

ELIGIBILITY PROGRAMS

Food and Nutrition Services

The Food and Nutrition Services program ensures nutritious meals for low income families by providing a monthly allotment of food stamp benefits. The number of persons in a household and the income and resources of those persons determine eligibility for the program. The food stamps program is a federal entitlement program, so all eligible individuals and households can receive assistance.

963	Applications taken
2,940	Clients reporting changes in cases and annual re-certifications
1,380	Average monthly case load

Commodity Food Distribution Program

This program distributes USDA donated commodity food to low income households on a quarterly basis. Distribution is open to all households receiving Food Stamps. Also, non-Food Stamp households may apply, and if income eligible receive the food. Distribution is held on a quarterly basis and it is first-come, first-serve. This program is also held on the Qualla boundary five days per week (only if not receiving food stamps).

199	Average families served per distribution
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Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Work First

This program enables citizens to become self sufficient by linking them with resources and teaching them skills that help them succeed. Work First provides short-term financial assistance and support services to help low income families achieve economic independence. This program is based on the premise that parents have a responsibility to support themselves and their children. Related caretakers can apply for monthly cash assistance if they are caring for eligible children in their home. Income and resources are only counted for the child/ren and the relative caretaker must cooperate with Child Support.

14	Work First on-going applications
15	Relative caretaker applications (Child-Only)

Work First Emergency Assistance

This type of assistance is intended to help clients who find themselves in an immediate financial crisis. The assistance is limited to one time per year and amount is based on need. Income eligibility is based on 100, 150 and 200% of the poverty level depending on the program.

39	Benefit Diversion applications (100% poverty level and only one time within 12 mo. period)
245	Applications taken (150% poverty level)
42	Applications taken (200% poverty level)

Domestic Violence Funds

DV funds are disbursed to the county each year.

15	Applications taken FY 2011-12
\$8,644.00	Allocated amount for Swain County

Energy Assistance

Crisis Intervention Program (CIP)

This Federally funded program provides assistance to qualified households during extreme heating or cooling emergencies. Payments are made directly to the vendors for households experiencing life-threatening or health related emergencies due to weather conditions.

Share the Warmth (STW)

This is a program for Duke Power customers only. Share the Warmth can cover past due heating bills and other types of heating needs as well.

444	Applications taken
\$165,560.65	Total amount allocated FY 2011-12

Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)

This program provides a one time cash payment to help eligible families pay their heating bills. The program targets the elderly, disabled and low income families to supplement their heating needs.

107	Applications taken
\$32,000	Allocation FY 2011-12

Medicaid

Medicaid benefits and eligibility vary according to a persons circumstances. Medicaid provides assistance with medical expenses for low income families with children, disabled adults and the elderly.

3,040	Monthly average cases
1,776	Applications received
6,541	Reviews and changes made to cases

Health Choice for Children (NCHC)

NCHC provides medical assistance for uninsured children when the family income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.

153	Monthly average cases
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Medicaid Transportation (NCMT)

Transportation is arranged and provided for individuals who are requesting non-emergency medical transportation. Eligibility is determined based on Medicaid policy.

166	Monthly average clients transported
4,514	Trips per year

\$45,385.40	Gas stations (gas vouchers)
\$40,224.78	Swain Transit
\$19,534.00	EBCI Transit
\$105,144.18	Total Vendor Payments

