



Georgia Department of Human Services

Aging Services | Child Support Services | Family & Children Services



ANNUAL REPORT

State Fiscal Year 2020



Table of Contents

Letter from Commissioner Robyn A. Crittenden	5
SFY 2020 Major Events	6
About the Department of Human Services	8
About the Division of Aging Services	11
Aging & Disability Resource Connection	12
Georgia Memory Net	16
Dementia Friends	17
Senior Community Service Employment Program	18
Kinship Care	19
Georgia Fund for Children and Elderly	19
Adult Protective Services	20
Public Guardianship	22
Forensic Special Initiatives Unit	23
About the Division of Child Support Services	24
Child Support Services	26
Fatherhood Program	28
Parental Accountability Court Program	30
About the Division of Family & Children Services	33
<i>Family Independence</i>	34
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program	34
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	36
Medicaid	38
Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program	40
Benefit Integrity & Recovery Unit	41
<i>Child Welfare</i>	42
Child Protective Services	42
Foster Care and Adoption Services	42
Kinship Care	42
Connected by 21	45
Georgia CREW	46
Afterschool Program	47
Residential Child Care Licensing	48
DHS Leadership	50
DHS Contacts	51







Letter from Commissioner Robyn A. Crittenden



In State Fiscal Year 2020 (SFY 2020), the Department of Human Services (DHS) rallied staff to step up to serve Georgians who, in the wake of a global pandemic, needed our services and programs more than ever before. We were motivated by our core values to provide access to resources of support and empowerment and to deliver services with dignity and respect for Georgia's most vulnerable.

In the last year, DHS accomplished great successes that furthered our vision of building stronger families for a stronger Georgia. Our Division of Aging Services' Dementia Friends program, which educates Georgians on ways to support members of their community living with dementia, increased the number of Dementia Friends in Georgia by 1,056 people. Our Division of Child Support Services increased the number of parents in its Parental Accountability Court (PAC) program, which helps noncustodial parents who are facing contempt actions in court for nonpayment of child support, address the issues that have kept them from paying their support orders. In SFY 2020, PAC participants paid \$1.6 million to support their children, who were previously not receiving any financial support – a \$500,000 increase over SFY 2019. And our Division of Family & Children Services implemented strategies that reduced the population of children in foster care by more than 8.5%, decreasing from 13,053 to 11,919, and that resulted in 1,421 finalized adoptions.

I am so proud of the work DHS does every day, and I am especially proud of the exceptional work that the agency has done in response to the coronavirus

pandemic. Our team has been a source of encouragement and inspiration in the face of great difficulty. Aging Services has re-tooled how seniors in Georgia access nutrition services by transitioning 8,091 older adults in April 2020, who were receiving meals in senior centers and other group settings before the start of the pandemic, to receive home-delivered meals during the pandemic to avoid large gatherings. Child Support has responded by making nearly all of its functions available to customers remotely. Ninety-five percent of child support inquiries are now handled virtually. DFCS simplified food stamp eligibility determinations to make the application process easier for new applicants and has expanded food stamp benefits to max out benefit allotments for those who were not already receiving their full benefit amount.

The details in this report showcase the Department of Human Services' continued commitment to the residents of Georgia, and I am proud to present this information to the public and to our legislators, stakeholders and partners. The successes of our Division of Aging Services, Division of Child Support Services and Division of Family & Children Services in SFY 2020 demonstrate our capacity for adaptability, compassion and dedication.

I am honored to serve the people of Georgia under Gov. Brian P. Kemp's leadership. We have accomplished so much in a year that presented many obstacles, but I know there is a great future ahead for human services in our great state and across the nation.

Robyn A. Crittenden

SFY 2020 Major Events

July 2019

The Department was recognized by the professional community for its innovative use of technology in the development of the Human Resources Personnel Action Self-Service System (HR PASS). HR PASS was selected as an award finalist for the Atlanta Business Chronicle and SHRM-Atlanta HR Excellence Awards. The HR PASS system streamlines and digitizes workforce administrative actions.

The Department rolled out its new Electronic Contract Automation and Tracking system (eCAT). This new solution allows the Department to manage the entire contract lifecycle digitally, from request to signature. eCAT demonstrates the Department's ongoing commitment to provide technologies that enhance human services available for Georgians.



August 2019



Division of Child Support Services Director* Tanguler Gray was tapped as President of the National Child Support Enforcement Association's Board of Directors.

**Tanguler Gray has since moved into a new role with the Department. Her current title is Deputy Commissioner and Child Support Administrator*

October 2019

GeorgiaCares partnered with Fort Valley State University's Mobile Technology Unit to offer free Medicare counseling to 16,000 Georgians during the open enrollment period, a 10% increase from the previous year.

December 2019

The Department launched its new websites, including the DHS homepage and division homepages. The new websites have been in development for several years and provide additional tools and enhanced navigation for DHS customers to find information.



March 2020

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department implemented new office protocols to provide services remotely, and the majority of the DHS workforce began teleworking.

Eligible families received additional food stamp benefits in March. The additional benefits are available through the Pandemic Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or P-SNAP. P-SNAP allows SNAP recipients who do not receive the maximum benefit for their household to get additional funds to max out their allotments.

April 2020



Division of Aging Services Director* Abby Cox was appointed to an ADvancing States workgroup charged with designing a "road map" to reopen Older Americans Act programming across the nation following the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Abby Cox has since been promoted to a new role in the agency. Her new title is Assistant Deputy Commissioner for Aging Services.*

June 2020

DHS announced a plan to reduce social isolation for older adults and people with disabilities amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic using funds from a federal CARES Act grant. The Department will distribute \$1.7 million throughout the state to provide older Georgians with enhanced connectivity like phones, tablets and hotspots, to keep them connected with their loved ones and communities while maintaining safe social distance during the pandemic.

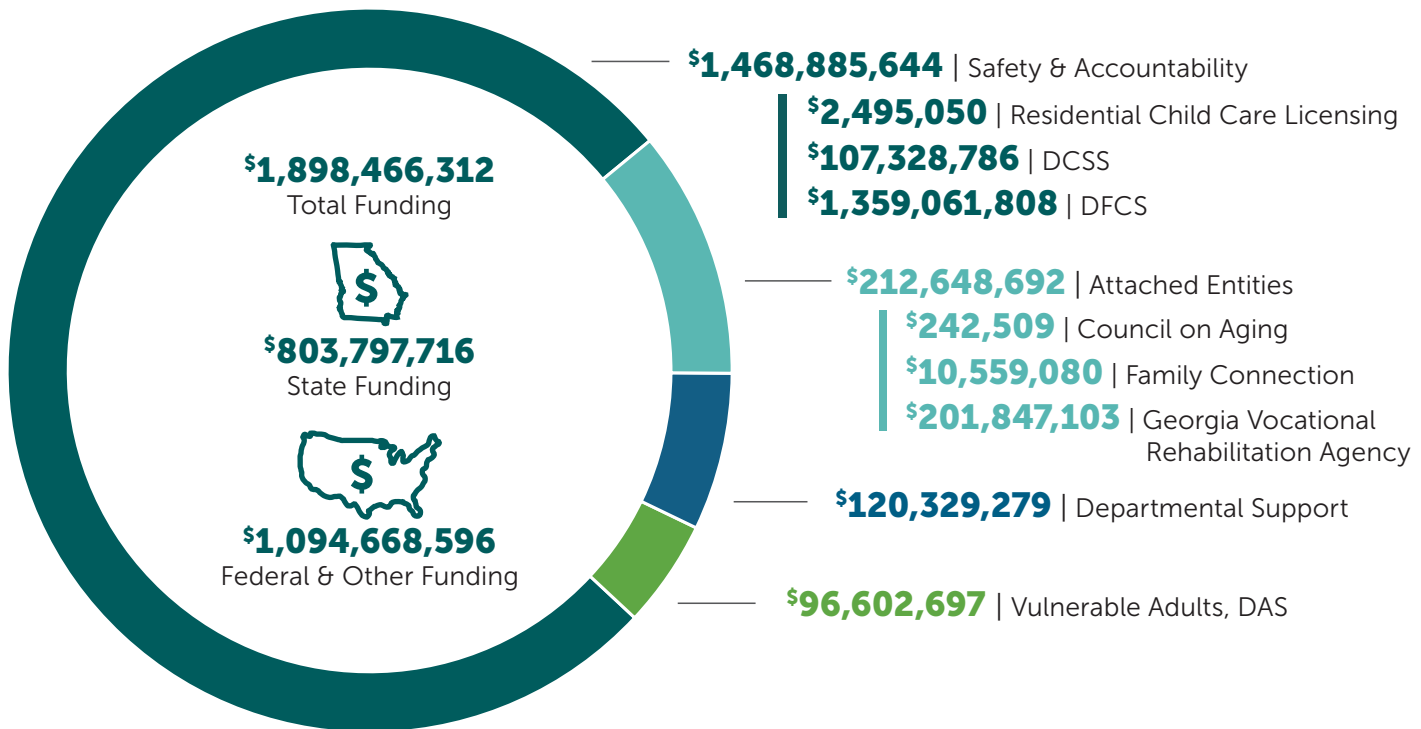
DFCS developed a plan in partnership with the Georgia Department of Education to provide food benefits to families with children who receive free and reduced lunch. The Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer program provided a one-time allotment for the spring semester to more than 1.1 million students to offset additional food costs caused by the pandemic.

