

SOCIAL SERVICES

DESCRIPTION

The Department of Social Services provides an array of benefits and services to children, families, and individuals who need social and financial assistance and support. The financial assistance and social services programs provided by the Department assist individuals and families in meeting their basic human needs, increasing their capacity to function independently, and providing protection for the elderly, disabled, and abused and neglected children. Funding to support these efforts is provided by the Federal, State, and County governments as well as through community partnerships while program mandates are set forth in federal and state law and regulation.

The benefits programs in the department help those who cannot provide for themselves financially to obtain the basic necessities of life, including access to food and adequate health care. The financial assistance programs provide temporary cash assistance and employment-related services to enable families with children to become self-supporting. These programs also include medical and health-related services for certain individuals and families with low incomes.

The services programs in the department are responsible for the protection of the community's children and elderly and disabled adults from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Family services workers engage in various local, State, and Federal initiatives that will support and preserve families. When these efforts are no longer viable options and/or the courts remove the child or children from their caretaker, foster care services are provided. When children are unable to return to their own families, the goal for the child becomes adoption.

Overarching goals of the Department of Social Services are to engage families and their natural support systems, to identify goals with clients that are attainable and sustainable and to create opportunity and breakdown barriers to achieve those goals. In doing so, the hope is to make home and community-based services more accessible and available to children and their families as well as to the elderly, reducing reliance on institutional care. Through the use of various program funds and community resources, the Department works with clients to become or to remain economically self-supporting. These efforts are accomplished via job training, other employment related activities, and other supportive services.

FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUMMARY

Annual Fiscal Plan

Description	FY23	FY24	FY25	Change
	Actual	Original	Approved	24 to 25
Personnel	\$ 17,044,114	\$ 19,512,007	\$ 21,261,234	9.0%
Operation	8,551,691	7,078,543	8,403,293	18.7%
Capital	163,640	31,860	47,110	47.9%
Total	<u>\$ 25,759,445</u>	<u>\$ 26,622,410</u>	<u>\$ 29,711,637</u>	<u>11.6%</u>
Personnel Complement *	216	216	219	3

* - Includes the addition of three Division Manager Positions in a June 2023 budget amendment.

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PERFORMANCE MEASURES

	<u>FY23</u>	<u>FY24</u>	<u>FY25</u>	<u>Change 24 to 25</u>
Workload Measures				
Family Foster Home Recruitment	31	33	33	-
Efficiency Measures				
SNAP Application Timely Processing	95%	97%	97%	0%
CPS Complaints Initiate Within Timeframe	91%	93%	93%	0%
Effectiveness Measures				
Fraud Prosecution Rate	100%	100%	100%	0%
Customer Appeals Sustained	97%	97%	97%	0%

OBJECTIVES

Benefits Programs:

- To process applications and reviews for benefit programs accurately and within timeframes established by State and Federal standards.
- To complete the unwinding activities related to the Public Health Emergency.
- To identify new ways to reach consumers of public benefits through community engagement activities and community-based outreach initiatives.

Services Programs:

- To respond timely and provide meaningful interventions in all service programs in accordance with State and Federal standards of practice. In both Adult Protective Services & Child Protective Services, initiate contact on all valid reports within mandated timeframes to ensure safety. In all adult services and child welfare programs, conduct timely and accurate assessments and connection to services to reduce the risk of future harm to children and elderly and/or disabled adults.
- In Foster Care & Adoptions, ensure compliance with all federal and state mandates to ensure accuracy for expenditures through the Quality Assurance Team.
- In Foster Care & Adoptions, work to identify, train and support resource family homes with an emphasis on kinship and fictive kinship placement resources.
- In the VIEW program, establishing new pathways to achieve self-sufficiency through engagement with current and new community partners around childcare, transportation, housing, and employment.
- To successfully investigate all reports of fraud in benefits and services programs.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The Department's budget for FY25 is \$29,711,637, which represents an increase of \$3,089,227, or 11.6%, from the FY24 approved budget. This budget will be supported by state, federal, and local revenues and the transfer of General Fund resources. Federal and State revenue will total an estimated \$21,712,945, which is 73.1% of total funding. Local partners in the Medicaid Outstation Program will contribute an estimated \$70,176 which is 0.2% of the total budget. The General Fund transfer will total \$7,928,507, accounting for 26.7% of total funding. The amount of General Fund represents an increase of \$1,028,325, or 14.9% above the FY24 approved budget. This increase was primarily caused by increased County support of personnel costs and programs with relatively high local matches.

Personnel salary and benefit costs are 9.0% higher than the FY24 approved budget. This budgetary growth is due to the addition of three Division Manager positions, wage scale increases, and higher benefit rates.

Operating and capital costs are \$8,403,293, and \$47,110, respectively. Operating costs have increased by \$1,324,750. Additional funding of \$1,000,000 has been provided for the Title IV-E Adoption Program. This increases the appropriation for the program to \$2,439,520, which is in line with expenses in this area during recent fiscal years. Other operating expenditure increases are designed to support miscellaneous operating needs and provide more flexibility to the department. Capital costs have been increased by \$9,650 to increase funding for the replacement and updating of furniture and computer equipment.

DEPARTMENTAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Department of Social Services provides critical services to County residents within legally binding timeframes. These services are rendered to all socio-economic groups and are often the last resort for residents of Henrico County. The Services Division administers the following programs: child and adult protective services hotlines; child and adult protective services investigations; adult and child screenings for assisted living and nursing home care; adults services and companion care; family preservation services; foster care and adoption services including Fostering Futures and Post-Adoption Assistance; foster home recruitment; training and support services; child care assistance; employment services (VIEW); home studies and custody investigations; and, information and referral services. The Administration and Benefits divisions provide customer services to both internal and external customers while covering all responsibilities in the determination and issuance of benefits including Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), General Relief, Refugee Assistance, and Long-Term Care.

Despite the challenges presented by workforce turnover, the Services Division persevered and had some successes despite continued workforce challenges and caseloads that have increased in volume and complexity. During FY23, the caseload for Medicaid services increased by 11.5%, while the requirements for SNAP and TANF increased by 12.5% and 17.8%, respectively.

The story is similar in the Service Programs area, where Adult Protective Service investigations increased by 12.8% and Child Protective Service assessments/investigations increased by 25.4% during FY23.

The Family Preservation program served 299 families in FY23, which was a decrease of 15.3% from FY22 service levels. This reduction is commensurate with increases in foster care caseload and active engagement with the Henrico Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court to increase case management in cooperation with other child serving

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agencies. During FY23, foster care entries increased by 31.3%. Within that group, the percentage in kinship placements grew from under 22% of foster care placements in FY22 to over 30% in FY23. Additionally, 17 adoptions were finalized in FY23.

Adoption Assistance increased 3.2% and Child Care Assistance grew by 41.7% in FY23. The caseload for Child Care Assistance continued to grow markedly during the first six months of FY24.