Highlighted Accomplishments

- Weekly devotions were implemented in the spring of 2011. Ministers have volunteered their Wednesday mornings to speak with employees by delivering an inspirational message. We're thankful to the following ministers: Jon Stevens with Victory Baptist, Dr. Ben Bushyhead, Steve Jameson with Shoal Creek Baptist, Wayne Dickert with Bryson City United Methodist, Marty Pressley with Bryson City Church of God, Jeff Helpman with the Grove, John Tagliarini with First Baptist, Tom Harris with Jackson Line Baptist, Kevin Seagle with Catholic Church and Bo Parris with Big Cove Baptist Church.
- Tom Decker, Swain DSS Board Member, and Sam Patillo, Auxiliary Director for the Swain County School System partnered to advocate for the creation of a new collaborative, Assistant Director Sheila Sutton and Cindi Burns-Quinett assisted them with their effort by organizing meetings and contacting other agencies to gather support for the newly created committee called ACT, 'Agencies Coming Together'. One of their goals is aimed at lowering the drop-out rate by reaching children at a young age. Another goal is to establish an open line of communication between children's services workers and school personnel, while maintaining the client's right to confidentiality.
- Swain DSS adopted the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics, and all employees are expected to practice our profession within these standards.
- Swain DSS applied for and received \$50,400.00 to be used for Adoption recruitment and Foster Care training.
- Agency Wellness Program ("Health Nuts")- Employees can participate on a volunteer basis and the goal is to maintain physical and emotional well-being. The program includes a poundage, exercise, and mental health plan.
- Chatterbox- This Agency newsletter is distributed on a weekly basis and it updates employees on current news and events.
- The on-call schedule for after-hours protective services was modified to boost morale and reduce employee burnout.
- Supervisory staff completed management training that began in the spring of 2011. Board Member, Tom Decker met weekly with the supervisors to enhance the management skills of the group by improving teamwork and other areas of supervision. The text used for these sessions was: *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, by Patrick Lencioni. In addition, all supervisors have attended other management training by state and private trainers.
- High priority was placed on training in all program areas. All social workers are up to date with state required trainings in Children's Services.
- A Social Networking Policy was adopted by the agency to give employees guidance in the workplace to ensure adherence to confidentiality.
- North Carolina Social Services Association (NCSA) has partnered with the "Smoky Mountain Ride In" biker club to raise money each year to buy Christmas presents for of all our foster children. \$5,336.00 was raised for the 2011 Christmas season.
- Swain DSS upgraded the current phone system, which now enables the caller to contact their caseworker directly, thereby reducing the number of phone calls having to be directed by reception staff.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Under the Food Stamp Act and USDA policy, discrimination is prohibited also on the basis of religion or political beliefs.

Swain County Department of Social Services 2011 - 2012 Annual Report



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BOARD MEMBERS

Robert White, Chair • Thomas Decker, Vice - Chair
Dr. Ben Bushyhead • Georgianna Carson
Sarah Wachacha

Sheila Sutton, Interim Director

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

The Swain County Department of Social Services is the safety net for children and families in our county. The agency has vast responsibilities and strives to deliver direct services in a timely manner when dealing with adults, poverty, family violence, and exploitation of children. The Department of Social Services strives to provide citizens with resources and services to maximize their well-being and self-determination. The Swain County Department of Social Services Board would like to take this opportunity to assure the citizens of Swain County that the agency is both professional and responsible when meeting the needs of its citizens. These needs are met in the most efficient and cost effective manner possible. The department is on a path to becoming the model for other social service agencies in the state system. Management has undergone in-depth training during this fiscal year and the department places a tremendous importance on hiring qualified personnel. Additionally, the supervisors have participated in extensive management training strictly adhering to state mandates. The Department of Social Services staff has adopted the National Association of Social Workers "Code of Ethics". The Swain County Department of Social Services is currently under the direction of Interim Director, Sheila Sutton. The Swain County Department of Social Services Board supports Sheila in her endeavors. We are confident with her leadership skills as well as her abilities to provide future direction for our community.

This Annual Report provides you a summary of activities and trends of the Swain County Department of Social Services for the fiscal year 2011-12.

Robert White, Chairman
Swain County Department of Social Services Board

MISSION STATEMENT

The Swain County Department of Social Services has the responsibility to meet with clients at their point of need to provide preventive, supportive and restorative services delivered with competence and compassion while striving to strengthen individual and family life, to support independent living, and to improve the quality of human existence, protect vulnerable children, aged, disabled, and less fortunate in our community. These services will enhance skills, knowledge, and encourage self-sufficiency, dignity, and independence. We will work to preserve the honor and privacy of all people and provide programs of human welfare with the goal of improving the quality of life for the Citizens of Swain County.

