



Fairfax County

A D V I S O R Y S O C I A L S E R V I C E S B O A R D

2008 **ANNUAL REPORT**

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March 2009

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Executive Summary

This report summarizes 2008 trends, events and initiatives for Department of Family Services programs that are overseen by the Advisory Social Services Board (ASSB).

Introduction

In accordance with its responsibility to provide citizen oversight of county social services programs administered by the Department of Family Services (DFS), the Fairfax County Advisory Social Services Board (ASSB) presents this report summarizing significant program trends, events and initiatives in 2008 for three DFS divisions: Adult and Aging; Children, Youth and Families; and Self-Sufficiency.

Preface

The county has long recognized that wise investments in human services to help individuals and families at vulnerable times can save public funds in the long term by minimizing the need for more costly services later on.

Our public policies provide a framework for enhancing the life and well-being of all of our residents. Critical experiences in the county remind local and state policymakers that when a community is unable to provide for its members at their weakest moments in life, the community's overall strength is tested.

Today the Department of Family Services is at the epicenter of the county's effort to help residents hit by the recent and dramatic decline of the economy.

Meeting Basic Needs

Demand for public assistance, which had been increasing steadily since 2001, shot up dramatically in the last quarter of calendar year of 2008.

In the month of December 2008, there were 9,484 visits from county residents to DFS front offices – 36 percent more than in December 2007

Even more striking was the increase in applications for food stamps, which in December 2008 were 73 percent higher than in December 2007.

Food Stamp Applications Received

Month	CY07	CY08	# Increase	% Increase
January	914	1,013	99	11%
February	716	943	227	32%
March	852	949	97	11%
April	733	1,014	281	38%
May	886	912	26	3%
June	872	944	72	8%
July	944	1,084	140	15%
August	1,007	1,068	61	6%
September	845	1,148	303	36%
October	958	1,294	336	35%
November	854	1,028	174	20%
December	754	1,303	549	73%
CY Total	10,335	12,700	2,365	23%
Month	CY08	CY09	# Increase	% Increase
January	1,013	1,361	348	34%

The county's four SkillSource employment centers had 37,221 visits in 2008 – an increase of about 27 percent over 2007. More job seekers were from a broader range of industries and had higher levels of education and experience, making it even more difficult for those with less experience and education to compete for the smaller pool of available jobs.

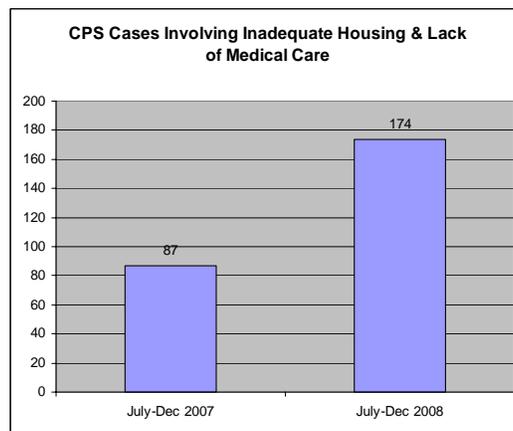
The DFS Self-Sufficiency Division has reorganized staff and processes to try to keep pace with the dramatic rise in caseloads. Although stretched thin, the division staff recognizes its critical role at a time of great need for increasing numbers of county residents.

Protecting the Vulnerable from Neglect and Abuse

Research indicates that child welfare cases often increase following increases in requests for public assistance. Economic decline increases stressors on families that can lead to substance abuse, mental health issues, child abuse and neglect, and family violence.

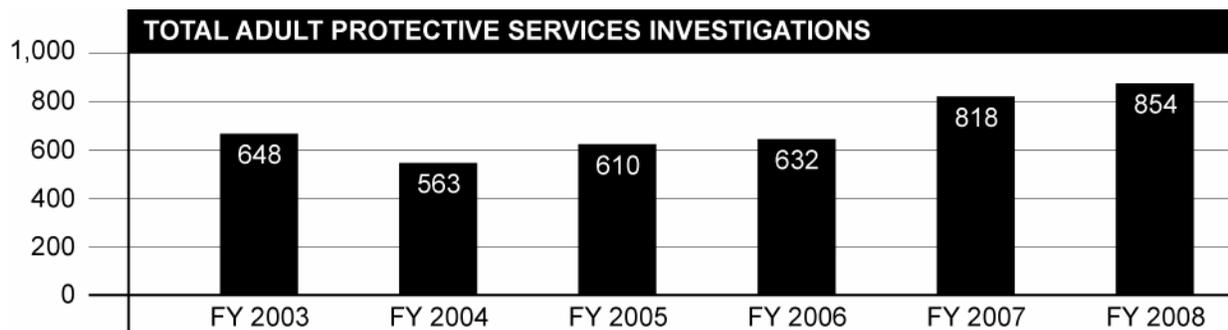
Child Protective Services has seen an 8 percent increase in the numbers of cases accepted for investigation or assessment in the first half of Fiscal Year 2009 (July - December 2008) compared with the first half of the previous fiscal year (July - December 2007).

Cases of physical neglect involving issues such as inadequate housing and lack of needed medical care have increased 100 percent during this same period – from 87 to 174 cases.



In recent years the number of children entering foster care in Fairfax County has steadily decreased, even as the population of the county increases. To maintain this positive trend in the current economic environment will require a firm commitment to continue supporting prevention programs with proven rates of success, such as Healthy Families Fairfax.

Adult Protective Services, which investigates abuse and neglect of older adults and adults with disabilities, has seen an increase in investigations of nearly 4.5 percent from 818 investigations in Fiscal Year 2007 to 854 in Fiscal Year 2008.



In FY 2008, there were 424 adults needing protective services, and 17 were appointed guardians. Of the cases of adults needing protective services:

- 124 involved caretaker neglect;
- 191 involved self-neglect;
- 69 involved abuse;
- 35 involved financial exploitation;
- 5 involved other types of exploitation.

Preserving Well-Being in Difficult Times

Fairfax County will experience an increase in the number and percentage of persons age 65 and older through 2020 due to longer life spans and number of persons currently between 60 and 65 years who are expected to remain county residents. By 2020, it is projected that there will be 138,600 persons age 65 and older living in Fairfax County, and they will be 11.6 percent of the total population.

Issues that impact the well-being of our county's older residents, such as affordable housing, transportation, physical and mental health challenges, become even more acute in a period of economic downturn.

Serving Homeless Families and Individuals and Preventing Homelessness

Although the results of the 2009 "point in time" survey were not available in time to be included in this report, estimates from past years have indicated that approximately 2,000 people in the Fairfax-Falls Church community are homeless at any given time. Fairfax County Public Schools is currently reporting 1,400 homeless children attending county public schools. Some live in shelters, motels, transitional housing or "doubled up" with other families awaiting shelter placement. The Department of Family Services oversees services to homeless individuals and families, including the county's six emergency homeless shelters and the countywide hypothermia prevention program, which served a record number of people this winter.

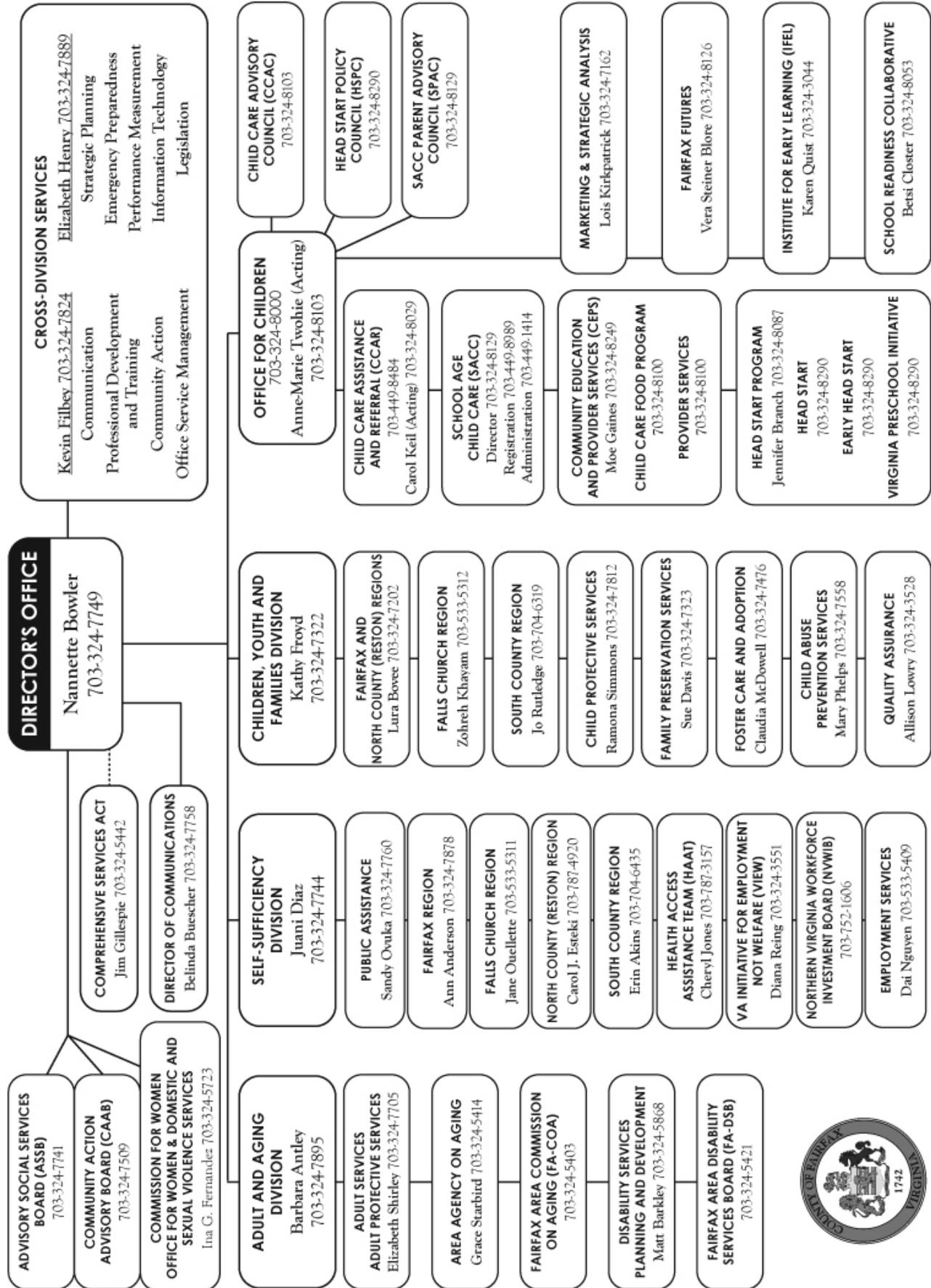
Summary

The Department of Family Services is working hard in increasingly difficult circumstances, having scoured its budget for savings and efficiencies as the workload and need continue to skyrocket. As the current recession deepens, significant sources of funds for child welfare services, adult and aging services, public assistance and employment services are also being scaled back. At precisely the time when these services are in greatest demand, the capacity to fund them is diminishing.

