

Orange County Department of Social Services



ANNUAL REPORT 2003-2004

CELEBRATING THE STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF
OUR CLIENTS, STAFF, AND COMMUNITY...

Board of Directors:
Dee Gamble, Chair
Mary Bowe, Vice-Chair
Margaret Brown
Harold Russell
Rosetta Wash



Director's Message

The past year has been filled with many challenges for the families served by Social Services and by the employees who work with them. The growth in demand for assistance with food and medical services, which began several years ago, continued last year. Families are faced with difficult choices and our staff are glad to be able to help many families meet their basic needs.

Our agency provides a diverse array of services, but all these services have common goals: to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect, to help families meet their basic needs including food and medical care, to increase employment opportunities and to promote strong family functioning.

There are many accomplishments for our community to celebrate this year. Children have been adopted by loving families, teen parents have finished high school, parents have completed training and increased their wages, and older adults have been able to live in the community with needed support. These accomplishments reflect the strength of the individual families and the support of many community partners and volunteers. We look forward to continuing this partnership in Orange County.

From,

Nancy Coston
Nancy Coston, MSW
Director

Administration



The Orange County Department of Social Services has two primary office locations:

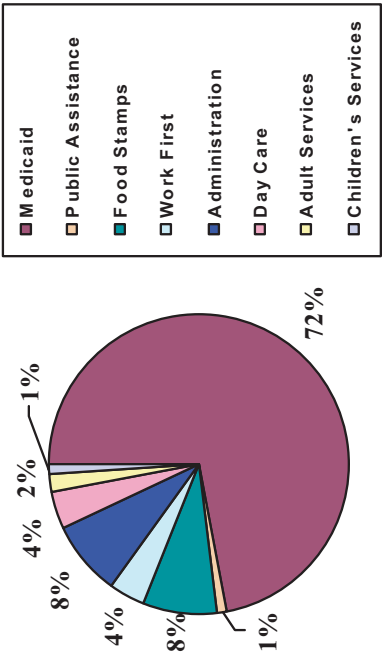
2501 Homestead Road
Chapel Hill, NC 27516
(919) 968-2000

300 West Tryon Street
Hillsborough, NC 27278
(919) 245-2800

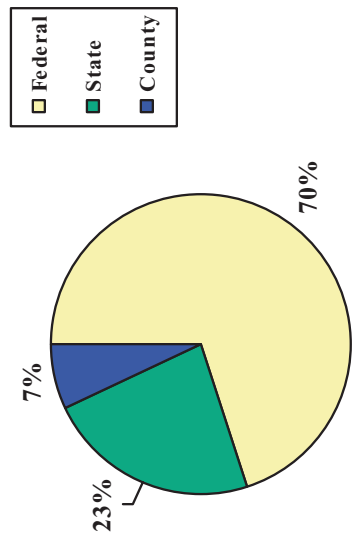
Fax: (919) 644-3005
Email: dssinfo@co.orange.nc.us

Financial Overview for Fiscal Year 2003-2004:

Total Budget \$90,878,344



Share Comparisons



Economic Services



Food Stamps

The Food Stamp Program is a federal program that provides a monthly allotment of Food Stamp benefits issued via Electronic Benefit Transfer cards (EBT cards) that can be used like debit cards. Food Stamp benefits may be used to purchase most foods at participating stores.

- 2336 households served monthly (average)
- 5122 individuals served monthly (average)
- \$5,435,792.00 total value of Food Stamps issued

Emergency Assistance

Families who are experiencing a financial emergency may be eligible for financial help to pay for housing, utilities, food, gas, and/or medicine.

- 13,763 people assisted
- \$100.00 average payment

Low Income Energy Assistance Program

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) provides for a one-time cash payment to help eligible families pay their heating bills.

- 1491 individuals and families assisted

- \$ 82.00 average payment per family
- \$122,261.00 total payments issued

Medicaid

Medicaid is a health insurance program for families and individuals whose income makes it difficult for them to afford health care. It is a publicly funded program governed by federal and state laws.

- 4215 households served monthly (average)
- 5825 individuals served monthly (average)

Health Choice

North Carolina Health Choice (NCHC) is North Carolina's health insurance program for children under age 19 who have no health insurance and whose family's income prevents them from affording health care, but who are ineligible for Medicaid. Coverage is through Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina, but the program is publicly funded and governed by federal and state laws. This program can end or be frozen when funds are depleted.

