



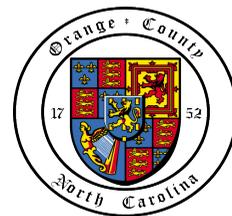
Orange County, North Carolina
Department of Social Services

ANNUAL REPORT

2006-2007



*B*uilding a stronger community...



Board of Directors:
Joe Robbins, Chair
Harold Russell, Vice-Chair
Valerie Foushee
Pat Garavaglia
Karen Long

2006-2007 Annual Report

The Orange County Department of Social Services provides needed crisis intervention and stabilization programs to low-income and at-risk children, adults and families in Orange County, North Carolina. While many segments of the population experienced low unemployment and generally good economic times during 2006-07, the low-income earners in Orange County continued to struggle to make ends meet and provide safe and stable lives for themselves and their children.

Many wage earning parents still found themselves unable to afford quality, safe child care for their children. Elderly and disabled adults on fixed incomes found it difficult to remain in their homes and meet their daily needs without costly support. Unemployed and low-income parents sought continued education and financial support to provide food, housing and utility services for their families. More than 10,000 Orange County residents requested assistance from the Department of Social Services in 2006-07. As this report will show, the agency responded by delivering a rich variety of targeted programs and services.

The Department of Social Services provided food and nutrition services, medical insurance, financial support for utility and housing bills, crisis intervention for at-risk and vulnerable children and adults, child care subsidies, and referral services to immediately alleviate thousands of dire situations for Orange County residents. Additionally, the agency sought to proactively involve individuals and families with preventative services and programs to avoid future problems. These included financial counseling, adolescent parenting programs, social work services, the provision of in-home services and case management.

None of this critical and necessary work could have been accomplished without outstanding staff, a compassionate and hard-working Social Services Board, great community partners, and the support and commitment of County Management and the Board of County Commissioners. It is thus with many thanks and great appreciation that the Orange County Department of Social Services presents the 2006-07 Annual Report.



Administration



Richard E. Whitted Building

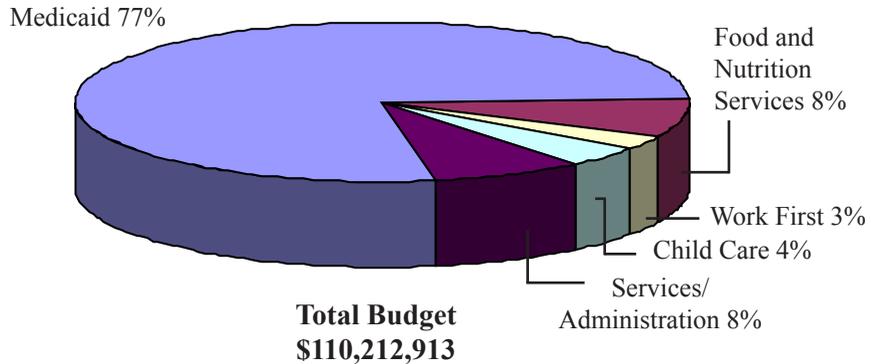


Southern Human Services Building

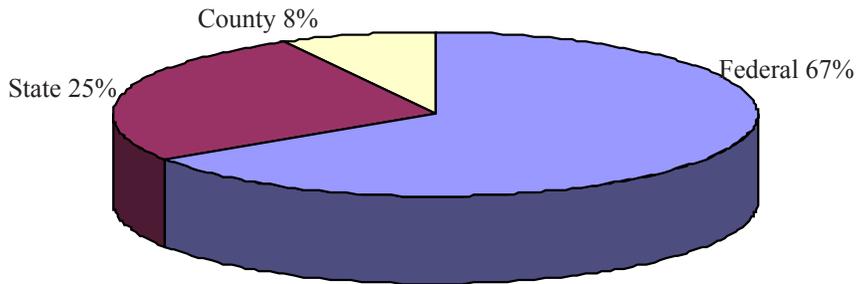


Skills Development Center

Social Services Budget 2006-2007



Share Comparisons 2006-2007



Contact Information

2501 Homestead Road
Chapel Hill, NC 27516
(919) 968-2000

Fax: (919) 644-3005

E-mail: dssinfo@co.orange.nc.us

Website: www.co.orange.nc.us/socsvcs/index.asp

300 West Tryon Street
Hillsborough, NC 27278
(919) 245-2800

Economic Services



Food and Nutrition Services

The Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Program is a federal program that provides a monthly allotment of FNS benefits issued via Electronic Benefit Transfer cards (EBT cards) that can be used like debit cards. FNS benefits may be used to purchase most foods at participating stores.