As the Board of Supervisors weighs difficult budget decisions in light of decreased county revenues, it is imperative to maintain support for services that provide a lifeline to residents in times of crisis.

Organization of the Fairfax County Department of Family Services

February 2009



Department of Family Services

Adult and Aging Division

The Adult and Aging Division provides services that target older adults and adults with disabilities. The services maximize independence and enhance existing family and community social support networks. The division offers a range of services to meet a variety of needs, including services provided in the home, education and information, and prevention services. The division also provides leadership and partners with the community in developing new support networks. The Adult and Aging Division includes the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, Adult Services, Adult Protective Services, and Disability Services Planning and Development. (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs)

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Cluster Care/Neighborhood Based Services

“Cluster care” builds on ideas from other local jurisdictions around the country that align services around “naturally occurring retirement communities,” where significant number of residents have aged in their homes. The focus of cluster care services is helping people to remain in their own homes. The cluster care model offers:

- **Case management:** During fiscal year 2008, 2,404 older adults and adults with disabilities received case management services.
- **Task-based home care:** With task-based home care, clients who meet functional and income guidelines may receive help with services such as housekeeping and personal care (for example, bathing). During fiscal year 2008, 1,140 older adults and adults with disabilities received assistance in the home.
- **Volunteer services:** Volunteers are recruited in the cluster areas to provide friendly visiting, shopping, telephone reassurance and other assistance.
- **Home delivered meals:** Instead of having meals prepared by home care aides, some clients are offered Meals on Wheels, which are delivered by volunteers. More information about the nutrition programs and volunteer services is included below.

Nutrition Program/Home Delivered Meals

Home delivered meals are provided for individuals age 60 and over who are unable to shop for or prepare their own meals. Over 800 older adults and 45 adults with disabilities, who are under the age of 60, are served annually. The objective of the program, mandated by the Older Americans Act, is to improve nutrition and maintain the physical, mental and/or cognitive functioning of homebound seniors as long as possible.

The Fairfax Area Agency on Aging has memorandums of agreement with 25 community volunteer organizations that coordinate and drive 45 meal delivery routes. Meals are purchased by the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging through contracts with the following vendors: Inova Health System, the Hermitage in Northern Virginia, Fairfax County Public Schools, Huong Binh Deli, the Korean Central Senior Center, Lil Italian/Middle Eastern Catering and Momsmeals. Recruitment of volunteers for the delivery of meals and volunteers for the management of the routes is an ongoing effort by staff of the Volunteer Solutions unit.

The Nutritional Supplement Program targets low income and minority individuals who are unable to consume sufficient calories from solid food due to chronic disabling conditions, dementia, or terminal illnesses. Over 500 clients were provided nutritional supplements in FY 2008.

In program year 2008, over 1,300 clients were served by the home delivered meals and nutritional supplement program. The total number of meals served to clients for both nutrition programs was 218,334 at an overall cost of \$1,699,000.

Meal routes have been created to serve older adults who have nutritional needs but who are unfamiliar with American foods. These include:

- Vietnamese (three routes)
- Korean (four routes)
- Middle Eastern (one route)

To increase meal options, a new service of bi-weekly UPS delivered vacuum packed meals has been operational since December 2007. This service option relieves the waiting list, and provides meals for persons who do not need the well-being check from the volunteers. Some people receiving Meals on Wheels cannot prepare meals, but are able to heat up already prepared meals.

For older adults who are able to leave their homes and go to centers, the **congregate meals program** provided:

- Over 298,364 meals.
- At 29 public and private congregate meals sites.
- To more than 3,289 older adults.

Participants are increasing in number and in ethnic diversity. An ongoing challenge is to identify and provide nutritious meals that are both palatable and pleasing in order to encourage good eating and better health. This year, client satisfaction surveys about meals were translated and administered to non-English speaking participants.

- Of the surveys completed, 441, or 62 percent, were completed in Spanish, Farsi, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese.
- The overall satisfaction rate was 89 percent, an increase from last year's rate of 87 percent.

Meal options are being assessed, and different menu selections are being introduced. New items such as hummus, jicama, and couscous are being offered, and at the request of participants fish is being served once per week.

Fairfax Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Volunteer Services

The Volunteer Solutions unit completed a year-long reorganization process, and the program now has a staff member located in each Department of Family Services' office. The purpose of the program redesign was to enhance the ability to provide targeted volunteer services to each region of the county and to increase the capacity to recruit and place volunteers from local businesses and community organizations.

In 2008, a total of 2,032 volunteers performed 75,388 hours of volunteer service, providing such essential services as:

- Home delivered meals
- Telephone reassurance
- Friendly visiting
- Insurance counseling
- Pet visits to nursing homes (Fairfax Pets on Wheels Program)
- Transportation to medical appointments
- Assist with grocery shopping
- Minor home repairs
- Home maintenance
- Yard work

If the services provided by volunteers were purchased it would cost the county over \$1.5 million (using a rate of \$20.08 per hour).

A new volunteer effort began this year to help older adults and adults with disabilities transition to digital television. Working in partnership with the county's Department of Cable Communications and Consumer Protection and the Department of Community and Recreation's 13 senior centers, a campaign to provide information, as well as one-on-one assistance for those unable to independently complete the transition was initiated. Volunteer Solutions recruited 25 volunteers to install converter boxes, and DCCCP staff provided training to the volunteers. County costs were offset by a \$7,000 grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aaa)

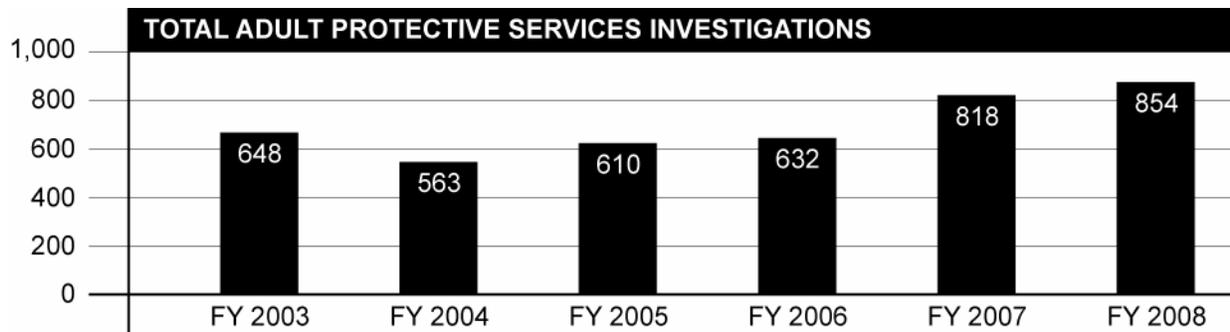
Public-Private Partnership, ElderLink

Building on the community model of providing services, ElderLink, a public-private partnership with Inova Health System, along with the Adult and Aging Division, faith communities, and other county agencies, developed the Independent Living Project community outreach program. The Independent Living Project initially focused on older adults living in Franconia/Rose Hill and Annandale and now is targeting the Springfield/Burke area. The program offers in-home assessments and exercise classes to increase strength and balance. Educational workshops offer information on such topics as fall prevention, nutrition and food safety, medication management, vision and hearing loss, maintaining healthy brains, and services for older adults. The county's contracted occupational therapist assists with the in-home assessments.

With the support of the Adult and Aging Division, ElderLink has also instituted a money management program to assist older adults and adults with disabilities with basic bill paying functions, budget development and monitoring, and assistance with health insurance claims or public assistance applications. The assistance given is tailored to meet the individual needs and encourages as much financial independence as possible.

Adult Protective Services

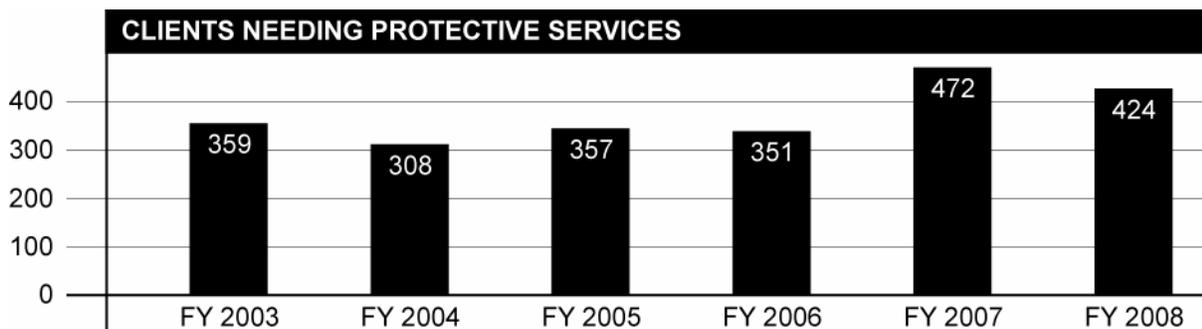
In fiscal year 2007, the number of Adult Protective Services investigations grew by nearly 4.5 percent from 818 investigations in fiscal year 2007 to 854 in fiscal year 2008.



Of the cases investigated:

- 76 percent involved persons over age 60.
- 24 percent involved persons under age 60.
- 17 percent involved persons in institutional facilities.

An investigation results in one of the following dispositions: Unfounded, Needs Protective Services-Accepts, Needs Protective Services-Refuses (capacitated adults have the right to refuse services). If someone is not capacitated, Adult Protective Services may work with the individual and/or the family to establish protective measures such as hiring home care services, moving to an assisted living or nursing facility, or occasionally going to court to have a guardian appointed. In FY 2008, there were 424 adults needing protective services, and 17 were appointed guardians. For situations involving exploitation when the individual is capacitated, Adult Protective Services may help the adult acquire legal assistance to establish a power of attorney and may help the adult to set up a process to ensure review of bill paying and financial accounts. Suspected criminal activity is reported to the police.



Of the cases of adults needing protective services:

- 124 involved caretaker neglect.
- 191 involved self neglect.
- 69 involved abuse.
- 35 involved financial exploitation.
- 5 involved other types of exploitation.

Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

During program year 2008, the Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program advocated for the rights and well-being of residents living in the 33 nursing facilities and 82

assisted living facilities in five jurisdictions (Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax County, Loudoun County, and Prince William County). As of July 1, 2008, Fairfax County had 16 nursing facilities (2,201 licensed beds) and 53 assisted living facilities (3,879 licensed beds), for a total of 6,080 licensed beds, or 55 percent of Northern Virginia's 10,973 licensed beds.

The Ombudsman Program handled 288 complaints through formal investigations and negotiations; 128 pertained to Fairfax County. Additionally, the volunteer ombudsmen handled 675 complaints that did not require formal investigations or mediation; 374 of those involved Fairfax County facilities. The program received 8,913 inquiries regarding resident care and facility information; 4,235 came from Fairfax County residents. Information and counseling was provided to 8,913 consumers during the year, verbally or by e-mail. Other citizens sought information from the program via the Internet: there were 23,778 visits to the ombudsman program Web site and 75,067 hits to view various topics on the Web site during the year. Consultation with facility staff totaled 195, with 116 of those for Fairfax facilities.

During 2008, the program continued to benefit from a capable team of 76 volunteer advocates, 42 for Fairfax facilities, who significantly increased the program's impact and presence around the region. The program is benefiting from good media exposure – new applicants are often familiar with the program from reading past publicity. Once trained, volunteer ombudsmen are assigned to one particular facility and are asked to visit at least four hours per week. The volunteer ombudsmen advocate for residents living in long-term care facilities and often quickly handle issues and concerns within the facility. They establish relationships with provider staff and residents to negotiate for improved quality of life and care for the residents and also provide education and support to empower residents or their families to self advocate. (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/lcombudsman)

Volunteer ombudsmen are recruited primarily through area newspapers, volunteer bureaus, outreach presentations and word-of-mouth.

Outreach, Education, and Support

Caregiver Support

Through the Older Americans Act, the federal government provides funding to support family caregivers. The Fairfax Area Agency on Aging uses these federal funds to provide a range of services that support caregivers, including public information, support groups, education/training, respite care, and assisted transportation. Cross-agency and public-private partnerships maximize use of the funds and provide more comprehensive services.

Among the division's caregiver initiatives are the following:

- *Caregivers Corner Online*, a monthly electronic newsletter, which reaches over 1, 400 subscribers.
- *Caregivers Corner*, a regular feature in the *Golden Gazette* reaches over 25,000 readers.
- The Fairfax Caregiver Seminar Consortium provides seminars for family caregivers. Members of the consortium are the Alzheimer's Association – National Capital Area; Alzheimer's Family Day Center; Fairfax County's Departments of Community and

Recreation Services, Health, and Family Services; Thomas West Financial Services; and the Fairfax County Public Library. Eleven seminars were held in spring 2008.

- A new initiative, Partners for Eldercare, provides assistance to local companies in supporting their employees who are family caregivers. The program offers on-site educational seminars on caregiving-related topics, sensitivity training for management staff, and access to information on local resources.
- In recognition of National Work and Family Month-October 2008, *Partners for Eldercare* provided a series of four educational seminars for Fairfax County employees who are family caregivers.
- In partnership with the Adult and Community Education Division of Fairfax County Public Schools, a three-class course in personal care training was provided to family caregivers.
- In November 2008, Suzanne Mintz, a nationally recognized caregiver expert and president of the National Family Caregivers Association, served as keynote speaker at a family caregiver seminar and resource fair with approximately 85 attendees.
- In December 2008, four additional caregiver-related seminars were held for Fairfax County employees who are family caregivers.

Adult and Aging Division's Disability and Caregiver Resources

The Adult and Aging Division's intake staff responded to more than 8,000 aging, disability and caregiver inquiries, by phone, walk-in, and Internet in fiscal year 2008. The monthly newspaper, the *Golden Gazette*, reaches 25,000 people and now has more than 720 readers subscribing to the large print version. The newspaper is also available online and on tape. In fiscal year 2008 over 8,400 people received long term care information at more than 140 speaking engagements by Adult and Aging staff. Of those presentations, 23 were focused specifically on Medicare Part D. In addition, more than 1,034 county residents were counseled individually about insurance options. The Disability Services Planning and Development unit reaches nearly 1,000 Fairfax Area residents each week with the "Disability Services E-News," a weekly e-newsletter that educates the public about current events impacting people with disabilities on the local, state and federal levels.

The Fairfax County Department of Family Services' Disability Services Planning and Development Unit developed a strategic partnership with SeniorNavigator and the Long Term Care Coordinating Council to form DisAbilityNavigator, a Web site that provides comprehensive information and referral services to people with disabilities in Northern Virginia. The Web site was designed using input from agencies, organizations and people with disabilities to make it as useful and user friendly as possible. DisAbility Navigator was launched in January 2009.

Multicultural Outreach

Multicultural efforts in 2008 were targeted at the Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Japanese communities in Fairfax County. Volunteers were recruited and trained to disperse service information to members in their community. Over 400 calls were received through the Korean and Vietnamese Senior Information Lines that were operated by bilingual volunteers. Two all-day orientation trainings were provided to approximately 50 bilingual volunteers and staff from community-based partners. The Multicultural Outreach and Program Coordinator attended several outreach events throughout the year, such as the Korean Resource Fair in May (with an

attendance of nearly 400 seniors) and the Chinese Resource Fair in October (which had over 300 attending seniors). Volunteers staffed other outreach events such as the Vietnamese Health Fair organized by Vietnamese physicians and volunteers and distributed information to approximately 500 families.

Disability Services Planning and Development Unit

The Department of Family Services' Disability Services Planning and Development Unit oversees contracts with Brain Injury Services, Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Legal Services of Northern Virginia. In 2008, Brain Injury Services provided nearly 5,000 units of service for people with brain injuries in the Fairfax Area. Services included case management, consultation, day programs, information and referral; and are all designed to increase independence and assist people with brain injuries in a community based setting. Through the contractors, outreach and assistance was expanded for people who are deaf or hard of hearing and for persons with disabilities who were in need of legal assistance for public assistance appeals and legal counsel for civil rights cases.

Under the leadership of the Fairfax Area Disability Services Board, Disability Services Planning and Development staff took a lead role in establishing and fostering an affinity group for Fairfax County employees with disabilities. Known as the Disability Awareness and Action Network, the group is committed to improving and achieving an accessible work environment for current and future employees with disabilities, promoting awareness of county resources for employees with disabilities, and providing a networking platform for open communication and opportunities.

In addition, the Fairfax Area Disability Services Board hosted the 2008 Martha Glennan Employer of the Year award in October 2008. The well publicized and attended event promoted disability awareness and acknowledged Safeway's employment achievements.

Initiatives Related to the 50+ Action Plan

Fairfax County will experience an increase in the number and percentage of persons age 65 and older through 2020 due to longer life spans and the number of persons currently between 60 and 65 years old who are expected to remain county residents.

By 2010, persons age 65 and older will be 9.2 percent of the county's population (104,400 persons), and by 2020 it is projected that there will be 138,600 persons (11.6 percent of the population) age 65 and older living in Fairfax County

In 2007, the Board of Supervisors released *Anticipating the Future: Fairfax 50+ Action Plan 2007*. The Board's report focused on community planning and revitalization, universal design for all ages, affordability of housing, transportation planning, increased volunteerism and employment options for older adults, building on the strengths of our diversity, supporting caregivers, using technology to increase independence, addressing health and mental health challenges, taking steps for safety and security, and addressing the impact on service capacity of a growing population of older adults. The Commission on Aging is responsible for developing the annual scorecard for the 50+ Plan. The first report on the 50+ accomplishments was this past summer and is available online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aaa/pdf/coa50plus_scorecard.pdf.

Highlights from the Fairfax 50+ Scorecard include:

- The Building for All Committee consisting of several county agencies, community leaders and experts on universal design, has been formed with the purpose of educating citizens in the use of universal design principles in their homes.
- The Area Agency on Aging now receives zoning applications from the Department of Planning and Zoning for review. The goal is to review the applications for livability for older adults.
- The Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority is maximizing its capital resources to the extent possible. The Redevelopment and Housing Authority adopted a policy on universal design.
- Volunteer Solutions established a partnership with the Fairfax County Public Library and the Campagna Center's Retired and Senior Volunteer Program to host volunteer fairs showcasing flexible, meaningful volunteer opportunities for boomers, retirees, and older adults of all ages.
- Emergency preparedness addresses the needs of older adults and their caregivers during emergencies. A medical registry was implemented by the county, and over 6,000 brochures explaining the registry have been distributed.

The 50+ Plan envisions neighborhood based services that help people live in their own homes as independently as possible and remain connected with their community. County services that are described in the body of the Adult and Aging section support and sometimes supplement community based services. The paragraphs below describe current work to implement the 50+ plan and to develop neighborhood services.

- Several neighborhood associations in the county are exploring the prospect of forming cooperatives for the purpose of purchasing and sharing personal and home maintenance services essential for living safely in their homes. This cooperative village model was initiated in Beacon Hill in Boston and has gained national attention. A highly successful event in April 2008, "Reinventing Your Neighborhood," was attended by more than 300 people who learned more about Beacon Hill and other village approaches so that local groups and neighborhood associations can consider the possibilities for creating a village in their own neighborhoods.
- Adult and Aging staff worked with the Long Term Care Coordinating Council and Faith Communities in Action on an interfaith summit in June 2008, to increase awareness of resources for serving older adults. Persons representing faith communities reported that the information they received will be extremely helpful in serving their older members. One result of the event was that Faith Communities in Action is creating a subcommittee to focus on the needs of older adults and encourages the enhancement of services for older adults in their communities.
- The Building for All Committee (BFAC) was created by the County Executive to promote the 50+ recommendations concerning universal design. In November 2008, the Building for All Committee and partner organizations held a successful event, Reinventing Your Home, attracting about 300 people. The event was promoted as an

opportunity to learn to make changes to homes in order to remain as independent for as long as possible.

- A proposal for a one-stop-shop for transportation was developed with participation of Adult and Aging Division staff. The one-stop transportation center would allow consumers to contact one place to learn transportation options, eligibility information, fare information, routing and scheduling information, and to receive trip-making assistance.

Providing access to online information and streamlining access to services are expectations for a public who look for information and assistance during non-business hours. Access is improving through the continuing partnership with SeniorNavigator, the development of DisAbilityNavigator, and new efforts to implement online applications for services. A new feature on the Web site allows prospective volunteers to apply online at their convenience.

Department of Family Services**Children, Youth and Families Division**

Fairfax County is home to over 250,000 children. Those under age 20 account for over 25 percent of the county's population. That percentage is projected to remain steady through the year 2025. Children in Fairfax County are more likely to live in poverty than adults. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, since 1980, poverty rates for children have tended to be higher than those for all persons. Fairfax County's children are also more racially and ethnically diverse than the population as a whole. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2003 American Community Survey, 38.2 percent of Fairfax County's total population were racial or ethnic minorities while 45.1 percent of those under age 20 were racial or ethnic minorities.