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). Since 2014, DFCS has reported directly to the governor. DHS also maintains 13 administrative offices that provide a variety of support functions — from constituent services and training to information technology and fiscal management.







About DAS

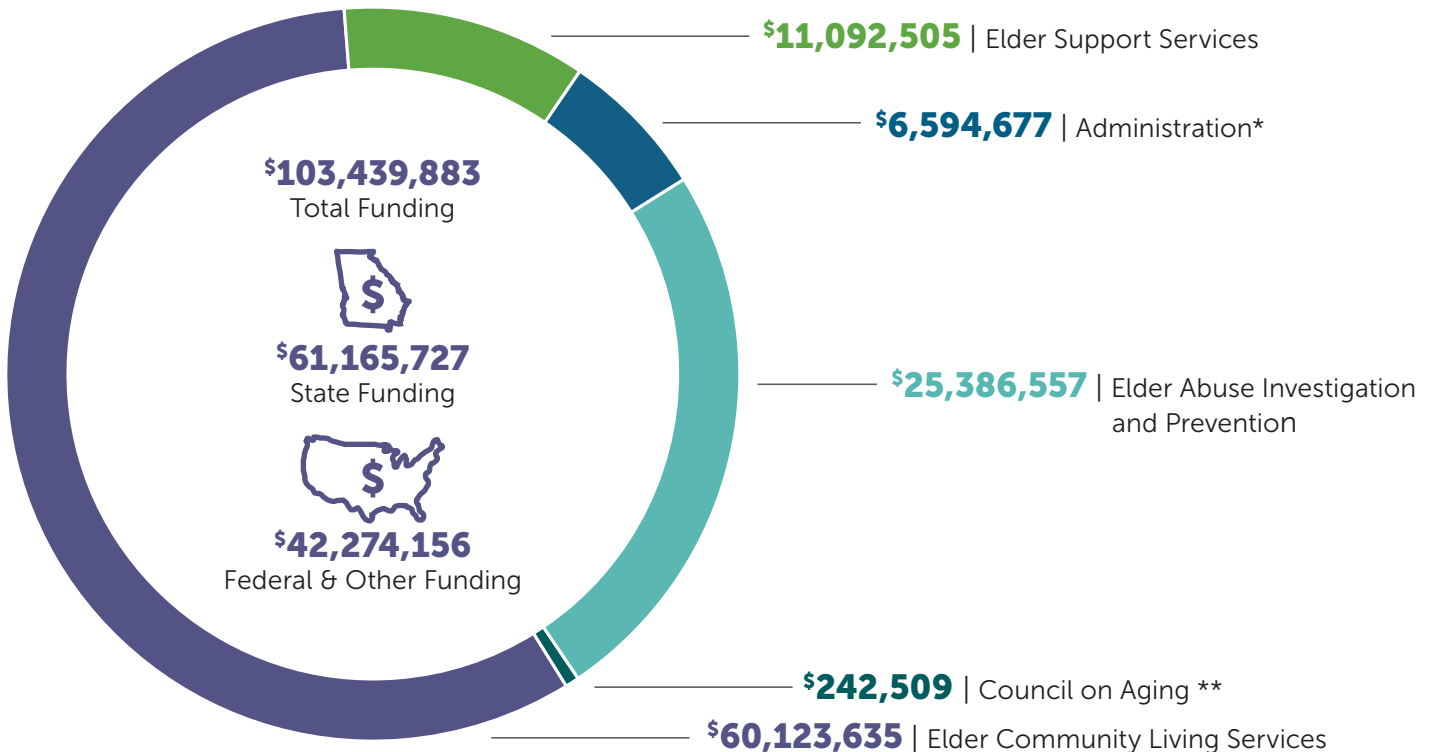
DIVISION OF AGING SERVICES



Abby Cox
Assistant Deputy
Commissioner for
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

Aging and Disability Resource Connection

ADRC provides free, unbiased counseling on resources and services to 70,558 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 a more self-sufficient life. 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

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 for as long as it is safe to do so.

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

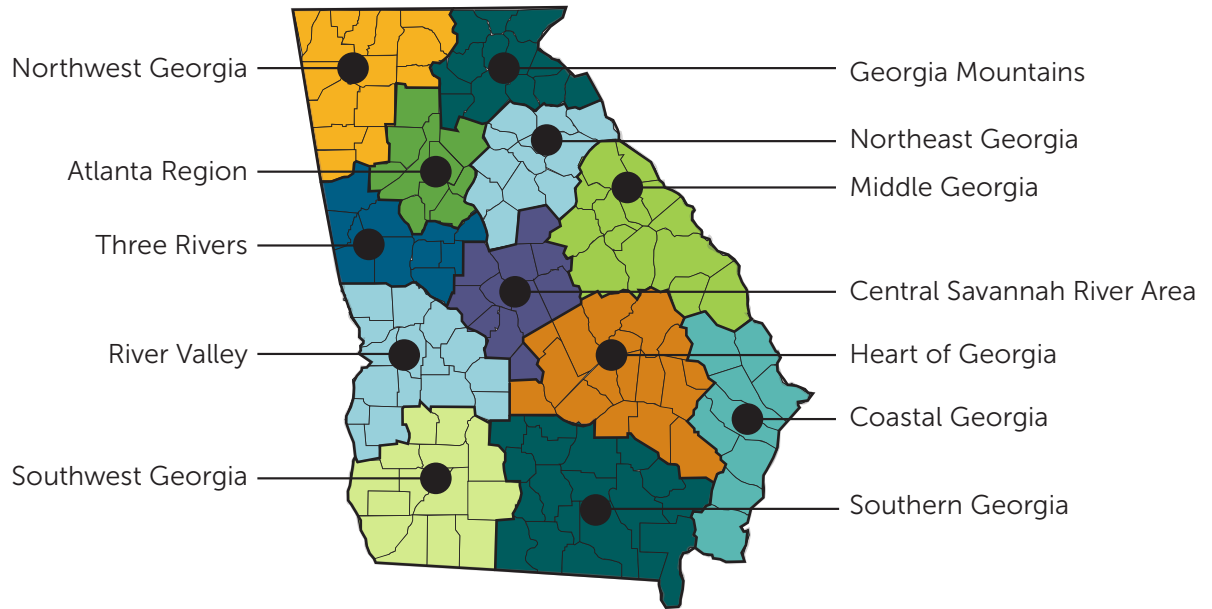
Elderly Legal Assistance Program

Legal representation, information and assistance for all civil matters including elder law, housing, elder abuse and neglect and Supplemental Security Income

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 2020 clients served by planning & service areas

Region	ADRC	Adult Protective Services**	GeorgiaCares	Home and Community Based Services	Money Follows the Person	Nursing Home Transitions
Atlanta	23,223	7,994	3,803	10,088	44	23
Central Savannah	3,226	1,304	900	2,731	0*	0*
Coastal Georgia	2,982	1,576	871	2,536	6	10
Georgia Mountains	4,369	1,837	2,355	3,524	8	9
Heart of Georgia	3,476	747	446	1,657	11	12
Middle Georgia	4,174	1,298	763	1,867	8	15
Northeast Georgia	4,558	1,433	1,243	3,142	22	12
Northwest Georgia	9,766	2,370	2,168	3,673	11	11
River Valley	2,809	877	645	1,662	11	10
Southern Georgia	4,495	1,299	741	2,041	11	11
Southwest Georgia	3,496	908	597	1,681	14	8
State DAS/CILs*	253			1,626	95	69
Unavailable – TERF	0	901				
Three Rivers	3,731	1,262	1,159	2,571	19	21
Statewide Total	70,558	23,806	15,691	37,780	216	191

*The AAA in CSRA does not provide transition services. All transitions in the CSRA region are done by Walton Options, the Center for Independent Living serving the CSRA region. Numbers for transitions in this region are capture in the State/CIL line below in the table. | ** Adult Protective Services Clients Served is defined as the number of intakes that met criteria during the fiscal year by Planning & Service Area region.

By the Numbers | ADRC

In State Fiscal Year 2020 (SFY 2020), the ADRC provided

70,558

customers and family members free, unbiased counseling on resources and services specific to their needs.



