

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE HEARING
FISCAL YEAR 2022 BUDGET



RAY FITZGERALD
DIVISION DIRECTOR

DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Department of Health and Social Services
February 24, 2021
Virtual, conducted via Zoom

Comments available online at <https://dhss.delaware.gov/>

Good Afternoon, Representative Carson, Senator Paradee, members of the Joint Finance Committee and members of the public.

I am Ray Fitzgerald, Director of the Division of Social Services (DSS). With me today is Thomas Hall who serves our Division as the Deputy Director and Victor Ting who is our Division's Chief of Administration.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today and present our accomplishments and Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Governor's Recommended Budget.

DIVISION OVERVIEW

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide prompt, respectful, and accurate services that promote the potential for self-sufficiency for all Delawareans.



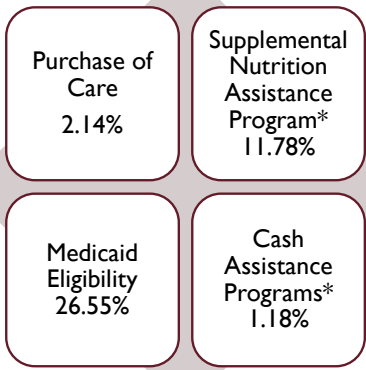
2

Our Division manages the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, the General Assistance (GA) program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly referred to as the Food Stamp Program), the Purchase of Care (POC) or Child Care program, Medicaid eligibility and Employment and Training (E&T) programs.

DIVISION OVERVIEW

Program Enrollment as a Percent of State Population

- Operations and Eligibility
- Employment and Training
- Non-Traditional Programs
- Policy and Support Services
- Fraud Monitoring and Control



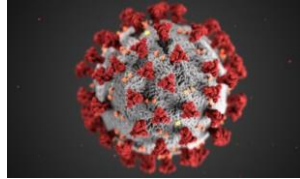
Total State Population	977,780
% of Delawareans on assistance in 2020 (279,585)	28.6%



*Formerly known as food benefits. Cash assistance is General Assistance and Temporary Assistance for Needy Family program.

DSS provides multiple programs to our clients. The percentages shown for each program above reflect program volume as a percentage of the total state population. Some people and families are in multiple programs with different policies and reporting requirements.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS – COVID-19 RESPONSE



4

Our Division is actively involved in supporting Delawareans impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the activities we initiated and are currently involved in are:

- Issued Pandemic EBT benefits to families;
- Issued Emergency Allotments to SNAP and TANF households;
- Prepared and delivered over 502,000 meals to Delawareans affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in calendar year 2020;
- Implemented dozens of policy and procedure trainings to support vulnerable clients and create flexibility for staff to maintain their excellent service to the community;
- Reduced Childcare burden by covering monthly parent co-pays.

We would like to acknowledge the Childcare provider community for their support and partnership. They have been a key contributor in supporting working families during the crisis and we thank them.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS – TRADITIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- Customer Service Improvements
- #1 in the Nation in SNAP Case Procedural Error Rate
- Assisted 535 clients find employment in calendar year 2020
- Improved vacancy rate from 28% to 11%
- Partnered with private employers to provide subsidized employment to over 250 low-income Delawareans
- DSS and DMMA partnered with DOC to complete the Incarcerated Medicaid Eligibility project
- Increased virtual/remote client interviews to reduce exposure
- Changed processes to allow staff to work at home for safety
- Waivers to create temporary efficiencies to apply for benefits
- Changed Hearing and Appeal process to allow virtual hearings
- Retro Medicaid Project
- Training programs and partnership
- Market Rate Study
- Cost of Care Analysis



5

The slide above outline some of our accomplishments in 2020. Two key accomplishments we would like to highlight are the Market Rate Study and Cost of Care analysis related to the Childcare program.

States are required to do a market rate survey every 3 years and Delaware just completed ours. Our consultant gathered information from childcare providers regarding the rates they charge the public and he used that information to calculate the 75TH percentile of rates in Delaware. Providers received up to 20 phone contacts, numerous emails, and in some cases in-person visits to try to encourage their participation. We were able to get data from 724 providers statewide.

