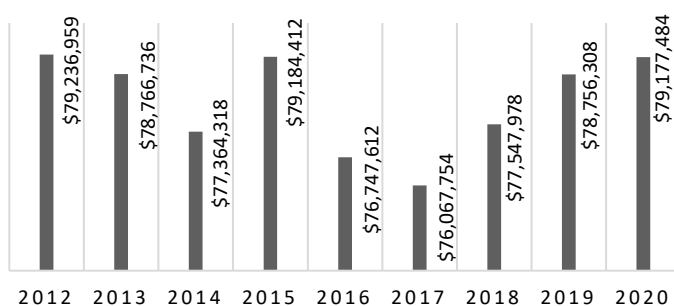


DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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DSS- COUNTY SHARE



WHO WE SERVE

The Department of Social Services is responsible for addressing the social service needs of the poor and working poor, as well as adults who are unable to care for and/or protect themselves. DSS delivers services that support and protect families and individuals while encouraging self-sufficiency and personal responsibility. The Department offers eligible Albany County residents with cash assistance, food buying assistance, temporary housing, employment preparation and training services, child care and case management to support the transition to more stable, productive lives. DSS also serves the aged and disabled through access to Medicaid benefits, as well as assessment and linkage to long-term services and supports. In partnership with the community, DSS is committed to providing excellent service with compassion and respect through the efficient use of resources in a fair, confidential and dignified manner.

The Reception Division greets and services all members of the public who come to the DSS building for assistance; accepts applications and documents for all program areas and routes them appropriately; identifies and manages emergency situations; and authorizes benefit cards.

Average Daily Reception Activity

Applications (all programs)	89
Benefit cards	56
Appointments	68
Receipts for dropped off documents	65
Miscellaneous queries and diversions	28

The Temporary Assistance Division is designed to meet the essential financial needs of eligible individuals and families and foster their ability to achieve economic self-sufficiency. The Division contracts with homeless shelters for temporary housing assistance and to help people obtain more permanent housing.

Year End 2018

- 13,266 Applications Processed for all TA Services
- 3,374 Eligibility Recertifications Processed
- Caseload as of December 2018 = 2,186
- Individuals receiving benefits as of December 2018 = 4,391

The Adult Services Division provides Assessment and Protective Services for vulnerable/at-risk adults and acts as Representative Payee for those who have been deemed by Social Security Administration to have challenges handling their money and provides case management services for Guardianship cases who have been deemed incompetent by a court. Additionally, Adult Services manages the Albany County NY Connects centralized information and assistance line for long term services and supports (518-447-4177) which also serves as Albany County's Adult Protective Intake Line. The Division also has a team which assesses eligibility and provides case management for individuals who need a Medicaid or Department for Aging homecare programs, Home Delivered Meals, Personal Emergency Response Systems, Social Adult Day Care, and/or Caregiver Respite programs.

One Month Snapshot

Active Guardianship Cases	78
Representative Payees	236
Home Care Cases	402
Home Delivered Meal Cases	371
Social Adult Day Care	37

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Previous 12 months

New York Connects Phone Contacts	6804
Adult Protective Intakes	561

The Child Support Enforcement Division facilitates collection and disbursement of all court ordered Child Support payments in Albany County. When necessary, the unit works to identify and locate financially responsible non-custodial parents in an effort to establish and enforce child support orders. For some clients this helps reduce dependence on public assistance.

Year End 2018

Active child support enforcement cases	17,206
Funds collected and disbursed to custodial parents	\$27,506,649

The Health Insurance Division provides access to health insurance coverage through Medicaid and Medicaid Managed Care, primarily for those who are age 65 and over and/or are disabled and in receipt of Medicare. We also determine Medicaid eligibility for people in skilled nursing facilities and for those individuals who have skilled needs and want to remain in the community and enroll in a Medicaid Waiver program such as Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Nursing Home Transition and Diversion (NHTDW), Care At Home, or other waiver programs.