- 2,928 households were served monthly (average)
- 6,196 individuals were served monthly (average)
- \$7,157,038 in FNS payments were issued to local grocery stores

Emergency Assistance

Families who are experiencing a financial emergency may be eligible for financial help to pay for housing, utilities, food, gas, and/or medicine.

- Over 3,000 people were assisted
- \$464,911 total in payments were issued
- 56% of funding went toward paying clients' electric payments

Medicaid

Medicaid is a health insurance program for certain families and individuals whose income makes it difficult for them to afford health care. It is a publicly funded program governed by federal and state laws.

- 6,580 households were served monthly (average)
- 8,333 individuals were served monthly (average)

- 5% increase in caseload occurred from 2005-06

Health Choice

North Carolina Health Choice (NCHC) is North Carolina's health insurance program for children ages 6-19 who have no health insurance and whose family's income prevents them from affording health care, but who are ineligible for Medicaid.

- 904 children were served through Health Choice

Medicaid Transportation

Transportation services are available to Medicaid recipients to enable them to get to and from medical appointments.

- 6,651 trips were made to or from appointments

Low Income Energy Assistance Program

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) provides for a one-time cash payment to help eligible families pay their heating bills.

- 1,818 individuals and families were assisted
- \$59.85 was the average payment per family
- \$119,714 in total payments were issued

Financial Counseling

Financial counseling services provide financial literacy training and household management to recipients of Emergency Assistance.

- Over 300 families received counseling services

Economic Services



Work First

Work First is North Carolina's TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) plan to help families move from welfare into jobs. Work First provides assistance with job search, vocational training, day care, transportation and time limited cash assistance to families with children under age 18 who meet income and resource guidelines.

- 878 clients received Work First assistance monthly (average)
- 116 participants found employment
- 17 families received a vehicle through Wheels for Work
- 98% of recipients who left the program have successfully gained employment or enrolled in an educational institution.

Orange County Skills Development Center

The Orange County Skills Development Center (JobLink), located at 503 West Franklin Street in downtown Chapel Hill, offers labor market information, provides access to career training and job placement services, and serves as the connection between employers and qualified workers.

- 9,257 visits were made to the Center
- 490 clients found job placements
- 2,761 people received further education and training

Angela is a single mother who had a good, steady job at a hospital until she was involved in a serious car accident. During the course of her treatment, Angela became addicted to pain medication. Her addiction eventually led to a criminal conviction and the loss of employment. For several years Angela tried and failed to overcome her addiction with the help of treatment programs. Eventually, Angela found her way to the Work First program. Through the program she received encouragement to do the hard work that the treatment programs demanded. She was encouraged to reflect on her past and the abilities that she had displayed before her addiction. She was also given a vision of a hopeful future. With renewed energy and hope she completed her substance abuse treatment and enrolled in Orange County's Work First Enrichment Program. During the class Angela quickly became a star pupil. She was always on time, always cheerful, and always presented excellent work. She caught the attention of instructors and potential employers. Today Angela is working full time making \$10.00/hour, and has received excellent performance reviews from her supervisors.

Family Services

“Jailynn came to the agency in 1998. At that time, there was no way I could know the profound impact that this little girl would have on both my personal and professional life. I am so very proud of the young woman that she has become. I was charged with the wonderful, rewarding task of helping Jailynn grow from a very loud, “mouthy,” attitude-ridden child, to a very beautiful, and confident, young woman. She placed her trust in me and the foster care system in hope of finding a permanent home. She has taught me the meaning of hope, resilience, perseverance and strength. Her adoptive family, the Millers, have reminded me of the core belief that it is possible to make a difference in the life of a child, no matter how old or injured that child might be. My vocabulary is not large enough to express the admiration and gratitude that I feel for the Millers and their new daughter. I will always remember Jailynn as a symbol of what can be if we just believe.” ~ CPS Social Worker

Child Care Subsidy Program

The Child Care Subsidy Program provides low-income families with information and financial resources to find and afford quality child care for their children. Resources enable families to make informed choices regarding child care providers.

