

Charlottesville Department of Social Services Advisory Board

ANNUAL REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL December 2020

The Social Services Advisory Board is pleased to present its 2020 Annual Report to City Council. We appreciate Council's support for the Charlottesville Department of Social Services' mission to join with the community in providing social services that meet essential needs, promote self-sufficiency, and enhance the quality of life for all residents.

City of Charlottesville's Vision

To be one community filled with opportunity

City of Charlottesville's Mission

We provide services that promote equity and an excellent quality of life in our community

City's Strategic Plan Goals that Align with Social Services

- Goal 1. An inclusive community of self-sufficient residents
- Goal 2. A healthy and safe city
- Goal 5. A well-managed and responsive organization



The Department of Social Services administers Benefits Programs and Family Services for the citizens of Charlottesville.

Federal and state mandated **Benefits Programs** help low income families and individuals meet basic needs for food, shelter, and medical care.

Major programs include but are not limited to:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Medicaid
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Virginia Initiative for Education and Work (VIEW)
- Child Care Assistance

Family Services Programs provide case management services through federal and state mandated programs.

Major programs include but are not limited to:

- Child Protective Services (CPS)
- Foster Care Prevention
- Foster Care
- Adoption
- Fostering Futures
- Adult Protective Services (APS)

In this year's report the Advisory Board chose to focus on how the department has adapted to serve clients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Benefits Division

Administrative Changes:

The benefits division transitioned to teleworking full time and for many this was a huge change to normal routines. 20+ laptops were disbursed to workers who did not already have state-issued laptops and workers learned the new configuration of logging in from home. Workflows were changed for how documents are handled from receipt in the office by either mail, drop box, or fax. A process was developed to manage the documents from receipt to scanning to a virtual mailbox and sending email notification to worker(s). A permanent virtual fax process is now in place as well as a new way to handle client mail. Benefit Programs Specialists were issued 24 cell phones to manage client calls by forwarding their desk phones to answer calls and conduct interviews. Benefit programs supervisors worked mainly in the office to manage the need to mail out forms, documents, and issue Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards. Additionally, the client entry team has rotated days working in the office to answer phone calls, process incoming and outgoing mail, and scan documents to workers.

Workload Changes:

Once COVID-19 restrictions began in the city, many community members faced layoffs from their jobs. Many of the newly unemployed began applying for public assistance programs such as SNAP, Medicaid, and TANF. The benefits division changed business processes to create a COVID-19 Intake Rotation. By doing this, the division was able to manage the spike in new applications from the community. During this period the Virginia Department of Social Services requested waivers from the Federal Government for the SNAP and Medicaid

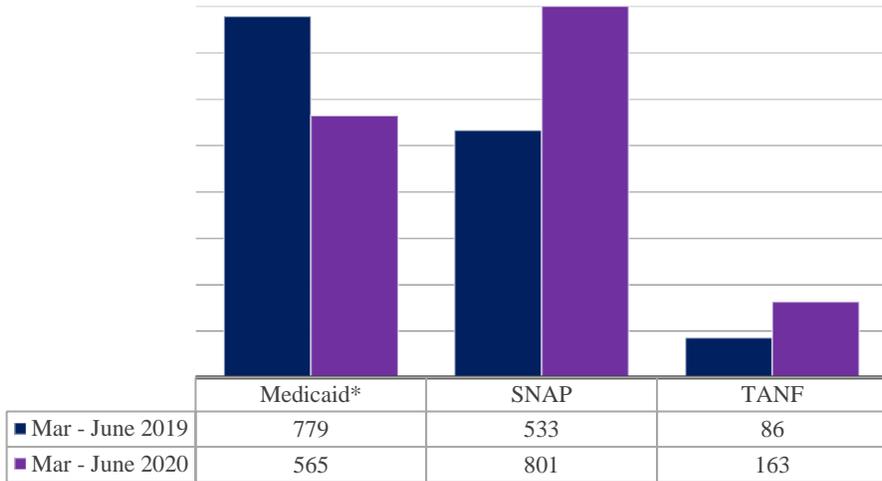
programs. Several waivers were approved which lead to significant, temporary policy changes in many of the benefits programs.

