families of Muscogee County. The Muscogee County DFCS office works very closely with law enforcement, the Juvenile court, as well as the District Attorney's office, when it comes to ensuring the safety and well-being of the children in the community. The Muscogee County DFCS office is continuously working to build strong, long-lasting relationships with any and all agencies in the community that will be of benefit to the families in need in our area.

C. Board's Assessment of Community Needs/Concerns:

The Muscogee County Board believes there should be some type of Substance Abuse Program for parents. We were excited to hear from the county director that the county is establishing a position to work with the County Family Drug Court. We believe this will be very beneficial to assisting families. The board believes child care options would be of great assistance in decreasing the number of lack of supervision cases in the county.

D. Board's Recommendations for Improved Operations of the County

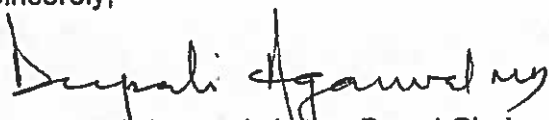
Department:

While we believe the county is doing an excellent job regarding operations, we also believe there is always room for improvement. The board believes there can be greater communication between the agency and community partners. We still believe that the community at large are not aware of all the resources and great work the local DFCS office is doing. The board still wants to see a greater partnership between the Muscogee DFCS office and the Muscogee School District. Desiring for the two agencies to work even more closely together than they do now. We would like to see the county develop a procedure or program to have greater engagement of fathers. We will believe that is something missing, which could be of great impact to the children being served.

We believe the county can operate at a higher level by retaining staff and by the agency having a faster recruitment process to fill vacant positions. We are concerned about the number of vacant positions and the length of time of these vacancies. We believe it is imperative for the county to rapidly fill their current case manager and supervisory leadership positions. This will ensure case managers are not carrying large – unbearable caseloads as they did in past years.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve in our community and work alongside the staff of Muscogee County DFCS.

Sincerely,



Dr. Deepali Agarwal, Acting Board Chairperson
Muscogee County DFCS Board
2100 Comer Avenue
Columbus, Ga. 31904

CC: Delbert Montgomery, Muscogee County DFCS Director
Stacy Barfield, Region 8 Interim Regional Director
Barbara Story-Jones, DFCS Board Member
Jennifer Melvin, DFCS Board Member
Charonda Huff, DFCS Board Member
Tolua Puailoa, DFCS Board Member

November 29, 2017

TO: Virginia Pryor, State DFCS Director
2 Peachtree Street
19-490
Atlanta, GA 30303

FROM: Quitman County DFCS Board

RE: Annual DFCS Board Report – Quitman County DFCS

The Quitman County DFCS Board has been supportive in the work of the agency in a number of ways. Each board member lives in the community and is aware of the demographics and needs of the community. Additionally, each board member is involved in serving and promoting the growth and well-being of children and families. In their various capacities, the members promote the work and efforts of the local DFCS staff. The Quitman County Board works well together and meetings are scheduled on a bi-monthly basis to discuss both the needs of the community and of the staff.

Over the past years, the changes in the Quitman County DFCS office have been many. We are very excited about the new staff members who have joined the team this year. Although we lost our dedicated front desk person, we were able to replace her rather quickly. One of the biggest positives for 2017 is that in the past, we have had to share a social services supervisor with 4 other counties. This year, we were able to hire a social services supervisor by promoting a long term case manager here locally. We are excited for her counterpart to be hired so that the 5 counties in our cluster will share 2 social services supervisor instead of the 1 supervisor we have had for years. This will allow the supervisor to focus more on the families here at home.

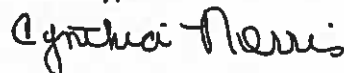
One of the areas that we need to change is that the office is only open 3 days a week to the public and we need it to be open 5 days a week. This access is desperately needed for the people in Clay County. We feel that it would greatly enhance the services to the county. In a small, rural community, the DFCS office is really a source of support, and it is important that our constituents are able to access the staff there. It's easier to talk to someone you know about your business rather than a stranger on the phone. Having the phone lines back in the county has helped, but our staff continue to have to travel to other offices on the days that the office is closed which is prohibitive to excellent customer service.

The County Director position continues to be posted and reposted. This is much needed as we have had an interim county director for several years now. She has done as much as she can do with covering both this position as well as another one, but we are looking forward to having someone here full time and the stability that brings with it. Additionally, Clay and Quitman Counties have always worked well together so a joint appointment for county director for these counties is understandable. However, we have now been grouped with Randolph County as well and we feel that this is just too much for one County Director to handle and due to the size of Randolph County, the person who is hired will likely end up spending much of his/her time there.

Finally, we do have a need for foster homes in Quitman County. At this time, we have none, so we would like to see some active recruiting to serve our children in their own home county. Our population of children in foster care has grown and we would like to be able to serve our children in our community.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss Quitman County's strengths and needs.

Sincerely,



Quitman County DFCS Board



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

145 N. Webster Street
Randolph County Department of Family & Children Services
Cuthbert, Georgia 39840 (229) 732-3742-Phone (229) 732-5412-Fax

December 13, 2017

TO: Virginia Pryor, State DFCS Director
2 Peachtree Street
19-490
Atlanta, GA 30303

FROM: Randolph County DFCS Board
145 N. Webster Street
Cuthbert, GA 39840

RE: Annual DFCS Board Report – Randolph County DFCS

The Randolph County DFCS Board has been active and supportive in the work of the agency in a number of ways this year. Each board member is well-versed in the demographics and needs of the community and each is involved in serving and promoting the growth and well-being of children and families. In their various capacities, the members promote the work and efforts of the local DFCS staff. Board members have been supportive of this effort in both donations and service. For most of the year, the Board only had three active members. We were able to fill two vacant board member positions last month and look forward to continuing our work with the Department. Our Board works well together and meets on a monthly basis to discuss both the needs of the community and of the staff. We have had in-house training this year and have a member representing our office on the Region 8 Advisory Board.

A major strength for our local DFCS staff is that of continuity and longevity of service. The staff is not only familiar with the services they provide but to the community they provide it to. Longevity promotes the quality of service and affords better networking with the community. We have been pleased with the transition of bringing OFI services back to the local office. This process has been much more effective in serving our community and meeting the needs of our county constituents. We were able to bring back local supervision for our staff. This change has also played an important role in increasing staff morale.

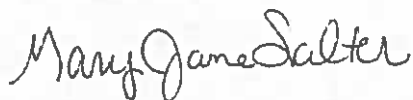
Another positive for Randolph County DFCS has been the ability to hire much needed staff. This year we were able to hire an additional Social Services Case Manager and Social Service Tech. This has proved to be a great asset to our office for many reasons. We were also able to hire a Social Services Supervisor for Randolph, Clay and Quitman counties. In the past we have shared a supervisor with 4 other counties. We are excited for another supervisor to be hired so that the 5 counties in our cluster will now have two supervisors to share rather than the one we have had for years.

Randolph County is still without a permanent County Director. The decision has been made to share a County Director with Clay and Quitman Counties. Although these counties work well together, we feel that having three counties can be too much for one person. Randolph County is the largest of the counties in our cluster and we would like to have someone who would be able to spend the needed time it takes to serve the families in our community. This would be beneficial not only to our community but our staff members as well.

We need more security measures for our office, including better lighting in the parking lot and some type of alarm system in each office. So far we have not had a bad incident in our office, but we want to be prepared and for our staff to feel they have adequate protection. As most other counties, we, too, need at least a couple of specialized foster homes, which are hard to come by in a rural county.

Thank you for the opportunity to reflect on Randolph County's strengths and needs.

Sincerely,



Mary Jane Salter
Randolph County DFCS Board Co-Chairperson



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report 2017

Schley County
Department of Family and Children Services
45 West Oglethorpe St
Ellaville, Ga. 31806

Schley County Annual Report December 2017

A. General summary of the Schley County DFCS Board:

- **Members/Offices:** Lois Nelson, Judy Gattis, Fred Smith, Lentz Williams, Kathy Tondee
- **Meetings take place on the 1st Wednesday, every other month at 10:00 am, at Schley County DFCS**
- **Activities for the past year :** Impact Class for Schley and Macon, assist families at Christmas, staff appreciation

B. Assessment of effectiveness of Schley County DFCS provision of services:

- **What's working well?** stable work force, quality customer service in OFI and CPS, new Gateway System, Solution Base Case Work, low foster care numbers, all foster children with relatives and or/in county
- **What's not working?** length of time it has taken to hire a County Director (have had Interim Director for over 14 months)

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns: public transportation issue in small towns, no in county substance abuse program

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department: none at this time

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair



Lois Nelson
Chairperson



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

P.O. Box 308

Stewart County Department of Family & Children Services
Lumpkin, Georgia 31815

(229) 838-4610-Phone (229) 838-6280 Fax

December 12, 2017

TO: Virginia Pryor, State DFCS Director
2 Peachtree Street
19-490
Atlanta, GA 30303

FROM: Stewart County DFCS Board
Fannie Perrymond, Chairman
P.O. Box 308
Lumpkin, GA 31815

RE: Annual DFCS Board Report – Stewart County DFCS

The Stewart County DFCS Board has been active and supportive in the work of the agency in a number of ways. Each board member is familiar in the demographics and needs of the community and each is involved in serving and promoting the growth and well-being of children and families. In their various capacities, the members promote the work and efforts of the local DFCS staff. Our Board works well together and meets on a monthly basis to discuss both the needs of the community and of the staff. We have had in-house training this year and have a member representing our office on the Region 8 Advisory Board.

Stewart County has had a lot of successes during the last year. We have been pleased with the efforts made to bring OFI services back to the local office. This effort promotes better customer service and delivery of services to our customers. Stewart County has been able to hire an OFI supervisor and ABD worker this year. Having staff available in our office is a benefit for not only the families we serve but our staff members as well. Although this move has been very positive for our office, we still feel the need for more communication and networking with OFI leadership.

Another positive for our office this year was the approval to hire a Social Services Supervisor for Stewart and Webster counties. In the past, we have shared a supervisor with 4 other counties. This will allow the supervisor to focus more on families here in our area. Even though we have not hired any Social Service Case Managers this year, we have hired in our cluster of counties. This has helped manage the work load and decreased case load size for staff.

One area that we need to work to improve is having foster homes in the county. Stewart County currently has 13 children in foster care. We have no foster homes in the county. Some of these children are placed with relatives but there are times when an alternative placement is needed. We also struggle with service providers in our area. The rural base of Stewart County has always necessitated travel to other areas for many of the services needed (physical and mental health care, specialized placements, judicial services, etc.). It becomes a challenge when providers are not willing to travel to our area. We still lack the right balance between DFCS and DJJ. This issue may have to be addressed at the state level before it can be sufficiently implemented at the local level. There has to be a way to better define delinquency and deprivation.

Thank you for the opportunity to reflect on Stewart County's strengths and needs.

Sincerely,



Fannie Perrymond
Stewart County DFCS Board Chairperson

CC: Laurie Sheffield, Randolph DFCS County Director
Stacy Barfield, Acting Region 8 Regional Director
Helen Booth, DFCS Board Co-Chairperson
Angela Starling, DFCS Board Member
Billie Ann Mallory, DFCS Board Member
Maggie Richardson, DFCS Board Member



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Talbot County
Department of Family and Children Services
356 Jordan City Road
Talbotton, Georgia
31827

TALBOT COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

Board Summary;

During the last calendar year, The Talbot County DFCS Board has been active as well as supportive to the Agency as well as its mission. The Board meets the fourth Wednesday of every other month at 2:00 PM to discuss the agency's case data and seasonal trends that affect the service outcomes.

Our Board consist of Board Chairperson, , Ms. Ruby Hardnett; Vice Chairperson, Ms. Annie Durham; and members Alice Johnson, Mrs. Lizzie Denson and Mr. Nathaniel Lippitt All five members meet the requirements listed in Senate Bill 138 Section. The Harris County Board consist of representatives from the faith base Community and the school system.

The Board has been actively involved in high profile cases that resulted in a high level of community involvement. The Board provided valuable feedback by way of community contacts and resources. The Board has shown concern for the lack of front line staff resulting in high caseloads, case manager oversight and staff retention. Historically, this has caused an impact on the level of service provided to the Talbot County Community.

The Talbot County Board is very focused on the safety of children and the service delivery to families. Each Board member has demonstrated a willingness to serve in their capacity and make a difference in the Talbot County community.

A. The County Board's assessment of the effectiveness of the County Departments prevision of services.

The agency as well as the Board has been very impressed with the decreasing numbers of Reports of child abuse and neglect as well as having only one child in foster care in Talbot County. The School system and Law enforcement both have a good working relationship with the Agency. The School system has experienced staff that have demonstrated the willingness to partner with the Agency. This has helped maintain compliance and consistency with DHR policies and the School System protocol.

Talbot County continues to foster a positive working relationship with the local law Enforcement Personal. Both Agencies have been very transparent in sharing information to assist in the protection of children. The Talbot County Community is very small but maintain the village concept in meeting the needs of community citizens. The faith based community has also proven to be a valuable resource for the families in Talbot County. The Agency will continue to partner with the faith base community to strive for stronger families and a stronger Georgia.

The Local family connections collaborative continues to be one of the biggest resources as it relates to community based needs and services. The local collaborative has a proven track record as well as a genuine interest in the Needs of the county. The relationship with our collaborative partners has added value to our true mission and proven to be successful. The Collaborative has been the main Resource for Job opportunities, Medical care Resources, continued education Resources, Counseling resources and other needs and service Resources for all community citizens.

The Talbot County office has a very good working relationship with, Juvenile court as well as the District Attorney's office. As first responders, the legal entities have worked diligently to foster a working relationship and resolve any concerns that may affect the delivery of service to our community.

1. Number of children in care. 1
2. Number of foster parents. 14
3. Number of finalized Adoptions. 0
4. Number of approved Foster Homes in the past year. 5
5. Number of CPS INV's 2
6. Number of Foster care cases 1
7. Number of Family Preservation cases. 2
8. Staff turnover. 0

B. The Boards Assessment of the needs in the community;

The Talbot County Community has several resources but can always use more. A long term commitment to reeducating young parents on enhancing their parenting skills would be very beneficial. The Community can also benefit from a fatherhood program that helps reengage fathers with their children. An inpatient and outpatient Substance abuse treatment program assessable to the county residence to help treat and rehabilitate all community citizens.

**C. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County
Department**

The Talbot County DFCS Board has consistently expressed concerns about the lack of front-line staff in Services as well as OFI. The lack of front line staff can and will affect the service delivery to the citizens of our community. The Talbot county office has lacked the sufficient staff to accommodate the daily impact of our community for a number of years due to budget constraints. As it relates to OFI, it's still the belief that our elderly population have been left behind due the modern day technology and the requirements to apply for services on line, processing applications, and the overall fear of operating a computer. This can and has cause a level of fear for the elderly population.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve in our community and work individually and collectively with the staff at Talbot County DFCS. We will continue to endorse the integrity of our Board Members and the Talbot County DFCS staff.



Ruby Hardnett, Board Chairperson
Talbot County DFCS Board
P.O. Box 4
Woodland Ga. 31822

CC: Derick Pinkney Harris county DFCS Director
Stacey Barfield, Region 8 Regional Director
Annie Durham, Board Vice-Chairperson
Lizzie Denson, DFCS Board
Alice Johnson, DFCS Board
Nathaniel Lippitt, DFCS Board



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Taylor County
Department of Family and Children Services
178-2 Charing Road
Butler, Georgia
31006

TAYLOR COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

Board Summary;

During the last calendar year, The Taylor County DFCS Board has been active as well as supportive to the Agency as well as its mission. The Board meets the fourth Tuesday of every other month at 2:00 PM to discuss the agency's case data and seasonal trends that affect the service outcomes. Our Board consist of Board Chairperson Ms. Cecelia Miller; Vice Chairperson, Ms. Maggie Pope; and members Joy Albritton, Mrs. Luliah Neal and Mrs. Phillis Heath . All five members meet the requirements listed in Senate Bill 138 Section. The Harris County Board consist of representatives from the faith based Community, the school system, and DFCS/DHR background. The Board has been actively involved in high profile cases that resulted in a high level of community involvement. The Board provided valuable feedback by way of community contacts and resources. The Board has shown concern for the lack of front line staff case managers resulting in high caseloads, case manager oversight and staff retention. Historically, this has caused an impact on the level of service provided to the Taylor County Community. The Board members have oppritunities for annual GPHSA trainings and seminars for updates, changes as well as new developments for the Division going forward. The Taylor County Board is very focused on the safety of children and the service delivery to families. Each Board member has demonstrated a willingness to serve in their capacity and make a difference in the Harris County community.

A. The County Board's assessment of the effectiveness of the County Departments prevision of services.

The agency as well as the Board has been very impressed with the relationship between DFCS and the Taylor county School System as it relates to child safety. The School System has a longstanding relationship with the county office. The School system has experienced staff that have demonstrated a good working relationship with the Agency. This has helped maintain compliance and consistency with DHR policies and the School System protocol. The Taylor County Community is very small but managaes to meet the needs of its citizens. The faith based community has also proven to be a valuable resource for the families in Taylor County. DFCS with continue to partner with the faith based community to strive for stronger families and a stronger Georgia. The State Representative Patty Bentley has been influential in having a family connection collaborative for Taylor County. This will enhance the level of resources available to the community. Job opportunities, housing resources/ grants/ funding, Medical care Resources, continued educational Resources, Counselling resources and other needs and services Resources.

The Taylor County office has a very good working relationship with law enforcement, Juvenile court as well as the District Attorney's office. As first responders, the legal entities have worked diligently to foster a working relationship and resolve any concerns that may affect the delivery of service to our community.

1. Number of children in care. 5
2. Number of foster parents. 4
3. Number of finalized Adoptions. 1
4. Number of approved Foster Homes in the past year. 4
5. Number of CPS INV's
6. Number of FC cases.
7. Number of Family Preservation cases.
8. Staff turnover. 1 staff promotion to Supervisor

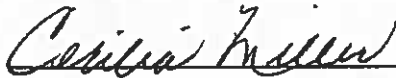
B. The Boards Assessment of the needs in the community;

The Taylor County Community has several resources but can always use more. A long term commitment to reeducating young parents on enhancing their parenting skills would be very beneficial. The Community can also benefit from a fatherhood program that helps reengage fathers with their children. An inpatient and outpatient Substance abuse treatment program assessable to the county residence to help treat and rehabilitate all community citizens.

