July 2018 - June 2019

Stronger Families.
Safer Communities.
A better future for all of Pitt County.

November 2019

ANNUAL REPORT

2020
Board of Social Services
Televised Meeting Dates

Jan • 14  Feb • 11  Mar • 10
Apr • 14  May • 12  June • 9
July • 14  Aug • 11  Sep • 8
Oct • 13  Nov • 10  Dec • 8

Meetings can be watched LIVE on:
PittTv (Suddenlink Cable Channel 13) Or Online at www.pittcountync.gov/LIVE

County Office Building
1717 West Fifth Street
Greenville, NC 27834
- Administration
- Child & Adult Protection
- Foster Care & Adoption

Human Services Center
203 Government Circle
Greenville, NC 27834
- Child Support
- Medicaid
- Nutrition Services
- Workfirst

Earth Building
112 Health Drive
Greenville, NC 27834
- Early Education
- Employment Services

PHONE: 252-902-1110
www.pittcountync.gov/DSS
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As the Board Chairman of the Pitt County Department of Social Services, I hope the following pages will provide you with some insight into the important work that goes on within this Department.

We want to recognize the efforts of all of the staff along with our community partners that work together to improve the lives of our Pitt County citizens. Our goal is not only to help individuals and families, but to ensure that Pitt County remains a place we all can be proud to call home.

A Letter from the Chairman

James Cox

Our Goals for Managing the Public’s Money

Offer a helping hand, not just a handout

Everyone needs help sometimes. When people can’t get it from their families, they often ask for help from their churches and other community organizations.

When they can’t find help there either, they come to us. That’s what we’re here for.

But most people want to solve their problems, not just live with them. We want that too.

That’s why most of our services are linked to opportunities for education, employment, and other ways that families can become more self-sufficient.

Bring taxpayer dollars back home to Pitt County

We all pay taxes. And of course, taxes pay for most of our agency’s services and management expenses. But did you know that only about three cents of every dollar come from our county taxes?

Where each dollar comes from:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal and State Taxes</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collections and Donations</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Taxes</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How each dollar is spent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid Healthcare Services</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Support</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Education</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Programs*</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes child protection, foster care, adoption, the protection of vulnerable adults and administration.

Most of our agency’s money comes from taxes we send to the federal and state governments. We believe it is generally better to spend that money in Greenville, Farmville and Winterville than in Washington and Raleigh. So part of our job is to bring as much as we can back to Pitt County where it contributes to the local economy.

Prevent waste and fraud

Each year we are responsible for managing one third of a billion taxpayer dollars.

We try to make sure every single one is used as effectively as possible, and that none are lost through waste or fraud.
Helping Children Stay Safe, and Families Grow Strong

Every family has emergencies. But some are more serious than others. And not every family has the resources and community ties needed to weather every emergency.

Our agency helps to fill some of the gaps.

Foster care, Adoption, Family Preservation
When children can no longer live safely at home, where can they go?

Many come to us. In fact, the number of Pitt County children who have had to leave their homes has more than doubled during the past six years. Caring for these kids – and, in some cases, finding new permanent homes for them – is a big part of what we do. It is made possible by our wonderful foster families, adoptive families, and the children’s own extended families.

But foster care and adoption are usually a last resort. Most parents would like to keep their children, and most children would like to live stable and healthy lives with their parents, brothers, and sisters.

That’s why DSS tries to prevent family separation, and to achieve reunification. The agency’s In-Home Services Unit offers counseling, parenthood training, and support for resolving underlying problems. Similarly, the agency’s Foster Care and Adoption Units helps separated families to overcome disruptions to their home lives.

Food and Nutrition Help
Few of us have experienced real hunger. But many of our neighbors worry about putting food on the table at least some of the time.

Fortunately, Pitt County is blessed with many churches and other groups that sponsor free food pantries. Our county is also served by the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina. DSS works with these charities, and also manages the federal Food & Nutrition Services program (FNS).

The FNS program helps about 14,000 Pitt County families, half of whose members are either children or the elderly. The average value of the help each family receives is about $192 per month.

Assistance with Heating and Cooling Bills
It’s easy to take public utilities for granted. But paying for them can be a struggle, especially during the coldest and hottest months – and especially when family members have medical conditions that are complicated by extreme cold or heat.

That’s why DSS manages two state and federal programs for families that need emergency help. Between 6,000 and 8,000 Pitt County families make use of these programs each year.

Thousands of Pitt County households – especially those that include family members with chronic medical conditions – receive state and federal help with heating and cooling bills.
Protecting the Vulnerable at all Stages of Life

Safety is everybody’s first concern. If someone isn’t safe, they are not very concerned about how well fed, well housed, or well educated they are. Our agency works closely with law enforcement, the medical community, and others to help make sure that our most vulnerable citizens stay safe.

Addressing Neglect, Abuse, and Exploitation

Many people cannot always ensure their own safety - for example, children, the elderly, and people with severe physical or intellectual disabilities. Fortunately, most are protected by their families.

But not all of them.

Our agency investigates and, if necessary, intervenes when these people have no one else to protect them and ensure they are getting the care they need. We may also be asked to step in if they are being exploited sexually or financially.