- 892 children served through Health Choice

Economic Services



Work First

Work First is North Carolina's TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) plan to help families move off of welfare and into jobs. Work First provides assistance with job search, vocational training, day care, transportation and time limited cash assistance to families with children under age 18 who meet income and resource guidelines.

- 778 clients applied for Work First assistance
- 118 participants found employment
- 31 families received a vehicle through Wheels for Work

Orange County Skills Development Center (JobLink)

The Orange County Skills Development Center located at 503 West Franklin Street in downtown Chapel Hill offers labor market information, provides access to career training and job placement services, and serves as the connection between employers and qualified workers.

- 5353 visits to the Center
- 502 clients found job placements
- 762 people received further education and training

Making a Difference Through Partnerships...

In March of 1999 Ms. Y was involved with Orange County Work First. She was working in childcare, but needed to get a better paying job. At the time, her son was eleven and her daughter was two years old, and providing for her family was very difficult. Through the Department of Social Services faith team partnerships, she was partnered with a Chapel Hill church. Ms. Y and the faith team spent many sessions exploring choices and consequences, and she decided that she wanted to become certified in childcare so she could get paid better. She chose to leave Work First and join an Americorps program for two years that would allow her to gain experience and receive her Child Care I and II Credentials at the same time. The money was meager, but with support services she was able to make ends meet. After completing the Americorps program and obtaining her certificates, she became employed at a local child care center. Through the Wheels for Work Program, Ms. Y also obtained a car. She has now paid off the car and owns her own transportation. Ms. Y has continued to be employed at the same child care center, and has done an outstanding job.

Family Services

Day Care

The Child Care Subsidy Program provides low-income families with information and financial resources to find and afford quality childcare for their children. Resources enable families to make informed choices regarding childcare providers.

- 772 families were able to obtain day care
- 1076 children were served
- 151 licensed child care providers participated
- 75% of cases were to support parents' employment
- Over \$3.5 million dollars spent to subsidize child care

Child Protective Services (CPS)

Child Protective Services is a legally mandated service to families. Orange County's foremost responsibility is to protect children. The CPS Unit provides services 24 hours per day; 8 a.m.—5 p.m. at the Department of Social Services, and after hours, weekends and holidays through an on-call system accessible through 911. The agency investigates reports of abuse, neglect and dependency.

- 1,296 children were assessed for abuse and/or neglect allegations
- 123 children in DSS custody monthly (average)



Adolescent Parenting Program

The Adolescent Parenting Program provides services and support to teenage parents who are working towards remaining in school, delaying a second pregnancy, improving parenting skills, preparing for employment, avoiding abuse and neglect, and improving the health status of mother and child.

- 27 teens participated
- 7 teens successfully graduated from High School

A Brighter Future...

A former student in the Chapel Hill Carrboro City School System whose child was born prematurely, was accepted into North Carolina A&T State University. She began in August.

A former student in the Orange County School System, is working 2 part-time jobs and attending classes at Alamance Community College, in addition to caring for her child.

Family Services

Adoption/Foster Care

The goal of foster parenting is to make a temporary care commitment to the child while working toward reuniting the child with his/her birth family. Foster families help children feel secure and assist the child with the tasks of normal development. Foster families also assist the child's birth family toward reunification by providing information on the child's progress, cooperating with visitation and offering support and encouragement to the child's parent.

When children are not able to return to their parents, adoption gives children in need of a loving family a permanent home. Of our completed adoptions, 14 of the children were adopted by their foster parents. Only 4 of those families originally thought about becoming adoptive parents. The rest all came to the agency wanting to provide temporary foster care for children. When the children became legally free for adoption, they and their foster families were so strongly bonded to one another that no thought was ever given to sending them on to another family.

- 18 adoptions were completed
- 82 licensed foster homes
- 14 newly licensed foster homes during the fiscal year



A New Family...

Mr. and Mrs. C. wanted to adopt an infant under the age of 6 months. They were asked to help with an emergency foster care placement of a sibling group of four children ranging in age from 4 to 14 years old. They accepted all four children. Six months later, they were offered the opportunity to foster a newborn whose mother was giving him up for adoption and they delightfully accepted.

Suddenly this couple in their late 20's were the parents of 5 children. The children are now free for adoption and the C's will be adopting all 5 children.

A Loving Home...

16 year old John has a chronic mental illness and has been in DSS custody since he was 9. For six years he lived in one type of mental health facility or another and was always the "different" kid. A little over a year ago he was placed with a family who want to become his adoptive parents. In the meantime, they are providing him with daily intervention services and helping him to learn to form appropriate friendships with other teenagers. They have promised him that he will never have to move again.

