



Georgia Department of Human Services

Aging Services | Child Support Services | Family & Children Services

ANNUAL REPORT

State Fiscal Year 2021





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Letter from Commissioner Candice L. Broce

My name is Candice Broce, and I am the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Director of the Division of Family & Children Services (DFCS).

I am proud to present the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2021 Annual Report for DHS. This report supports Gov. Brian P. Kemp and First Lady Marty Kemp's goals for the state and highlights existing programs and services; gives a snapshot of the number of Georgians served during the 12-month period from July 2020 to June 2021; and throughout demonstrates our Department's unified vision of building stronger families for a stronger Georgia.

In FY 21, the Division of Aging Services (DAS) continued its work to protect the vulnerable from abuse, neglect and/or exploitation, and provided resources to support older Georgians, persons with disabilities and their caregivers. The Senior Community Service Employment Program volunteered 44,478 hours of service to community organizations, and the Georgia Fund for Children & Elderly provided home-delivered meals and transportation for seniors across our state as we continued to battle against the COVID-19 pandemic. Georgians were educated and connected by programs like Georgia Memory Net (GMN) and the Memory Assessment Clinics, which provide screenings for Alzheimer's and other dementias and connect patients and caregivers with the resources they need to live their best lives. Dementia Friends also continued their work to raise awareness across the state and to make our communities more dementia friendly.

In addition, Adult Protective Services (APS) investigated over 30,000 reports of abuse, neglect and exploitation. We remain proud of the investigators and case managers who work long, hard hours to protect our most vulnerable and bring those who seek to take advantage of them to justice.

The Division of Child Support Services (DCSS) continued working to build stronger families by

getting children the financial support they need and giving parents the tools they need to provide for their children. 8,121 parents enrolled in the DCSS Fatherhood program, which innovated during the pandemic, now offering an entirely virtual process. In FY 21, over \$10 million was collected from Fatherhood participants. 1,761 children received increased support from parents who participated in Georgia's Parental Accountability Court program.

The Division of Family & Children Services (DFCS) continued its work to help families in need. 962,647 children benefited from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) program in FY 21, and 13, 897 children were supported by the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program monthly.

Child Protective Services (CPS) continued to investigate reports of child abuse and neglect, with 14,045 children receiving services without being placed in foster care. In FY 21, 16,469 children were in the foster care system, down 10.7% from FY 20. 1,291 children were adopted by new families and given permanent homes. DFCS also provided support to Georgia's students with the Afterschool Care Program and regulated 336 Residential Child Care facilities statewide.

The details in this report showcase the Department's continued commitment to protecting our most vulnerable, educating and supplying resources to Georgia families and providing much-needed support to our aging population. I am incredibly grateful to all our staff who consistently and selflessly serve, and who are dedicated to our vision of stronger families. Together, with the support of Gov. and First Lady Kemp, members of the General Assembly and our community partners, we will continue expand our capacity for adaptability and innovation, and ultimately build a stronger Georgia.

Candice Broce



This report supports the goals for the state, highlights existing programs and services and demonstrates our Department's unified vision of building stronger families for a stronger Georgia.

SFY 2021 Major Events

August 2020

Seventeen Georgia community organizations were selected to work with the DFCS State of Hope initiative, supporting their ongoing work to serve Georgia families with technical assistance and funding.



November 2020

Georgia's Child Support Services mobile app, DCSS On the Go, was recognized at the **Center for Digital Government's 4th annual Government Experience Awards**. Launched in Sep. 2016, this free app was instrumental in improving how Georgia families connect with DCSS services on their mobile devices.



With the support of DHS employees, **we raised \$8,560 for the Georgia State Charitable Contributions Program**, well beyond our initial goal of \$6,000!



February 2021

Georgia's Division of Aging Services (DAS) announced that a **\$4.6 million grant from the Administration for Community Living** would be used to serve home-delivered meals to vulnerable seniors. This funding allowed for DAS to serve adults in need of additional assistance as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We teamed up with the Department of Public Health and local Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) **to help Georgia's seniors get vaccinated against COVID-19**. AAAs assisted with transportation for home-bound seniors and worked with DPH's public health districts to plan vaccination events in safe environments.

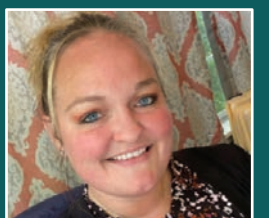
May 2021

Commemorating Older Americans Month, the River Valley Area Agency on Aging **hosted a drive thru event** to share information from more than 20 vendors with local seniors.



June 2021

Georgia Parent Advisory Council member **Erin Thomas received the 2021 National Reunification Hero Award** from the American Bar Association. After being incarcerated, Erin reunified with her son in 2020, and works as a mentor and advocate for those trying to do the same.





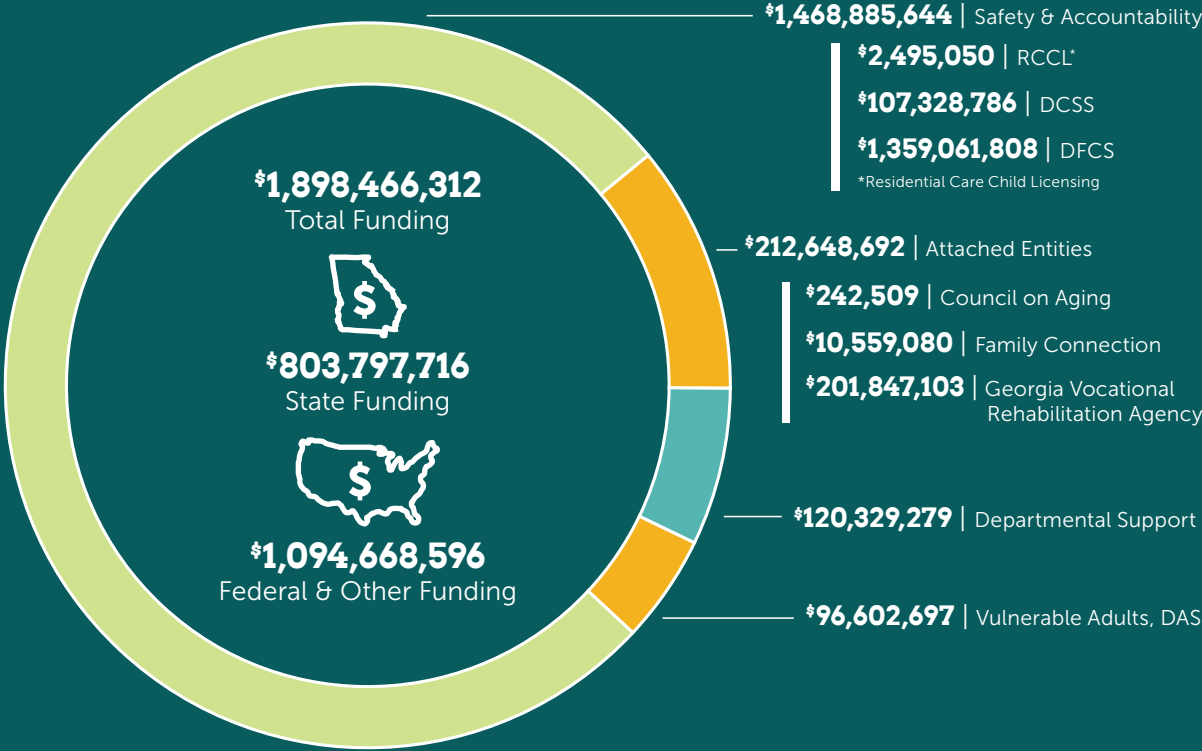
Candice L. Broce
Commissioner

About DHS

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

The Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) serves more than 2 million Georgians and employs approximately 8,912 people. With an annual budget of \$1.89 billion, DHS delivers a wide range of services that protect and enhance the lives of Georgia’s most vulnerable residents.

DHS comprises three divisions — the Division of Aging Services (DAS), the Division of Child Support Services (DCSS) and the Division of Family & Children Services (DFCS).



Through each of its programs and services, the Georgia DHS strives to fulfill its vision of creating Stronger Families for a Stronger Georgia.

Residential Child Care Licensing

RCCL regulates 336 facilities in SFY 2021

The Department’s Residential Child Care Licensing (RCCL) unit seeks to protect children in residential care by licensing and providing oversight for a variety of child care facilities to ensure that facilities have the resources to provide for children in their care and keep them safe.

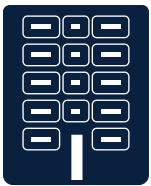
Through its Tracking Residential Applications, Incidents and Licenses System (TRAILS), RCCL also keeps stakeholders and the public informed of the quality of residential child care programs. Facilities requiring a license from RCCL include Child Caring Institutions, Child Placing Agencies, Outdoor Child Caring Programs, Children’s Transition Care Centers and Maternity Homes. Child Caring Institutions and Child Placing Agencies make up the majority of state licenses.

Child Caring Institutions (CCIs) are commonly referred to as group homes and include any institution, society, agency or facility that provides full-time care for six or more children through 18 years of age outside of their own homes. Child Placing Agencies (CPAs) are any institution, society, agency or facility which places children in foster homes for temporary care or in prospective adoptive homes for adoption. Outdoor Child Caring Programs (OCCPs) are CCIs that provide outdoor activities designed to improve the emotional and behavioral well-being of children in a wilderness or camp environment. Maternity Homes (MHs) are any place that receives, treats or cares for, within a six-month period, more than one pregnant woman whose child is born out of wedlock.



By the Numbers

Residential Child Care Licensing



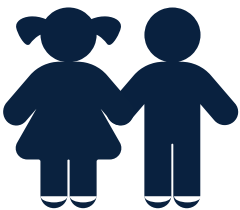
336
facilities were regulated by RCCL in SFY 2021



1
new maternity home received licensure



5
new licenses were approved for child caring institutions



4
new licenses were approved for child placing agencies

Top 6 Reasons Facilities Received Citations in SFY 2021

- #1** Insufficient development, implementation and/or compliance with policies and proceduress
- #2** Insufficient documentation of the involvement of the child’s guardian in the service plan
- #3** Insufficient documentation of resident’s general dental examination
- #4** Incomplete service plans
- #5** Insufficient documentation of additional staff training in child care issues
- #6** Insufficient documentation to support adequate supervision of a child in care

RCCL Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

The Department’s Residential Child Care Licensing (RCCL) unit has continued to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic with safeguards in place. In Aug. 2020, RCCL surveyors resumed limited on-site inspections for the following situations: Agency or facility had a temporary license

- Adverse action within past 12 months
- Pending investigations or other open survey concerns
- Agency or facility did not have a contract with DFCS and did not have an on-site inspection in 2020
- Any other RCCL concerns

Abbreviated, off-site inspections have been conducted for other types of inspections. These off-site inspections have been conducted via Microsoft Teams or by other virtual means. The determination to conduct an on-site or off-site inspection has been determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the allegations against the agency or facility. During this time, when an on-site inspection was required, RCCL confirmed with the licensed provider that the were no active cases of COVID-19 at the facility prior to the inspection. RCCL staff put in place additional safeguards, like surveyors limiting their time spent on-site, surveyors wearing personal protective equipment and RCCL limiting the number of RCCL and provider staff involved in the inspection.





