



**Georgia Department of Human Services**

Aging Services | Child Support Services | Family & Children Services

# Annual Report

STATE FISCAL YEAR **2019**



*Stronger families for a stronger Georgia*



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*Robyn A. Crittenden served as the commissioner of DHS from July 2015 to November 2018 when then-Gov. Nathan Deal appointed her Secretary of State. She was again appointed DHS Commissioner in January 2019 by Gov. Brian P. Kemp.*



# Letter from Commissioner Robyn A. Crittenden



In State Fiscal Year 2019 (SFY 2019), we were reminded of the difference the Department of Human Services' (DHS) work made in the lives of those we serve, and we were encouraged by the support of our partners and community members.

DHS made several strides in building stronger families for a stronger Georgia in the last year. Our Division of Aging Services launched the Dementia Friends program, which sought to educate Georgians on ways to support members of their community living with dementia. Our Division of Child Support Services added new Parental Accountability Court programs in several judicial circuits across the state. And the Division of Family & Children Services implemented strategies that reduced the foster care population by more than 3 percent and increased the number of children adopted out of foster care by more than 17 percent.

In this report, I am proud to present to the public, legislators and interested stakeholders an opportunity to learn about the Department's many initiatives from the previous fiscal year, to review accomplishments toward strategic goals and to better understand how the state can support families on their paths to safe, self-reliant and fulfilling lives.

Each section of the report that follows outlines the successes of the Divisions of Aging Services, Child Support Services and Family & Children Services and the Department's continued commitment to serve Georgia's adults and children and to remain accountable to taxpayers. It also highlights just a few of the thousands of DHS staff members who consistently and selflessly serve Georgia families. Their commitment to our vision of stronger families is inspiring and gives me confidence that we can overcome any challenges in the year ahead.

As major innovations are on the horizon for human services nationwide, the Department is committed to adapting and improving our processes to provide our staff, partners, stakeholders and — most importantly — vulnerable populations, with what they need to build a stronger Georgia.

It is a great honor to serve the state under the leadership of Gov. Brian P. Kemp and with the support of partners like you. I look forward to working with you to make Georgia and its families stronger in the months to come in 2020.

# SFY 2019 Major Events

## August 2018

Georgia's Parental Accountability Court program received the National Child Support Enforcement Association's Innovative Partnership and Collaboration Award for its work with other governmental agencies and private sector entities to help parents overcome barriers to meet their child support obligations.

## September 2018

The Division of Child Support Services (DCSS) hosted a Fatherhood Celebration for residents in Henry and Clayton counties to honor the important role fathers have in the lives of their children and to promote the Fatherhood program, which helps noncustodial parents find jobs paying above minimum wage so they can better support their children. DCSS held a second celebration in Valdosta in April 2019.

The Division of Family & Children Services (DFCS) announced funding for five State of Hope (SOH) sites. SOH encourages nonprofits, government, business and other community members to collaborate on building local safety nets that focus on education, trauma-informed service, quality caregiving and economic self-sufficiency. An SOH site is an individual or an organization that applied to receive funding from DFCS to help bring a "big idea" to fruition. The "big ideas" seek to solve an identifiable problem affecting child safety and well-being in the local community. Projects could be anything from providing a mentorship program to stocking food pantries.

## November 2018



*DFCS Director Tom Rawlings checks in with Hurricane Michael victims on a tour of southwest Georgia.*

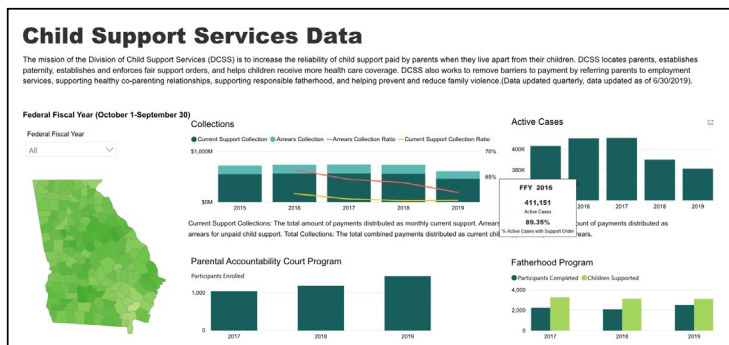
< Georgia announces a Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in 20 counties in Southwest Georgia. The temporary program, supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, allowed Georgians hit hardest by Hurricane Michael to apply for assistance to feed their families.

## December 2018

The Division of Family & Children Services launched the Click Safe pilot program in West Georgia. Click Safe provides caseworkers with a panic button that alerts authorities if they feel unsafe while working in the field. The project was funded by the Georgia General Assembly to address child welfare caseworker safety.

## March 2019

The Division of Child Support Services' Georgia Employer Hub (GE Hub) held an Employer Symposium in Atlanta to connect with the region's employers and provide information on the services offered by the GE Hub as well as details on the wage withholding process for employees with child support orders.



< DHS published Phase 2 of its Data Transparency Initiative, making current and past data about its services accessible to the public in a series of dynamic dashboards online at [dhs.ga.gov](http://dhs.ga.gov).

## May 2019

Georgia was one of eight sites selected by the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute to participate in a project designed to strengthen the child welfare workforce. This five-year project will serve to identify areas of strength and inform strategies for improvement.

## June 2019



DHS Commissioner Robyn A. Crittenden, right, and Division of Aging Services Director Abby Cox, middle, pose for a photo with former Dementia Friends program manager, Victoria Helmly, following the kickoff of Georgia's Dementia Friends program June 5 in Pine Mountain.

< The Division of Aging Services (DAS) launched the Dementia Friends program, which seeks to educate Georgians on ways to support members of their community living with dementia.