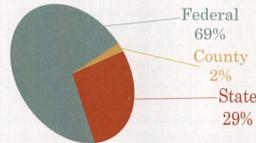
AGENCY GOALS

- Swain County DSS will run an effective, resourceful, knowledgeable, and ethical organization.
- Children and families at risk of abuse, neglect, and poverty will live in safe, healthy, and stable environments.
- Economically disadvantaged families will become self determined and not remain dependent on public assistance.
- Families experiencing economic hardship will obtain financial assistance to alleviate short term crisis.
- Aging and disabled adults will be safe and live in the least restrictive settings.
- Swain DSS will collaborate with sister agencies to ensure services are accessible to all Swain County citizens.
- Swain DSS will keep the community informed of all programs and services offered at DSS.

Support Services

16,023 Walk-ins FY 2011-12
39,852 Phone Calls for FY 2011-12

Revenues FY 2011-2012

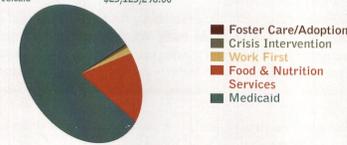


Federal \$22,288,902.00
State \$ 9,500,177.00
County \$ 497,030.00

Expenditures FY 2011-2012

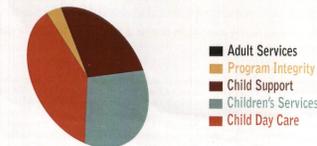
Public Assistance

Foster Care/Adoption \$142,403.00
Crisis Intervention \$185,754.00
Work First \$395,477.00
Food & Nutrition Services \$5,286,279.00
Medicaid \$25,125,296.00



Service Programs

Adult Services \$1,903.00
Program Integrity \$49,988.00
Child Support \$295,905.00
Children's Services \$373,104.00
Child Day Care \$430,000.00



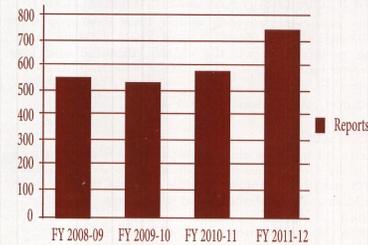
SERVICE PROGRAMS

Child Protective Services

Investigates reports of suspected child abuse, neglect and/or dependency. Services are provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

730 Reports investigated
50 Assists provided to other counties

Responses to Abuse, Neglect & Dependency



In-Home Services

Provides a continuum of care to families in an effort to protect children when abuse and/or neglect have been substantiated. Social workers connect family members with services designed to eliminate risk factors and promote stability resulting in permanency for children.

49 Monthly average cases

Child Support

Child Support Enforcement is a state mandated, county administered program. Federal law requires that all states establish and collect child support to ensure that both parents support their children.

Services provided

- Location of non-custodial parents
- Paternity establishment for children born outside of Marriage
- Establishment of support obligations
- Collection and distribution of support
- Enforcement of support obligations

457 On-going cases
\$76,250.66 Monthly average collections
\$10,069.82 Incentive Payment

Foster Care Services

Children are placed in the care of the agency via court ordered custody, voluntary placement agreements, or release for adoption. Permanency planning ensures a plan of care targeting the most goal oriented and least restrictive environment for children in achieving one year to permanency.

43 Monthly average of children in care
6 Home Studies completed
1 Adoption completed
25 Children reunified with family

Adult Protective Services

Ensures that elderly and disabled citizens live healthy, independent and productive lives free from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Protective Services provides an immediate comprehensive assessment of abuse, neglect and exploitation reports. Protective Services are provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

85 Reports taken
25 Outreach

Guardianship Services

DSS is looked at by the courts as a "Disinterested Public Agent". As a result, the court appoints Social Services as guardian for the elderly or disabled adults who are mentally incompetent, they cannot make responsible decisions concerning their personal care and finances and when no other family member is available to act on their behalf.

18 Guardian cases

Protective Payee Services

DSS provides case management for clients who have been deemed unable to manage their own finances. The Court, Social Security or the Veteran's Administration has the authority to appoint DSS as the Protective Payee.

22 Payees FY 2011-12