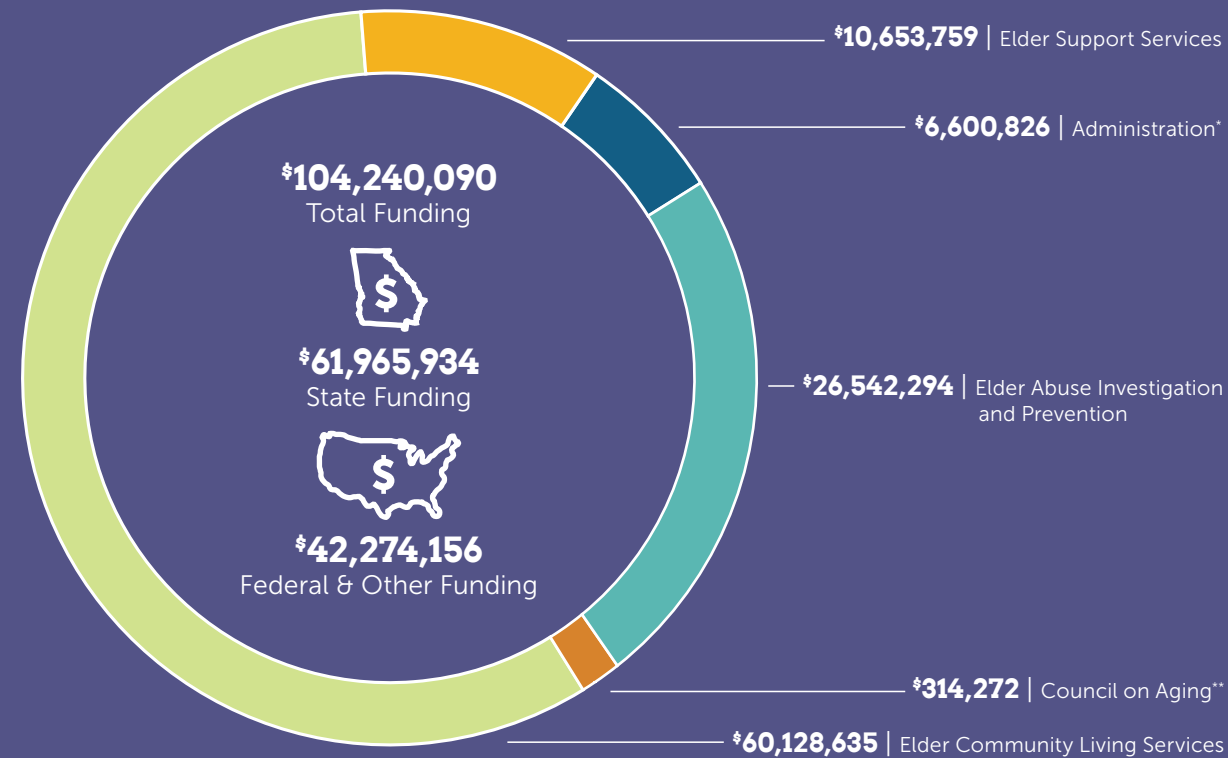
Abby Cox
Assistant Deputy
Commissioner for
Aging Services

About DAS

DIVISION OF AGING SERVICES

The Division of Aging Services (DAS) assists older individuals, at-risk adults, persons with disabilities, their families and caregivers to achieve safe, healthy, independent and self-reliant lives. The Division works with its partners around the state to keep people in their homes and communities for as long as they desire, enabling them to function independently and avoid or delay placement in a long-term care facility.

DAS is also responsible for safeguarding vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect and exploitation. The Division investigates claims of abuse in the community setting (The Department of Community Health investigates claims of abuse in care facilities). DAS also provides services to advocate for adults under guardianship.



*Accounted for as "Departmental Support" on Page 8

**Accounted for as "Attached Entities" on Page 8

**Did You
Know?**

DAS works with its partners around the state to keep people in their homes and communities for as long as they desire, enabling them to function independently and avoid or delay placement in a long-term care facility.

DAS

Aging and Disability Resource Connection

ADRC provides free, unbiased counseling on resources and services to 77,929 customers

ADRC is a one-stop shop or “no wrong door” entry point staffed with counselors who help older adults and adults with disabilities navigate life changes and find resources to assist them with living more self-sufficient lives. The majority of these services are provided through the statewide network of Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs).

Area Agencies on Aging
Through contracts with the 12 AAAs, the Division of Aging Services supports older adults, adults living with a disability and their caregivers through a variety of home and community-based services and other supportive services. AAAs are located across the state and support individuals and caregivers in every county. While specific services vary by region, the core programs in each AAA region are:

Personal Care Assistance
Hands-on assistance with bathing, dressing and similar daily living activities

Transportation Services
Provides rides to and from senior centers, medical and health-related appointments and quality of life trips (such as shopping and activities to remain engaged in the community)

Assistive Technology
Tools that can help individuals perform everyday tasks, allowing them to remain in their own home or community setting of their choosing and/or avoid long-term residential care

Home-Delivered Meals
Nutritious meals provided to qualified individuals in their homes

Congregate Meals
Nutritious weekday lunches provided to older adults in a group setting

Chronic Disease Self-Management
Services that teach individuals with recurring conditions and illnesses how to monitor and care for themselves in a way that maximizes their quality of life

Did You Know?

Anyone seeking resources to support an older adult or individual living with a disability can call the ADRC’s toll-free number at **866-552-4464** to speak with a counselor.

Based on the individual’s needs, counselors provide unbiased information on resources and services that will support the individual and allow him/her to live in the setting of their choosing.

The toll-free number can also connect callers to the GeorgiaCares program, which provides free and unbiased counseling on Medicare, Medicaid and other related health insurance. For more information, please visit mygeorgiacares.org.

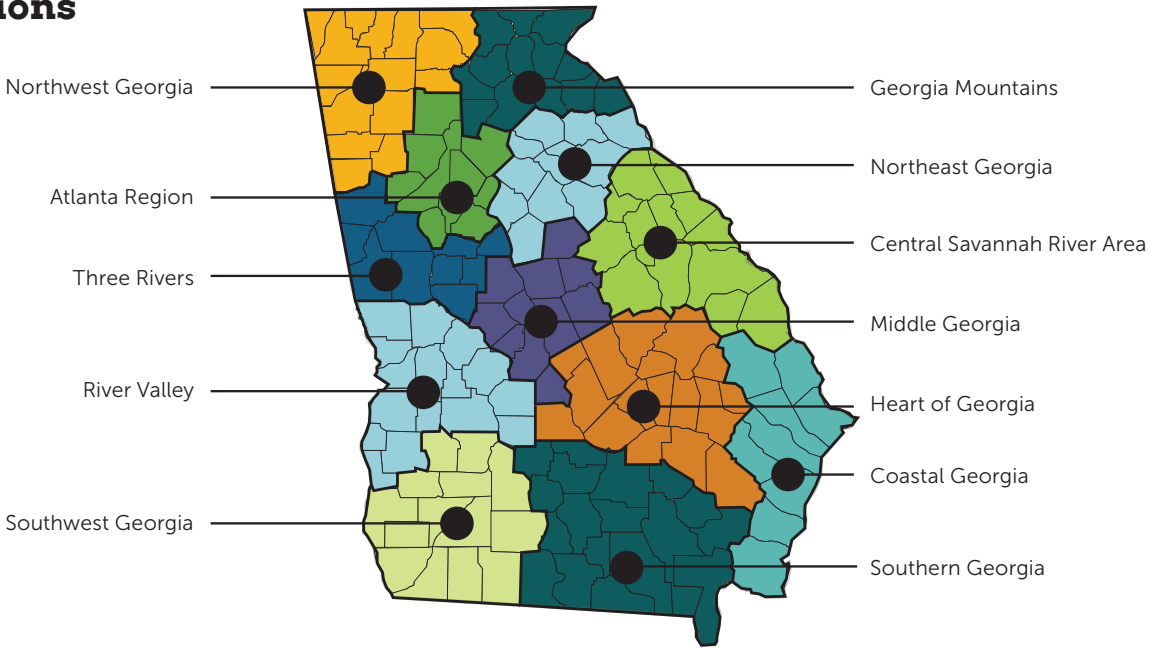
Respite Care
Services that offer a brief period of rest for family caregivers, either in the home or on a short-term basis in institutional settings

Elderly Legal Assistance Program
Legal information and representation on elder law matters, such as healthcare and long-term care; housing; protection or recovery from abuse, neglect and/or exploitation; public benefits and income security; and estate planning

Money Follows the Person and Nursing Home Transitions programs
Programs that assist individuals who reside in long-term in-patient facilities with relocating back into a community setting of their choosing, when desired. Money Follows the Person is a federally funded program and Nursing Home Transitions is funded by the state.



AAA Regions



SFY 2021 Clients Served by Planning & Service Areas

Region	ADRC	Adult Protective Services ²	GeorgiaCares	Home & Community Based Services	Money Follows the Person	Nursing Home Transitions
Atlanta	20,817	8,198	4,922	12,591	56	26
Central Savannah River Area (CSRA)	3,255	1,410	706	2,891	0 ³	0 ³
Coastal Georgia	5,753	1,791	861	3,118	9	7
Georgia Mountains	2,062	1,634	2,114	2,527	11	9
Heart of Georgia	3,586	656	403	2,054	14	9
Middle Georgia	4,597	1,225	630	1,909	4	12
Northeast Georgia	5,329	1,543	1,083	2,914	12	10
Northwest Georgia	9,162	2,402	1,627	3,539	15	11
River Valley	2,858	987	537	1,802	6	6
Southern Georgia	5,034	1,190	708	2,222	17	11
Southwest Georgia	10,097	922	485	3,279	14	6
State DAS/CILs ¹	273			178	41	52
Unavailable Planning and Service Area	0	1,150				
Temporary Emergency Respite Funds (TERF)		52				
Three Rivers	5,156	1,297	1,039	2,436	17	21
Statewide Total	77,979	24,457	15,115	40,146	216	180

¹The AAA in CSRA does not provide transition services. All transitions in the CSRA region are done by Walton Options, the Center for Independent Living (CIL) serving the CSRA region. Numbers for transitions in this region are captured in the State/CIL line below in the table. | ²Adult Protective Services Clients Served is defined as the number of intakes that met criteria during the fiscal year by Planning & Service Area region. | ³Has been added to the State DAS/CILs



By the Numbers

ADRC



396

vulnerable adults transitioned from nursing homes and in-patient facilities back into their homes and communities through the Money Follows the Person and Nursing Home Transitions programs.



\$648,748

in out-of-pocket expenses was saved by GeorgiaCares Medicare beneficiaries
The federal government made changes to how this figure is calculated this year. As a result, this figure is lower than reported in previous years.



