

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Talbot County
Department of Social Services





GRAY HARE

VISION

We envision a community where people independently support themselves and their families, and where individuals are safe from abuse and neglect.

MISSION

We assist people in economic need, protect children and vulnerable adults, and promote the safety and well-being of the residents of Talbot County.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- We will preserve the Department's and individual's dignity by respecting diversity, promoting self-determination and ensuring confidentiality.
- We recognize that employees are our greatest asset.
- We will ensure customers receive timely and equitable access to services.
- We will support and value a culture of health, well-being and safety.
- We will educate the public regarding our role in the community and the challenges customers face.
- We will collaborate with community partners to insure delivery of comprehensive services.
- We will advocate for needed State and Local services for customers.

FY 2018 TALBOT COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICE BOARD MEMBERS

Laura Heikes, Chair
Kate Stinton, Vice Chair
Corey Pack, County Council
Kindel Kimball
A. Thomas Duncan, III

Berenice Orellana
Daphan Smith
Mary Gregorio
Rabbi Peter Hyman

Message from the Director

Friends and Colleagues,

Welcome to the Talbot County Department of Social Services (TCDSS) Fiscal Year 2018 Annual Report! This was a year of accomplishments for us, and I'd like to highlight just a few.

First, TCDSS was successfully re-accredited by the Council on Accreditation. Since 2003, TCDSS has earned this distinction, which confirms that our organization and our programs continue to meet best practice and quality standards in administration and management, our service delivery environment and in all areas of service delivery. We received exceptional and highly complimentary feedback from our reviewers and welcomed that input after the year-long process leading to the final re-accreditation decision.

This year, we completed work under the 2015-2018 strategic plan. Highlights of that plan include the launch of the TCDSS Facebook page (Like Us at www.facebook.com/TalbotDSS), increases in child support collections, expanded community outreach, increased focus on employee wellness, and building our capacity to serve our multicultural community. We also developed our next 3-year plan, working with a team that included staff from all areas of the organization. This new plan reflects the current needs of both our organization and our community by focusing on retaining competent and skilled employees, educating our workforce in areas relevant to the current practice environment, preparing for new technology that will modernize the way in which we work, increasing our prevention focus in the community, and continuing to increase our capacity to serve Talbot County's non-English speaking residents.

With an eye on prevention and community needs, TCDSS was able to expand its Nurturing Parenting Program (NPP). Nurturing Parenting is a family-centered trauma-informed initiative that promotes positive, healthy interactions between parents and their children by building nurturing parenting skills as an alternative to abusive and



neglectful parenting and child-rearing practices. Weekly sessions provide dinner, child care, education and support. While NPP has operated for some time, this year we were able to engage bilingual facilitators for Spanish-speaking families, as well as provide a program for parents of adolescents. Future sessions for families in substance abuse treatment and recovery are planned.

Additional prevention focus and community engagement is reflected in our support of the Primary Project. Delivered by Channel Marker in Talbot County Public Schools, this evidence-based program helps students in Pre-K through third grade with early school adjustment difficulties gain confidence and social skills and focus on learning. Through this 12-15 week program of structured play, children build skills that will help avoid greater adjustment difficulties in the future.

The following pages will provide more detail and highlight the many other ways in which we have continued to meet individual and community needs. As I have said many times, and will continue to say, it is through the hard work and commitment of the TCDSS staff with the support of our Social Service Board and community partners, including government agencies, non-profit and faith-based organizations, resource families, generous individuals and our county government, that we are able to serve the residents of Talbot County. It is with the deepest gratitude for each individual and community contribution that I offer this brief overview of our 2018 accomplishments.

Linda Webb, LCSW



ACHIEVEMENTS

- TCDSS was successfully re-accredited by the Council on Accreditation confirming that our organization and our programs continue to meet best practice and quality standards set forth by COA in the areas of:
 - Administration and Management (financial and human resources management, ethical practice, risk prevention and management, performance and quality improvement);
 - Service Delivery Environment (client rights, personnel development and supervision); and
 - All areas of service delivery (all child welfare, adult services and workforce development programs)
- TCDSS continued its role as a partner in the Thrive@25 grant through which the region is developing and implementing key strategies to end and prevent homelessness among youth with a child welfare history. This federal grant includes the University of Maryland, the National Center for Housing and Child Welfare, and the Mid Shore Departments of Social Services. One intervention being implemented, Achieve My Plan (AMP), is a youth engagement model that helps young people set goals, then work with their social network to achieve those goals. Through this planning process, young people are better

positioned for their transition from foster care into adulthood. This year, many of our foster care staff and transition planning facilitators were trained and certified in AMP.

