

COUNTY OF CHATHAM

CHATHAM COUNTY

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Social Services Board:
Cecil Wilson
Sara Welch
Memory Dossenbach
Peter Varney

ORGANIZED 1770

707 SQUARE MILES

Chatham County Board of Social Services Session Meeting Minutes October 18, 2023

Members in attendance: Cecil Wilson, Vice President; Memory Dossenbach, Member; Peter Varney, Member; Jennie Kristiansen; Director; LeAnn McKcoy, Planner/Evaluator and Nancy Burgess, Executive Assistant.

Cecil Wilson called the meeting to order.

Peter Varney was sworn in as a member.

June, July, August and September Meeting Minutes were tabled for the November Meeting for vote.

Members reviewed the monthly data report.

Economic Services Updates:

In preparation for Medicaid Expansion, NCDHHS will start activating the functionality for eligibility determinations in the system during the October updates (called releases). All beneficiaries who are on another Medicaid program, like family planning, will be transitioned on 11/4 with an eligibility date of 12/1/23. This will require approval of a State Plan Amendment by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, but this is anticipated to be approved in the next few days. DHHS has also made progress in manual updates so that the policy changes, communicated through "Change Notices" and "admin letters" are now posted with the policy. The changes have not been integrated into the manual document yet and will still need to be referenced separately. Work is also underway to add capability in NC FAST to allow direct scanning into the system and the option to add one more than one document at a time.

Chatham County has had several cases selected in the monthly audit being conducted by Franklin v. Kinsley lawsuit. To date, four cases have been pulled and three have had an internal control error. Two of the errors were because the case worker did not offer to assist the client with enhancing their EPASS account. The third case had an error in issuing a notice. None were eligible.

In the Food and Nutrition Program, a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) went into effect 10/1/23 which means that there has been an increase in FNS benefits but the minimum benefit amount remains the same (\$23). There was also an increase in the standard utility allowance, but the resource limits are the same (income \$1580 for a household of 1, \$3250 for a household of 4). For people who are over 60 or disabled, the resource limits are \$2750 and \$4250.

There has been a change in the Childcare Subsidy policy that will now allow providers to be reimbursed at the market rate regardless of the private pay rate. The prior policy required the provider to get reimbursed at the rate or private rate whichever was lower. This will not require a manual action in NCFAS and will be automatically adjusted. Also, the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) announced that the stabilization grants for all providers will be extended through June 2024 after the legislature authorized DCDEE the flexibility to be able to use other funds to extend these grants. This will provide valuable support to the childcare provider community across NC.

Family Services Updates:

The Administration for Children and Families announced some changes that will help states better serve their child welfare involved families. The first is that they created a rule that allows for separate kinship licensing standards to make it easier for kin to receive foster care board payments to support the children in their care. In addition, there are two proposed regulations that protect youth identifying as LGBTQ from mistreatment in foster care and to provide for foster parent training. Another proposed regulation would allow states to use federal IV-E funds to assist parents with legal representation to prevent children entering foster care. For example, a parent may need legal assistance to get a Domestic Violence Protective Order from an abusive spouse.

North Carolina will participate in Round 4 of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) in 2024. The last review was in 2015. The purpose of the CFSR is to ensure conformity with federal requirements, determine what is happening to children and families in the child welfare system, and assist states in enhancing their capacity to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families. The CFSR measures NC performance on 7 Outcomes and 7 Systemic Factors.

The Statewide Assessment is the initial phase of this process and is completed in collaboration with internal and external partners to the Child Welfare System. NC DHHS will be gathering and analyze qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the overall functioning of the Child Welfare System. Information from the Assessment aids the Children's Bureau in determining if North Carolina's Child Welfare System is in substantial conformity with requirements.

National Adoption Day will be recognized on Saturday, November 18. There are four adoptions that will be finalized that day at the Chatham County Justice Center.

Agency Updates:

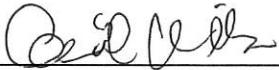
Ms. Kristiansen provided updates on the Emergency Housing Program, including Emergency Housing Application Program (EHAP) data. Jason Smith, new Emergency Housing Coordinator, is collecting county data on housing related programs and services by population size to be able to see what other communities have (or don't have). Work is underway with the Chatham Housing Collective on a White Flag Sheltering protocol (not sure when we will be ready to launch, not by the first cold night). In November, the Department is considering a change to the EHAP to eliminate the two-week open application window and make it continuous. Initially, the application window was only open for two weeks of the month due to uncertainty regarding the volume of applications.

During the October staff meeting, employees received an in-service on the Child Support Program and a presentation from Chatham Literacy on their Financial Literacy classes.

Fall Fest will be held on October 31st with a Halloween Costume Contest.

With no further items to discuss, Cecil Wilson adjourned the meeting.

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, November 15, 2023 in the ground conference room of CCDSS at 3:00.



Vice Chair

12-20-23

Date



Secretary

12/20/23

Date

