

JACKSON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

2015 - 2016

ANNUAL REPORT

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.

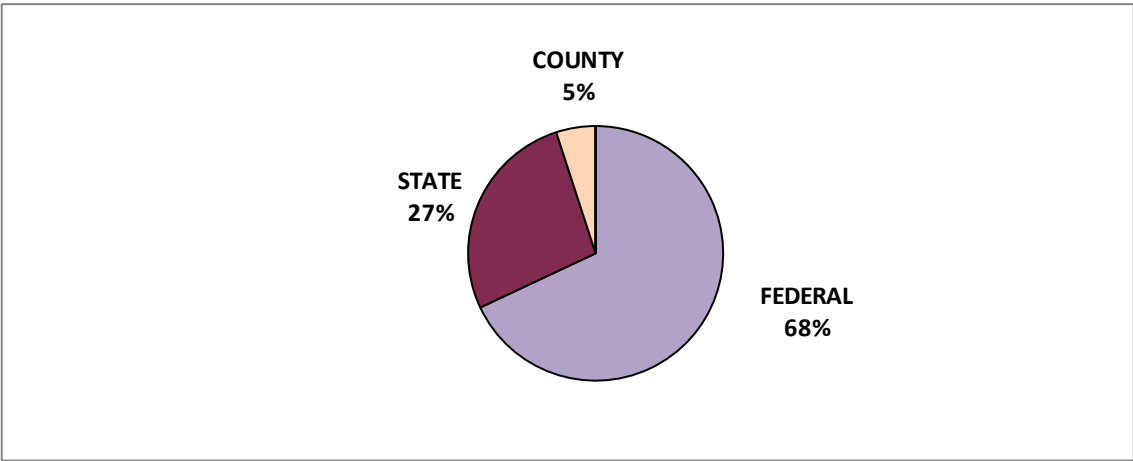
The staff of the Jackson County Department of Social Services have dedicated themselves to establishing a team approach in which to offer services in the most efficient and effective way possible while ensuring that all citizens receive these services in a professional and courteous manner.

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 2015-2016. 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 to be more accountable for the public funds entrusted to this Department.

BOARD MEMBERS

Dennis Wilkey, Chairperson
Janice Wright, Vice-Chairperson
Jennie Miller, Member
Juanita Burrell, Member
Delos Monteith, Member

Robert B. Cochran, Director



REVENUES FY 2015-2016

FEDERAL	\$37,955,883.19	68%
STATE	\$15,347,290.50	27%
COUNTY	\$ 2,636,105.16	5%
OTHER	<u>\$ 26,789.29</u>	0%
TOTAL	\$55,966,068.14	100%

EXPENDITURES FY 2015-2016

MEDICAID PAYMENTS	\$ 41,513,841.00
FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES	\$ 7,625,907.00
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION (Medicaid, Work First Family Assistance, Food & Nutrition Services, Special Assistance)	\$ 2,138,150.83
SOCIAL WORK SERVICES	\$ 1,897,252.82
WORK FIRST	\$ 1,109,516.00
EMERGENCY CRISIS ASSISTANCE (Low Income Energy Assistance, Fuel, Shelter, Utilities, Medicine)	\$ 429,905.71
OTHER EXPENDITURES INCLUDE:	
FOSTER CARE	\$ 528,451.05
SPECIAL ASSISTANCE (Adult Care Payments)	\$ 382,713.82
CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES	\$ 317,358.61
IN HOME SERVICES (Adult Day Care, Aide Services, Home Delivered Meals)	\$ 20,890.68
ADULT GUARDIANSHIP	<u>\$ 2,080.62</u>
TOTAL	\$55,966,068.14

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.

- 954 Responses to Reports of Abuse, Neglect and/or Dependency
- 95 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 reduce risk factors, promote stability and bring about permanence for children.

- 39 Families Served
- 80 Children Served
- 74 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.

- 41 Children In Agency Custody as of 07/01/15
- 34 Children Entered Agency Custody through 06/30/16
- 23 Children Left Agency Custody
 - 13 Children Returned to Parents
 - 4 Guardianship or Custody to Others
 - 4 Children Adopted
 - 2 Transferred to Another County
- 52 Children Remained in Agency Custody - 06/30/16

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.