Below is a listing of the Benefits programs policy changes due to COVID-19:

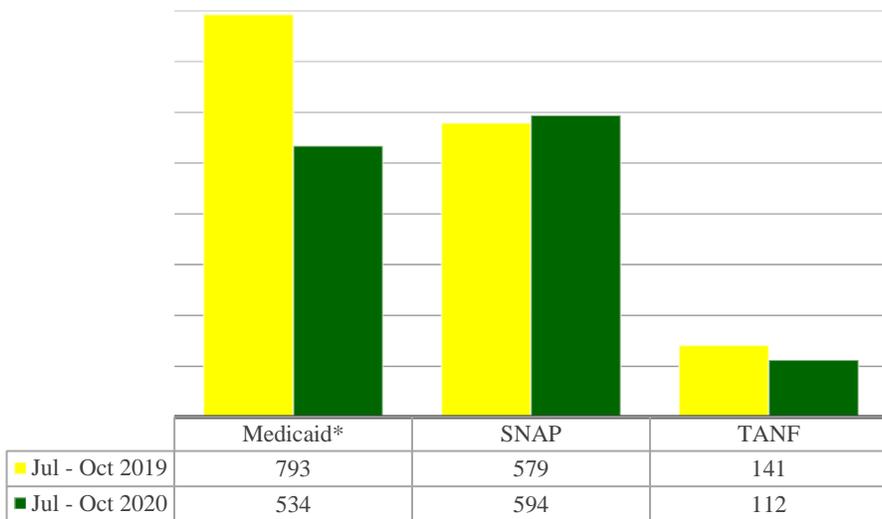
Program	Waiver	Duration
SNAP	Waive interviews for new applications, reapplications and renewals	April 1, 2020- August 31, 2020
	Issue additional SNAP benefits to the maximum allotment for the household size during the Pandemic	March 2020 - Present
	Extended renewals due for March, April, May, June to August, September, October and December 2020	
	Waive renewal interviews for Aged, Blind and Disabled Households and waive 50% of all other Households for renewal applications received.	September 8, 2020 – October 19, 2020
	Suspending ABAWD work clocks while the Pandemic is active	Until 30 days after the Pandemic has ended
	Waive all SNAP interviews for applications, reapplications and renewals	October 19, 2020 – January 2021
Medicaid	Directive not to close coverage for existing cases during the Pandemic unless the client moves out of state or is deceased	Until January 21, 2021
	Directive not to reduce/change level of coverage or patient pay for client in a Long Term Care facility or receiving Community Base Care services during the Pandemic	Until January 21, 2021
	Extended renewals due for March, April, May, June to August, September, October and December 2020	
TANF/VIEW	Lift all sanctions on VIEW cases if the minimum period of time has been served	No set end date at this time

	regardless if the client has actively complied	
	Waived VIEW activities for clients if the activity was not in a virtual format.	No set end date at this time
	Added the reason of COVID-19 for one of the reasons for applying for TANF Emergency Services	
	Waived TANF renewal Interviews	September 8, 2020 – December 31, 2020
Refugee Assistance	Continuation of Refugee Cash Assistance beyond the 8 months allowed	Until December 31, 2020
Child Care Assistance	Extended renewals due for six months starting in March 2020	
	Number of absences was increased through June which allowed providers to get paid while they were closed	June 30, 2020
	Copays for parents were waived	May 1, 2020 – June 30, 2020
	Allows providers to be paid for school age kids while they attend virtual school	No set end date at this time
Energy Assistance Program	All Cooling applications were electronically processed without worker assistance unless needed.	June 2020

Benefit Programs Applications Received



Benefit Programs Applications Received



*More Medicaid applications were received in 2019 because it was the 1st year of Medicaid expansion

Family Services Division

Administrative Changes:

The services division transitioned to work from home in March surprisingly well due to already possessing items such as laptops, cell phones, and a State-issued mobile device. Staff worked quickly with the social services finance team on how to process an enormous amount of paperwork electronically versus paper including a signature process. This paperwork includes funding requests for mandated services for clients. The division focused on problem solving how to meet clients' needs while protecting staff as well. In March, there was not enough personal protective equipment (PPE) for staff to safely meet with clients and this caused some anxiety due to the unknown about COVID-19. However, more PPE items were received in the next couple of weeks and this helped greatly.

