



2022

ADVISORY SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT



FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
FAMILY SERVICES

Advisory Social Services Board

The Advisory Social Services Board interests itself in all matters pertaining to the wellbeing of the residents of Fairfax County. The Board monitors the formation and implementation of social support programs; meets with and advises the Director of the Department of Family Services, for the purpose of making recommendations on policy matters; makes an annual report to the Board of Supervisors concerning the administration of the social services programs; and submits other reports as appropriate.

DISTRICT	BOARD MEMBER
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<i>At-Large - Chairman's Office</i>	David T.S. Jonas, Chair
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<i>Braddock District</i>	Karen Darley
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<i>City of Falls Church</i>	Mary Wilcox
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<i>City of Fairfax</i>	Andre Lee
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<i>Dranesville District</i>	Benjamin Zuhl
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<i>Hunter Mill District</i>	Joe Koszarek
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<i>Lee District</i>	Saud Hasan Shah, Secretary
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<i>Mason District</i>	Vacant
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<i>Mount Vernon District</i>	Raymond McGrath
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<i>Providence District</i>	Laura Martinez
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<i>Springfield District</i>	Amrita Banerjee
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<i>Sully District</i>	Alice Foltz, Vice Chair
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Michael A. Becketts, Ph.D., MSW, MSHA, M.Ed
Director, Department of Family Services

Letter from the Chair

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) and the outcomes DFS achieved in 2022. 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. **In particular, the ASSB in 2022 studied the intersection between housing policy and DFS outcomes, with the ASSB concluding the Board of Supervisors must continue to take greater measures to expand the amount of housing—both affordable and market-rate—in order to continue to improve the quality of life for residents DFS works tirelessly to promote.**

Over the past year, the ASSB focused its meetings on the intersection of housing and the needs of vulnerable groups such as older adults, victims of domestic violence, and families with children. Crucially, the ASSB discovered, the success of programs and services in DFS often depended on the affordability and availability of housing.


These essential services, as well as others offered by DFS through the divisions of Adult and Aging; Children, Youth, and Families; Domestic and Sexual Violence Services; and Public Assistance and Employment Services continue to help people in need and provide assistance through prevention programs, avoiding the need for more serious, and expensive, actions later. We know with critical early 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.

As a result, we strongly believe that (1) 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, and (2) reforms should be implemented to fully meet the demand for housing in Fairfax County. Ideally, the board should take the steps necessary to study, develop, and implement zoning reforms; change our county's proffer system; increase the amount of housing available to families with extremely low-income; and update land development policies (such as converting underutilized commercial office space to housing) to both increase the amount of and reduce the cost of housing.

Finally, the ASSB remains proud of DFS' accomplishments in another year marked by the county's response to the COVID-19 crisis. DFS took many of the new initiatives and innovations in delivering services developed in 2020 and 2021 and applied them to the long-term benefit of the community in 2022.

As we build upon our accomplishments, we look forward to working collaboratively with the county to address the challenges of affordable housing and providing stability, opportunity, and the improvement of people's lives.

Sincerely,



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





ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES

The Fairfax County Department of Family Services (DFS) provides services supporting the development of a strong and resilient Fairfax County: safe communities, a thriving economy, excellent schools, and opportunities for everyone to feel connected and engaged.

DFS has over 50 programs and services. These services allow us to partner with our public safety and judicial resources and lessen the strain on these systems by: responding to allegations of abuse and neglect of children and vulnerable adults; providing resources and support for those experiencing interpersonal or sexual violence; providing employment and training support to increase the workforce and tax base; improving self-sufficiency of county residents facing various socioeconomic challenges; supporting lifelong learning of children and adults; and creating an environment where all residents have opportunities to live their success story and thrive.

There are four main divisions that provide direct services to the community:

- ▶ ADULT AND AGING
- ▶ CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES
- ▶ DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE SERVICES
- ▶ PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Our service delivery system is supported by key administrative and operational offices, which include Children's Services Act Office, Communications and Public Information, Fiscal Services, Human Resources, Logistics and Facility Services, Information Technology and Data Analytics, and Professional Development and Training.

DFS VALUES: Our values and their underlying principles shape organizational behavior to lead to better outcomes for those served by DFS.

PEOPLE-FOCUSED

- ▶ Each employee of the Department of Family Services focuses on the people we serve to make a positive impact on their lives and communities in which they live.
- ▶ Each voice is vital to the success of the organization. No matter what role a person has in the department, everyone is a valued contributor.
- ▶ We are committed to ensuring that employees have the tools to be successful in their roles, have opportunities to learn and employ new skills, and are supported in mastering their roles to provide exemplary service.

INNOVATION


- ▶ We strive for new, innovative, and more effective approaches for our work to advance the wellbeing of our community.
- ▶ We work to enhance existing partnerships and create new partnerships, funding sources, and service improvements.
- ▶ We actively seek input from and encourage full engagement of people with a diversity of perspectives.

PARTNERSHIP

- ▶ We engage in strategic partnerships at all levels—with clients, co-workers, within and across departments, and with community partners and other jurisdictions.