- TCDSS continued its role in the Talbot County Language and Cultural Competence Steering Committee. In this role, we supported 21 cultural competence trainings and two state level conference presentations. The committee also supported the 40-hour “The Community Interpreter International” training in partnership with Chesapeake College. The program graduated 25 interpreters that are available in the community for service.
- Nurturing Parenting, a series of workshops that teaches positive parenting behaviors, was conducted 3 times serving a total of 25 children, 7 adolescents, and 29 parents with 387 units of personal contact. In FY 2018, this parenting education program was expanded to meet the needs of our growing Hispanic community. Based on a need identified by the Hispanic community, we offered the Nurturing Parenting Program for Parents and Adolescents, facilitated by bilingual staff. We also began providing a Nurturing Parenting group at the local shelter and continue offering the program for women at the detention center. Training was completed to prepare the facilitators to offer Nurturing Parenting for Families in Substance Abuse Treatment and Recovery in the upcoming fiscal year.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- The 10th annual Back to School Resource Fair was held with the support of Talbot Community Connections, a non-profit organization that fills service gaps identified by TCDSS.. 307 cinch sacks stuffed with school supplies were distributed to children in Pre-K through 12th grade. An additional 93 cinch sacks were donated to the St. Michaels Community Center, Talbot County Health Department Immunization Clinic and Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center. We had 11 community vendors attend the event and provide information and giveaways to our customers.
- Staff participated in 25 community outreach events. These events included Hill Day, BAAM festival, the Multicultural festival and Boonanza.

- TCDSS provided 662 gently used books and 73 new books to children and families by making these free resources available in our lobby.
- The third annual Senior Summit, a day of education and activities related to aging and aging issues and hosted by Talbot Community Connections with support from TCDSS, was held at the Talbot County Community Center with over 225 attendees.
- TCDSS continued to support community recovery houses by providing food, personal care items, and household items.
- TCDSS partnered with St. Vincent de Paul, the Presbyterian Church of Easton, the Neighborhood Service Center and Chesapeake Women's Health Center to distribute over 110 food baskets and/or bags of food to families over the holiday season.
- Through strong partnerships with many community agencies including: Talbot County Health Department, Neighborhood Service Center, Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center, St Vincent de Paul, Legal Aid, Mid Shore Pro Bono, Mid Shore Behavioral Health, Affiliated Sante Mobile Crisis and others, TCDSS was able to assist approximately 15 families in their relocation efforts necessitated by the Talbot Trailer Park closure. Relocation efforts included: conducting community meetings, linking individual tenants to various resources, as well as proving financial resources to cover related moving expenses.
- In partnership with Talbot County Public Schools and Channel Marker, TCDSS was able to expand the Primary Project to serve an additional 7 children. The Primary Project is a national evidence-based program that helps children in Pre-K through third grade adjust to school, gain confidence and social skills, and focus on learning; thereby, increasing their chances for success.
- TCDSS provided financial and staff support to the first annual Talbot Community Resource Expo.
- TCDSS delivered Empower Me, a personal safety program for children and adults, 17 times, reaching 236 children and 47 adults.
- TCDSS operated Getting Ahead in A Just Gettin'-By-World, a program to promote resource-building for individuals in poverty with the goal of moving from "just gettin' by" to "gettin' ahead". Getting Ahead was funded by a Talbot Family Network grant and managed by TCDSS. In Fiscal Year 2018, extensive outreach and program development was completed, resulting in 46 individuals graduating from the program

with a 94% reported increase in overall stability after completion of the program.