1,440

clients received assistive technology services
This increase over the previous year was due to an increase in funding from \$46,551 to \$382,797. Additional funding was provided from federal COVID assistance dollars



5,214,276

meals were provided to older or disabled adults through home delivery and congregate settings
The number of meals served this year increased substantially thanks to CARES Act funding during the COVID-19 pandemic



12

AAAs established 11 Assisted Technology Labs to cover the entire state. All 12 AAAs have Assisted Technology toolkits for public demonstrations



\$38,038,966

was the value of legal services provided to older Georgians through the Elderly Legal Assistance Program



1,892

individuals contacted the ADRC to receive information on assistive technology



40,146

individuals received Home and Community-Based Services



\$2,227

average individual annual cost to provide Home and Community-Based Services

In Action

MR. J

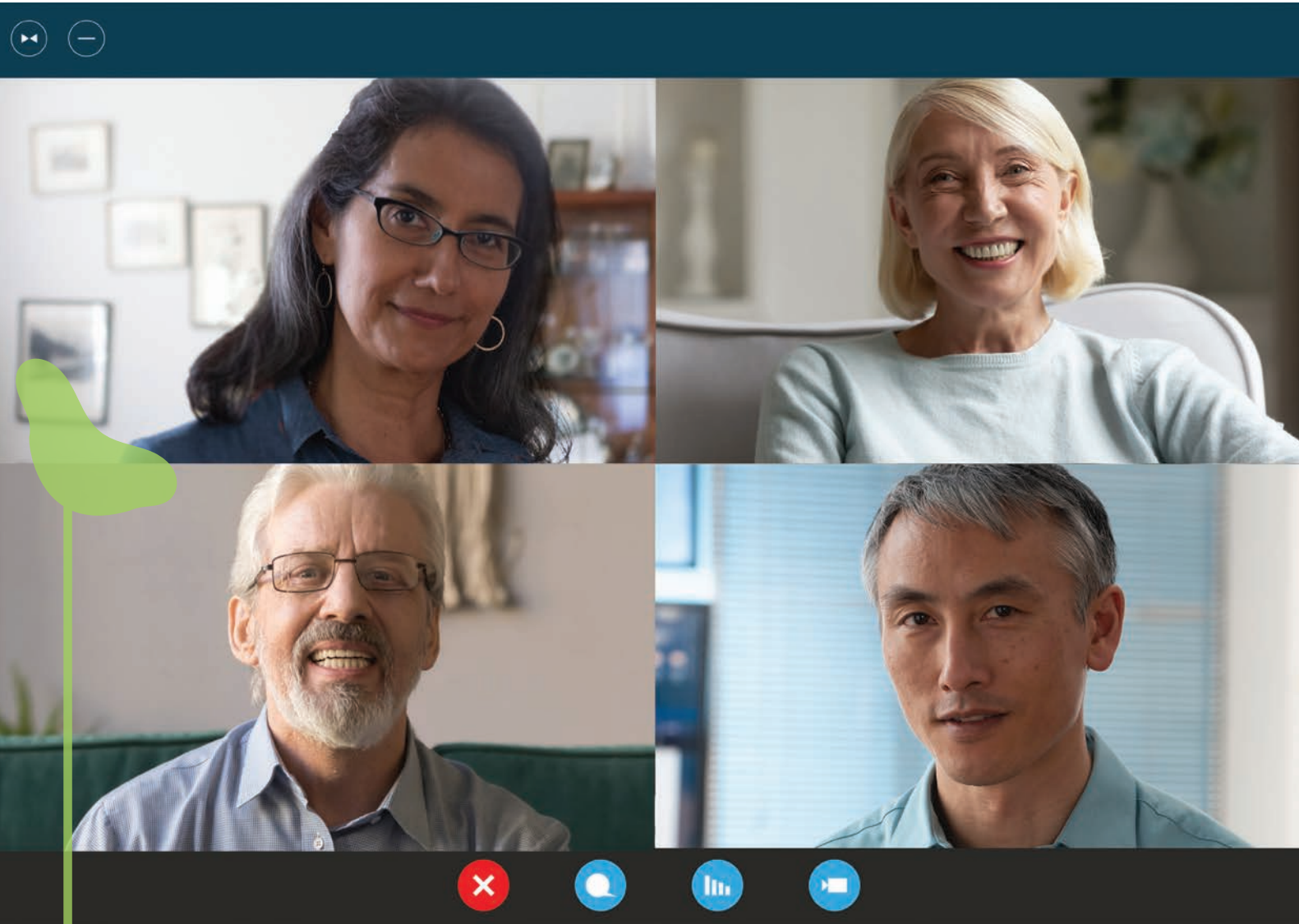
One client in the Atlanta region was able to safely maintain his healthcare activities and avoid feelings of self-isolation due to a computer tablet he received through the ADRC. Prior to receiving the tablet, he was missing out on his PTSD/ depression individual and men’s support group therapy sessions due to COVID-19 as the sessions were forced to go virtual.

The tablet provided a much needed life line to keep him connected to necessary services and has changed his life for the better. He was able to maintain his mental health and keep in touch with the outside world while prioritizing his health during the pandemic.

He was so grateful for the tablet and help he received that he wrote a letter of appreciation. In the letter he said: “Thank you for your concerns, support and just being there for me.” The ability to keep clients connected to their healthcare professionals and avoid self-isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic has been a great achievement for the ADRC.

Allocated COVID-19 Expenditures by Service

Service	COVID-19 Budget
Aging Services Administration	N/A
Elder Abuse Investigation and Prevention	\$463,476.54
Elder Community Living Services	\$1,777,952.08
Elder Support Services	\$719,357.21
Total	\$2,960,785.83



In SFY 2021, ADRC provided **77,979** customers and family members free, unbiased counseling on resources and services specific to their needs.

Georgia Memory Net

Memory clinics provide care to 424 people

Georgia Memory Net (GMN) is a statewide program, developed in partnership with Emory University, to expand access to early and accurate diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias and to support those living with dementia, including caregivers.

Additionally, GMN trains physicians to properly screen for the disease and collect data in a manner that will allow the state to better support those living with dementia. Cognitive Neurology and Neuropsychology Leads based in Emory’s Cognitive Neurology Program train and continuously work with MACs to ensure the MAC providers have the tools and training they need to effectively and accurately diagnose Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias using evidence-based, clinically proven tools.

Currently, five Memory Assessment Clinics (MACs) are in operation across the state. The MACs are located at Augusta University in Augusta, Grady Health in Atlanta, Navicent Health in Macon, Piedmont Columbus Regional in Columbus and Phoebe Putney Health in Albany.

In SFY 2021:

- MACs increased their patient volumes. The clinics saw a total of 503 unique patients, conducted 960 total visits and 261 clients were referred to AAAs.
- Expanded partnerships include collaboration with DPH for B-SEEN project and continued work with GA GEAR, Georgia’s only Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration.
- CARES funds used to purchase 25 iPads provided an opportunity to partner with organizations and combine resources to provide expanded telehealth access to patients across the state. Devices will be deployed for broader telehealth use in upcoming fiscal year.
- GMNnywhere 2021 featured several great sessions for the network. In addition to a timely session on the newly FDA Approved Alzheimer’s drug, Aducanumab, and a Georgia General Assembly Roundtable, the series featured several guest speakers. The keynote speaker was Dr. Bradley Boeve, MD of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, who shared his expertise in Lewy Body Dementia, a session that attracted attendees from as far as Canada.
- GMN Portal enhancements have resulted in improved productivity for MAC staff and enhanced data integrity in the GMN repository.



By the Numbers

GMN



\$26,188

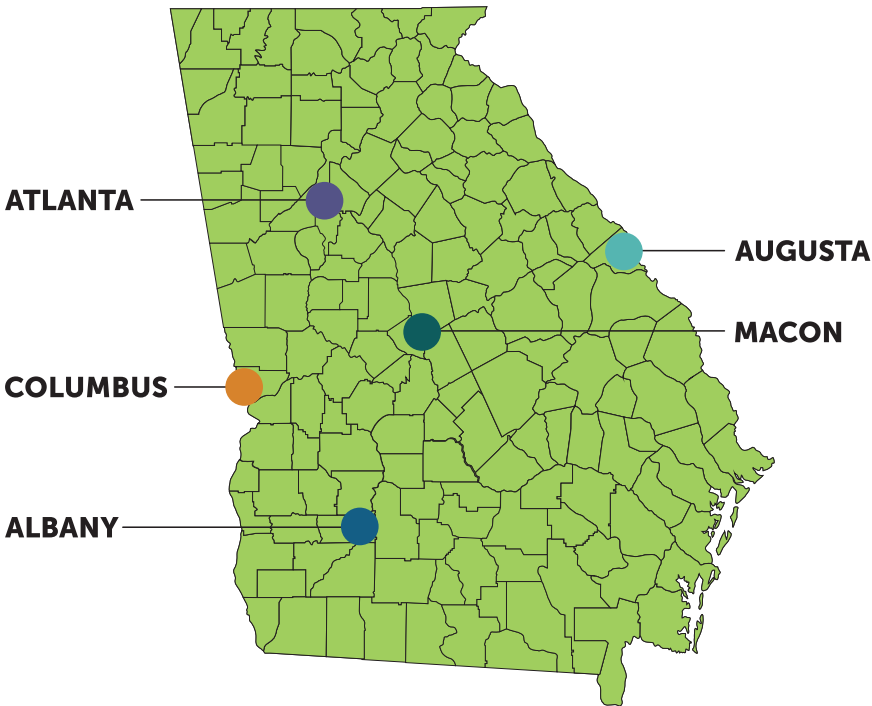
is the amount of money Medicare spends annually per person diagnosed with dementia



190,000

residents are estimated to be living with Alzheimer’s in Georgia by 2025

MAC Locations



Did You Know? MEMORY ASSESSMENT TESTS

Medicare recipients can receive a free cognitive impairment assessment that measures memory loss and cognitive decline as part of their annual wellness visit.

For more information, visit georgiamemorynet.org.

Dementia Friends

DHS expands Dementia Friends program across library and education sectors

During COVID, Dementia Friends Champions continued to use virtual means to bring information sessions to consumers statewide. Specifically, Champions focused on engaging attendees with small group sizes and promotion of active discussions. Champions also worked to encourage Dementia Friends to submit the action items they tend to employ to make their communities more dementia-friendly.

To aid with the process, DAS conducted refresher trainings with Champions, emphasizing the importance of both hosting two sessions per year and also reporting the number of attendees at the session. DHS and the GARD Dementia Friendly Strategy Group are working together to build relationships with libraries and the education sector.

The goal for this initiative is to build audiences for Dementia Friends within key community partners, ultimately making more Dementia Friends to make Georgia more dementia-friendly.



By the Numbers

Dementia Friends



186

Dementia Friends in SFY 2020



31

Information Sessions have been hosted by Dementia Friends Champions in SFY 2021

DAS

Senior Community Service Employment Program

Participants contribute 44,478 hours of service to community organizations

Adults who are 55 or older, unemployed and looking to re-enter the workforce may qualify for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). Services are available in the majority of Georgia’s 159 counties. SCSEP is a program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor that serves low-income persons who have a family income of no more than 125% of the federal poverty level and have poor employment prospects. Eligible individuals are placed in part-time community service positions with a goal of transitioning to unsubsidized employment. The program serves people whose yearly income meets the U.S. Department of Labor guidelines.

Participants' training wages contribute to the local economy and reduce their dependence on public benefits programs. Participants provided 44,478 hours of community service including 19,003 hours of service to organizations that serve older adults. Thirty percent were individuals with disabilities. Twenty-three percent of participants were homeless or at risk of homelessness.


Did You Know?
SCSEP
Adults who are at least 55, unemployed and have a family income of no more than 125% of the federal poverty level may qualify for subsidized employment opportunities. For a family of two, that would equate to an annual income of no more than \$21,138.

In Action
MS. WG
SCSEP program participant Ms. WG successfully secured a position with the Athens Community Council on Aging. When she was searching for a job, she became a participant in SCSEP. She received training and education at Mercy Care Rome which enabled her to qualify for the SCSEP coordinator position with the Athens Community Council on Aging. She was very grateful for the job opportunity and relocated from Rome to Athens for the position.


She was very happy for the transition and enjoys her new city and job. This opportunity gave Ms. WG a source of interaction and training so she could guide other people in need. Since becoming a participant in the SCSEP program, she realized her passion for helping seniors. Her new role has been very fulfilling and she enjoys finding opportunities for other seniors who are in the same position she was in.

“My life before SCSEP was like a puzzle with one missing piece,” Ms. WG said. “SCSEP was the missing piece.”


By the Numbers
SCSEP



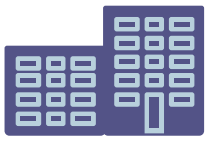
184
people participated in SCSEP in SFY 2020




30%
of participants were individuals with disabilities




44,478
hours of community service were provided by participants



159
participants provided community service



23%
of SCSEP participants were homeless or at risk of homelessness



19
participants got a full-time job
The COVID-19 pandemic forced many grantees to close their physical locations this year, which meant fewer participants were able to secure positions.