- ▶ We seek opportunities to collaborate, plan, and align our work at all levels for the benefit of the community.
- ▶ We are dedicated to ensuring a diversity of voices and experiences are included in decision making.

EQUITY

- ▶ We are well positioned to create and operationalize steps to reduce inequities and address systemic oppression, which hampers the growth and wellbeing of our communities.
- ▶ We unequivocally reject racism, violence, and bigotry in all its forms, including the systemic racism directed at people of color which has been woven into the fabric of our policies, procedures, and practices. Read our full Equity Impact Statement at FairfaxCounty.gov/familyservices/about. 

ACCOUNTABILITY

- ▶ We are dedicated public servants who exercise great care in our efficient and effective management of county resources.
- ▶ We serve with honesty and transparency.
- ▶ We accept responsibility and ownership for our work including our decisions, our successes, and our shortcomings.
- ▶ We engage in data-driven decision making, monitoring and adjusting our approach and business processes accordingly to ensure our work is achieving desired results.

MISSION:

The Department of Family Services strengthens the wellbeing of our diverse community by protecting and improving the lives of all children, adults, and families through assistance, partnership, advocacy, outreach, and quality services.

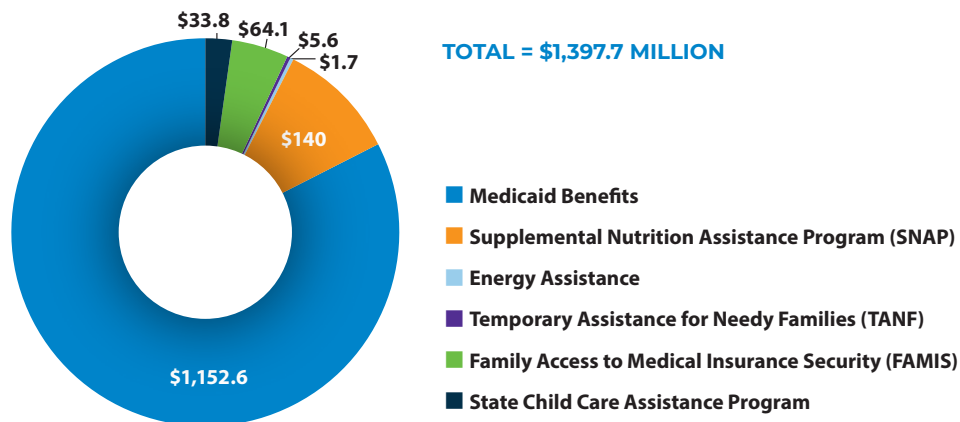
VISION:

Fairfax County is a community where everyone lives their success story and thrives.

STATEWIDE BENEFITS FY 2022

Fairfax County, Fairfax City, and City of Falls Church (in millions)

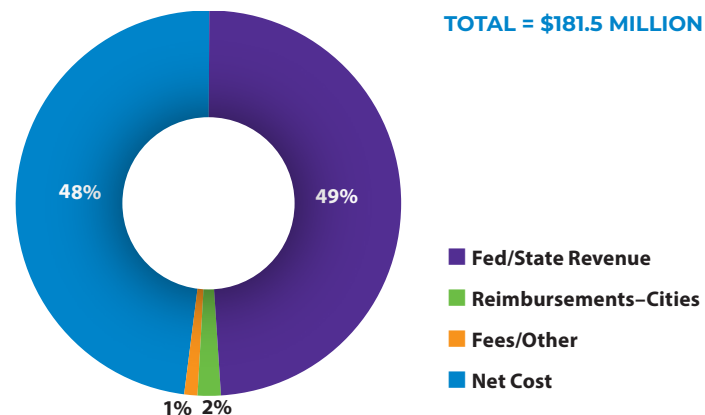
DFS conducts eligibility determinations for state and federal public assistance programs, where the financial assistance benefit flows directly from the state to the recipient. In FY 2022, the state disbursed a total of \$1,397.7 million dollars to residents of Fairfax County, Fairfax City, and Falls Church City for these programs: Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Energy Assistance, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Family Access to Medical Insurance Security (FAMIS), and State Child Care Assistance Program subsidies.



DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES (ALL SOURCES, FY 2022)

DFS social service programs and other client assistance are also funded through the county financial system, and offset with revenue from county, state, and federal funds. Nearly \$181.5 million was expended in FY 2022, including fringe benefits and \$13.4 million in grants.

DFS TOTAL EXPENDITURES



\$181.5 million expended in FY 2022, including fringe benefits.

You can find detailed FY 2022 budget information online at FairfaxCounty.gov/Budget/Budget-Archives.



ADULT & AGING

The Adult and Aging Division of the Department of Family Services provides services and education to older adults, adults with disabilities, and family caregivers. Each program area maximizes safety and independence, as well as enhances family and social supports, with an emphasis on community education and volunteer resources.

Adult Protective Services

Conducts investigations and provides services in response to allegations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation involving adults aged 60 and older and incapacitated adults aged 18 and older.

Adult Services

Provides case management services, Medicaid Long Term Care Screenings and Supports (LTSS), and home-based care for eligible adults over 60, and adults with disabilities.

