

Kent County Department of Social Services

2015 ANNUAL REPORT



Maryland Department of Human Resources

Vision

We envision Kent County as a safe community where individuals and families strive for, achieve and maintain independence.

Mission

Kent County Department of Social Services promotes and supports personal responsibility, dignity and self-sufficiency. We protect and preserve vulnerable children, adults and families. We accomplish this in partnership with our customers, stakeholders and community.

Values

We believe that every adult, child and family should be given the opportunity and means to establish stability and economic independence so that they become and remain self-sufficient.

We believe that we must maintain a supportive environment that encourages collaborative customer service; high quality delivery of service; and respect for ourselves, our colleagues and our customers.

We support individuals, families and the community by providing accessible and proficient services in a dignified and compassionate manner in partnership with our stakeholders.

FY 2015 Kent County DSS Advisory Board Members

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Gail Yerkie, Vice Chair
Rosalie Kuechler, Treasurer
Ernie Crofoot, Commissioner Designee
Carolyn Brooks
David E. Kelley
Marcie Woodward
Shannon Piasecki
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Director's Message

It is my great pleasure to present the Kent County Department of Social Services (KCDSS) annual report for fiscal year 2015.

This has been a year of community connection for us. After all, how better to serve and support our neighbors than through a community response? One example of a true community response is the Kent County Community Adult Multidisciplinary Team, which was initiated in April of 2015. This group, consisting of representatives from the healthcare, legal, law enforcement and various human service fields, meets monthly to assess and provide consultation on treatment planning and service delivery for Kent County's adult population in need. This collaborative process engages subject matter experts who bring their vast knowledge to the planning process and develop collaborative responses to individual needs.

Another example of community connection is our Social Service Board's first fundraiser – Freaky Friday. This fun-filled event was generously supported by Washington College and their Compass Dining Services team, as well as by many individuals, businesses and musical professionals in the community. Proceeds supported the Kent County Community Assistance Fund, which fills gaps in services to children and families in Kent County. One program supported by the fund is our Child Advocacy Center (CAC), which provides services to child victims and their families when sexual and/or serious physical abuse have occurred.

Additional community connections occurred through our holiday programs, our outreach activities, our social media presence, our charitable giving and our financial and volunteer support for community events and initiatives, all of which you will read about in this report.

It is through the hard work and commitment of the KCDSS staff with the support of our Social Service Board and community partners, including government agencies, non-profit and faith-based organizations, resource families, generous individuals and our county government, that we are able to serve the citizens of Kent County.....in other words, through community connections. It is with the deepest gratitude for each individual and community contribution that I offer this brief overview of our 2015 accomplishments.

Linda C. Webb, LCSW, Director

Achievements

- Initiated the Kent County Adult Multi-Disciplinary Team comprised of community partners from diverse disciplines who provide comprehensive assessment, case review, consultation and planning for services and treatment for our adult population
- Granted \$2,000 by United Way of Kent County to support the Kent County Community Assistance Fund initiated to support important Department of Social Service programs that do not receive government funding.
- Recognized with a DHR Golden Fork Award for performance in Food Supplement Program application timeliness, percent of cases reviewed and staff training activities.
- Recognized with a Maryland Association of Social Service Boards Paul Hastings Award for our tobacco cessation programs funded by a PATCH (Pregnant and Tobacco Cessation Help) grant from the Kent County Health Department.

Community Connections

- Partnered with the Kent County Health Department to administer and support the Pregnancy and Tobacco Cessation Help (PATCH) program. Activities to assist tobacco users quit and referrals to cessation programs were promoted throughout the year.
- Provided 224 pounds of food, donated by KCDSS employees, to the Community Food Pantry of Kent County in recognition of the Governor's Day to Serve. This donation provided 179 meals to Kent County residents.
- Used program funding to support Healthy Families, an evidence-based home visiting program that works with first time parents to provide education and support that leads to reduced child maltreatment, healthy child development, increased school readiness, promotion of family self-sufficiency and positive parenting.
- Served 14 families through the Adopt-a-Family Holiday Program, which matches families referred by employees with community sponsors. Thirteen community members and/or organizations served as sponsors who purchased gifts for the families. 140 applications were referred to the Star Democrat's Brighter Christmas Fund, and 273 individuals and families were referred to the Lions Clubs of Kent County for the Christmas Basket Program.
- Used program funding and staffing to support Kent Forward and Kent County Public Schools' Challenge Day, a positive change initiative that builds connection and empathy between students.
- Participated in 52 outreach activities, including community education, formal presentations, and presence at various community events.