Kinship Care

Support groups, other resources provide stability, foundation for grandparents raising grandchildren

Through kinship support groups, DAS provides education and peer support for grandparents and relative caregivers raising children by focusing on positive parenting, effective discipline and healthy relationships. Other kinship care services include provision of material aid such as school supplies, respite through summer camps and case management for grandfamilies of children with disabilities.

By the Numbers
Kinship Care



\$367,072
was provided to AAAs for Kinship Care Services using federal and state funds



5,060
people attended over 500 AAA-sponsored kinship support groups

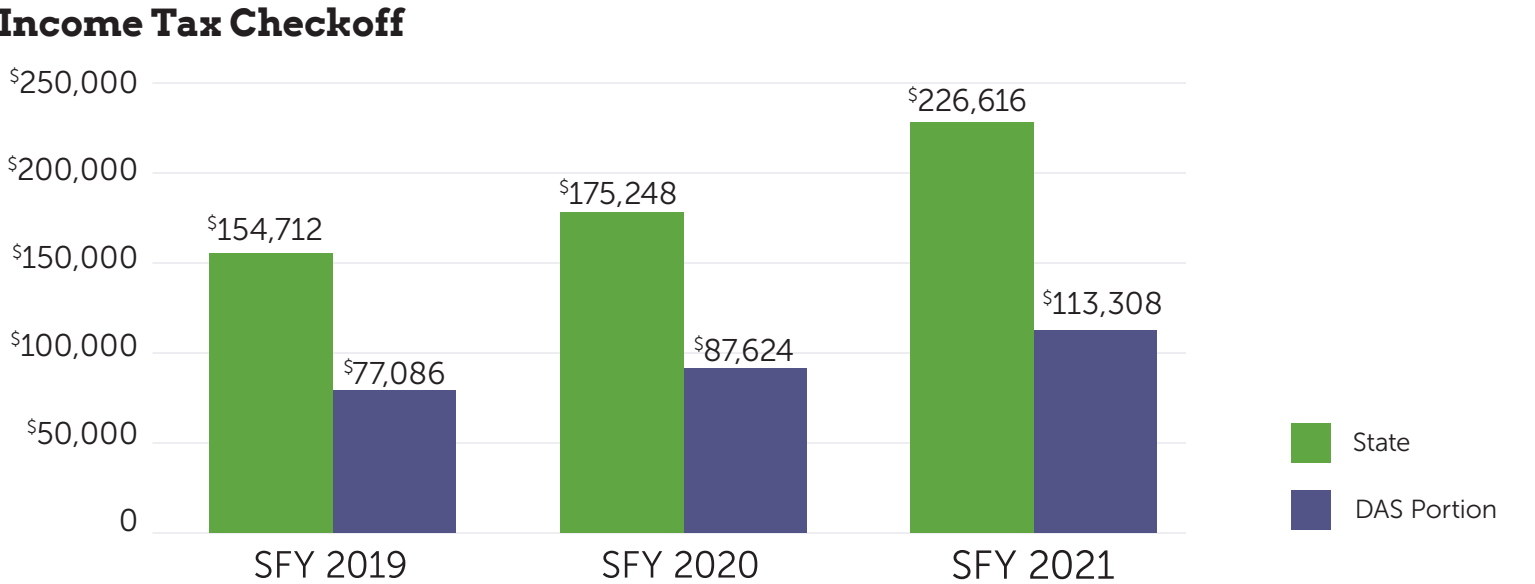


36
ongoing Kinship Care support groups were held in six public service areas

Georgia Fund for Children & Elderly

Increase in 2020 income tax donations provides home-delivered meals and transportation for seniors

The Georgia Department of Human Services Division of Aging Services co-administers the Georgia Fund for Children & Elderly with the Department of Public Health’s Maternal and Child Health Program Division. The Division of Aging Services receives 50% of the fund’s donations each year, and those donations are distributed to Area Agencies on Aging for home-delivered meals and senior transportation. The remaining 50% is allotted to the Department of Public Health to provide grants for programs that serve children and youth with special needs. Income tax check-off donations received between calendar years/income tax years 2019 and 2021 are shown below.



Adult Protective Services

APS fields more than 11,000 reports of financial exploitation in SFY 2021

Adult Protective Services (APS) investigates reports of abuse, neglect and exploitation of older persons or adults with disabilities who do not reside in long-term care facilities. Abuse involves physically harming or distressing an at-risk adult or depriving an individual of his/her basic needs, such as not providing necessary medications or withholding food.

APS case managers work with victims of abuse, neglect or exploitation to employ the least restrictive intervention for adults who are in need of support and have the capacity to engage in decisions about their well-being.

To report abuse of an older adult or a person with a disability in the community:

- Call **1-866-552-4464** or visit aging.ga.gov.

To report abuse of an older adult or a person with a disability in long-term care facilities:

- Call the Department of Community Health at **404-657-5700**. In case of emergency, call 911.

Staff Highlight

APS INVESTIGATOR, DAKOTA WRIGHT RECEIVED THE SPIRIT OF NAPSA AWARD

This award is given to a frontline Adult Protective Services (APS) staff person in recognition of their significant contribution to the growth and development of the APS program in their community, as well as to the field of abuse intervention. The nominee does not have to be a National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) member to be nominated. Dakota Wright went above and beyond on a case that held many challenges. Wright holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Tennessee Temple University and has been with the State of Georgia for four years. She is an APS investigator from the Northwest Georgia APS team. She always offers to assist her colleagues and has been doing outstanding work building bridges with law enforcement and reporters in her area. She recently had a case with a client who was cognitively impaired and had been abused and abandoned by their caregiver. The client was alone and did not remember to eat and was unable to meet their own needs. Wright connected with local law enforcement to ensure the client received the help they needed.



What is NAPSA?

NAPSA is a national non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization with members in all 50 states. Formed in 1989, the goal of NAPSA is to provide APS programs a forum for sharing information, solving problems and improving the quality of services for victims of elder and vulnerable adult mistreatment. Its mission is to strengthen the capacity of APS at the national, state and local levels to effectively and efficiently recognize, report and respond to the needs of elders and/or adults with disabilities who are the victims of abuse, neglect or exploitation and to prevent such abuse whenever possible.

By the Numbers

APS



11,114

cases were substantiated, meaning alleged abuse, neglect or exploitation was confirmed



31,768

number of reports of abuse, neglect or exploitation



173

budgeted APS case manager positions

SFY 2021 Top 5 Reasons for APS Reports

#1

FINANCIAL ABUSE OR EXPLOITATION

Improperly or illegally using a person's resources for the benefit of another person. **11,136 reports**

#2

SELF-NEGLECT

Depriving oneself of necessities such as food, water or medication. Consciously putting oneself in harm's way or being unable to handle the needs of day-to-day living, because of medical, mental health or other disabilities. **8,879 reports**

#3

NEGLECT

Refusing or failing to provide essential services (food, water, shelter, medical care, etc.) to a person to the degree that it harms or threatens to harm them. **6,793 reports**

#4

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Using tactics, such as harassment, insults, intimidation, isolation or threats that cause mental or emotional anguish. Emotional abuse diminishes the person's sense of identity, dignity and self-worth. **3,418 reports**

#5

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Using physical force to coerce or to inflict bodily harm. It often, but not always, causes physical discomfort, pain or injury. It may include the willful deprivation of essential services, such as medical care, food or water. **2,980 reports**



Call **1-866-552-4464** or visit aging.ga.gov to report abuse of an older adult or a person with a disability in the community.

Public Guardianship

39 case managers support 1,179 adults

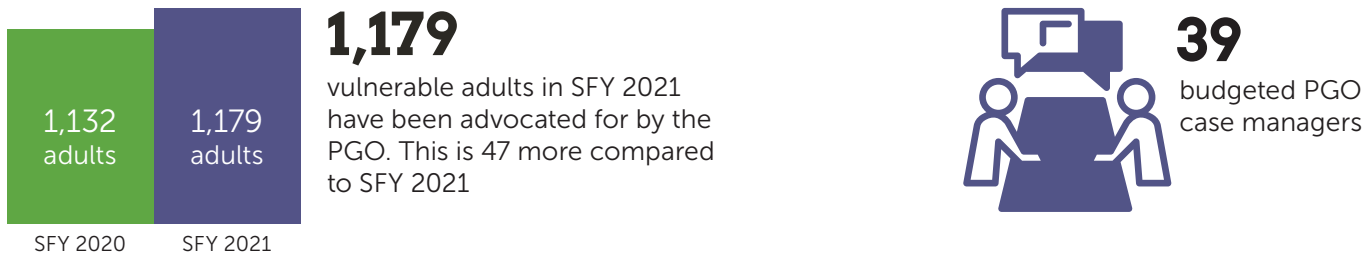
DHS can be appointed as guardian of last resort for Georgians who have been deemed by a probate court to be incapable of making or communicating decisions about their health or safety and for whom no appropriate family or friends have been located to assist. On behalf of DHS, assisting those individuals under DHS guardianship is handled by the staff of the Public Guardianship Office (PGO) within DAS.

PGO case managers advocate for persons under guardianship, act as surrogate decision-makers and coordinate and monitor all services needed for the support, care, education, health and welfare of guardianship clients.

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By the Numbers

PGO



Forensic Special Initiatives Unit

FSIU trains 305 professionals on identifying and reporting abuse, neglect and exploitation

The Forensic Special Initiatives Unit (FSIU) aids the Division and other local, state and federal partners in their efforts to protect Georgia’s at-risk adults from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

During calendar year 2021, FSIU became a detached unit housed within the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. An MOU between DHS and the GBI combined the expertise of FSIU with the primary state law enforcement agency in Georgia.

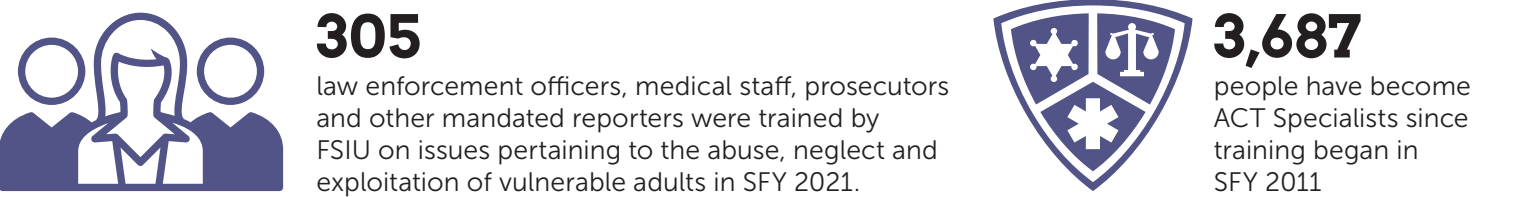
The unit provides technical assistance and case consultations and offers a two-day At-Risk Crime Tactics (ACT) certification course. The course trains professionals to identify and investigate cases of abuse, neglect and exploitation. The ACT training is open to primary and secondary responders including:

- Law enforcement
- Judges and prosecutors
- Health care providers and medical services personnel
- Employees of financial institutions
- Regulatory/social/victim service workers
- Other professionals who respond to the abuse, neglect and exploitation of at-risk adults