Disability Rights and Resources

Promotes the self-sufficiency and well-being of people with disabilities through advocacy, education, consultation on legal rights and protections, solution management, and by connecting people to resources and services.

The Fairfax Area Agency on Aging

Organizes, coordinates, and offers community-based services and opportunities for older adults, adults with disabilities, and family caregivers using an extensive network of volunteers and partners. Services include:

- ▶ Home Delivered Meals
- ▶ Health and Wellness Programs
- ▶ Caregiver Programs
- ▶ Volunteer Solutions
- ▶ Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program
- ▶ Insurance Counseling
- ▶ Congregate Meals and Transportation Services
- ▶ Golden Gazette and Outreach
- ▶ Information and Referral (Aging, Disability, and Caregiver Resource Line)
- ▶ Case Management Services

ADULT & AGING PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

		FY 2020	FY 2021	FY2022
Adult Protective Services	Investigations	1,346	1,255	1,162
	Clients who needed protective services	913	902	780
Adult Services/Case Management	Clients served	2,785	2,928	3,359
Aging, Disability, and Caregiver Resources Line	Number of interactions	17,906	17,989	20,795
Fairfax Area Agency on Aging Volunteer Solutions	Volunteers who served older adults and adults with disabilities	3,155	750	1,923
	Number of volunteer hours	97,019	16,287*	22,930

*Reflects the decrease from FY 2020 in face-to-face volunteer opportunities during the COVID emergency for Home Delivered Nutrition, the Volunteer Ombudsman Program, and more.

The Story Behind the Numbers

The mission of the Adult and Aging Division is to promote and sustain a high quality of life for older adults and adults with disabilities by offering a mixture of services, provided through the public and private sectors, which maximize personal choice, dignity, and independence.

Adult Protective Services (APS) responds to allegations of abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults. APS investigated 1,162 reports of abuse, neglect, or exploitation in FY 2022. There was a slight decrease in the number of investigations likely due to a decline in APS reports made by long-term care facilities and other community-based providers as they shifted their focus to COVID-19 disease prevention and mitigation of disease outbreaks.

Nevertheless, the substantiation rate (780) of reports requiring intensive service provision due to the acuity of clients' needs represent a full two-thirds of all investigations.

Adult Services provides ongoing supports so that older adults and adults with disabilities can remain safely in their homes and access community-based resources. In FY 2022, the number of Adult Services clients grew by 15 % over the previous fiscal year to 3,359 clients. Adult Services caseloads experienced consistent increases throughout the fiscal year, with the steepest increase occurring between January 2022 and June 2022. While caseload numbers initially stalled or decreased at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the program saw a significant increase in cases once the governor's stay at home emergency order was lifted.

As part of the Older Americans Act mandate, the **Area Agency on Aging (AAA)** collaborates with community partners to serve older adults so they can remain in their home with supportive services in place. In FY 2022, the Aging, Disability, and Caregiver Resources (ADCR) Line processed 20,795 interactions on multiple needs, an increase of 16 percent from FY 2021. Of the 20,795 interactions, 10 percent (2,177) were for consultations. ADCR staff, who speak six other languages (Korean, Spanish, Hebrew, Russian, Azerbaijani, and Turkish) provided support and resources through the intake line on 39 other need areas.

The **Volunteer Solutions** program plays a critical role in support of older adults, adults with disabilities, and caregivers in the Fairfax area by providing various volunteer opportunities. The program partners with nonprofits, schools, and private businesses to collaborate and coordinate volunteer opportunities. These services often fill important gaps that promote independent living and community inclusion, which are critical to the social and emotional well-being of older adults and adults with disabilities. Efforts to prevent and mitigate COVID-19 outbreaks coupled with the governor's stay at home emergency order led to a countywide pause on in-person volunteer opportunities. As a result, there was a significant reduction in the number of volunteers and the number of hours donated in FYs 2020 and 2021. In FY 2022, volunteers were welcomed back to in-person opportunities, and the program more than doubled the number of adults who volunteered (1,923) and increased the number of donated hours by 41percent (22,930). Additionally, several innovative hybrid volunteer opportunities are in place, further increasing the ability for volunteers to serve older adults, adults with disabilities, and their caregivers. The value of the Adult and Aging volunteer hours using the 2021 Virginia Average Hourly Volunteer hourly rate is \$30.80, which equates to \$706,244.





Adult & Aging Success Story

A 67-year-old, Korean-speaking woman needed help securing housing after her husband passed away. She was also diagnosed with colon cancer requiring chemo and radiation treatment. Her anxiety soared while experiencing the loss of her husband, loss of her home, and failing health. Jenny*, a DFS social worker fluent in Korean, interpreted the housing needs in the housing assessment, advocated for the client to ensure she received other services, and bridged the communication/language barrier the client had with her own adult children. Thanks to Jenny's assistance, the woman was able to obtain an emergency housing voucher and she moved into a newly renovated apartment which is in the area client wants to live. She is now able to focus on her cancer treatment. The client expressed gratitude to be able to move into stable housing and for all the supportive service she has received from APS. We are grateful to see this client thriving in our community.

*Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.



CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

The Children, Youth, and Families Division includes programs designed to protect children from harm, prevent child abuse and neglect, support families, and help them remain together safely for the long-term emotional and physical health of the children. These intervention services operate on a continuum from prevention through assessment, investigation, mitigation, and eventual cessation of abuse and neglect.

Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention

Supports families, particularly those at risk of child abuse or neglect, through community-based parent education and other family support services. Programs include Healthy Families Fairfax, Neighborhood Networks, Parenting Education Programs, and Volunteer and Partner Services, designed to provide early intervention to mitigate risks to children.

Child Protective Services

Protects children from parental or caretaker abuse and neglect by assessing their safety and risk of harm, and the family's strengths and needs. Practitioners provide support and connect families to services needed to help keep families safely intact. These services tend to be short-term, with early positive results.

Protection and Preservation Services

Prevents child abuse and neglect and preserves families by enhancing families' ability to provide safe, stable, and nurturing environments for their children. Practitioners provide clinical case management and support services to children living at home with their families. These services tend to be longer term, with the goal of avoiding family separation.

Family Engagement Program

Brings immediate and extended family members together through partnership meetings, kinship support, and father engagement, empowering them to make decisions regarding the safety, stability, and well-being of their children. Settings are family-driven and focus on family strengths.

Foster Care and Adoption Services

Provides placements and services for children who cannot safely remain with their families. Practitioners also provide services to children's birth families and resource families to enable children to return home safely, be placed with relatives, or be placed in adoptive families.

Foster Care and Adoption Resource and Support

Practitioners in this program recruit, train, and support foster and adoptive parents; match children with appropriate placements; help teens learn life skills and achieve permanency; and provide financial and supportive services, when needed, to adoptive and kinship/guardianship parents.

Quality Programs

Supports the CYF division through data analysis and reporting, program evaluation, continuous quality improvement projects, professional development, and project management.

CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

		FY 2020	FY 2021	FY2022
Child Protective Services	CPS Hotline Calls	13,102	11,005	13,318
	<i>Calls resulting in a CPS assessment or investigation</i>	2,113	1,878	2,701
Foster Care & Adoption	Number of children in care on last day of fiscal year	191	198	181

The Story Behind the Numbers

In FY 2022, the number of hotline calls was higher than the previous year and closer to pre-pandemic levels. This was most likely due to an increase in “eyes on children” as in-person education and extracurricular events resumed. DFS was successful in facilitating multiple media stories about community involvement in child abuse prevention and how to call the hotline. We also reached out to mandatory reporters to review and clarify the reporting process.

The number of calls resulting in an assessment or investigation increased as well. DFS continues to see an increase in the complexity of cases including those involving parental substance abuse and mental health disorders, and intimate partner and domestic violence.

The decrease in the number of children in foster care is likely due to an increased focus on diversion and increased support to families and extended families to allow children to remain safely in their homes.

In FY 2023, CYF will build on its success through four strategic priorities: 1) strengthening our clinical practice using the Safe and Connected™ practice model, 2) strengthening our professional development efforts through a major redesign of our Child Welfare Institute and enhanced focus on workforce recruitment and retention, 3) incorporating an equity lens into all we do, and 4) enhancing our efforts to engage relatives and keep children with their immediate and extended family whenever possible. Together, these four priorities are helping us achieve greater outcomes that ensure children’s safety and help families reach their goals.





CYF Success Story

The Burgo family* has provided foster care for a male youth for more than four years. They have provided the ideal mixture of being available to give James* guidance while he learns to make independent decisions. He came into their care at 16 years old, and their family has supported him through finishing high school and adjusting to college where James is now a senior. They've encouraged James to save money, so that he'll have a good savings account when he ages out of foster care. The Burgos have also helped James in negotiating his relationship with his biological family, and he now has a much-improved relationship with them. Even now that James is being served under Independent Living program, he still stays with the Burgo family on vacations from college. His college girlfriend has also visited with the foster family. They have provided him with a strong foundation to get started in his next phase of life.

*Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.



CHILDREN'S SERVICES ACT OFFICE

The Fairfax-Falls Church Children's Services Act (CSA) program administers a Virginia law that funds a continuum of child welfare, special education, and intensive mental health and substance abuse services for children and youth across multiple county agencies, the school system, and private treatment providers. Following a System of Care model, CSA supports child-serving agencies to help youth and families in our community access services and supports to meet their behavioral health care needs. As a part of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, the model for CSA promotes collaboration between agencies, schools, and the provider community for integration of service delivery for youth and their families with oversight by cross-agency management and leadership teams. The Cities of Falls Church and Fairfax are included in the scope of the program and contribute to the cost of serving participants from those jurisdictions.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES ACT OFFICE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY2022
Percent of children in CSA served in the community and not in a facility	91%	90%	84%

The Story Behind the Numbers

The Children's Services Act program is a mandated state program that combines state and local funding to purchase a continuum of specialized services. The CSA program staff along with other administrative staff from DPMM and DFS Fiscal Management staff support the provision of behavioral health care services across public human services agencies and the schools including child welfare, private special education, and intensive mental health treatment services. The local match rate varies by type of service but averages 46% of the cost.