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- Achieved total reach of 22,333 on our Facebook page.
 - Our Charitable Giving Committee identifies, organizes and conducts local charitable giving opportunities for employees of KCDSS and oversees the annual statewide Maryland Charities Campaign for our jurisdiction. Through this group we
 - o Raised through employee activities \$1,035, which was donated to Re-building Together Kent County.
 - o Contributed to the Maryland Charities Campaign a total of \$4,354, an increase of 11% over 2014.

Our Outreach Committee identifies, organizes and participates in community events to educate our community on KCDSS programs and services. Through this group we

- o Created an Outreach Kit that includes informational materials from across the agency and can be taken to community events.
- o Participated in a number of community events.
- o Partnered with the agency Wellness Committee to host a Health Fair for employees and the community.
- o Went door-to-door in senior citizen housing complexes to complete applications for the Lions Club Christmas Basket program.

Child and Adult Services Division

The Child and Adult Services Division works together with our county's citizens and community partners to protect stabilize and strengthen families. We have continued to focus on strategies that promote the safety and well-being of the children, families and adults we serve while promoting their independence and self-sufficiency.

From July 2014 through June 2015:

- Conducted 85 Child Protective Service investigations and 28 Adult Protective Service investigations.
- Served 12 child victims of sexual abuse and/or severe physical abuse through the Child Advocacy Center.
- 58% of families screened in for Child Protective Services received an Alternative Response. This approach engages families with our staff and our community partners through an assessment process, which benefits families by linking them to individualized resources.
- Served through In Home Services 6 families who are caring for a substance-exposed newborn.

- Met 7 of our 7 Place Matters goals in Child Welfare services.
- Safely diverted 34 children from Out of Home Placement by conducting 29 Family Involvement Meetings (FIM's). These meetings are held with family members and their support network at key child welfare decision points for In Home and Out of Home cases.
- To support and show appreciation for our resource parents we held a Foster Parent Association Holiday Party; organized and participated in local and regional resource parent recognition dinners; and held social events for youth in foster care, children who have been adopted and adoptive and resource parents, such as a Shorebirds baseball game.
- Two foster youth participated in the regional Summer Employment Program.
- Maintained 10 children in Out of Home placements.
- Maintained 10 adults in Adult Public Guardianships.
- Assisted 63 individuals in Social Services to Adults and In Home Aide Services programs by helping them remain in their individual homes.

Family Investment Division

The Family Investment Division helps families achieve independence through work, personal responsibility and community involvement. In addition, a variety of family centered supportive services and assistance are provided. These include Temporary Cash Assistance, Temporary Disability Assistance, Emergency Assistance to Families with Children, Local Emergency Assistance, Food Supplement Assistance, Medical Assistance, Work Readiness and Job Placement programs, Rental Assistance and Child Care Subsidies. Home heating needs are supplemented through our Office of Home Energy Programs.

From July 2014 through June 2015:

- Provided assistance totaling \$1,279,075 to 1,215 Kent County households through the Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) and the Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP).
- Processed 99% of applications within required time frames.
- Issued Food Supplement Program Benefits averaging a total of \$358,269 per month to an average of 1,707 households per month.
- Served an average of 1,273 families receiving Community Medical Assistance and 82 individuals receiving Long Term Care Medical Assistance each month.
- Helped 45 households resolve eviction and utility crises totaling \$10,930 through the Emergency Assistance to Families with Children program.

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- Served 74 individuals and families totaling \$21,180 through the Local Emergency Assistance Program. This program also provided support to the Samaritan Group Winter Shelter.
 - Assisted individuals exiting public assistance by obtaining 65 jobs, 11 of these with wages of \$10 per hour or more.
 - Connected two individuals exiting public assistance following employment to the Transportation Assistance Program to obtain vehicles of their own.

Child Support Division

The Child Support Division is committed to raising the standard of living for children in Kent County by establishing and enforcing their right to receive support from both parents.

How We Do It: The Child Support Division provides services to all custodial and non-custodial parents, guardians and caretakers.

