

ASSB FY23 Report Text Only

Cover:

- Change photo from last year
- Change year to 2023

Inside Cover:

- Update members

At-Large - Chairman's Office, Noah Abraham

Braddock District - Karen Darley

City of Falls Church - Mary Wilcox

City of Fairfax - Andre Lee

Dranesville District - Benjamin Zuhl

Hunter Mill District - Joe Koszarek

Franconia District - Latriece Prince-Wheeler

Mason District - Julian De Phillips, Secretary

Mount Vernon District - Raymond McGrath, Vice Chair

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Sully District - Jose M. Garzon

Letter from the Chair:

February 2024

Dear Chairman McKay and Members of the Board of Supervisors,

The Advisory Social Services Board (ASSB) presents this annual report as required by the Code of Virginia, on the services provided and outcomes achieved by the Department of Family Services (DFS) in 2023. As this report shows, the need for DFS services remains high. The demand for DFS services has been driven by an increase in the number of people living below the poverty level; the continued impact of the coronavirus pandemic on people already facing other vulnerabilities, including the end of COVID-related Medicaid certification waivers and work requirement exemptions for food assistance; the ongoing need for services related to child abuse and domestic violence; and an expanding older adult population.

Over the past year, the ASSB focused on the intersection of DFS services with other human services agencies, especially with respect to the needs of children and youth. The ASSB studied child and youth wellbeing as it relates to adverse childhood experiences, and saw how the effects of violence, abuse, or neglect, household substance use, mental health problems, and economic hardship can span a child's lifetime. However, interventions that support the integration of protective factors in families available through DFS and the broader Health and Human Services Continuum can reduce the behavioral, social, and emotional impacts of maltreatment, both for the short and long term.

While a focus on well-being is integrated into all aspects of DFS services, the reparative and preventative work of the department must continue, as well as collaboration with other human services agencies, public safety officers, and the courts to promote safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments where children live, learn, and play.

With timely intervention, 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 community here in Fairfax County.

DFS bears witness each day to the lingering impacts of the pandemic on our community's most vulnerable residents and aspires to provide supportive services to meet the evolving complex needs of the families and individuals at risk. The rise

in inflation, increased sexual and domestic violence, and behavioral health issues are all putting a strain on social services and the community. As a result, the services DFS provides are essential for supporting the community and helping people thrive. Maintaining core DFS services is critical to the success of the community.

The ASSB is very pleased with what DFS has been able to accomplish in a post pandemic world marked by the evolving and complex needs of families and individuals served, and we thank the Board of Supervisors for your ongoing support of critical human services and those provided by DFS in particular.

As we build upon our accomplishments, we look forward to working collaboratively with the county to address the challenges for families and individuals served by DFS in this post-pandemic world.

Sincerely,
Laura Martinez, Chair

Advisory Social Services Board

About DFS:

- Keep the same as last year

DFS Values:

- Keep the same as last year

A Focus on Resilience

The Advisory Social Services Board used their time this year to become more aware of the complex, ever-evolving tapestry of human experience that defines the work of the Department of Family Services and other county human services agencies. We serve families and individuals facing extraordinary challenges, navigating personal crises, and working hard to live their success stories and thrive. During this year, ASSB took time to understand the enduring impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on wellbeing and resilience.

ACEs - the often-unseen scars of neglect, abuse, or household dysfunction - leave undeniable footprints on development, health, and life's trajectory. Yet, within this narrative of vulnerability lies another, equally powerful story: one of resilience. For it is not simply adversity that defines us, but our capacity to rise above it. While ACEs can cast long shadows, the presence of loving relationships, supportive communities, and access to tangible resources can illuminate pathways to hope, healing, and resilience.

In partnership with other county departments and our community partners, DFS strives to be architects of resilience, building upon the inherent strengths within each family and community, and fostering environments where protective factors can flourish.

During this year, the ASSB has learned how integrated partnerships between divisions in DFS, and with sister human services agencies, are part of the fabric that harnesses transformative power within those for whom we provide services.