3,982,671

meals were provided to older or disabled adults through home delivery and congregate settings



\$12,080,735

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



407

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



9

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



\$2,000

is the average annual cost to provide assistive technology to allow an individual to remain in his/her home or community rather than a long-term care facility



\$16,867,387

in out-of-pocket expenses was saved by GeorgiaCares Medicare beneficiaries



37,780

individuals received Home and Community-Based Services



\$2,131

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



\$70,000+

is the average annual cost to provide residential care in a nursing home



2,123

individuals contacted the ADRC to receive information on assistive technology



In Action

MR. B

The ADRC received a referral from a nursing home for Mr. B, who had recently moved from Texas to Georgia. When Mr. B arrived in Georgia, he found that the cost of living was much higher than he'd anticipated. Mr. B ended up living in his car when he contracted pneumonia and was eventually sent to a nursing home to recover. An Options Counselor worked with him and was able to assist him with finding housing in a subsidized apartment and connecting him with Georgia's Nursing Home Transitions program.

The program provided basic household supplies and furniture that Mr. B would not have been able to source on his own. After his first night in his own apartment, Mr. B reported that he had his first good night's sleep in ages. He was so thankful for the programs that helped him get back on his feet and regain his independence.

Allocated COVID-19 expenditures by service

Service	COVID-19 Budget
Aging Services Administration	\$6,235.20
Elder Abuse Investigation and Prevention	\$116,387.54
Elder Community Living Services	\$27,619,353.00
Elder Support Services	\$1,131,111.55
Total	\$28,873,087.29





DAS

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 2020:

- All MACs increased their patient volumes. The clinics saw a total of 424 unique patients, conducted 747 diagnostic and care planning visits and 153 clients were referred to Area Agencies on Aging.
- GMN expanded its partnership to include the Lewy Body Dementia Association, Georgia Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program, and various programs from across the Emory Brain Health Center and Goizueta Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center at Emory.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, MACs suspended in-person visits. The clinics developed telemedicine workflows for all MAC locations using various methods such as telephone visits and videoconferencing platforms. The virtual options expand GMN’s coverage to offer ongoing services throughout the state. GMN anticipates that further development of telemedicine will significantly extend MAC services into rural or otherwise under-resourced communities.
- The network hosted the “GMNytwhere Series,” a virtual training course that covered a variety of topics including self-care, mental health, COVID impacts on primary care and frontline worker wellness.
- As safety measures were established, each of the five MACs was able to safely and gradually reopen, ensuring continued provision of diagnostic and care planning services to Georgians in need.

By the Numbers | GMN



11.2%

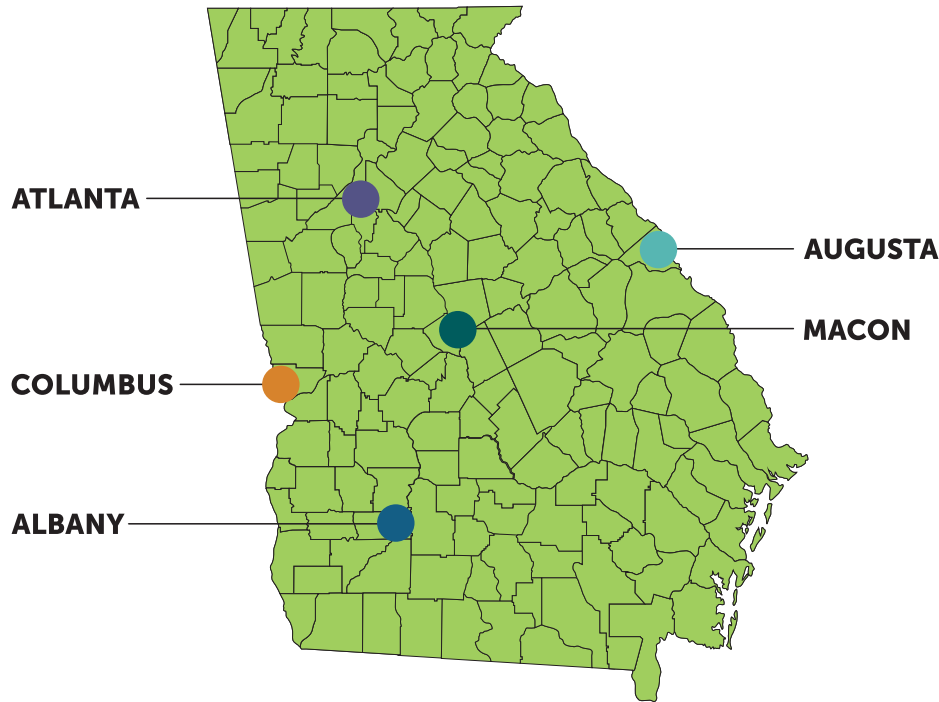
of those aged 45 and over report experiencing confusion or memory loss that is happening more often or is getting worse



190,000

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

MAC locations



Did you know? MEDICARE

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

Georgia dementia program exceeds goal of training 1,000 "friends" in its first year

The Dementia Friends program began in June 2019, with the goal of increasing the number of Dementia Friends in Georgia. The campaign helps communities learn how they can become better friends, neighbors and relatives to people who live with dementia. In SFY 2020, each AAA had at least one representative designated a Dementia Friends Champion.

These Champions host Dementia Friends Information Sessions to create more Dementia Friends across the state. Due to COVID-19, Dementia Friends USA permitted Information Sessions to be offered online. Because the sessions are meant to be interactive, they are encouraged to be used in small groups with chat features when administered online. This new format will allow the aging network to utilize Dementia Friends in a new and exciting way.

By the Numbers | Dementia Friends



1,056

Dementia Friends
in SFY 2020



60

Information Sessions will be
hosted by Dementia Friends
Champions in SFY 2021



Senior Community Service Employment Program

Participants contribute 150,797 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 Guidelines.

Participants' training wages contribute to the local economy and reduce their dependence on public benefits programs. Participants provided 150,797 hours of community service including 62,250 hours of service to organizations that serve older adults. Twenty-nine percent were individuals with disabilities. Twenty-two 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. O

Ms. O struggled with job placements in the Athens area as she had not completed high school and lacked basic computer skills. She joined SCSEP’s On-the-Job Experience Program, which teamed her up with All Ways Caring, an organization that provides caregiving services. Ms. O started working on her GED while in the program and learned some basic computing skills. She made a lasting impression with her employer and clients. Coworkers noticed her positive attitude.

Supervisors and teachers commended her willingness to learn. And customers have shared their love for her and insist that she is their regular caregiver. Ms. O now has a stable job in caregiving, serving people in her community.

“I am happy I can still get out, work and stay active at my age,” Ms. O said.

By the Numbers | SCSEP



236

people participated in SCSEP in SFY 2020



150

participants got a full-time job



150,797

hours of community service were provided by participants



29%

of participants were individuals with disabilities



21%

of SCSEP participants were homeless or at risk of homelessness



226

participants provided community service

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



\$273,673

was provided to AAAs for Kinship Care Services using federal and state funds



4,500

people attended over 500 AAA-sponsored kinship support groups



42

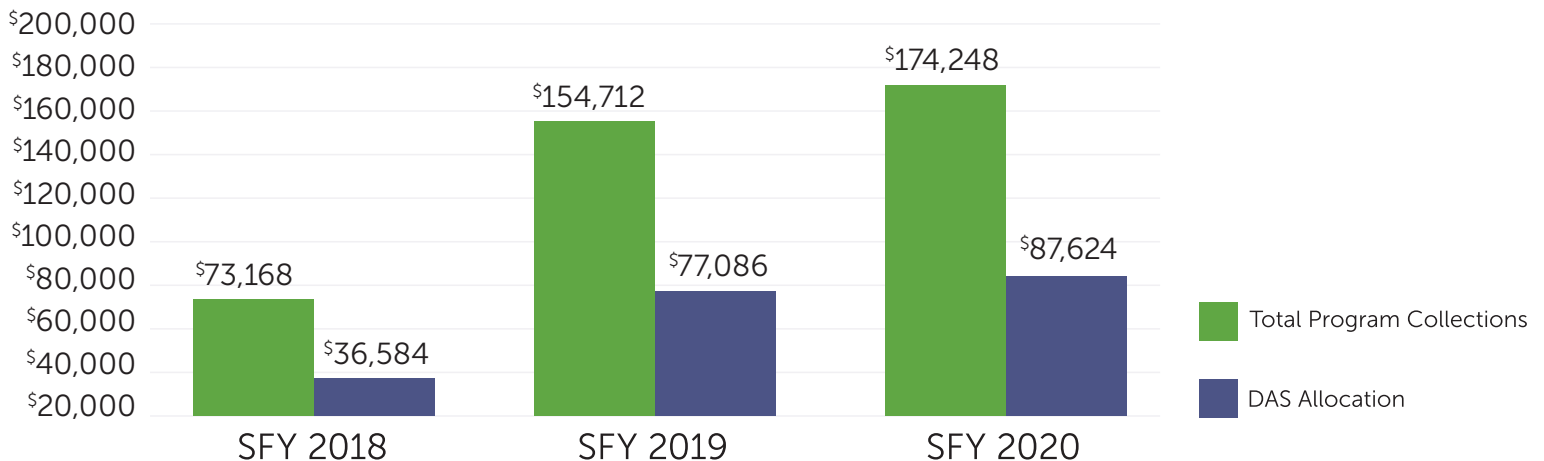
ongoing Kinship Care support groups were held in six public service areas

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 2018 and 2020 are shown below.

