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RUTHERFORD COUNTY

Department of social services

“Committed to Providing Essential Services”

ANNUAL REPORT

2012-2013

Mission Statement

To support, protect, and enhance the quality of life in Rutherford County by partnering with families and the community to provide needed services and meaningful opportunities for our citizens.

Vision Statement

Rutherford County DSS is an agency that partners with all county citizens to promote a safe, healthy, self-reliant, economically secure community where citizens are empowered to improve the quality of their lives.

Core Values

Service: To provide services in a prompt and respectful manner that are responsive; ethical; effective; fair; and consistent with governing laws, rules and policies while utilizing county resources in the most efficient manner.

Flexibility: To always look forward and adapt services to the ever changing needs of the community and provide consumers with the information to better serve those needs.

Accountability: To accept responsibility for our actions and behaviors and be accountable to each other, consumers, and to the community for professional conduct and the responsible use of tax payer dollars.

Integrity: To always serve the community and employees with honesty, fairness, and respect.

Diversity: To recognize and respect differences and values among all people without regard to race, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation or disability.

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PO Box 242

Spindale, NC 28160

828-287-6165

Visit us on the web: www.rutherfordcountync.gov/socialservices

RAM HIGHLIGHTS

registered 651 people to vote.

- Investigated or assessed 913 reports of child abuse/neglect involving 1594 children. Of this number, 318 children were substantiated as abused and/or neglected; 36 children were found to be in need of services, 36 children were provided services during the assessment and services were recommended for 124 cases.
- Provided in-home treatment to 132 families.
- Took 44 children into custody by court order. Services were provided to a monthly average of 97 children in foster care.
- 345 Child and Family Team Meetings were held to help guide families through issues related to Child Protective Services and Foster Care involvement.
- Supported 26 eligible Rutherford County DSS foster care youth through the North Carolina *Foster Care Independence Program*, LINKS.
- Provided Independent Living Transitional Funds for 32 aged-out foster care youth.
- Conducted 3 Model Approach to Positive Parenting (MAPP) classes for prospective foster and adoptive parents.
- Licensed or re-licensed 9 foster homes for children and trained 27 prospective foster and adoptive families through *Model Approach to Positive Parenting (MAPP)*.
- Placed 23 children in pre-adoptive homes and finalized 19 adoptions of children in our custody and 19 private or step parent adoptions.
- Subsidized child care for an average of 599 children per month at an average cost of \$215,434 allowing parents/caretakers to maintain employment, attend school, or receive job training; and maintained a waiting list for an average of 408 families waiting for subsidized child care services.
- Investigated 61 reports of abuse, neglect and exploitation of elderly/disabled adults. Of those, 5 consumers were determined to be abused, neglected or exploited and were provided protective services.
- Monitored a total of 16 Adult Care Homes.
- Served as court-appointed guardian for 20 adults and served as protective payees for 11 individuals.
- Collected \$4,801,121 in child support payments for children, located 730 absent parents, established 415 support obligations, and initiated 5,347 enforcement actions. Child support enforcement officers handled an average of 3,481 cases per month.
- Issued an average of \$1,854,959 per month in Food and Nutrition benefits to 7,281 households.
- Took an average of 177 applications per month for Adult Medicaid and 360 applications per month for Family and Children's Medicaid. An average of 4,866 children per month were enrolled in Medicaid and an average of 756 children per month participated in North Carolina Health Choice for Children
- 36 Work First Consumers obtained employment and became self-sufficient through the Work First Assistance Program..
- Investigated 825 cases of public welfare fraud and recovered \$28,256.00 incentive paid to the county.



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Program totaling \$774,154.42.

Transportation Services with an average of 2,421 monthly trips.

ention Program and 599 households through the Low Income Energy Assistance

AGENCY HIGHLIGHTS - 2012-13

New Computer System Proves Challenging, but Successful

2012-13 was a challenging year for our Income Maintenance programs as *North Carolina Families Assessing Services through Technology* (NC FAST) was implemented in Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) and preparation began for the implementation of other programs. NC FAST is a statewide computer system designed to improve the way NC DHHS and the 100 county departments of social services conduct business. When fully implemented, it will be less complex for consumers to apply for all economic services. There are many challenges that come with learning and implementing a robust and complex system like NC FAST. It requires strong leadership from managers and supervisors and acceptance of major changes by staff. Our managers took a very proactive approach, preparing for implementation in advance. Efforts were made to notify consumers of the possible longer wait times and delays in benefits. Creative ideas to enhance training, support staff and improve morale, and unit reorganization lead to a smoother transition. We were fortunate that we did not have major wait times and delays. However, a major setback in NC FAST came in July 2013 when statewide issues with the system caused cases statewide not to be processed and many were without the food they needed. There are still many glitches in the system and local agencies continue to work with the state to improve implementation. With lessons learned during the FNS implementation to draw from, we began the implementation of Medicaid and Work First in October 2013. There will be bumps in the road as we continue the journey to full implementation of NC FAST in all services. We do not know all of the challenges that will be encountered, but will strive to offer the best customer service possible and keep our consumers informed. Our consumers have been very patient with us as we learned the system and dealt with the many issues on the state level, and continue to be supportive as we continue implementation in the areas of Medicaid and Work First. We look forward to the time when consumers will be able to apply for multiple programs at one time and see only one caseworker. We are well on our way!