**C. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County
Department**

The Taylor County DFCS Board has consistently expressed concerns about the lack of front-line staff in Services as well as OFI. The lack of front line staff can and will affect the service delivery to the citizens of our community. The Taylor county office has lacked the sufficient staff to accommodate the daily impact of our community for a number of years due to budget constraints. As it relates to OFI, it's still the belief that our elderly population have been left behind due the modern day technology and the requirements to apply for services on line, process applications, and the overall fear of operating a computer. This can and has cause a level of fear for the elderly population.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve in our community and work individually and collectively with the staff at Taylor County DFCS. We will continue to endorse the integrity of our Board Members and the Taylor County DFCS staff.



Cecelia Miller, Board Chairperson
Taylor County DFCS Board
P.O. Box 556
Reynolds Ga. 31076

CC: Derick Pinkney Harris county DFCS Director
Stacey Barfield, Region 8 Regional Director
Lillie Williams, Board Vice-Chairperson
Debbie Blackmar, DFCS Board
Janice Harris, DFCS Board
Phoebe Dawson, DFCS Board



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

P.O. Box 9

Webster County Department of Family & Children Services
Preston, Georgia 31824

(229) 828-3115-Phone (229) 828-6280-Fax

December 12, 2017

TO: Virginia Pryor, State DFCS Director
2 Peachtree Street
19-490
Atlanta, GA 30303

FROM: Webster County DFCS Board
Vernette Crimes, Chairman
P.O. Box 9
Preston, GA 31824

RE: Annual DFCS Board Report – Webster County DFCS

The Webster County DFCS Board has been active and supportive in the work of the agency in a number of ways. Each board member is familiar in the demographics and needs of the community and each is involved in serving and promoting the growth and well-being of children and families. In their various capacities, the members promote the work and efforts of the local DFCS staff. Our Board works well together and meets on a monthly basis to discuss both the needs of the community and of the staff. We also have a member who serves on the Regional Advisory Board that meets quarterly.

Webster County has seen many successes this year. We have been pleased with the efforts made to bring OFI services back to the local office. Although some challenges still remain, it has been a great support to our local community to have staff available in their local office to assist with any needs they may have. We have one OFI case manager available in the office and share supervision with neighboring counties.

Another success of our office is the important connections we have with our community partners. The positive relationships with our school, law enforcement, and public health play an important role in the services we provide to families and children. DFCS Board and employees are active in many areas of the community and this helps to encourage collaboration and support of the work we do.

Another strength is the stability of both the OFI and SS staff. The staff in OFI and SS have over 5 to 10 years of employment with the agency, and this helps with quality services. We are also pleased to be able to hire staff for our county. It has been nice to see the offices finally occupied with staff

members. This has helped with being able to provide quality services to families and children in our community. In the past, Webster County has shared a social services supervisor with 4 other counties. This year, we have been able to post a position to hire a supervisor for Stewart and Webster Counties. This will allow the supervisor to focus more on the families here at home.

The rural base of Webster County has always necessitated travel to other areas for many of the services needed (physical and mental health care, specialized placements, judicial services, foster homes, etc.). It becomes a challenge to provide services to families when providers are not willing to travel to our area. Another challenge is our partnership with DJJ. This issue may have to be addressed at the state level before it can be sufficiently implemented at the local level. There has to be a way to better define delinquency and deprivation.

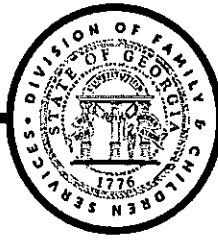
Thank you for the opportunity to reflect on Webster County's strengths and needs.

Sincerely,



Vernetta Crimes
Chairperson
Webster County DFCS

CC: Stacy Barfield, Region 8 Acting Regional Director
Laurie Sheffield, DFCS County Director
Effie Lockett, DFCS Board Co-Chairperson
Frank Johnson, DFCS Board Member
Harold Jones, DFCS Board Member
Louise Latimer, DFCS Board Member



Annual Report 2017

**Richmond County
Department of Family and Children Services
2216 Bungalow Rd
Augusta, GA 30906**

**RICHMOND COUNTY
ANNUAL REPORT
DECEMBER 2017**

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

The Richmond County Board consists of the following members:

Ms. JoAnn Allen Cook, Board Chair

Ms. Dorothy Moore, Co - Chair

Dr. Cliff Gardner

Mr. James Kendrick

Dr. Louise Rice

Dr. Josue Sanchez

The Board meets the fourth Tuesday of the month, at 1:00 p.m.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

Richmond County DFCS at 520 Fenwick Street suffered a fire in June and had to relocate. We were initially providing services from Augusta Technical College and are now in our "temporary permanent" location at 2216 Bungalow Rd. We had to make many adjustments in order to adequately serve our customers. We still face challenges but address each one promptly so as not to have a lapse in services. A positive in this situation is that the County Director has been able to see firsthand the operations of OFI and has been able to interact more with employees as well as customers. Customer service is very important and the County Director expects that all customers are treated fairly and with respect.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

Richmond County continues to be in dire need of foster homes/group homes and is working with Resource Development to keep foster homes and gain new ones. There is a new State initiative, Bring Them Home, which mandates that each County work to get their foster children placed in their respective counties rather than outside the Region and in other counties, therefore, it is imperative that we gain more foster homes. We still recognize that the county could benefit from more funding or services for Mental Health, a DFCS liaison with the Board of Education and Juvenile Justice. Another concern is the implementation of Georgia Gateway. There are a lot of kinks in this system that are being worked on that are delaying benefits to customers.

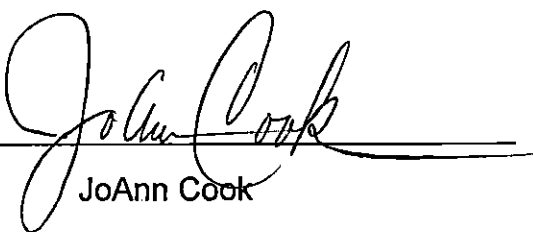
D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

The Board feels that though office morale has improved efforts should continue to maintain morale and maintain and retain staff.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair

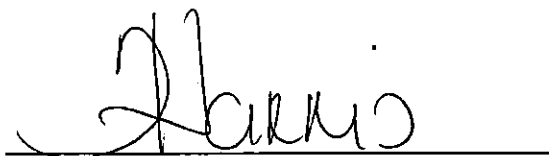
This past year it seems great strides have been made in Richmond County despite the fire. Staff have had to make adjustments and have taken everything in stride and seem to be closer. The Board and the County Director have a great relationship, work well together to ensure staff continue assessing children safety in a timely manner, supporting the community and collaborating with other agencies/stakeholders.

Respectfully Submitted,



JoAnn Cook

Board Chair



Tavia Harris

Richmond County Director



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

Rockdale County Department of Family and Children Services
Annual Board Report 2017

General Summary of the County DFCS Board

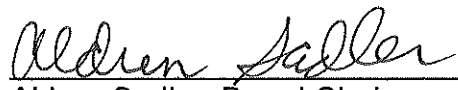
- Board makeup-
 - Aldren Sadler-Chairman
 - Charlene Ellis-Board Member
 - Gerre Byrd-Board Member
 - Diane Howington-Board Member
 - Gail Jenkins-Board Member
- Meeting dates/times-1/12/17 @10:00 AM, 3/30/17 @10:00 AM, 6/29/17 @ 10:00 AM, 9/14/17 @10:00 AM, and 12/7/17 @ 10:00 AM
- Activities for the past year- staff appreciation, and Thanksgiving luncheon
- County funds were used for general assistance, board members, foster children to participate in extracurricular activities that wasn't covered through state funds or ILP, school's dues, clothing for youths that are not covered through state funds, hair care, and other incidentals as it relates to the youths that are not covered through state funds.

Assessment of the effectiveness of the Rockdale County Department of Family and Children Services provision of services

- Continue to have Pre-Removal Staffing before any removal of a child from their home/caretaker. By doing this, we can involve parents, relatives, SAAGs, community stakeholders, case managers, and all levels of county leadership for the most appropriate outcome. As well as reduce the number of children entering foster care.
- Rockdale has had the support of temp staff to support the foster care and child protective services(CPS) case managers through October 2017. All the foster care positions are filled except two, and the CPS except for one. We hired a full-time Social Service Tech to provide support to the foster care unit. This position is a great support to staff. Supervisors and case managers received up to 19% salary increase to stabilize the work force. Also, all Rockdale staff received a one-time bonus approved by the County Board to continue to improve morale. Staff are given county and regional performance awards.
- We will continue to have community collaborative stakeholder's quarterly roundtable meetings that are facilitated by Prevent Child Abuse Rockdale to educate staff, so they are able to better service our families to build a stronger community.
- We continue to work collaboratively with our Juvenile Court Judge and CASA to ensure the needs of our families are being met. We maintain our relationship law enforcement agencies, the school system, Rockdale County Board of Commissioners, and community stakeholders.

Closing and signature of the Board Chair

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to share our recommendations for improving the services offered to our children and families in Rockdale County to become a stronger community.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Aldren Sadler". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Aldren Sadler, Board Chairman



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report 2017

Schley County
Department of Family and Children Services
45 West Oglethorpe St
Ellaville, Ga. 31806

Schley County Annual Report December 2017

A. General summary of the Schley County DFCS Board:

- **Members/Offices:** Lois Nelson, Judy Gattis, Fred Smith, Lentz Williams, Kathy Tondee
- **Meetings take place on the 1st Wednesday, every other month at 10:00 am, at Schley County DFCS**
- **Activities for the past year :** Impact Class for Schley and Macon, assist families at Christmas, staff appreciation

B. Assessment of effectiveness of Schley County DFCS provision of services:

- **What's working well?** stable work force, quality customer service in OFI and CPS, new Gateway System, Solution Base Case Work, low foster care numbers, all foster children with relatives and or/in county
- **What's not working?** length of time it has taken to hire a County Director (have had Interim Director for over 14 months)

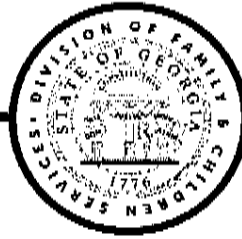
C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns: public transportation issue in small towns, no in county substance abuse program

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department: none at this time

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair



Lois Nelson
Chairperson



NATHAN DEAL
GOVERNOR

VIRGINIA PRYOR
INTERIM DIRECTOR

Annual Report 2017

Screven County
Department of Family and
Children Services
110 Singleton Avenue
Sylvania, Georgia 30467

SCREVEN COUNTY

ANNUAL REPORT

DECEMBER 2017

A. General Summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Members
 - Debbie Brown, Chair
 - Member since 6-1-2014
 - County Probate Judge
 - Bernard Brown
 - Member since 1-2-2013
 - Local Farmer
 - Gussie Hunter
 - Member since 1-2-2011
 - With the School Board
 - Larry Scarboro
 - Member since 1-2-2015
 - With the School Board
 - Gary Weaver
 - Member since 6-1-2014
 - Police and Fire Chief
- Meeting Dates/Times and Attendance
 - January 17, 2017 – Ms. Brown, Mr. Brown, Ms. Hunter, Mr. Scarboro, and Mr. Weaver
 - February 6, 2017 – No Meeting
 - March 17, 2017 – No Meeting held, director on Medical Leave
 - April 18, 2017 – Ms. Brown, Mr. Brown, Mr. Scarboro, Ms. Hunter
 - May 16, 2017 – No attendees
 - June 28, 2017 – No attendees
 - July 26, 2017 – No meeting
 - August 30, 2017 – Mr. Brown, Ms. Hunter, Mr. Scarboro
 - September 27, 2017 – Mr. Brown, Ms. Hunter, Mr. Scarboro
 - October 25, 2017 – Ms. Brown, Mr. Brown, Mr. Scarboro
 - November 15, 2017 – Ms. Brown, Mr. Brown, Ms. Hunter, Mr. Scarboro, and Mr. Weaver.
 - December 2017 – No board meeting held (at request of board)
- Activities for the past year

The board has provided monies for staff appreciation events and dinners for the staff. They are very supportive of staff and their needs. Mr. Bernard Brown, one of the Board Members hold an annual Christmas party for Screven and Jenkins counties' foster children. He and his wife provide the food, entertainment, and gifts.
- Use of Local County Funds

Local County Funds have been used to pay electric bills, rent, clothing for Foster children, bedding for relatives taking in foster children, paying relative Care monies when funds were delayed. The board is always helpful in ensuring children and families are taken care of.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Departments provision of services:

- **Successes**

Through the county boards help, Screven county has avoided placing children in care; they have ensured the safety of children and providing families with monies to get through tough times.
- **Challenges/Opportunities**

This year Screven county has seen a significant rise in methamphetamine use; which has caused more children to come into care. The board stays informed of the workloads of case manager and how they are doing and their needs. They also stay informed of the families in the community's needs, progress and challenges they have.
- **Number of Children in Care**

Currently Screven County currently has 34 children in care. Eighteen of these children came into care this year.
- **Number of Foster Parents / Home finalized this year**

Screven County currently has 9 foster homes. No new homes have been opened this year.
- **Number of Finalized Adoptions**

No adoptions were finalized in Screven County during this year
- **Statistics regarding CPS, Family Preservation, and Family Support Cases**
 - CPS: 107 Cases
 - Family Support: 79 Cases.
 - Family Preservation: 11 Cases
- **Statistics for SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, and ABAWD Cases**
 - SNAP: 9,576
 - TANF: 242
 - Medicaid: 4,263
 - ABAWD: 0
- **Staff Turnover Rate**

There has been no staff turnover this year.
- **Stakeholder involvement/relationships**

Screven county has a good relationship with our Stakeholders. The following agencies are involved and provide services/assistance to the agency as needed. The agency is fully engaged and has a strong relationship with Law Enforcement, Family Connections, the Hospital, the Courts, DJJ, the City, the School System, and the County Commissioners. They are willing and able to aid this agency, as well as the community when needed.

Board's Assessment of community needs/concerns

The County Board feels the county needs more job opportunities. Most individuals must go outside of the County to Bulloch, Chatham, and Effingham Counties to work. The County Board is also concerned over the increase in the number of children placed in care due to drug abuse by their parents. These parents must go outside of the county for treatment and for regular drug screens.

Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

The board feels the county is running efficiently with the resources it has at hand. They had no recommendations for improved operations. They are pleased with the work the County Director is doing, and the relationships formed within the county.

Screven County, per the 2010 census, has a population of 14, 593. It is a great place for families and children. It has a family atmosphere, where people know each other and care about each other. Screven County DFCS is a pillar in the community. We strive to ensure children are safe and well in their families; and parents have the resources they need to become self-sufficient and successful.



Ms. Debbie Brown, Board Chair



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Seminole County
Department of Family and Children Services
108 W. 4th St.
Donalsonville,
Georgia 39845

LOCAL COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Mr. Raymond Wilson, Board Chair. Local business owner and active in the community.
- Ms. Harriett Fennell, Vice-Chair. Employed by the school system.
- Ms. Sharon Hodges, Board Member. Retired State of Georgia employee
- Mr. Michael Kirkland, Board Member. School teacher.
- The board meets the last Wednesday of last month of each quarter at 9:00 am.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Clients and community partners were happy to have OFI casemanagers resume working local cases.
- Having someone to assist walk-in clients is an improvement to customer service.
- There are 17 children in foster care.
- The county currently has 1 CPS case, 2 Family Preservation and 8 Family Support cases.
- Staff turnover has not been a concern for this county.
- Seminole County maintains positive relationships with their community partners.
- Limited community programs for youth.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

Seminole County is a small, rural county with limited resources. Graduation rates and teen pregnancy are long-term concerns. Mental health and substance abuse treatment is limited within the county, with providers either having to come to the client or the client travel to a nearby county.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department.

At this time, the County Director position is vacant. Filling that position would be the priority of the board.



Georgia Department of Human Services
Aging Services | Child Support Services | Family & Children Services

Spalding County Department of Family and Children Services

DFCS Field Operations Annual County Board Report

Phyllis Easton-Barkley, County Director (Secretary)

Portia Lacy, Board Member Chair

Theresa Buchanan, Board Member Co-Chair

Janice Bogan, Board Member

Cherryl Gilbert, Board Member

Frances Phillips, Board Member

Spalding County Department of Family and Children Services

Annual County Board Report

The Spalding County Department of Family and Children Services board consists of five members from the community appointed by the Spalding County Commissioners. Four members have been on the board a minimum of 3 years or more. Our board meets on the next to the last Tuesday of each month at 4 o'clock pm in the board room of Spalding County DFCS.

Due to the requirements by the Spalding County Board of Commissioners that county funds only be used for direct services to the population of people served, the local board has not held any activities initiated solely by us. However, the board members did provide lunch for all the staff during employee appreciation week. We felt this was the least we could do collectively to show our support to the staff for the long hours, frustrated moments and minimal appreciation. This is our way of putting a smile on their faces and fullness in their body on behalf of those they serve in some many different ways every day. The board was represented at the agency's annual law enforcement meet and greet. This year the county extended it to include the school system's social workers. Additionally, the board had a representative at the GPHSA/ Board Conference and has committee to representatives at each conference going forward.

The County board members' varied community roles and involvement has allowed us to see there is still a need for

- 1) Resources for the homeless population – specifically families (with children)
- 2) Transportation is a big issue especially for a large population of the workforce
- 3) Resources for Juvenile Delinquents

The County Board's assessment of the effectiveness of the county department's provision of services is:

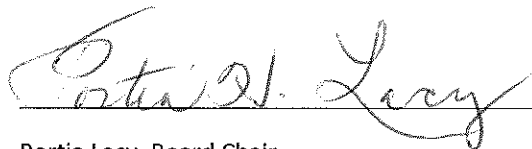
- 1) There has been a noticeable improvement in processing OFI benefits from the previous year.

Although individually some of us are still receiving information from individual that cases are Not processed time to get benefits, things have improved greatly.

The County Board's recommendations for improved operations of the county department are:

- 1) Increasing OFI staff to sufficient levels for the agency
- 2) Maintain the number of staff in social services
- 3) The agency needs to have staff funded security staff in the building due to things that take place in social services cases as well as the numbers of people who are in all communities with serious mental health issues and no treatment.
- 4) More foster parents and placements for children with behavior/mental health issues to prevent them from being in hotels.

The county board of Spalding County Department of Family and Children Services is appreciative of the work employees provide to the community. We are also dedicated to being voices within our community for the agency and promoting safety for the families in Spalding County.



Portia Lacy, Board Chair

NATHAN DEAL
GOVERNOR



VIRGINIA PRYOR
INTERIM DIRECTOR

Annual Report 2017

**Stephens County
Department of Family and Children Services
64 Boulevard, Suite 101
Toccoa, GA 30577**

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SAFE CHILDREN. STRENGTHENED FAMILIES. STRONGER GEORGIA.