The Children, Youth, and Families (CYF) Division provides the following services to children and their families:

- Child Protective Services.
- Foster Care and Adoption Services.
- Family Preservation Services, including services to homeless individuals and families.
- Child Abuse Prevention Services.

The goals of these services are to protect children from harm and prevent abuse and neglect; support and enhance parents' and families' capacity to safely care for and nurture their children; and ensure the normal development and long-term emotional and physical health of children by supporting families.

The CYF Division strives to serve children and families in the most effective ways possible by incorporating best practices into daily service delivery, evaluating results, and implementing identified process improvements. To assure accessibility, flexibility and responsiveness to the community, services are provided to families in each of the county's four regional human services offices (Fairfax, Falls Church, North County and South County), as well as in multiple smaller community-based sites.

ISSUES/TRENDS

Several overarching issues and trends in our community influence services provided by and initiatives undertaken by the Children, Youth and Families Division.

Engaging Families

Families are the experts in their own situations and lives. Their engagement and involvement is crucial to impact lasting change in the family system. In 2008, the CYF Division chartered a task force to assess how families are approached when they first interact with child welfare and recommend ways to better engage them at the beginning. Over the past several years, the CYF Division has undertaken various efforts to enhance the way families are involved as active participants and partners in service planning. The CYF division began with a strength-based effort which stressed the importance of assessing families from the strengths perspective rather than deficits. From there, the effort evolved into involving families in service planning and

decision making through models such as Family Group Conferencing. Another model that enhances the way the division works with families is Bridging the Gap, a regional public-private partnership to improve communication between birth parents and foster parents. The CYF Division was also awarded two grants relating to engaging families. The first was through Casey Family Programs which selected Fairfax County as one of 15 teams across the country to participate in a Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Timely Permanency through Reunification. The second grant focused specifically on engaging fathers as a system and includes materials and resources for fathers. The CYF Division is striving to ensure that it is structured in the best way to encourage family engagement and to find ways to engage families as partners in systemic reform.

Child Welfare Reform

Several efforts are underway at the national, state and local levels to enhance child welfare services. Virginia has embarked on a major reform effort to improve the lives of many of its most vulnerable children and families and to make the Commonwealth a leader in the field of children's services. During 2008, the Council on Reform, or CORE Team, developed a vision for children's services, evaluated services to children and families, and is helping to inform state policy and practice to implement appropriate reforms. Fairfax County participated as one of 13 CORE localities and will continue to participate as the effort is implemented statewide as the Children's Services Transformation. In addition to CORE, there is a local effort called Systems of Care designed to achieve similar goals including reducing the number of children in congregate care, increasing the number of children served in family-based placements, and serving more children locally in Fairfax.

The Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has begun the second round of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) focusing on safety, permanency and well-being. Virginia's review will be in July 2009. As the largest metropolitan area in the state, Fairfax will be one of the localities reviewed, as it was in 2003. To support the continued improvement of services to children and families and to help prepare for the review, the CYF Division implemented internal quality assurance case reviews. These internal reviews use the same instrument the federal government uses and focus on system performance by evaluating our progress toward achieving better outcomes for children.

Managing an Increasing Workload

In addition to the reform efforts, several other factors have contributed to an increasing workload for social workers. As the number of children in foster care has declined, new mandates have dramatically increased the workload in foster care. In March 2006, the State Board of Social Services policy increased the minimum frequency of face-to-face, in-home visits between social workers and children in foster care from quarterly to monthly, effectively tripling the workload. This change is congruent with the direction being taken by the federal government in the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006. These visits must occur regardless of where the child lives – within Fairfax County, elsewhere in the state, or out of state.

The CYF Division is expecting to see a rise in caseloads as the economy continues to deteriorate, placing additional stressors on families. As the economic downturn unfolds, the number of

people applying for help with basic needs continues to intensify. Research indicates that child welfare cases often rise following increases in requests for public assistance.

All of the reform efforts and policy changes are supported by CYF and local implementation is currently underway. However, this puts significant pressure on current staff resources. That pressure is multiplied by the budget reductions and holding additional positions vacant to address the dire budget situation. Increasing needs, increasing mandates, and declining resources will challenge our ability to continue the trend of improving outcomes for families and their children.

Addressing the Disproportionality of Minority Children in Foster Care

Nationwide there is an issue of a disproportionate number of African-American children in the foster care system, and Fairfax County is no exception. While about 10 percent of the children in Fairfax County are African-American, 37 percent of the children in foster care are African-American. Additionally, in recent years a disproportionate number of Hispanic children have entered foster care. While about 17 percent of Fairfax County's children are Hispanic, 24 percent of the children who entered foster care in FY 2008 were Hispanic.

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Kinship care is a vital component in addressing the issue of the high numbers of African-American children in foster care because it shares the family-centered philosophy of the African-American culture and provides support to family members who provide primary care for children. In 2008, DFS and its partners sponsored two series of support groups for grandparents and other relatives raising children, as well as regular respite Saturdays for caregivers. The department also developed and published a *Kinship Care Resource Guide for Family Caregivers* which can be found online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfsfactsheets/kinship_care_guide.htm.

The Early Intervention Strategy Team (EIST) was established in November 1996 to address the disproportionate representation of African-American children in the Fairfax-Falls Church area needing out-of-home services. The team was charged with identifying reasons for this disproportionate representation and to develop individual, family, school and community early intervention strategies for working with at-risk African-American children and their families. The EIST uses small group dialogue to engage frontline workers in learning from their own and others' experiences. The goal is to have service providers integrate awareness of the African-American culture and early intervention philosophy into their service delivery.

Children, Youth and Families Division

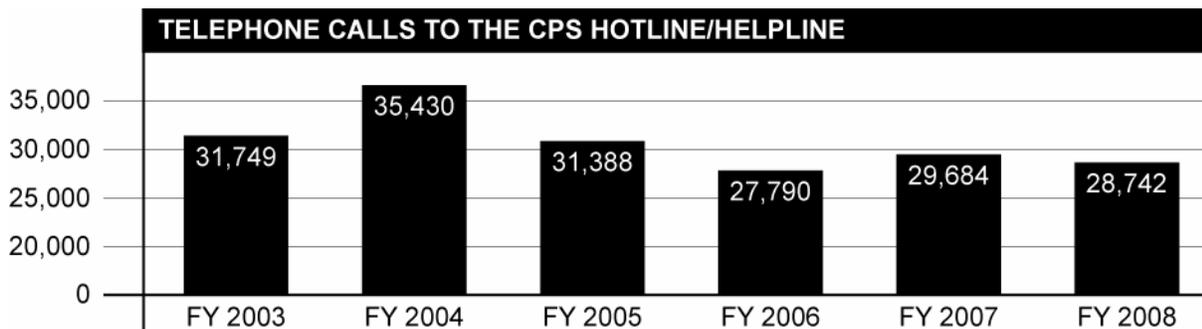
Child Protective Services

The Child Protective Services (CPS) program is designed to protect children from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Child Protective social workers assess child safety and risk. Social workers also assess the strengths and needs of families. If needed, supportive services such as child care, counseling and parenting programs are provided to enable children to remain safe in their homes.

INITIATIVES/PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

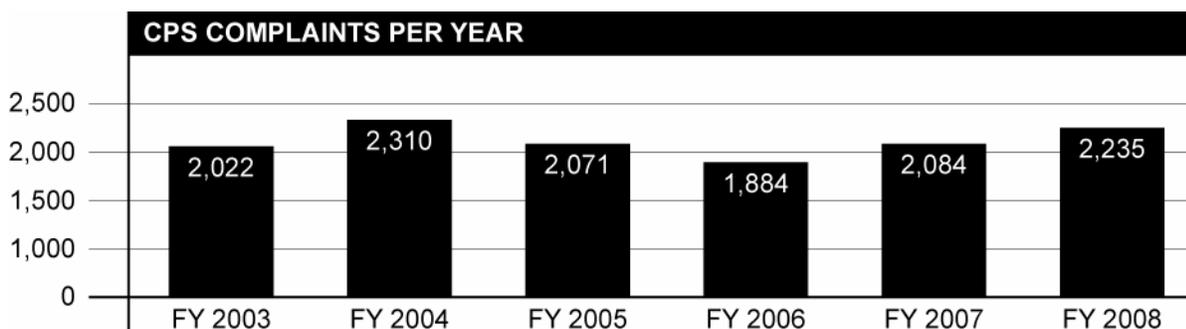
Child Protective Services Hotline/Helpline

Hotline social workers receive reports of alleged abuse or neglect. If the situation meets Virginia's definition of abuse or neglect, the complaint is assigned to a CPS social worker for investigation or assessment. The hotline is also an information and referral helpline as more than half of the calls are from people seeking information.



CPS Assessments and Investigations

Social workers in CPS are responsible for assessing and investigating allegations of child abuse and neglect and providing short-term services when needed.

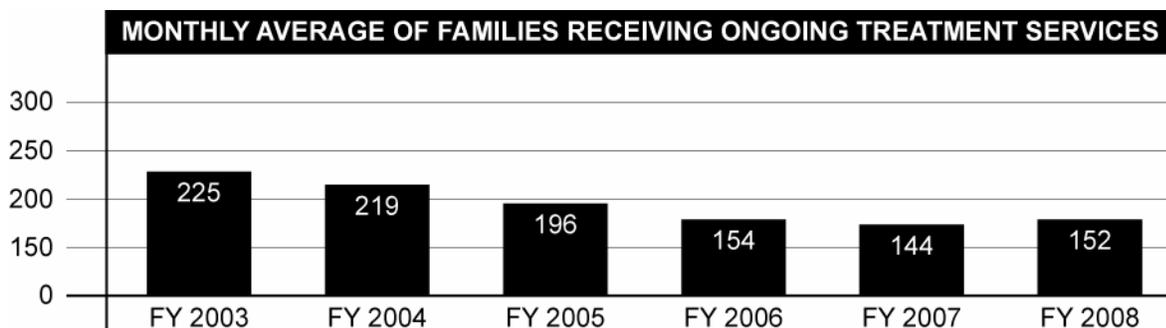


* Of the 2,235 complaints made to the hotline in FY 2008, 23% (502) were investigations; 74% (1,663) were family assessments; and 3% (70) were courtesy interviews for other child protective service agencies.