In this annual report, we celebrate triumphs, big and small, from a child finding safe haven in a nurturing foster home to a parent overcoming addiction and securing employment. These victories, interwoven with data and analysis, paint a vibrant picture of our collective impact. Beyond individual journeys, we showcase the collaborative efforts that strengthen the very fabric of our community. We highlight partnerships with public health agencies,

educators, and private businesses, all working in unison to create a web of support for families on their paths to stability and wellbeing.

It is through this interconnected web of individual stories, data-driven insights, and community partnerships that DFS fulfills its promise. We are not simply responding to challenges; we are actively shaping a future where resilience trumps adversity, and every child, every family, has the opportunity to thrive.

Division Pages:

- Delete descriptions of all the programs (but hyperlink to them on the website)
- Keep Performance Indicators but add FY2023 (don't delete FY2020)

Adult and Aging

	FY 2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023
Adult Protective Services				
Investigations	1,346	1,255	1,162	1,052
Clients who needed protective services	913	902	780	620
Adult Services/Case Management				
Clients served	2,785	2,928	3,359	3,564
Fairfax Area Agency on Aging				
Volunteers who served older adults and adults with disabilities	3,155 97,019 hours	750 16,287 hours	1,923 22,930	1,594 26,139

The older adult population in Fairfax County continues to grow, resulting in increased caseloads. There are significant increases in calls for assistance, nutritional programming, caregiver services, home-based care services and Medicaid waiver screenings. The acuity and complexity of client needs is also growing, often due to a combination of physical, mental, socioeconomic, and cognitive challenges, compounding the intensity of service provision required.

In FY 2023, the percentage of APS investigations which met the 45-day standard for completion was 66 percent, falling short of the 90 percent target. Persistent vacancies in the program continue to present a challenge in meeting the standard for timeliness as do the significant number of investigations that are substantiated. Substantiated investigations, or those investigations that result in the need for ongoing protective services, remained high at 60 percent, representing a full two-thirds of all investigations completed.

In FY 2023, 93 percent of Adult Services clients were able to remain in their own homes following one year of case management, exceeding the program's target of 80 percent. The principal program which positively impacts people's ability to age in place is the Home-Based Care program. This program provides contracted in-home bathing, laundry, and light housekeeping services for functionally and financially eligible clients.

The division continues to offer a number of volunteer opportunities (both in person and remote) for individuals to support older adults and adults with disabilities. While the number of volunteers slightly decreased this FY, the overall number of hours provided by volunteers increased by 14% due to multiple new volunteer opportunities.

AA Success Story

A 67-year-old client needed help finding housing after she was evicted from her apartment due to hoarding, bed bug infestation, and non-payment of rent. She had started living in her car in order to keep her possessions. The client had failing health and was frequently hospitalized because her health condition was challenging to manage. Our Adult Protective Services (APS) worker assigned to the case treated the client with dignity and respect throughout their working relationship and connected the client to community and County resources including housing supports, a nutritional program to address food insecurity, and bedbug cleaning services to treat the possessions in the vehicle

which allowed the client to successfully enter an assisted living facility. The DFS APS worker was a pivotal partner in addressing the client’s care needs which has resulted in the client having a stable housing option that allows her to maintain her independence while receiving needed support.

CSA

CSA	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
Percent of children in CSA served in the community and not in a facility	91%	90%	84%	

The Children’s Services Act (CSA) program experienced a reduction of approximately 200 children in the number of youths served annually during COVID reflecting the decrease in services by child-serving agencies. In FY 2023, referrals began increasing towards pre-COVID levels with 1,087 youth served. Of those youths served, 90 percent received their services in the community which is consistent with the goal of meeting youth’s needs within the community whenever possible.

Service utilization has increased significantly in two areas: 1) the number of children entering foster care has increased. More children in care were placed in therapeutic foster homes rather than family foster homes due to a decrease in capacity. 2) More children were referred for residential treatment primarily for substance use disorder treatment. CSA has expanded our continuum of care and provider network to include primary substance use treatment programs in response to the fentanyl/opioid crisis impacting youth in our community and across the nation.