Our federal partners also required conducting a cost of care analysis to understand the cost to run childcare programs in Delaware. The cost of care study is expected to be completed by the end of this month and will include data from 300 childcare providers.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS – TRADITIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES (CONT'D)



ASSIST Self Service Website Refresh

Redesigned User Experience coupled with technology upgrades, Human Centered Design concepts and Nudging

- 35% increase in mobile usage with mobile enabled design
- 70% increase in daily applications observed pre-COVID
- 40% increase in likelihood of clients completing SNAP applications that were previously left unfinished
- Improved data quality and faster application processing with up to 1 in 4 individuals responding to targeted nudges for additional/ accurate data



Multi-lingual Client Correspondences

Ability to send client correspondences in Spanish plus a reusable framework for additional languages

- Improved Access to Information with over 130 different types of notices and letters being available in Spanish
- Over 300 households have requested and received Spanish correspondences within one month of feature Go-Live
- The system allows workers to create new letters and manually edit outgoing letters in Spanish in real-time



Rapid COVID Response

Highly agile response to the COVID crisis to enhance access to and ensure continuity of social services to families in need during the pandemic.

- Issued over \$45,000,000 in Pandemic EBT benefits to families with Children no longer receiving school meals
- Issued over \$70,000,000 in Emergency Allotment benefits to SNAP and TANF households
- Reduced Child Care burden by covering over \$700,000 in monthly parent co-pays
- Extending renewals for all programs based on federal program guidelines to avoid benefit closures



6

The current slide shows technology improvements made in 2020.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS – NON-TRADITIONAL SERVICES

Community Partner Support Unit (CPSU)

- Serve as a bridge between DHSS divisions and community organizations that serve clients eligible for state benefits.
- Trains community partners to help their clients apply for their state benefits through the ASSIST Service Portal.
- Provide employee-support services, subsidized wages, and transportation to employers who hire our clients.
- Case managed 2,871 clients to remove barriers in 2020
- Helped 726 clients find employment in 2020

WONDERWORKS

- Helped 184 clients find employment
- Assisted 11 clients get merit jobs with DHSS

Case Management Resource Unit (CMRU)

- Managed 1,300+ clients in support of housing related services
- Assisted more than 60 families find housing



Strengthen Communities:



7

This slide highlights our Community Partner Support Unit – or CPSU. Some CPSU performance data is detailed below:

- Assisted over 100 re-entering citizens apply for benefits.
- Helped 60 people get hired with United Parcel Service in 2020
- Helped people find employment in 2020 with an average wage of \$13.40 for adults and approximately \$11.00 for youth.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS – FAMILY SERVICES CABINET COUNCIL

- **Dual Generation Services:**
 - Dual Generation Center/Stubbs Early Education Center
- **Group Violence Intervention (GVI)**
 - Wilmington
- **Focus on Re-entry Supports:**
 - Parole Offices Partnership



8

The Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) has been involved in advancing several of the Governor’s Priorities through our work in the Family Services Cabinet Council (FSCC). Through this work and the Governor’s Action Plan, we have increased support and developed creative and flexible ways to assist clients and their communities.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS – DUAL GENERATION CENTER

Families Served	Homeless Families Housed	Families Referred & Participating in Behavioral Health Services	Families Members Gained Employment	Families Received Support with Emergency Services
270+	60	30+	82	150+

Many of the families are from Wilmington and previously lived in 19801, 19802, and 19805 Zip Codes.

- 98% single mothers
- 1% single fathers
- 1% both parents in the household
- Over 50% of the families supported were from the Christina School District



1
9

The Dual Generation Center at Stubbs offers opportunities for adults in parenting skills, literacy, financial education, GED preparation and job training. Accomplishments are shown in the slide above.

LOOKING AHEAD



10

The Division will initiate or expand the following activities in calendar year 2021:

- Improve customer service by developing a phone app to allow clients to conduct functions online so they don't have to call or come into the office.
- Strengthen Communities by:
 - Continuing to partner with communities to increase self-sufficiency through partnerships and subsidized employment support
 - Increasing support to Group Violence Intervention (GVI) and the Dual Generation Center
- Increasing Re-entry Services by:
- Developing housing and employment resources for returning citizens
- Strengthening Delaware's World Class Workforce by:
- Increasing the number of livable wage employers we partner with for our subsidized wage program

Our goal is to be bold and creative in how we use our funding to support individuals who want to be self-sufficient to minimize or eliminate their service needs.