Ongoing Treatment Services

CPS ongoing treatment social workers are responsible for providing continuing services in serious situations where the child remains in the home and may be at risk for future abuse or neglect, including court-ordered monitoring. Many of these families are involved with multiple

service providers, addressing a variety of needs. CPS ongoing treatment social workers collaborate with the family and service providers to develop specific interventions to address the needs and goals of the family and to reduce risk and increase safety for the child.



The monthly average number of families receiving ongoing treatment services has dropped by one-third over the past five years. One factor contributing to the decline was a realignment of responsibilities within the CYF Division to improve services and supports for families. The reduction in ongoing treatment cases also reflects the availability and effectiveness of prevention services within the department, in schools and through community-based services.

Decrease in Children Entering Foster Care through CPS

The number of children CPS placed into foster care decreased by 46 percent – from 170 children in FY07 to 91 children in FY08. CPS staff attributes the decrease in part to increased efforts to locate fathers, relatives, and other caregivers.

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Childhelp USA Children’s Center of Virginia - The Childhelp USA Children's Center of Virginia, supported by a public-private partnership, provides a child-friendly facility where victims of sexual abuse receive the continuum of services needed to interrupt abuse and treat its effects. In FY 2008, its sixth year of operation, 313 interviews were conducted at the center with child victims and non-offending caretakers. Supportive services were provided to 47 children and adults from the Childhelp Family Advocate in preparation for court hearings.

During 2008, the Childhelp Children's Center was accredited as a Child Advocacy Center by the National Children’s Alliance. This process ensured that all the standards established by the national organization for the investigation and necessary assistance required by children and their non-offending caretakers were met. The success of this team effort is a reflection of the outstanding working relationship among partnering agencies which include Childhelp, Department of Family Services, Fairfax County Police and Victim Services, Inova Fairfax Hospital, Fairfax County Commonwealth Attorney, Fairfax County CSB/Mental Health, Victim Assistance Network and Hispanics Against Child Abuse and Neglect (HACAN).

With funding by a grant from the Victims of Crime Act, Childhelp has begun providing additional individual and group therapeutic services to sexual abuse victims at the center. During FY 2008, CPS social workers and other partners provided individual and group therapeutic services to 108 child sexual abuse victims and 120 adults at the center (total of 2,594 therapeutic

hours). Additional therapeutic services for families impacted by sexual abuse are available through a partnership between CPS, Childhelp, the Multicultural Clinical Center and the Center for Clinical and Forensic Services.

Children, Youth and Families Division

Foster Care and Adoption

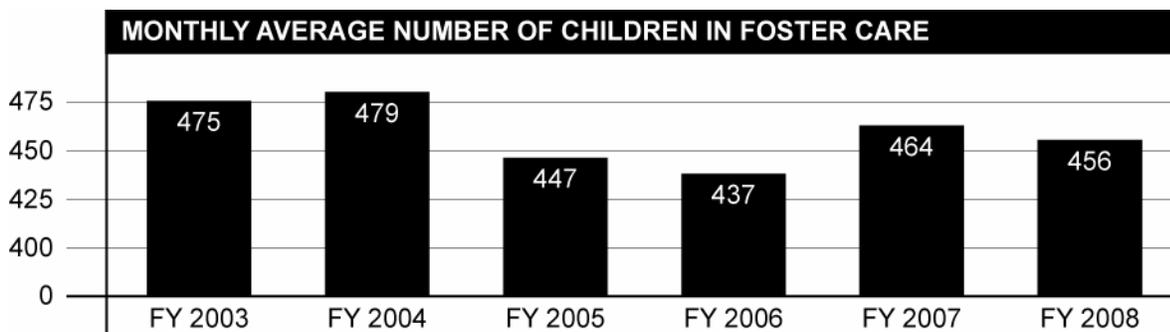
Foster care is the provision of substitute care and rehabilitative services for children temporarily separated from their parents. Foster care can be provided until a child is returned to the family or placed in an adoptive home or other permanent living arrangement. Children may be placed in a variety of settings including foster homes, group homes, hospitals and residential treatment facilities.

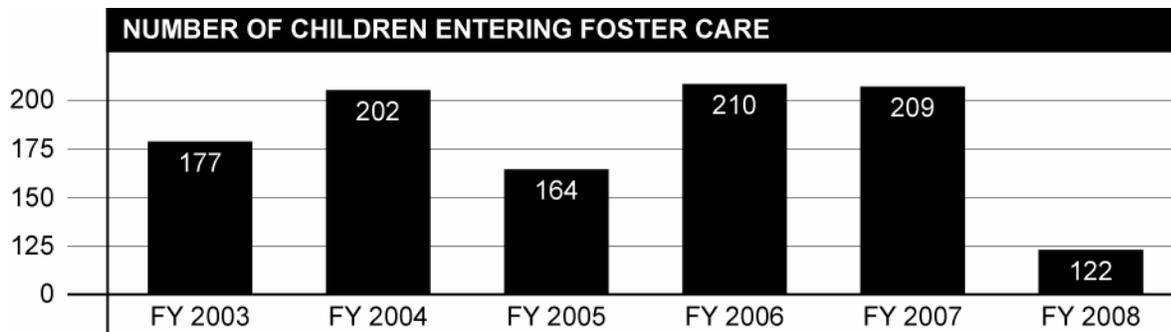
Adoption services include counseling to birth parents and preparing for and placing a child into an adoptive home when efforts to reunite the child with his or her birth family are unsuccessful. Support in the form of subsidy payments, therapy and other social services is provided to adoptees and adoptive parents before and after an adoption is finalized.

INITIATIVES/PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Number of Children in Foster Care

The number of children in foster care has declined significantly since FY 1999 when there were 617 children in care on average each month. The following charts show the monthly average number of children in foster care and the number of children entering foster care over the past six years:





Note the dramatic decrease in the number of children entering foster care in FY08. Staff attributes the decrease in part to increased efforts to locate fathers, relatives, and other caregivers.

At the end of FY 2008, African-Americans comprised 41 percent of the county's foster care population. The African-American population in foster care has decreased by 9 percent since FY 2003.

The fastest growing group of children in foster care is the teen population. Nearly one-third (29 percent) of the children who entered foster care in FY 2008 were age 13-17. The average age of children in foster care at the end of FY 2008 was 12.18.

Of the 163 children who exited foster care during FY 2008:

- 36 percent were returned home.
- 19 percent were placed in the custody of relatives.
- 27 percent were placed for adoption.

The remaining 18 percent exited for reasons such as turning 21 years old or refusing to remain in foster care after turning 18. The median length of stay for all children in foster care in FY 2008 is 1.81 years, reflecting a decline from 2.71 years in FY 2000.

Independent Living Services

At the end of FY 2008, 236 (50 percent) of the children in foster care were age 13 or older. The department continues to enhance placement and independent living resources to serve older children.

Older youth in foster care often have severe emotional or behavioral difficulties requiring expensive, long-term residential treatment. Without proper services, these youth are at risk of homelessness, unemployment, incomplete education and untreated illnesses. All youth in foster care between ages 16 and 21 must receive a range of services to help them transition to independent living. The department operates a mentor program for teens and provides mentor foster homes for those older, more responsible youth who need support rather than parenting. The department received grant funding for the past four years from the state to implement a program, "Choices for Success," customized for teens and young adults who are close to transitioning out of foster care services. The department's foster care and employment/training programs are partnering to deliver intensive services including educational workshops about job

readiness skills, career assessments, paid and unpaid work experiences, assistance with finding financial aid, and other supportive services to help these young people achieve their goals for living independently.

Foster and Adoptive Home Recruitment and Training

- **Ongoing Recruitment and Retention Efforts** – Ongoing recruitment and retention of foster/adoptive families is critical and remains a challenge, both locally and nationally. Despite significant efforts, the Fairfax County pool of foster parents continues to need expansion.

The department approved 21 adoptive families during FY 2008. As of January 1, 2009, the department had 13 children waiting for identification of an adoptive home. The children who wait the longest for adoptive placement tend to be African-American, male and school-aged. They may have educational delays, behavioral or psychiatric problems, a history of sexual abuse and/or medication needs. Recruitment efforts on behalf of children awaiting adoptive placements include presentations at community fairs, town meetings, churches, businesses and social organizations. Partnerships established with faith-based organizations in all regions of the county enable the department to conduct orientations and training in the community and to participate in events hosted by those organizations to raise awareness about adoption.

The racial/ethnic balance of the department's 176 foster homes shows a slight increase in the number of our multi-racial homes compared to 2007. Caucasian families still make up the majority of foster homes (66%). Twenty-five percent of DFS foster homes are African-American, five percent are multi-racial, two percent are Hispanic and two percent are American Indian / Pacific Islander. The department works to increase the cultural diversity of foster homes through culturally sensitive recruitment efforts and partnerships with community organizations, businesses and faith communities. The department has developed a strategic recruitment plan that targets certain neighborhoods and media channels for reaching minority foster/adoptive families, including the Foster Care and Adoption Ambassador Program. Ten foster and adoptive parents are currently trained to speak publicly on behalf of the department to educate residents about the needs of children in foster care. They utilize their personal networks to carry out this community education.

For additional information on foster and adoptive parent recruitment, please refer to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/childrenyouth/fostercare.htm ("Becoming a Foster Parent").

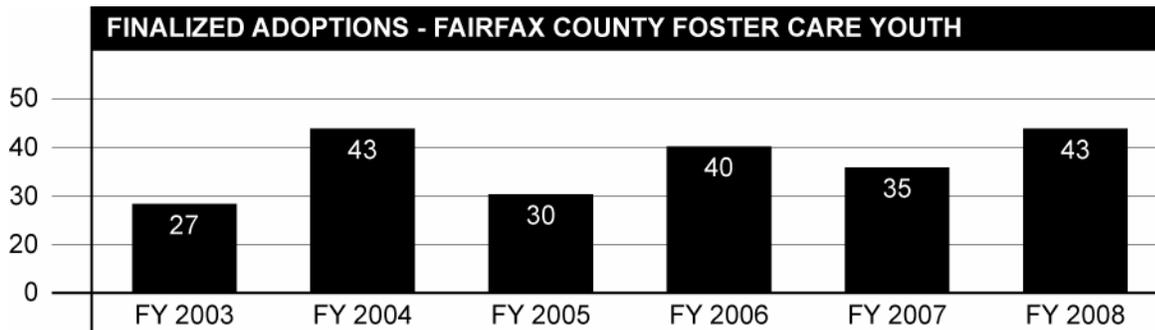
- **Fairfax Initiative to Increase Adoptive Homes for Hard-to-Place Children** – The Fairfax Families4Kids initiative strives to find permanent families and lifelong connections for children in foster care age 9 and over, the majority of whom are male and African-American. The children and youth take part in monthly activities that provide them with an opportunity to interact with other children who need homes and to meet potential adoptive parents and mentors. Through this experience the children gain self-confidence, develop poise, and actively participate in the recruitment process on their own behalf. In FY 2008, 35 community based organizations partnered with the department to serve 42 children and youth through Fairfax Families4Kids. In 2008, eight children were featured in the Metropolitan

Washington Council of Government’s Heart Gallery, sponsored by the Freddie Mac Foundation, a photo display that lets the community know about the children who need permanent families.