Income Tax Checkoff





DAS

Adult Protective Services

APS fields more than 9,000 reports of financial exploitation in SFY 2020

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

TORA DALE REDDICK

Tora Dale Reddick is an APS Supervisor who joined the Department in 1981. Her work included case management and investigations in both Child and Adult Protective Services. Tora was one of the very first APS Investigators in the state of Georgia and has spent almost four decades helping the elderly and disabled adult population.



She recalls that the majority of reported APS cases in the early 1980's were cases of self-neglect. One of her first investigations involved an elderly lady who lived in a small tin farming shed in the middle of a field. Tora was able to get this client approved for food stamps and Social Security disability. She also worked with local nonprofit agencies to provide a small, used trailer for the client to have a safe home.

Now, Tora notes that APS cases are much more complex than they were when she started her career. Today, most investigations involve financial exploitation and staff require and receive more specialized training.

Tora has seen APS transform over the last several decades, and we are so grateful to have her as part of our APS family!

By the Numbers | APS



23,806

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



50,158

number of reports of abuse, neglect or exploitation



173

budgeted APS case manager positions



SFY 2020 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. **9,620 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. **7,610 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. **6,298 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. **2,850 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. **2,411 reports.**



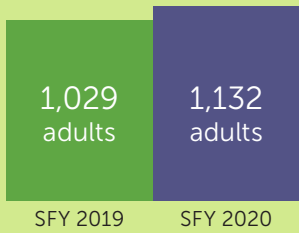
Public Guardianship

39 case managers support 1,132 adults

The Public Guardianship Office (PGO) is the 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.

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.

By the Numbers | PGO



1,132
vulnerable adults in SFY 2020, have been advocated by the PGO. This is 103 more compared to SFY 2019



39
budgeted PGO case managers

In Action

PGO

Every guardian has the responsibility to work to assist the person under guardianship to work toward having his or her rights restored at the earliest possible opportunity if that person’s capabilities and physical and/or mental health has improved or stabilized. Opportunities for restorations of rights do not occur often, due to the extreme needs of many of our guardianship clients.

The Public Guardianship Office (PGO) filed a Restoration Petition for an individual who had been under guardianship for five years. At the time of the original appointment, the client was only 20 years old and diagnosed with borderline intellectual function and several other illnesses. She was fixated with leaving the United States to live with a foreign man she had never met in person but with whom she claimed to have a romantic relationship. Once appointed, DHS set her up with counseling sessions and supported her by attending some sessions with her.

Through these efforts, she came to understand that the gentleman’s intentions were not good and realized that she had been putting herself in danger. A plan was implemented to assist her with regaining the trust of her parents to no

longer fear that she would run away and leave the country. She discovered joy in assisting with grooming animals at a pet salon. When the salon closed, which in the past could have destabilized her, the PGO was able to help her plan for her own future.

She enrolled in and worked hard to complete a program to be an animal groomer, and she became employed full-time at PetSmart. DHS reassessed her to determine if she could have her rights restored. She demonstrated the ability to plan for her own future, obtain job skills, obtain full-time employment, and the ability to manage her own bank accounts. DHS petitioned the Probate Court that this young woman should have her rights restored.

At the hearing, the woman was able to tell the court about her progress. She told them about her training and employment and social life.

The presiding judge was impressed with the client’s progress and her ability to address the court. The court restored her rights, and she is now a productive member of society.

Forensic Special Initiatives Unit

FSIU trains 269 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.

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

By the Numbers | FSIU

269

law enforcement officers, medical staff, prosecutors and other mandated reporters were trained by FSIU on issues pertaining to the abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable adults in SFY 2020.



Since training began in SFY 2011,

3,345

people have become ACT Specialists



About DCSS

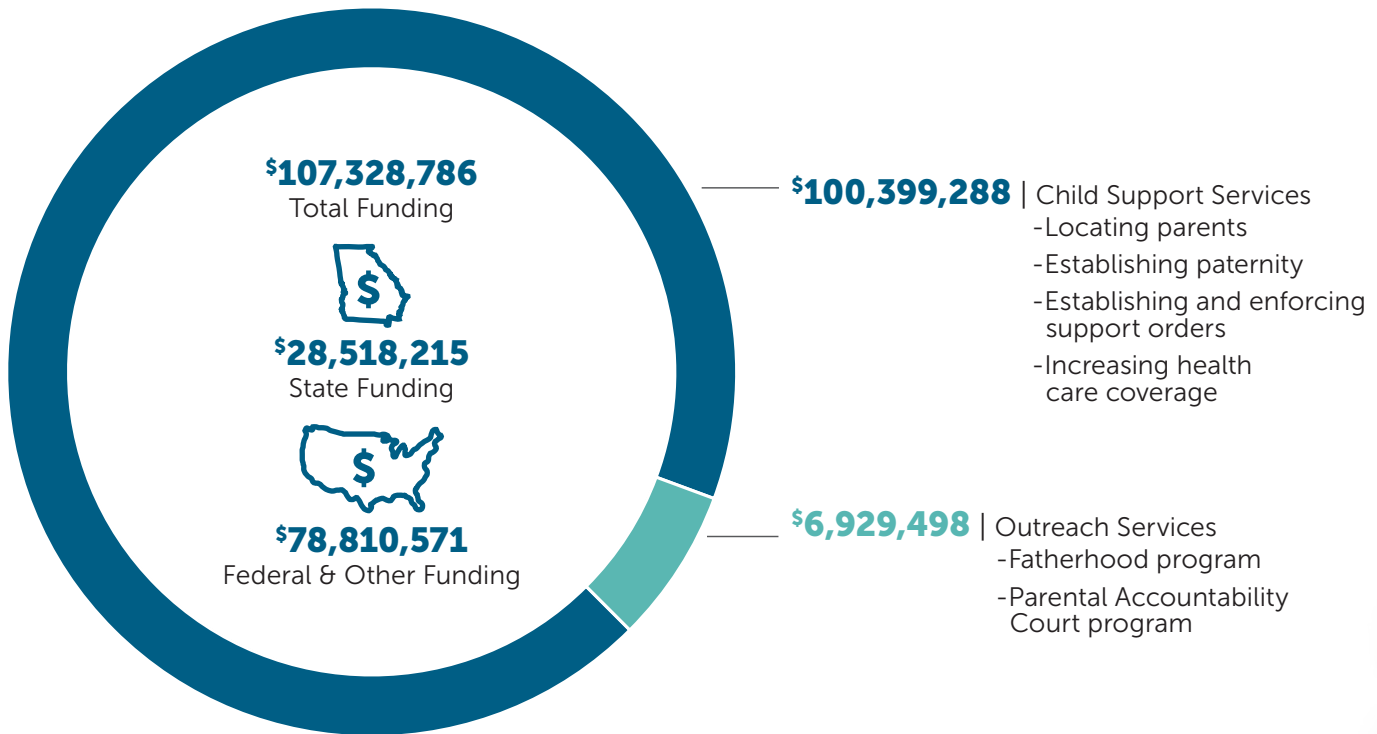
DIVISION OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES



Tanguler Gray
Deputy Commissioner
and Child Support
Administrator

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.







DCSS

Child Support Services

Division distributes \$835 million to 485,648 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

KYLE BROOKINS

Kyle Brookins has been with the Division of Child Support Services since April 2013 and currently serves as a legal secretary in Region 4. She has been recognized as a COVID-19 MVP. During this difficult time, she has volunteered to cover the home office, sort and scan incoming mail to remote workers and process all outgoing mail for her 16 teammates.



To assist her office in reaching performance goals, Kyle regularly completes tasks that do not normally fall within her duties. One example is when she agreed to assist with DNA collections when customers return to help the division meet paternity requirements. She has also assumed the responsibility of monitoring security and cleaning services in the absence of management, cleaning up the overflowing file room and monitoring jail logs and weekly documentation on over 100 outstanding warrant cases.

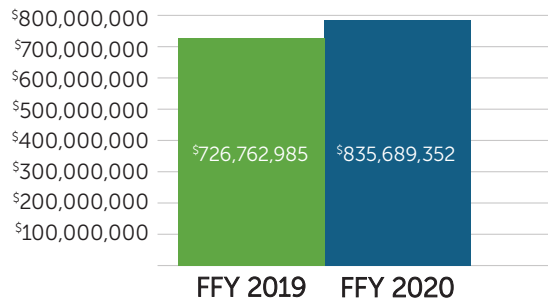
By the Numbers | Child Support Services

NOTE: DCSS reports data for Federal Fiscal Year 2020, which runs from Oct. 1, 2019, to Sept. 30, 2020.