Adult Services



Adult Services

The Adult Services Department administers programs that help to promote independence and enhance the dignity of North Carolina's older and disabled persons and their families through a community-based system of opportunities, services, benefits, and protections. These programs include:

- Adult Protective Services
- Placement Services
- Guardianship
- In-Home Aide Services
- Day Care Services for Adults
- Long-term Care Placements

Accomplishments:

- 15 clients received assistance in maintaining their Social Security benefits to appropriately pay bills, get needed medication, buy groceries and other daily requirements to remain in the community.
- 73 clients were provided in-home services through the Community Alternatives Program (CAP) to avoid inappropriate placement into a nursing home.
- 46 clients who were in need of assistance with feeding, bathing and personal care were provided services in Adult Care Homes.
- 26 clients received services in their homes and were maintained with health support rather than entering a Group Home.
- 35 clients received appropriate group facility arrangements when they could no longer live in their own homes.

Other Services



The Orange County Department of Social Services provides a variety of additional programs and services.

Special Needs Registry

The Special Needs Registry is a voluntary database containing information about individuals in Orange County with special needs who may require assistance in the event of a disaster.

Veteran's Affairs

The Veteran's Services Office assists veterans and dependents in obtaining, retaining, or reinstating compensation, pension, medical, education, training, loan, insurance, and other applicable benefits and services.

Financial Counseling

Financial counseling services provide financial literacy training and household management to recipients of Emergency Assistance.

Fatherhood Initiative

The Fatherhood Initiative Program is designed to provide employment related services to non-custodial fathers of

children receiving some type of financial assistance to help involve them in the lives and welfare of their children.

LINKS

The Orange County Department of Social Services provides services to youth in DSS custody ages 13 through 18. Young adults who were discharged from custody as teens can continue to receive services up to age 21. The focus is to help them prepare for lives as healthy adults.

Medicaid Transportation

Transportation services are available to Medicaid recipients to enable them to get to and from medical appointments.

Holiday Program/Summer Camp Program

These are programs that enable children involved with the agency to enjoy the holidays and Summer Camp.

Other Programs

The Orange County Department of Social Services also provides Work Permits for children under 18, and provides voter registration services.

Become a Volunteer!

Thanks to our Community Partners...

We are able to serve the thousands of clients that come through our doors throughout the year. The support of our donors and volunteers helps to improve the lives of all Orange County residents. Without them, thousands of men, women and children in our community would lead lives less dignified and free.

We have ongoing volunteer/donor opportunities in the following areas:

- Friends of DSS
- Adolescent Parenting Program
- Foster Parenting
- Faith Teams
- Holiday Program
- Summer Camp Program

For more information on any of these opportunities, call Lindsey Shewmaker at (919) 245-2817

"No one ever became poor through giving."



We at the Department of Social Services would like to take this opportunity to extend a special thank you to the following groups and organizations for their tremendous donations of time, talent, and resources:

*Friends of DSS
Faith Teams
Foster and Adoptive Parents
APP Volunteers
Balloons & Tunes*

We appreciate all that you do for our clients, staff, and community...

Thank you so very much!!

Highlights of 2003-2004



- **Transportation** services allowed 970 Orange County residents to get to their medical appointments.
- **18 adoptions** were finalized in 2003-2004, providing safe and loving homes to children in need.
- The **Orange County Skills Development Center** was certified by the state at Level III, the highest level attainable.
- The **Adolescent Parenting Program** enabled 7 teenage mothers to graduate from high school, the highest number yet.
- **7 bilingual** staff members were added to enhance services to families with limited English proficiency.
- The **intake** unit aided over 13,600 families who came in for assistance.
- The **Work First** program provided services that helped 118 clients find employment and move off assistance.
- The **Wheels for Work** program provided cars for 31 participants.
- 99 elderly Orange County residents received **in-home services** instead of entering Nursing or Rest Homes.
- 772 families were able to obtain subsidized **day care** to support employment.
- The **Child Protective Services Unit** received outstanding marks on an intensive biannual state review for the services they provide to children and families.

The staff that I have met have all been helpful and friendly and not looked down at me for my situation. I felt very comfortable. Thank you.
-Client

Place
Stamp
Here

Orange County DSS
300 West Tryon Street
P.O. Box 8181
Hillsborough, NC 27278