



An Equal Opportunity Employer

# Caroline County

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

2013 Annual Report

**Child Welfare Services  
Administration**

John R. Hargreaves  
District Court &  
Multi-Services Center  
207 South 3rd Street  
Denton, MD 21629

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**Adult Services  
Energy Assistance  
Family Investment  
Child Support Enforcement  
Caroline County Career Center**

The Carter Building  
300 Market Street  
Denton, MD 21629



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Council on Accreditation  
For Children and Family Services



## Director's Message

The focus of this report is to provide the outcomes that reflect the commitment and dedication of our staff to provide quality services to the citizens of Caroline County. On behalf of the Board of Directors and Staff of Caroline County Department of Social Services, I am pleased to provide you with our 2013 Annual Report.

We have had many accomplishments in the past year and are proud of the work and new initiatives that the agency has undertaken. Following are a few highlights of our accomplishments.

- ◇ From July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013, the Place Matters initiative referred 46 families as a result of a CPS Investigation, 23 families were referred as the result of an SFC-I Assessment, 224 children were serviced through this program, and; 219 or 98% of those children were able to remain with family and in their community without Court Intervention.
- ◇ The Agency ended the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) with 1,461 cases in Child Support.
- ◇ \$3,419,880.00 in current and arrears support payments were collected and disbursed.
- ◇ Emergency Assistance (EA) - In FY 2013, an average of 84 adults and/or families per month contact the Adult Services Unit for emergency assistance or referrals. Two-hundred, seventeen (217) clients were served in FFY 2013; 96 through ETHS, 37 through HPP, and 84 through EA.
- ◇ The Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP) Processed 2,058 applications for the Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP). 1,854 families were certified for a total of \$1,285,371.00 in grants.
- ◇ The Respite Program is an extension of Caroline County Department of Social Services' foster care program. Respite care is provided for a maximum of 72 hours per incident and the program pays for a maximum of 12 days per child during the contract year. Additional days are assessed on a case-by-case basis. In FY 2013, 36 children were served.

Please join me in thanking my Staff and Board for their hard work and dedication.



*Osvaldina Gomes Dafy, LCSW  
Director*

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## Child Welfare Services

### In-Home Services/Investigations

Child Protective Services (CPS)

- **Total Investigations Assigned:** 194
- **Investigations Outcome:**
  - 45 Indicated
  - 34 Unsubstantiated
  - 115 Ruled out
- **Other Cases Assigned or Referred in-house:**
  - 20 Requests from other agencies
  - 72 In-agency service referrals
  - 8 30-day Assessments

### In-Home Services/Consolidated Programs

#### Services to Families with Children – Intake (SFC-I)

- There are four caseworkers in this unit that provide SFC-I and Consolidated Services to families. In 2013:
- 75 families received Assessment Services.
- 29 families accepted Assessment Services.
- 23 families were referred and accepted on-going Consolidated Services.
- 9 families received services under this service.

#### Consolidated Services

The Place Matters initiative was implemented to improve the services offered to Maryland's children and families that include family-centered practice, a focus on permanency practice, targeted child well-being practices, placement and community resource development, and resource home recruitment and retention.

From July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013:

- 46 families were referred as a result of a CPS Investigation.
- 23 families were referred as the result of an SFC-I Assessment
- 224 children were serviced through this program.
- 219 or 98% of those children were able to remain with family and in their community without Court Intervention.

## Child Welfare Services

### **In-Home Services *Continued***

#### **Interagency Family Preservation Services (INFPS)**

- Referrals can come from the Child Welfare Unit of the Department of Social Services, Department of Juvenile Services, and Mental Health Services through Core Services Agency, Board of Education, and the Caroline County Health Department.
- Families will receive 3 months of high intensive services in the home, in some cases up to 20 hours per week. They can receive up to, but no more than, a total of six months of service from INFPS.
- 10 families were provided INFPS services in FY 2013.
- For FY ending June 2013, the In-Home Services Unit provided services to 17 children. Of those children, 14 or 82% were able to remain safely in their homes and communities with family. The children, who were not able to be safely with their families without Court Intervention, were placed with a family member and 1 child was entered through the Voluntary Placement Agreement Service requiring specialized Residential Treatment Needs but remaining in the care and custody of their parent.