COVID has had a significant impact on youth mental health nationwide. The acuity and complexity of youth mental health needs in the Fairfax-Falls Church community appears to have increased. Two areas have increased including the need for treatment of eating disorders and primary substance use disorders, particularly for opioids. CSA has been recruiting providers to meet these specialized treatment needs and expand the continuum of care. The leadership board, the Community Policy and Management Team, has approved new policies to expedite access to care for substance use disorders and hospital diversion. CSA has also continued to support DFS CYF in the implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) by contracting and coordinating eligible in-home evidence-based treatment services.

Although it was anticipated that referrals to CSA would increase, service delivery and utilization has been negatively impacted by difficulty with recruitment and retention of qualified staff. Private providers have waiting lists and/or offer reduced hours of services. Staffing limitations at the public agency level have impacted CSA referrals, resulting in reduced referrals from programs such as Child Protective Services (CPS) and Protection and Preservation Services (PPS). Fewer children have been served by CSA with a 10% and 2% reduction in FY 2021 and FY 2022 respectively. It is unclear if the number of youth served will return to pre-pandemic levels in FY23 and may be largely dependent on resolution of workforce issues.



Children's Services Act Success Story

Last year, Carl*, a teen, was hospitalized several different times, struggling with medication compliance, displaying high-risk and unsafe behaviors, and was being considered for admission into long-term residential care. Through many sacrifices and hurdles, the treatment team and the family continued to stay resilient for seven months to show Carl they would not give up on him and that he could achieve his goal of transitioning back home. This goal eventually came true when the team identified an appropriate group home called Gateway Homes, which assisted the client and family with identifying and achieving one of the biggest challenges of medication compliance. After achieving this goal, completing the program, and returning home, Carl and the family have continued to show fantastic progress and success including Carl successfully engaging in therapeutic services and being medication compliant. Carl has also shown fantastic progress in the school environment, in which he has shown interest in clubs and sports and also vocalized an interest in transitioning to a higher level of education after graduating next year in the spring. Mom has shown amazing progress throughout the past year, in which she has been able to grow as an advocate for Carl and improve her insight and understanding regarding the maturation of Carl's diagnosis. Mom has also been able to navigate and identify resources and services in Fairfax County to continue assisting the sustainability and stability of her son in the community.

*Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.



DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE SERVICES

The Domestic and Sexual Violence Services (DSVS) Division offers compassionate and comprehensive state-accredited programs for women, men, teens, and children who have been affected by domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and human trafficking.

Domestic and Sexual Violence Services

Provides a 24-hour crisis hotline, the Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP), advocacy, information, counseling, resources, and liaison for emergency shelter for victims and survivors of interpersonal violence. The division also provides countywide coordination to improve access to services and the community responses to interpersonal violence. DSVS provides intervention treatment to persons that do harm to family members. DSVS also provides education, outreach, and training on issues related to interpersonal and gender-based violence such as domestic and sexual violence, human trafficking, and stalking.

Advocacy Services

Enhances safety for victims of domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking through counseling, court education and accompaniment, and support accessing appropriate resources.

Community Engagement

Promotes awareness of the impact of interpersonal violence, including its overlap with other social determinants of health and wellbeing. The unit operates Fairfax County's Domestic and Sexual Violence 24-Hour Hotline and the LAP, and Hospital Accompaniment Support Advocates (HASA) provide support before, during, and after a forensic exam. Community Engagement provides programs and trainings focused on prevention and intervention strategies.

Coordinated Community Response

Engages human service and public safety agencies, as well as nonprofit organizations and community leaders, in identifying and implementing best practices, developing innovative prevention and intervention programming, and raising awareness of the prevalence and impact of interpersonal violence in our community.

Counseling Services

Provides short-term, individual, family, and group counseling to survivors of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, teen dating violence, and human trafficking.

Anger and Domestic Abuse Prevention and Treatment (ADAPT)

Offers violence intervention services for adults who have caused harm to household/family members or dating partners and violence prevention services for high-conflict couples.

Human Trafficking Services

Provides hotline services, advocacy, and counseling to victims of human trafficking. The unit works closely with other regional, county, and community groups to collect data, provide training, and develop response plans.

Stalking Services

Provides direct advocacy and counseling services for survivors of stalking either in person or through the Fairfax County Domestic and Sexual Violence 24-Hour Hotline. The unit provides training and technical assistance to allied professionals to increase their capacity to respond to survivors of stalking in their work.

DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE SERVICES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

		FY 2020	FY 2021	FY2022
Survivor Services Clients	(includes Advocacy, Counseling, Hotline, LAP, and HASA)	3,637	3,751	4,181
DV Emergency Shelter Admissions		361	356	361

Note: Client Counts are unduplicated within each service line but not across service lines.

The Story Behind the Numbers

DSVS works with communities to transform society's response to domestic violence, sexual violence, human trafficking, and stalking by challenging oppression, collaborating to inform policy, and providing all persons impacted by violence with equitable access to trauma-informed support, advocacy, education, and a space for healing.