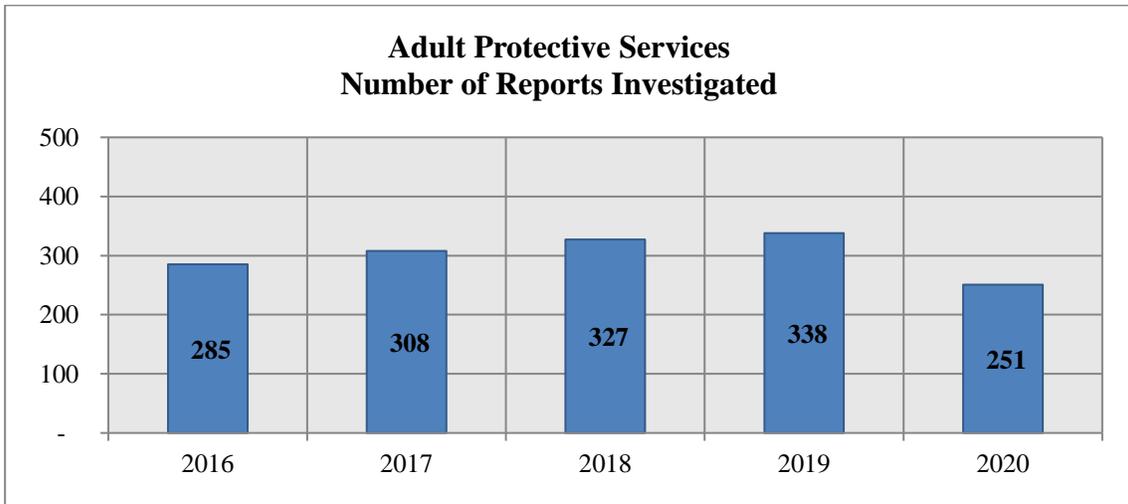
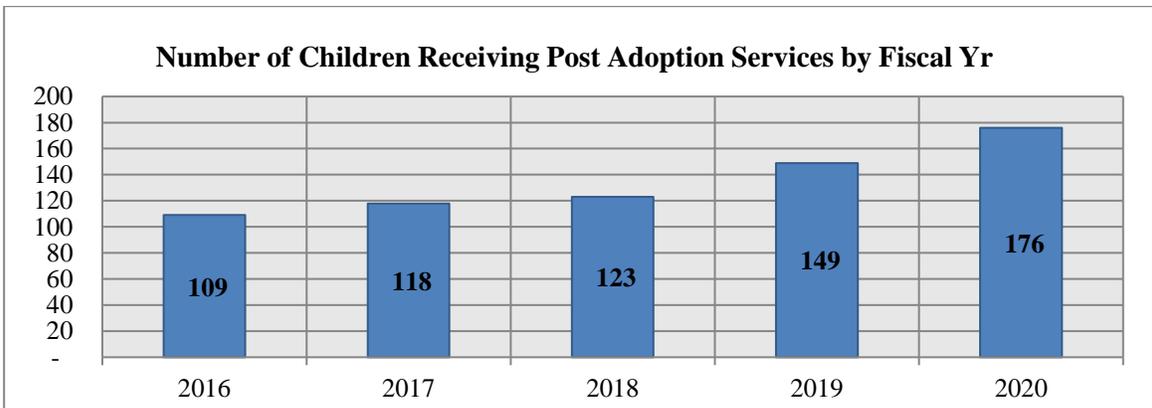
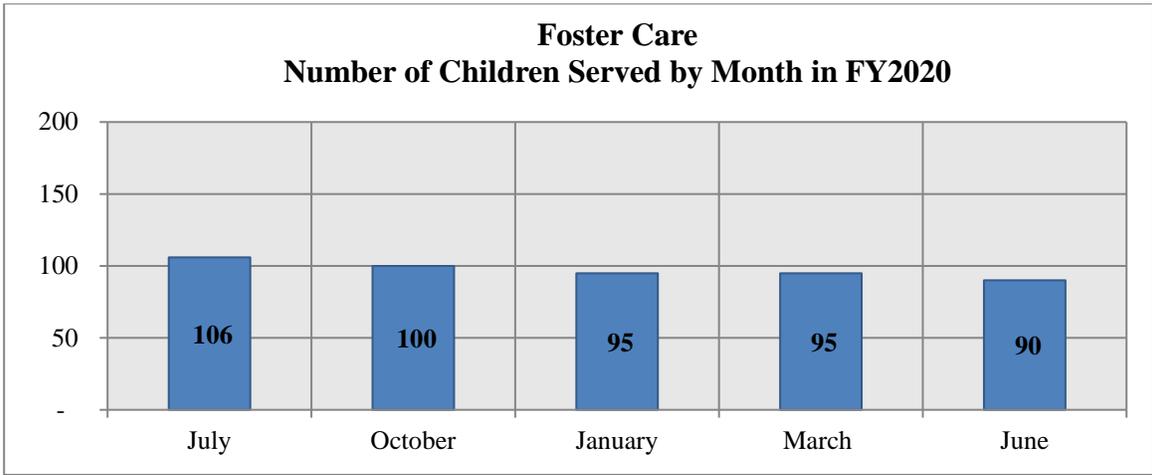
Workload Changes:

In April, the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) issued guidance allowing child welfare workers to conduct visits virtually and provided a secure method of completing these visits. This proved to be very successful and clients adapted much easier than expected. Furthermore, the division began to hold all the Family Partnership Meetings virtually. Again, clients transitioned well to this process and family member participation did not suffer due to the meeting being held virtually. In some cases, participation increased due to clients finding it easier to log on than traveling to a meeting site. VDSS guidance changed at the end of the summer, and all visits with child welfare clients now must be face to face. Child welfare workers are doing most visits in person with PPE and social distancing. If someone in the home has COVID-19 or symptoms, those visits are done virtually. All family services staff continue to work from home and come into the office when needed to perform a specific task. This seems to be working well and helping people stay well.

During the lockdown and with schools being closed, Charlottesville City saw a reduction in Child Protective Services (CPS) referrals. Even though school has returned virtually, there has continued to be a reduction in referrals from the schools. The family services division has seen an increase in referrals through law enforcement and the medical community starting in September.

The Foster Care caseload has remained stable and COVID-19 has only caused minor disruption in overall service plans for children in foster care. Children continue to spend time with their family of origin and adoptions are being finalized. 27 adoptions were finalized in FY2020 with many being with relative placements.

Adult Protective Services have remained stable over the last year. There has been a slight increase in cases starting in September 2020. The increase does not seem to be COVID related



Finance Team

The finance team, consisting of 4 staff members, maintains the department's accounting functions including: invoice & payment processing for administrative and client-related services, fund reconciliations, and financial reporting; budget development and management; procurement functions; and personnel administration.

Administrative Changes:

Due to the nature of the work, the finance team has needed to be in the office to complete most job tasks. All have laptops and telework is encouraged at least one day per week when feasible. Staggered work schedules when in the office are also in place to encourage social distancing.

Workload Changes:

For the most part, the department's financial and personnel deadlines have remained unchanged during the pandemic.

Most of the finance tasks are paper-driven. With the majority of the department working from home though, adjustments have needed to be made to the administrative and client-related invoicing processes to allow for electronic submissions and approvals. However, the finance team has had to print all electronic submissions to comply with payment documentation rules.

The finance team has also worked diligently to secure needed technology and PPE items for staff. 24 cell phones were purchased to allow benefit programs staff to be able to contact clients while working from home. Web cams were also purchased for staff who did not have one pre-installed in their department laptop. The team has identified the need for electronic signature software for staff and is working with I.T.

The finance team has closely monitored the department's budget to ensure that these unplanned expenditures could be made along with the ongoing service costs related to the 24 new cell phones.