#### **Out-of-Home Services/Foster Care and Adoptions**

- 42 Children were in Foster Care on July 1, 2013
- 6 entered Foster Care during the fiscal year ( 2-VPA, 4-OOH)
- 7 foster children exited Foster Care during the fiscal year; 4 were adopted, 1 was reunified, 1 aged out, and 1 was a relative placement/guardianship

The Agency had 41 children in Foster Care at the end of the fiscal year (6/30/2012).

#### **Adoption**

- 6 children in Foster Care had the plan of adoption.
- 4 children in foster care were adopted.

#### **Respite Care**

Respite care is designed to provide the caretaker and the child(ren) with short-term separation during times of crisis and to prevent a higher level of services from becoming necessary. The program also offers planned respite intervention for caretakers who are caring for children diagnosed as severely handicapped, emotionally disturbed or medically fragile, as well as children in the foster care system. Licensed foster homes are used to provide respite care.

Respite care is provided for a maximum of 72 hours per incident. The program pays for a maximum of 12 days per child during the contract year. Additional days are assessed on a case-by-case basis. In FY 2013, 36 children were served through this program.

## Child Welfare Services

**Resource Homes**— July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013 the Agency:

- Maintained an average of 29 licensed foster/adoptive homes. As of 6/30/13 the diversity of our homes was:
- 1 Hispanic family, 19 Caucasian families and 9 African American families.
- Completed Two (2) community informational sessions about PRIDE training held, January 8, 2013 and April 17, 2013.
- Attended and Marketed “Foster Care and Adoption Services” at Summerfest and Family Fun Day in Caroline County.
- C.A.S.E , the Center for Adoption, Support and Education came to Caroline County C.A.S.E , Madeline Krebs gave a three (3) hour presentation on “Open Adoptions and the Importance of Birth Families”. Twenty-six (26) people attended some staff but primarily foster parents from four (4) different counties.
- Collaborated with other mid-shore Departments of Social Services to recruit additional foster/adoptive families.

## Adult Services (AS)

The Adult Services Unit consists of a unit supervisor, two and one half (2 1/2) full-time and two (2) in-home aide workers. Also, through a partnership with Upper Shore Aging, the unit includes (1) full time case worker (35 hours per week) and (1) part time case worker (14 hours per week). In FY 13, the AS unit accomplished:

- 100 % (exceeding the state goal of 96%) of Adult Protective Services (APS) investigations indicated or unsubstantiated having no re-occurrence in six months
- 98.75% (exceeding state goal of 97%) for individuals receiving assistance to remain in the community.

**Adult Protective Services (APS)** received 163 referrals for investigation. Of the 163 cases:

- 93 cases were screened out.
- 10 cases were investigated for exploitation.
- 26 cases were investigated for self-neglect, 23 cases were investigated for neglect by others.
- 3 cases were investigated for abuse.
- 2 cases were requests by another agency.
- 6 cases were APS continuing.
- 1 court-ordered assessments and 1 Guardianship Petition.
- Department was Guardian of the Person for 5 adult clients.
- New Screening Risk Assessment Tool is in effect for APS/SSTA.

## Adult Services

**Social Services to Adults (SSTA)** services assist clients through case management to maintain their independence and remain in their community. There was an average of seventy-six (76) cases that received SSTA services for FY 2013.

**In-Home Aide Services (IHAS)** are support services provided to **SSTA** clients based on need and availability of services. These services may be in the form of chore and/or personal care.

- An average of 39 individuals received chore and/or personal care services.
- **Project Home (PH)** is a program that houses and provides case management services to adult clients who are physically and/or mentally disabled. In FY 2013:
  - 5 customers resided in the 3 certified Project Care Homes.

**Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP)** primarily assists eligible adults and families with eviction prevention. Rental costs have steadily increased over the last two years even though funding has not increased. In FY 2013:

- 37 adults and families who were presented with eviction notices were assisted with funds to prevent eviction subsequently preventing homeless situations.

**Emergency Transitional Housing Services (ETHS)** provides funds for first months rent or back rent to prevent homeless situations. Funds may also be utilized for temporary lodging, and emergency food. In FY 2013:

- 96 clients were assisted with ETHS funds. Rental costs have steadily increased even though funding has decreased for the third year in a row.

**Emergency Assistance (EA)** In FY 2013, an average of 84 adults and/or families per month contact the Adult Services Unit for emergency assistance or referrals. Contacts are in the form of walk-ins, telephone calls, and repeat calls from/to clients and vendors. In FY 2013:

- 217 clients were served; 96 through ETHS, 37 through HPP, and 84 through EA. EA clients were assisted with utility cut-offs, medications, and homeless individuals. There were 44 homeless individuals served from the ages of 6 months to 72 years. The total number of bed-nights for the shelter was a total of 1,860. Limited funding is available to the Department to assist EA clients.

## Family Investment & Child Support

### Family Investment

**The Family Investment Division** provides income, income supplements, service subsidies, medical coverage, and work opportunities to low income families in Caroline County. During State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2013, Family Investment:

- Provided Food Supplement assistance to a monthly average of 6,701 individuals in 3,044 households.
- Provided Temporary Cash Assistance to a monthly average of 346 children and 82 adults in 200 households.
- Provided Medical Assistance to a monthly average of 2,728 community care households, 118 Long Term Care individuals, and 772 individuals receiving Supplemental Security Income.
- Provided a total of \$ 502,663 in Child Care Subsidy Program payments on behalf of a monthly average of 168 children in 103 households.
- Provided Temporary Disability Assistance to a monthly average of 108 individuals.
- Assisted 101 families through Emergency Assistance to Families with Children with expenses for items such as rent and utilities.
- Screened 338 Family Investment and Child Welfare customers for substance abuse, referred 42 individuals for assessment and 11 for treatment.
- Provided pre-employment training to 49 TCA, Food Supplement and Child Support customers.

**Family Investment** is measured on performance in the areas of administrative processes (application timeliness), accuracy, and independence (job placements and work participation). In SFY 2013, Family Investment:

- Achieved a 99.45% application timeliness rate in regular Food Supplement cases and a 98.62 % application timeliness rate for expedited Food Supplement cases completed for SFY 2013.
- Assisted 100 individuals receiving Temporary Cash Assistance or owing child support obtain jobs (128% of our annual goal) for FFY 2013.
- Achieved a 76% Work Participation Rate—FFY 2013 (152 % of our annual goal – the number of work eligible Temporary Cash Assistance customers participating in a countable work activity for the required number of hours each month).



## Family Investment & Child Support

### Family Investment *continued*

The Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP) helps families pay utility bills, minimize heating crises and make energy costs more affordable. These programs are measured on performance in outreach or increasing the number of families in the community who access services. In SFY 2013, OHEP:

- Processed 2,058 applications for the Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP), which provides assistance grants to help with the payment of home heating bills. 1,854 families were certified for a total of \$1,285,371.00 in grants.
- Processed 1,995 applications for the Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP), which provides financial assistance with electric bills. 1,818 households were certified for a total of \$658,392.00 in assistance.
- Processed 1,152 applications for the Electric Universal Service Arrearage Program, which provides financial assistance with past due electric bills. 214 households were certified for a total of \$151,493.00 in assistance.

