



Annual Report

July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012

Gordon County Department
Of
Family and Children Services

Economic Support Services

Our Office of Family Independence programs provide aid to families who are in need of financial assistance in order to obtain basic necessities. These programs continue to include: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF); Employability Programs; Childcare; Food Stamps; Medical Assistance and ABD.

Temporary Assistance to Need Families – The TANF program provides monthly cash assistance for poor families with children under age 18. There is a four year life-time limit on cash assistance. TANF has a strong work component with the intent to develop the skills needed to find a job and become employed full time. Since welfare reform was enacted in 1996, Gordon County DFCS has been working hard to move families from welfare to work. Data with regard to expenditures and caseload size is not available.

Employment Services – Employment Services are provided to TANF applicants and include Assessment, Education, Skills Training, Job Readiness Services and Work Experience. These services are designed to develop the necessary skills to move from assistance to gainful employment. This past fiscal year, we provided services to an average of four (4) clients per month in Gordon County. This number has decreased from FY 2010 because clients are finding employment quicker after starting the program. Employment services may continue for the client after finding employment as needed. Most commonly this includes child care services. Data with regard to caseload size is not available.

Childcare (CAPS) – Childcare is provided as payment to childcare providers. Low-income families may receive assistance on a sliding scale based on income and continue to represent the largest number of recipients. TANF recipients may be eligible for childcare to assist in active job search, job training, or work experience. Children considered in transition may receive childcare benefits as families

work to stabilize their living situation. The waiting list for childcare services was discontinued in October 2010. Any family can apply for CAPS but priority is given to families who meet "Priority Services Requirements". The CAPS program was re-assigned under DECAL – Department of Early Care and Learning as of July 2, 2012.

Food Stamps – The Food Stamp program provides monthly benefits to low-income households to help pay for the cost of food. A household may be one person living alone, a family, or several unrelated persons who routinely purchase and prepare meals together. Assistance with the cost of food aids families in meeting the basic nutritional needs for children and adults.

Food Stamps	2010	2011	2012
Expenditures	\$8,792,589.00	\$15,549,073.00	\$1,395,272.92
Average Case/month	2,633 households	4,274 households	4,718 households

Medicaid – Medicaid provides payment for medical care including prescription medication for low-income families and for the aged, blind and disabled. Provision of assistance in the form of Medicaid is complex and is governed by federal guidelines. Current data is not available for this report.

Family Medicaid includes several different programs: Right from the Start Medicaid (RSM) provides Medicaid coverage for eligible children under the age of 19 and pregnant women. Low Income Medicaid (LIM) includes families with children under 18 with very low income. Emergency Medical Assistance (EMA) covers ineligible aliens, and Newborn Medicaid is for infants up to 12 months when the mother was on Medicaid when the baby was born.

Aged, Blind and Disabled Medicaid (ABD) includes individuals (adults and children) who are age 65, blind or disabled. This class of Medicaid includes individuals in their own homes, nursing homes, mental retardation facilities or hospice care. It also covers those who have lost their SSI or were not eligible for SSI for specific reasons.

Qualified Medicare Beneficiaries Program (QMB) pays Part A and Part B premiums, Medicare co-insurance payments (20% of covered charges Medicare will not pay), and Medicare deductibles (in-patient hospital deductible). The QMB program will not cover any medical service that is not covered by Medicare. The Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiaries program (SLMB) pays only the Medicare Part B premium. The income limit for this program is higher than the QMB limit. The Qualifying Individuals – 1 program is identical to the SLMB program except that it is time limited based on available state funds and income limit is higher.

Community Care Services Program (CCSP) is a category of assistance for in-home and community based services. The individual must meet criteria for nursing home placement but chooses to remain in a residential home. These individuals must receive certain waived services not covered by Medicaid which include adult day rehabilitation, personal care homes, emergency response systems, home delivered services, homemaker aid services or respite care. These individuals pay a cost share for the service they are receiving and receive full coverage Medicaid. Eligibility for these programs is determined by DFCS.

Deeming Waiver is a category of assistance for individuals under age 18 who are ineligible for SSI. These children must be in need of institutional care but have chosen to be cared for at home at a lower cost. Deeming Waiver allows the deeming of the income and resource of parents to be waived when determining eligibility.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a program in which all recipients are eligible for Medicaid. Eligibility is determined by the Social Security Administration.

Social Services

Our Social Services programs include Child Protective Services and Placement and Protective Services.

Child Protective Services – Child Protective Services include Assessment (Investigation), Family Support (Diversion) and Family Preservation case management services. Referrals of suspected child abuse or neglect are screened out, investigated or diverted. Referrals that are screened out include allegations that do not meet the criteria for abuse or neglect. Investigations are initiated to determine if a child was abused or neglected and to determine the safety needs of the child. Diversion cases are primarily cases where the allegations would best be handled by educating the family, providing referrals for services, and/or assisting the family in determining more appropriate options. These cases usually have no serious history with child protection and do not include the more dangerous allegations. Families and caseworkers alike see this as a more helpful process for specific type cases.