Year End 2018

- 10,213 Applications Processed
- 11,088 Eligibility Recertifications Conducted
- Caseload as of December 2018 = 17,883
- Individuals in caseload as of December 2018 = 18,878

The Employment and Child Care Subsidy Division provides job readiness training, job placements and assistance with child care costs to help individuals prepare for, secure and retain employment. Child Care Subsidy benefits are provided to eligible low income families to assist with the cost of child care so that adult household member(s) can maintain employment or other allowable work readiness activities.

Year End 2018

Employment - 710 New Jobs Obtained by Recipients (454 TANF; 256 Safety Net)

Child Care - 1,295 Children Receiving Child Care Subsidy (monthly average)

The SNAP/HEAP Division operates the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP- formerly known as Food Stamps). SNAP is designed to help low income individuals and families meet their nutritional needs. This Division also administers the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) which offers financial assistance to eligible households to offset residential heating fuel and utility costs.

Year End 2018

SNAP

- 13,326 Applications Processed
- 9667 Eligibility Recertifications Processed
- ~ \$1,000,000 in SNAP "dollars" Per Week Authorized
- Caseload as of December 2018 = 16,893
- Number of Individuals on caseload as of December 2018 = 31,498

HEAP

- Fuel/Utility/Repair Benefits Provided 25,295 times
- \$6,519,007 Paid to Fuel/Utility Vendors

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The Fair Hearing Unit provides an opportunity for an applicant/recipient to appear before an impartial State appointed Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) to explain why they disagree with an action taken by ACDSS. The ALJ issues a written decision based on testimony, law and procedure.

Year End 2018

- 1,623 Fair Hearing Requests Made
- 93% Affirmation of Agency's Determinations

The Fraud Division has three main functions: Front End Detection System (F.E.D.S.) which helps to prevent fraudulent activity during the application process; Back End Detection System (B.E.D.S.) which investigates allegations of fraudulent activity in established cases; Eligibility Verification Review (EVR) which investigates a random sampling of cases in an ongoing way.

Year End 2018

Front End Detection and Eligibility Verification Review

- 1,605 Referred for F.E.D.S. or E.V.R investigation
- 228 Denials of applications based on F.E.D.S. and EVR

Back End Detection (B.E.D.)

- 886 Investigations
- 376 Cases closed or benefits reduced based on B.E.D.S.
- 103 Provable fraud with ~\$332,850 detected and ~\$125,000 recovered

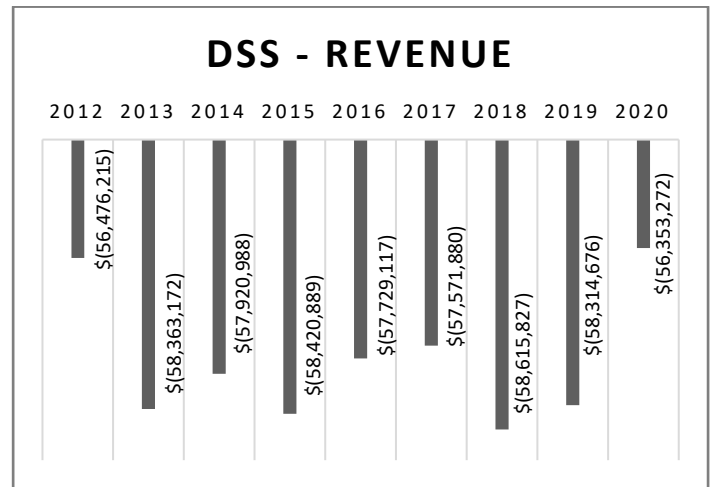
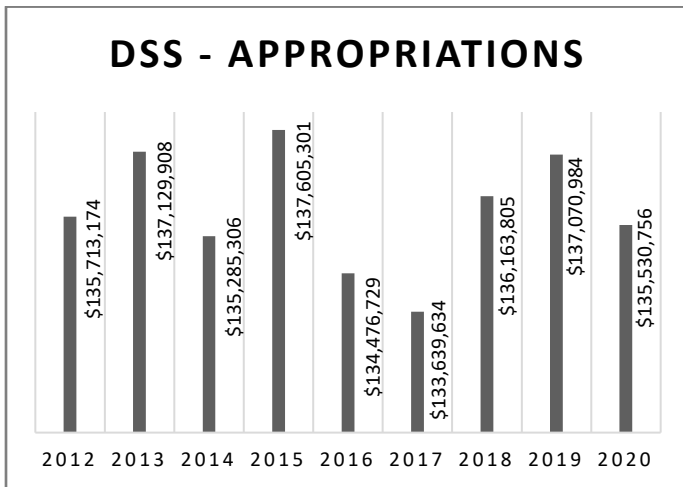
2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CHALLENGES