DAS hosted its Senior Hunger Summit and Healthy Communities Summit in Savannah. The annual events are an opportunity for partners across the state to come together to share best practices that enhance well-being and improve nutrition for older adults.

DFCS held reunification events across the state to celebrate the accomplishments of families who overcame a variety of challenges to be reunited safely and successfully with their children.





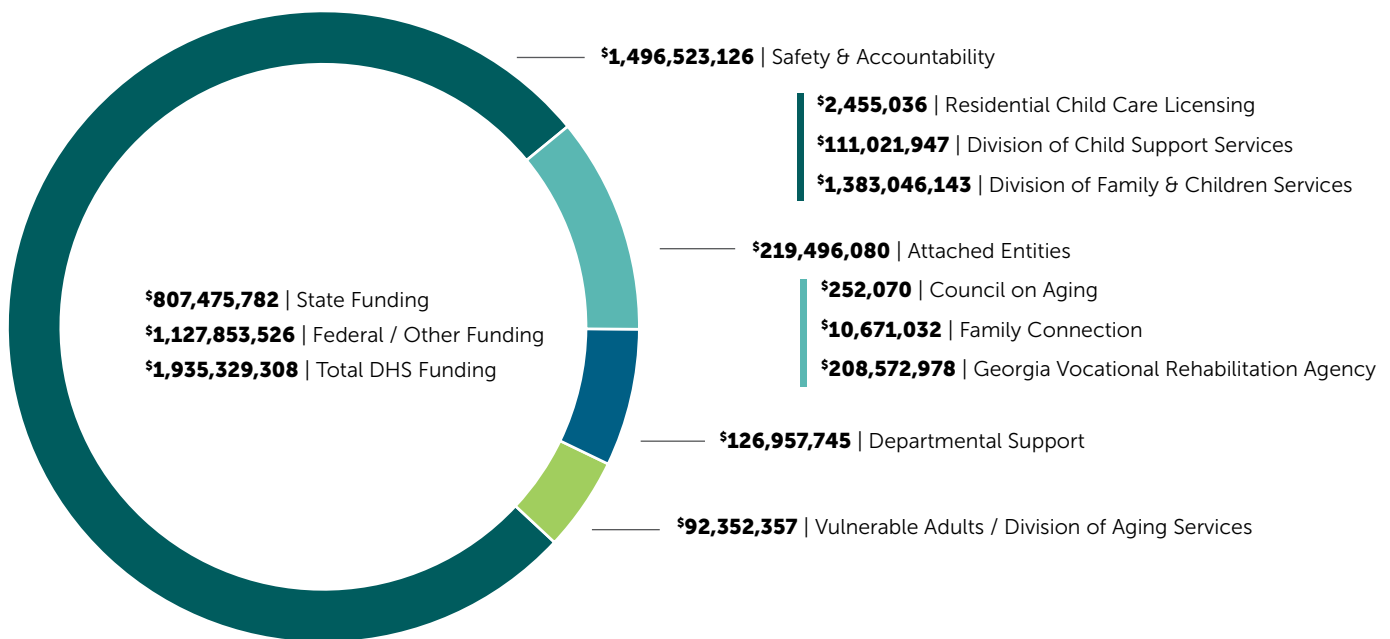
# About DHS

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

The Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) is the largest agency in state government, serving more than 2 million Georgians and employing approximately 9,400 people. With an annual budget of \$1.86 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.

## SFY 2019 BUDGET





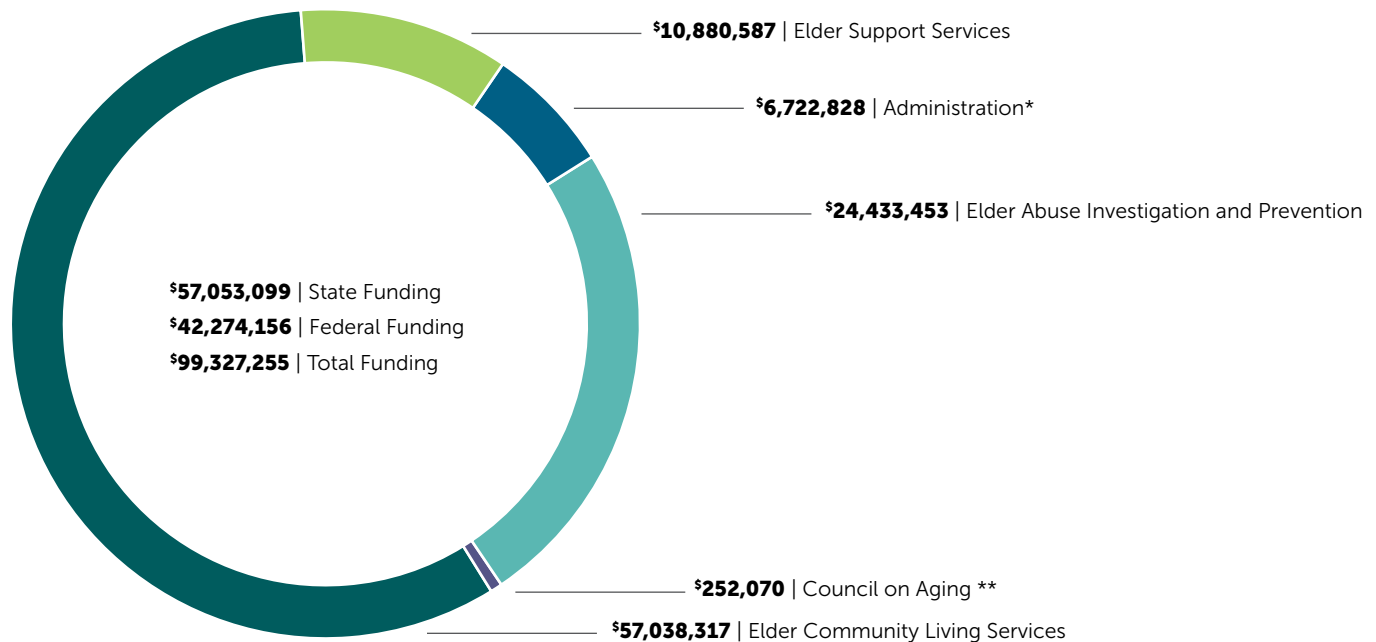
# About DAS

DIVISION OF AGING SERVICES

The Division of Aging Services (DAS) supports the larger goals of DHS by assisting 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 the same groups 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.