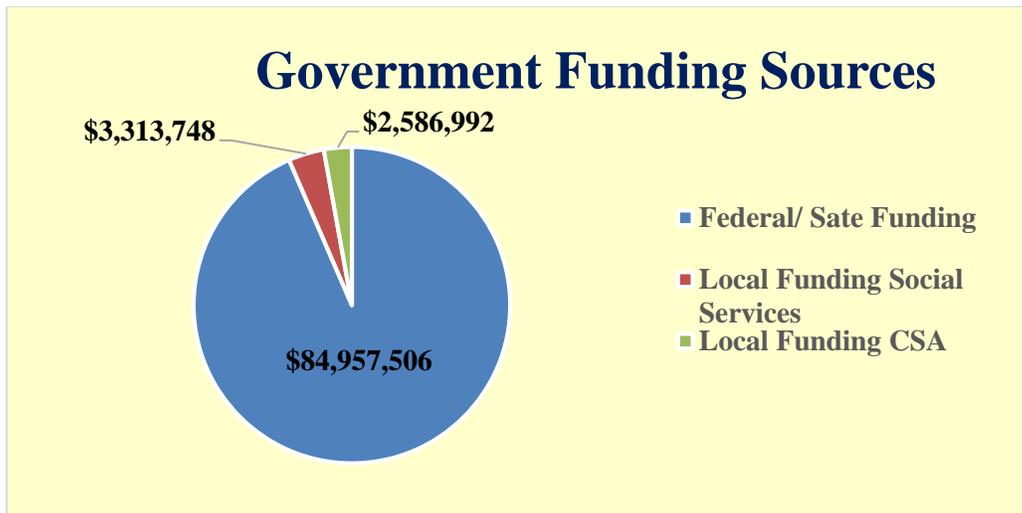
An issue that has come to light during the pandemic that will need to be addressed in the coming budget planning cycle is the replacement of the payment and invoicing system that the department uses to process payments related to Children Services Act (CSA) and Title IV-E. The system has been in place for over 20 years and is not able to support telework access. This system is used by finance staff as well as child welfare benefits staff. During the past several months, the host file has become corrupted on numerous occasions and required city Information Technology to restore the program from previous versions. This has caused staff to lose work that had previously been entered. Finance staff have had preliminary discussions with I.T. about a replacement and have also reached out to the Virginia Department of Social Services to see if a state-wide payment and invoicing system is in the works. Initial cost estimate for a new system is around \$190,000 plus ongoing annual maintenance fees.

Economic Impact

Economic Impact - \$90,858,246

Total Federal and State Funding for Fiscal Year 2019 = \$84,957,506. Many of these funds were spent on rent, utilities, payments to medical providers and hospitals, purchases at grocery stores and gas stations, and purchases of clothing and school supplies, thereby increasing the economic impact to the community as the funds recycled through the local economy. The matching local costs for fiscal year 2019 totaled **\$3,313,748** for Social Services and **\$2,586,992** for the Children’s Services Act (CSA).

- **\$60,845,890** in Medicaid and Family Access to Medical Insurance Security (FAMIS) payments to providers
- **\$5,101,646** in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- **\$6,844,250** in Children’s Services Act (CSA) payments to providers¹
- **\$5,506,270** in Staff, Administrative, and Operations costs
- **\$2,251,427** in Adoption Assistance payments to adoptive parents
- **\$1,770,575** in Title IV-E Foster Care payments to providers
- **\$876,393** in Child Care payments to providers
- **\$762,799** in Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- **\$138,427** in Fostering Futures Foster Care Assistance
- **\$14,964** in Kinship Guardianship Assistance
- **\$326,691** in Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- **\$150,221** in Auxiliary Grant payments to providers
- **\$143,207** Other Purchased Services for clients
- **\$109,258** in Central Service Cost Allocation²
- **\$86,015** in Virginia Initiative for Education and Work (VIEW)
- **\$19,858** in Independent Living Services
- **\$9,616** in General Relief



¹ The Children’s Services Act (CSA) enacted in 1993 established a single State pool of funds to purchase services for at-risk youth and their families. Charlottesville Social Services coordinates administration and financial services for the CSA collaborative interagency team of Social Services, City Schools, Region Ten and the Court Services Unit.