- Adult Services staff continues to meet with providers from Mental Health, Health Home Care Coordinators and OPWDD at care conferences to coordinate efforts to best serve our shared clients. With the roll-out of Medicaid Community First Choice Option (CFCO), Adult Services has been working to identify providers to establish contracts for the varied services (e.g., environmental, home modifications, etc.) CFCO will provide to eligible individuals (children and adults), who have long term care needs, so they can continue to remain in the community.
- The Employment Unit has entered into an MOU with the Capital District Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) that allows our clients to be directly exposed to the educational programs and services of the EOC on a monthly basis through the school year. Our participants receive tours of the programs and hands-on demonstrations. These activities highlight the EOC educational programs; ATTAIN (Advanced Technology Training and Information Networking) lab services and certification offerings as well as employment and college & career services available. The EOC offers our participants hospitality (food and beverages) and a direct connection with EOC students who share their experiences. It is our shared belief that if we bring our eligible clients to the EOC to have this personalized introduction to all that is available we are able to spark their interest and desire for investment in their own future.
- The Fair Hearing (FH) Unit has developed a database to track and monitor all FH requests, issues and outcomes which will allow us to pinpoint any areas in need of training or evaluation to ensure that these areas are addressed and resolved, ultimately creating a reduction in the number of FH requests.
- In 2019 the Fraud Unit takes pre-emptive action on applications and re-certifications where fraud has been detected to avoid paying out benefits (cost avoidance) to those who are not entitled. These actions achieved an overall cost avoidance of \$3,180,000 by denying fraudulent applications for assistance and closing or re-budgeting active assistance cases where fraud was detected.
- The Emergency Team stationed in Reception assisted 950 households by paying security deposits, preventing evictions, and reinstating utilities in order to assure stable housing.

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- Temporary Assistance works closely with the Employment Division to make sure that all families and singles are actively engaged in employment related activities. TA is utilizing Caseworker and Client Support Specialist staff to work with individuals and families that present with high-risk high needs. We have been able to connect these individuals and families to community resources and supports. By utilizing Caseworkers, we have been successful in the reducing the length of shelter stays especially with regards to families. On average our shelter families are in shelter 30 to 60 days, a year ago the average shelter stay was 120 days. Our Caseworker and Client Support Specialist work closely with the shelter case managers, DCYF, community agencies, to assist clients with securing permanent housing.