STEPHENS COUNTY DEPT. OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES | 64 BOULEVARD, SUITE 101 | TOCCOA, GA 30577

STEPHENS COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

Board Members:

Bill Wheeler – Chairperson
Janice London
Floyd Means
Karen Palmer

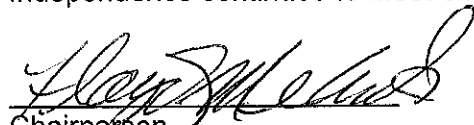
The Stephens County DFCS Board meets on the second Wednesday of every month at 1:00 p.m. There is currently 1 vacancy on the Board. The local county budget for FY2017 was \$30,000. A total of \$29,798.97 was spent for the fiscal year. \$21,493.97 was allocated for a cash match position to serve Office of Family Independence families. \$7,063.10 was used to meet the needs of foster children. The remaining \$1,241.90 was used for Board member meeting per diem and other administrative expenses.

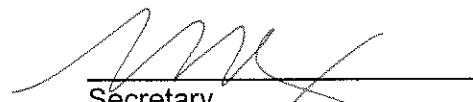
Stephens County had an average of 27 children in foster care per month during the past year. Stephens County currently has 12 foster homes. 227 Investigations were assigned during the year along with 106 Family Supports cases. The county averaged 21 Family Preservation cases per month. According to the FY2016 Descriptive Data Report, Stephens County had a monthly average of 103 TANF recipients, 3,160 food stamp (SNAP) households, 2,416 Family Medicaid households and 2,452 ABD households.

During the year, 1 Social Services Supervisor was promoted to Administrator, 2 Social Services Case Managers were promoted to Supervisor, 1 Case manager joined the agency and 2 Child Protective Services Case Managers left the agency. 1 TANF worker was promoted to Supervisor and 2 Program Assistants were added to help serve the front desk. 1 Family Independence Case Manager retired and this position has not yet been filled.

Stephens County DFCS continued to partner with Family Connection and local churches to recruit foster families. The county continues to have strong relationships with law enforcement and the schools which has been vital in our efforts to serve families and protect children. Staff attended local meetings such as Multi-Disciplinary Team, Local Interagency Planning Team, Family Connections, Family Treatment Court, etc.

There continues to be a need for well-qualified foster parents. The agency's focus is to keep children in the county if/when foster care services are needed. Most of the children that entered foster care over the last year did so due to drugs (primarily meth). Due to Social Services vacancies in Banks County that cannot be filled at this time, Stephens/Banks will now share work. Moving forward, there will be a Banks/Stephens Investigation Unit, Family Preservation Unit and Foster Care Unit. Banks/Stephens Social Services staff will be considered multi-county and will need to adjust to traveling to/from each county on a regular basis. The Office of Family Independence continues to meet challenges with the new Gateway system.


Chairperson
Bill Wheeler


Secretary
Mark Akridge



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

P.O. Box 308

Stewart County Department of Family & Children Services
Lumpkin, Georgia 31815

(229) 838-4610-Phone (229) 838-6280 Fax

December 12, 2017

TO: Virginia Pryor, State DFCS Director
2 Peachtree Street
19-490
Atlanta, GA 30303

FROM: Stewart County DFCS Board
Fannie Perrymond, Chairman
P.O. Box 308
Lumpkin, GA 31815

RE: Annual DFCS Board Report – Stewart County DFCS

The Stewart County DFCS Board has been active and supportive in the work of the agency in a number of ways. Each board member is familiar in the demographics and needs of the community and each is involved in serving and promoting the growth and well-being of children and families. In their various capacities, the members promote the work and efforts of the local DFCS staff. Our Board works well together and meets on a monthly basis to discuss both the needs of the community and of the staff. We have had in-house training this year and have a member representing our office on the Region 8 Advisory Board.

Stewart County has had a lot of successes during the last year. We have been pleased with the efforts made to bring OFI services back to the local office. This effort promotes better customer service and delivery of services to our customers. Stewart County has been able to hire an OFI supervisor and ABD worker this year. Having staff available in our office is a benefit for not only the families we serve but our staff members as well. Although this move has been very positive for our office, we still feel the need for more communication and networking with OFI leadership.

Another positive for our office this year was the approval to hire a Social Services Supervisor for Stewart and Webster counties. In the past, we have shared a supervisor with 4 other counties. This will allow the supervisor to focus more on families here in our area. Even though we have not hired any Social Service Case Managers this year, we have hired in our cluster of counties. This has helped manage the work load and decreased case load size for staff.

One area that we need to work to improve is having foster homes in the county. Stewart County currently has 13 children in foster care. We have no foster homes in the county. Some of these children are placed with relatives but there are times when an alternative placement is needed. We also struggle with service providers in our area. The rural base of Stewart County has always necessitated travel to other areas for many of the services needed (physical and mental health care, specialized placements, judicial services, etc.). It becomes a challenge when providers are not willing to travel to our area. We still lack the right balance between DFCS and DJJ. This issue may have to be addressed at the state level before it can be sufficiently implemented at the local level. There has to be a way to better define delinquency and deprivation.

Thank you for the opportunity to reflect on Stewart County's strengths and needs.

Sincerely,



Fannie Perrymond
Stewart County DFCS Board Chairperson

- CC: Laurie Sheffield, Randolph DFCS County Director
Stacy Barfield, Acting Region 8 Regional Director
Helen Booth, DFCS Board Co-Chairperson
Angela Starling, DFCS Board Member
Billie Ann Mallory, DFCS Board Member
Maggie Richardson, DFCS Board Member



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Talbot County
Department of Family and Children Services
356 Jordan City Road
Talbotton, Georgia
31827

TALBOT COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

Board Summary;

During the last calendar year, The Talbot County DFCS Board has been active as well as supportive to the Agency as well as its mission. The Board meets the fourth Wednesday of every other month at 2:00 PM to discuss the agency's case data and seasonal trends that affect the service outcomes.

Our Board consist of Board Chairperson, , Ms. Ruby Hardnett; Vice Chairperson, Ms. Annie Durham; and members Alice Johnson, Mrs. Lizzie Denson and Mr. Nathaniel Lippitt All five members meet the requirements listed in Senate Bill 138 Section. The Harris County Board consist of representatives from the faith base Community and the school system.

The Board has been actively involved in high profile cases that resulted in a high level of community involvement. The Board provided valuable feedback by way of community contacts and resources. The Board has shown concern for the lack of front line staff resulting in high caseloads, case manager oversight and staff retention. Historically, this has caused an impact on the level of service provided to the Talbot County Community.

The Talbot County Board is very focused on the safety of children and the service delivery to families. Each Board member has demonstrated a willingness to serve in their capacity and make a difference in the Talbot County community.

A. The County Board's assessment of the effectiveness of the County Departments prevision of services.

The agency as well as the Board has been very impressed with the decreasing numbers of Reports of child abuse and neglect as well as having only one child in foster care in Talbot County. The School system and Law enforcement both have a good working relationship with the Agency. The School system has experienced staff that have demonstrated the willingness to partner with the Agency. This has helped maintain compliance and consistency with DHR policies and the School System protocol.

Talbot County continues to foster a positive working relationship with the local law Enforcement Personal. Both Agencies have been very transparent in sharing information to assist in the protection of children. The Talbot County Community is very small but maintain the village concept in meeting the needs of community citizens. The faith based community has also proven to be a valuable resource for the families in Talbot County. The Agency will continue to partner with the faith base community to strive for stronger families and a stronger Georgia.

The Local family connections collaborative continues to be one of the biggest resources as it relates to community based needs and services. The local collaborative has a proven track record as well as a genuine interest in the Needs of the county. The relationship with our collaborative partners has added value to our true mission and proven to be successful. The Collaborative has been the main Resource for Job opportunities, Medical care Resources, continued education Resources, Counseling resources and other needs and service Resources for all community citizens.

The Talbot County office has a very good working relationship with, Juvenile court as well as the District Attorney's office. As first responders, the legal entities have worked diligently to foster a working relationship and resolve any concerns that may affect the delivery of service to our community.

1. Number of children in care. 1
2. Number of foster parents. 14
3. Number of finalized Adoptions. 0
4. Number of approved Foster Homes in the past year. 5
5. Number of CPS INV's 2
6. Number of Foster care cases 1
7. Number of Family Preservation cases. 2
8. Staff turnover. 0

B. The Boards Assessment of the needs in the community;

The Talbot County Community has several resources but can always use more. A long term commitment to reeducating young parents on enhancing their parenting skills would be very beneficial. The Community can also benefit from a fatherhood program that helps reengage fathers with their children. An inpatient and outpatient Substance abuse treatment program assessable to the county residence to help treat and rehabilitate all community citizens.

**C. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County
Department**

The Talbot County DFCS Board has consistently expressed concerns about the lack of front-line staff in Services as well as OFI. The lack of front line staff can and will affect the service delivery to the citizens of our community. The Talbot county office has lacked the sufficient staff to accommodate the daily impact of our community for a number of years due to budget constraints. As it relates to OFI, it's still the belief that our elderly population have been left behind due the modern day technology and the requirements to apply for services on line, processing applications, and the overall fear of operating a computer. This can and has cause a level of fear for the elderly population.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve in our community and work individually and collectively with the staff at Talbot County DFCS. We will continue to endorse the integrity of our Board Members and the Talbot County DFCS staff.



Ruby Hardnett, Board Chairperson
Talbot County DFCS Board
P.O. Box 4
Woodland Ga. 31822

CC: Derick Pinkney Harris county DFCS Director
Stacey Barfield, Region 8 Regional Director
Annie Durham, Board Vice-Chairperson
Lizzie Denson, DFCS Board
Alice Johnson, DFCS Board
Nathaniel Lippitt, DFCS Board

NATHAN DEAL
GOVERNOR



VIRGINIA PRYOR
INTERIM DIRECTOR

Annual Report 2017

Taliaferro County
Department of Family and Children Services
107 Commerce St. NW
Crawfordville, GA 30631

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SAFE CHILDREN. STRENGTHENED FAMILIES. STRONGER GEORGIA.

WILKES, LINCOLN, TALIAFERRO COUNTY DFCS – J. GRANT MCCURLEY, DIRECTOR - 48 LEXINGTON AVE. | WASHINGTON, GA 30673

Taliaferro County Annual Report December 2017

A. General summary of the county DFCS Board:

Makeup: 5 members

Meeting Dates: Bi-Monthly at 11 AM; Board Member attendance has been sporadic

Activities for 2017: Board Meetings bi-monthly; Board members have attended staff appreciation activities

Use of Local County Funds: County funds were used to help families and for staff retention

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

In 2017, the Taliaferro County board continued to educate the community about all program areas of DFCS. There has been a conscious effort made to assure quality and timely service delivery. Clients continue to embrace technology by taking advantage of faster service by utilizing lobby computers and online applications. Staff uses technology to document work more effectively while also being safer in the field. The agency continues to maintain positive relationships with community partners and stakeholders. Local stakeholders are the juvenile court, the school system, family connection, law enforcement, and the health department. There are no mental health, substance abuse, or physical health service providers in the county. Families have to travel out of the county to obtain these services. Currently, there are no children in foster care and there were no adoptions finalized. There is one approved foster home in the county. There were no new homes approved this year. This year there were four CPS reports, one Family Preservation case, and two Family Support cases. There were 301 SNAP cases, two TANF cases, 125 Medicaid cases, and 85 ABAWD cases in the county. There has been no staff turnover of OFI staff and there has been two services staff resign, however these vacancies have been filled.

C. Board's Assessment of community needs/concerns

Taliaferro County has a population of approximately 1,500 citizens. There continues to be few local resources in the area and families continue to travel to outside counties for employment opportunities, high-end medical needs, shopping, mental health/and substance abuse needs etc. The agency has continued to assist the families financially and pay services providers to travel to the county to provide services. There is a strong adult literacy program offered through Athens Technical College. The unemployment rate is 7%. There is a county operated transit system available.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

The staffing situation is currently three Case Managers (splitting their time between Wilkes, Lincoln, and Taliaferro Counties) - two for CPS and one for Foster Care – and one Social Services Supervisor that supervises both program areas. Approval has been given to hire one Social Service Tech position to cover all three counties.

There is one OFI Supervisor that covers Wilkes, Lincoln, and Taliaferro counties. There is one OFI position that is assigned to the office. CAPS, ABD Medicaid, and APS staff are not assigned to the county. Office staff continue to share the front desk responsibilities.

The board reports that the automated phone system is difficult for customers to navigate and they request that a staff member be available to answer calls. The board is appreciative of the hurricane relief monies that were given back to families that lost food during long power outages.

E. Closing and Signature of the Board Chair

The board will continue to support staff as needed.

In kindest regards, Taliaferro County Board



Valeria Bowman, Board Chair



J. Grant McCurley, County Director



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report
2017

Tattnall County
Department of Family and Children Services
117 N. Main Street
Reidsville, GA 30453

TATTNALL COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

General summary of the Tattnall DFCS Board:

The Tattnall board meets on the first Thursday of each month at 2:00 PM at the Tattnall DFCS office. The board's makeup is consistent with the demographics of the community and all members have more than five years of service and all have been available for board meetings at least 80% of the time but some much more.

Jessie Rhodes, Chair and Regional Board Representative-retired farmer
Faye Way, Vice-Chair-retired DJJ teacher
Elbert Alberson-retired businessman
Eileen Bland-retired public health nurse
Juanita Ashford-retired school teacher
Genell Akins, Secretary

The board was involved in several activities in the past year including:

- Board supported the County Director in approving funds for purchases and updates needed in order to support staff such as funds for Happy Faces.
- Board prepared Thanksgiving meal for staff to show their appreciation for the work they do for the community.
- County Director kept the board informed of DFCS initiatives, system changes and community information such as updates on Hurricane IRMA so that board members were able to answer questions from the community when asked about DFCS responsibilities.
- Jessie Rhodes, Board Chair, represented Tattnall County as our representative on The Regional DFCS Board.
- Two of the five members represented Tattnall DFCS at the Annual Board Meeting in Savannah.

Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

We believe there have been many improvements over the last year. The County Director makes a point to introduce each new staff member to the board and we are pleased to have a new Social Services Supervisor, new front desk/receptionist and a new Office Manager position. We think the addition of the after-hours CPS unit has also been a good thing and has helped take some of the after-hours work off the day staff. We have been pleased to see the Social Services Investigation timeliness and response times improve to the level that we have always expected in our county. We, as board members, have strengthened our resolve to do our part to support staff so that they have a better connection to us and each other.

The County Director is involved in all aspects of the community to include Family Connection, CHINS, and outreach to faith based partners as well as any other organization or entity that may request or desire to know the needs of DFCS staff and DFCS families. She also recognizes the need for DFCS representatives to be present at partner meetings as needed.

When we looked at what was not working as well, we still feel that the Tattnall, Evans and Candler County cluster needs a dedicated Resource Development staff person that local residents interested in Foster Care can meet with. It is important that local people be able to talk to someone familiar with their questions and needs.

The county has 18 children in care, 16 are with relatives or fictive kin and 2 are in a CCI (Child Caring Institution). The county only has 8 foster parents with 4 approved foster homes, one of which is a foster to adopt only. The county has finalized one adoption this year and currently has no children totally free for adoption.

The County Boards assessment of the needs of the Community:

The Board feels our greatest need is more foster homes in order that we may keep our children in our county. We have increased our number of homes to four but we know there is still a great need for homes. The resource development worker attends as many community events as possible and came to the Kiwanis Family Fun day and one of the Fall Festivals to distribute information regarding foster care.

The Board also feels that the community has a need for more Hispanic resources. We have lots of Hispanic families and know that language is a great barrier for staff as they strive to help those families with their issues.

The County Board's recommendations for improved operations of the county department:

Overall, we believe that the local DFCS office is doing well with the resources that they have. We are still concerned that the lack of computer literacy in the elder population will continue to create a barrier to program access. The Board is continually reviewing options and resources within the community to bridge this gap.

We are still concerned with the lack of foster homes in Tattnall County and hope that with staff at many events, with the Board promoting fostering and the Bring Them Home Initiative that we will see the number of foster homes in the county increase this year. We know that once interest has been gained there needs to be an immediate follow-up to ensure a maintained interest.

Conclusion:

We, the members of the Tattnall DFCS board, feel there has been definite improvement within the agency this past year. We are willing to partner with the County Director and staff to keep moving the Blueprint for Change forward. We see no reason not to expect good things to come in the future as long as DFCS leadership stays on task and focused on the needs of families and the needs of staff.



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Taylor County
Department of Family and Children Services
178-2 Charing Road
Butler, Georgia
31006

TAYLOR COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

Board Summary;

During the last calendar year, The Taylor County DFCS Board has been active as well as supportive to the Agency as well as its mission. The Board meets the fourth Tuesday of every other month at 2:00 PM to discuss the agency's case data and seasonal trends that affect the service outcomes. Our Board consist of Board Chairperson Ms. Cecelia Miller; Vice Chairperson, Ms. Maggie Pope; and members Joy Albritton, Mrs. Luliah Neal and Mrs. Phillis Heath . All five members meet the requirements listed in Senate Bill 138 Section. The Harris County Board consist of representatives from the faith based Community, the school system, and DFCS/DHR background. The Board has been actively involved in high profile cases that resulted in a high level of community involvement. The Board provided valuable feedback by way of community contacts and resources. The Board has shown concern for the lack of front line staff case managers resulting in high caseloads, case manager oversight and staff retention. Historically, this has caused an impact on the level of service provided to the Taylor County Community. The Board members have oppritunities for annual GPHSA trainings and seminars for updates, changes as well as new developments for the Division going forward. The Taylor County Board is very focused on the safety of children and the service delivery to families. Each Board member has demonstrated a willingness to serve in their capacity and make a difference in the Harris County community.

A. The County Board's assessment of the effectiveness of the County Departments prevision of services.

The agency as well as the Board has been very impressed with the relationship between DFCS and the Taylor county School System as it relates to child safety. The School System has a longstanding relationship with the county office. The School system has experienced staff that have demonstrated a good working relationship with the Agency. This has helped maintain compliance and consistency with DHR policies and the School System protocol. The Taylor County Community is very small but managaes to meet the needs of its citizens. The faith based community has also proven to be a valuable resource for the families in Taylor County. DFCS with continue to partner with the faith based community to strive for stronger families and a stronger Georgia. The State Representative Patty Bentley has been influential in having a family connection collaborative for Taylor County. This will enhance the level of resources available to the community. Job opportunities, housing resources/ grants/ funding, Medical care Resources, continued educational Resources, Counselling resources and other needs and services Resources.

The Taylor County office has a very good working relationship with law enforcement, Juvenile court as well as the District Attorney's office. As first responders, the legal entities have worked diligently to foster a working relationship and resolve any concerns that may affect the delivery of service to our community.