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By the Numbers

FSIU

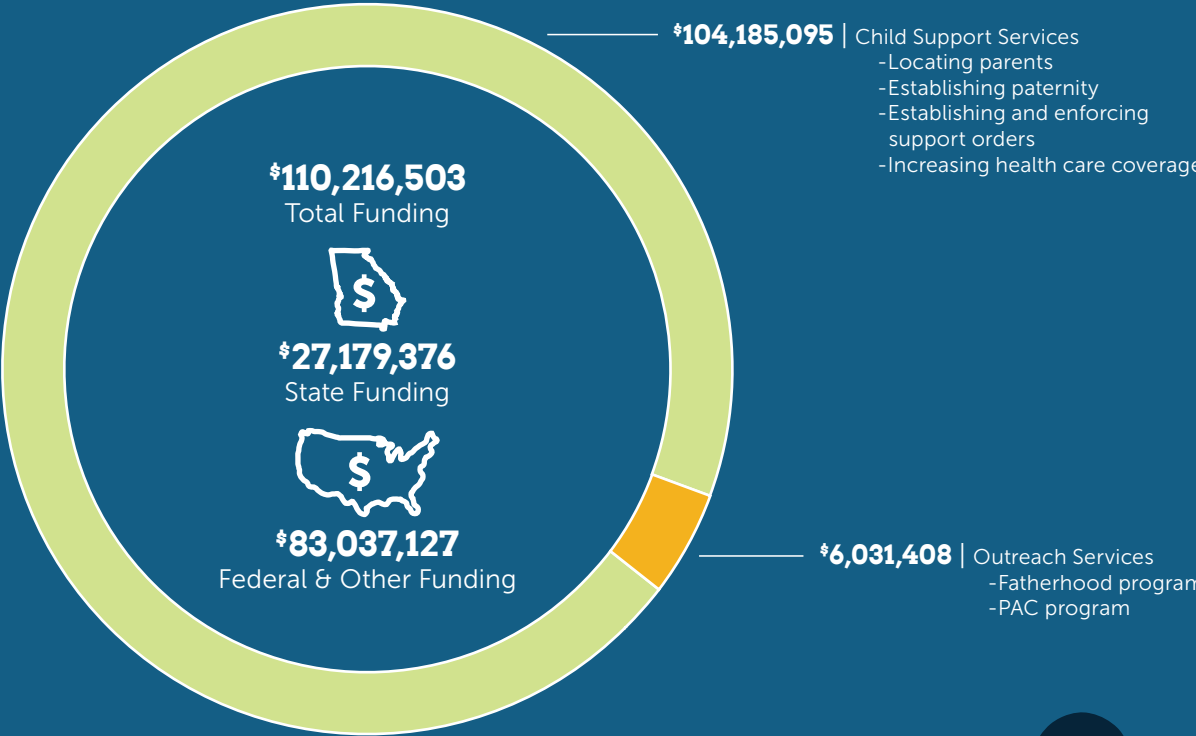




John Hurst
Assistant Deputy
Commissioner
for Child Support
Services

The Division of Child Support Services (DCSS) works to increase the consistency of financial support children receive from parents who do not have primary custody.

DCSS' services include locating parents; establishing paternity; establishing, monitoring and enforcing fair support orders; increasing health care coverage for children; and removing barriers to payment. In its efforts to build stronger families, DCSS assists noncustodial parents in finding employment that pays above minimum wage by connecting parents who have behavioral or mental health issues with the resources to overcome or manage those issues so they can be positively involved in their children's lives.



Did You Know?

DCSS helps locate parents who owe child support, assists in determining paternity, collects payments and provides resources to parents to ensure Georgia's children receive financial and medical support from both parents.

About DCSS

DIVISION OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

Child Support Services

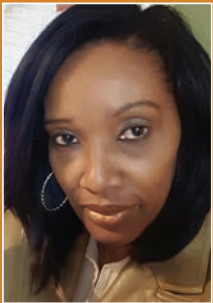
Division distributes \$751 million to 464,121 children

The Division of Child Support Services (DCSS) helps locate parents who owe child support, assists in determining paternity, collects payments and provides resources to parents to ensure Georgia’s children receive financial and medical support from both parents. Children who receive support from both parents are more likely to experience financial and emotional stability, and have a greater chance at success in adulthood.

Staff Highlight

VICKY WHIPPLE

Vicky Whipple started with the Division of Child Support Services in Aug. 2000 and serves as an administrative assistant for Region 4. In her role, she works closely with the assistant deputy directors and provides support to the Training and Staff Development Team. She is instrumental in training new administrative assistants as they come on board and has been a great asset to the Division. In addition to performing her job at an exemplary level, Whipple demonstrates an extraordinary commitment to DCSS. She has an eagerness to learn and seeks answers when she is not clear on expectations. She takes it upon herself to provide exceptional support and service and uses her years of knowledge to assist others.



Whipple is willing to step up to offer her assistance when units are short-staffed. She discerns others’ needs and moves quickly and efficiently to provide resolutions to all concerns that arise. She offers recommendations and goes above and beyond to make sure all problems are addressed and resolved immediately. She has been especially supportive of the business operations unit’s success. Whipple took on several additional job duties when assisting business operations, including entering a significant amount of requisitions for payment processing, processing invoices for timely vendor payment, creating reports for budget impact and assisting with training and staff development for the unit and region Administrative Operations Coordinators. Whipple has been a great example of effective team work and has truly made a profound impact throughout her years of service. And for these reasons she was selected as the FFY20 DCSS Hero of the Year!



By the Numbers

Child Support Services

DCSS reports data for Federal Fiscal Year 2021 (FFY 2021), which runs from Oct. 1, 2020, to Sept. 30, 2021.



266,724

parents were under a court order for child support in Georgia, compared to 273,641 in FFY 2021



464,121

children were financially supported as a result of these orders compared to 485,648 in FFY 2021
Each icon represents 10,000 children

In FFY 2021, **\$751,964,843** was distributed to Georgia’s children and families by DCSS.



Fatherhood Program

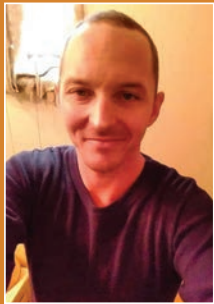
1,135 participants enrolled in GED and short-term training job programs

Noncustodial parents who are having difficulty paying child support may receive services that can help them achieve self-sufficiency and provide for their children to avoid contempt action on their support order. The Fatherhood program offers assistance in accessing training and employment opportunities. It also encourages parents to increase emotional, parental and financial involvement in the lives of their children. Some of the services included are below, and more information can be found on the [DCSS website](#).

- Driver’s license reinstatement (for licenses suspended or pending suspension for non-payment of child support)
 - Virtual meetings
- Online skills assessment
 - Job placement
 - Federal bonding letter
 - Access and visitation services

In Action
FATHERHOOD PROGRAM

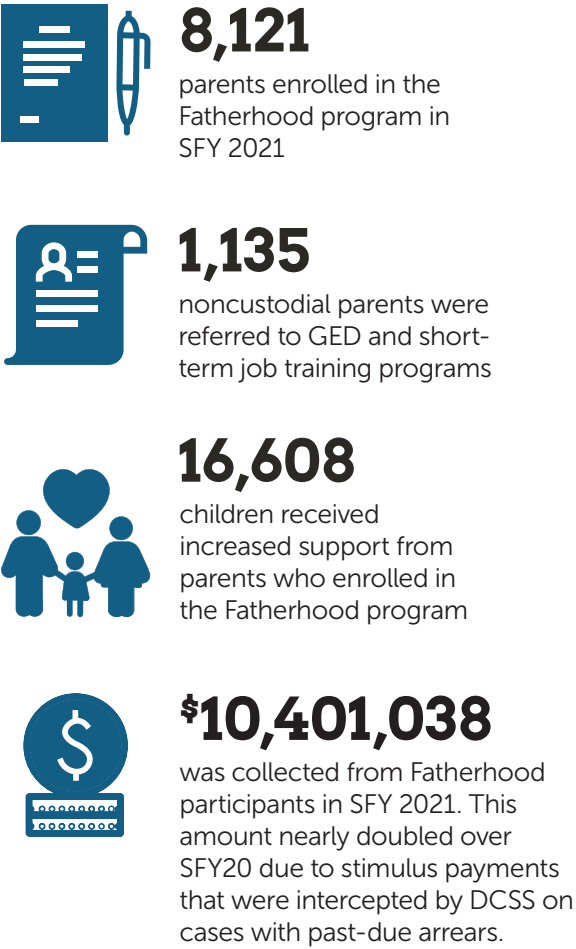
Luke was hesitant to join the Fatherhood program, because he did not understand the benefits of participating in the program. However, after attending the orientation, he was inspired to search for work immediately despite not having a valid license. Luke worked with Fatherhood Agent Radney and his family to find ways to overcome his transportation barrier. As a result, he started working as a self-employed contractor. This new role brought Luke a better salary and allowed him to pay more toward his child support obligation. His new job also had better hours and granted him more time to spend with his family.



The effects of Luke’s positive experience with Fatherhood continued even after he successfully completed the program in July 2021. Due to the increase in current support paid during his enrollment, the local office was able to continue driver’s license assistance by placing an override on his driver’s license suspension in Aug. 2021.

Luke’s story is one of complete success. He began working soon after joining Fatherhood, and despite his circumstances, he managed to overcome transportation barriers, start and maintain his own business and change the course of his future and his family’s future.

By the Numbers
Fatherhood program



Fatherhood Program Response to COVID-19 Pandemic
COVID-19 PRESENTS FATHERHOOD THE OPPORTUNITY TO REIMAGINE THEIR APPROACH TO SERVICES

COVID-19 presented obvious barriers to the Fatherhood program’s traditional in-person meeting processes, but it also allowed the program the opportunity to pivot innovatively. By utilizing platforms supported by our organization, including Microsoft Teams, SharePoint, Microsoft Forms, and Microsoft Streams, we transitioned to an entirely virtual process that offers our customers the convenience to continue to access support, services, and resources via telephone, cell phone, or computer.

The program continues to thrive with the new techniques, and we will continue to deliver this option to customers who are unable to meet in-person.



Parental Accountability Court Program

PAC participants provided \$1 million for 1,761 children who previously were not receiving regular support

DCSS recognizes that incarceration for nonpayment of support can be counterproductive as it prevents parents from accessing employment that ultimately results in falling further behind on court-ordered child support. In 2009, DCSS and the superior court judges established Georgia’s first Parental Accountability Court (PAC). At the end of SFY 2021, 43 judicial circuits were offering the program as an alternative to incarceration. The program assists chronic nonpayers of child support with meeting their financial obligations through judicial oversight, parent accountability, employment and education. Services offered through the PAC program include:

- Substance abuse treatment
- Job assistance and placement
- Short-term training
- Coaching and mentoring
- Educational services
- Employment training

In Action PARENTAL ACCOUNTABILITY COURT PROGRAM

In the spring of 2020, Angelia was referred to the Parental Accountability Court by her agent for not making payments toward her child support obligation. She was eager to enroll in the program and get back on track with her payments. Once enrolled, Angelia immediately started looking for employment. She realized that working outside was something she enjoyed, so she decided to work for herself in landscaping. However, her employment choice meant that she would be responsible for sending in her own payments. This initially caused concern because her last payment prior to entering the PAC program in 2020 was made in 2014. However, once she started working for herself and participating in the PAC program, she diligently made her child support payments every month. Angelia was goal-oriented in all aspects of her life and determined to take care of her support obligation from the beginning.



Ultimately, she was able to pay off her case in 2021 and graduate from the PAC program in Barrow County. Angelia is a perfect example of how the PAC program can get parents back on track.

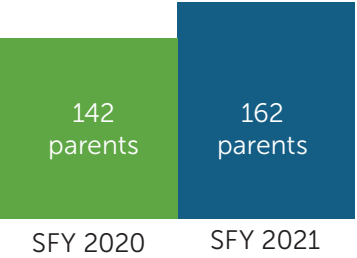
PAC Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 TAKES TOLL ON PAC ENROLLMENT

Participation in the PAC program was hindered some due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many court systems across the state closed, affecting the Division’s ability to file contempt notices and other court procedures necessary for this program. It was also difficult to navigate situations in which participants had little to no access to electronic devices or Internet service to attend court virtually or provide electronic signatures.

Additionally, community resources that are typically available to help support this program faced closures and hardships as well. For these reasons, the PAC program saw a decrease in participation and performance this year.