During this past year, Fairfax Families4Kids started a Rites of Passage Program for young men in foster care. In collaboration with a local church, the Fairfax Families4Kids program is working with 14 youth in foster care to provide them with increased mentoring and support as they transition into adulthood. Many of the young men served through the Rites of Passage program do not have a strong male role model in their life and through their participation in the program have the opportunity to establish positive relationships with men and have strong male role models to guide them.

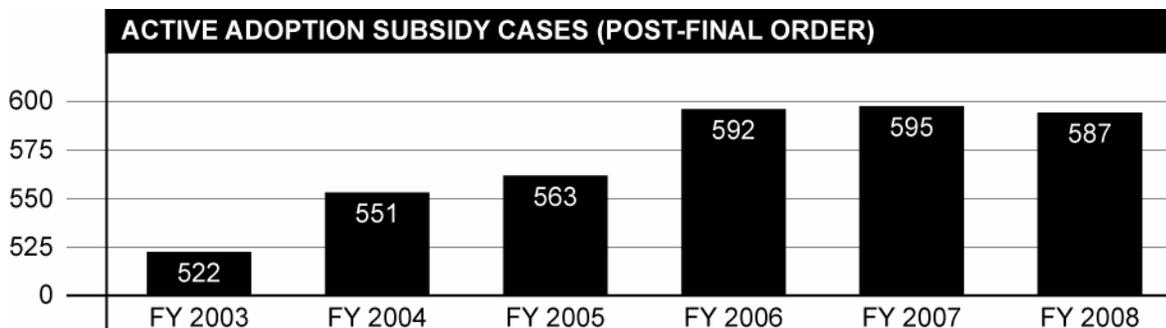
Finalized Adoptions

As of December 31, 2008, 19 percent (77) of the children in foster care had the goal of adoption. The 43 finalized adoptions during FY 2008 represent 27 percent of the children who exited foster care during the year.



Children Receiving Subsidized Adoption Services

Families who adopt children with special mental, emotional and medical needs are entitled to receive ongoing casework support from the department, as well as federal and state financial assistance to enable the permanent placement of these children. Support includes home-based services, counseling and treatment, child care, health and education services, respite care, transportation services, and quality assurance for services received. The number of post-final order subsidy cases continues to grow as the adoptions of children are finalized, because most children are eligible to receive assistance until age 21. This growth in the number of post-final order subsidy cases was offset in FY 2008 by the unusually large number (42) of young people who aged out of eligibility. Note: Numbers are the total at the close of each fiscal year..



Children, Youth and Families Division

Family Preservation Services

Family Preservation Services are designed to improve family functioning and increase self-sufficiency in families who are at moderate to high risk of child abuse or neglect. These families may struggle with a number of complex issues that destabilize the family structure, such as family violence, poor parenting, substance abuse, mental or physical illness, and/or homelessness. This program area also oversees the department's efforts to prevent families from becoming homeless and to provide short-term shelter and transitional housing support to move families into more permanent housing.

INITIATIVES/PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Intensive Services

Social workers provide an array of services to families: comprehensive assessment; case management; counseling; parent training and education; linkage to other services; monitoring of purchased services; life skills training; court-ordered home studies; and court-ordered protective supervision.

Family Preservation Services staff works with families referred to them by Child Protective Services (CPS) and Foster Care; Fairfax County Public Schools; Department of Systems Management for Human Services – Coordinated Services Planning (CSP); Fairfax Area Christian Emergency and Transition Services (FACETS) and other local human services providers.

FPS also includes specialized secondary services for those families served by CYF. These are Domestic Violence services and Family Group Conferencing. The Domestic Violence staff continued to provide specialized direct services (safety planning, court accompaniment, education and referral) to families impacted by domestic violence. They are a significant presence on workgroups, most notably the Fairfax County Domestic Violence Service Operations Transition and Redesign Project and the Domestic Violence Prevention, Policy and Coordinating Council, both of which seek to enhance services to victims and their families through improvement, alignment and integration of services.

The Family Group Conference coordinators organize and facilitate meetings for families at risk of abusing or neglecting their children, focusing their efforts on locating and engaging relatives to provide support to the families. They also provide numerous trainings and consultations to county staff, as well as to other agencies that are developing programs.

FAMILIES SERVED BY THE FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES PROGRAM						
Monthly Average:	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
Number of Families Served	297*	333	344	331	386	412
Number of Children in Families	632	703	737	659	735	728

Note: In 2008, almost 34% of the families served spoke a language other than English in the home; approximately 68% of those families spoke Spanish. In FY08, the FPS program served a total of 703 families, an unduplicated count.

Services to Prevent Homelessness and Serve Homeless Families and Individuals

Although the results of the *2009 Point in Time Survey* had not been released to the public in time to be included in this report, we know from past estimates that at any given time approximately 1,835 people in the Fairfax-Falls Church community – including nearly 1,091 persons in families, including children – are homeless. Some live in shelters, motels, transitional housing or “doubled up” with other families awaiting shelter placement. DFS oversees the county’s six emergency shelters and hypothermia programs and contracts with several nonprofit organizations to operate the shelters.

Shelters – Fairfax County continues to fund the operation of six emergency shelters, all which are managed by nonprofit contractors. Reston Interfaith operates the Embury Rucker Shelter, which serves both individuals and families. New Hope Housing operates Eleanor Kennedy (adults) and Mondloch II (families). Volunteers of America operates the Bailey’s Shelter (adults). Shelter House, Inc., operates two county family shelters: Shelter House and the Katherine K. Hanley Family Shelter.

TOTAL NUMBER OF HOMELESS PERSONS SERVED IN THE EMERGENCY SHELTER SYSTEM						
	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
Individuals (duplicated)	1,788	2,194	1,861	2,260	2,170	1,757
Persons in Families	498	382	440	454	462	631
Total	2,286	2,576	2,301	2,714	2,632	2,388

Note: Does not include the 724 adults served in the winter hypothermia program. The reason for the increase in the number of persons in families served in shelters is the opening of the Katherine K. Hanley Shelter in FY2008.

Services for Families and Children

Emergency Assistance – Emergency assistance provides eligible families and individuals with a grant or loan to help with rent or mortgage, security deposits, utility payments, and storage or moving expenses. DFS and the Department of Systems Management for Human Services (DSMHS) work together to provide emergency assistance.

EMERGENCY HOUSING ASSISTANCE EXPENDITURES (FY 2004 - FY 2008 COMPARISON)					
	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
Total	\$219,822	\$210,374	\$254,728	\$354,593	\$340,052
Number of Households Served	not counted	352	427	561	560

Motels - When space is not available at the family shelters and no other housing alternatives exist, homeless families with children may be placed in motels. The department works with community partners to provide services to families while they await placement in the shelter.

HOMELESS PERSONS IN MOTELS						
	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
Number of Families	134	134	122	94	83	120
Number of Persons	465	415	399	346	324	422

Transitional Housing - The department continued to administer two federally funded transitional housing grant programs – the Community Housing Resource Program (CHRP III) and Reaching Independence through Support and Education (RISE). The department’s nonprofit partners (Northern Virginia Family Service, Reston Interfaith, Shelter House, United Community Ministries and New Hope Housing) operated these programs, which provide support services to high-risk, formerly homeless families in scattered-site, community-based housing. In FY 2008, 53 families received services in these programs.

Partnership for Permanent Housing - Permanent Housing Initiative – During 2008, 25 families worked with their case managers in preparation to purchase their first homes. The families receive supportive services and case management from nonprofit organizations, and participate in ongoing training on money management, credit restoration, banking services, savings programs and homeownership seminars.

Services for Individuals

Medical Respite –This year, DFS in partnership with the Fairfax County Health Department and Reston Interfaith, continued the Medical Respite program for homeless persons living in shelters. The program provides a temporary stay, combined with nursing and supportive services, for homeless persons recovering from more intensive illnesses and/or injuries.

Hypothermia Prevention – There is a continuing need in the county for hypothermia prevention services for persons who do not stay in the county’s emergency shelters. The county partners with homeless service providers (New Hope Housing, Reston Interfaith, Volunteers of America, FACETS) and the faith community to provide hypothermia prevention services in various parts of the county.

Children, Youth and Families Division

Child Abuse Prevention Services

Throughout the Children, Youth and Families Division, services are focused on strengthening families and preventing abuse and neglect. The Child Abuse Prevention program area was developed to enhance the division's prevention efforts. Child Abuse Prevention Services support families, particularly those at risk of child abuse or neglect, through community-based, family-focused prevention and early intervention services.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Five strategies are utilized in Child Abuse Prevention Services: one-to-one education of family members; group-based parenting education conducted at community sites; drop-in, neighborhood-based service delivery and coalition building to improve family and community conditions; community-wide public education and awareness initiatives; and engaging the community by involving volunteers and donors in child welfare programs.

One-to-One Education and Support of Families

The Healthy Families Fairfax and mentoring programs provide one-to-one education and support of families.

Healthy Families Fairfax is a home-based early intervention and prevention program offering first-time parents at risk of maltreating their child an opportunity to learn parenting skills and receive emotional support and case management services. It is supported through a partnership among DFS, the Fairfax County Health Department and three nonprofit organizations – Northern Virginia Family Service, UCM-Community Solutions and Reston Interfaith.

HEALTHY FAMILIES FAIRFAX						
	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
Number of Families Served	649	671	650	684	638	598
Number of Children Served	449	707*	615	630	563	570

* Until FY 2004, the number of children served was tabulated differently than the number of families. In FY 2004, a more accurate method of calculating children served was established capturing the number of children served throughout the year.

Mentoring - Children and parents who are clients of DFS, and would benefit from one-to-one mentoring, are referred to receive four to eight hours per month of mentoring by trained volunteers. Through the BeFriend-A-Child and BeFriend-A-Parent mentoring programs, volunteers provide role modeling, companionship, support, guidance and advocacy. Mentors help children develop the protective capabilities that come from having positive self-esteem, hobbies and interests, good decision-making skills, and a sense of responsibility. BeFriend-A-Parent goals include increasing parent self-esteem, decreasing stress and isolation, and helping parents rely less on their children to meet

their emotional needs. Eighty-one children were served in the BeFriend-A-Child program, and 15 parents were served in the BeFriend-A-Parent program in FY 2008.