1. Number of children in care. 5
2. Number of foster parents. 4
3. Number of finalized Adoptions. 1
4. Number of approved Foster Homes in the past year. 4
5. Number of CPS INV's
6. Number of FC cases.
7. Number of Family Preservation cases.
8. Staff turnover. 1 staff promotion to Supervisor

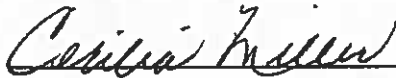
B. The Boards Assessment of the needs in the community;

The Taylor County Community has several resources but can always use more. A long term commitment to reeducating young parents on enhancing their parenting skills would be very beneficial. The Community can also benefit from a fatherhood program that helps reengage fathers with their children. An inpatient and outpatient Substance abuse treatment program assessable to the county residence to help treat and rehabilitate all community citizens.

C. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

The Taylor County DFCS Board has consistently expressed concerns about the lack of front-line staff in Services as well as OFI. The lack of front line staff can and will affect the service delivery to the citizens of our community. The Taylor county office has lacked the sufficient staff to accommodate the daily impact of our community for a number of years due to budget constraints. As it relates to OFI, it's still the belief that our elderly population have been left behind due the modern day technology and the requirements to apply for services on line, process applications, and the overall fear of operating a computer. This can and has cause a level of fear for the elderly population.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve in our community and work individually and collectively with the staff at Taylor County DFCS. We will continue to endorse the integrity of our Board Members and the Taylor County DFCS staff.



Cecelia Miller, Board Chairperson
Taylor County DFCS Board
P.O. Box 556
Reynolds Ga. 31076

CC: Derick Pinkney Harris county DFCS Director
Stacey Barfield, Region 8 Regional Director
Lillie Williams, Board Vice-Chairperson
Debbie Blackmar, DFCS Board
Janice Harris, DFCS Board
Phoebe Dawson, DFCS Board



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

Annual Report

2017

Telfair County
Department of Family and Children Services
35 East Brewton Street
McRae, GA 31055

**To: Virginia Pryor, Interim DFCS Director
2 Peachtree Street
19-490
Atlanta, Georgia 30303**

**From: Lurlene Fussell, Telfair County DFCS
Board Chair**

Date: November 15, 2017

**Subject: DFCS Annual County Board Report
Telfair County DFCS
35 East Brewton Street
McRae-Helena, GA 31055**

A. General Summary of the Telfair County DFCS Board

The Telfair County DFCS Board of Directors is made up of the following members:

Mrs. Lurlene H. Fussell, Chair, has served on the board since 1989. She is the owner and operator of a local trucking company. She is also involved in community faith based organizations.

Mr. Frank Ray, Vice-Chair, has served on the board since 1992. He is retired from the US Postal Service. He is also involved in community faith based organizations and coaches different athletic teams with the leisure services department.

Mrs. Iris Myles has served on the board since 2006. She currently works with the Telfair County Board of Education. She also serves on the regional DFCS board. She is also involved in community faith based organizations.

Mr. Stan Rutherford has served on the board since 1996. He is a retired school counselor. He is also involved in community faith based organizations.

Dr. Christy Stapleton served on the board since 1994. She currently teaches biology in the Jeff Davis school system and is also involved with numerous programs in the school system. She is also involved in community faith based organizations.

The Telfair County DFCS Board of Directors meets on the second Wednesday of every other month at 4:00 p.m. at the Telfair DFCS office. They have completed the following report as required by Senate Bill 138. The information has been reviewed and approved by the board prior to submission.

Activities for the past year has been our annual Meet and Greet with local law enforcement and our social services team, meeting all new staff, and Mrs. Iris Myles, board member, has served on the regional board. Some of our staff worked with Red Cross at several of our shelters that were opened in Laurens County, Dublin, GA, for evacuees from Hurricane IRMA.

Our local county funds are used for expenses which the state doesn't cover such as the part of the board per diem and travel, foster care expenses, staff appreciation, miscellaneous expenses which the state doesn't cover.

B. Assessment of the provision of services by the Telfair County DFCS Office

Stable staff located at the Telfair County DFCS office. Several employees have been with Telfair County DFCS for 20 plus years and are known in the community. This provides a stable agency in Telfair County with contacts throughout the community. Localization of OFI services or The One Caseworker, One Family practice helps provide more convenient, consistent services to the customers in Telfair County. Customers in the community are aware of who their worker is and where to go to for answers concerning their benefits. This provides a much better and quicker access to needed services. There are fewer complaints. This also provides a more manageable workload for the case managers. The movement towards local supervision with all OFI staff under one supervisor. This has increased confidence and less confusion for the case managers as they are all under the same expectation and are able to see their supervisor face to face on a regular basis. This has increased morale for OFI staff. The new staff is introduced to the board.

Social services has seen positive improvements during the last year. We have been able to hire a placement supervisor. We also have several new workers who have been able to begin their training soon after being hired. Our veteran workers are meeting response times and cases are being processed timely in our county. With inhouse supervision and the mentoring from our veteran workers, we are progressing smoothly. The veteran workers can share knowledge of the community and community partners of who to contact concerning cases. This is a work in progress. As soon as the new workers finish training, everyone will be trained and ready to carry a caseload.

There has been a community outreach by the agency, law enforcement “meet and greet” for the past two years that has helped increase communication between DFCS and law enforcement. There is an open line between law enforcement agencies in the community and the agency at all times.

Prior to moving back to localized services, customers were struggling in being able to access benefits as well as information concerning who was working their case. Telfair County has struggled with social services provision due to lack of local staff dedicated to this community. Due to the new workers still in training, the case managers are being pulled over several counties to work. This also affects the case managers ability to develop and maintain collaborative relationships with community partners such as schools, law enforcement, public health and the courts. It is believed that staff should be dedicated to the community in which they serve.

Telfair County had a total of 44 children in legal custody from January 2017 – November 2017. 17 children have either returned home or gone on to permanency with a forever family. At the time of this report, there were 26 children in the custody of Telfair County DFCS.

Telfair County has four foster homes which one of these was approved in the 2017 year. One of these homes can't take any more children due to the capacity level. The lack of foster homes continue to be a great concern. Any child that has to come into foster care, has to be placed outside of Telfair County. There is a need for dedicated resources to develop local foster homes. Resource development is housed out of a county 40 miles away and the staff is so limited that the resource development case managers are having to work 3, 4, and sometimes 6 counties. Telfair County has had four finalized adoptions during the 2017 year.

Telfair has had a total of 28 CPS investigations, 57 family support services cases, and seven family preservation cases.

Telfair County is not able to provide a breakdown of the number of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases. The new GATEWAY system does not have the availability to pull these figures at this time.

Telfair County has had two to retire and three new hires. Telfair County is presently at full staffing levels.

Service providers are few in the Telfair County area. The ones that the State approves become overloaded and unable to take on more cases. The process of contracting with service providers is extremely cumbersome and does not take into account local needs.

A law enforcement meet and greet has been held for the past three years. This has helped increase communication between DFCS and law enforcement. There is an open line between law enforcement agencies in the community and the agency at all times.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

Telfair County is a small rural county with limited job opportunities. Telfair County lacks the ability to attract/keep new businesses and industry, therefore Telfair County's unemployment rate remains high which contributes to elevated poverty rate. An elevated poverty rate may contribute to increased crime, teenage pregnancy, child abuse and drug dependency. Telfair County needs to have community partnerships to work to attract new business to provide our young people with job opportunities. There is also limited medical personnel to treat the citizens of Telfair County. The closest hospital is over 20 miles away. Most have to go out of town to receive medical treatment, however on November 1st, an urgent care facility opened in the city of McRae-Helena. There is a child and adolescent center through Mental Health located in Telfair County, but intake and other mental health needs must be accessed out of the county. Public transportation is provided as a service of the Telfair County Community Center, most commonly known as Telfair Transit. They have two 13 passenger vans one of which has handicap/wheelchair access for the convenience of the residents of Telfair County.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

One County Director for no more than two counties.

Resource Development staff to not have no more than three counties so that they can focus on Telfair County foster home recruitment.

Community involvement to address the issues of problem/troubled youth as DFCS is not equipped to deal with violent youth.

E. Closing and Signature of Board Chair

It is a pleasure to submit this annual report for the Telfair County Department of Family and Children Services.

Sincerely,

LURLENE H. FUSSELL

Lurlene H. Fussell
Board Chair

Note: Please accept typed signature instead of handwritten signature due to report prepared and approved via email due to deadline/meeting dates.

Terrell County Department of Family and Children Services

2017 Field Operations Annual County Board Report

Terrell County DFCS Board:

Ann Bolton –Retired School Teacher-Board Chairperson

Kevin Massey –Bank of Terrell- Vice Chairperson

Robert Lee –DFCS Director- Secretary

Shane Bell-Loan Officer-Board Member

Charlotte Law-County Nurse Manager– Board member

Mary Ivey-School Teacher-Board Member

Dorothy Coleman-Retired Teacher-Board Member

Tommy Poupard-Chief of Police-Board Member

Terrell County Board meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 4:30 p.m.

County Board's assessment of the effectiveness of the county department's provision of services:

There have been significant improvement in providing timely and needed services to the families of Terrell County. The board believes that the provision to families will continue to see marked improvement as the agency moves to "One Worker, One Family."

The board is encouraged by the states effort to increase the amount of social services case managers hired to serve Terrell County. Terrell County has been able to add one additional case manager over the last year. The board recognizes how this allotment will go a long way in decreasing case load sizes and therefore allowing case managers to ensure children are safe.

The board continues to recognize the struggles of the case managers as the majority of them work multi-county. Terrell County had 38 investigations and 34 Family Support cases in 2017. The county averaged between 35 and 40 children in Foster Care throughout the year. There was an average of 8 to 10 Family Preservation cases open during any particular month in 2017.

There is a strong partnership between Terrell County Division of Family and Children Services and other stakeholders in the community. Law Enforcement and the Division work closely to ensure children are protected and families have needed services. The Division works closely with the school counselors and Social Worker regarding the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

Terrell County DFCS is supported by our Local Board and County Commissioners and each Terrell County employee is provided a supplement that is funded by the county. This supplement as well as other supports provided to the staff has meant turnover is way below the state average. This lack of turnover means staff are able to better serve the community and cuts way down on costs associated with new employee recruitment and training.

Terrell County DFCS provides ongoing support to our foster parents as well as our foster children. Terrell County honored all the foster parents in May with a foster parent appreciation dinner. The board provides ongoing support for the children in foster care by approving funds to support our children's activities and to enhance their daily lives.

County Board's assessment of the needs to the community:

Poverty, lack of jobs, teenage pregnancy and lack of adequate support for youth serve as barriers to the health, economic and social well-being of Terrell County citizens. Greater cooperation among local leaders and other concerned citizens can lead to a cultural shift that can successfully address these issues and produce positive and sustainable outcomes.

There is an extreme shortage of foster homes in Terrell County and most of our children that come into care are placed outside the county. There are only two active foster homes in Terrell County and all of those homes are currently filled to capacity. Terrell County DFCS has an assigned Resource Development Case Manager to assist with the development and retention of foster homes.

There is limited access to local mental health services. Many of the families served by Terrell County DFCS have some issues related to the need for ongoing mental health services and assessments. The families in Terrell County must travel out of county to meet their mental health needs

County Board's recommendation for improved operations of the county department:

1. The state will continue to allocate enough case managers in each county to meet the needs of the community they serve.
2. There needs to be more resources put into obtaining and maintaining quality foster homes in Terrell County.
3. Increased statewide contracts with local mental health service providers to ensure the emotional/psychological needs of the families in Terrell County are met.

4. Terrell County DFCS will work on strengthening their relationship with the Faith Based Community in Terrell County



Board Chairperson
Ann Bolton



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

Thomas County Board Report 2017

A. General summary of County DFCS board:

- The board has five members:
 - Audrey Linder, Chairman, has served on the board for seven years. Her professional experience is in Human Resources and and Workforce development. She is employed in local industry and a military retiree.
 - Jennifer Reynolds, Vice Chair, has served on the board for two years and is a DFCS alumni who specialized in permanency for foster children. She is currently Social Work Assistant Faculty at Southern Regional Technical College.
 - Diane Moncur, Board Member, has served on the board for seven years. She is a retired DFCS Alumni consultant.
 - Kenneth Manwaring, Board Member, has served on the board for a year. He is a retired educator and a leader in the faith-based community. He is the director for Habitat for Humanity.
 - Heather Stroh, Board Member, is a recent appointee to the the board. She is a Clinical/Education Coordinator with an area hospital.

- The board meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 8:30 a.m.
- The board is still involved in the recruitment process for the vacant County Director position. Several members have participated in interviews.
- At various times during the year, the board has approved staff appreciation functions, they have provided treats for staff and have invited new staff to introduce themselves at board meetings.
- Throughout the year, board members have attended various trainings, as well as functions with community partners and elected officials.

B. Board's assessment of the effectiveness of the county department's provision of services (i.e. what is working well and what is not, etc.):

Thomas County DFCS | Jackie Bridges, Interim County Director | 260 Smith Ave. | Thomasville, GA 31792
229-227-3165 Telephone | 229-225-5278 Fax

An Equal Opportunity Employer

The county department has positive relationships with community partners and staff, making them an effective group. The most recent County Director was more visible in the community and enhanced the role of the agency with partners. However, the Board has been without a permanent Director for more than two years and it has taken a toll throughout the agency. Although the department has had a very capable interim Director, there are inherent shortcomings with not having a leader fully dedicated to Thomas County. Thomas DFCS has made positive changes in being open to the community, reaching out and letting community partners become more involved with our programs and needs. The statewide organizational changes have resulted in improved services and customer contact.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:


Thomas County is experiencing a higher than average rate of unemployment, indicating a need for jobs in the area. Affordable housing continues to be a problem, which is closely tied to an increase in the homeless population. Public transportation is available, but is not readily available for many clients. Advance reservations are required and route options are limited. Teen pregnancy and young mothers continues to be an area of concern. The closing of Southwestern State Hospital was a huge loss in community mental health resources. Local mental health (Georgia Pines CSB) does not adequately meet the needs of our clients.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the county department:

1. Hire a Thomas County Director with ties to the community and the training, experience and leadership skills to move our department forward.
2. Improve worker safety in the building and the field. Roll out panic buttons for staff as quickly as possible. Consider in-office panic button for front desk.
3. Improve local staffing structure or state staffing rules in order to facilitate internal hires in Thomas County for the Director position. This will allow for more opportunity to hire county directors with ties to the community.
4. Provide sufficient clerical support for the office size. OFI absorbed the Regional Receptionist in the office and our county has only the Office Manager for support. Our internal and external customers would benefit from the continuity provided by back-up staff for this position.
5. Provide salary increases to boost managerial staff morale. Review salary increases for managerial staff to ensure they are equitable in comparison to non-managerial staff.

E. Closing

Hopefully, it is clear one of the Board's primary concerns is the hire of a Director for the county. A fulltime Director will be fully dedicated to the provision of services, safety and other needs of Thomas County, its customers and our staff.



Audrey Linder, Thomas DFCS Board Chair



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Tift County
Department of Family and Children Services
410 West 2nd Street
Tifton, Georgia
31794

TIFT COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Makeup - Greg Crumley, Chairman, twenty-six years of service, Real Estate Consultant, Rodney Griffin, five years of service, Retired DFCS County Director, Carol Bell, Retired School Teacher, thirteen years of service, Audrey Cromer, Enforcement Agent, fourteen years of service, and Hal Baxley, Business Owner and Real Estate, five years of service
- Meeting dates/times and attendance of board members - Fourth Wednesday of each month. All board members regularly attend meetings
- Activities for the past year – Board members served on different Community Partner Committees of Tift County, Thanksgiving Luncheon, Rodney Griffin attended the Regional Quarterly Board meetings and State meetings
- Use of Local County Funds – No county funds received

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Successes – Worked well with collaborative partners, worked very closely with Red Cross to provide services during Hurricane Irma, Community partners assist during Christmas, Meet and Greet with Law Enforcement conducted to strengthen partnership, worked with Salvation Army to provide Thanksgiving baskets to elderly population
- Challenges/Opportunities – Slowness of computer system, more knowledge regarding Gateway and Solution Based Case Work
- Number of children in care - 145
- Number of foster parents - 28
- Number of finalized adoptions – 5
- Number of approved foster homes in past year - 2
- Breakdown of number of CPS, Family Preservation and Family Support – 257 investigations, 21 Family Preservation and 176 Family Support
- Breakdown of number of SNAP and TANF cases - Monthly average:
SNAP: 3096 TANF: 52
- Staff turnover rate - DFCS Social Services Specialist for FY17 0.00%
- Stakeholder involvement/relationships - Juvenile Court and Legal System, Health Department, School System, Family Connection partnership, Foster Parents, Homeless shelters, Family Violence Shelter, Fatherhood Program

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

- Gangs
- Treatment resources

- Substance abuse

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

- Primary concern was slowness of computer system, which delayed OFI processing, SHINES documentation and SMILE accounting system. County is scheduled to receive bandwidth increase
- The length of time that it entails from when a position is advertised until selected candidate is brought on board

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair



Board Chairperson



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor

Annual Report

2017

Toombs County
Department of Family and Children Services
162 Oxley Drive
Lyons Georgia 304362345

**Toombs County Department of Family and Children Services
162 Oxley Drive
Lyons, Georgia 30436**

Summary of County Board members and activities

The Toombs County Department of Family and Children services holds its regular meeting on the first Wednesday of each month at 1:00 pm. During the past year board activities include participation in the local CASA fund raiser. The Toombs County Board is comprised of 5 members. There is currently a vacancy on the Board. Below is a list of members and their respective offices.

**Wayne Smith- Chairman, Retired Business owner
Ann Bedingfield-Vice Chair- Retired Nurse
Sandra Williams- Retired DFCS OFI supervisor
Mary Ann McMillan- Retired School Teacher**

Summary of County DFCS Department Assessment

Region IX implementation of the clustering of counties has been as positive change for the provision of services to agency customers. The hiring of additional staff along with the clustering of counties have improved staff morale as well as improvement in the outcomes for families being served by the agency. The Board is hopeful the division will continue to provide the necessary resources to ensure the county offices are sufficiently staffed and workers have the recommended case to staff ratio.

The Toombs County Board feel that Toombs County DFCS, although a small county, has the volume of work that justifies a full-time director. The regional plan is for Toombs County DFCS to be a stand-alone county within the next five years. The board feels this should be reviewed carefully and the process to fill the director's position be expedited. We would recommend our current multi-county director, Tangela Strickland be appointed as the director for the Toombs County office full-time.