In Federal Fiscal Year 2020 (FFY 2020),

\$835,689,352

was distributed to Georgia’s children and families by DCSS. That’s an increase of **\$108,926,367** compared to FFY 2019



273,641

parents were under a court order for child support in Georgia, compared to 293,768 in FFY 2019



485,648

children were financially supported as a result of these orders compared to 511,194 in FFY 2019

Each icon represents 10,000 children





Fatherhood program

1,666 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. The Fatherhood program also encourages parents to increase emotional, parental and financial involvement in the lives of their children. Services include:

- Driver's license reinstatement
- GED enrollment
- Job training
- Job search/placement
- Volunteer work opportunities
- Review and modification of support order

In Action

FATHERHOOD PROGRAM

David was struggling to keep up with child support orders for his two children. His income was drastically reduced from the time his orders were established in 2000 and 2003.

"I'm a father, and I love my kids," David said. "It's not that I don't want to do the right things, but it was just challenging paying and sustaining my living situation."

Because he had fallen behind on his support obligations, David's license was suspended which prevented him from getting to work or finding a job that paid more.

"I reached out to DCSS because I wanted to clear it up. I needed a program or something to allow me to apply for the opportunities and support my children," he said.

He was introduced to the Fatherhood program as a way to release the suspension on his license and to help him find better employment. During the program, David received his license and obtained employment that allowed him to meet his support obligations.

Damarcus Jordan, the Fatherhood Agent David worked with, helped David find a solution. Damarcus told David about the review and modification process so he could adjust the amounts required to meet his child support orders. DCSS helped David find a solution that was within his means and that still allowed him to maintain a living and be present for his children. David said the program taught him how to believe and have faith.

"That program was the best thing because it helped me to realize that I wasn't in a hopeless situation. I was down in despair when I first started, and now I'm smiling. You all have helped me to hold my head up high. For that I love them. They'll never understand."



By the Numbers | Fatherhood program



8,721

parents enrolled in the Fatherhood program in SFY 2020



1,666

noncustodial parents were referred to GED and short-term job training programs



12,708

children received increased support from parents who enrolled in the Fatherhood program



\$5,271,860

was collected from Fatherhood participants in SFY 2020





Parental Accountability Court program

PAC participants provided \$1.6 million for 2,789 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 2020, 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

Sabrina joined the Paulding Judicial Circuit PAC program on March 18, 2019. At the time, Sabrina was in contempt and did not know how she was going to overcome and meet her support obligations.

"I missed quite a few payments. I didn't have a good head on my shoulders, I didn't have my license at the time, and I was just kind of stuck at home," said Sabrina. "Mr. Marshel Riley [PAC coordinator] contacted me about the program, and I was like 'absolutely not, not happening.'"



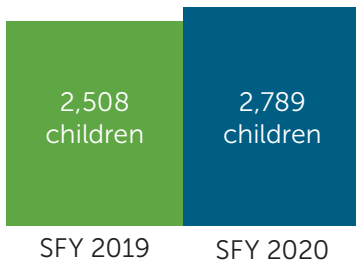
Sabrina reluctantly joined the PAC program and begin progress toward her goals. Two of her goals were to obtain her GED and driver's license. Through the PAC program, Sabrina signed up to attend Chattahoochee Tech and immediately started to feel a sense of accomplishment as she worked toward her GED. Every month, she attended PAC court with a smile on her face, and she could not wait to tell the presiding judge, Judge T. David Lyles, that she started school and began making payments through the DCSS mobile app.

Sabrina also needed to obtain her license, which would cost her \$800 in fines. Judge Lyles advised Sabrina to bring an envelope to court every month to show how much money she saved toward her goal. Every month, Sabrina came to court with an envelope filled with the money she saved to get her license. She eventually received her license and could not wait to share this accomplishment with Judge Lyles. She did all of this and made monthly payments on her case while being pregnant. The PAC program surprised her in court with a baby shower. She was overjoyed at the love of the program and the other participants.

"The PAC program is the best thing I've done so far."

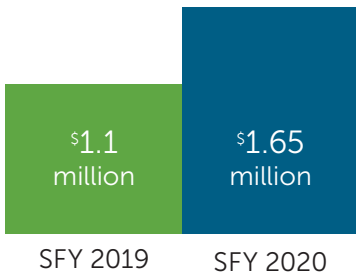


By the Numbers | PAC



2,789

children received increased support from parents who participated in the PAC program, compared to **2,508** in SFY 2019



\$1,657,383

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



5,052

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



1,058

noncustodial parents received help on their journey to lead more self-sufficient lives as part of their enrollment in the PAC program in SFY 2020



142

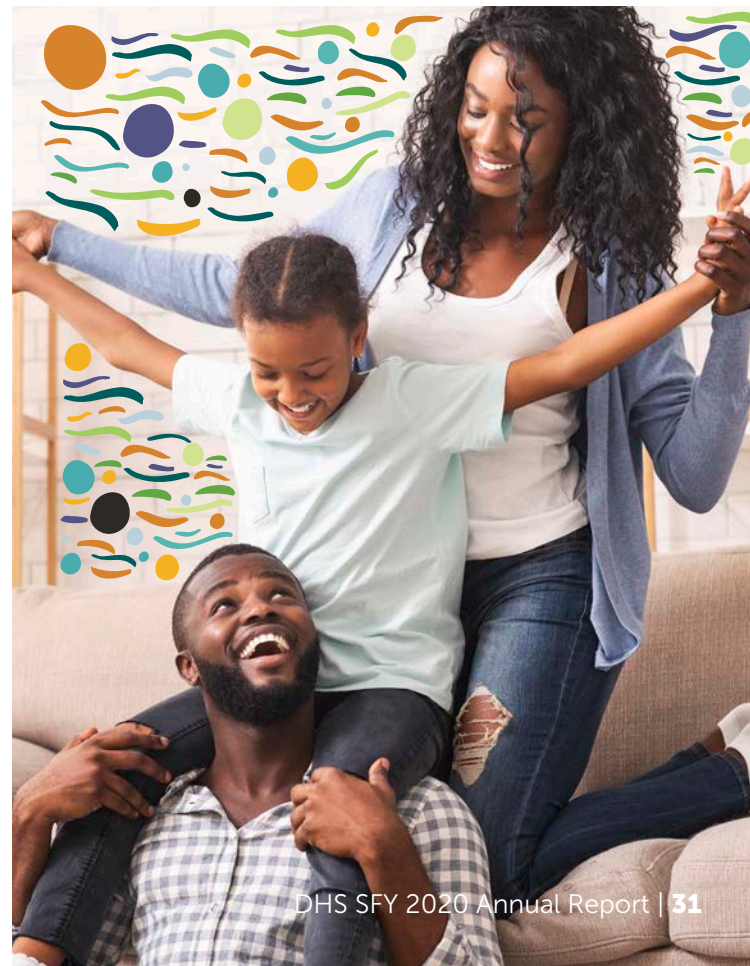
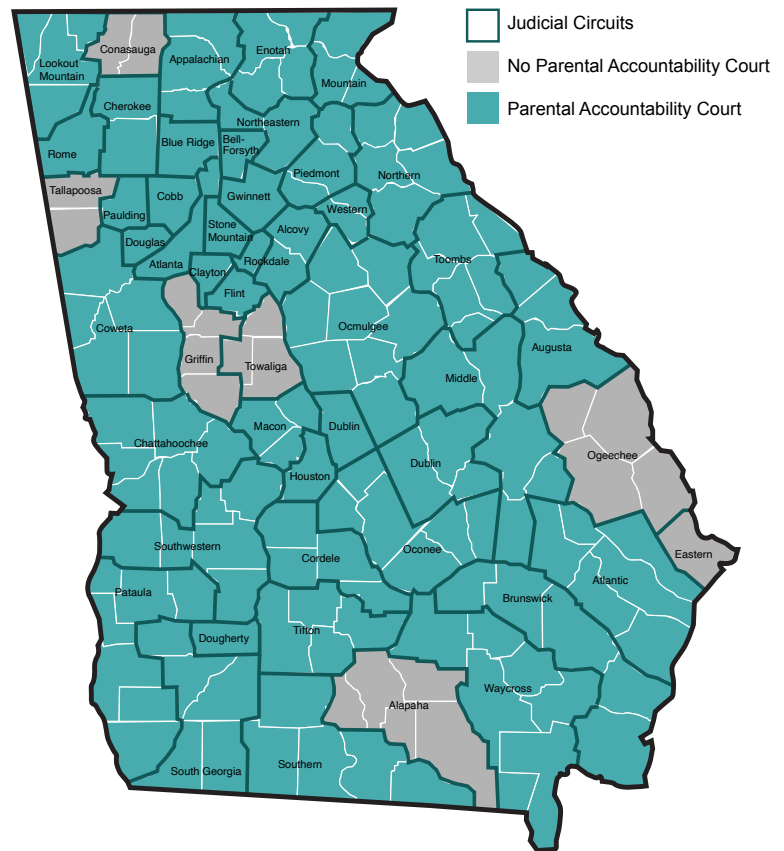
parents graduated from the PAC program, providing support to children who previously received partial or no support



