

# COUNTY OF CHATHAM

CHATHAM COUNTY

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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

ORGANIZED 1770

707 SQUARE MILES

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

Members in attendance: Sara Welch, Member; Cim Brailer, Deputy Director; Donna Gigowski, Economic Services Program Administrator; LeAnn McKcoy, Planner/Evaluator and Nancy Burgess, Executive Assistant.

Sara Welch called the meeting to order.

Without a quorum the June Open and Closed session Minutes were tabled for the August Meeting for vote.

Ms. Welch reviewed the monthly data report.

### **Economic Services:**

Text and secure messaging were now available for the Food and Nutrition Services Program. Text Messages are pre-written, templated messages sent to the mobile number of the customer with basic information on activity and reminders related to their application or case (in English or Spanish). Secure Messages can include more detailed, confidential information and are sent directly to the customer's linked ePASS account. When a Secure Message is sent, the customer is notified by text or email that they have a new message to view from their caseworker.

Several FNS waivers were expiring that will affect recipients. During the pandemic, there was a waiver that prevented counties from collecting on fraud overpayments and this waiver has ended. A second waiver addressed people who met the criteria for "Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents" (ABAWD) who were not working and do not have an exemption will now only receive benefits for three months. The final waiver was regarding individuals that had been convicted of a Class H or I drug related felony that will now have to be referred for a substance use disorder assessment to regain eligibility for FNS benefits.

While there was no new information available about a Medicaid expansion implementation date, NCDHHS announced the week of July 10th that they are delaying the implementation of the NC Medicaid Managed Care Behavioral Health and Intellectual/ Developmental Disabilities Tailored Plans (i.e., Tailored Plans) that had been scheduled for Oct. 1, 2023. The modified implementation date is still to be determined. This was the result of concerns about not being ready for all aspects of implementation (including having a budget from the General Assembly) and the fact that beneficiaries transitioning to the Tailored Plan have more complex medical needs, making a smooth transition without disruption very important.

**Family Services:**

Several changes were taking place with Child Protective Services (CPS) Intake and Assessments. For intake, "improper discipline" was changed to "unsafe discipline" and the "criminal charge" requirement for a DUI was removed. If a caretaker drives under the influence, the report must be screened as abuse. Also, the protocol under unsafe discipline states that a mark or bruise cannot be screened in unless it has lasted longer than 24 hours has been removed. The timeframe is no longer necessary to screen in a report of unsafe discipline when a mark or bruise is present.

For CPS Assessments, the "Services Recommended" case decision has been removed as an option. At the conclusion of a CPS assessment, the social worker will select from three different case decisions; CPS Services Not Needed, Services Provided, CPS Services No Longer Needed, or CPS Services Needed. These changes were the result of conducting case reviews and fatality reviews across the state that indicated over half of fatalities with an assessment five years prior had at least one Assessment with a finding of Services Recommended. NCDSS identified that this case decision was not being utilized appropriately and some families needed further intervention and did not receive it.

NCDSS provided firearm safety guidance documents to counties. During an intake, the reporter is required to ask questions about the availability of an unsecured firearm. All CPS reports that include information about an unsecured firearm in the home that children have access to must be screened in. The guidance documents include brief information to share with parents around talking with kids about gun safety and the connection between suicide and access to guns. In addition, Safe Kids Chatham has provided gun locks to DSS, and they can be provided to the public upon request.

Data collection was extended one week for the child welfare workload study, ending on July 28th. Most of the child welfare team was involved in data collection. Statewide 78 counties have participated in the study. The data collected will be used to revise the state standards for caseload/workload.

Chatham County is preparing for changes to the Child Welfare System (formerly called NCFAST) Intake Tool. The scheduled go live for these changes is September 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Agency:**

The Management Team hosted a hot dog luncheon on June 28th, ending with dessert and a water balloon toss. Many of the employees attended and it was a fun event.

Almost 30 applications were received during the first month of the Emergency Homelessness Assistance Program (EHAP). The program launched on June 15<sup>th</sup>. Most of the applicants were approved. If an applicant was denied it was because they were not at risk of eviction, or the amount owed was very large and the applicant was not able to contribute to paying a portion of the past due amount.

CORA is transitioning from a drive through only model to one where visitors can shop for their groceries. Drive through pick up will now be Friday only. There will likely be some changes to traffic flow and parking in the DSS parking lot to accommodate the visitors to CORA.

**Next Meeting:**

A tour is scheduled for the DSS Visitation Center after the August meeting.

With no further items to discuss, Sara Welch adjourned the meeting.

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, August 16, 2023 in the ground conference room of CCDSS at 3:00.

  
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Vice Chair

12-20-23  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

12/20/23  
Date