- More than \$10.8 million was funneled into the local economy through the following Federal and State programs:
 - \$5,810,649 through Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP), Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA), transportation and programs that meet families' emergency needs.
 - \$3,158,775 through child support collected and disbursed to children and their families.
 - \$1,817,864 through funding that supports foster care, adoptions and meeting the needs of children and their families.
- TCDSS increased its use of social media. The agency Facebook page currently has 273 followers, 268 likes and a reach of 1,200 users.
- TCDSS partnered with the Neighborhood Service Center and Webb's Hope to offer an efficiency apartment reserved for emergency housing for current and former foster youth throughout the Mid Shore region.
- TCDSS collaborated with faith-based organizations, businesses and individuals to provide holiday assistance to Talbot County residents. These community sponsors assisted 46 families with a turkey, a box of food and fixings for Thanksgiving. Christmas sponsors assisted 260 individuals and families. In addition, TCDSS received 173 applications for the Brighter Christmas program.



CHILD WELFARE AND ADULT SERVICES

The Child and Adult Services Division works together with county residents and community partners to protect, stabilize and strengthen families. We have continued to focus on strategies that promote the safety and well-being of the children, families and adults we serve while promoting their independence and self-sufficiency.

Child Protective Services and Consolidated In Home Services

Child Protective Services responds to allegations of child abuse and neglect. Consolidated In Home Services works with families to provide stabilization services with the goal of minimizing risk and reducing future out of home placement. Consolidated Services also includes Risk of Harm cases, substance exposed newborn cases and 30-day assessments.

From July 2017 through June 2018, we:

- Held 39 Family Involvement Meetings (FIMs) with family members and their support networks at key child welfare decision points for families receiving In Home and Out of Home Services
- Provided Family Preservation Services to 10 families and 16 children.
- Provided Consolidated Services to 21 families
- Responded to 44 reports of child abuse or neglect using an investigative response
- Responded to 65 reports of child abuse or neglect using an alternative response
- Conducted 74 assessments for risk and In Home Services

Talbot County Children's Advocacy Center

The Talbot County Children's Advocacy Center (TCCAC) provides a multi-disciplinary response to allegations of child abuse. Within a child focused setting, TCCAC ensures that victims of child sexual abuse or assault and their non-offending caregivers have access to support services in a safe, culturally respectful environment.

From July 2017 through June 2018, we:

- Served 62 children at the CAC by conducting 51 forensic interviews and 11 medical exams. The CAC's services are utilized throughout the Mid-Shore region:
 - 11 Medical exams:
 - Caroline: 6
 - Kent: 1
 - Dorchester: 2
 - Talbot: 2
 - 51 Forensic Interviews:
 - Talbot: 49
 - Kent: 1
 - Dorchester: 1
- Prosecuted 4 cases, 3 of which resulted in the conviction of the maltreater. In the fourth case, a plea deal was reached.
- Sent members of the multidisciplinary team to 57 trainings, including sessions on cultural competency, sex offender interviews, leadership, sexual behaviors in youth, trauma, and parenting training.
- Facilitated a group for girls between the ages of 14-17.
- Hired a bilingual family advocate, who attended interpreter training and advocacy training.



Foster Care, Adoption and Respite (Out of Home Services)

Out of Home Services provide safe, stable and temporary out of home placements for children who can no longer remain in their own homes. With the goal of permanency for children, placement options include adoption, placement with a relative, reunification with biological family and/or caregivers, and Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA).

From July 2017 through June 2018, we:

- Provided foster care services to 22 children.
- Served 19 children with a total of 507 nights of respite through Option Respite, which provides parents with scheduled and emergent short-term child care services that offer temporary relief, improve family stability, and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect.
- Provided 4 potluck dinners and trainings, regional resource parent conference, and 4 appreciation events for our licensed Resource homes to offer Resource families required training hours, as well as an opportunity for fellowship and relationship building.
- Maintained 16 licensed Resource homes. Adults licensed as resource home providers undergo extensive training and evaluation before they may provide foster, respite and adoptive services.

Adult Services

Adult Services provides vulnerable adults, age 18 and over, with professional services to protect their health, safety and welfare, and to prevent or remedy neglect, abuse or exploitation.

From July 2017 through June 2018, we:

- Completed 103 Adult Protective Services investigations and assessments.
- Provided 288 units of personal contact in Adult Protective Services continuing care.
- Provided 276 units of personal contact in In-Home Aide Services continuing care.