\$15,239,649

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

Judicial Circuits with PACs







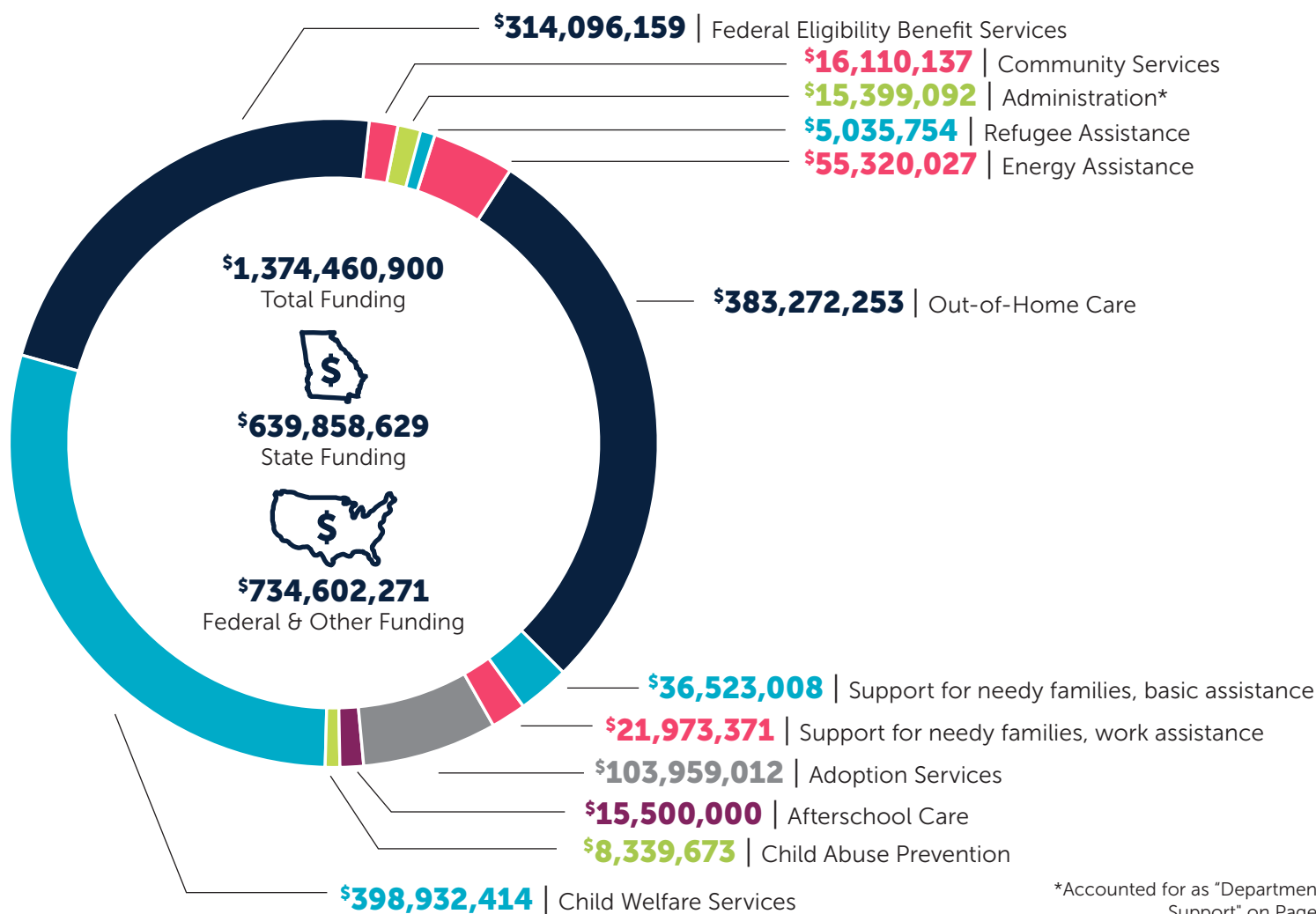
About DFCS

DIVISION OF FAMILY & CHILDREN SERVICES



Tom C. Rawlings
Division Director

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.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Division provides nutrition assistance to 1.39 million people each month

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

Georgia's SNAP Works Program is open to any food stamp recipient and offers job search, job skills training, GED programs, limited vocational training for work experience (short-term, unpaid work assignment) through partnerships with community organizations and educational institutions.

The goal of the SNAP Works Program is to help food stamp recipients who are unemployed or underemployed with job placement assistance, reducing and/or eliminating their dependency on food stamps. Training opportunities are in a variety of fields, from health care and manufacturing to teaching and welding. Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) are required to have a job or participate in volunteer programs to keep their benefits for more than three months.

Since 2016, DFCS has expanded its partnerships with educational and technical training institutions as well as job readiness organizations to improve Georgians' ability to get back on their feet. Through these partnerships, DFCS offers supervised job search, job skills training, GED, Second Language Acquisition (formerly referred to as English as a Second Language), vocational training for specific jobs and work experience (a short-term, unpaid work assignment). SNAP Works offers participants transportation, nutrition classes, child care, education, health classes, housing services and more.

DFCS also offers 90-day job retention services for SNAP Works participants after they have obtained employment. Job retention support services provide expenses necessary for the participant to maintain employment.

SNAP response to COVID-19 pandemic

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, SNAP received several policy waivers and guidance from the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, 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:

- Simplify eligibility determinations by accepting client statements for income and certain household expenses.
- Extend certification periods for an additional six months to households beginning in March 2020.
- Suspend work requirements for ABAWDs between April and June 2020.
- Issue Pandemic SNAP (P-SNAP) and emergency allotments to SNAP households to bring their allotment up to the maximum benefit amount for their household size. P-SNAP and emergency allotments were issued from March through September 2020.
- Offer online EBT 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.

By the Numbers | SNAP

NOTE: Some DFCS programs report data for Federal Fiscal Year 2020 (FFY 2020), which runs from Oct. 1, 2019, to Sept. 30, 2020.

1,396,878
is the average number of individuals who received SNAP benefits each month



\$13,014,660

average amount of Senior SNAP benefits issued per month in SFY 2020



217,384

number of seniors and disabled adults who received SNAP benefits



29,229

SNAP recipients who participated in SNAP Works to improve their economic well-being and were not subject to ABAWD work requirements



88,825

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



135,862

number of individuals who received Senior SNAP* benefits in SFY 2020



107,543

monthly average number of individuals who received Senior SNAP benefits

**The Georgia Senior SNAP program is an elderly simplified application project designed to make it easier for seniors to receive food stamp benefits.*



\$300

average monthly SNAP benefit (including P-SNAP) per household in Federal Fiscal Year 2020 (FFY 2020)



902,786

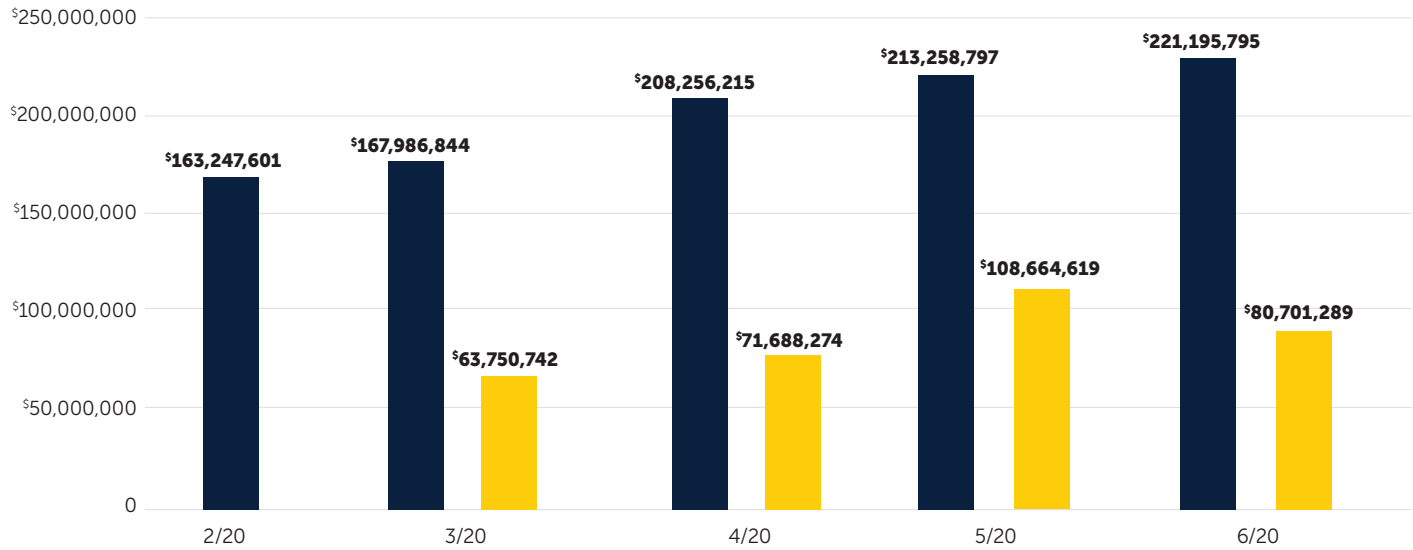
children who benefited from the SNAP program in SFY 2020



118,054

total number of SNAP recipients served by the SNAP Works Program in FFY 2020

P-SNAP and SNAP issuances since start of COVID-19 pandemic



■ Regular issuance
■ P-SNAP issuance

P-SNAP issuances began in March 2020.
May 2020 includes regular SNAP, monthly P-SNAP (\$77,976,133) and P-SNAP sweeps for prior months totaling \$30,688,486.
Regular issuances include both on-going and daily issuances.