Providers continue to have challenges with workforce and staffing. Lack of provider capacity means families may encounter waitlists for residential and community-based care. CSA is working on expanding their network of providers. 90% of youth served in CSA are receiving community-based care.

CSA Success Story

Two young children entered foster care after the mother experienced a non-fatal overdose and the father’s addiction prevented him from providing care to the children. The Department of Family Services’ Children, Youth, and Families Division managed the overall foster care services plan using funding from the Children’s Services Act (CSA) to provide evaluations, therapy, supervised visitation with the parents and other foster care services to support reunification with the parents. The mother, with the assistance of these treatment services, started on her journey to sobriety. She checked into the Fairfax Detox program to ween off drugs. After completing the program, she entered an intensive outpatient program and participated in substance abuse group therapy four times a week, and weekly individual psychotherapy. Eventually, the mother was able to secure full-time employment, attend her outpatient substance abuse groups, and establish independent housing on her own, and her children were returned to her. DFS continued to monitor the children in the home and at childcare on a weekly basis to ensure safety and to support their mother during this transition time. She continues to participate in her relapse prevention program and is grateful to the providers and her family for their support.

CYF

		FY 2020	FY 2021	FY2022	FY2023
Child Protective Services	CPS Hotline Calls	13,102	11,005	13,318	13,109
	Calls resulting in an assessment or investigation	2,113	1,878	2,701	2,793
		FY 2020	FY 2021	FY2022	FY2023

Foster Care & Adoption	Number of children in care on last day of fiscal year	191	198	181	211

The Children, Youth and Families Division continues to leverage evidence-based practices and partner with industry experts to deepen and strengthen practice in its strategic priority areas. Complicating the work is a high position vacancy rate which hovered around 20 percent for most of FY 2023. Stabilizing the workforce is the highest priority for the division at this time and will remain so until staffing reaches a level that supports the work needed to meet the mission of keeping children safe and strengthening families.

With the shift back to in-person schooling, CPS received an influx of 2,701 referrals in FY 2022, a 44 percent increase from the prior year. The surge continued in FY 2023 with 2,793 referrals. Due to this significantly higher volume of referrals as well as recruitment and retention issues faced by the agency, there was a noticeable decrease in the percentage of referrals responded to within the mandated response times in FY 2022 and FY 2023. CPS has been focusing on performance in this area and has implemented several targeted strategies to ensure a performance level of 95 percent is met in FY 2024.

In FY 2023, a total of 281 children were served in foster care and adoption programs: a 5 percent increase from last year. The percent of children exiting foster care to permanency increased from 70 percent in FY 2022 to 77 percent in FY 2023 (54 of the 70 children who exited care). Of children exiting foster care in FY 2023, 29 percent (20 children) returned home, 20 percent (14 children) exited to relatives or fictive kin (including custody transfer and adoptions); 29 percent (20 children) exited to adoption by foster parents or non-relatives; and 23 percent (16 youth) aged out.

CYF Success Story

DFS received a phone call about an urgent situation likely to result in a separation for 6-month-old baby. The baby’s father was not able to be located, but within an hour, our DFS Kinship Navigator found her maternal grandparents, completed the necessary paperwork for emergency approval, and had the baby placed in the grandparents’ home by that afternoon. Living with her grandparents allows the baby to maintain familial and cultural ties. Based on research, we know that by being placed with relatives, she will likely remain in foster care a shorter time than if she were placed in a foster home with strangers. DFS worked closely with the grandparents to prepare them for the unique dynamics of being kin caregivers, discussing such things as how to set boundaries with their daughter to ensure the baby’s safety. Becoming a kinship caregiver can be a challenging and emotional experience, but the baby’s grandparents feel it is well worth the reward of watching their granddaughter grow and develop, knowing that she will celebrate her first birthday surrounded by family.

DSVS

	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY2023
Survivor Services Clients (includes Advocacy, Counseling, Hotline, LAP, and HASA)	3,637	3,751	4,181	4002
DV Emergency Shelter Admissions	361	356	361	183

Three years after a record spike during the pandemic, incidence of interpersonal violence continued to trend upward in FY 2023. Domestic and Sexual Violence Services are still experiencing high numbers of residents seeking services and the call volume to the DSVS 24-hour hotline has increased as well. Clients reported more severe physical assaults, fewer economic resources, and less social support.