## SFY 2019 BUDGET



\*Accounted for as "Departmental Support" on Page 9

\*\* Accounted for as "Attached Entities" on Page 9



**Abby Cox**, Division Director



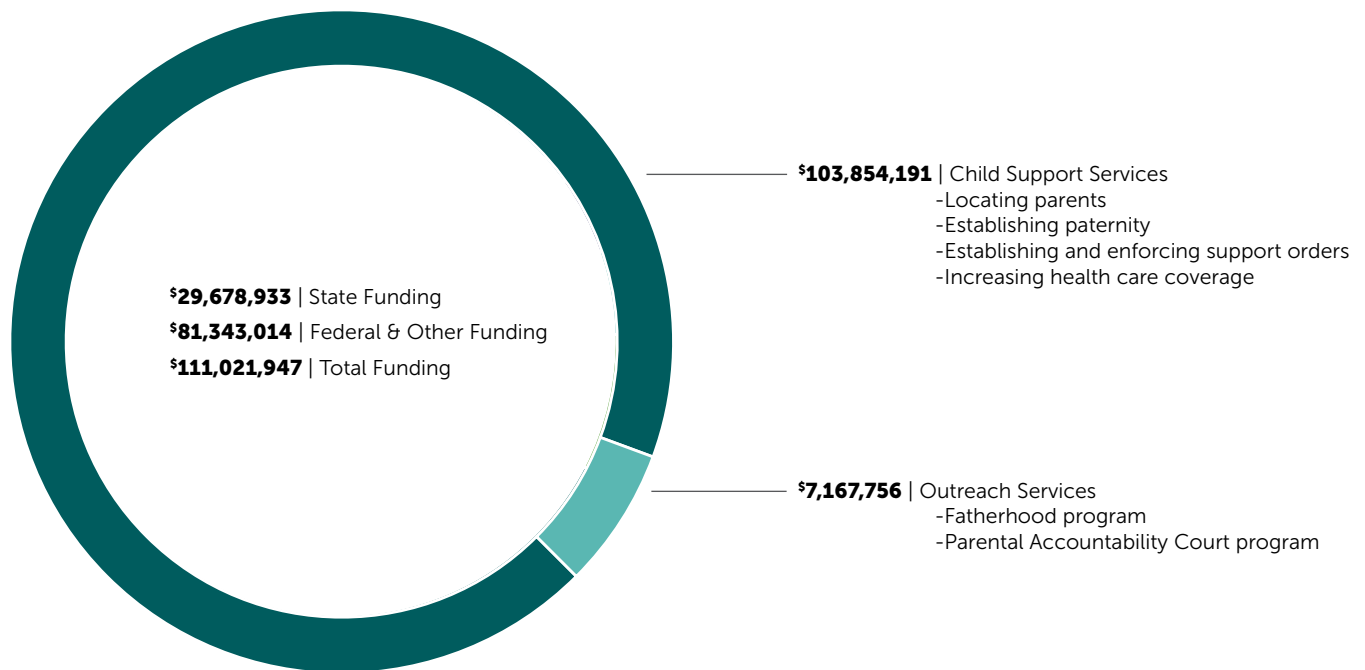
# About DCSS

DIVISION OF 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.