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 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

Work activity, performed in return for public assistance that 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 that are directly related to the preparation of individuals for 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



TANF response to COVID-19 pandemic

On March 14, 2020, Gov. Brian P. Kemp signed a Public Health State of Emergency to address the coronavirus in Georgia. That same day, TANF policy was simplified to prevent unnecessary requests of clients during the pandemic.

As a result, the number of forms with signature requirements were reduced, and TANF renewals were extended an additional six months, beginning in March and lasting through August.

Applications for TANF were available immediately via telephone, and online application submissions in Georgia Gateway were effective June 1. Mandatory work requirements were waived and work sanctions were lifted on April 1. People who wanted to participate in a supported job search activity were permitted, and they were eligible for continued work support payments once employment was obtained.

By the Numbers | TANF



12,613

total number of TANF cases in SFY 2020



892

average number caregivers who receive TANF support each month and are subject to a work requirement



\$256

average benefit amount per month



14,519

average number of children supported by TANF each month



7,783

average number of child-only cases receiving TANF support each month, meaning the caregivers receive assistance on behalf of a child and are not required to participate in work activities

In Action

TANF

In October 2019, Nicola was looking for assistance with her job search. She was desperate to find a job as she was in a dire financial situation due to a marital separation. Nicola had a child to care for and was not receiving support from other sources.



With funding provided by TANF, Nicola began the process of finding employment that would address her family's needs. The job placement program helped provide Nicola valuable job readiness training, including soft skills. Nicola also benefitted from job search assistance, with her case manager helping her seek out employment opportunities.

Nicola was excited to start the job search process and her motivation was evident, with frequent visits to the Career Center, where she searched for jobs and followed up on potential leads. The only time Nicola was not at the Career Center was when she was attending job interviews!

In her fourth week of the program, Nicola was called for two interviews for Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) positions. Nicola was thrilled to accept a part-time job offer.

Now, at the end of FY20, Nicola is still employed and grateful for the opportunity to earn an income while working toward another personal goal – completing her college education.

Medicaid

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.



By the Numbers | Medicaid

In State Fiscal Year 2020 (SFY 2020),

1,111,717

is the average number of children who received Medicaid (excluding PeachCare) each month



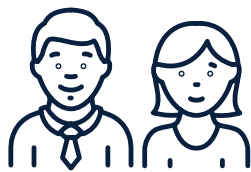
847,698

average number of families that received medical coverage through Medicaid each month



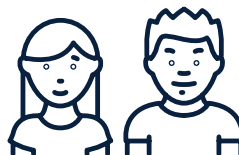
896,806

number of Medicaid applications processed in SFY 2020



551,064

average number of adults who received medical coverage through Medicaid each month



132,342

average number of children who received medical coverage through PeachCare each month

Medicaid response to COVID-19 pandemic

On March 1, 2020, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services issued several pandemic policy waivers to states for their Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Programs eligibility rules.

The Georgia Department of Community Health communicated those rules to DFCS for implementation for all Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids cases.

These 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.
- Extension of period of eligibility renewal end dates. Renewals with due dates in the months of March through June 2020 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 and financial eligibility for Supplemental Security Income.
- Excluding pandemic stimulus payments and pandemic unemployment compensation from budget calculations.
- Suspending PeachCare for Kids premiums.





DFCS | Family Independence

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

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.

By the Numbers | LIHEAP



193,528

households received assistance from the LIHEAP program in SFY 2020



Benefit Integrity & Recovery Unit

DHS identifies 1,382 cases of fraud worth \$6,031,748

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
- Investigative Analytics and Knowledge Management
- Staff Development

By the Numbers | BIRU

In Federal Fiscal Year 2020, the BIRU investigated fraud claims with an established value in excess of

\$6,031,748



4,870

investigations were completed in SFY 2020



1,382

claims were established from the investigations in SFY 2020



\$4,364.51

average fraud claim in SFY 2020

Did you know?

WASTE, FRAUD OR ABUSE

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



Child Protective Services

DFCS reduces number of children in foster care for third consecutive year

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.

Did you know?

REPORT CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

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

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

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. DFCS' goal is to return children safely 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, DFCS works with the courts to find loving adoptive homes for them.

In SFY 2020, the division was on track to increase adoptions as in years past, but unfortunately, the program was affected by court closures caused by the Coronavirus pandemic. However, adoption staff and the courts adjusted and leveraged technology to host virtual adoption finalization hearings. As a result, DFCS fell slightly short of its goal to increase adoption finalizations. In SFY 2020, 22% of children exited foster care through adoption. Additionally, 25% of children designated as having special needs left foster care through adoptions. The adoption unit and members from the DFCS executive team host a monthly There's No Place Like Home call to celebrate these adoption successes.

Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) is Consortium for Children's standardized home study methodology that has changed the way that public and private child welfare agencies study and evaluate prospective adoptive, kin and foster families. SAFE aids home study practitioners in performing a thorough, structured and uniform evaluation of families who have applied to foster or adopt. Georgia began with a pilot of the SAFE model in late 2018, having certified 239 DFCS and Child Placing Agency (CPA) staff. In 2019, approximately 511 DFCS and CPA staff were certified, for a total of 750 SAFE certified staff members throughout the state of Georgia.

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 often called Kinship Care. Children who remain connected to their family, friends, school, extracurricular activities and community through these Kinship Care arrangements fare much better and experience less trauma than children placed in traditional foster care arrangements.

By the Numbers | Child Protective Services



34,970

reports of abuse or neglect of children were investigated by CPS staff in SFY 2020. The number of youths in foster care decreased by **16.5%**



12

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



13,029

children were able to remain in their homes after their families received shelter, food, parenting classes or health referrals in SFY 2020

**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

FOSTER CARE

Jack and Phyllis Endres, from Columbia County, were the 2020 recipients of the Foster Caregiver of the Year Hope Builder Award as the Partnership MVPs. Mr. and Mrs. Endres are 84 and 81 respectively and have fostered over 140 children. The Endres' have one of the most substantial commitments to the foster care system with 32 years of service. They are always available to help the Division in any way they possibly can and go above and beyond in helping other foster parents whenever there is a need. Mr. and Mrs. Endres respond quickly if any foster parent needs a bed, clothing, toys, or any other accessory required for immediate placement.

They are very active with the Columbia County Adoption & Foster Parent Association of Georgia Association and are dedicated advocates for foster parent recruitment. They attend all meetings at DFCS with other foster parents and are quick to mentor new foster parents and provide respite for them. They are members of a large church in Columbia County and regularly encourage others to consider fostering and adopting through DFCS.

As our most valuable parents, Jack and Phyllis also work to preserve sibling connections and birth family connections by encouraging relatives with children related to the foster child to visit in their home.



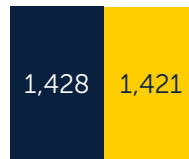
By the Numbers | Foster Care Services



SFY 2019 SFY 2020

18,449

children were in the foster care system on average at any point in time, representing a decrease of **10%** from SFY 2019



SFY 2019 SFY 2020

1,421

children were adopted by new families and given permanent homes



1,647

children were in foster care at the end of SFY 2020 and were available for adoption



31.3%

of children in foster care were placed with a relative in SFY 2020



20

is the median* caseload for a foster care caseworker



288,297

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.*

In Action

KINSHIP CARE

Bertha is the grandmother of three beautiful granddaughters. She took them in two years ago because she didn't want them to go into the foster care system.

As a 66-year-old on a fixed income, it wasn't easy at first feeding three girls on \$60 of food stamps a month and raising them in a one-bedroom apartment. And it was hard coping with the teenage girls' attitudes and encouraging all three to keep a good relationship with their mother.

DFCS Kinship Navigator Eric J., who grew up in a kinship family arrangement himself, along with another kinship caregiver, has played a critical role in Bertha's support system.