Community measures indicate an overall increase in the number and severity of incidents of domestic violence in FY 2022. Fairfax County Police Department responded to 8% more domestic violence calls over FY 2021 and 32% more arrests due to strangulation were made. As of October 14, 2022, 36% of all homicides in Fairfax County were domestic violence related.

Combined Counseling and ADAPT saw an average of 176 clients per month in FY 2022 and Advocacy received 2,000 calls. Advocacy served nearly 1,000 clients, providing over 3,900 services. DSVS led 112 outreach, training, and education events in FY 2022.

DSVS continues to lead and actively serve on countywide workgroups and task forces designed to improve the systems' response to interpersonal violence. Due to DSVS' advocacy, county partners are working to enhance accountability and services to those that cause harm as a way to increase victim safety and have improved education and awareness about the dangers of firearms in relationships where domestic violence is present.

Survivors of interpersonal violence continue to experience unmet needs. As the cost of living continues to rise and wages remain flat, survivors continue to struggle to find and maintain stable, affordable housing for themselves and their families. While not all survivors need emergency shelter, there is a need for financial and rental support to rebuild economic security, reduce the risk of homelessness, and increase financial independence. The National Report Card on Education and Fairfax County Youth Survey both highlighted the educational crisis that students face and the mental health concerns that are top of mind for parents and children. These issues are compounded when survivors also are concerned about their physical and emotional safety. Survivors and their families benefit from low barrier, easy access to mental health and substance abuse treatment.





DSVS Success Story

Dara* had been in an abusive two-year marriage. She was finally able to get out, and she got a job. But the first day of the job, she got COVID. DSVS helped her with paperwork to get housing, helped with her finances, helped her retain a lawyer to handle her legal issues, and got her into therapy. Her struggles with mental health issues became worse during COVID.

Two months after this assistance, Dara just disappeared. When our advocate was finally able to reconnect, Dara said she hadn't left the house in weeks; she hadn't been able to shower. She was having trouble completing simple tasks. In addition, Dara was receiving threatening calls from her ex-husband. DSVS got her into a women's support group. We helped her update her resume. We helped her organize her finances.

Slowly, our advocacy started paying off. Initially very quiet in the women's support group, she's now one of the most ardent members. She's advising other women and even arranged a picnic for the ladies in the group. She's also back at work, happy, and beginning to thrive!

*Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.



PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES DIVISION

Helps eligible individuals and families apply for and receive financial, medical, and food assistance to meet basic needs as they transition to self-sufficiency.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Helps individuals and families with low income to purchase food.

Medicaid

Provides medical care for adults; people with low income; people who are blind or have other disabilities; pregnant women; children in need and their caretakers; and refugees when they first enter the U.S.

The Energy Assistance Program

Helps households with low income pay their heating and cooling bills.

The General Relief Program

Provides financial assistance to adults with low income who have temporary disabilities and to children in need living with non-relatives.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Provides temporary financial assistance to low-income families with children, as parents prepare for and seek employment.

Long-Term Services and Support

A unit of specially trained staff determines initial and ongoing financial eligibility for long-term care programs such as Medicaid and Auxiliary Grants.

The Health Access Assistance Team

Connects people in need with health care and a “medical home,” such as a federally qualified health center operated by Neighborhood Health or HealthWorks, and the Medical Care for Children Partnership (MCCP) program which is a public/private partnership to connect uninsured children with medical and dental assistance. The collaboration supports optimal utilization of health care resources.

Employment Services

Helps connect and prepare job seekers with employment and training opportunities through one-stop employment resource centers locally known as Virginia Career Works Centers. The program area offers employment workshops, occupational skills training, and job search assistance.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES DIVISION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

		FY 2020	FY 2021	FY2022
SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as Food Stamps)	Number of Recipients	54,501	61,057	66,399
TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)	Number of Recipients	3,587	3,469	4,445
Medicaid	Number of Recipients	153,949	163,942	185,954
Child Care Assistance	Unduplicated # of Children Receiving Child Care Assistance from State and Federal Dollars	2,996	2,785	3,529
Employment Services	Virginia Career Works Clients Served	24,480	29,598	37,662

The Story Behind the Numbers

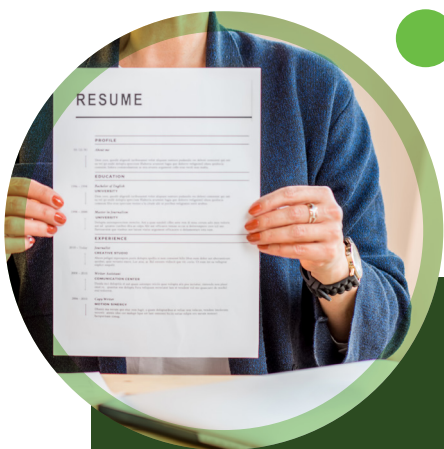
The PAES division plays a critical role in helping Fairfax County residents meet their basic needs. Although the economy improved in FY 2022 from the initial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals faced high inflation, decreased purchasing power, food insecurity, and health stressors. Many Fairfax County residents continued to seek the safety and security of the programs offered by the PAES division to help support themselves and their families.

