

JACKSON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT

**JACKSON COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**
15 Griffin Street, Sylva, NC 28779
828-586-5546

The mission of the Jackson County Department of Social Services is to provide essential human services that protect, strengthen and improve lives in Jackson County. Our commitment is to provide the highest quality of service through teamwork, professionalism and respect for our clients and the community that supports our work.

A message from . . .

THE JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES

The Jackson County Department of Social Services is a client-oriented agency that responds to all age groups from infancy to the elderly.

We must be responsive and sensitive to the needs of the less fortunate and most vulnerable citizens in our community. At the same time, however, we have a responsibility to the taxpaying community to meet human needs with cost-effective methods.

The staff of the Jackson County Department of Social Services have dedicated themselves to establishing a team approach in which to offer services in the most efficient and effective way possible while ensuring that all citizens receive these services in a professional and courteous manner.

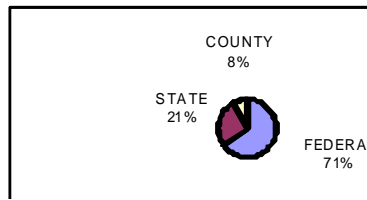
This Annual Report summarizes for the citizens of Jackson County the activities and trends of this County Department of Social Services for the Fiscal Year 2008-2009. The Report is our attempt to convey to the citizens of our county the broad range of services provided by the agency and the number of clients served. It is a voluntary effort on our part to be more accountable for the public funds entrusted to this Department.

BOARD MEMBERS

Katie Allman, Chairperson
 Greg Scott, Vice-Chairperson
 Juanita Burrell, Member
 Rob Sutton, Member
 Audrey Tritt, Member

Robert B. Cochran, Director

REVENUES FY 2008-2009



FEDERAL	\$31,301,475.22	71%
STATE	\$ 9,439,636.15	21%
COUNTY	\$ 3,367,176.63	8%
TOTAL	\$44,108,288.00	100%

EXPENDITURES FY 2008-2009

MEDICAID PAYMENTS	\$32,968,958.55
FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES	\$ 4,496,721.00
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE	\$ 2,215,059.73
ADMINISTRATION (Medicaid, Work First Family Assistance, Low Income Energy Assistance, Food & Nutrition Services, Special Assistance)	
SOCIAL WORK SERVICES	\$ 1,573,344.89
WORK FIRST	\$ 1,277,840.50
FOSTER CARE	\$ 374,656.87
OTHER EXPENDITURES INCLUDE:	
EMERGENCY CRISIS ASSISTANCE (Fuel, Shelter, Utilities, Medicine)	\$ 539,865.11
CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT	\$ 327,068.31
SPECIAL ASSISTANCE (Adult Care Payments)	\$ 308,159.00
IN HOME SERVICES (Adult Day Care, Aide Services, Home Delivered Meals)	\$ 26,614.04
TOTAL	\$44,108,288.00

SERVICE PROGRAMS

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICE INVESTIGATIONS

Reports of suspected child abuse, neglect and/or dependency are investigated. Services are provided 24 hours a day, seven

days a week. Home Studies are completed for alternate placement for children.

- 938 Responses to Reports of Abuse, Neglect and/or Dependency
- 68 Additional Home Studies and Assists Provided to Other Counties

FAMILY INTERVENTION SERVICES

Provides services to protect children in families where abuse and/or neglect has been substantiated. Social Workers engage family members in activities designed to eliminate risk factors, promote stability and bring about permanence for children.

- 90 Families Served
- 186 Children Served
- 183 Children Able to Stay Safely at Home

FOSTER CARE SERVICES

Children are placed in the responsibility of the agency through court ordered custody, voluntary placement agreements, or release for adoption. Permanency planning for children provides time-limited and goal-oriented care for children to achieve permanent families as soon as possible.

- 59 Children in Custody of Agency – 07/01/08
- 9 Children Received in Agency Custody through 06/30/09
- 42 Children Released from Custody of Agency
 - 19 Children Returned to Parents
 - 6 Children Placed with Relatives
 - 12 Children Adopted
 - 2 Guardianship to Other
 - 2 Custody to Other
 - 1 Child Turned 18 Years of Age
- 26 Children Remaining in Custody – 06/30/09

ADOPTIONS

Adoption provides children with legal permanency in safe, loving homes. Adoptions include agency adoptive placements, stepparent and relative adoptions, and independent adoptions arranged between birth parents and unrelated individuals.

- 12 Agency Adoptions Finalized

- 3 Non-Agency Adoptions Finalized
- 2 Agency Children Cleared for Adoption Awaiting Homes
- 26 Families Received Adoption Assistance for 37 Children to Help Offset the Costs of Adopting a Child with Disabilities or Special Needs

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICE EVALUATIONS

Reports of suspected abuse, neglect and/or exploitation are evaluated and assessments are completed regarding the needs of disabled adults. Services are provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- 100 Responses to Reports of Abuse, Neglect and/or Exploitation

GUARDIANSHIP SERVICES

The Court appoints Social Services as guardian for elderly or disabled adults who are mentally incompetent and cannot make responsible decisions concerning their personal care and their finances.

- 19 Average monthly guardianship cases

PROTECTIVE PAYEE SERVICES

Social Services is appointed by the Court, Social Security, or the Veterans Administration to receive and assure the appropriate use of benefit funds when individuals are unable to do so.

- 13 Average monthly payee cases

SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

Services provided include: Adjustment Services, Individual Family and Adjustment and In-Home Aide services.