By the Numbers PAC



5,513

participants received services through PACs across the state since the beginning of the program in 2009, avoiding incarceration and saving taxpayers the cost of incarceration



\$19,255,495

was collected in child support payments because of the success of noncustodial parents in the PAC program in all FFYs

162

parents graduated from the PAC program, providing support to children who previously received partial or no support compared to 142 in SFY 2020



661

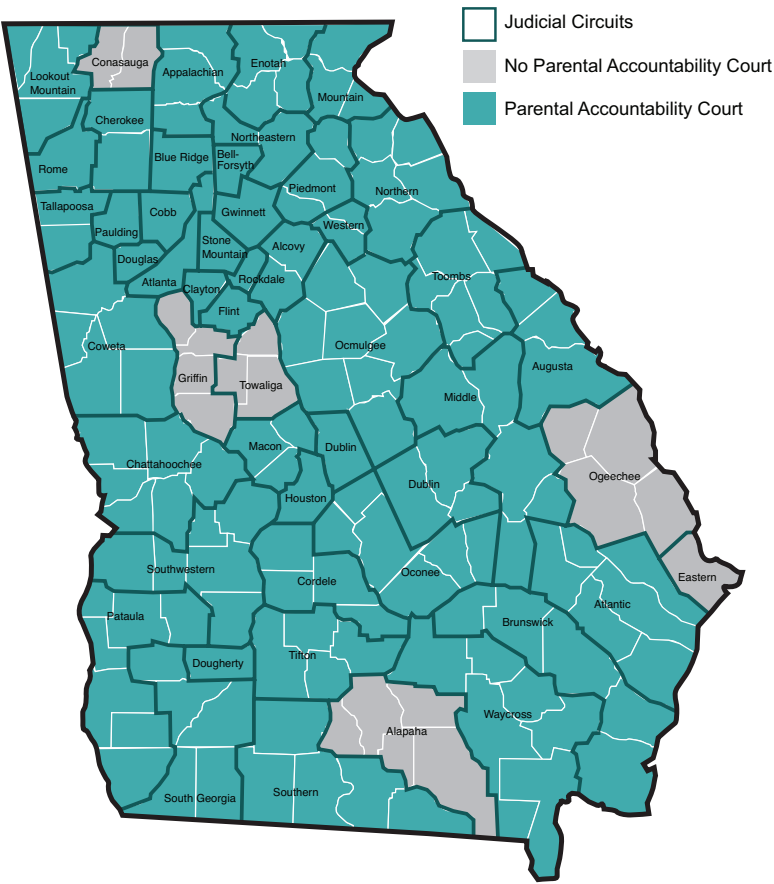
noncustodial parents received help on their journey to lead more self-sufficient lives as part of their enrollment in the PAC program in SFY 2021



\$1,087,099

in financial support was collected from parents who participated in the PAC program in SFY 2021

Judicial Circuits with PACs



In SFY 2021, **1,761** children received increased support from parents who participated in the PAC program.

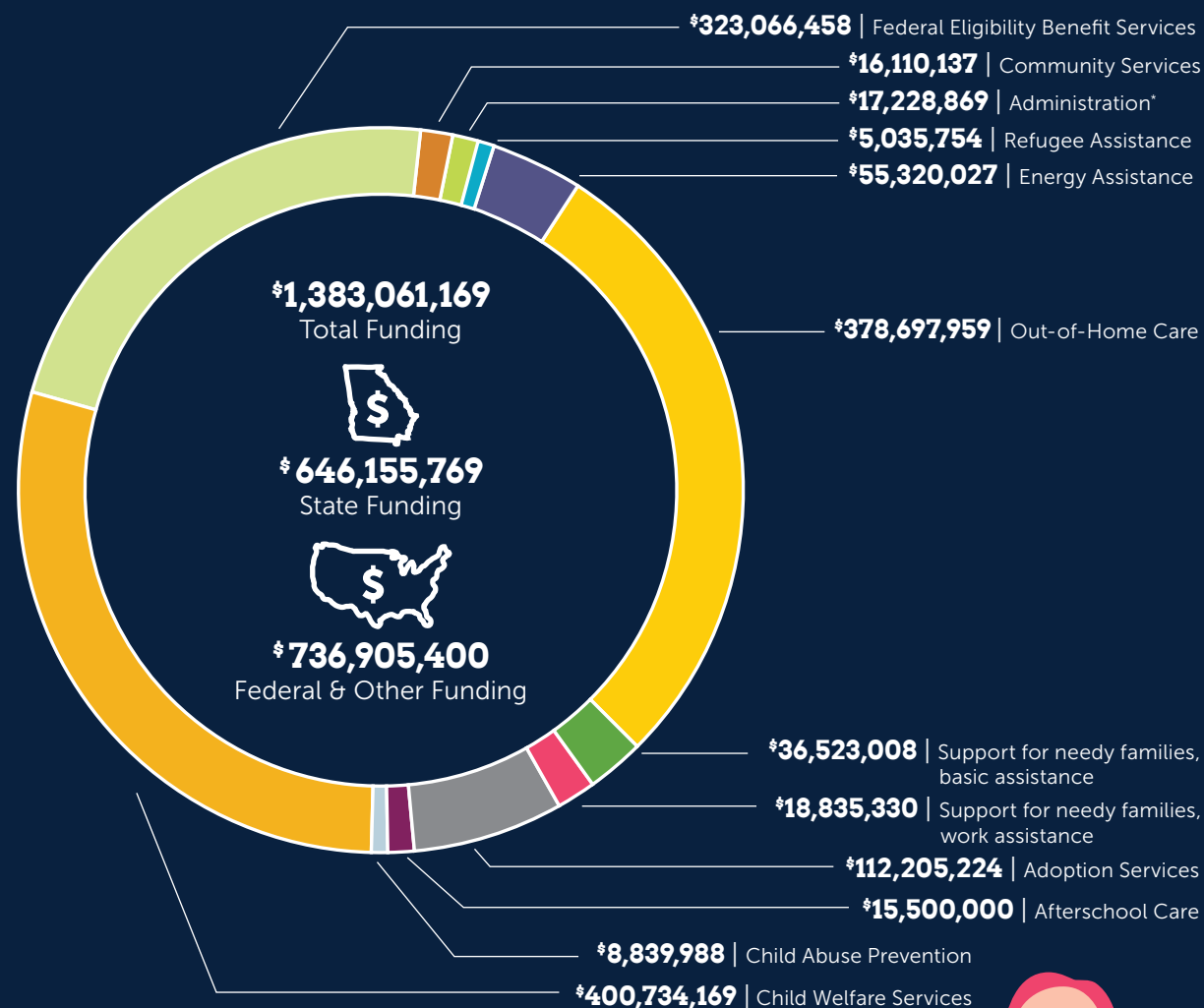


Candice L. Broce
Division of Family
& Children Services
Director

About DFCS

DIVISION OF FAMILY & CHILDREN SERVICES

The Division of Family & Children Services (DFCS) investigates reports of child abuse and neglect; finds foster and adoptive homes for abused and neglected children; determines eligibility for and administers the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs; helps out-of-work parents get back on their feet; and provides numerous support services and innovative programs to help families in need.



*Accounted for as "Departmental Support" on Page 8.

Did You Know?

DFCS implemented strategies that reduced the child foster care population (<18 years old) by more than 8.95 percent, decreasing from 11,919 to 10,852, and that resulted in 1,067 finalized adoptions (as of June 30, 2021).

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Division provides nutrition assistance to 1.74 million people monthly

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly referred to as the Food Stamp Program, is a federally funded program that helps low-income families pay for the cost of food. The SNAP program also provides opportunities to improve their economic standing with job skills training and other support.

SNAP Works

The SNAP Employment and Training Program, also known as SNAP Works, is a voluntary workforce development program designed to help SNAP recipients who are unemployed or underemployed with job placement assistance, thereby reducing and/or eliminating their dependency on SNAP. SNAP Works provides SNAP recipients with opportunities to gain skills, training and experience that will improve their ability to attain employment. The program offers supervised job search, job skills training, GED, vocational training for specific jobs and work experience through partnerships with community-based organizations and educational institutions. SNAP Works participants include Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD), single parents, families, refugees, senior citizens and some individuals with disabilities.

SNAP Works participants also receive work support services, like transportation and child care.

P-SNAP and SNAP Issuances Increase Since Start of COVID-19 Pandemic

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Division has provided both Pandemic Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (P-SNAP) emergency allotments and regular SNAP allotments to ensure that SNAP households receive the food assistance they need to meet their nutritional needs.

According to SFY21 data, there were 1.74 million SNAP customers receiving \$348 million in benefits each month, with the average family issued a \$470 allotment. These distributions included SNAP, P-SNAP and an additional temporary 15% increase approved through the Consolidated Appropriations Act beginning in Jan. 2021. These pandemic response efforts lasted throughout the end of the fiscal year and will continue to be requested from federal partners for as long as the State of Georgia has a state of emergency declaration in place.

In Action

SNAP

Renata Felton enrolled in the SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) program on Nov. 1, 2019, through Central Georgia Technical College in Macon. She had served as a Certified Nursing Assistant in home health care prior to enrolling in the SNAP E&T program, and notified the program that her long-term professional goal was to obtain a full-time position as a pharmacy technician.

“I had to endure a lot of sleepless nights and early mornings. I had to remember drugs and classifications so much until I would dream about them. I had good and bad days. I had a time in my life where I thought I wasn’t going to be able to finish the program, but God sent me an angel,” said Felton. “I met Ms. Holmes [from Career Connections] during a Campus Life event and my life change for the better,” she continued. Felton said the program is very helpful and her mentor, Ms. Holmes, encouraged her and constantly checked in on her education and career goals. The program also helped Felton with uniforms, monetary needs and guidance. Since enrolling in the program, Felton has maintained a 3.0 GPA and communicates regularly with her instructors and the SNAP E&T Project Manager. She successfully completed the required credits for the program in July 2020 and obtained a Pharmacy Technology diploma.

By the Numbers SNAP

Some DFCS programs report data for Federal Fiscal Year 2021 (FFY 2021), which runs from Oct. 1, 2020, to Sept. 30, 2021.



387,942

number of seniors and disabled adults who received SNAP benefits



14,719

average monthly number of individuals who received Senior SNAP benefits



176,632

number of individuals who received Senior SNAP* benefits in SFY 2021



\$25,761,498

average amount of Senior SNAP benefits issued per month in SFY 2021



\$389

average monthly SNAP benefit (including P-SNAP) per household in FFY 2021



962,647

children who benefited from the SNAP program in SFY 2021



224,361

number of able-bodied adults without dependents who could volunteer to participate in the SNAP program to meet federal work requirements



1,215

total number of SNAP recipients served by the SNAP Works Program in FFY 2021

SNAP Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, SNAP received guidance from the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, and policy waivers to help Georgia families meet their food and nutritional needs during the public health emergency. With these policy waivers, the SNAP program was able to:

- Extend certification periods for an additional six months to households through June 2021.
- Exempt ABAWDs from work requirements from July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2022.
- Issue P-SNAP and emergency allotments to SNAP households to bring the allotment up to the maximum benefit amount for each household size. P-SNAP and emergency allotments will continue to be issued based on the Governor’s approval of the Emergency Declaration.
- Offer online Electronic Benefit Transfer use with in-store pickup and grocery delivery. This expanded partnership with grocers allows SNAP recipients, especially those with underlying health conditions, to safely get food.



1,690,177 is the average number of individuals who received SNAP benefits monthly.