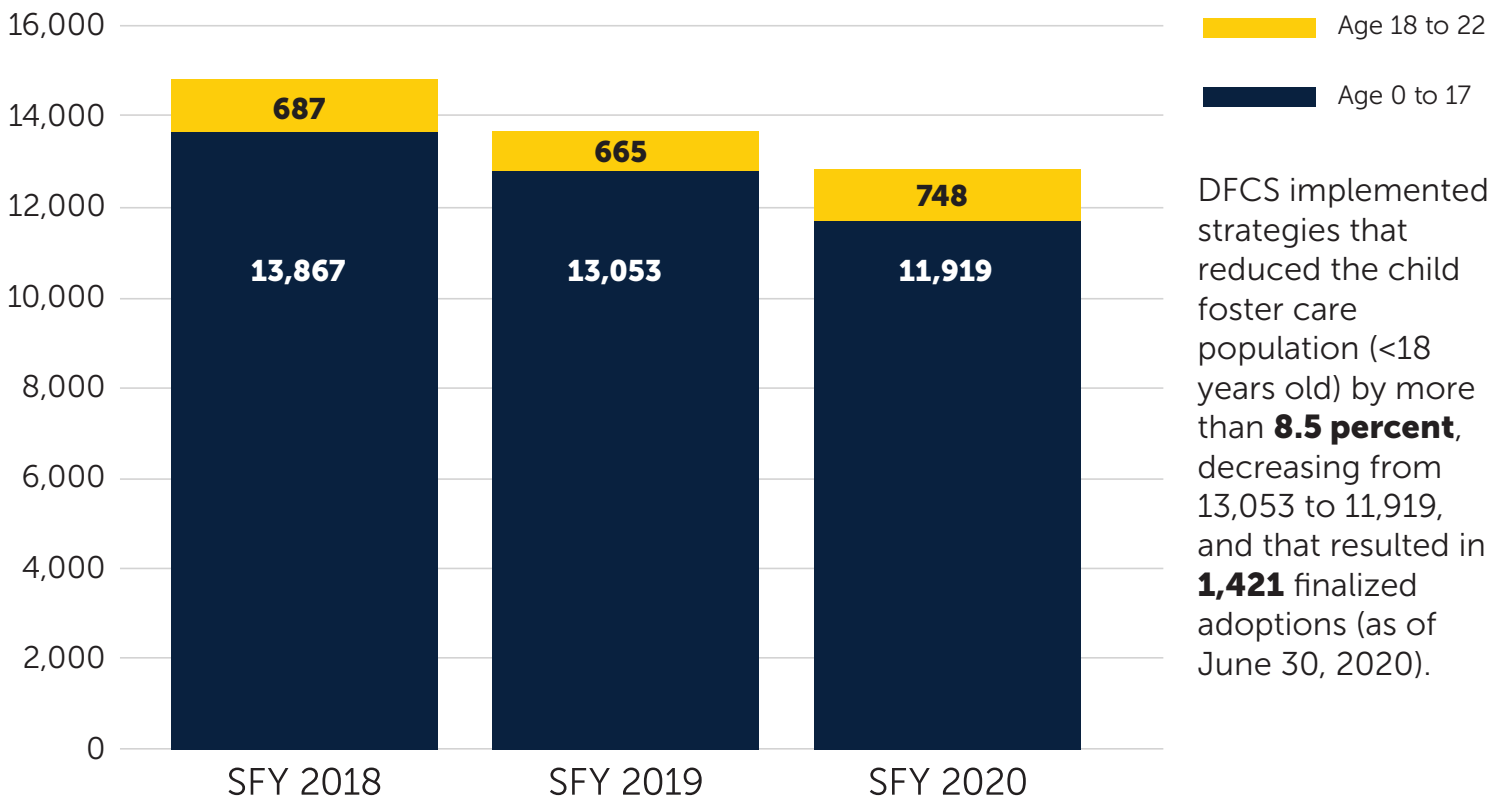
Bertha is the community "loudspeaker," Eric says. She inspires other caregivers to put their trust in DFCS. The Kinship Program helped Bertha acquire a three-bedroom apartment and bedroom sets for her granddaughters.

The program also helped her apply for and secure the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits her family needed. And it gave her the chance to watch the girls thrive and smile.

"I cannot thank them enough for all their help and support," Bertha said of the Kinship Program.



Number of children & youth in foster care*



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

Connected by 21

DFCS hosts townhalls to implement youth perspective in plan to extend care

The Division of Family & Children Services 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 Connected by 21 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.

Coined the “Connections Program,” participants must meet additional participation requirements such as being employed or attending secondary or post-secondary school. Through the Connections Program, the division hopes to inspire youth to:

- Prepare for their future through educational and employment training opportunities
- Find and secure consistent and safe housing
- Build permanent connections with caring adults, including relatives, mentors and community members
- Acquire vital life skills through training and leadership opportunities to live independently

In SFY 2020, DFCS hosted three youth townhall listening sessions to solicit input from youth in foster care for the development of the Connections Extension of Foster Care program policies. The Division coordinated this effort with its program partners, the Multiagency Alliance for Children and the University of Georgia’s J.W. Fanning Institute. More than 120 youth attended these listening sessions and provided feedback on the key components of the extended foster care program, such as program eligibility, participation requirements, housing and other services. DFCS utilized this feedback to inform the policies for the Connections Extension of Foster Program. The Division will continue to support young adults in becoming more confident, productive individuals and is committed to helping them achieve lifelong success.

Since 2014, on average, 75% of the youth who turn 18 in the Georgia foster care system elect to remain in extended foster care. In 2019, 517 of the 700 youth who turned 18 decided that remaining in foster care was in their best interest.

COVID-19 support for foster youth

The Division supports an average of 350 youth each year with attending post-secondary institutions through the federal Education Training Voucher (ETV) program. Nearly one-third of those youth identified as residing in on-campus housing when campuses began to close in March 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Division’s Independent Living Program contacted each of the youth to determine whether they had existing support for housing, and helped those who didn’t identify available resources. The Division also provided additional stipends for ETV recipients through the remainder of the spring semester.

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 enhancing and rebranding the program, Georgia CREW will provide greater support to young people by engaging them more frequently and presenting opportunities that will help them thrive. The goals of the CREW Program are to:

- Encourage the self-sufficiency of Georgia’s foster and opportunity youth through the development of employability and work readiness skills
- Provide employability training and hands-on work experience for foster care and TANF-eligible youth who are 16 and 17 years old
- Provide employment resource connections for Georgia’s foster and opportunity youth

By the Numbers | Georgia CREW

In Federal Fiscal Year 2020,

159

youth participated in job readiness training sessions that were taught throughout the Division’s 14 regions. Unfortunately, half of the FFY 2020 training sessions were cancelled due to the pandemic.



88

employers participated in the program



482

youth participated in the summer work programs



Afterschool Care Program

25,903 children participated in 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 2020, 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.

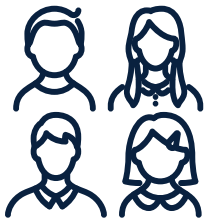
Afterschool Care Program response to COVID

Afterschool Care programs throughout the state have embraced creative methods to continuously provide services to students in their communities. All funded programs have implemented virtual learning activities as an option to keep their participants connected and engaged. Many funded partners updated their sanitation policies and practices in preparation for providing in-person programming to a reduced number of participants.

Additionally, most programs expanded their services to provide meal distribution and well-being support to help ease the burden of navigating life during the pandemic. The program's commitment to children, families and communities helps ensure that low-to-moderate income youth in Georgia still have access to high quality, out-of-school programming even in unprecedented times.

By the Numbers

Afterschool Care Program



25,903

youths were served through the Afterschool Care Program





Residential Child Care Licensing

RCCL regulates 321 facilities in SFY 2020

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.

Top 5 reasons facilities received citations in SFY 2020

- #1** Insufficient documentation of references in personnel files
- #2** Incomplete service plans
- #3** Insufficient or untimely health screenings of personnel
- #4** Insufficient documentation of the involvement of the child’s guardian in the service plan
- #5** Insufficient development, implementation and/or compliance with policies and procedures

By the Numbers | RCCL



321
facilities were regulated by RCCL in SFY 2020



9
new licenses were approved for child caring institutions



1
new maternity home received licensure



8
new licenses were approved for child placing agencies



DHS Leadership



Gov. Brian P. Kemp

BOARD OF HUMAN SERVICES*

Robertiena Fletcher (Chair)

Randall "Randy" P. Smith (Vice Chair)

Monica Walters (Secretary)

David Barbee

Lisa Hamilton

Scott Johnson

Wes Lewis

Jack F. Williams

*Board members are appointed by the governor.

EXECUTIVE & DIVISION LEADERSHIP



Robyn A. Crittenden
Commissioner



Gerlda B. Hines
Chief of Staff



Tanguler Gray
Deputy Commissioner
and Child Support Administrator



R. Demetrius Taylor
Deputy Commissioner and
Chief Financial Officer



Ann Burris
Assistant Deputy Commissioner
for Human Resources



Abby Cox
Assistant Deputy Commissioner
for Aging Services



John Hurst
Interim Assistant Deputy
Commissioner for Child
Support Services



Tom Rawlings
Division of Family & Children Services
Director



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

DIVISION OF FAMILY & CHILDREN SERVICES

OFFICE OF FAMILY INDEPENDENCE (OFI) | 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.

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

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES (CPS) | 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, call or 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 OFI 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**