When there is a substantiated case of abuse or neglect, several options are available to assist the family to reduce the risk of re-occurrence of harm to the child. These options can be as simple as a referral for services for the caretaker or as life altering as removing a child from the abusive or neglectful situation. The entire case circumstances determine the need for and the type of intervention. Serious cases often include multiple concerns such as: prior abuse or neglect, current abuse and/or neglect, substance abuse, domestic violence or mental health issues. These cases are complex and often times require law enforcement involvement and/or the involvement of the juvenile court.

When families need intervention and monitoring to assure the safety of the child, **Family Preservation Services** are provided. These may be voluntary or court ordered, but always include a case plan. The case plan may include several things that must be accomplished to reduce the risk of abuse or neglect re-occurrence in the home.

Family Preservation services often include the purchase by DFCS of assessment or treatment related services for the entire family or individuals within the family system. The ability to purchase these services also helps to prevent removal of the child in many cases.

Referrals may be investigated, handled as a Diversion case, or screened out if it does not meet criteria for DFCS to handle.

Protective Services	2001	2010	2011	2012
Referrals	604	637	443	405
Diversions	N/A	268	178	162
Investigations	405	300	225	206

Placement and Protective Services – Placement services include Foster Care services, Relative Placements, Foster Care Recruitment and Licensing and Reunification Aftercare services.

Foster care placements are made up of group homes and individual family homes that are licensed after a careful screening process, specialized training (IMPACT) and the completion of a home study. Some other types of foster care placements are the relative foster home, the adoptive foster homes, and the therapeutic foster homes. All total, these homes served an average of 185 Gordon County children during this fiscal year.

The goal of all foster care cases is permanency for the child. It is understood that the best plan for permanency is for the child to return to a safer family of origin home. When this is not possible, permanent relative placement, adoption or emancipation for older children becomes the best option for permanency. This year, 6 children were placed for adoption in Gordon County.

Gordon County continues to make great strides towards providing a family-centered approach to child welfare. The Family Team meeting model is used to engage the family to identify areas of need and

work together to develop a case plan that aims to reduce risk to the child(ren) and strengthen the family.

Administration

Meaghan Bryant, Interim County Director
Jody Sanderson, Office Manager
Claudia Stearns, OFI Supervisor
Kristy Wilson, OFI Supervisor
Julie Nelson, Investigations Supervisor
Rachel Brooks, Family Preservation Supervisor
Connie Branam, Placement Supervisor

Board Members

Dianne Kirby, Chairman
Bruce Potts, Member
Mitch Talley, Member
Sheila Callaway, Member
Thomas Petty, Member

Community Support and Partnerships

Gordon County continues to support our efforts, our programs, and the families we serve in many ways. DFCS is an integral part of safeguarding our children and providing assistance to families, but we are only one part. Without community partners this agency could not begin to provide for the needs of our children and families. The Gordon County Department of Family and Children Services Board and staff would like to thank the many who support us and often work side by side us to accomplish our goals.

Gordon County Commissioners – The County has continued to provide financial support for the children in our custody and for our programs in general. With their help we were able to provide for the needs and opportunities for the children and training for our staff. Their continued support enables us to go the extra mile.

Santa Fund – The Santa Fund is our annual effort to raise donations for children in foster care. Individuals, organizations and businesses all come together to sponsor children for Christmas by donating money and toys in order to make the holiday season special for these very special children.

Interagency Council – The Gordon County Interagency Council meets monthly and provides us with valuable information about other programs and services in the community. This opportunity for networking also offers us the opportunity to educate our social service partners concerning DFCS programs and clients.

Family Connection – The Gordon County Family Connection partnership continues to collaboratively join several agencies toward the goal of serving the children in our community. The primary focus this year has been increasing parenting skills and teen pregnancy.

Family Resource Center – The Gordon County Family Resource Center provides visitation services for our families who have children in foster care. They provide a family like setting for visits to take place and help parents develop their parenting skills. The Family

Resource Center also provides programs such as Healthy Families, Parents as Teachers, and Nurturing Fathers – programs that aim to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Foster Parents – Gordon County foster parents provide homes to children who have been abused or neglected. They care for those who are most in need of love and attention and nurturing. They love even the unlovable. They answer their phones when we call at 2:00 a.m. looking for a home for children. They drive children for visits, doctor's appointments, school and counseling. We do not provide them with nearly enough reimbursement for all that they do, yet they do it anyway. We cannot thank them enough.

All the many others – In our community, there are so many whose jobs, volunteer positions, or simply their willingness to get involved help to make our work possible. To all those too numerous to mention thank you from our agency, our board, our staff and especially "THANK YOU" from the children and families you have served.