Helping Ensure the Safety of the Elderly and Disabled

Not all of the dangers that people face are immediate or critical.

For example, some elderly people just need a little help to avoid being forced to move away from their homes. Some disabled people need legal guardians to help them make decisions about their lives.

Our agency offers these types of help for those who have no other place to look for it. It prevents emergencies, and the pain (and avoidable expense) of allowing emergencies to occur.

As the proportion of Pitt County's elderly increases and the prevalence of chronic disability grows, these services are likely to become more important.

Provisioning Access to Healthcare, and Preventing Fraud

The Medicaid program is sponsored jointly by the federal and state governments. It provides health insurance for nearly a quarter of Pitt County’s citizens. And it is expensive.

About 40% of people with Medicaid are children. Another 25% are elderly or disabled.

Our agency is responsible for deciding who qualifies for Medicaid and who does not. We take both of those responsibilities very seriously.

When someone enrolls in Medicaid, they receive access to care that may mean the difference between life and death, or between a lifetime of ability and one of chronic dependency. On the other hand, when someone does not qualify for Medicaid, the agency helps to ensure that public resources are preserved for the most vulnerable among us.

The proportion of older people in Pitt County is increasing far more rapidly than other age groups.
Building the Foundation for a Stronger Future

Almost everything our agency does is designed to help secure a stronger future for Pitt County. But there are three things that are essential. If they can be done well, a brighter future is virtually assured.

Building Employment

Employment is one of the surest guarantees of family stability for both current and future generations.

During a typical month, the agency’s Employment and Training Unit helps nearly 100 people to either find a job or acquire more stable, better paid employment.

This effort is supplemented by Work First Family Assistance – a relatively small and shrinking program that is one of the last vestiges of traditional “welfare.”

Furthering Education

Education is central to our work. We offer education for new foster parents, and for older foster children who may soon be taking responsibility for themselves. Our educational mission also includes early education for children and vocational training for adults.

Also each year we work with East Carolina University to help train the next generation of social work professionals. Finally, we provide several types of ongoing training for our staff to help them achieve their program goals more efficiently and reliably.

Caring for Our Children

By the age of five, most of us have already formed the basis of our characters. Early childhood is when people develop most of their ability to learn, succeed, and maintain good health and good relationships throughout life.

That’s why DSS tries to ensure that children receive adequate care and support. Last year we collected over $15 million in child support from non-custodial parents. We also managed $10.3 million to support local early childhood programs in cooperation with the state Division of Child Development and Early Education.

Help with paying for early education is good for kids and good for working parents.

Our agency provides job training and placement assistance for many of our clients.

Work First, which is one of the few cash assistance programs still in existence, is declining rapidly.

Our agency plays an important role in ensuring that non-custodial parents help support their children.
DSS In the Community

The Department of Social Services works closely with partners throughout Pitt County.

Disaster Response

DSS staffed Red Cross emergency shelters when Hurricane Dorian hit. All DSS staff members are trained in disaster response, and are regularly called upon to support Pitt County during emergencies.

Abuse Prevention

In addition to responding to reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, DSS and its partners help to raise public awareness of how to prevent these crimes from occurring.

Job Training & Placement

DSS works with NC Works, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and many schools, churches, and charities to help people find employment.

Fund Raising

In cooperation with local businesses and nonprofits, DSS gathers contributions for foster children and others in need.

Where Can I Get Information or Help With...?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Goal</th>
<th>Where to Go</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education Completion</td>
<td>Pitt Community College, Transitional Studies</td>
<td>252-493-7892</td>
<td>pittcc.edu/academics/academic-programs/transitional-studies/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Literacy Volunteers</td>
<td>252-353-6578</td>
<td>pittliteracy.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Training</td>
<td>Pitt Community College, Continuing Education</td>
<td>252-493-7388</td>
<td>pittcc.edu/community/continuing-education/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Placement</td>
<td>NCWorks</td>
<td>252-355-9067</td>
<td>ncworks.gov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pitt County DSS (for Food &amp; Nutrition &amp; Work First clients)</td>
<td>252-902-1151</td>
<td>pittcountync.gov/574/pittworks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disability Support</td>
<td>Vocational Rehabilitation</td>
<td>252-830-8560</td>
<td>ncdhhs.gov/divisions/dvrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disability Advocates &amp; Resource Center</td>
<td>252-355-6215</td>
<td>darcnc.org</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Board Members

- James Cox
- Sheila Bunch
- Mary Perkins-Williams
- Catherine Nelson
- Darone Dancy

Staff Leadership

- Jan Elliott
- Gwendolyn Burns

Additional Services

Economic Support Services Program Administrator
(including Medicaid, Nutrition Services, and Work First):
Bryan Averette • bryan.averette@pittcountync.gov

Adult Services Program Manager
Cynthia Ross • cynthia.ross@pittcountync.gov

Child Welfare Administrator
Tammy Lewis • tammy.lewis@pittcountync.gov

Family Support Services Program Administrator
(including Child Support, Early Education, and Employment Services):
Michele McCorkle • michele.mccorkle@pittcountync.gov