- 755 families were able to obtain child care
- 1,138 children were served
- 123 licensed child care providers participated
- 72% of cases were to support parents' employment
- Over \$4.4 million dollars were spent to subsidize child care

Child Protective Services (CPS)

The CPS staff investigate reports of abuse, neglect and dependency, and provide services to families around the clock.

- 1,284 children were assessed for abuse and/or neglect allegations
- 144 children were in DSS custody monthly (average)

Adolescent Parenting Program

The Adolescent Parenting Program provides services and support to teenage parents who are working towards remaining in school, delaying a second pregnancy, improving parenting skills, preparing for employment, avoiding abuse and neglect, and improving the health status of mother and child.

- 28 teens participated
- 7 teens successfully graduated from High School

*T*erri is a single mother in Orange County raising her six-year-old and four-year-old daughters. In 2003 she began receiving child care subsidy from the Orange County Department of Social Services so that her two daughters could attend a high quality child care program while she worked full-time to provide for her family. In the spring of 2005 Terri returned to school and enrolled as a full-time student in Alamance Community College's Dental Assistant program. She continued to work full-time while completing her degree. She received her degree, and in January Terri was hired as a full-time Dental Assistant, making a significantly higher income. The Department of Social Services' child care subsidy program enabled her to achieve her goals while providing her children with safe, high quality child care that helped prepare them to be successful in school.

Family Services



Adoption/Foster Care

The goal of foster parenting is to provide temporary care to the child while working toward reuniting the child with his/her birth family. Foster families help children feel secure and assist the child with the tasks of normal development. They also support the child's birth family toward reunification. When children are not able to return to their parents, adoption gives children in need of a loving family a permanent home.

- 16 adoptions were completed
- 65 licensed foster homes were available for children
- 15 new foster homes were licensed during the fiscal year

LINKS

The LINKS Program provides services to youth

in DSS custody ages 13 through 21. The focus is to help them prepare for lives as healthy adults by learning about budgeting, maintaining a household, and emphasizing the importance of education.

- 70 young adults received services
- 9 youth were enrolled in high school or GED programs and 5 were in post secondary education programs

School-based Social Workers

Through a partnership with the Orange County School System, the Department of Social Services provides trained social workers to work in the schools to provide preventative social work services to children and their families.

- 697 families were served
- 893 children received services

Having Family Specialists in the schools is all about making a difference. Chris is a fifth grader in the Orange County Schools System who was performing below grade level and having a difficult time adjusting to a new school. The Family Specialist stationed at the school met with his mother and found that the family had no transportation and was living with relatives in a crowded apartment. She assisted them in obtaining medical exams, which resulted in new glasses for Chris and his mother as well as extensive dental appointments for four members of his family. His mother had never gotten her license because she did not have glasses and could not see to pass the test. With the help of the Family Specialist, the family was able to find housing and affordable home furnishings. Chris's grades improved and he was able to pass his End of Grade tests.

Adult Services



Adult Services

The Adult Services Department administers programs that help to promote independence and enhance the dignity of North Carolina's older and disabled persons and their families through a community-based system of opportunities, services, benefits, and protections. These programs include Adult Protective Services, Placement Services, Guardianship, In-Home Aide Services, Day Care Services for Adults, and Long-term Care Placements.

- 21 clients received assistance to manage their own funds so as to pay bills.
- 69 clients were provided in-home services through the Community Alternatives Program (CAP) to avoid inappropriate placement into a nursing home.
- 29 clients who were in need of assistance with feeding, bathing and personal care were provided services in Adult Care Homes.
- 23 clients received services in their homes and were maintained with health support rather than entering a Group Home.
- 32 clients received assistance in finding appropriate group facility arrangements when they could no longer live in their own homes.
- 23 clients received Guardianship services.

Special Needs Registry

The Special Needs Registry is a voluntary database containing information about individuals in Orange County with special needs who may require assistance in the event of a disaster.

Veteran's Affairs

The Veteran's Services Office assists veterans and dependents in obtaining, retaining, or reinstating compensation, pension, medical, education, training, loan, insurance, and other applicable benefits and services.

Voter Registration

Clients at the Department of Social Services can register to vote or change their voting information while at the agency.