Banquet Celebrates Accomplishments and Successes of Adoption and Foster Care

During the 2012-2013 year, the Adoptions Unit engaged in strategically designed best practice recruitment activities including child specific recruitment, public awareness events and announcements, and a county-wide distribution of bookmarks and flyers displaying the tag line – “Children in Your Community Need Your Help – Become a Resource Family”. The Adoptions Unit offered the nationally acclaimed training program, Model Approach to Partnership in Parenting (MAPP), three times during the year and supported class participants with customized educational family meetings. The highlight of the year was the “booked solid” Adoptions Banquet, held on November 8, 2012, at the Carolina Event and Conference Center in Forest City, N.C. The motivational speaker for the event was Shawn Collins, an adoptive parent who provided a story of inspiration, love and hope for all adoptive children who need a forever family.



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Busy, Productive Year for LINKS Program – Agency Hosted Regional Banquet

The Rutherford County DSS Foster Care to Independence Program, LINKS, is available to children between the ages of 13 and 21 who are in the foster care system or who have aged out and are living independently. During the 2012 -2013 year, LINKS members met on a monthly basis to learn essential independent living skills such as budgeting, applying for jobs, job skills, college preparation, banking, the art of finding and staying in healthy relationships, good decision making, the long-term negative effects of becoming involved with drugs and alcohol, home management skills and tips for successful people. LINKS members took advantage of opportunities throughout the year to visit North Carolina colleges and work with professionals to budget for and secure a drivers license, car and car insurance. In addition to these opportunities, several LINKS members were assisted in securing a home or apartment, and funding for college. LINKS members helped plan and participated in the LINKS Regional Banquet hosted in Rutherford County on June 28, 2013 at the Carolina Event and Conference Center. LINKS members from nine counties that form the Western Region were recognized for their accomplishments.

LOOKING AHEAD...AND LOOK FORWARD TO 2013-14

Improved Collaboration will Improve Outcomes for Families

As of October 1, 2013, Smoky Mountain Center (SMC) took over the function of coordinating and authorizing all services for individuals with developmental disabilities, mental health and substance abuse needs in a 23 county service area including Rutherford County. While SMC is committed to ensuring that consumers have access to timely, evidence-based, and culturally sensitive prevention, treatment, and support services, the Department has increased its efforts to ensure that Rutherford County is an integral partner in the planning, development, and delivery of these services.

Under the auspices of the Department, a series of meetings have been held with core behavioral health providers including Parkway Behavioral Health, Intensive Family Preservation Services and RHA Behavioral Health (the Team) to discuss local service strengths and needs (as they relate to DSS consumers), and the challenges associated with maintaining, improving access and/or bringing new services to Rutherford County. The initial focus of the Team is on understanding our existing service menu, implementation of evidence based service options and community supports, and identification of funding streams to adequately and seamlessly pay for needed services.

The core values that will drive the work of the Team are stated as follows:

- Rutherford County DSS consumers have access to a comprehensive array of services, including traditional and evidenced based formal and informal services, intensive home-based services (Medicaid and non-Medicaid); community based mental health and substance abuse services and crisis stabilization services.
- Services will be designed to enable consumers to live with their families, when possible, while addressing their physical, emotional, social and educational needs.
- Rutherford County DSS Consumers will receive individualized services based on their unique strengths and needs. *The Team supports the notion that services should be adapted to DSS consumers and they should not be required to adapt to inflexible, pre-existing services that may not be effective.

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- problem solving among DSS and service providers;
wide array of evidence based formal and informal community
based service options that will better meet the unique needs of our consumers; and
3. Implement an on-going, real-time needs assessment and planning process to address service strengths, gaps needs.

As its start up activity, the Team agreed to provide licensed mental health and substance abuse professionals, at no cost, to participate in DSS weekly “Expert Reviews” beginning in October. The purpose is to collaboratively discuss complex DSS cases and identify services and support options that will more effectively meet the unique needs of our consumers. This process will serve as the on-going, real-time needs assessment mentioned above.

The Team plan was initiated in October 2013 and will be discussed in on-going Team meetings. The Department is pleased to be engaged with this dedicated and talented team of mental health and substance abuse professionals, and we are looking forward to the future of our collaboration!