DFCS | Family Independence

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Program provides cash assistance to more than 12,000 individuals

Adults who receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) are required to participate in approved work activities for a minimum of 30 hours each week. If the household has a child under age 6, the weekly minimum requirement is 20 hours. Children and families exhibiting the greatest need can benefit from the TANF cash assistance program if their parents participate in qualified work activities. This program is also available to children in the care of relatives. Adults who receive benefits on behalf of a relative child (called a “child-only case”) are not subject to work requirements. Activities that meet TANF work requirements include:

Unsubsidized Employment

Full or part-time employment

Work Experience

A work activity performed in return for public assistance. This experience provides an individual with the opportunity to acquire the general skills, knowledge and work habits necessary to obtain and retain employment

On-The-Job Training

Training given to a paid employee that provides knowledge and skills essential to the performance of the job

Community Service

Structured programs and activities for the direct benefit of the community. These programs are limited to projects that serve a useful community purpose in fields such as health, social services, environmental protection, education, urban and rural redevelopment, recreation, public facilities, public safety and/or child care

Job Search and Job Preparedness Assistance

Act of seeking or obtaining employment, or preparation to seek employment, by undergoing life skills training, substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment or other rehabilitation activities. Treatment or therapy must be deemed necessary by a qualified medical, substance abuse or mental health professional

Vocational Training

Organized educational programs directly related to employment in current or emerging occupations. This activity is countable for up to 12 months

Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment

Training or education required for employment to advance or adapt to the changing demands of the workplace

In Action

TANF

Linda* was referred to Goodwill through the TANF-Goodwill Partnership in May 2021 and developed a plan with a member of the Career Services Team at Goodwill Industries of Middle Georgia and the Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission. With this assistance, Linda developed a resume, participated in job readiness training and completed job searches led by a career services specialist. Linda had been unemployed for five months prior to enrolling in the TANF program. She relied on her family for transportation, but was ready to start providing for herself and her children. Through the TANF program, Linda was able to secure a full-time job with Goodwill as a cashier at one of their retail locations.

Now a member of the tight-knit Goodwill family, she will continue her career growth by obtaining her GED and participating in other credentialed training courses provided through Helms Career Education.

*Name changed for privacy

By the Numbers
TANF



11,975

total number of TANF cases in SFY 2021



13,897

average number of children supported by TANF monthly



\$205

monthly average benefit amount

6,673 is the average number of child-only cases receiving TANF support monthly* & 1,384 is the average caregivers receiving TANF support monthly and subject to a work requirement

*The caregivers receive assistance on behalf of a child and are not required to participate in work activities



TANF Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 procedures for the TANF program that began in SFY 2020 remained in place during SFY 2021. This included temporarily waived work requirements, a reduction in the forms requiring client signature (to reduce the need for hard paperwork circulation) and extended renewal periods. In SFY 2021, work-eligible individuals were encouraged to participate in work activities and support services continued to be paid. Many individuals benefited by choosing job search as a supported activity. Those participants who found full-time employment qualified for work support payments of \$200 per month for up to 12 months, as well as continued services. State law requires a TANF lifetime limit of 48 months, however, Georgia granted good cause extensions to ensure that families’ assistance remained in place when they needed it the most.

TANF policy was also adapted to mirror the evolving policies for SNAP and Medical Assistance. Having similar policies between programs streamlines eligibility practices for staff and reduces the need to provide non-essential verification, saving time and energy for our families requesting assistance.

Medical Assistance

Programs provide medical coverage to more than 1.2 million children in Georgia

The Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids® programs provide a safety net for children who may not otherwise have access to health care.

Family Medicaid

Low-income families with children under age 19 may qualify for Family Medicaid. These families may qualify at various income levels depending on family size and income. Families who qualify are entitled to the full range of Medicaid covered services including doctors’ visits, health checkups, immunizations, dental and vision care.

Aged, Blind and Disabled Medicaid Program

The Aged, Blind and Disabled (ABD) Medicaid Program in Georgia serves individuals who are age 65 and older, individuals who are legally blind or individuals who are disabled, as defined by the Social Security Act. There are 19 different coverage categories, known as Classes of Assistance (COA), for the ABD population. An individual’s living arrangement, income, marital status and prior Medicaid eligibility, among other factors, determine the most appropriate COA.

In SFY 2021, **1,274,488** is the average number of children who received Medicaid (excluding PeachCare) monthly.

By the Numbers
Medical Assistance



971,988

average number of families that received medical coverage through Medicaid monthly



589,333

average number of adults who received medical coverage through Medicaid monthly



643,018

number of Medicaid applications processed in SFY 2021



163,861

average number of children who received medical coverage through PeachCare monthly

Medical Assistance Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 pandemic policy waivers issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in SFY 2020 continued in SFY 2021. The Georgia Department of Community Health communicated those rules to DFCS for continued implementation for all Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids® cases. The Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids® policy waivers included the following:

- Using self-attestation and client statements as acceptable verification that would normally require documents from a third party.
- Allowance to exceed timeliness standards for applications and renewals.
- Extending the period of eligibility renewal end dates. Renewals with due dates in the months of July 2020 through June 2021 were extended by six months.
- Allowing certain documents to be e-mailed as secure attachments rather than being faxed.
- Not closing or allowing benefit coverage reductions for any active Medicaid or PeachCare for Kids® cases, except for the reasons of death, moving out-of-state, voluntary closure, foster care discharge or entry, being invalidly enrolled, incarceration and financial eligibility for Supplemental Security Income.
- Excluding pandemic stimulus payments, pandemic unemployment compensation and Advance Child Tax Credit payments from budget calculations.
- Suspending PeachCare for Kids® premiums.



Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

Energy assistance program keeps 193,528 Georgians safe in extreme heat and cold

The Georgia Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federally funded program that helps low-income Georgians with home energy bills to reduce the risk of health and safety issues that occur as a result of disconnection.

Qualified individuals may be able to receive energy bill payment assistance, energy crisis assistance, weatherization and energy-related minor home repairs. Applications are offered first to homebound individuals, individuals age 65 and over and those with life-threatening circumstances.

Did You Know?

LIHEAP

For more information, call 404-657-3426 or visit dcs.ga.gov/services/low-income-home-energy-assistance-program-liheap.

By the Numbers

LIHEAP

In SFY 2021, **179,258** households received assistance from the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Georgia LIHEAP Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, \$900 million of supplemental LIHEAP funding will be distributed nationwide to help prevent, prepare for, or respond to home energy needs during the coronavirus pandemic. Georgia received more than \$44 million of federal funding for LIHEAP CARES. The LIHEAP CARES Program began on July 1, 2020, in Georgia.

Benefit Integrity & Recovery Unit

Georgia DHS identifies 2,156 cases of fraud worth \$8,885,600

The Benefit Integrity and Recovery Unit (BIRU) is charged with investigating recipient fraud in the agency’s public assistance programs. Examples of suspected fraud include withholding or falsifying information in order to receive public assistance to which one is not entitled, and trading or selling Electronic Benefits Transfer cards in violation of program regulations. BIRU has five operating units throughout the state:

- Benefit Trafficking
- Claims and Recoveries
- Fraud Detection and Investigations

Did You Know?

WASTE, FRAUD OR ABUSE

You can report waste, fraud or abuse at 1-844-694-2347 or dhs.georgia.gov/benefit-recovery-integrity-unit.

- Investigative Analytics and Knowledge Management
- Staff Development

By the Numbers

BIRU

In FFY 2020, the BIRU investigated fraud claims with an established value in excess of **\$8,885,660**.



9,147

investigations were completed in SFY 2021



2,156

claims were established from the investigations in SFY 2021



\$4,121.36

average fraud claim in SFY 2021



DFCS | Child Welfare

Child Protective Services

DFCS continues child protection measures despite pandemic challenges

In SFY 2021, Child Welfare programs continued to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, but all program operations continued. Technology was leveraged to provide virtual services whenever possible, and when concerns about a child’s safety required face-to-face contact, pandemic health and safety measures were followed.

Child Protective Services (CPS) staff investigate reports of child abuse and neglect and work with caregivers, law enforcement and judicial partners to ensure the safety of Georgia’s most vulnerable children. When an allegation of child abuse or neglect is confirmed, caseworkers partner with families and community organizations to address issues that affect child safety in the home. In most cases, DFCS can work with families to address the safety concern and stabilize the home environment.

Foster Care and Adoption Services

When children are victims of abuse or neglect and DFCS caseworkers determine they cannot remain safely in their homes, DFCS petitions the juvenile court to bring children into foster care to ensure their safety. Foster care is intended to be a temporary solution for children as the agency works with their families to eliminate the safety issues that required DFCS intervention. The Division’s goal is to return children to their families as soon as possible, but only after the safety issues have been resolved. When parents consistently demonstrate that they are unable or unwilling to care for their children, the juvenile court may direct DFCS to find loving adoptive homes for them.

Kinship Care

When a child is not able to safely remain in the care of their biological parents, relatives can step in to provide the stability they need during a difficult time. These arrangements are commonly called kinship care. Children who remain connected to their family, friends, school, extracurricular activities and community through these kinship care arrangements experience less trauma than children placed in traditional foster care arrangements.

Did You Know?

CHILD PROTECTIVE CENTER HOTLINE

You can call **1-855-422-4453** 24 hours a day, seven days a week to report child abuse or neglect.

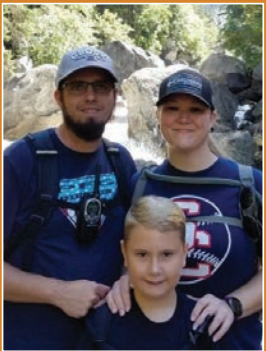
In addition to our Child Protective Center Hotline, mandated reporters are encouraged to use the secure web-based portal at cps.dhs.ga.gov to make a CPS referral and track previous referrals.

In emergencies, or when a child is in imminent danger, you should always call 911.

In Action

MEET THE STRINGER FAMILY

Julie and Blake Stringer are the parents of one 10-year-old son named Shawn. And they are both nurturing and supportive foster parents who have not skipped a beat since they joined the Cherokee County DFCS family in 2016! They have said “yes” to 27 or more placements and do not hesitate to go beyond the call of duty for every child in their care. They have fostered high-risk teens and are open to the idea of adoption, if the opportunity presents itself. The Stringers work with birth parents whenever possible and with a nonjudgmental attitude. They recently helped reunite a 12-year-old boy with his mother, whom he had not lived with in many years. They assisted the mother in setting up her home and even provided her with some much-needed furniture. “Being partnership parents means fostering the entire family unit, not just the children; we are teaching and coaching the parents just as much as we are their kids,” said Julie. “Long term, we want to break this cycle, so the children that come into our home with a trash bag of clothes in tow do not grow up and have their own children taken into care. Short term, we want to help the parents grow past this circumstance, provide every tool, and teach every skill we can so that we hopefully will not ever have their children in care a second time around.”



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By the Numbers

Foster Care Services



1,512
children were in foster care at the end of SFY 2021 and were available for adoption



36.6%
of children in foster care were placed with a relative in SFY 2021



20
is the median* caseload for a foster care caseworker



319,766
children in Georgia live with a relative caregiver, according to grandfamilies.org

*Previously, this was reported as an average. Currently, the median figure is used, as it is less likely to be affected by extreme outlying values.

1,291 children were adopted by new families and given permanent homes. **&** **16,469** children were served in the foster care system.



.....

By the Numbers

Child Protective Services



31,127
reports of abuse or neglect of children were investigated by CPS staff in SFY 2020



10
is the median number* of cases a CPS worker manages at a time



14,045
number of children who received services without entry into foster care

*Previously, this was reported as an average. Currently, the median figure is used, as it is less likely to be affected by extreme outlying values.