## SFY 2019 BUDGET



**Tanguler Gray**, Division Director

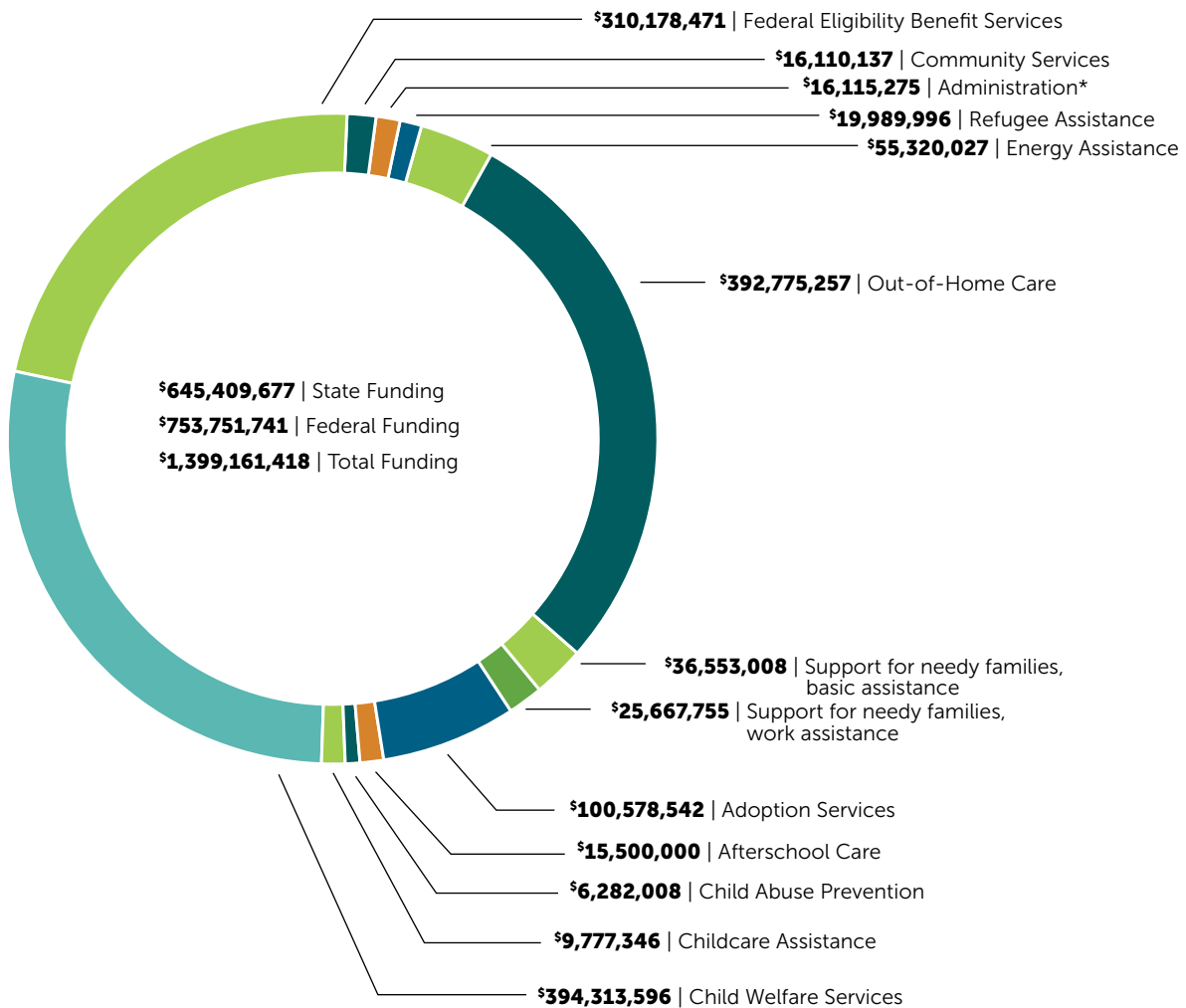


# About DFCS

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.

## SFY 2019 BUDGET



\*Accounted for as "Departmental Support" on Page 9



**Tom Rawlings**, Division Director





# Serving Adults in Georgia

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is committed to building stronger families for a stronger Georgia by supporting adults who are trying to provide for their families, achieve economic independence or maintain self-sufficiency. The Department also works to ensure adults are protected from abuse, neglect and exploitation so that they can live their best lives. Here is a look at what the Department did to support, strengthen and safeguard adults in State Fiscal Year 2019 (SFY 2019).

## HOW WE SERVE ADULTS IN GEORGIA

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SERVING ADULTS IN GEORGIA

# Supporting Adults





The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the economic, social and emotional well-being of adults in Georgia through several programs and services administered through the Divisions of Family & Children Services (DFCS) and Aging Services (DAS).

One in five Georgians is supported by the nutrition, cash, medical and energy assistance programs administered by DFCS. Kinship caregivers, or those who have a relative child living in their homes, can access financial and emotional support for their caregiving duties through programs offered by DAS and DFCS.

The Georgia Memory Net program, administered by DAS in partnership with Emory University, gives Georgians access to accurate and early diagnosis of Alzheimer's and related dementias and connects those affected by the disease with community resources that provide treatment and caregiver support. Georgians who seek to support family and community members living with the disease also now have the option to become better educated on those efforts through DAS' Dementia Friends initiative.

190,000+

residents are estimated to be living with Alzheimer's in Georgia by the year 2025

80%

of Georgians with self-reported cognitive impairment have not been evaluated or treated, according to researchers at Emory University

SERVING ADULTS IN GEORGIA  
**SUPPORTING ADULTS**

## Georgia Memory Net continues serving individuals and families facing dementia across the state

*[Services funded by the Division of Aging Services]*

In 2017, Georgia began establishing the Georgia Memory Net (GMN) in response to the growing needs of individuals and families dealing with the effects of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

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 dementias, 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 the disease. GMN also gives physicians access to specialists such as Cognitive Neurologist and Neuropsychology Leads, who provide expertise in improving speech, learning and memory.

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.

### DID YOU KNOW?

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](http://georgiamemorynet.org).

In State Fiscal Year 2020, GMN will:

- Expand and enhance outreach and education to physicians in all MAC regions.
- Educate Georgians and their physicians on MAC referral processes and enhanced care for persons with dementia via supportive care.
- Enhance and deploy curriculum and education for physicians and other relevant audiences regarding the Annual Wellness Visit screening and improved care for persons living with dementia.