Rutherford County Social Services Board

Many thanks to our loyal and faithful DSS Board for their leadership, guidance, and support during 2012-13

Mr. Steve Wright, Chairman

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of the Quarter for 2012-13

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3rd Quarter – 2012
Teresa Reynolds
Food and Nutrition



4th Quarter – 2012
Joe Hunt
Maintenance



1st Quarter - 2013
Susan Epley
Food and Nutrition

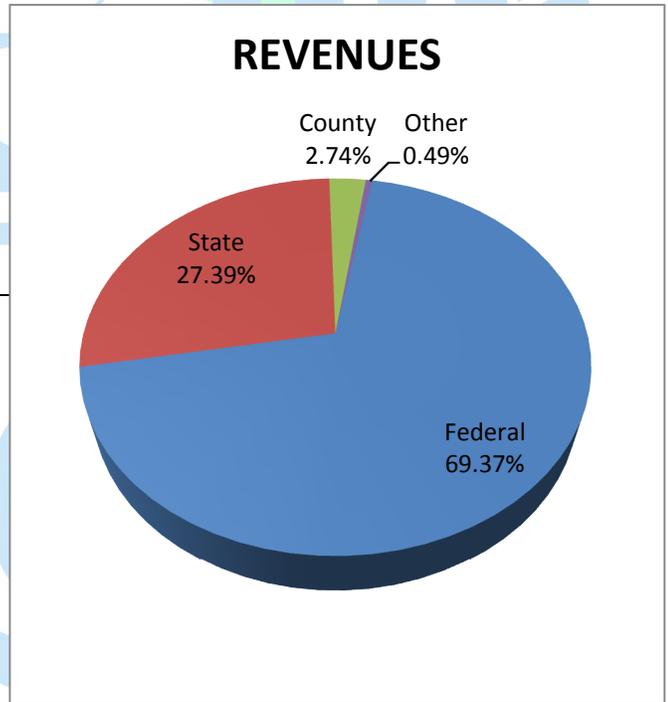


2nd Quarter - 2013
Marcia King
F & C Medicaid

**Rutherford County Department of Social Services
Total Revenues & Expenses 2012-2013**

TOTAL REVENUES

Federal	\$ 92,878,748
State	\$ 36,676,785
County	\$ 3,673,915
Other	\$ 655,287
	\$ 133,884,735

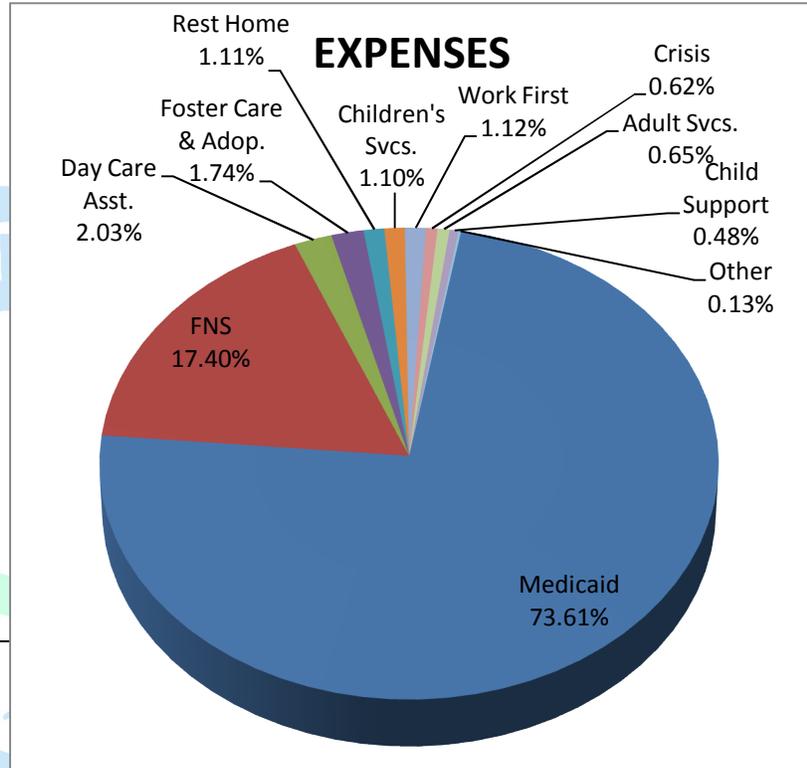


Our Mission: To support, protect, and enhance the quality of life in Rutherford County by partnering with families and the community to provide needed services and meaningful opportunities for our citizens.

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TOTAL EXPENSES

Medicaid	\$ 98,554,064
FNS	\$ 23,292,477
Day Care Asst.	\$ 2,723,440
Foster Care & Adop.	\$ 2,334,115
Rest Home	\$ 1,490,943
Children's Svcs.	\$ 1,467,876
Work First	\$ 1,501,276
Crisis	\$ 833,402
Adult Svcs.	\$ 870,312
Child Support	\$ 647,340
Other	\$ 169,490
	\$ 133,884,735



Committed to Providing Essential Services