Volunteer & Donate



Adopt-A-Family Holiday Program

This program allows families working with Social Services to enjoy the holidays.

- 338 families received gifts
- Over \$16,000 was donated for agency families in addition to thousands of dollars worth of gifts

Summer Camp Program

The Summer Camp program allows low-income and/or special needs children to attend area summer camps.

- More than 100 children attended camp
- Over \$22,000 in donations were received

Day Care Sponsorship Program

Benefactors may choose to donate funds to sponsor families on the waiting list for day care subsidy. Donors can choose to designate the donation for employees of a specific business, members of a church or a specific family, or can donate to a general fund that is then matched by the county. 100% of donations go directly to costs of care.

Foster Care

Foster parents provide temporary care to a child in DSS custody. The agency is always in need of caring, committed foster families to care for these vulnerable children.

***T*hanks to our Community Partners, Donors and Volunteers...**

We could not do what we do without your constant support and assistance. Please know how greatly you are appreciated. Thank you so very much!

Even with the wonderful community support that exists for Social Services' programs and services, we still have ongoing volunteer and donor needs. Please consider helping in whatever way you can. We always have needs in the following programs:

Friends of DSS

Foster and Adoptive Parenting

Summer Camp Program

Day Care Sponsorship Program

Adolescent Parenting Program

Adopt-A-Family Holiday Program

Foster Children Donation Fund

For more information on any of these opportunities, call Sharron Hinton at (919) 245-2840

Highlights 2006-2007

- The Adopt-A-Family program was able to provide 338 families with clothes, toys, bicycles, and an array of other items.
- The Adolescent Parenting Program enabled 7 teenage mothers to graduate from high school.
- The Second Family Program was established by Mike Miles and his family to foster and nurture the self-development of adolescent, foster care youth in Orange County. Second Family provides a strong focus on personal, intellectual, and physical development. The program is based on a philosophy of “giving back” and provides subsidy for expenses such as tutoring, music lessons, dance lessons, and athletics. It also includes training/mentoring for development of social skills, and the development of “code of ethics” for youth.
- The Work First program provided services that helped 116 clients find employment and move off assistance.
- The Wheels for Work program provided cars for 17 participants.
- 114 elderly Orange County residents received in-home services instead of entering Nursing or Adult Care Homes.
- Funding for child care subsidy increased from \$3,946,852 to \$4,303,412 in 2006-07. This allowed 755 families to obtain subsidized child care to support employment. The number of children served increased from 1,025 to 1,138, and wait time for services declined from 15 months to approximately 3 months.
- Child Welfare helped strengthen families by increasing counseling and mental health services to CPS families.
- The agency continued to meet service demands by providing laptops with docking stations to field staff to increase efficiency and cut down on new staff requests.



Highlights 2006-2007

- The Orange County Work First Pilot increased the participation rate for the county more than 20%. Orange County's participation rate exceeds state standards for the Work First Program. The pilot includes a comprehensive 12 week enrichment training program with 2 weeks of work experience, on-the-job training/subsidized employment, enthusiastic and dedicated program support staff, and work incentives.
- 16 adoptions were finalized in 2006-2007, providing safe and loving homes to children in need.
- Assisted Guardianship allowed more children to enjoy a stable, permanent home. It provides subsidy payments to a guardian to allow a child to have a permanent home when neither reunification nor adoption is possible. Assisted Guardianship can be utilized when a child has been in agency custody for a year, and with one provider for at least six months, the continued placement with this caregiver is in the child's best interests, and meets the need for permanency and safety, the caregiver is willing to assume guardianship and provide a permanent home, and the Juvenile Court approves of the plan.
- The agency received a Best Practice Award from the North Carolina Association of County Directors of Social Services for the Child Welfare Equine Therapy Program.
- The agency received and/or participated in two special grant programs. "Real Men Rock" was a program done in partnership with Healthy Carolinians of Orange County and the University of North Carolina Hospital to provide educational materials to new and expectant fathers about the prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome. The agency worked with FRIENDS of DSS and the Strowd Roses Foundation to secure funding for new car seats and cribs for low-income parents.
- The agency recovered \$46,383 in overpayments to clients through Program Integrity efforts.



**Orange County Department of Social Services
300 West Tryon Street
P.O. Box 8181
Hillsborough, NC 27278**

Place
Stamp
Here