



Overview

Making a Difference in the Lives of County Residents

Now more than ever, the Department of Family Services (DFS) is making a critical difference in the lives of many thousands of county residents.

Responding to Challenging Times and Adapting to Change

Economic Recession

Thousands of county residents have been affected by the economic recession and are coming to DFS in record numbers, many for the first time. DFS reception offices throughout the county received 122,000 visits last year.

Most visitors are seeking public assistance, such as food stamps (now called supplemental nutrition assistance (SNAP)) and Medicaid. Applications for both programs have skyrocketed. To keep pace with the rapidly increasing workload, DFS has redesigned intake procedures, updated records management and redeployed front office staff positions.

People who have not had to write a resume in 20 years are now showing up at employment centers. Mid-level, experienced workers are now competing with lower-skilled and younger workers for fewer available jobs.

DFS launched a summer youth employment program in 2009 and acquired federal funding of over \$1 million, with the Northern Virginia Workforce Investment Board, to provide job training for displaced workers.



Working Families and Individuals Making Ends Meet

DFS' successful regional Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program in 2009 helped 3,280 low-income working families and individuals prepare and file their income tax returns to receive over \$4.4 million in federal refunds and tax credits.

Impact on Families

Job loss, homelessness and poverty can be risk factors for child abuse and neglect. Prevention programs, such as DFS' Healthy Families program for first-time parents, are in high demand, as are DFS parenting education programs and supportive services. Child protective services investigations and assessments increased 21 percent from FY 2006 to FY 2009 (from 1884 to 2287).

The county's shelter for victims of domestic and sexual violence has been consistently full for two years. Those needing counseling services now have to go on a wait list.

What People With Disabilities Need Most

People with disabilities in Fairfax County reported in a recent survey that their top needs are transportation, case management, assistive technology, medical assistance and employment.



Decreasing Resources for Vulnerable Adults

Adult Protective Services reports of abuse and neglect of adults with disabilities and older adults continue to increase in the county and in the state, and there are no new state resources available for staffing or services. Proposed reductions in the governor's budget target Medicaid funded services for adults with disabilities. Virginia's eligibility criteria for Medicaid funded services are already among the most stringent in the nation. The proposed reductions, if implemented, will have a drastic impact upon locally funded services, leaving vulnerable people with inadequate services for living safely in community homes.

Volunteers Help County's Older Adults – Our Fastest Growing Population

Older residents are the fastest growing population in the county. Volunteers have provided a highly successful solution to the challenge of providing needed services during difficult times. In 2009, 2,255 volunteers provided 78,199 hours of service – the equivalent of \$1.6 million in service to Fairfax County residents. They provided essential services such as home-delivered meals, transportation to medical appointments, assistance with grocery shopping, minor home repairs, and insurance counseling.

A Positive Trend

In spite of the challenging times, a positive trend is emerging. The number of children in foster care decreased dramatically. From FY 06 to FY 09, the number of children removed by CPS and placed in foster care went down by 48 percent (from 172 to 90), even as the number of CPS assessments and investigations increased. How is this possible? DFS has increased its efforts to locate and engage families and relatives to develop and carry out plans to keep their children safe. When needed, DFS provides intensive community-based services.

Lines of Service Initiative

In May 2009, DFS launched a department-wide initiative to examine its principal lines of service to improve processes and procedures, address gaps and concerns, and develop action plans to enable the department to meet the needs of a changing community during challenging times.

Cluster Care

Using the "cluster care" model of providing in-home services, DFS was able to stay within budget and help an increased number of older adults and adults with disabilities continue to live safely in their homes. Of those receiving these services, 86 percent remained in their own home for at least one year.



Journey To Self-Sufficiency

A mother with two young children was homeless, a victim of domestic violence, and suffered from physical and mental problems. With Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance, SNAP and Medicaid she was able to meet some of her family's basic needs. The Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare Program helped her identify her strengths and find employment. Within months she was working, getting professional help with her mental and physical issues, the children were in child care and school, and the family moved into transitional housing. A year later she was able to buy a car, transition off public assistance, and was recently offered a full time job with benefits. She has traveled a long journey and looks to the future with hope.

Budget Summary

The FY 2009 budget for DFS was \$214.2 million. Approximately half of all expenditures are mandated by federal or state laws. Only 41.8 percent of the DFS budget was funded from Fairfax County's General Fund. The remaining funds came from the federal and state governments (67.1%), School-Age Child Care fees (31.2%), and other sources (1.7%).