The Board would like to praise the staff of the Toombs County DFCS in their willingness to service the people of this community. The Toombs employees are loyal and a committed staff who strive daily to provide superb services to agency customers.

Data for Key Items

Number of Foster Children- 75
Number of Foster Parents- 9

Number of finalized adoptions-9
Number of approved Foster Parents in past year-6
CPS - investigations- 14, Family Preservation and Family Support-36, Monthly averages

Office of Family Independence
Application- TANF - 19, Food Stamps- 195, Medicaid -515
Renewals- TANF – 3 , Food stamps- 457, Medicaid 558
Staff Turnover Rate- 0

Stakeholders Involvement/ relationships

The county director is very involved in the local community and participates in quarterly stakeholder meetings. The local DFCS office partners with numerous local and State agencies. Below is a list non-exhausted list of community partners. In addition, the Toombs County Office has implemented the Care Portal Initiative in which local churches can provide support to the local DFCS Staff and families by meeting the needs of Foster children in the agency's care.

Family connections

Chins Committee
LIPT Committee
CASA
Sunshine House
Law Enforcement
Department of Juvenile Justice
Promise 360

Annual Report
Page 2

Summary of Community Needs

Toombs County is a large class two county, although relatively small in size, is characterized by a large migrant population, high unemployment, high poverty and a large population of illiterate residents. Toombs County population of residents depend on the local DFCS benefits and services to provide for their basic needs. The local DFCS serves as a referral source for many patrons who are seeking assistance for a number of family-related issues. These services would fall in the general services category and does serve a vital role in small communities regarding prevention strategies. In addition, the county has experienced an increased in the number of Children coming into care due to the Opiates and Benzodiazepines epidemic.

Recommendation for Improved Operations of the County Department including Recommendations for Staffing Levels

- Appointment of a full-time county director for the Toombs County office.
- Expedite the process of relocation of the Toombs County DFCS office. This process has been initiated.
- Continue the Divisions efforts in developing safety-panic button for workers in the field.
- Hire an ABD worker to be housed in the local office.
- Review and modify the current policy to allow fictive kin to receive a per diem for children placed in their home that are in the legal custody of the department.



Wayne Smith, Chairman
Toombs County DFCS Board

**LOCAL COUNTY
ANNUAL REPORT
DECEMBER 2017**

General Summary of the Towns County DFCS Board

Towns County DFCS board comprises of 4 members appointed by the sole commissioner Mr Bill Kendall.

The board comprises of the chairperson and the secretary (County Director) and 3 other voting members

The Towns County Board meets Bi-monthly to assess the needs of the county.

The board has worked to ensure the staff in the county are recognized, by providing support in recruiting foster families, working with agencies to develop a foster/group home. The board is active at the Regional board meetings with Mr Wilson attending as a representative for the County.

Assessment of effectiveness of Towns County DFCS provision of services

The board also recognized the adoptions that had occurred in the county throughout the year and the progress we make each day in attempting to develop new placements options.

The board did see an ongoing issue with staffing levels and concerns throughout the year with case managers working in other counties, low case manager levels causing additional stress to newly trained case managers is an ongoing concern.

The board recognized that the pay increases to case management and supervisory level staff was needed and hoped this would retain staff in the future.

Towns Count Board assessment of community needs/concerns

The community needs to be aware of the need for recruitment of foster families to serve the children in the custody of Towns County DFCS.

Transportation continues to be a need in any small community.

Towns County Board's recommendation for improved operations of the County Department

The board feels the county continues to make developments. The board continues to commend the staff for the hard work they do each day.

Closing

Towns County DFCS continues to develop relationships in the community with Family Connection, the school system, the court system and law enforcement to ensure families are protected and provided with the needs to enhance the lives of all members in each home.

Jim McDonald
Arburne Wilson



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor

Annual Report

2017

Treutlen County
Department of Family and Children Services
1831 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr.
Soperton, Georgia
30457

**Treutlen County Department of Family and Children Services
1831 MLK Drive
Soperton, Georgia, 30457**

Summary of County Board members and activities

The Treutlen County Department of Family and Children services holds its regular meeting on the second Tuesday of each month at 9:00 am. During the past year board activities include participation in the local CASA fund raiser. The Treutlen County Board is comprised of 5 members. The board will vote on a Vice Chair. Below is a list of members and their respective offices.

**Bobby Joe Cammack- Retired Business - Chair
Derrick Ryals- Clergy, Formal Foster child
Regina Harris- School Administrator
Laurianne Pullen- Retired DFCS Director
Brenda Williams- Nurse manager, Health Department**

Summary of County DFCS Department Assessment

Region IX implementation of the clustering of counties has been as positive change for the provision of services to agency customers. The hiring of additional staff along with the clustering of counties have improved staff morale as well as improvement in the outcomes for families being served by the agency. The Board is hopeful the division will continue to provide the necessary resources to ensure the county offices are sufficiently staffed and workers have the recommended case to staff ratio.

The regional plan is for Toombs County DFCS to be a stand-alone county within the next five years. With that change the plan is to add Johnson County to our cluster. The board feels this should be reviewed carefully as they do not feel that the change would benefit the constituents of Treutlen county. The Board recommends that the Treutlen office be paired with no more than one additional office.

The Board would like to praise the staff of the Treutlen County DFCS in their willingness to service the people of this community. The Treutlen employees are loyal and a committed staff who strive daily to provide superb services to agency customers. Below is a listing of key OFI and Social Services Data for the Treutlen County.

Data for Key Items

Number of Foster Children- 13

Number of Foster Parents- 2

Number of approved Foster Parents in past year-0

CPS - investigations- 7, Family Preservation and Family Support-5, Monthly averages

Office of Family Independence

Application- TANF - 5, Food Stamps- 71, Medicaid -130 Total- 206

Renewals- TANF – 1 Food stamps- 108, Medicaid 116 Total-225

Staff Turnover Rate- 0

Stakeholders Involvement/ relationships

The county director is very involved in the local community and participates in quarterly stakeholder meetings. The local DFCS office partners with numerous local and State agencies. Below is a list of community partners.

Family connections

Chins Committee

LIPT Committee

CASA

Sunshine House

Law Enforcement

Department of Juvenile Justice

Summary of Community Needs

Treutlen County, although relatively small, is characterized by a large migrant population, high unemployment, high poverty and a large population of illiterate residents. Treutlen County population of residents depend on the local DFCS benefits and services to provide for their basic needs. The local DFCS serves as a referral source for many patrons who are seeking assistance for a number of family-related issues. These services would fall in the general services category and does serve a vital role in small communities regarding prevention strategies. In addition, the county has experienced an increased in the number of Children coming into care due to the Opiates and Benzodiazepines epidemic.

Recommendation for Improved Operations of the County Department including Recommendations for Staffing Levels

- Appointment of a full-time county director for the Treutlen County office.
- Continue the Divisions efforts in developing safety-panic button for workers in the field.
- Hire an ABD worker to be housed in the local office.



Bobby Cammack , Chair
Treutlen County DFCS Board



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle

Annual Report

2017

Troup County
Department of Family and Children Services
1220 Hogansville Rd.
LaGrange, GA 30241

TROUP County ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Makeup - Members/Officers, Length of service on Board, Background
- Meeting dates/times and attendance of board members
- Activities for the past year
- Use of Local County Funds

Troup County DFCS Board is made up of 6 members. The County Director serves as the secretary to the Board. Rev. Walter Darden is the Chairman of the Board. He has served on the Board over thirteen years. He is a local pastor. Beverly Lundberg is the Vice Chair and has served on the Board over five years. She is retired from Troup County Department of Family and Children Services. Dorothy Billingslea has served on the Board over seven years and is a retired educator. Kay Elam has served on the Board over four years and is a previous foster parent. Brenda Royster has served on the Board for over four years. She is retired from the Troup County Juvenile Court and is an Educator. Dale Strickland has served on the board for over one year and is with City of Lagrange Police Department.

Troup County Board meets the second Friday of every month at 10:00 am at the DFCS office. All board meetings are typically held as there is always a quorum to move ahead with the meeting.

Troup County Board members have attended several activities throughout the year to include Stakeholders Appreciation Day, Child Abuse Protocol Signing, Trauma Responsive Community activities and our annual Thanksgiving luncheon.

County Director can approve the use of county funded expenditures up to \$1,000.00 and anything over \$ 1,000.00 requires Board approval.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- Successes
- Challenges/Opportunities
- Number of children in care
- Number of foster parents
- Number of finalized adoptions
- Number of approved foster homes in past year
- Breakdown of number of CPS, Family Preservation and Family Support
- Stakeholder involvement/relationships

Troup County Board is very pleased with the allocation of staff in both OFI and Child Welfare over the last year. The Board also considers the collaboration between DFCS and Community Partners/Stakeholders as a strong one and supports the County Director in Community Events.

Troup County has 148 children in care and a total of 14 foster families who are approved as Foster Parents. Troup has an additional 5 families who are

adoption families only. The agency had 12 finalized adoptions this past year and approved six foster homes for the year 2017. The average intakes received during a month for Troup County is around 65. This is an average of 27 intakes being assigned as investigations and 37 being assigned as family support. The average Family Preservations cases opened per month is around 95.

Troup County is greatly blessed with strong community partnerships which help our clients assess and access needed services as well as helps with staff retention. Stakeholders meet monthly in several different ways to collaborate and help support the needs of the community.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

The Troup County Board recognizes the lack of foster homes as a crisis not just for Troup County but the state as a whole. They also are very concerned about the lack of communication between OFI Administration and the County Director. There are often times new workers hired in OFI with no knowledge of the County Director, however, County Director is responsible for the work they do and is require to answer any and all calls in regards to constituent complaints within the agency from dissatisfied customers. The workload is very high causing work to be delayed and families not receiving their benefits timely. The Board also has concerns that workers are still not completing work for Troup County Families and work is scattered around the state/region.

The Troup Board also recognizes the need for more mental health services for families and children in our community. The local CSB is not staffed enough to handle the volume of mental health clients needing assistance.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

The Troup County Board recommends it is critical to county operations to have flexibility to use county funds without state oversight and restrictions. Frequently local businesses could be used to purchase items at a more economical cost than those with a state contract.

The Troup Board recommends oversight of OFI in the county needs to be brought back under the leadership of the local County Director. All applications and renewals needs to be handled by the local county OFI staff. The Board also has concerns the state has no real means to know how many clients in the County receive benefits because of the new Gateway System.

The Troup Board is also very concerned that the State purchased the building from the City of LaGrange. The Troup Board recommends a complete remodel of the building to include improvements with the HVAC system as well and the carpet needs to be replaced. The carpet currently in the building is over 17 year's old and in very poor condition.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to share our recommendations for improving the services offered to our families in Troup County.

Beverly Lundberg
Board Co-Chairman
Beverly Lundberg



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

Annual Report

2017

Twiggs County
Division of Family and Children Services
14072 US Hwy 80 Suite A
Jeffersonville, GA 31044

TWIGGS COUNTY
ANNUAL REPORT
DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Makeup – Members/Officers
 1. Patricia Gallegly – Board Chair.
 2. Matilda Basley – Vice–Chair
 3. Marilyn Mallory – Board Member
 4. Loretta Faulk – Board Member

- Meeting dates/times:

Board Meetings are held monthly on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 9 am at the Twiggs County DFCS office.

- Activities for the past year:

During the past year, the Board has been very involved with the local office and community. We helped provide staff with a Thanksgiving and Christmas luncheon as an appreciation for the work they are doing. We attended the Semi-Annual DFCS County Board Meeting in April. We attended the Annual GPHSA Conference held in August in Savannah, GA and GPHSA Fall Meeting and Training in St. Simons during the month of November. We advocated for local businesses to help our local office with food donations in November and gifts for the foster children at Christmas time. We supported the staff in April during Child Abuse Prevention Month with community awareness activities such as pinwheels for prevention and wearing our blue ribbons/pins. We participated in the Back-to-School Backpacks for Children drive that was held in the community. We attended and participated in Family Connections meetings.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

- What's working well: This Board is proud of Twiggs County DFCS and the community partnerships that have been developed and maintained throughout the years. The relationship between DFCS and the local law enforcement is excellent. The local law enforcement is very involved with the agency and they support the work that is being done by the staff. If their assistance is needed they respond immediately to help ensure the safety of the staff. Our relationship with the County Commissioner's Office is a strong partnership. Family Connections is a partnership that has grown throughout

the years. We support this partnership and participate in this partnership, as one of our board members is a part of the Family Connections Team.

- What's not working: As a Board we are concerned about turnover in both Social Services (SS) and the Office of Family Independence (OFI). We are aware that in the last fiscal year Social Services and OFI staff were given salary increases in hopes of retaining workers and recruiting better qualified applicants, but workers appear to still be leaving at a rapid pace. Workers continue to cite high workloads and job demands that far exceed a 40 hour work week, which greatly impacts their family life.

Another concern is around front desk coverage. The front desk position in Twiggs has been vacant since September 1, 2017. Although approval to fill the position has been given, months have gone by and the position is still not filled. This is a hardship for the one OFI worker that is now left, as she has to work her cases, service all walk-ins, and answer all OFI calls.

- C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns: As a Board we do believe there are needs within this community. Currently, Twiggs County does not have any foster parents. Due to this when children are brought into care they are having to be placed outside of the county. We feel there is a lack of transportation services within our county. We also feel there is a need for an ambulance service within our county. At present time we do not have an ambulance service. We are very concerned with the increase of drug activity in the county. We are aware that the majority of the social services cases that the county handles involves drug issues within the family. This is very concerning to us as a Board.

- D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department: As a Board we have several recommendations. We feel that the process in regards to the recruitment and hiring of new staff needs to be evaluated. We feel that part of the issue regarding the lengthy process has to do with recruitment due to limited qualified applicants applying for the positions. In regards to turnover, we feel that employee salaries need to be evaluated. We feel that increasing pay at all levels will help with sustainability, while also creating a competitive market so that the right people are hired for the job. We also feel that the development of foster homes in this community is a must.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair: In closing, we appreciate you giving us the opportunity to be heard. We have some excellent partnerships in Twiggs County and are extremely proud of the work our DFCS office does.

Patricia Gallegly
Twiggs County DFCS Board Chair

Patricia Gallegly
12/15/17

Union County
Annual Report
December 2017

A: General Summary of the Union County DFCS Board

Union County DFCS has 5 members to the county board comprising of the Chairperson, 4 members and the County Director who serves at the secretary

Union County Board members meeting Quarterly (1/4) at the county office

The board has been instrumental in communication with the local sole commissioner in determining the financial needs of the county.

B: Assessment of effectiveness of the County Departments provision of Services:

The Union County board expressed that the county office is providing excellent service to the clients of Union County in all program areas.

C: Boards assessment of community needs/concerns.

The board had some concerns related to OFI services but hopes the transition continues.

Transportation remains a need for the county.

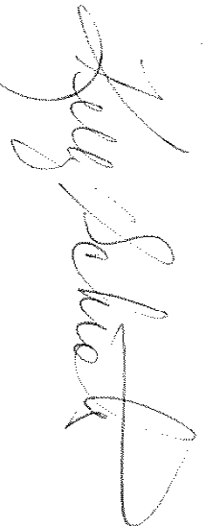
D: Boards recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

The board noted that staffing loads for case managers continue to be of concern especially since the recent freeze in hiring in the region.

The need for additional foster homes continues to be one of the biggest needs to ensure children remain in the community and school when they are removed from the caregiver's home.

The increase in relative placements has overcome some of the needs for additional foster homes but the need is still great.

E: Closing and signature of the Board Chair.



Annual Report 2017

Upson County
Department of Family and Children Services
711 North Bethel Street
Thomaston, GA 30286

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

The Upson County Department of Family and Children Services Board currently consists of three members from the community, appointed by the Upson County Commissioners.

Ruth Hatchett, Board Chairman

George Carriker, Board Member

Tonia Brown, Board Member

The Upson County Department of Family and Children Services Board currently consists of three members from the community. They are appointed by the Upson County Commissioners. Due to resignations, there are currently two vacancies on the Board. Upson DFCS has been working in conjunction with the Upson County Commissioners to fill these vacancies. The Upson County DFCS Board currently meets every other month on a Wednesday morning at 9:00 am. The date is decided upon ahead of time by the Board.

Throughout this past year, our meetings have included discussions of the day to day work in the areas of Child Protective Services, Foster Care, Resource Development, Adoptions, and Office of Family Independence. Additionally, we review the county funds and approve the county budget along with establishing the guide lines for Foster Parent expenses.

The County Director provides the Board with updated information received from the regional and state offices.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

The Upson County DFCS Board is supportive of staff in all service areas. They recognize that the staff of Upson DFCS are diligently working to provide quality and effective services to the citizens of Upson County. Upson DFCS has also worked diligently to improve the working relationship with community partners while striving for continuous improvement.

The Board would like to acknowledge the staff for their continuous efforts and timeliness of work. This has also been recognized at the Regional level. The Board is pleased that Upson DFCS has been able to hire additional staff which has resulted in lower caseloads. While some of the work force is young and inexperienced, they have shown the ability to provide services and meet the need of families. These staff are continuing to develop their skills and knowledge within the program areas. The Board is pleased with the selection of a new County Director from within Upson DFCS.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

The Board recognizes that Upson County is in need of additional qualified foster homes as children from Upson County are placed throughout the State with some placements being hours away. This presents a barrier to visitation with the parents and siblings. The Board feels that there needs to be specific recruitment efforts for homes in Upson County. There is additional concern due to the lack of communication with the Resource Development team and the county office. The lack of

local county involvement leads to less than desirable outcomes for children in care. The Board recognizes the current recruitment efforts being made by the county child welfare and administrative staff. The Board is pleased with the efforts being made at the regional level that will assist in bringing children back closer to their homes.

There is the need for continuous collaboration to ensure effective communication with all community partners including law enforcement and the Upson County School System. The Board supports additional training for mandated reporters, especially the educational system. There appears to be a need for a better understanding of what should be reported to the Department.

The Board is pleased with the hiring of new case management staff and a Services Supervisor who is from the community.

The Board is aware that Upson County has a high poverty rate with an elevated level of public housing and that the school system is under the Title One program due to the poverty rate and scores within the system.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

The Upson County Board would recommend that the county continue to be involved with the approval and re-evaluation process for foster homes.

The Board would like to see Board vacancies filled with qualified community members who will be able to bring diverse insight and guidance to the Board.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair:

The Upson County DFCS Board continues to support the County Director and staff in achieving their goals. The Board is proud of the efforts that staff put forth in serving the citizens of Upson County.