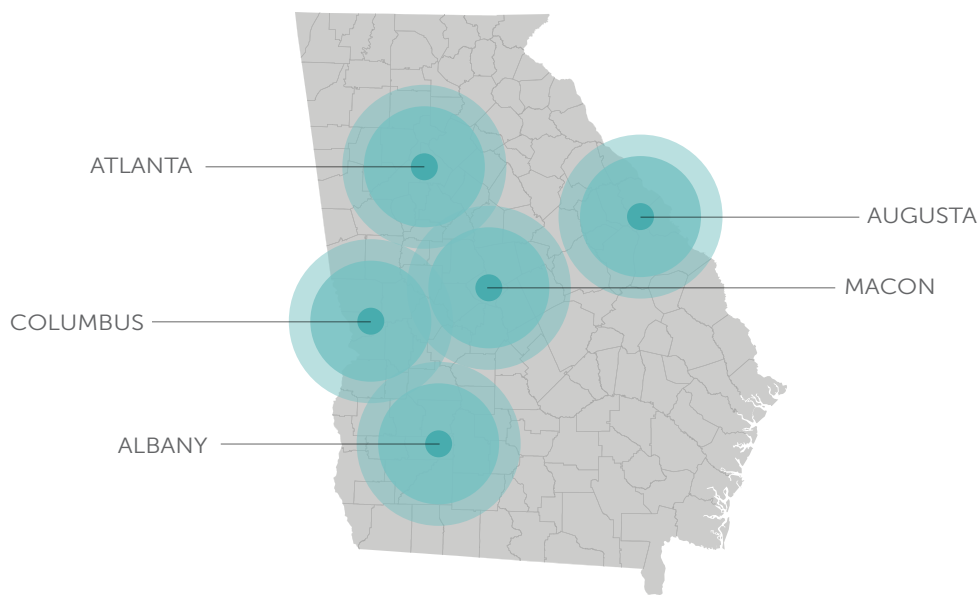
**\$10,000**

in grant funding was provided to five Georgia communities in \$2,000 mini-grants for dementia friendly initiatives

**1,000+**

Dementia Friends are expected to join the program in SFY 2020 to increase the public's understanding of dementia and support those living with dementia through information sessions

GMN'S MEMORY ASSESSMENT CLINIC LOCATIONS



## Dementia Friends creates a network of neighbors who understand the effects of dementia

*[Program provided by the Division of Aging Services]*

In State Fiscal Year 2019 (SFY 2019), DAS launched a Dementia Friends Georgia campaign to help communities learn how they can become better friends, neighbors and relatives to people who live with dementia.

Dementia Friends USA, administered by Dementia Friendly America in the United States, is an initiative developed by the Alzheimer's Society in the United Kingdom. It is intended to improve the public's understanding of dementia—how it affects people and how individuals can make a difference for those affected by dementia.

For more information on Dementia Friends, visit [aging.georgia.gov/dementia-friends](https://aging.georgia.gov/dementia-friends).

## **TANF cash assistance program provides support to an average of 1,500 caregivers each month**

*[Program administered by the Division of Family & Children Services]*

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a monthly cash assistance program with an employment services component for low-income families with children living in their home who under age 18 and are full-time students.

Adults who receive TANF are required to participate in approved work activities a minimum of 30 hours each week. If the household has a child under age, the weekly minimum requirement is 20 hours.

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 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 – the 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.

For more information on how cash assistance benefits Georgia's youth, see **Page 56**.

**9,887**

total number of TANF cases in SFY 2019

**1,522**

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

**8,365**

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

**\$257**

average benefit amount per month



## Nutrition assistance program expands organizational partnerships to increase recipients' self-sufficiency

*[Program provided by the Division of Family & Children Services]*

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-based organizations and educational institutions. 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.

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.

Since 2016, DFCS has expanded partnerships with education and technical training institutions and 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 a work experience (a

short-term, unpaid work assignment). SNAP Works offers participants transportation, nutrition classes, childcare, education, health classes, housing 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.

To learn more about how children benefit from the SNAP program, see **Page 56**.

### DID YOU KNOW?

All adults 60 years and older and adults who are disabled are eligible for medical deductions when applying for SNAP benefits. Medical expenses that exceed \$35 per month can decrease an applicant's gross income, thereby increasing their amount of SNAP benefits.

Eligible medical expenses include medical and dental services, medical equipment, medical insurance premiums and transportation and lodging costs incurred during the receipt of medical treatment. For more information, visit [dfcs.ga.gov/senior-snap](https://dfcs.ga.gov/senior-snap).



## SNAP by the numbers



**\$269**

average monthly SNAP benefit per household in Federal Fiscal Year 2019 (FFY 2019)



**1,458,118**

average number of individuals who received SNAP benefits each month



**375,411**

number of seniors and disabled adults who received SNAP benefits

## SNAP Works



**787**

total number of SNAP recipients served by the SNAP Works Program in FFY 2019, either to meet a federal work requirement or to improve their economic well-being



**256**

number of Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) who participated in the program to meet federal work requirements



**531**

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

## Senior SNAP



**\$8,394,933**

average amount of Senior SNAP benefits issued per month in SFY 2019



**108,216**

monthly average number of individuals who received Senior SNAP benefits



**128,451**

total number of individuals who received Senior SNAP benefits in SFY 2019

# Medical assistance program processes 773,416 applications for Medicaid services in SFY 2019

*[Program provided by the Division of Family & Children Services]*

## **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.

For more information on medical assistance for children, see **Page 56**.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Adults whose family income disqualifies them for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) cash assistance and who meet the criteria for disability may still be eligible for Medicaid assistance. To learn more about Medicaid eligibility requirements, contact local DFCS staff. Locations and contact information can be found at [dfcs.ga.gov](http://dfcs.ga.gov).

## 831,738

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

## 542,489

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

## 773,416

number of Medicaid applications processed in SFY 2019

## Energy assistance program keeps nearly 200,000 Georgians safe and healthy in extreme weather

*[Program provided by the Division of Family & Children Services]*

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 & over and those with life-threatening circumstances.

For more information, call **404-361-4442** or visit **[www.georgiacaa.org](http://www.georgiacaa.org)**.

# 191,435

households received assistance from the LIHEAP program in SFY 2019



## Kinship support groups provide guidance on parenting and healthy relationships for caregivers of children

*[Services provided by the Division of Family & Children Services and Division of Aging Services]*

Kinship Care refers to a temporary or permanent arrangement in which a relative or any non-relative adult who has a long-standing relationship with a child takes on the full-time, substitute care of that child when his/her parents are unable or unwilling to do so. These caregivers keep children out of the foster care system and in their communities.

