

Dear Chairman McKay and Members of the Board of Supervisors,

The Advisory Social Services Board (ASSB) presents this annual report on the services provided by the Department of Family Services (DFS) as a summary of the department's accomplishments during 2021, as well as a record of the outcomes DFS has achieved. The ASSB is required under the Code of Virginia to issue an annual report on the department's activities, and as this report shows, the need for DFS services remains high throughout Fairfax County.

The ASSB is proud of DFS's accomplishments in another year marked by the county's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. DFS took many of the new initiatives and innovations in delivering services developed in 2020 and applied them to the long-term benefit of the community in 2021. DFS estimates that one in every five households in the county has been helped this year in some way by its services—either through direct use of programs, calling emergency hotlines, attending community outreach events, or volunteering.

Last year, the ASSB was awed by DFS staff, volunteers, and other community members who found creative and original ways to meet the unprecedented demand for services. The response by staff to the changing conditions within our community reflects the DFS core values and commitment to equity. This year, the ASSB is deeply appreciative of the long-term perseverance the county has shown in maintaining this high level of services. DFS's renewed emphasis on economic opportunity, mobility, and recovery is of especial note, as is highlighted in this report.

The ASSB is mindful that many of the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis remain submerged in our community. Mental and physical health needs, employment needs, nutrition needs—DFS anticipates that these challenges may become greater as this crisis persists. The services offered by DFS through the divisions of Self-Sufficiency, Children Youth and Families, Adult and Aging, and Domestic and Sexual Violence Services continue to help people in need and aim to provide assistance as far upstream as possible—not just at the very end.

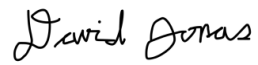
Investing in our community and all its members through prevention programs avoids the need for more serious and expensive actions later on. We know with critical early intervention services, children are more likely to be successful in school; teens are more likely to be engaged in work or educational pursuits; adults are more likely to own homes and businesses; and older adults are more likely to remain active and independent. These elements form the foundation of our robust and caring community here in Fairfax County.

**As a result, we strongly believe that successful programs in DFS and throughout the Health, Housing, and Human Services system must remain funded and be allowed to expand to meet demand as needed throughout Fairfax County.** Leaders at the county, state, and federal levels continue to recognize the need for fully funding these programs, as evidenced by Fairfax County's budget in FY 2022, as well as the American Rescue Plan Act passed in 2021.

As we build upon these accomplishments, we look forward to working collaboratively with the county to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic stronger and more vibrant than ever. The impact on the health and wellbeing of families continues, and we urge everyone in Fairfax

County to appreciate DFS's role in helping provide the stability, opportunity, and the improvement of people's lives that our community values and invests in.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Jonas".

David T.S. Jonas, Chair  
Advisory Social Services Board