- 34 Clients Served
- 13 New Clients
- 12 Case Closures

MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION

Transportation to medical appointments is provided, arranged or reimbursed for individuals who are eligible for this service.

- 771 Clients Transported
- 11,488 Number of Trips
- \$ 4,044.00 Direct Payments to Clients
- \$128,068.41 Payments to Providers

PROVIDERS

- \$ 11,553.50 WestCare
- \$ 74,427.54 Jackson County Transit
- \$ 4,141.50 Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian Transit
- \$ 37,945.87 Gas Stations

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND AUXILIARY PROGRAMS

MEDICAID AND SPECIAL ASSISTANCE

Medicaid provides assistance with medical expenses for low-income families with children, disabled adults, and the elderly. **Special Assistance** provides a monthly payment to help pay the cost of facility placement or in-home care.

- 2,839 Applications Received
- 10,144 Reviews/Revisions to Cases
- 3,502 Average Monthly Cases

MEDICAID'S IMPACT ON LOCAL ECONOMY

The following shows regional Medicaid dollars paid to Jackson County providers.

Harris Regional Hospital	\$11,416,129.98
Physicians / Dentists / Optometrists	\$6,236,794.69
Nursing Homes / Adult Care	\$4,353,537.04
Smoky Mountain Mental Health	\$4,261,405.76
Pharmacies	\$3,940,521.77
Children's Developmental Services	\$742,164.64
Health Department	\$462,381.61
Other	\$3,995,214.21

HEALTH CHOICE FOR CHILDREN

North Carolina Health Choice for children provides medical assistance for uninsured children when the family income is at or below 200% of federal poverty level.

- 555 Children Enrolled

FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES

Designed to raise the nutritional levels in low-income households by issuing food assistance allotments to supplement a household's food dollars.

- 1,931 Applications Received
- 5,053 Reviews/Revisions to Cases
- 1,541 Average Monthly Cases

WORK FIRST FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Financial and medical assistance for dependent minor children who are deprived of parental care and support of one or both parents.

- 147 Applications Received
- 93 Reviews/Revisions to Cases
- 39 Average Monthly Cases

WORK FIRST FAMILY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

This component of the Work First Program is designed to help families achieve independence from financial assistance services.

- 11 Parents Went To Work
- 14 Benefit Diversions Provided
- 100% Families Stayed Off Work First After One Year Of Work

96	Households Served
\$23,452.00	Expenditures
\$ 244.29	Average Payment

LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Assistance with heating expenses through a once a year program. This program assists households with income at or below 110% of the federal poverty level and assets not exceeding \$2,200

\$1,070	Households Served
\$218.00	Average Payment
\$233,433.00	Total Payments

PROGRAM INTEGRITY/FRAUD INVESTIGATIONS

Public Assistance cases are routinely investigated to assure accuracy and to address discrepancies. Repayment of benefits is pursued in cases of fraud and overpayment.

324	Cases Investigated
\$275.00	Work First Repayments
\$916.00	Special Assistance Repayments
\$1,717.25	Medicaid Repayments
\$21,752.93	Food & Nutrition Services Repayments

CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT

Assures that children receive adequate parental support by locating absent parents, establishing paternity, establishing medical and financial support, modifying and enforcing court ordered support obligations.

910	Active Cases
\$2,601,990.64	Collections
\$82,066.76	County Return and Incentives Earned
40	Paternities Established
106	New and/or Modified Support Orders Established

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

SHELTER/UTILITY ASSISTANCE

The Crisis Intervention Program, Share the Warmth, Federal Emergency Management Act, and Helping Each Member Cope are programs to assist people in an energy/shelter crisis. These four programs combined to accomplish the following:

1298	Households Served
\$276,169.65	Expenditures
\$212.77	Average Payment

GENERAL ASSISTANCE

One-time assistance for families in a crisis situation.

689	Households Served
\$30,098.13	Expenditures
\$43.68	Average Payment

WORK FIRST EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

A one-time, short-term assistance to help prevent future long-term dependence on other forms of public assistance.

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- For the 10th year in a row, the JCDSS Income Maintenance Program staff was recognized by the State Division of Social Services for exceeding all quality and timeliness standards for both the Medicaid and the Food & Nutrition Services Programs.
- Out of 96 programs across the state, the JCDSS Child Support staff earned the ranking of #3 in North Carolina for overall effectiveness in FY 08-09.
- The JCDSS Child Support program has now been ranked among the top four programs in North Carolina for seven straight years.
- With the help of local businesses and churches, the JCDSS staff voluntarily raised \$3,730.00 for the Back-to-School Program and assisted 75 children with backpacks, shoes and school supplies for the start of the 2008 school year.
- By exceeding state goals for successful agency adoptions, the JCDSS Child Welfare staff qualified for \$141,000 in federal incentive awards. Because the funding became depleted however, only \$60,000 was actually paid to Jackson County by the state.
- JCDSS staff successfully partnered with WCU computer science students to analyze and automate portions of the agency's services tracking system.
- The Board of Social Services and the JCDSS staff engaged in a successful collaborative process to review and update the agency's mission statement, which is printed on the front of this report.

PROCESSING SUPPORT SERVICES

27,535	In-Agency Client Visits
--------	-------------------------

SATELLITE OFFICES

A satellite office in Cherokee provides Food and Nutrition Services, Medicaid, Work First Family Assistance and Social Work Services.

In Accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. Under the Food Stamp Act and USDA policy, discrimination is prohibited also on the basis of religion or political beliefs.