Walker County Division of Family and Children Services

2017 Annual Board Report

The Walker County Division of Family and Children Services board is comprised of seven members of the community that now meet monthly, typically on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, at the Walker County DFCS office. The meetings begin at 5:30 p.m. Notification is listed in the local newspaper and also posted in the DFCS lobby in advance of the meetings. Members currently serving on the board are Mr. Roger Neal, Chairperson, who has been on the board since 1989; Ms. Anne Goodson, Vice-Chairperson, who has been on the board since 2001; Mr. Bert Nichols, member since 2003; Mr. Charles Helton, member since 2005; Ms. Renee Stapleton, member since 2007; Det. Pepper Stanfield, member since July 1, 2016; and Fire Chief, Waymond Westbrook, member since July 1, 2016. The County DFCS office receives county funds in which the Board approves all expenditures exceeding \$300.

In addition to the above listed members, the Walker County DFCS Director and the Walker County DFCS Office Manager also attend each meeting.

At each meeting, a standard agenda is followed that includes the review and approval of the minutes from the previous board meeting and the current financial report; a review and discussion of reports related to services provided by both sections of DFCS, Office of Financial Independence and Social Services; there is a discussion involving updates on administrative and personnel matters; any follow-up items needing to be discussed as part of Old Business and any new business related to the department is then discussed; and lastly, important dates of upcoming meetings and events are shared with the board.

2017 Walker County DFCS Background:

In calendar 2017, Walker County DFCS experienced a number of changes that should be noted. January 1st Walker County's new commissioner, Shannon Whitfield, took office. In March 2017, Teresa Hughes was asked to be the Interim County Director in Chatham County. Ms. Hughes spent the next four months traveling back and forth to Savannah, GA while Kim Ballard-Humphrey, Chattooga County Director covered Walker County.

Upon Ms. Hughes return to Walker County a proposal was made to the board to start meeting on the 2nd Tuesday of the month as opposed to the 3rd Tuesday. This was due to Mrs. Hughes being unable to attend on the 3rd Tuesday of the month because of a conflict with the Statewide "Hopefuls" meetings where Ms. Hughes' attendance was required. The Board approved this change.

In September, the agency was notified that the county budget was being cut. Due to the increased financial issues Walker County continues to have, Commissioner Whitfield cut the county budget 37%. The majority of the county budget is used for foster care reimbursement. Agency staff along with representatives from the foster parent association met and discussed adjustments that could be made to the foster child reimbursement plan. Working together, a new plan was developed and approved by the board that will have the least impact on the families and children we serve.

Programmatic agency changes that continued in 2017 included Social Services policy changes including implementation of the Solution Based Casework practice model. Case Managers and Supervisors have attended SBC training. The agency is in the process of getting staff certified.

OFI is adjusting to the newly developed GateWay system. The new system rolled out May 1st in Walker County, staff, as well as, clients continue to adjust to the program.

2017 Assessment and Recommendations:

The Board assessed the overall effectiveness of the Walker County DFCS provision of services in the areas of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Office of Financial Independence (OFI) that included SNAP, Medicaid, ABD and Childcare, and Social Services program areas that included Child Protective Services (CPS), Family Preservation Services (FP), Foster Care and Adoptions. The Board feels like the following are working well at Walker County DFCS.

- Continuation of One Family, One Worker has made a huge impact on local families being able to receive assistance timely and resolve issues when they occur. Having a same day worker to handle expedited applications as well as the local phone lines being activated has cut down on complaints in the community.
- Agency is very responsive to reports of abuse/neglect and works diligently to perform adequate assessments.
- Court intervention is sought when needed to keep children safe.
- Needs of children in foster care are met.
- Increased communication and improved relationships with community partners/stakeholders has benefited the children and families in the community and the agency as a whole. The agency works diligently to continue to find ways to strengthen community relations. In 2017, agency representatives have attended multiple community meetings as well as the agency sponsored stakeholder "Meet and Greet" event that local law enforcement, elected officials, providers, and other county agencies were invited to attend.
- Strong customer service continues to be a focus at all areas within the DFCS office.
- Utilization of outside county support when needed to fill gaps to ensure safety of children. This gap is filled by community generosity. Local business, churches, and individuals are making Secret Santa donations.
- Increased community outreach highlighting the need for local foster homes is making a positive impact.
- Increased focus on staff retention helped in efforts to remain consistency staffed.

The Board assessed the following areas needing improvement that is partially within local agency control.

- Staff retention. Historical turnover has greatly impacted outcomes for children and families in the county. However, during 2017 a number of newly created positions have been filled. The agency filled two Social Services Administrator positions as well as two Social Services Tech

positions. The agency has seen a decrease in staff leaving the agency however, the board feels as if filling vacated positions will offset more turnover.

The Board identifies the following needs for the community.

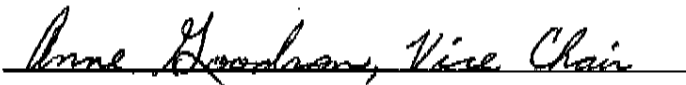
- More local service resources such as mental health, substance abuse, transportation, etc
- More local foster homes to serve the Walker County children in foster care.

The Board made the following recommendations for improved operations.

- Identifying local businesses to employ TANF recipients as well as ABAWD (able bodied adults without dependents) clients.
- Continued efforts for staff and foster home retention.
- Development of more local service providers to meet the needs of Walker citizens.
- Focus on timely permanency

In regards to the Board's self-assessment and recommendations, the Board discussed the following.

- The Board feels that they have a better understanding of the day-to-day work conducted in the Walker DFCS office. They also feel a continued explanation of provided data will help them gain understanding.
- The Board will continue to work independently to try to gather more information on the specific needs of the community and learn how DFCS can help meet those needs.
- The Board feels they are able to provide support to county agency staff in the ways of approval of county funds for events to support agency staff, foster parents and children in foster care. Additionally, as they are able, they participate in office functions to show their appreciation and support to staff.



Roger Neal, Board Chair



Teresa Hughes, County Director



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report

2017

Walton County
Department of Family and Children Services
300 Georgia Avenue, Suite 100
Monroe, GA 30655

**Walton County Board of Directors
Annual Report
December 2017**

A. General summary of County DFCS Board:

- Members/Officers: Gina Meadows (Walton County School System) - Chair; Charlotte George (Retired DFCS) – Co Chair; Nancy Curry (Retired Community Member); Darren Vinson (Law Enforcement); Michelle Camp (Former Foster Parent); Juanasha Watkins (Social Circle School System); and Tina Grubbs - Walton County Director.
- Meeting Dates (all meetings are held at 10:00 am on the last Tuesday of the month unless specially set): January 31, 2017, February 28, 2017, No meeting in March 2017 due to Interim CD conflict, April 26, 2017, May 30, 2017, June 27, 2017, July 25, 2017, August 29, 2017, September 26, 2017, October 31, 2017, December 5, 2017 (in lieu of CD conflict in November) and December 15, 2017 (special set 1:00 – 2:30 – in lieu of meeting attendance at Staff Holiday Celebration).
- Activities/Use of Funds: The board attended regular meetings, approved funding for staff appreciation events, approved county funds as requested for foster children and staff, attended and provided funding for staff/board holiday celebration, lobbied for county staff and management needs with local legislators and state level management, and were active advocates for staff salary increases and retention.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

In preparation for the retirement of two long-tenured employees (one Administrator and one Supervisor), coupled with a vacant County Director position, Interim County Director Audrey Brannen was assigned to Walton County in the fall of 2016.

Although some may argue there's no difference between change leadership and everyday leadership, Walton County Board would disagree. Change leadership requires a different mindset; an extra set of capabilities in order to lead an organization to a new place. Interim County Director Brannen successfully guided Walton County staff during the retirement transition, facilitating day to day operations while building on existing processes, developing organizational and strengthening front line staff. The Board is thankful for Ms. Brannen's leadership and experience.

In May of 2017, Tina Grubbs was appointed Walton County Director. Coming from the non-profit sector, Director Grubbs brought unique skill sets to Walton County, viewing systems within state government through a different lens. Beginning day one, Director Grubbs casted vision with staff, acknowledging the fear of change. Not only did Director Grubbs raise children in Walton, she also personally experienced the adoption process in Walton County.

The Board is pleased with Director Grubbs' collaboration and community engagement expertise. She is intentionally relational, a shift for staff, but well-received. During the first six months, Director Grubbs focused efforts in assessing county trends, evaluating staff productivity and accountability measurement tools, determining gaps in personnel, empowering leadership and charting a course for 2018.

During 2017, Walton County received approval to hire six new Social Service Case Managers, fill two Supervisor vacancies, and add a part-time Social Services Technician. Walton County continues to provide for Masters of Social Work students to receive supervision. Prior to year-end, Director

Grubbs' announced Tabitha Willoughby as new Social Service Administrator charged with day to day program operations. Although there have been several resignations during Quarter four of 2017, the Board is pleased staff turnover has decreased as a direct result the state's 19% salary increase for social services case managers and supervisors.

The board continues to supplement social services staff monthly after their first 90 days of employment, as well as monthly supplements to County Director, Social Service Administrator and Social Service Supervisors. The board also provides county funds to support temporary staffing on an as-needed basis. To improve staff productivity and timeliness, county funds have also been utilized to purchase additional non-network printers and dictation services. In 2017, Walton County experienced a surprise escalation in the number of reports during the summer months. In fact, during August and September, Walton County exceeded Clarke County in the number of child abuse reports. Even though staff maintained a 93% response rate during July- November of 2017 (August and November exceeding 97%), staff continue to feel the strain of backlog and overdue cases.

The board was impressed with the Home in Five initiative presentation by Field Program Specialist Audrey Brannen in late fall. With the closing of eight foster homes in 2017 (three due to adoption placement, one due to noncompliance, two due to ICPC placements and 2 voluntary closings) and only four approved foster homes in Walton County, the board hopes this public-private partnership will boost interest and support for foster care in our community. Although the number of foster care entries decreased in 2017 from 101 in 2016 to 62 this year, the goal for Home in Five is for place every child in care in Walton County with a foster family in or around the county.

Most recent data received from the Office of Family Independence (September 30, 2017) reflects a total of 205 new food stamp applications received in Walton County during 2017 with 778 renewals. 11 new TANF applications were received and 20 were renewed while 208 new applications for Medicaid were received with over 994 renewed during the year. With the implementation of Gateway, OFI has seen a 4% staff turnover rate during the months of July and August.

There are a few areas in which the Department sees room for improvement and seeks the support of the State office to implement change. For example, the board is disappointed to learn of a freeze in hiring new social service staff to fill recently approved vacant positions. The inability to hire new staff to fill positions makes it difficult to complete the work in a timely and effective fashion. While the increase in pay for existing social services staff was needed, it should not come at the expense of hiring new staff.

Secondly, the board was surprised to hear of the number of consumer complaints Director Grubbs reported regarding the lack of response by OFI and ABD staff during Gateway transition. Director Grubbs asked OFI administration to preview the Gateway system with the board mid fall. While the board was excited to learn of a system which increases staff productively, they were disappointed to learn paper applications would become extent causing a barrier for some consumers. OFI staff explained the role of an office navigator and encouraged board members that as staff become more familiar with the system, consumers will receive timely service.

Lastly, the board is concerned with the recent transition of child care assistance from DFCS to the DCAL. The board learned the county has received several foster care complaints regarding child care payment. The board hopes that in the future, there will be a designated contact at the state level to address payments in a timely manner, eliminating unnecessary calls and emails by Case Managers, Supervisors, Administrators, and County Director.

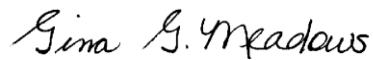
C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

Walton County struggles with transportation as the largest barrier in the community. Many times, DFCS pays for transporters and parent aides to provide necessary services to children in care and families needing support. Additionally, there is a lack of affordable housing and limited availability of local mental health services in Walton County which prevents many parents from providing stability and permanency for their children.

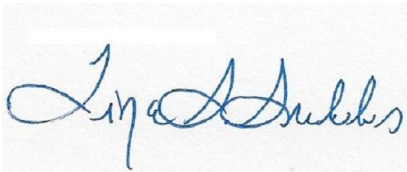
D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

None at this time.

Respectfully submitted,



Gina Meadows
Walton County DFCS Board Chair



Tina G. Grubbs
Walton County Director



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby Cagle
Director

ANNUAL REPORT
2017

Ware County
Department of Family and Children Services
1200 Plant Avenue
Waycross, GA 31501

WARE COUNTY

ANNUAL REPORT

December 2017

A. General Summary of the DFCS Board

- Rita Eaton (Chairman)- Mrs. Eaton was appointed to the Board September 12, 2005. Mrs. Eaton served as a County Director with Ware Co. DFCS before retiring.
 - Faye Boyd (Co-Chair)- Mrs. Boyd was appointed to the Board December 11, 2006. She is a retired educator with the Ware Co. School System.
 - Linda Booker- Mrs. Booker was appointed to the Board July 1, 1990. She serves on various boards in the Waycross Community.
 - Franklin Pinckney- Mr. Pinckney was appointed to the Board February 25, 1991. He is a retired School Superintendent and serves on the Ware Co. Board of Education.
 - Betty Lee- Mrs. Lee was appointed to the Board July 14, 2008. She is a retired business owner.
-
- Board Meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 1:00 pm.
 - The board hosts a social every quarter and provides treats to the staff. They also attend Meet and Greets with Community Partners.
 - Local County Funds (Donated Funds) are used to help with Utility payment, Prescription Costs, Emergency Housing, etc. There is a local county fund directive that is used.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's Provision of Services.

Effectiveness (What is working well and What is not) of the county department's provision of services:

- We have a great team at our local office that works hard to provide the best services possible. Since our office is open five days a week, staff is able to serve local clients as well as those from other counties.
- Having OFI Management back in the local office, continues to improve both staff morale and service provided to clients.
- Clients are now seeing case managers in the office or can call in and speak with their case managers.
- Our Social service staff works well with all community partners: Children's Initiative, Multi-Disciplinary Team meeting, Truancy Task force, Child Fatality reviews, Local Interagency Planning Team, Emergency Food and Shelter program, Domestic Violence Task force, School Social Workers and Teen Maze.
- There are 151 children in foster care in Ware County.
- There is only 15 open Foster Homes in Ware County. Out of 151 children needing foster homes only 4 are placed in Foster homes in Ware County, and 23 are in Relative Care in the County. There are 124 placed outside the county. This is ineffective, taking too much staff time, costs too much and is not in the best interest of the children. Therefore, there is a desperate need for more DFCS foster homes and Therapeutic homes.
- There were 6 adoptions finalized from January 1, 2017 to present day.
- Investigations and Family Support Cases vary depending on how many intakes are received during the month. Ware Co. currently has 23 open Investigations and 15 Family Support cases. The CPS unit also provides support in Investigations and Family Support cases in Pierce County until they are staffed. Ware County currently has 7 open Family Preservation

Cases. Ware Co. also provides support to Pierce County in Family Preservation until they are staffed.

- The Office of Family Independence recently moved to a new software system Gateway. At this time, it is only able to capture renewals and applications taken. Ware County Breakdown is as follows for Applications received: SNAP- 164; TANF- 5; Medicaid- 167; ABAWD- Unknown. Ware County Breakdown is as follows for Renewals: SNAP-657; TANF- 8; Medicaid- 708; ABAWD- Unknown.

- Ware County's turnover rate for 2017 is 30%. That is up from 20% for the 2016 year.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns.

The needs of the community:

- There is a need for more foster homes in our community to care for local Foster Children. This means that our children have to move from their schools, churches, and recreational programs when they have already been moved from their homes and families.

- There is a need for more substance abuse long-term treatment facilities available to this area. Although the area has St. Illa it is only a 28 day program.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department.

Recommendations for improved operations of the county department:

- Resource Development needs to come back into the County and hire additional staff to recruit and maintain foster homes. Foster Homes are not getting enough attention.

- In order to retain staff and provide adequate services, annual cost of living raises should be continued and additional staff should be hired.

- Rural counties that close two days a week should provide clerical support to offices that are opened five days a week to assist in serving their clients.

- The hiring process needs to be refined and streamlined as the process is taking too long. This process discourages applicants and they seek other employment. Not hiring timely causes current staff to resign.

- The issue of the out of compliance building lease agreement needs to be resolved so safety concerns of the staff can be addressed.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair.

Rita Eaton
Rita Eaton, Chairman

12-4-17
Date

Cathy Cason
Cathy Cason, County Director

12-4-17
Date



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report

2017

Warren County
Department of Family and Children Services
408 Hwy. 80 N
Warrenton, GA 30828

Warren COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCSs Board:

The Warren County Board consists of the following members:

Ms. Pauline Wilson, Board Chair
Ms. Betty Reese
Ms. Linda Story
Ms. Claudia Waller
Mr. George Ivey
Ms. Gloria Parker (replaced Mr. Ivey at end of term)

The Board meets the third Tuesday of the month, every other month, at 4 pm.
February 21, 2017, April 18, 2017, June 20, 2017, August 15, 2017, October 17,
2017, December 19, 2017

County funds are utilized for foster children needs and staff meetings/ events to improve staff morale. They also cover cost of supplies needed in the office.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

Front desk staff make services to the elderly more available. All customers are able to get assistance when needed. The phone access to the front desk also improved agency accessibility. Complaints are minimal for Warren County and can usually be handled locally. The public does need to be made more aware of services available from the Department.

The Warren County office currently houses 7 staff. There have been 2 staff that have left during this year. One OFI CM transferred back to her home county, and one resigned.

There is a quarterly Family Connections and Communities in Schools of Warren County, Inc. meeting that involves local stakeholders. Representatives attend to share what resources are available and discuss the needs of the community

There is currently one child in foster care in Warren County. There is 1 foster home and one adoptive home. There have been 2 adoptions finalizations this year.

The following information is based on data from SFY16

Child Protective Services Data

Family Preservation Cases: 6

CPS Investigations: 24

Family Support Services: 13

Office of Family Independence Data

SNAP: 1,525 (monthly average recipients)

TANF: 20 (monthly average recipients)

Medicaid and ABAWD: 767 (average monthly cases)

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns


Resources remain limited for Warren residence. Public housing and jobs are limited. Those jobs that are available are mostly low income salary. Most shopping has to be done out of town in neighboring counties. Transportation is also an issue for residence that may not have access. There is a limit in community medical resources and day care facilities.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

The Board members had not recommendations to improve operations with the hiring of front desk staff and turning on of the front desk phone.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair

The Warren County office is open Monday through Friday 8 am to 5 pm.