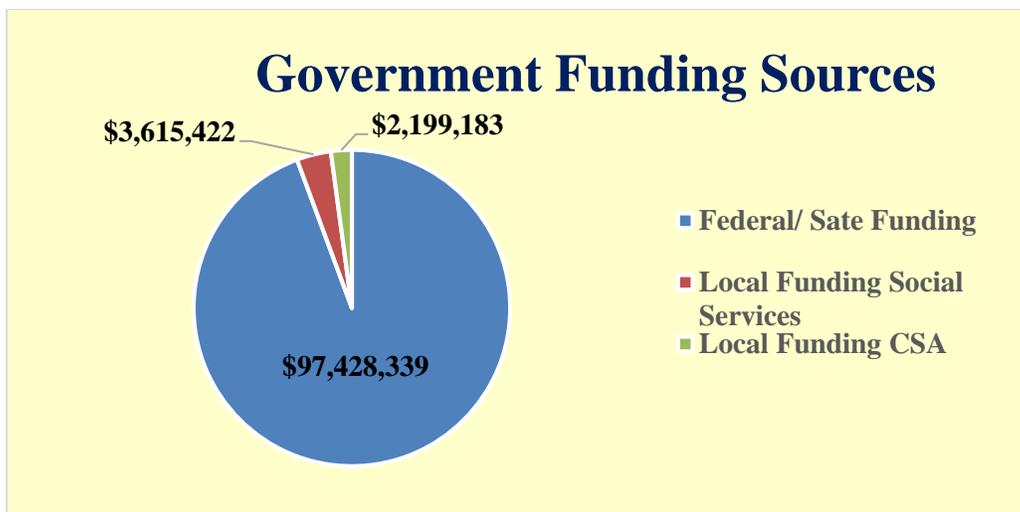
² Federal reimbursement for services from other city departments including, but not limited to: City Manager, City Attorney, Human Resources, Facilities Management, City Finance, City Treasurer and Purchasing.

Economic Impact

Economic Impact - \$103,242,944

Total Federal and State Funding for Fiscal Year 2020 = \$97,428,339. Many of these funds were spent on rent, utilities, payments to medical providers and hospitals, purchases at grocery stores and gas stations, and purchases of clothing and school supplies, thereby increasing the economic impact to the community as the funds recycled through the local economy. The matching local costs for fiscal year 2020 totaled **\$3,615,422** for Social Services and **\$2,199,183** for the Children’s Services Act (CSA).

- **\$72,565,910** in Medicaid and Family Access to Medical Insurance Security (FAMIS) payments to providers
- **\$6,390,677** in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- **\$5,680,000** in Children’s Services Act (CSA) payments to providers³
- **\$5,689,700** in Staff, Administrative, and Operations costs
- **\$2,891,234** in Adoption Assistance payments to adoptive parents
- **\$1,487,100** in Title IV-E Foster Care payments to providers
- **\$773,010** in Child Care payments to providers
- **\$847,063** in Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- **\$117,542** in Fostering Futures Foster Care Assistance
- **\$24,098** in Kinship Guardianship Assistance
- **\$320,404** in Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- **\$135,919** in Auxiliary Grant payments to providers
- **\$135,695** Other Purchased Services for clients
- **\$167,283** in Central Service Cost Allocation⁴
- **\$160,494** in Virginia Initiative for Education and Work (VIEW)
- **\$17,581** in Independent Living Services
- **\$16,255** in Refugee Assistance
- **\$8,375** in General Relief



³ The Children’s Services Act (CSA) enacted in 1993 established a single State pool of funds to purchase services for at-risk youth and their families. Charlottesville Social Services coordinates administration and financial services for the CSA collaborative interagency team of Social Services, City Schools, Region Ten and the Court Services Unit.

⁴ Federal reimbursement for services from other city departments including, but not limited to: City Manager, City Attorney, Human Resources, Facilities Management, City Finance, City Treasurer and Purchasing.

Respectfully submitted by Charlottesville Department of Social Services Advisory Board Members:

- Kathryn May Gallanosa, Vice Chair
- Lisa Brown
- Shayla Givens
- Sena Magill, City Council
- Rebekah Menning
- Janet Morrow
- L.D. Perry
- Judith Zeitler