

COUNTY OF CHATHAM

CHATHAM COUNTY

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Social Services Board:
Valerie Broadway, Chair
Cecil Wilson, Vice Chair
Thomas Droke, Member
Sara Welch, Member
Memory Dossenbach, Member

ORGANIZED 1770

707 SQUARE MILES

Chatham County Board of Social Services Session Meeting Minutes April 19, 2023

Members in attendance: Valerie Broadway, Chair; Cecil Wilson, Vice Chair; Thomas Droke, Member; Sara Welch, Member; Memory Dossenbach, Member; Jennie Kristiansen, Director; Paige Felton, Emergency Housing Coordinator; LeAnn McKoy, Evaluator/Planner and Nancy Burgess, Executive Assistant.

Valerie Broadway called the meeting to order.

There was a motion to approve the April Meeting Minutes from Tom Droke with a second motion from Sara Welch, with all in favor.

Pat Walters and Sholeh Dadressan presented information to the board members regarding the potential benefits of introducing a Therapy Dog Program to the Family Visitation process.

Ms. Felton and Ms. Kristiansen provided an overview of work being done in Chatham County to address housing and homelessness. Ms. Felton described the role of the Balance of State (administered through the NC Coalition to End Homelessness) and the functions of both the emergency housing and housing stabilization programs through HUD. She also reviewed the draft policy for the DSS Homelessness Prevention Program.

Review of Monthly Data:

There were 42 accepted CPS reports in March. Three reports were initiated outside of the timeframe, with a timeliness of 93%. Two of the reports were partially initiated by other counties while the third report involved a large sibling set and one of the children was not seen within timeframe.

Economic Services Updates:

The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) ended on March 30th. From December 1st through March 30th, employees answered over 1800 calls and took over 1100 applications for the CIP and LIEAP programs.

Work continued with the unwinding of the Public Health Emergency. Medicaid reviews resumed in April deeming the ineligible will lose their Medicaid coverage. Piloting of a new text message option for FNS will hopefully begin soon. The goal of text messaging is to alert recipients that their certification period is expiring to reduce churn (i.e., when recipients lose the benefit and reapply).

Pandemic-EBT for the Food and Nutrition Program was approved for Summer 2023 for childcare and school age children and will be a one-time payment of \$120.00 for eligible students that covers June 1, 2023-August 31, 2023.

Card skimming continues to be problematic across NC and has been reported to have affected some Work First Family Assistance clients (in addition to Food and Nutrition). NCDSS submitted a response plan to the USDA and is still waiting for approval. At this time, FNS benefits are being replaced through 2024 for clients whose benefits were stolen.

The Division of Health Benefits is in the early stages of planning for the Medicaid Expansion policy (implementation is contingent upon the passage of a state budget).

As the result of a lawsuit, there are new telephone system requirements for DSS agencies and counties will be monitored for compliance. Requirements are as follows: avoiding busy signals, rolling over calls to another staff member or an option to leave a message, providing ability to leave a message after hours or on holiday, limiting hold times, avoiding hang ups or messages that no one can take a call without the option to leave a message, and returning messages within a reasonable time. Work is being conducted with the MIS department to meet these requirements but there are limitations with the county phone system (e.g., no option for a dial by name directory to leave a message).

Family Services:

The Division of Social Services awarded a contract to Public Consulting Group to conduct a child welfare workforce study in NC. Focus group began in March and two CCDSS social workers participated in the group.

In May, the clinical social work team will be providing a series of trainings to DSS social workers and Family Visitation Center staff on visitation/family time. The training will cover preparation and facilitating/conducting visits as well as handling any issues that come up after visits. This is part of a larger project to enhance time and options for parents and children in foster care. Vaya funds are covering the expense of a temporary position who assists with transportation to visits.

Elder Abuse Awareness Month runs from Mother's Day to Father's Day each year. The adult services unit is planning two events, one will be for DSS employees on, Wednesday, May 24, 2023 while a second event will be held at the Western Senior Center in Siler City on Wednesday, June 7, 2023 between 10 am and 1 pm.

Agency Updates:

Each year a 360 survey is conducted that provides an opportunity for employees to rate their supervisor on several items and to give feedback on any other member of the DSS leadership team. The survey period is underway with all responses due by May 5th.

Chatham Organizing for Racial Equity is conducting a workshop on the Power of Perspective for all DSS employees. The final workshop will be in May and thus far survey responses have been mostly positive.

DSS is the second county department to be given access to a new training platform called EMTRAIN. This is a software system that was selected and funded by a grant at the Health Department that will provide standardized training related to organizational culture, including equity. Most assignments will be virtual and will take 10-30 minutes to complete. There are also webinar options that are longer (45-60 min). The platform collects data on organizational culture and provides feedback on both individual

responses and all responses (across all users nationally). The first set of trainings are focused on communication.

Next Meeting:

Tom Droke's second term will expire December 9, 2023. The board member to discuss potential recruitment efforts.

Members are scheduled to be given a tour of the Department.

With no further items to discuss there was a motion to adjourn from Cecil Wilson, with a second motion from Memory Dossenbach, with all in favor.

The next meeting will be held May 17th in the ground conference room of CCDSS at 3:00.



Chair

5/17/23

Date



Secretary

6/12/23

Date