- Provided 300 units of personal contact in Social Services to Adults continuing care.
- Provided services that supported the ability of 98% of the adults served to remain safely in the community.
- Maintained 4 providers of Project Home, a supportive housing program for persons with mental illness or other disabilities, offering an adult foster family model of care that provides a stable, family-like living arrangement in the community.

FAMILY INVESTMENT SERVICES

Family Investment provides income supports to those in need. We assist with Food Supplements, Cash Assistance, Medical Assistance, Long Term Care Medical Assistance, and Emergency Assistance. Our programs help the residents of Talbot County maintain healthy households while they work toward independence. In addition, our Work Opportunities Program provides employment readiness and job placement services.

From July 2017 to June 2018, we:

- Served a monthly average of 76.5 Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) households who received a total combined annual grant of \$431,341.
- Facilitated 75 full-time job placements for individuals receiving TCA.
- 33 of the total job placements paid a wage of at least \$10.00 per hour.
- Served a monthly average of 2,364 households receiving Food Supplement benefits who received a combined annual total of \$5,722,178.
- Assisted 145 residents with Long Term Care Medical Assistance.
- Served a monthly average of 2,190 residents with Community Medical Assistance.
- Assisted 33 households with Emergency Assistance for Families with Children who received a combined annual total of \$12,523.
- Served a monthly average of 10 individuals with Public Assistance to Adults who received a combined annual total of \$11,693.
- Assisted an average of 64 Temporary Disability Assistance Program recipients who received a combined annual total of \$141,483.

CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

The Child Support Program is federally funded and requires that each state establishes standards to measure the effectiveness of the program. Performance is measured in the areas of paternity establishment, child support order establishment, collection of current child support and payment on arrears.

From October 2017 through September 2018 (Federal Fiscal Year 2018), we:

- Collected and disbursed to families and children \$2,571,716 in current child support.
- Collected 71.47% of current child support due.
- Ranked third in the State for percentage of collections in cases with arrears owed.
- Collected payments on arrears in 76.31% of cases with arrears owed.

The Child Support Program is supported by the Talbot County Young Fathers/Non-custodial Parent Employment Program (NPEP). This program provides one-on-one case management services to non-custodial parents aimed at identifying, assessing and addressing barriers to self-sufficiency and employment. NPEP provides referrals to community partners for services in the areas of behavioral health, substance abuse, job readiness and employment resources. In State Fiscal Year 2018, we:

- Enrolled 52 parents.
- Assisted 45 individuals with securing full-time employment.
- Supported 73% of those who secured employment in retaining that employment for more than 90 days.
- Facilitated the collection of \$125,399 in child support from NPEP participants.
- Provided the Jolly Rogers Annual Celebration of Families Event, funded by Talbot Community Connections, for 9 families consisting of 14 adults and 32 children.

Funding for the Young Fathers Program provides the opportunity to conduct outreach classes for fathers incarcerated at the Talbot County Detention Center. Utilizing the evidenced-based curriculum Inside Out Dad, the goal of this program is to reduce recidivism. In FY 2018, this program was expanded by 36 classes with funding provided by the Talbot County Detention Center. Certificates are awarded at 4-class intervals for participation at 3 levels: Introductory, Intermediate and Advanced. Guest



presenters included the Child Support Supervisor, Imagination Library, and Mid Shore Community Mediation. Group members decorated cookies and made Christmas cards for their children in December 2017. In State Fiscal Year 2018:

- 78 classes held.
- 32 men were served.
- 25 men were awarded Introductory Certificates.
- 21 men were awarded Intermediate Certificates.
- 15 men were awarded Advanced Certificates.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

The Administrative Division facilitates quality service delivery to our customers and our community by supporting TCDSS employees in the areas of human resources, budget management, accounting operations, procurement and purchasing, fleet operations, information technology and communications, inventory and supply management, facilities and lease management, and security services.