The DAS kinship support groups provide education and peer support for grandparents raising grandchildren focusing on positive parenting, effective discipline and healthy relationships.

Relatives or close family friends who provide care for children who have been left with them or have been placed in their care through Division intervention should contact their local DFCS office to inquire about eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program and other relative subsidies funded by the state.

For more information, visit [dhs.georgia.gov/kinship-care-portal](https://dhs.georgia.gov/kinship-care-portal).

To learn more about how Kinship Care supports children in Georgia, see **Page 56**.

### DID YOU KNOW?

There is a staff member in every region of the state dedicated to helping kinship caregivers navigate the support system. To find the Kinship Navigator for your region, visit [dhs.ga.gov/kinship-care-portal](https://dhs.ga.gov/kinship-care-portal)

In SFY 2019, DAS provided

**\$327,688**

to six Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) for Kinship Care services using both federal and state funds

**2,763**

people attended the AAAs' 258 support groups

**35**

ongoing Kinship Care Support Groups were held in six regions. Most groups meet monthly, though several of the groups meet twice per month

**5,327**

people provided care to a relative child in foster care in SFY 2019



SERVING ADULTS IN GEORGIA

# Strengthening Adults





The Division of Aging Services' (DAS') Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) strengthens older adults in Georgia by connecting them with resources that encourage self-sufficiency and helping them stay in the setting of their choosing for as long as possible, keeping community ties strong and active.

DAS also helps older adults who are re-entering the job market or entering it for the first time, access opportunities to learn in a professional environment.

The Division of Child Support Services (DCSS) has programs that offer noncustodial parents job training, GED courses, behavioral and mental health assistance and other resources that prepare them for successful employment to strengthen their ability to provide for their children.

# ADRC connects older adults and adults with disabilities to community support and caregiving resources

*[Services provided by the Division of Aging Services]*

The Aging and Disability Resource Connection (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** - Rides to everyday destinations for little or no charge

**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

## 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.

ADRC’s 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, visit [mygeorgiacares.org](http://mygeorgiacares.org).

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

**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 inpatient 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.



In State Fiscal Year 2019 (SFY 2019), the Aging and Disability Resource Connection provided

# 90,414

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



## 4,268,686

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



## 35,947

individuals received Home and Community-Based Services, such as homemaker services, nutrition counseling, home modification and repair, adult day services and more.



## \$12.8 million

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



## 402

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



## \$70,000

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



## \$2,000

is the average annual cost to provide assistive technology to allow individuals to remain in their home or community rather than a long-term care facility

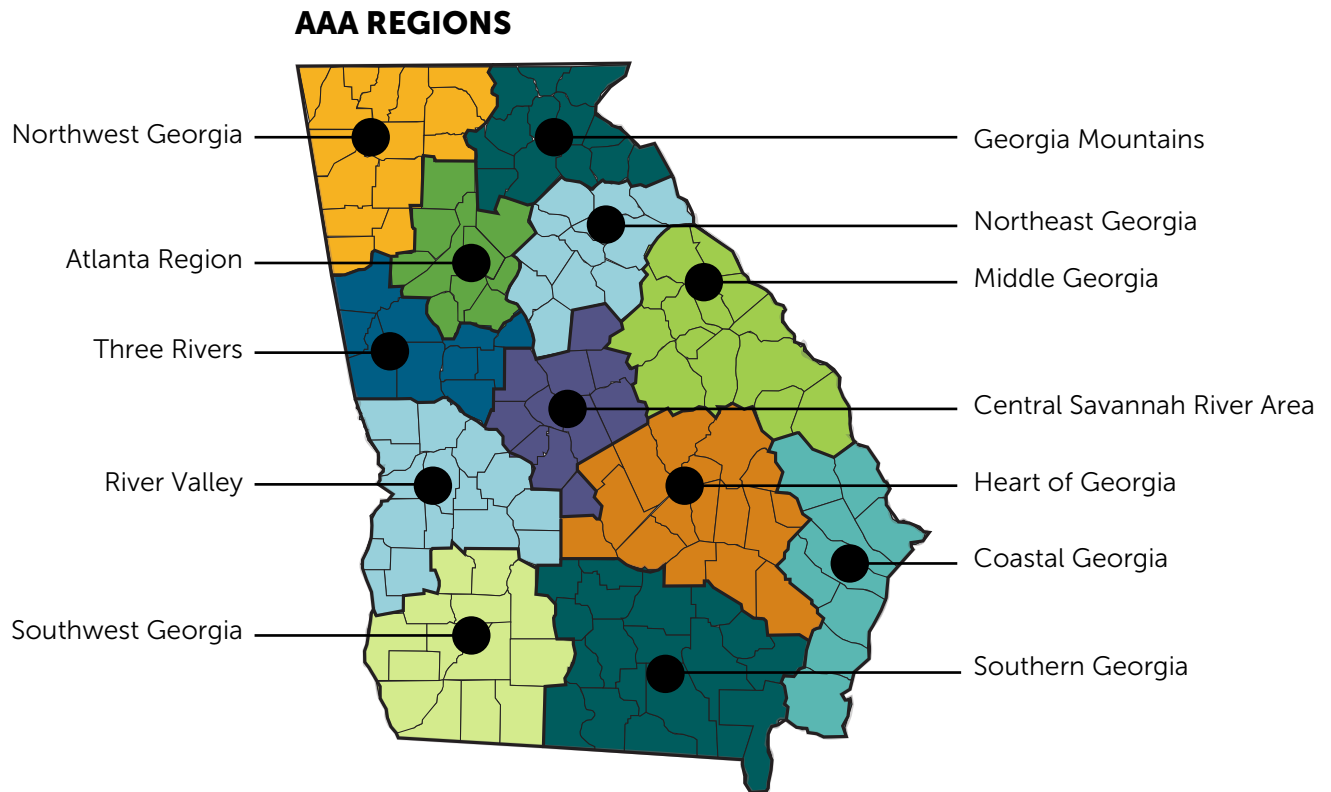
# In Action

## AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CONNECTION

Ms. M is a Middle Georgia senior with significant mobility limitations because of a fall that resulted in quadriplegia. This caused her to rely on her family and friends for around-the-clock care and assistance with daily activities.