Our services include:

- Establishing paternity/legal fatherhood;
- Providing genetic testing;
- Establishing child support and medical support orders;
- Collecting and distributing child support payments;
- Enforcing and/or modifying child support orders; and
- Assisting non-custodial parents to secure employment.

From October 2014 through September 2015:

- Collected over \$1.9 million in Child Support payments, an increase of nearly 2% over the previous federal fiscal year.
- Exceeded our Federal Performance Measures in the establishment of paternity, court orders and payment towards child support arrears.
- Increased wage withholding collections by nearly \$32,000, or 3% over Federal fiscal year 2014.
- Continued to participate in a variety of community outreach activities to further strengthen our partnerships within the community.

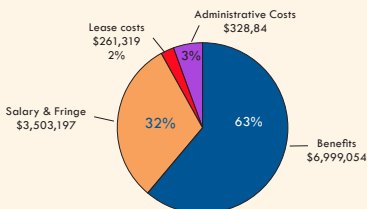
Administrative Division

The Administrative Division provides a wide variety of support to Kent County Department of Social Services employees, enabling them to provide quality services to our customers and community. Support functions provided by this division include personnel services, budget management, accounting operations, procurement and purchasing, fleet operations, information technology and communications, inventory and supply management, facilities and lease management, and security services.

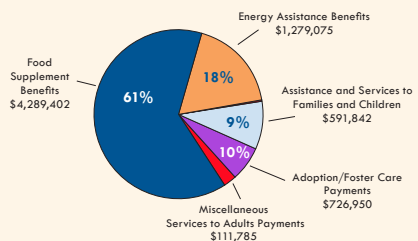
From July 2014 to June 2015:

- Participated in the training and implementation of the Statewide Personnel System and provided input at planning sessions held to discuss functional requirements of the new Automated Fiscal System (AFS).
- Processed five new hires, one retirement and two employee transfers to other agencies.
- Improved tracking and management of our local IT work order process by utilizing Smartsheet, which allows users to submit work orders electronically.
- Converted Virtual Private Networking (VPN) to “AnyConnect”, which provides highly secure access to networks and a more efficient way to connect to our servers remotely.
- Upgraded agency servers and work stations to provide more storage space and memory, replaced 7 printers and upgraded 40 monitors.
- Upgraded to SecureAuth, which combines a multitude of authentication and identity management features and is the first step towards a single sign-on process for multiple system logons.
- Installed Filezilla, which allows online Child Support applications through the DHR website.
- Installed a Check Scanner, which streamlined local child support payment processing.
- Installed and piloted the automated correspondence application Xpressions for the Child Support Division.

KENT COUNTY DSS FY 2015 SPENDING
\$11,092,415



KENT COUNTY DSS FY 2015 CUSTOMER BENEFITS
\$6,999,054





**Annual Place Matters Awards,
October 2014**

L to R: DHR Acting Deputy Secretary of Programs Carnitra White, KCDSS Supervisor Kathryn McAllister, DHR Secretary Ted Dallas, KCDSS Assistant Director Lisa Falls, DHR Acting Executive Director of Social Services Administration Debbie Ramelmeier



Eat Local Celebration in Child Support

L to R: Assistant Director Kathy Nolan, Supervisor Elizabeth Bankhead, Robin Reed, Ruth Kerr, Virginia Johnstone, Lindsay Blume



**September 2014 Donation to Community
Food Pantry of Kent County**

L to R: Doria Douglas, Katie LeMaire, JoyAnne Foreman



**Dinner's served at the Kent County Social Service
Board's March 2015 Freaky Friday Fundraiser**



March 2015 Freaky Friday Fundraiser
Kent County Social Service Board Chair Joe Irr (left) and Vice Chair Gail Yerkie (right)



October 2014 Customer Service Excellence Awards

L to R: KCDSS Director Linda Webb, MASSD Co-Chair Karen Butler, DHR Secretary Ted Dallas, KCDSS Awardee Denise Durham-Madison, DHR Acting Deputy Secretary for Programs, Carnitra White

December 2014 KCDSS Employee Contribution to Rebuilding Together Kent County

L to R: KCDSS Director Linda Webb, KCDSS Charitable Giving Committee Members Elizabeth Bankhead and Doria Douglas, RTKC Executive Director Lindsey Buckless



Family Investment Division receiving a Golden Fork Award



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