Board Chair


County Director

NATHAN DEAL
GOVERNOR



VIRGINIA PRYOR
INTERIM DIRECTOR

Aging Services | Child Support Services | Family & Children Services
Ollivette Long, MSCP – Director of Washington & Hancock Co DFCS
1124 S. Harris St PO Box 108 Sandersville, GA 31082
478-553-2376 (O) - 470-733-4677 (Cell) 478-240-3031 (fax)

Annual Report 2017

**Washington County
Department of Family and Children Services
1124 S. Harris St.
Sandersville, GA 31082**

Washington County Annual Report December 2017

A. General summary of the county DFCS Board:

Makeup: 5 members

Meeting Dates: Once per month at the county office at 10:30 am

Activities for 2017: Monthly board meetings

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

In 2017, the Washington County board continued to educate the community about all program areas of DFCS. There has been a conscious effort made to assure quality and timely service delivery. Clients continue to embrace technology by taking advantage of faster service by utilizing lobby computers and online applications. Staff uses technology to document work more effectively while also being safer in the field. The agency continues to maintain positive relationships with community partners. For example, law enforcement is willing to assist case managers on home visits as needed to ensure their safety.

C. Board's Assessment of community needs/concerns

Washington County has a population of approximately 21,187 citizens. There continues to be few local resources in the area and families continue to travel to outside counties for employment opportunities, high-end medical needs, shopping, and etc. Parents with children being served in foster care were often required to complete family plans in order to be reunified with their children. The family plan often included obtaining and

maintaining stable employment and housing, domestic violence, and completing substance abuse treatment. Family plans were not often completed timely due to lack of local resources and private transportation. The Agency has continued to assist families financially, i.e., paying rent and utility deposits, paying for transportation to neighboring counties where services were being provided, and payment to providers for needed services.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

- The staffing situation is currently two Case Managers – one for CPS and one for Foster Care – We are currently in the process of hiring a Social Service Supervisor that supervises both program areas. The county has been given permission to hire two CPS Case Managers. which will be a tremendous help in assisting current case managers and the supervisor with day to day duties and to maintain a more manageable work load. Hiring another Social Services supervisor that would supervise each program area would ensure more efficient case management and safe case closure.

There is one OFI Supervisor that covers Washington and Hancock. There is a shortage of staff in OFI and a need of at least one case manager in all program areas - i.e., CAPS, ABD, and Medicaid.

E. Closing and Signature of the Board Chair

The board will continue to support staff as needed.

In kindest regards, Washington County Board





STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report 2017

Wayne County
Department of Family and Children Services
1220 South 1st St.
Jesup, Ga. 31598

Wayne County Dept of Family and Children Services
DFCS Field Operations Annual County Board Report

2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Jackie Perkins-Chair; Open-Vice Chair; Loretta Boykins; Terry Thomas; Susan Graham
- The County DFCS Board meets every other 4th Wednesday of the month at 10:00 am.
- The County DFCS Board has participated in staff appreciation activities.
- The County DFCS Board uses local County Funds for Child Welfare Expenses, Foster Children clothing, haircuts, and allowances. This money has been used for Staff Appreciation Luncheonw. The funds have also been used for child care for children in care and for helping out with utilities.

B. County Board's assessment of the effectiveness of the county department's provision of services.

- OFI is fully staffed and staff are working local cases.
- There has been turnover with the Social Services staff. Currently, there are only two CPS Investigators in the county. One investigator is being pulled from another county in the cluster to assist. There are no Family Preservation workers in the county. One Family Preservation worker from another is being pulled to work Wayne County as well. There is one newly hired foster care worker who has just begun training. Until training is completed, the Supervisor has to cover the caseload. With the current coverage, for Investigations and Family Support, the caseload size for each average 15-20 cases. The caseload size for foster care average 50 for the one worker. The county has no overdue cases. However, there are still vacancies to fill in the social services unit for the unit to be fully functional.
- There is adequate front office personnel.
- Having the local line available for the office continues to be a positive change for the customers.
- Wayne County had a total of 56 children in legal custody from January 2017-November 2017. 8 children have either returned home or gone on to permanency with a forever family. At the time of this report, there are 48 children in the custody of Wayne county DFCS.

- Wayne County has 6 foster homes.
- Wayne County has had 1 finalized adoption during the 2017 year.
- Wayne County has had a total of 95 CPS Investigations, 376 Family Support Services Cases, and 35 Family Preservation Cases during 2017.
- There is currently not a breakdown of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases available due to the new GATEWAY system.
- Wayne County has had 1 to retire, 3 to resign and 1 to be hired. Wayne County is not presently at full staffing level. Wayne County needs 3 workers for Social Services – 1 Investigator, 1 Placement and 1 Ongoing Worker.
- Agency Representative attends Family Connection Meetings, MDT's, CHINS Meetings, Law Enforcement Meet-N-Greet, School Meetings, and Regional Stakeholder Meetings to maintain/build relationships.

C. County Board assessment of needs of the community.

- This issue remains the same as the previous year in that funds may not be available to assist with homeless shelters, battered women's shelter, public transportation, etc.
- There has been a Child Advocacy Center established in Wayne County. This facility will serve Appling and Jeff Davis Counties as well in providing forensic interviews, sexual abuse exams and counseling.

D. County Board's recommendation for improved operations of the county department.

- The Board continues to recommend getting the media involved with agency activity to show the community the great work that the staff are doing in providing services to families.

E. The County DFCS Board members are relatively new in serving in this role, but they are committed to learning the process and making an impact in the agency and being able to perform to the fullest on meeting the needs of the children and families.



 Jacklyn Perkins, Board Chairman Signature



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

P.O. Box 9

Webster County Department of Family & Children Services
Preston, Georgia 31824

(229) 828-3115-Phone (229) 828-6280-Fax

December 12, 2017

TO: Virginia Pryor, State DFCS Director
2 Peachtree Street
19-490
Atlanta, GA 30303

FROM: Webster County DFCS Board
Vernette Crimes, Chairman
P.O. Box 9
Preston, GA 31824

RE: Annual DFCS Board Report – Webster County DFCS

The Webster County DFCS Board has been active and supportive in the work of the agency in a number of ways. Each board member is familiar in the demographics and needs of the community and each is involved in serving and promoting the growth and well-being of children and families. In their various capacities, the members promote the work and efforts of the local DFCS staff. Our Board works well together and meets on a monthly basis to discuss both the needs of the community and of the staff. We also have a member who serves on the Regional Advisory Board that meets quarterly.

Webster County has seen many successes this year. We have been pleased with the efforts made to bring OFI services back to the local office. Although some challenges still remain, it has been a great support to our local community to have staff available in their local office to assist with any needs they may have. We have one OFI case manager available in the office and share supervision with neighboring counties.

Another success of our office is the important connections we have with our community partners. The positive relationships with our school, law enforcement, and public health play an important role in the services we provide to families and children. DFCS Board and employees are active in many areas of the community and this helps to encourage collaboration and support of the work we do.

Another strength is the stability of both the OFI and SS staff. The staff in OFI and SS have over 5 to 10 years of employment with the agency, and this helps with quality services. We are also pleased to be able to hire staff for our county. It has been nice to see the offices finally occupied with staff

members. This has helped with being able to provide quality services to families and children in our community. In the past, Webster County has shared a social services supervisor with 4 other counties. This year, we have been able to post a position to hire a supervisor for Stewart and Webster Counties. This will allow the supervisor to focus more on the families here at home.

The rural base of Webster County has always necessitated travel to other areas for many of the services needed (physical and mental health care, specialized placements, judicial services, foster homes, etc.). It becomes a challenge to provide services to families when providers are not willing to travel to our area. Another challenge is our partnership with DJJ. This issue may have to be addressed at the state level before it can be sufficiently implemented at the local level. There has to be a way to better define delinquency and deprivation.

Thank you for the opportunity to reflect on Webster County's strengths and needs.

Sincerely,



Vernetta Crimes
Chairperson
Webster County DFCS

CC: Stacy Barfield, Region 8 Acting Regional Director
Laurie Sheffield, DFCS County Director
Effie Lockett, DFCS Board Co-Chairperson
Frank Johnson, DFCS Board Member
Harold Jones, DFCS Board Member
Louise Latimer, DFCS Board Member



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

Annual Report

2017

Wheeler County
Department of Family and Children Services
44 West Third Avenue
Alamo, GA 30411

**To: Virginia Pryor, Interim DFCS Director
2 Peachtree Street
19-490
Atlanta, Georgia 30303**

**From: Angela Johnson, Wheeler County DFCS
Board Chair**

Date: December 6, 2017

**Subject: DFCS Annual County Board Report
Wheeler County DFCS
44 West Third Avenue
Alamo, GA 30411**

A. General Summary of the Wheeler County DFCS Board

The Wheeler County DFCS Board of Directors is made up of the following members:

Mrs. Angela Johnson, Chair, has served on the board since 2006. She is a retired DFCS case manager. She worked both OFI and social services programs. She is involved in community faith based organizations. She also serves on our regional board.

Mr. Adolphus Hall, Vice Chair, has served on the board since 1993. He has a faith based background.

Mrs. Hazel Culver has served on the board since 2005. She currently works in the local school system and is involved in community faith based organizations.

Mrs. Roberta Culver has served on the board since 2013. She currently works in the local school system and is involved in community faith based organizations.

Mr. Jimmy Wells has served on the board since 05/2017. He is a retired insurance salesman but is currently involved in Legacy Outdoor Ministry and has a strong faith based background.

The Wheeler County DFCS Board of Directors meet on the second Monday of every other month at 10:00 a.m. at the Wheeler DFCS office. They have completed the following report as required by Senate Bill 138. The information has been reviewed and approved by the board prior to submission.

Activities for the past year has been our annual Meet and Greet with local law enforcement and our social services team, meeting all new staff, and Mrs. Angela Johnson, board chair, has served on the regional board. Some of our staff worked with Red Cross at several of our shelters that were opened in Laurens County, Dublin, GA, for evacuees from Hurricane IRMA.

Our local county funds are used for expenses which the state doesn't cover such as the part of the board per diem and travel, foster care expenses, staff appreciation, miscellaneous expenses which the state doesn't cover such as cable, etc.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of Wheeler County DFCS Office's provision of services:

Localization of OFI services help provide more convenient, consistent services to the customers of Wheeler County. Customers are aware of the worker in the office and who they need to contact for assistance and answers concerning their benefits. Localized OFI services has improved the worker's morale and provided a more manageable workload. Localized OFI supervision, even though still multi-county has increased worker accountability and proficiency. The worker is able to have face to face contact with the supervisor on a regular basis. There has been no complaints from customers.

Social Services has seen positive improvements during the last year. We have been able to bring on board one placement supervisor and four case managers for our cluster. Three of the four are trained and working caseloads. Response times are being met and cases are being processed timely in our county. With in-house supervision and the mentoring from our veteran workers, we are progressing smoothly. The veteran workers can share knowledge of the community and community partners of who to contact concerning cases.

There has been a community outreach such as law enforcement "meet and greet". There is an open line between law enforcement agencies in the community and the agency at all times.

There is only one OFI worker in Wheeler County. If this worker is out on leave or on interviews, there is no other personnel to interview or assist without a wait time or having to call another county. Wheeler County has struggled with social services provision due to lack of local staff dedicated to this community. There is presently no social services front line staff assigned to Wheeler County. The one worker on Wheeler County payroll is housed in a county 30 miles away. In order for someone to respond to Wheeler County, the closest worker in the cluster is 10 miles away. This affects the case managers' ability to develop and maintain collaborative relationships with community partners such as schools, law enforcement and public health. It is believed that it is best to have dedicated staff for the community in which they serve.

There is also concern due to the lack of local foster parents. There are only two foster homes, one of which only does respite care. Wheeler County children have to be placed outside of Wheeler County. Resource development is housed 30 miles away and the resource development staff work 3, 4, and sometimes 6 counties and therefore cannot devote any time to develop foster parent resources in Wheeler County.

Service providers are few in the Wheeler County area. There are none located in Wheeler County. The ones that the state approved becomes overloaded. The process of contracting with service providers is extremely cumbersome and does not take into account local needs.

Wheeler County had a total of 10 children in legal custody from January 2017 – November 2017. Six children have either returned home or gone on to permanency with a forever family. At the time of this report, there were four children in the custody of Wheeler County DFCS.

Wheeler County has two foster homes. One of those homes is for respite only and will not accept children for placement. One foster home was approved during the 2017 year. We had one finalized adoption during the 2017 year.

Wheeler County has had a total of 13 CPS investigations, 30 family support services cases, and three family preservation cases.

Wheeler County is not able to provide a breakdown of the number of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases. The new GATEWAY system does not have the availability to pull these figures at this time.

Wheeler County has had one resignation and two retirements from January 2017 – November 2017. Resignation is 17% turnover rate.

A law enforcement meet and greet has been held for the past two years. This has helped increase communication between DFCS and law enforcement. There is an open line between law enforcement agencies in the community and the agency at all times.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

Wheeler County is a small rural county with limited job opportunities. Wheeler County has a high poverty rate which may contribute to increased crime, teenage pregnancy, child abuse and drug dependency. There is no hospital, medical clinic or mental health facility located in Wheeler County so everyone has to go out of town to receive medical treatment. The closest hospital or mental health facility is 30 – 45 minutes away. This presents major life threats for the citizens and also the employees who have life threatening issues at times with unstable clients. On November 1st, an urgent care center opened in McRae which is ten miles away. In the past, we haven't been able to depend on any new facility to stay open.

There is also concern due to the EMS 911 center being shared with an adjoining county. When an emergency call is received at the 911 unit, they are not sending the closest unit available. This is a major problem and puts someone's life on the line when the responder is not getting there when needed. This is very important for both workers and clients who may be the caller on this end.

There is also concern due to the lack of no communication towers located in this county. This puts our workers at risk when they are in the field and need to make a phone call and have no phone service to do so. This poses a safety issue for the worker and client. This issue has gotten worse over the last year.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

One County Director for no more than two counties.

At least one social services case manager dedicated to Wheeler County.

Increased community involvement. This cannot happen until there is actually dedicated staff for Wheeler County.

Resource Development staff to increase and focus on Wheeler County and counties like Wheeler that are small and need foster parents.

Medical facility and /or emergency care for the county. 911 Services to be provided efficiently for the county.

Communication Services to be established for citizens/workers of Wheeler County.

E. Closing and signature of Board Chair:

It is a pleasure to submit this annual board report for the Wheeler County Department of Family and Children Services.

Sincerely,

ANGELA JOHNSON

Angela Johnson
Board Chair

Note: Please accept typed signature instead of handwritten signature due to report prepared and approved via email due to deadline/meeting dates.

NATHAN DEAL
GOVERNOR



VIRGINIA PRYOR
INTERIM DIRECTOR

Annual Report 2017

White County
Department of Family and Children Services
1241 Helen Highway, Suite 200
Cleveland, Georgia 30528

- A. The White County Board of Family and Children Services is comprised of a five-member board as outlined below:

Seat 1: Pam Walden, Chair – Service – 7 years. Former DFCS employee, White County Sheriff Office Community Liaison, Active member in the local and faith based community.

Seat 2: Tom Carter/ Retired – Service – 2 years

Seat 3: Donna Nordan – Service – 2 years. Hall County Superior Court Support Staff to Judge Deal, community liaison

Seat 4: Anna Robertson – Service 4 years. Community Liaison, grant writer, experienced non-profit social services employee

Seat 5: Judi Lawson – Service 1 year. White County Family Connections

The Board meets every other month, except as needed for specially called meetings. The Board meets the second Wednesday of “even numbered” months (Feb., April, June, etc.) at 1:00 pm in the DFCS conference room in the county office.

Board activities and involvement this past year have included participation in the quarterly Regional Board meetings; attendance at the Georgia Professional Human Services Association annual conference and attendance at the Regional C3 Community Stakeholders meeting; support of staff through approval of staff ergonomically office chairs and staff appreciation lunches throughout the year.

- B. The County office has been effective in its mission of ensuring child safety and serving individuals and families in need. This is evidenced by data on the www.fosteringcourtimprovement.org website. The office remains a leader within the Region and assists in supporting other counties within the Region.

The office is fully staffed and has gained new positions over the past year in Child Welfare Services. The case loads are rising due to the increased number of children entering foster care. The case loads are currently within reason (25 or below) although not yet at the Governor’s stated goal of 15 per case manager. The county staff have assisted neighboring counties in the Region in managing their workload and ensuring child safety and family well-being both in Child Protective Services and in Permanency cases. The county has an excellent partnership with stakeholders in the community to include law enforcement, the courts, the

District Attorney's office, the school system, Family Connections, services providers and CASA.

The County Director has prudently managed the County Funds provided by the county, remaining under budget month over month.

The Board believes that while the County Director is performing his duties and has demonstrated leadership and operational and services improvement during his tenure that ideally, he would not be serving in three counties. The County Director has expressed that he enjoys the responsibility of the three counties, however it does restrict his ability to have more direct hands-on involvement in the community.

- C. The Board notes that staffing loads for case manager continue to be of a concern due to the number of children entering care and the recent hiring freeze in the region.

The Board continues to believe there is a need for more aggressive recruitment of foster families and development of communities of care. The community lacks public transportation and affordable housing.

- D. The Board does not have any specific recommendations for improved operations of the local office. The Director maintains clear communication with the Board and is very responsive to any requests of the board.

Presented by: Chairperson Pam Walden, Tom Carter, Donna Nordan, Anna Robertson, Judi Lawson Acting County Director, Tina Teater and County Director Scott Wilbanks



Secretary
Tina Teater, M. Ed. For
Scott Wilbanks, Ed. D.



Chair
Pam Walden



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report

2017

Whitfield County
Division of Family and Children Services
1142 North Thornton Avenue
Dalton, Georgia 30720

Whitfield County Annual Report December 2017

A. General summary of Whitfield County DFCS Board:

Whitfield County DFCS Board meets at noon on the second Thursday of each month. The board currently consists of five members.

Board Chairperson, Detective John Helton, is employed with the Dalton Police Department. Board Member Kelley McAllister is employed with Hamilton Medical Center as a Social Worker and Case Manager for Maternal Women's Services. Board Member Miguel Garcia is currently employed as a school social worker for Whitfield County Schools. Board Members James Stephens and Jane Harrell are both retired, but are extremely active in our community. Mr. Stephens, a retired educator, referees and officiates ballgames for Whitfield County Recreation Department. Mrs. Harrell works part-time for our local television station and newspaper.

The Board is very accessible outside of normal meeting times. They are quick to respond to inquiries and requests that come from the County Director by email. The Board is extremely supportive of the efforts of those employed by Whitfield DFCS.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

Whitfield County DFCS Board is not aware of any concerns regarding the effectiveness of services that are initiated and provided within the county office. The Board is aware that the leadership team in Whitfield makes diligent efforts to resolve customer concerns/complaints within a timely manner, while making themselves available for inquiries.