From July 2017 through June 2018, we:

- Provided support to 71 individuals, including TCDSS employees and

- 1 Talbot County Health Department employee who provides addiction screening onsite
- 2 MD Department of Human Services Central Office employees who work onsite
- 3 individuals employed by the University of Maryland as a part of the Thrive@25 grant
- Supported employees in continued professional development
 - 1 employee earned a Licensed Graduate Social Work (LGSW) license
 - 2 employee earned a Licensed Certified Social Worker- Clinical (LCSW-C) license
 - 3 employees pursued their Masters of Social Work (one graduation)
- Recruited for 21 vacant positions and filled 18 positions
- Promoted 9 individuals

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (CQI)

Quality in the human service field is more important than it is in manufacturing. In the latter you can easily throw away or rework the flaws. In human service we do not have that luxury. We must strive to make it right the first time, every time. A multi-faceted approach has therefore been developed at TCDSS, which includes a CQI Central Council working with Performance Improvement Teams from each program area. The precepts are communication, evaluation, planning, training, staff empowerment, and teamwork. Participation is considered critical to an effective CQI process. All staff members are encouraged to participate in CQI activities.



From July 2017 through June 2018, we:

CQI-CENTRAL COUNCIL (CQI-CC)

- Delivered the Annual All Staff Day and CQI training.
- Implemented a new Staff recognition program, which recognizes



years of service and acknowledges employees' Commitment to Excellence on a quarterly basis.

- Provided CQI orientation and welcome binders to new Performance Improvement Team facilitators.
- Reviewed and acted upon a total of 12 Care to Shares (staff suggestions). Responses are made available to all employees.
- Partnered with the Management Team and the Social Services Board to develop the agency's 2019-2021 strategic plan.

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT TEAMS

Child Support Improvement Team (CSIT):

- Provided Early Intervention services to a total of 45 cases, 28 of which continued payment.
- Targeted 165 cases that were behind in their child support, paying 80% or less of their current obligation. The total current support obligation due for these cases was \$65,488; however the total paid was \$128,622, thereby reducing the amount of past due child support. These collections were derived from contacting Non-Custodial Parents to resolve Driver's License Suspension issues, working the Delinquency Report to secure a lump payment, employment information and schedule non-paying individuals for court and as a result of the Offset Program.
- Completed 110 of 117 modification of child support orders.

Family Investment Improvement Team (FIIT):

- Held an FIA team-building retreat, which included training on Self Care and Mental Health in the Workplace.
- Expanded the use of technology in customer service through email and text message reminders of outstanding verifications and appointments.
- Updated our Local Resource Guide to provide current community information for our customers.
- Evaluated and modified internal processes to support the successful launch of the Long Term Care Medical Assistance module in MD Think.

General Administration Improvement Team (GAIT):

- Created a Standard Operating Procedure and trained front desk and backup staff to ensure optimal front desk coverage and standardized processes and procedures for consistency in customer service.
- Celebrated Customer Appreciation Week in December by giving snowman ornaments to customers.

Services Excellence Team (SET):

- Supported the third annual Senior Summit.
- Developed and implemented templates for documenting face-to-face contact that are consistent with the needs of each Child Welfare unit.
- Held Annual Self Care retreat at Camp Pecometh that included kayaking, nature walks, crafts, guided meditation and Yoga.
- Celebrated Social Work Month in May.
- Regularly shared information on education and training opportunities.

October 2018 Customer Service Excellence Awards



L to R: DHS Chief of Staff and Deputy Secretary for Strategy and Administration Craig Eichler; TCDSS Director Linda Webb; TCDSS Supervisor Susan Merriken; DHS Secretary Lourdes Padilla; TCDSS Family Preservation Social Worker and Customer Service Excellence Awardee Keontae Murray; TCDSS Assistant Director Diane Shaffer; DHS Deputy Secretary for Operations Greg James.

Talbot County Young Fathers/NPEP Employment Programs Annual Family Celebration



At Jolly Roger Amusement and Water Park, Ocean City Maryland



Mid Shore Fresh Start's 2018 Getting Ahead Graduation



Resource Family Volunteer, Shameira Jenkins, Face Painting a the 2017 Appreciation Crab Feast



Talbot Goes Hollywood All Staff and Continuous Quality Improvement Day, May 2018



TCDSS Management Team with COA Accreditation plaque



Scharf family Adoption of sibling set of 5



**TALBOT COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

301 Bay St. Unit #5

Easton, MD 21601

Phone: 410-770-4848 Fax: 410-820-7117

www.dhs.maryland.gov



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Lourdes R. Padilla, Secretary