In Action
NEVER TOO OLD TO CARE

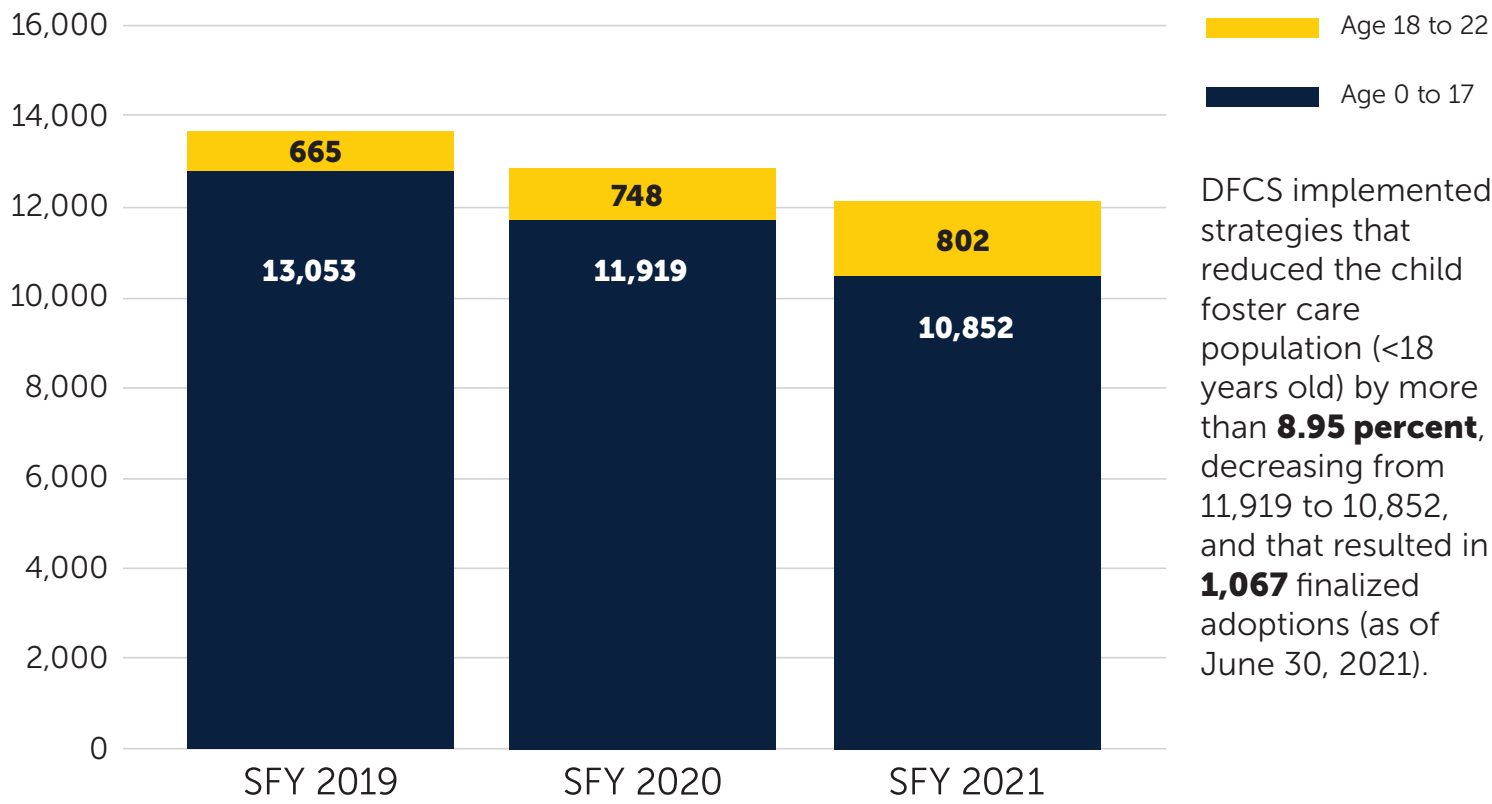
In 2019, Yvonne Walton, without hesitation, decided to serve as a relative placement for her grandson, Tyler. At 67, she never imagined that she'd be a full-time parent later in life, but she says she wouldn't have it any other way.

As a former educator, Walton felt compelled to do all she could for her grandson to have a bright future despite the trauma he experienced. Walton's first significant change was to relocate so that Tyler could enroll in a better school district. After settling into their new routine of school drop-off and pick-up, medical appointments and all that comes with caring for a child, the COVID-19 pandemic struck, Walton relied on her former experience and provided Tyler with structured daily activities to help improve his reading and comprehension skills while he was not able to attend school in person. Her sole focus as a grandmother was to see Tyler thrive and addressing his educational needs was only the beginning.

Today, Tyler is thriving and is actively involved in church, swimming, basketball and fishing. Tyler will undoubtedly grow into a young man with many talents, but most importantly, he will grow up in a loving and nurturing home.



Number of Children & Youth in Foster Care*



**Average or median count on a single day of that year*

DFCS implemented strategies that reduced the child foster care population (<18 years old) by more than **8.95 percent**, decreasing from 11,919 to 10,852, and that resulted in **1,067** finalized adoptions (as of June 30, 2021).

Georgia Resilient, Youth-Centered, Stable and Empowered John H. Chafee Independent Living Program
DFCS hosts townhalls to hear youth perspective

DFCS bolsters children on their path to adulthood through a variety of programs that support their education, their readiness for the job market and their social well-being. The Georgia Resilient, Youth-Centered, Stable and Empowered (GA-RYSE) John H. Chafee Independent Living Program seeks to bridge the gap between adolescence and adulthood and provide youth who are aging out of foster care with the social, educational, medical and financial foundation they need to live independently as adults.

In partnership with the University of Georgia and the Multi-Agency Alliance for Children, the Division hosted four roadshows during calendar year 2020, which included Youth Town Hall Meetings. These meetings provided an opportunity for DFCS leadership to hear from youth in care and their adult supporters. The road shows occurred in the following DFCS regions: Region 12 (Savannah area), Region 1 (Dalton area), Region 14 (metro Atlanta area) and Region 8 (Columbus area).

GA-RYSE Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

The federal John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (also known as GA-RYSE) offers assistance to youth and young adults ages 14–21 who are currently within the foster care system and those who have experienced foster care. Through federal Chafee funding received by Georgia, our state of Georgia John H. Chafee Independent Living Program assists youth and young adults in a wide variety of areas designed to support a successful transition to adulthood. Activities and programs include education support assistance, extracurricular activities, financial literacy, housing needs support (costs to maintain) and connections to a Regional State Independent Living Specialist.

The Educational and Training Vouchers Program provides tuition assistance and a stipend to support young people in meeting their education and training needs as they transition out of foster care. This program makes available vouchers of up to \$5,000 per year per youth for post-secondary education and training for eligible youth.

During FFY 2021, support continued for youth in foster care who were impacted by COVID-19. Young people who were in college continued to receive additional stipend support each month, as well as tuition support. In Dec. 2019, the Consolidated Appropriations Act was approved, and Georgia was awarded over \$10 million in federal John H. Chafee funding for youth in care and over \$1.4 million in ETV funding. This funding was made available for young people to apply in Aug. 2021.



Cultivating the Rising Experienced Worker Program

Program provides hands-on experience, job training

The Cultivating the Rising Experienced Worker (CREW) program, formerly known as the Georgia TeenWork Internship Program, has provided valuable work readiness training and youth employment experiences for older youth in care for more than 13 years.

The CREW program serves as the youth employment hub within DFCS. The program provides a youth-friendly environment where participants can engage in a series of employment preparation services such as workshops, trainings, resource connections, hands-on work experiences and more.



By the Numbers

Georgia CREW

In FFY 2021, **49** youths participated in job readiness training sessions that were taught throughout the Division’s 14 regions.



601

youth participated in the summer work programs



Afterschool Care Program

21,905 children participate in the program

The Afterschool Care Program keeps children and youth safe when they are not in school. Additionally, afterschool programs offer tutoring services, meals, extracurricular activities and other community-based activities.

During SFY 2021, agencies funded through the Afterschool Care Program provided Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math-based opportunities which allowed children to learn about 21st century career and educational pathways.



By the Numbers

Afterschool Care Program

In FFY 2021, **21,905** youths were served through the Afterschool Care Program.

Afterschool Care Program Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

During the pandemic, the afterschool programs throughout the state have embraced creative methods to continuously provide services to students in their communities.

Many afterschool partners followed the lead of the local education agency in determining whether to host in-person or virtual out-of-school time activities.

Those funded partners that elected to provide in-person services have consistently followed CDC and local public health guidelines, and have made provisions to update their sanitation practices and reduced the number of participants they host to facilitate social distancing.



The Family First Prevention Services Act

Creating a theory of change

During SFY 21, the Division made great strides toward implementing the provisions of the Family First Prevention Services Act (known as Family First). Family First will allow the state to access additional federal funds to support evidence-based services for children at risk of entering foster care and their families. Agency leadership engaged in visioning and planning exercises to create a theory of change and to identify the intended outcomes for clients, including greater well-being and healing throughout the child welfare continuum; more services provided in community-based settings; decreased use of foster care; and strengthened communities.

The agency will submit its Title IV-E Prevention plan in the fall of 2021. This plan outlines how the state will implement changes necessary to support the provision of evidence-based services. To develop this plan, many stakeholders, including direct service staff across the state, other child and family serving state agencies, contracted service providers, community-based organizations, foster parents, kinship caregivers and parents and youth who have received services from DFCS have participated in a number of workgroups and focus groups to provide invaluable feedback on decisions. When the plan is submitted, the Division will begin a phased implementation of services, initially offering a smaller number of services in select regions with plans to scale to needed capacity statewide over time.



By the Numbers

Family First Prevention Services Act

In FFY 2021, over **400** DFCS staff and stakeholders participated in workgroups and focus groups to provide invaluable feedback on decisions.





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DHS Contacts

GENERAL INFORMATION | 1-844-694-2347 (1-844-MYGADHS)

Statewide toll-free number for customers who need assistance from the Division of Child Support Services, Division of Aging Services or the Office of Inspector General

AGING SERVICES | 1-866-552-4464

Statewide toll-free number serving older adults and individuals of all ages with disabilities for information and to make reports of abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults. Callers may leave messages 24 hours per day.

DHS CONSTITUENT SERVICES | 404-651-6316

For information, questions and complaints regarding Aging Services, Child Support Services and DHS enterprise functions
Email: **customerservicedhs@dhs.ga.gov**

OFFICE OF FAMILY INDEPENDENCE | 1-877-423-4746

Statewide toll-free number for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP/Food Stamps), Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and general inquiries.

Family Independence only: Self service available 24 hours per day. Agents are available 7:30 a.m.–2 p.m.

Reasonable modification: **dfcs.georgia.gov/adasection-504-and-civil-rights**

Online form submission: **dhs.georgia.gov/dfcs-reasonable-modifications-and-communication-assistance-request-form-persons-disabilities**

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES | 1-855-GACHILD (422-4453)

Statewide toll-free number for all reports of child abuse and neglect, 24 hours per day, seven days a week Email: **cpsintake@dhs.ga.gov** (NOTE: This email is only for mandated reporters.)

ADOPTIONS & FOSTER CARE | 1-877-210-KIDS (5437)

For information, visit **fostergeorgia.com** or **itsmyturnnow.dhs.ga.gov**.
Call center hours are Monday–Thursday: 8 a.m.–6 p.m., Friday: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday: closed

DFCS CONSTITUENT SERVICES | 404-657-3433

For information, questions and complaints regarding Office of Family Independence Programs & Child Welfare.
Email: **customer_services_dfcs@dhs.ga.gov**

All hours of operation are 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday through Friday unless otherwise noted.

ON THE WEB

Department of Human Services: **dhs.ga.gov**

Division of Aging Services: **aging.ga.gov**

Division of Child Support Services: **childsupport.ga.gov**

Division of Family & Children Services: **dfcs.ga.gov**





**Georgia Department
of Human Services**