Throughout the COVID public health emergency, many families struggled to meet their food needs and received assistance from the SNAP program. In June 2022, 51,699 individuals facing food insecurity received over \$12.8 million in SNAP benefits. The number of individuals receiving help with meeting their food needs increased by 17% from a year earlier. Boosts made to the SNAP program due to the COVID-19 pandemic remained in effect to include the issuance of SNAP emergency allotments which increased benefits to the maximum amount for each household with a minimum increase per household of \$95. This helped households participating in the SNAP program purchase healthy foods and freed up money for other basic expenses. In addition, during the emergency, the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) program, administered by the Virginia Department of Social Services in partnership with public schools, provided food benefits to families of school aged children who no longer had access to free or reduced priced meals. SNAP benefits play an important role in helping to ensure that Fairfax County residents lead a healthy life. However, rising inflation and increases in the cost of food, resulted in households experiencing an overall decrease in their food purchasing power. This is especially hard for the low-income households served by the PAES division who already struggle to put food on the table.

Participation in the Medicaid program rose throughout FY 2022, in large part, due to the continuous coverage requirement of the Families First Coronavirus Act (FFCRA) enacted during the public health emergency. FFCRA prohibited cancellation of any individual's health coverage except for a few specific reasons. This has helped thousands maintain coverage during the disruption of the pandemic, protecting them from interruptions in coverage and access to care. Medicaid was the primary source of health coverage for 185,954 low-income and disabled individuals during FY 2022.

As of June 2022, Fairfax County's unemployment rate is down to 2.5% from 10.2%, in February 2020. While our local labor market is near pre-pandemic conditions, the distribution of job loss during the pandemic disproportionately impacted low-income, people of color, women, and workers with lower levels of formal education and training. As a result, these job seekers are most in need of employment services to be marketable in today's labor market.

The pandemic work requirement waiver has continued for Virginia Initiative for Education and Work (VIEW) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAPET). Cases have remained steady since FY2021 as the programs remain voluntary for TANF and SNAP recipients. The TANF work requirement resumes January 2023, however the date for the return of the SNAP work requirement has not yet been announced. VIEW and SNAPET programs continue to make efforts to educate eligible public assistance recipients of the services available to participants.



PAES Success Story

Ms. Sanchez* came to SCSEP (Senior Community Services Employment Program) in March 2021 after being unemployed for a year due to the pandemic. SCSEP staff placed Ms. Sanchez at a host agency where she gained skills in peer recovery to add to her resume, then assigned her to the Reston Employment Center to complete her online job skills training tasks. The Reston Employment Center staff noticed her positive attitude, reliability, and great work ethic and knew she would be a great addition to assist in the Employment Center as a SCSEP trainee. She was assigned to the Center in July 2022 at the request of the professional staff and excelled in her duties. Ms. Sanchez assisted job seekers and provided support to professional staff and other SCSEP trainees. She continued her job search and was happy when an opportunity became available at the Reston Employment Center. She applied, was selected for an interview, and offered the position earning \$23 per hour. We are all proud of Ms. Sanchez for her persistence and work ethic and look forward to working with her as a colleague!

*Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

A FOCUS ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The ASSB wholeheartedly supports the efforts of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors with respect to affordable housing challenges and the impact on individuals and families in the county. Producing and preserving affordable homes is essential to the success of our community. Affordable housing is getting harder to find for Fairfax families with low to moderate income. Over the past year, the ASSB has focused on the intersection of affordable housing on groups facing vulnerabilities, such as older adults, survivors of domestic violence, and families with low income who have children. We learned about the various programs and services offered by the county from different departments.



Housing and Community Development

The Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) presented information about the range of housing types available in Fairfax County — ranging from emergency shelters to pathways toward homeownership. On the housing services continuum were an assortment of housing options and types, each critically important in different circumstances. Because of the efforts to increase access and options, HCD has seen a substantial reduction in homelessness, an increase in permanent housing beds, and a sharp increase in funding.

Neighborhood and Community Services

Neighborhood and Community Services shared with the ASSB information about the array of funding sources, emergency supports, and eviction prevention strategies. Programs such as emergency rental assistance and utility assistance allow residents to pay delinquent rent or utility payment and up to three months of payments into the future to maintain housing stability. As part of a comprehensive approach to eviction prevention, landlords can seek rent assistance in partnership with their tenants. These crucial services offer additional avenues to maintaining housing stability.

Department of Family Services

DFS addresses housing insecurity and stability by working with the cadre of internal and community supports to help residents access appropriate housing and the services needed to keep them in their homes. Individuals and families are assessed for housing needs and receive case management services to support housing stability and access, including ongoing advocacy throughout the process. DFS programs and services assist older adults, survivors of domestic violence, and families with children who are homeless or at risk of being homeless.

The Aging, Disability, and Caregiver Resource Intake Line connects individuals to Rental Assistance, HUD Housing, or other supportive services. Volunteer Solutions mobilizes and connects volunteers to opportunities supporting older adults, adults with disabilities, and caregivers with maintaining their housing environments. Services include trash removal, light housekeeping and organizing, minor household repairs, yardwork, grocery shopping, transportation support, social visitation and meaningful social engagement opportunities. The annual Helping Hands project aids individuals in preventing eviction from hoarding or unsafe conditions.

The Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program advocates for improving care and quality of life for those ages 60 and over who receive long-term care services in their homes. The Medical Respite Program provides care and support for individuals experiencing homelessness as they recover from an acute medical need. These services are provided in partnership with Fairfax County shelters, the Health Department, Office to Prevent and End Homelessness, and community-based nonprofit partners. Disability Rights and Resources maintains a list of accessible housing and apartment communities that provide reduced rent for participation in an affordable housing program.

The Adult Services Home-Based Care program offers a wide range of services and case management support to help people remain in their own homes. Adult Foster Care offers room and board, supervision, and special services to adults with physical or mental health needs. The local program is an alternative option to an assisted living facility.

Through the Domestic and Sexual Violence 24-Hour Hotline, crisis line specialists and volunteers assist with housing and financial needs and provide information and referrals to emergency and family shelters. Crisis line specialists provide referrals to Artemis House and Bethany House, shelters for victims fleeing domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking. They complete warm handovers to DSVS Advocacy Services, which connects individuals to housing-related support, including screening and assistance with shelter entry, and accessing financial needs and support to maintain housing.

DSVS has a dedicated housing and economic specialist who manages domestic violence referrals to the Rental Services and Supports Program and the Domestic Violence Supportive Housing Prevention Program. The specialist collaborates with the Department of Housing and Community Development, Northern Virginia Family Services, and Shelter House, Inc. to assist victims with housing support and stabilization.

The Children, Youth, and Families Division provides financial support to families through Family Unification Program Housing Choice Vouchers. This grant program is designed to maintain housing for families where housing insecurity is the primary factor in either the imminent separation of children, a delay in discharge of children from foster care, or where youth aged 18-24 will leave foster care within 90 days and are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

The Public Assistance and Employment Services Division supports housing stability by administering two limited assistance programs for families in crisis who are eligible for TANF or are receiving TANF. When there has been a temporary loss or delay in receiving income, the Diversionary Assistance program can provide short-term, one-time-only assistance to resolve a specific emergency or crisis related to basic needs, such as shelter expenses. The Emergency Assistance program can provide financial assistance to TANF eligible households that have experienced a natural disaster, fire, or are facing eviction.

These essential services, as well as others offered by DFS, help people live with dignity and improve their wellbeing, avoiding the need for more serious and expensive interventions later. Affordable housing is the basis for inclusive and diverse communities because it is the platform for individual and family wellbeing. Stable housing promotes economic self-sufficiency and upward mobility and promotes sustainable local economic growth.

Affordable housing is a critical challenge, and the need will continue to increase over the next 15 years. The ASSB believes more work remains to connect residents facing vulnerability and marginalization to appropriate housing and services needed to keep them in their homes. The alignment of resources, innovative land use and zoning policies, and the ongoing collaboration across county agencies, boards, authorities, and commissions is vital to effectively meeting the challenges ahead.



LOOKING FORWARD

As we look forward to 2023, the ASSB is mindful of four key trends in Fairfax County that we will be monitoring:

The unwinding of pandemic-era program waivers for various social services.

Changes in Medicaid will likely create unprecedented workloads for DFS Medicaid staff in an era of high staff vacancies. Pandemic-era SNAP provisions will continue to wind down, resulting in many families seeing a reduction in their benefits when the emergency allotment expires. We will be monitoring ongoing coordination among staff to ensure SNAP recipients are preparing for the decrease in benefits and have information to connect to other community resources for food if needed.

Demand for DFS services.

Demand will continue to hinge on the following key factors: increases in the number of people living below the poverty level; the continued, adverse impact of the coronavirus pandemic on people facing vulnerabilities; Medicaid expansion; the ongoing need for services related to child abuse and domestic violence; and an expanding older adult population. DFS is confident that these and other challenges can be surmounted with creative thinking and partnership with community organizations.

Continued funding.

The ASSB appreciates the maintenance of DFS baseline resources and that DFS continues to maintain high quality service delivery to clients and to meet state mandated processing timeframes. DFS has been able to achieve a high level of success and expand to meet demand as needed throughout Fairfax County because the programs remain fully funded.

Children and youth.

In 2023, the ASSB will focus on youth and child wellbeing to develop a shared understanding of the disparities that exist by race and gender, learn what children and young people need and want to be well, what local government is and should be doing to support them, and how the community will work together to create the conditions for all young people to thrive in Fairfax County. We hope our findings will be useful to DFS and partners outside of DFS and that our recommendations can be implemented in time.



FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
FAMILY SERVICES



Department of Family Services Main Number
and Public Assistance Customer Care

703-324-7500; TTY 711,

Monday through Friday,
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



DFSInfo@FairfaxCounty.gov

Please do not include confidential information.



FairfaxCounty.gov/FamilyServices/Office-Locations



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A Fairfax County Publication. 2/2023

*Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. To request reasonable accommodations or to receive this information in an alternate format, contact Kristina Jordan by email or call 703-324-7741, TTY 711.