C. Board assessment of community needs/concerns:

Whitfield County DFCS Board has assessed the continued needs of this community. While there have been great strides made in recruitment of foster parents, we need continued and ongoing recruitment of foster/adoptive families. Having our foster children placed locally would greatly impact permanency outcomes for our families. Our population, including some stakeholders, appear to have a lack of understanding as to the role of DFCS. Having better education for our community regarding "what DFCS is" and "what role does DFCS play" would be very beneficial. Education would greatly impact how the population views DFCS interventions/investigations and how foster care is envisioned. Whitfield County would benefit from stronger mental health services, in-patient substance abuse treatment for parents, trauma based intervention, and sex offender treatment for children.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

The board recommends continued support in staff allocations for Whitfield County from the state and regional levels, so that caseload sizes are reduced and are maintained at a manageable level.

The board recommends that decisions made involving the use of county funds not be governed in the manner it currently is. The board feels that once they have voted and approved the use of county funds, their decision should be final.

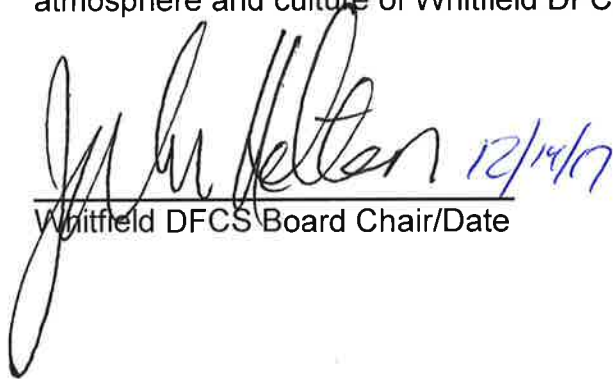
The board also recommends that the policy regarding the purchase of gift cards be revised.

E. Closing and signature of Board Chair and Director

Whitfield's Blueprint for Change is active and in motion. Whitfield has drastically increased its staff resources to begin lowering caseload sizes. With Region 1's leadership classes, the monthly summits, and the mentoring program, Whitfield has and will continue its Robust Workforce Development.

Whitfield CPS is currently certified in and practicing Solution Based Casework, our Division's Practice Model. Our foster care staff should be certified in January 2018. This model serves as our foundation for child safety and will assist us in making families stronger.

There have been no social services staff who have resigned from DFCS in over one year, drastically reducing our turnover rate. In fact, the last employee in social services to resign in the summer of 2016 is now back with us as a supervisor. This is a profound example of the atmosphere and culture of Whitfield DFCS.



Whitfield DFCS Board Chair/Date



Whitfield DFCS County Director/Date



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report

2017

Wilcox County
Department of Family and Children Services
453 Second Avenue
P.O. Box 246
Rochelle, GA

WILCOX COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General Summary of the Wilcox County DFCS Board

The Wilcox Board meets on the third Thursday of every other month at 2 p.m. at the Wilcox Office. The board is made up of DFCS alumni, leaders of the faith based community, members of the education community, and medical field.

Current Board Members:

Sibbie Terry, Board Chair

Patricia Holcomb, Board Co-Chair

Catherine Lewis

Billie Milling

Gail Goodman, RN

The board has had many opportunities over the past year, and we will share a few of the highlights of those activities. We were honored to assist with hosting local law enforcement for our "Meet and Greets" with the social services team. We were pleased to be included in the recognition of staff who completed training, as well as staff who were recognized for their years of service. The board was honored to provide opportunities for staff to gather for worker appreciation events, including our annual Christmas festivities. Our board chair has had the honor of serving on the regional DFCS board and attending those meetings led by the Regional Director, Stacey Barfield. Ms. Catherine Lewis has taken an active role in the community to address literacy issues and promote education within our county. She also serves her community as councilwoman on the Pineview City Council and as a board member for the Wilcox County Family Connections. Mr. Billie Milling has maintained a clothing closet for the community, and his church has assisted families in the community who were in need through their food pantry. Ms. Patricia Holcomb serves on the board of the Wilcox County Public Library, and she volunteers at the local Union Baptist Family Ministry Center. This facility assists low income families and those who have been affected by natural disasters with clothing and home goods. These items are offered either for free or at extremely reduced prices. Ms. Holcomb also assists with a food distribution program throughout our county.

Local county funds have been used to promote training opportunities for the board, as well as staff members. Our board has been fiscally responsible in the expenditures of our local county funds, and we have always been able to stay within our budget limits. The board reviews and approves a county funds policy annually and guidelines are set in the policy regarding usage of those funds for needs of our children in care. Additional expenditures not covered by the policy or the county budget letter are voted on by the board, as needed.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

Successes

The Wilcox Board has continued to see tremendous improvement in the services offered by the OFI side of the house. Localization of services has improved our ability to make sure that

local citizens have access to the federal programs that we provide. Customer complaints have remained low, even during the current transition period from our SUCCESS system to the new Gateway system. We are very excited about the progress made in OFI services, and we have seen improved outcomes for our community because of this.

The board also recognizes that the continued support of our governor and state legislature has played a pivotal role to ensure that the agency has been able to hire the staff necessary to effectively and efficiently carry out the work of the agency. Because of this support, we are well on our way to impacting the quality and timeliness of services provided by the social services side of the agency.

Our board has been greatly blessed to have availability of local county funds that allow the board opportunities to show local staff they are appreciated. New staff members are introduced to the board during regular board meetings. Appreciation of the staff is shown through provision of meals during various trainings and staff meetings. These small gestures show the staff that their work is appreciated by the board and their community.

Wilcox County Board is fortunate to have good collaboration within the local board. We are able to work together and discuss issues that impact the Division and our community. Our members are also in tune with local community leadership and partners. Partnerships are vital, and we are fortunate to have a board whose members are trusted and connected within the community. Constituents freely approach board members with issues and concerns that arise, and we are able to work with the County Director to resolve concerns. The board also supports the Law Enforcement Meet and Greets. Our local law enforcement has a good relationship with the Division and is willing to assist case managers in making initial response to families when there are safety concerns.

Challenges/Opportunities

Our board strongly believes that the presence of the County Director is vital to improving outcomes, community relations/outreach, and overall staff morale. Unfortunately, over the years, it has been necessary for our County Director to assume responsibility for two additional counties. As a board, we recommend that a county director have no more than two counties of responsibility. We feel that this will promote better outcomes.

The board is also concerned regarding the lack of foster homes currently approved in the county. We would like to see increased recruitment efforts and training opportunities for foster and adoptive homes.

County Services Data

Number of children in care: 12

Number of foster parents: 1

Number of finalized adoptions: 0

Number of approved foster homes in the past year: 1

CPS Investigations: 10

Family Support Services: 53

Family Preservation Cases: 1

Staff turnover rate: 0%

Stakeholder involvement/Relationships: Our County Director and staff attend various meetings throughout the community to support stakeholder relationships. A few of those opportunities

are as follows: Law Enforcement Meet and Greets, Monthly Family Connections Meetings, Quarterly Gateway Child Advocacy Center Meetings (County Director Powell also serves on the executive board), Monthly Multi-disciplinary Team Meetings, Participation in local school collaborations/meetings, etc.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns

The following have been identified by our board as areas of community needs: Additional foster homes, literacy, unemployment, poverty, transportation, mental health resources, additional medical services, and substance abuse treatment resources.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

1. The board believes that every county should have a County Director and full social services staff housed in county. However, we understand that staff must sometimes serve more than one county due to caseload responsibilities and sizes. When this is necessary, the board believes that those staff members should have no more than two counties of responsibility.
2. The board would like to see more specialized efforts in Wilcox County to recruit foster and adoptive homes locally.

E. Closing and signature of Board Chair

It is our great honor to submit this annual board report for the Wilcox County Department of Family and Children services.

Sincerely,



Sibbie Terry
Board Chair

NATHAN DEAL
GOVERNOR



VIRGINIA PRYOR
INTERIM DIRECTOR

Annual Report 2017

**Wilkes County
Department of Family and Children Services
48 Lexington Ave.
Washington, GA 30673**

Wilkes County Annual Report December 2017

A. General summary of the county DFCS Board:

Makeup: 5 members

Meeting Dates: Bi-Monthly at 10 am

Activities for 2017: Bi-monthly board meetings, Board members attend staff appreciation activities

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

In 2017, the Wilkes County board continued to educate the community about all program areas of DFCS. There has been a conscious effort made to assure quality and timely service delivery. Clients continue to embrace technology by taking advantage of faster service by utilizing lobby computers and online applications. Staff uses technology to document work more effectively while also being safer in the field. The agency continues to maintain positive relationships with community partners and stakeholders. Local stakeholders are the juvenile court, the school system, family connection, law enforcement, and the health department. There are currently 8 children in foster care and there were two adoptions finalized. There are three approved foster homes in the county. There were no new homes approved this year. This year there were 34 CPS reports, 39 Family Preservation case, and 38 Family Support cases. There were 2590 SNAP cases, 13 TANF cases, 702 Medicaid cases, and 438 ABD case in the county. There has been no staff turnover in eligibility staff and there has been two services staff resign, however those two positions have been filled.

C. Board's Assessment of community needs/concerns

Wilkes County is a small county with a population of approximately 10,000 citizens. There continues to be few local resources in the area and families continue to travel to outside the county for employment opportunities, high-end medical needs, shopping, mental health services, etc. All parents with children being served by foster care were required to complete family plans in order to be reunified with their children. The family plan goals often included obtaining and maintaining stable employment and housing, domestic violence treatment, and completing substance abuse treatment. Family plans were not often completed timely due to lack of local resources. The Agency has continued to assist families financially, i.e., paying rent and utility deposits, paying for transportation to neighboring counties where services were being provided, and paying providers for services.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department

The Staffing situation for services is currently three case managers (splitting their time between Wilkes, Lincoln, and Taliaferro Counties) - two for CPS and one for Foster Care – and one Social Services Supervisor that supervises both program areas. There is one Social Service Tech that is shared with Lincoln and Taliaferro Counties. There continues to be one OFI Supervisor that covers Wilkes, Lincoln, and Taliaferro counties. There are five OFI staff members working in the county. CAPS, ABD Medicaid and APS staff are not assigned to the county. Front desk coverage is handled by a worker in a TANF subsidy position and a worker from the Experience Works program.

E. Closing and Signature of the Board Chair

The board will continue to support staff as needed.

In kindest regards, Wilkes County Board



J. Grant McCurley, County Director

Bobbie A. Griffin, Board Chair



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Virginia Pryor
Interim Director

Annual Report 2017

Wilkinson County
Division of Family and Children Services
103 Payne Street
Irwinton, GA 31042

**WILKINSON COUNTY
ANNUAL REPORT
DECEMBER 2017**

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

- Makeup - Members/Officers
 1. Earl Knight-Board Chair
 2. Betty Cooper-Board Member
 3. Walter Holloway-Board Member
 4. Felton Swicord-Board Member

- **Meeting dates/times:**

Board Meetings are held monthly on the 4th Wednesday of the month at 9:00 am at the Wilkinson County DFCS office.

- **Activities for the past year:**

During this past year the Board has been very involved with the local office and community. We assisted in providing staff with a Thanksgiving and Christmas luncheon, as an appreciation for the work that they do each and every day. We attended the Semi-Annual DFCS County Board Meeting held in April. We had participation at the GPHSA Conference held in August in Savannah, GA., and Board members attended the GPHSA Fall Meeting/Training in St. Simons, GA. We advocated for the Department by working with churches in the community to provide donations for foster children when they first enter care. We advocated for the Department by working with civic organizations to also help provide needed items for families that we are working with, as well as when children first enter care. We attended and participated in Family Connection meetings. The Board supported staff in April during Child Abuse Prevention Month. Pinwheels were displayed in support of prevention and blue ribbons/pins were worn. We also participated the Back-to-School Backpacks for Children Drive in the community. We facilitated with the help of the County Director in writing a letter to the landlord so that needed improvements could be made to the DFCS building. The landlord responded immediately and improvements were made.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

What's working well: This Board is proud of Wilkinson County DFCS and the community partnerships that have been developed and maintained throughout the

years. The relationship between DFCS and the local law enforcement is excellent. The local law enforcement is very involved with the agency and support the work that is being done by the staff. If their assistance is needed they respond immediately to help ensure the safety of the staff. Family Connection is a partnership that has grown throughout the years. We support this partnership and participate in this partnership, as one of our board members is a part of the Family Connection team. We have an excellent relationship with several churches and civic organizations in the community.

What's not working:

As a Board, we are concerned about turnover in both Social Services and in Office of Family Independence. We are aware that in the last fiscal year Social Services and OFI staff were given salary increases in hopes of retaining workers and recruiting better qualified applicants, but workers appear to continue to leave at a rapid pace. Workers cite high workloads and job demands that far exceed a 40-hour work-week, which greatly impacts their family life.

C. Board's assessment of community needs/concerns:

As a Board, we do believe there are needs within this community. Currently, Wilkinson County only has one foster parent. Because of this, when children are brought into care they are having to be placed outside of the county. We feel there is a huge need for recruitment and development of foster homes in Wilkinson County. We are very concerned with the increase of drug activity in the county. We are aware that the majority of Social Services cases that the county handles involves drug issues within the family. This is very concerning to us as a Board.

D. Board's recommendation for improved operations of the County

Department:

As a Board, we have several recommendations. We feel that the process in regards to recruitment, and hiring new staff needs to be evaluated. The major issue has to do with Human Resources lengthy hiring process, to include timely job posting, recruitment and on-boarding. We are aware that in the last fiscal year, Social Services and OFI staff were given salary increases in hopes of retaining workers and recruiting better qualified applicants, but workers appear to still be leaving at a rapid pace. Workers continue to cite high workloads and job demands that far exceed a 40 hour work week, which greatly impacts their family life. There is also a desperate need for the development of foster homes in the community. We also feel that new DFCS signage needs to be constructed for outside the building. The current sign is very old and is hard to see from the road.

E. Closing and signature of the Board Chair.

In closing, we appreciate you giving us the opportunity to be heard. We have some excellent partnerships in Wilkinson County and are extremely proud of the work our DFCS office does.

Earl Knight
Wilkinson County DFCS Board Chair

Earl Knight
12/15/17



STATE OF GEORGIA
Division of Family and Children Services

Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby D. Cagle
Director

Annual Report

2017

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LOCAL COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT DECEMBER 2017

A. General summary of the County DFCS Board:

Makeup – Members/Officers, Length of service on Board, Background

- Sarah McCrary, Chairperson, 19 years, Retired County Extension Service
- Gretchen Gay, Vice-Chairperson, 8 years, Retired DFCS
- Lee Outlaw, Member, 3 years, Retired School Teacher
- Julie Sumner, Member, 14 years, Retired School Administrator
- Lisa Bartley, Member, 1 year, Wellcare

Meeting dates/times and attendance of board members:
Last Wednesday of every month at 3 pm

Activities for the past year:

- Staff appreciation and health fair on May 25, 2017
- Foster parent recruitment booth at Spring Fling

Use of Local County Funds

- Funds used for the needs of our local foster children and parents (clothing, medical, school needs, mileage, etc.)
- Funds used for the prevention of the unnecessary removal of children from their homes.
- Funds used for facility support when needed.

B. Assessment of effectiveness of County Department's provision of services:

Successes:

- Worth County has an afterschool program provided by the Worth County Family Connections.
- The new Gateway system for OFI streamlined services.
- Social Service has a new practice model (Solution Based Casework) that will bring more positive outcomes for families.
- Social Services (case managers and supervisors) and OFI salaries were raised to the market average in the Southeast United States.

Challenges/Opportunities:

- Social services faced significant challenges with turnover and a Foster Care caseload that tripled due to the growing number of cases involving substance abuse. We have two freshman supervisors in Social Services (Foster Care and CPS). They need to concentrate on their new roles, however, both supervisors carried caseload the entire year to help their staff.
- OFI and the families they serve experienced delays in benefits due to the learning curve in implementing the new Gateway system.
- We have a good working relationship with our judge; however, he has expressed concern about our high caseloads and the effects on our clients.
- The salaries of the county administration staff (administrative support and office managers) needs to be elevated.

Number of children in care: 79
 Number of foster parents: 11
 Number of finalized adoptions: 2
 Number of approved foster homes in past year: 0

Breakdown of number of CPS, Family Preservation, and Family Support:

MONTH	CPS INVESTIGATIONS	FAMILY PRESERVATION	FAMILY SUPPORT
JAN 2017	8	5	13
FEB 2017	13	4	5
MAR 2017	8	7	9
APRIL 2017	6	11	13
MAY 2017	9	11	9
JUNE 2017	7	16	7
JULY 2017	11	15	3
AUGUST 2017	14	15	12
SEPT 2017	11	15	5
OCT 2017	11	18	7

Breakdown of number of SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and ABAWD cases:

MONTH	SNAP	TANF	FAMILY MEDICAID	ADULT MEDICAID
JAN 2017	1786	13	1187	1311
FEB 2017	1764	12	1170	1289
MARCH 2017	1739	14	1157	1277
APRIL 2017	1673	12	1141	1240
MAY 2017	1688	13	1122	1247

(We do not have any further totals because we went live on Gateway in July and there currently is not a report to pull that shows the total breakdown by county on the Gateway system).

We do not have an ABAWD number because we are currently not an ABAWD county.

Staff turnover rate:

- We experienced significant turnover. Social Services turned over four positions (1 CPS, 1 Adoptions, 2 Foster Care).
- OFI turned over one position this year and filled a position that turned over at the end of last year.

Stakeholder involvement/relationships:

- We participate in the community wide disaster drill each year with the Health Department, EMA, local law enforcement, local animal shelter and community members
- We hold a meet and greet with our law enforcement each year during the month of September.
- We have a good working relationship with our judge.
- We serve on the MDT and Child Fatality Review team.
- We actively attend the Worth County Family Connections meetings each month.

C. Boards' assessment of community needs/concerns:

Worth County is in need of a local mental health office. Worth County residents have to travel 30 minutes to either Albany or Tifton. We are also in need of more foster homes and a local transportation system in the community.

D. Board's recommendations for improved operations of the County Department:

- The agency needs to be fully staffed in the Investigations and Foster Units. The agency needs to continue to hire staff to get caseloads at the desired 15 cases per case manager.
- Safety is a concern:
We need a panic button at the front desk. Panic buttons for services staff are being rolled out in January 2018.
- Video camera's need to be installed at each door for staff safety.

E. Closing:

In conclusion, Worth County DFCS has seen some positive changes in 2017. We hope to see many more changes as we begin 2018.

Sincerely,



Sarah McCrary, Chairperson