2020 GOALS AND PERFORMANCE TARGETS

- Adult Services/Adult Protective Services (APS) will collaborate with Local Law Enforcement agencies as well as the Albany County District Attorney's (DA) office to discuss best practices for addressing the growing number of financial exploitation cases, including how to move towards prosecution when appropriate. Adult Services/APS will also re-engage with DA's office and Law Enforcement to be a key partner in the SALT Initiative (Seniors and Law Enforcement Together) to participate in and provide trainings and forums throughout the community on how to reduce, prevent and address crimes against older adults
- APS will work with the County Executive's office as well as the Department of Law to express support for NY State Bill A05609 which proposes to amend Mental Health Law Art. 81 to require petitioners to identify other people who are able to assist the incapacitated person before pursuing guardianship and to prevent guardianship petitions being filed solely for bill collection purposes.
- We believe that a NYS driver's license can open up a world of opportunity and independence to certain members of our client population. Over the next year the Employment Unit will explore the feasibility of offering our eligible clients the 5 hour pre-licensing course required by DMV as well as developing a pre-permit review course.
- The Fair Hearing Unit, in collaboration with DSS Divisions, will continue to evolve the process whereby each program area designee reaches out to clients in advance of a scheduled hearing to resolve issues in a positive manner. If an issue can be resolved to the satisfaction of both parties, the client is asked to withdraw their request for the hearing, reducing the burden on all parties to prepare for, attend and otherwise address Fair Hearing requests.
- The agency will work to effect a smooth transition to a new Queuing system in the Reception Area of DSS. It is expected that the new system will assist with creating a more efficient client flow.

SUMMARY OF BUDGET CHANGES

- Day Care appropriation decreases by \$1M or 7.5% driven by caseload and expenditure trend.
- Purchase of Services appropriation increases by \$1M or 50% driven by payments to DV Shelters for non-TA domestic violence clients.
- Medicaid appropriation increases by \$456k or .70% from \$67.2M to \$67.7M

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- Medical Assistance appropriation increases by \$250K driven by NYS implementation of Community First Choice Option.
- Family Assistance appropriation decreases by \$600K or 5% driven by DV Shelters payments moved to Purchase of Services and general expenditure trend.
- Safety Net appropriation decreases by \$1.3M or 10% driven by DV Shelters payments moved to Purchase of Services and general caseload/expenditure trend.
- Overall appropriation decreases by \$1.2M or .90%
- Overall local share increases by \$782K or 1.0% driven by increases to Purchase of Services related to DV Shelters payments for non-TA domestic violence clients and Medicaid.

I met my DSS Employment worker when I was a teenaged single mother, receiving TANF assistance. Up to that point, my childhood was defined by emotional trauma and abuse, neglect and homelessness. Generally, people looked at me and saw nothing useful. They saw a waste, a life of poverty for me and nothing more. By chance, I encountered my Employment worker at Albany County DSS, and it is because of his assistance that my life began to change.

My worker saw, somehow, that I had something more to offer the world. He placed me in an educational program at the Capital District EOC. I earned my GED, general office skills, and gained some confidence in my ability to overcome poverty. He supported my goal of obtaining a college degree, and granted me acceptance into the PACE Program at Hudson Valley Community College in 2002. I majored in Human Services and excelled academically. After graduating with honors in 2004, I enrolled in SUNY Albany's Social Welfare program while attending America Works to find gainful employment. My worker remained connected to my case and tracked my progress.

After about six months of job searching, I finally found not just a job, but a career. I was hired as an Employment Case Manager at CareerLinks, Inc. And rather than my DSS worker's client, I became a colleague and since that time, I have been able to help support the efforts of other TANF recipients to become self-sufficient at CareerLinks, then at St. Peter's Hospital, ACAP, and the City of Albany as an EEO and Minority Recruitment Specialist.

I am now employed with a NYS office, responsible for protecting the rights of protected class employees. I am by most accounts, a well-rounded professional, fully self-supporting, and dedicated to assisting those in need. The daughter that brought me to DSS for help back then is now a college student herself, attending the same Human Services program I attended at Hudson Valley Community College. I eventually had a second daughter, who is now 12 years old and thriving in school. This year, I achieved a lifelong goal and bought my first home- a beautiful, safe, forever home for my family. Because of my worker, and other good people I encountered along my life journey, who helped me see my value and achieve my goals, I am now able to give back. I foster 10 year old triplets who, coupled with my biological children, fill my home and heart with inexplicable joy and love.