Group-Based Education and Support

The CYF Division offers two group-based education/support programs: the Parenting Education Program and Good Touch, Bad Touch®.

The Parenting Education Program is a structured educational experience for parents and children including adolescent children. In FY 2008, the Parenting Education Program conducted a total of 22 groups, including seven groups using the Spanish curriculum, three groups using the curriculum designed to be culturally appropriate for parents of African-American children, two adolescent groups, and one teen parent group.

PARENTING EDUCATION PROGRAMS						
	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
Number of Families Served	152	197	231	195	174	254
Number of Parents Served	199	265	321	267	240	330
Number of Children Served*	226	335	392	310	252	381
Number of Groups Held**	15	19	23	18	17	22

* Number of children served includes young children and adolescents.

** Four groups were held in Spanish in FY 2002, three in FY 2003, five in FY 2004, six in FY 2005, four in FY 2006, three in FY 2007 and three in FY 2008. All others were in English.

Good Touch, Bad Touch® is a comprehensive child abuse prevention curriculum to teach students in preschool through 6th grade the skills that play a major role in preventing or interrupting child abuse/sexual abuse in their own lives. Based on pre- and post-tests, participating children showed a marked increase in their understanding about how to protect themselves from harm. In FY 2008, 389 children participated in 42 Good Touch, Bad Touch® groups.

Information about parenting education programs and the Good Touch, Bad Touch® Program, as well as other parenting resources, is available to the public on the DFS parenting resource Web page at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/ParentingResource/default.htm.

Neighborhood-Based Organizing and Coalition Building to Improve Family and Community Conditions

Family Resource Centers offer culturally sensitive, prevention-focused programs. The primary goal is to strengthen families in their own neighborhoods by providing parents with opportunities to learn and improve their skills in raising and nurturing their children. The department operates two centers: the Culmore Family Resource Center and the Springfield/Franconia Family Resource Center. Family Services provides financial support for several other centers. A total of 30,511 visitors (duplicated count) dropped in and/or participated in programs at the centers in FY 2008.

Neighborhood Networks (NN) is a collaboration between DFS and Fairfax County Public Schools focused on educating and connecting families to support systems. Families nominated by the schools for this program are families who are committed to good parenting and stability and encourage their children to work for a better life. Neighborhood Networks partners with schools in each region. In the North County region, the schools are: Forest Edge Elementary, Dogwood Elementary, Terraset Elementary and McNair Elementary. In the Fairfax region, the partner school is London Towne Elementary. In the Falls Church region, the partner school is Annandale Terrace Elementary. In the South County region, the partner schools are Riverside Elementary, Woodlawn Elementary, and Woodley Hills Elementary.

NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKS						
	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
Number of Children Served	69	101	113	113	104	124
Number of Families Served	21	28	33	33	30	38
Number of Partner Schools	5	6	6	8	9	9

* Numbers include children and families served across multiple years.

Engaging the Community through Public Awareness and Education

The Blue Ribbon Campaign Committee educates professionals and the public about child abuse and neglect prevention.

Blue Ribbon Campaign to Prevent Child Abuse

As part of a larger national Blue Ribbon Campaign focusing on preventing child abuse, the department’s local campaign continues to assume greater responsibility for educating the Fairfax community on child abuse prevention. Blue Ribbon outreach efforts are supported by various public and private organizations and corporations.

Outreach and education efforts for 2008 include:

- All Blue Ribbon Publications were added to the DFS and Fairfax County Public Schools Web sites.
- 100,000 copies of “Words that Help Kids” were printed and distributed in English, Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Korean, Spanish, Urdu and Vietnamese.
- The “Understanding and Guiding Children as They Grow and Develop” publication was translated and printed in Arabic, Farsi, Korean, and Vietnamese (in addition to being available in Spanish & English). All versions are available on the Web site.
- 45,000 pocket-size “Child Supervision Guidelines” were printed and distributed in English, Farsi, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Urdu and Arabic languages.

The materials produced and distributed by the Blue Ribbon Campaign can be accessed at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/childrenyouth/blue_ribbon_campaign.htm.

Engaging the Community by Involving Volunteers and Donors in Child Welfare Programs

The Volunteer Services Program recruits, trains and supports volunteers to work with the division’s programs and the families they serve. The CYF Family Donor Program accepts

donations from businesses, community organizations and individuals for children and families in child welfare programs who need clothes and other essentials.

VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT						
	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
Total Unduplicated Volunteers* does not include group or special event volunteers	N/A	N/A	147	149	128	139
Total Unduplicated Volunteer Hours	N/A	N/A	9,808	10,422	9,191	11,067
Value of Volunteer Hours FY 2007: \$18.40 FY 2008: \$19.72	N/A	N/A	\$174,484	\$188,013	\$169,114	\$218,241

* A new volunteer database tracking system was created during FY 2005.

DONOR CONTRIBUTIONS						
	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
Value of Donations	\$252,404	\$299,051	\$287,670	\$329,833	\$123,827	\$140,829
Total Number of Donors	194	213	290	290	118	178

* Beginning in FY 2007 management of holiday donations for children in foster care was moved to the Foster Care and Adoption program area instead of Child Abuse Prevention.

Department of Family Services

Self-Sufficiency Division

The Self-Sufficiency Division provides the following services to job seekers and economically disadvantaged residents of Fairfax County and the cities of Falls Church and Fairfax:

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
- Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare (VIEW).
- Medicaid and Family Access to Medical Insurance Security (FAMIS).
- Food Stamps.
- Other cash assistance programs (e.g., General Relief, Energy Assistance)
- Workforce Investment Act (WIA) – Adult, Dislocated Workers and Youth Services.
- Other grant-funded employment and training programs.

The goal of public assistance programs is to prevent individuals from falling into poverty beyond a certain level. These federal and state programs provide those who are unemployed, underemployed, or unable to work due to age and/or disability, access to basics such as health care, food and shelter. Services are provided in each of the county’s four regional human services offices (Fairfax, Falls Church, South County and Reston), as well as in multiple community-based sites such as area hospitals, and Community Health Care Clinics. Employment and training services are also community based and delivered through one-stop employment centers, called SkillSource Centers, which serve employers and job seekers.

There has been a steady and significant increase in demand for public assistance since FY2001. This trend can be attributed to policy changes at the state and federal levels, successful outreach efforts, increasing population and most recently, changes in the economy.

In Fiscal Year 2008, the division authorized more than \$294 million in public assistance benefit payments (not included in the agency’s budget) on behalf of county residents and managed an average monthly public assistance caseload of 51,939 cases, a 67 percent increase from FY 2002. The department has made continuous efforts to streamline business practices to better meet customer needs. Even so, the increase in cases without corresponding staff increases is taxing the division’s capacity to deliver services in accordance with federal and state requirements. It should be noted, that unlike other services in the county where waiting lists may be created if demand for services exceeds capacity, federal entitlement programs, such as Food Stamps and Medicaid, do not permit this practice. These mandated programs give everyone the right to apply for benefits, receive a determination of their eligibility, and receive benefits if eligible within policy established timeframes regardless of associated workload created and staff capacity to handle the additional work. Agencies that fail to meet performance mandates (timeliness of delivery of services and quality) may be placed in corrective action ranging from ‘technical assistance’ from state and federal agencies to financial sanctions depending on the

In FY 2008, the division managed an average monthly public assistance caseload of 51,939 cases, a 67 percent increase from FY 2002.

severity of the situation. Families and individuals in need are greatly affected when they cannot access these basic services in a timely manner.

A description of the programs offered and a caseload breakdown by year since 2003 follows:

AVERAGE NUMBER OF MONTHLY PUBLIC ASSISTANCE/WELFARE REFORM CASES						
	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
TANF	1,253	1,378	1,419	1,422	1,364	1,268
Food Stamps	7,487	8,899	9,855	10,299	10,553	11,610
Medicaid	23,224	29,875	32,889	35,667	35,696	37,130
VIEW	322	390	419	414	366	343
Other	2,369	1,986	1,910	1,699	1,702	1,588
TOTAL	34,333	45,528	46,491	49,501	49,681	51,939

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE HIGHLIGHTS

Food Stamps Program

In FY 2008, an average of 11,610 families per month received \$1.9 million in nutrition assistance through the Food Stamps program, or \$22.3 million for the year. The purpose of the Food Stamps program is to alleviate hunger and malnutrition by providing eligible low-income families additional food purchasing power through income supplementation.

Medicaid/Family Access to Medical Insurance Security (FAMIS) and FAMIS Plus

In FY 2008, an average of 45,488 individuals (14,000 adults and 31,488 children) participated in the Medicaid/FAMIS Plus programs. The county also enrolled an additional 6,891 children in FAMIS. In FY 2008, a monthly average of \$24 million (or \$287 million for the year) was paid out under the Medicaid/FAMIS Plus programs to county residents. The federal/state funded Medicaid and FAMIS programs pay medical service providers for services rendered to eligible elderly, disabled and blind individuals; pregnant women; and low-income families with children. FAMIS is the federal/state program that provides low-cost health insurance for children in low-income families that earn too much to be eligible for Medicaid, but do not have private health insurance. FAMIS Plus is Virginia's name for children's Medicaid.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare (VIEW)

In FY 2008, an average of 1,268 families per month received \$428,810 per month in TANF benefits, or a total of \$5.1 million for the year. In addition to the cash benefit, 1,026 parents received employment services under the VIEW program.

The TANF program provides monthly cash assistance to low-income families so families can stay together. VIEW is the mandatory employment program for able-to-work parents with children 12 months of age or older receiving TANF. The maximum amount of benefits a participating TANF family receives ranges from \$242 per month for one person to \$570 per month for six or more people. The average monthly TANF grant in Fairfax County is \$328.

VIEW participants who were employed during FY 2008 achieved an average wage of \$9.48 per hour and average monthly earnings of \$1,325. It should be noted that VIEW families become ineligible for TANF and VIEW at the 24-month time limit for the program or when wages from employment, combined with other available income, reach 100 percent of the federal poverty level (for example: \$1,467 monthly, the Federal Poverty Level for 2008 for a family of three). The federal poverty level contrasts with the Self Sufficiency Standard formula developed at the University of Washington, which calculates a self-sufficient income for a family of three (one adult, one infant and one preschooler) in Fairfax County at \$5,422 per month (June 2006).