- 4 Agency Adoptions Finalized
- 5 Non-Agency Adoptions
- 11 Agency Children Cleared for Adoption
- 27 Families Received Adoption Assistance for 35 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 individuals 18 and older. Services are provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

171 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/or their finances.

28 Guardianship Clients Served

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.

31 Payee Clients Served

SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

Assistance is provided to blind/visually impaired clients through Independent Living (IL) Services. The Medical Eye Care Assistance program assists with exams, glasses, vision related surgery and referrals to other programs when funding is unavailable.

24 Clients Received IL Instruction
10 New Clients Received IL Instruction
9 Case Closures for Clients Receiving IL Instruction
9 Medical Eye Care Clients Served
14 Clients Referred to Other Resources for Assistance

CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

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

865 Active Cases
\$2,304,578.52 Collections
\$38,456.00 County Return and Incentives Earned
65 Paternities Established
112 New Support Orders Established
183 Support Orders Modified
519 Implemented Income Withholdings
840 Enforcement Actions Completed

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE 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.

2,024	Applications Received
2,741	Reviews Completed
6,020	Average Monthly Cases

MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION

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

626	Clients Transported
3,863	Number of Trips for the Year
\$20,021.29	Direct Payments to Clients
\$172,072.41	Payments to Providers

PROVIDERS

\$76,301.83	Jackson County Transit
\$26,940.79	Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Transit
\$68,829.79	Gas Stations

HEALTH CHOICE FOR CHILDREN

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

363 Active Cases as of 06/30/16

BACK-TO-SCHOOL PROJECT



Balsam Baptist Church (some members pictured above), local businesses, and other churches together with the JCDSS staff raised \$9,163 for their 16th Annual Back-to-School Project. 169 children received backpacks, shoes and school supplies to start the 2015 school year.

FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES

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

2,961	Applications Received
3,075	Reviews Completed
3,002	Average Monthly Cases

WORK FIRST FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Work First is an employment program for families with children under the age of 18 living in the home. Child-only benefits are available to eligible non-parent relatives caring for minor children.

86	Applications Received
44	Average Monthly Cases

SHELTER/UTILITY ASSISTANCE

The Crisis Intervention Program, Low-Income Energy Assistance, Work First Emergency Assistance, Duke Energy, Energy Neighbor, Emergency Food and Shelter Program, and Helping Each Member Cope are programs to assist people in an energy/shelter crisis. These seven programs accomplished the following:

1,776	Households Served
\$397,241.21	Total Payments
\$223.67	Average Payment

GENERAL ASSISTANCE

One-time assistance for families in a crisis situation.

707	Households Served
\$35,035.21	Total Payments
\$49.55	Average Payment

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.

62	Cases Investigated
\$1,197.22	Medicaid Repayments
\$14,116.42	Food & Nutrition Services Repayments

PROCESSING SUPPORT SERVICES

23,801 Clients Seen in Agency

15,704 Incoming Pieces of Regular Mail

506 Incoming Pieces of Courier Mail

26,140 Outgoing Pieces of Regular Mail

108 Outgoing Pieces of Courier Mail



JCDSS recognized three employees with over 25 years of service: Pam Hooper, Tammy Bradley, and Kim Cabe.

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- JCDSS recognized five employees with over 20 years of service: Jennifer Abshire, Christi Hooper, Randal Moss, Sheryl Williamson, and Becky Green.
- JCDSS worked closely with The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians as they transitioned into providing Social Work Services on Tribal Land beginning October 2015.
- The Agency's annual audit was held in July for FY 15-16. No errors were found in the review.
- The Agency held a very successful Christmas Party for 48 foster and adoptive children.
- The Child Support staff met or exceeded all five incentive goals for the year.
- 22 JCDSS employees and their families participated in the Elder Abuse Awareness Walk.
- Two Adult Services Social Workers provided elder abuse awareness training in the community which included a talk on WRGC Radio.
- Agency staff collected items to fill 23 Christmas boxes for the elderly.
- Employee, Raquel Moore, made personalized cakes for each foster child's birthday.
- Agency implemented a flex schedule for staff.
- The Agency's Annual Pink-Out day raised \$470 for a co-worker who was diagnosed with Breast Cancer.

SATELLITE OFFICE

A satellite office in Cherokee provides Food and Nutrition Services and Medicaid.

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.