Her daughter, who is her main support, was planning to get married and move out of state. This concerned Ms. M because she depended on her daughter for most of her needs. The Middle Georgia Area Agency on Aging contacted Disability Connections to assess her needs, connect her with a peer supporter and provide assistive technology devices to help her function more independently.

Disability Connections helped Ms. M install a deadbolt lock, two doorbell cameras and two indoor cameras that she controlled from her tablet and Alexa Dot, devices she was already using. These improvements gave her a new sense of independence and safety. She is very thankful for them and the financial assistance that made it possible.



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. The service regions can be seen in the map above.

## SFY 2019 CLIENTS SERVED BY PLANNING & SERVICE AREAS

Region	ADRC	GeorgiaCares	Home and Community-Based Services	Money Follows the Person	Nursing Home Transitions	Adult Protective Services**
Atlanta Region	49,105	3,187	10,522	55	29	7,289
Central Savannah River Region	3,570	545	2,536	0	0	1,237
Coastal Georgia Region	3,132	675	2,602	8	9	1,459
Georgia Mountains Region	3,609	2,314	3,142	7	14	1,567
Heart of Georgia Region	2,549	225	1,440	10	10	705
Middle Georgia Region	4,727	887	1,803	17	9	1,173
Northeast Georgia Region	4,358	1,133	2,685	7	12	1,320
Northwest Georgia Region	5,902	1,714	3,461	15	15	2,287
River Valley Georgia Region	2,495	667	1,474	7	10	774
Southern Georgia Region	4,427	1,065	1,853	16	12	986
Southwest Georgia Region	3,443	1,243	1,924	10	11	865
Three Rivers Region	3,097	1,146	2,505	16	18	1,150
State DAS/CILS*	0	0	0	46	39	0
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>90,414</b>	<b>14,801</b>	<b>35,947</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>20,812</b>

\* Centers for Independent Living | \*\* APS Clients Served is defined as the number of intakes that met criteria during the fiscal year by Planning & Service Area region.



# Senior Community Service Employment Program boosts employment opportunities for low-income seniors

*[Program provided by the Division of Aging Services]*

Adults who are of 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 are 55 and older 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 Health and Human Services Annual Poverty Guidelines.

## DID YOU KNOW?

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.

**285**

people participated in SCSEP in SFY 2019

**120**

SCSEP participants got a full-time job

**280**

SCSEP participants provided community service

**149,808**

hours of community service were provided by participants

## In Action

### SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Veronica J. was on disability, concerned about maintaining a roof over her head and providing for her most basic needs. An article in the newspaper led her to reach out to a Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) representative to learn more about how the program could help her become more self-sustainable.

Upon entering the program, Veronica was placed in a position with the Department of Labor for nine months where she learned a variety of computer programs and technological applications.

"I got a lot of experience and an opportunity to show that I could do this," she said. "It improved my confidence and my whole life."

Veronica's positive experience in the program motivated her to help other older adults in need of professional opportunities. She even connected with a woman in New York, via Facebook, and assisted her with reaching out to her local SCSEP, which led her to getting a job.

"I feel great being able to be a contributing member of society and not feeling like I was less than everyone else," she said. "I feel great with my new abilities. I'm so thankful for what this has done for my life."

Currently, Veronica works as a Resource Specialist in Northwest Georgia, helping older adults to get jobs and increase their economic sustainability.

## Fatherhood program provides education and training for parents struggling to meet support obligations

*[Program provided by the Division of Child Support Services]*

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 provided:

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

For more on how the DCSS Fatherhood program supports children, please see **Page 54**.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Participation in the **Fatherhood program** can help with driver's license reinstatement if the license was suspended due to nonpayment of child support.

## 5,082

noncustodial parents were enrolled in the Fatherhood program in SFY 2019

## 1,417

noncustodial parents were referred to GED and short-term job training programs as part of this initiative in SFY 2019

## In Action

### FATHERHOOD PROGRAM

Nathaniel P. had never heard of the Fatherhood program until the day that he received a notice that his driver's license was suspended. However, according to Nathaniel, this was one of the best things to happen to him: "I'm glad it [suspended license] led me to that [Fatherhood program]."

Before entering the Fulton County Fatherhood program, the father of one moved to Atlanta, was unemployed for an extensive amount of time and was a year behind on his child support order. He was frustrated with his life and down on his luck.

During the initial accountability meeting with his Fatherhood agent, Nathaniel was referred to Federal Express, a partner of the Fatherhood program, where he was hired. He also attended a technical college and obtained an Air Conditioning Service certification. Now he works in a field he enjoys and is self-sufficient.

Nathaniel recalls the program teaching him more than job skills and helping him become current on his order.

"They deliver a message to get guys to understand that you should have a relationship with your children outside of money ... and focus on being a father," he said.