During FY 2008, the Fairfax County VIEW program provided 1,026 parents with economic, social and employment services including skills training, emergency services and supportive services that helped them keep their families together. The VIEW program also provided:

- More than 500 educational and vocational assessments.
- 107 neuropsychological evaluations for participants who screened in with potential hidden disabilities. The evaluations were followed up with referrals and services to help participants overcome or manage the identified challenges.
- More than 50 VIEW participants with English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes.
- Over 600 participants, who became employed, with follow-up services including extended Medicaid, transportation and child care support when needed.
- 365 VIEW participants with meaningful work activities ranging from skill training to volunteer work experience.
- 107 individuals with a certificate for completing intensive job readiness training in Workplace Essential Skills classes.
- A monthly average of 111 employed participants with a work incentive stipend.

Other Public Assistance Programs

Other important public assistance programs managed by DFS that address needs of eligible low-income families and individuals in our community include: Energy Assistance, Refugee Assistance, General Relief, Aid to Families with Dependent Children / Foster Care (AFDC/FC), Auxiliary Grants for the elderly and disabled, Fraud Prevention, and Repatriation. These programs comprise approximately 3.1 percent of the public assistance caseload or 1,588 cases. Another critical program administered by DFS, the seasonal Energy Assistance Program (Cooling, Heating and Crisis Assistance), served more than 1,757 additional county residents.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Extended Business Hours – For two years, the DFS Self-Sufficiency Division extended public assistance business hours from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays, to accommodate the needs of working families and individuals who needed its services. Fewer clients than expected were visiting the offices during the extended hours. Almost 90 percent of the clients continued to conduct business during the county’s standard operating hours of 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. To make best use of staff resources and sustain efficient service delivery in the current economic environment, the extended business hours were suspended in July 2008.

The division continues to provide non-traditional work hour appointments for those clients who may need such accommodations. Other ways to access services are offered, such as drop-off boxes outside of each office. Customers are also informed of other ways to provide documents, such as via mail, Internet and fax.

Continuous Quality Improvement – The division is continuing its efforts of process improvement in order to continue to maximize efficiencies, maintain excellent customer service and meet federal and state performance mandates. The division is in the midst of a change from a case management system to process management system. Under this new system the division will focus on how the work is actually done and the steps or processes involved. This process management system will bring many changes that will benefit both clients and caseworkers. It should allow for the work to be completed in a more timely, efficient and quality manner. Implementation of this new system is currently underway.

Health Access Assistance Team (HAAT) Program -

The HAAT program is a partnership among the Fairfax County Community Health Care Network (CHCN), the Fairfax County Health Department, the Office of Public Private Partnerships and Northern Virginia Family

Approximately 8,000 families were assessed and evaluated for enrollment in health care programs in FY08.

Service. The HAAT mission is to ensure that people without health insurance have access to and use the most appropriate health care resources available to them. This is achieved by simplifying access to federal, state and local health care services through coordinated “points of entry.” HAAT teams are located at each of the three Community Health Care Network offices located in Reston, South County and Bailey’s Crossroads. In FY 2008, approximately 8,000 families were assessed and evaluated for enrollment in health care programs. These programs include:

- Medicaid, FAMIS Plus, and FAMIS
- State and Local Hospitalization
- CHCN, Medical Care for Children’s Partnership (MCCP)
- MCCP Kaiser
- Kaiser-Bridge

Individuals ineligible for enrollment are connected to other resources in the community, such as the Jeanie Schmidt Clinic, Culmore Clinic and pharmaceutical assistance programs. In addition to new enrollment, an average of 560 patients a month must recertify for continued services through CHCN.

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The Self-Sufficiency Division, under contract with the SkillSource Group, Inc., manages and delivers Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and other federal and state funded employment and training programs. The SkillSource Group, Inc., is the administrative arm of the Northern Virginia Workforce Investment Board (NVWIB). The NVWIB is the governing body for this local workforce area, which includes the counties of Fairfax, Prince William, and Loudoun, as well as the cities of Falls Church, Fairfax, Manassas, and Manassas Park.

Employment and training services are delivered through one-stop centers called SkillSource Centers, which serve employers, job seekers, and entrepreneurs. A combination of mandatory (under WIA) and voluntary partners enable clients to access a wide variety of employment and support services under one roof.

The Department of Family Services operates three of the four SkillSource Centers in this region, in South County, Falls Church, and Reston, plus additional employment resource centers in the Fairfax human services building and inside the Pre-Release Center at the county jail. In addition, DFS has worked with the Commonwealth of Virginia and The SkillSource Group, Inc. to establish SHARE (Showing How Access to Resources Empowers) sites at two faith and community-based organizations in the region. The SHARE sites are equipped with computers, employment resources, and SkillSource-trained staff to provide basic job search assistance to the members of these faith and community-based groups. In 2008, the SHARE locations served 122 individuals who may not have otherwise accessed SkillSource Center services.

FY 2008 Program Statistics

- 37,221 visits were made to the employment and SkillSource Centers in Fairfax County, representing 16,601 individuals. The numbers are higher than 2007 which reported 27,000 visits and reflects the upward trend in job losses due to the economic downturn. The centers reported 942 placements with an average annual salary of \$28,392. We estimate that the number of placements is vastly under-reported because job placements for individuals not enrolled in WIA are not systematically recorded.
- 365 participants were enrolled in Intensive and Training Services through the Workforce Investment Act programs. Annual wage at placement for dislocated workers was \$46,300, for adult workers was \$28,100, and youth was \$18,470.
- The Center for Business Planning and Development, which is co-located at the Falls Church SkillSource Center and provides small business startup and expansion services, helped to start 47 new businesses, expanded 9 existing businesses, and created 70 new jobs.
- The DFS Youth Employment Center (Job Corner) is focused on serving the most vulnerable youth between the ages of 14 and 21. In 2008, 82 percent of the nearly 700 visits have been from minority youth who have significant barriers to success. 110 at-risk youth are also being served intensively through either the regional WIA youth program or through a special project for foster care youth called Choices for Success. Both intensive, year-round programs provide long-term support to eligible youth with multiple barriers to help increase the rate of high school completion and their future success in the workforce. As an added service to youth, a GED completion program (GRANTS) operates out of the Job Corner two days per week in partnership with Fairfax County Public Schools.

2008 Program Highlights

- **One-Stop Center Certifications**

Two of the Fairfax County SkillSource Centers, in Falls Church and South County, attained the highest level of quality standard certification at the local and state levels. The certifications are based on the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Program.

- **Fourth Annual “Envision Your Success” Career and Entrepreneurship Expo**

The EYS Expo is the Employment and Training Program’s major annual event, with the primary goal of connecting job seekers to employers who are currently hiring, and entrepreneurs to business startup resources. 58 employers exhibited at the Fourth Annual Career and Entrepreneurship Expo in March 2008, which featured a mega job fair, and workshops on careers (for adults and youth) and business startup. The event attracted an estimated 2,000 job seekers and prospective entrepreneurs. This year’s event is scheduled for March 28, 2009 and will focus on dislocated workers who have been impacted by the economic downturn. Due to the economic downturn, the 2009 expo planning team expects an unusually high turnout of job seekers at the event, and increased challenges with recruiting employer participation.

- **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program**

The operation of the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program was transferred from the Office of Public Private Partnerships to DFS. The purpose of this program is to provide free tax preparation for low-income families, and enable them to access the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) if they are eligible. DFS is working with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the Virginia Community Action partnership (VACAP), other government agencies throughout Northern Virginia, and a regional coalition of community-based organizations to mobilize over 500 volunteers across 16 sites in Northern Virginia, with a goal of preparing 3,000 tax returns. DFS secured some funding to offset operating costs through two small grants from the IRS and VACAP.

- **Fairfax County Pre-Release Employment Center**

The success of the Virginia Serious and Violent Offender Re-Entry Initiative to facilitate the transition of ex-offenders back into the community has enabled a continued partnership with the Virginia Department of Corrections, to provide employment services as a critical component to successful community re-entry. In 2008, the Northern Virginia Workforce Investment Board used a grant from the Governor’s Discretionary Fund to open an employment center in partnership with DFS and the Office of the Sheriff, inside the Pre-Release Center of the Adult Detention Center. Since May 2008, 60 of the 75 participants have been placed in jobs at an average rate of \$9.24 per hour.

- **EYE (Educating Youth through Employment) Summer Program**

The EYE program provides a professional, paid opportunity for youth ages 16-21 each summer for 6-8 weeks; it is a project of the SkillSource Group, Inc. and DFS. Over the past three years, since this summer employment program started, over 200 young people have attended job readiness workshops and almost 70 have been placed in professional, paid work experiences (including 31 youth in 2008). The EYE Program continues to see

increasing support and contributions from the private sector business community each year.

- **Project GATE (Growing America Through Entrepreneurship)**

Project GATE is a Department of Labor grant that launched in February 2009, to help dislocated workers over the age of 45 to start their own business. Services will be delivered through a partnership between DFS, The SkillSource Group, and the Business Development Assistance Group, Inc., a community-based nonprofit organization which specializes in small business startup and expansion.

ISSUES/TRENDS

- As the economic situation declines the department continues to experience a dramatic increase in the number of county residents seeking support from public assistance and employment services, further increasing the department's workload. The unemployment rate, which had been annually declining since 2002, was 2.2 percent in 2007; in December 2008, it had risen to 3.4 percent. The national unemployment rate was 4.9 percent in 2007, but rose steadily throughout 2008 to 7.2 percent in December. Economists predict that this trend will continue throughout 2009. The following are examples of increases in workload of the Self-Sufficiency Division.
 - The number of county residents visiting the offices for public assistance services increased 36 percent.
 - Applications for Food Stamps increased 73 percent from December 2007 to December 2008.
 - Applications for Medicaid increased 22 percent from December 2007 – December 2008.
 - Overall public assistance ongoing caseload increase 11 percent from December 2007 – December 2008.
 - The number of individuals seeking employment service more than doubled since 2007.
- The budget of the new presidential administration will be monitored closely to assess potential impacts to workforce programs. Possible opportunities may include a summer job programs for youth, and increased Workforce Investment Act formula funds (which are based on unemployment rates).
- The presidential economic stimulus package provides a 13.6 percent increase in food stamp benefits for current recipients. This increase would provide an effective stimulus to the local economy as the USDA estimates that each additional food stamp dollar would generate \$1.84 dollars in economic activity. It would also help low-income families pay for groceries. Still, many recipients find it difficult to meet their nutritional needs with food stamps alone.
- The reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program will continue coverage for children currently enrolled and extend the program for 4 ½ years. It also

will allow states the option to offer coverage immediately to children of legal immigrants, abolishing a five-year waiting period and to provide dental coverage to some families with higher incomes.

This report can be viewed online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/pdf/ASSB2008.pdf

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Fairfax County is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in all county programs services and activities and will provide reasonable accommodations upon request. To request this information in an alternate format, call 703-324-5870; TTY 703-222-9452.

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