In FY 2023, DSVS served 1,888 callers to its 24-hour domestic violence hotline and 357 calls to the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP). DSVS also served 1,045 persons through advocacy services, 574 clients in clinical services and 56 clients through hospital accompaniment. In FY 2023, DSVS experienced increases of 25 percent and 22 percent in the number of clients served in hotline and advocacy services, respectively, but experienced a decrease in the number of new intakes into the ADAPT program largely due to a decrease in clients court ordered into the program. The number of referrals to ADAPT began to increase late in FY 2023. Eighty seven percent of victims/survivors reported being better able to plan for safety and 85 percent of persons who completed ADAPT demonstrated self-responsibility for abusive behaviors.

Emergency shelter admissions dropped dramatically over the past year because the average length of stay increased from 90 days to 120 days. This was because people were less able to secure safe housing to transition out of shelter, so there was less space available to take new admissions.

DSVS Success Story

A 5-year-old girl who witnessed domestic violence in the home had developed severe insomnia and frequent crying spells. The child told the counselor she saw and heard her parents fighting as she was trying to go to sleep. Through play therapy, the counselor helped the child resolve her sleeping issues and by the end of therapy, she no longer had frequent crying spells or trouble during the exchange of visits with her father. The counselor also helped her mom plan a nightly routine and taught them deep breathing techniques they could practice together. The counselor helped both the girl and her mom plan for safety and taught them how to get help if domestic violence occurred in the future. The mother also improved her social support network by developing close friendships with several other mothers and the child enjoys playing with their children.

PAES

	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) Total SNAP Recipients	54,501	61,057	66,399	73,042
TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) Total TANF Recipients	3,587	3,469	4,445	5,623
Medicaid of recipients	Number 153,949	163,942	185,954	209,153
Child Care Assistance Unduplicated # of children receiving childcare assistance from state and federal dollars	2,996	2,785	3,529	4,403
Employment Services Virginia Career Works clients served	24,480	29,598	37,662	25,989

The number of recipients receiving public assistance continued to grow throughout FY 2023, primarily due to cumulative continuances of state and federal flexibilities related to the Public Health Emergency (PHE). However, with the federal declaration ending the PHE on March 31, 2023, the number is expected to gradually decline due to the resumption of Medicaid eligibility redeterminations. Although the number of recipients may decline, these redeterminations have resulted in increased workloads for staff who are now responsible for processing thousands of cases which could not be reassessed for eligibility while the PHE was in effect. Additionally, with inflation trending upward, the rising cost of food, and the number of households experiencing food insecurity, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) number of recipients increased to an all-time high of 73,042 people, primarily children.

During FY 2023, Employment Services expanded partnerships with community groups and other county agencies such as Neighborhood and Community Services, the public libraries, Fairfax County Public Schools, and the Department of Economic Initiatives. These partnerships resulted in high impact initiatives such as TalentUP, The WISH (Workforce Innovation and Skills Hub) Center, and the Fairfax County Economic Mobility Pilot which support the countywide strategic plan in the areas of Economic Opportunity, Effective and Efficient Government and Empowerment and Support of Residents Facing Vulnerability.

PAES Success Story

A single mother with one son, with very little family support, began working with the VIEW program just before the start of COVID. She expressed interest in the healthcare field and received assistance in addressing childcare and transportation needs as well as accessing FAFSA for financial aid. She enrolled in Northern Virginia Community College, initially planning to study dental hygiene, but changed her major to nursing. Throughout COVID, the client continued to receive assistance through VIEW and attended her nursing classes. In January 2023, she completed her training and quickly passed the NCLEX (nursing licensure). She was offered a full-time nursing position with Inova earning \$34 per hour. She continues to receive transitional assistance (transportation and reduced childcare) through the VIEW Transition Program (VTP).

Budget Charts:

- Update numbers from last year but keep the same charts (coming soon!)

Back Page:

- Keep the same as last year