FY 2022 GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET

FY 2022 Governor's Recommended Budget (\$ in thousands)

	GF	ASF	NSF	Total
FTEs	194.8	0.0	191.9	386.7
Dollars (\$)	91,439.9	2,259.1	88,163.4	181,862.4

Budget Definitions:

GF – General Funds
ASF – Appropriated Special Funds
NSF – Non-Appropriated Special Funds
FTEs – Full Time Equivalent Positions



11

The slide above shows the DSS budget included in the FY 2022 Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB).

Our Division's FY 2022 GRB is:

- \$91,439.9 [Ninety-One Million, Four Hundred Thirty-Nine Thousand, Nine Hundred dollars] in General Funds (GF);
- \$2,259.1 [Two million, Two Hundred Fifty-Nine Thousand, One Hundred dollars] in Appropriated Special Fund (ASF) Spending Authority and
- \$88,163.4 [Eighty-Eight Million, One Hundred Sixty-Three Thousand, Four Hundred dollars] in Non-Appropriated Special Funds (NSF).

FY 2022 GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET

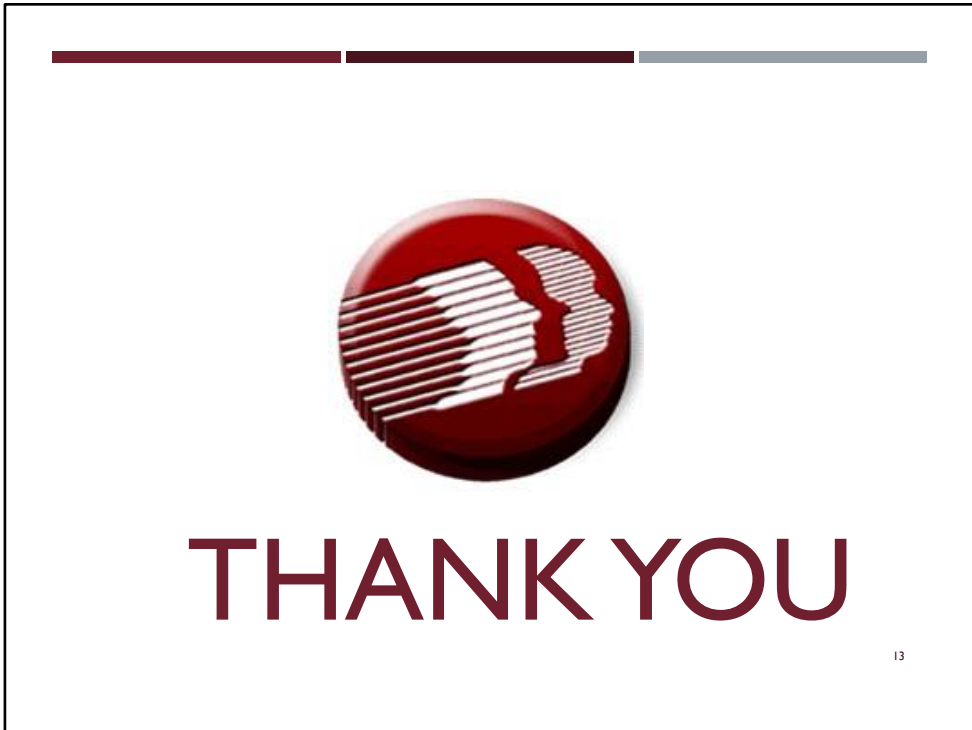
\$100.0 GROUP VIOLENCE INTERVENTION (GVI)

- GVI focuses on the groups at highest risk for violent victimization and offending, with the intention to keep those in them alive, safe, and out of prison.
- GVI is at its core, an intergovernmental partnership between law enforcement agencies, social service agencies, and the community.
- DHSS has worked to reallocate and make strategic investments in the growth of the staff supporting the mission and work of Group Violence Intervention for the model's Social Services' Supports and Outreach.



12

The Governor's Recommended Budget includes \$100.0 for Group Violence Intervention (GVI) program operating costs.



Thank you for the opportunity to share with you the challenges and opportunities facing the Division of Social Services.

I look forward to your questions.