### Child Support

The Caroline County Office of Child Support Enforcement provides paternity and child support establishment, as well as enforcement and modification of child support services to Caroline County families. During Federal Fiscal Year 2013, Child Support:

- Ended the service period with 1,461 child support cases
- Disbursed \$3,419,880.00 in child support payments (current support plus arrears)

Child Support is measured on performance in the areas of paternity establishment, support order establishment, current collections and payments made on arrears. In FFY 2013, Child Support:

- Established paternity for 104.43% of the children in our caseload who were born out-of-wedlock (annual goal 109.30%)
- Established support orders in 91.72% of our cases (annual goal 91.08%)
- Collected 65.17% of current child support owed (annual goal 66.60%)
- Collected payments from 68.53% of non-custodial parents owing arrears (annual goal 72.53%)

## Family Investment

### **Non-Custodial Parent Employment Program**

The State of Maryland initiated the Non-Custodial Parent Employment Program (NPEP) in April 2007. This program provides job readiness and job placement assistance to non-custodial parents who are able to work, but who are not paying child support. Program goals include regular and reliable child support payments, fewer children receiving public assistance, and an increased employment rate in the non-custodial parent population. The Office of Child Support Enforcement refers non-custodial parents to the job readiness and job placement programs operated by Family Investment. The court may also order non-custodial parents to participate. From the inception of the NPEP program through June 2013, the Caroline County program has:

- Referred 441 non-custodial parents with a total of 1,029 child support cases to NPEP
- Enrolled 210 parents in the program
- Assisted 160 parents to successfully complete the program
- Collected a total of \$1,604,716.00 in child support payments from 355 of the parents referred to NPEP

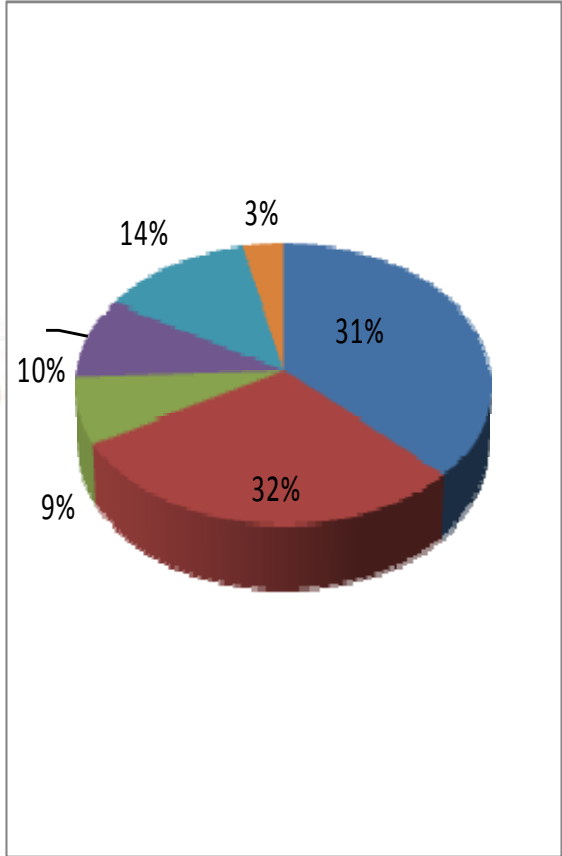
### **Parents as Partners**

The Parents as Partners program provides case management and coordination of service delivery including employment development, parenting skills development, counseling, and assistance with child support-related issues to enable custodial and non-custodial parents to better meet the financial and emotional needs of their children. In SFY 2013, this program:

- Served 59 parents (236% of our annual goal)
- Assisted 18 parents in obtaining jobs
- Helped 7 parents retain employment for 90 days or longer
- Provided service linkages for parenting skills, job readiness and career counseling, life skills counseling, mental health treatment, and peer support groups

Parents as Partners participants paid a total of \$71,110.04 in child support during SFY 2013.

# Total Expenditures



- \$ 2,490,975.57 FIA
- \$2,006,080.96 Child Welfare
- \$496,177.64 Adult Services
- \$612,484.88 Administration
- \$880,738.63 Child Support
- \$237,488.41 Work Opp
- \$6,723,946.09 Total

## Board of Directors

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