In an email of gratitude to his Fatherhood agent, Nathaniel wrote, "I want to thank you for helping me with obtaining employment ... I greatly appreciate you and all you do for this program. Hopefully, gentlemen in this program feel the same as I do. Once again, thank you."

# Parental Accountability Court program partners with Superior Courts to help parents avoid incarceration

[Program provided by the Division of Child Support Services]

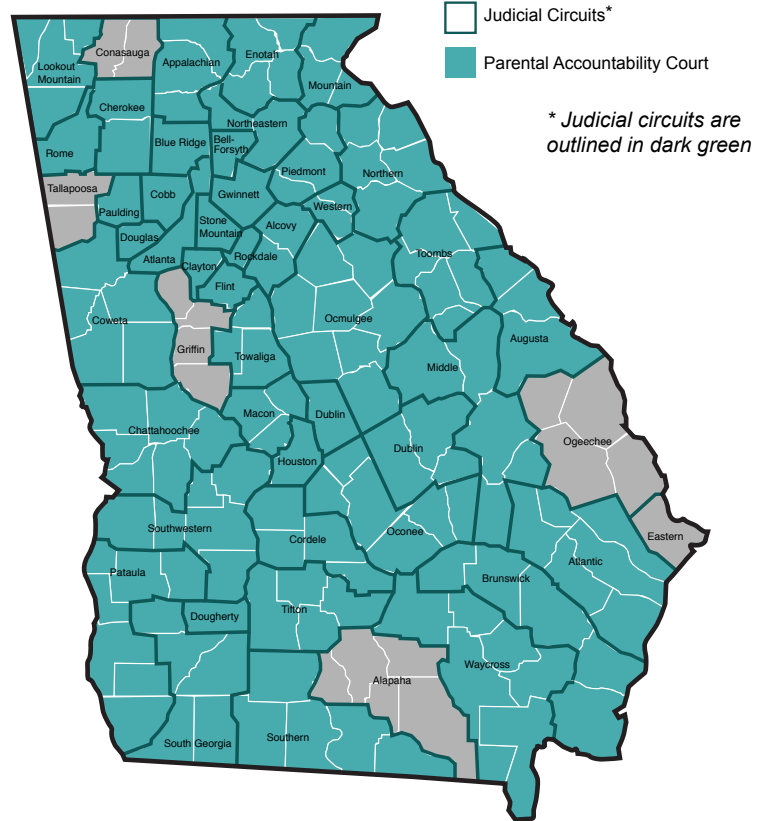
DCSS recognizes that incarceration for nonpayment of support can be counterproductive as it prevents the parent from employment and he/she falls further behind in his/her court-ordered child support. In 2009, DCSS and the superior court judges established Georgia's first Parental Accountability Court (PAC). At the end of SFY 2019, 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

For more on how the PAC program benefits Georgia's children, see **Page 54**.

## Judicial Circuits with PACs





Since the PAC program began in SFY 2009,

**3,854**

participants received services through PACs across the state, avoiding incarceration and saving the state and local governments incarceration expenses

Since 2009, more than

**\$10.2 million**

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

**944**

noncustodial parents received help on their journey to lead more self-sufficient lives as part of their enrollment in the PAC program in SFY 2019

**127**

parents graduated from the PAC program in SFY 2019, providing \$367,826 to children who previously received partial or no support

## In Action

### PARENTAL ACCOUNTABILITY COURT PROGRAM

Brandon J., a 39-year-old father of four, began participating in the PAC program in March 2018. The last payment received on his child support case was six months prior to his entry into the program.

While in the program, Brandon obtained sustainable employment and worked hard to reach his goal of paying his monthly child support obligation and arrears. He started to make consistent payments which resulted in him meeting the full obligation on his case.

In addition to securing employment through the PAC program, Brandon regained a relationship and visitation with two of his children, whom he had not seen in over a year. He graduated from the program in May 2019.

"I want to thank the whole PAC program, especially [PAC Coordinator] Patricia Huling and [PAC] Judge Bonnie Chessher Oliver. They helped me get my priorities back in check by keeping me in line and helping me stay focused on the prize. I had not seen my kids for a year, and now I've been getting them for the weekends for months. Thanks for not giving up on me," Brandon said.

SERVING ADULTS IN GEORGIA

# Safeguarding Adults





The Division of Aging Services (DAS) works to keep older adults safe by investigating claims of abuse, neglect and exploitation. DAS oversees public guardianship, providing protection to wards of the state who are unable to make decisions for their well-being and need an advocate to ensure they are provided necessary and adequate treatment and services.

The Forensic Special Initiatives Unit trains first responders, bank and finance professionals and health care workers to identify and properly report cases of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

## Adult Protective Services investigates abuse of older adults and persons with disabilities in Georgia communities

*[Services provided by the Division of Aging Services]*

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

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](https://aging.ga.gov). (To report abuse in long-term care facilities, contact the Department of Community Health at 404-657-5700. In the case of an emergency, call 911.)

### DID YOU KNOW?

According to the National Council on Aging, approximately **1 in 10** Americans aged 60+ have experienced some form of elder abuse.

### In Action

#### ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

An elderly resident in rural Georgia who was no longer able to keep up with cleaning duties in her home developed a serious infestation of bed bugs and roaches. Because of the danger posed by the infestation, the home health services that came to help with her medical issues could no longer send their staff to the home. As a result, APS became involved in the situation.

Although the client had been resistant to receiving assistance in the past, the APS worker made continued attempts to build rapport with the client and gain her trust. Before any health services were discontinued, the APS worker was able to convince the client to accept help.

With the assistance of APS, pest control was able to exterminate the infestation, and the family was able to clean and repair dangerous conditions.

The home health services were continued, and APS assisted the client with applying for assistance services to help with housework and cleaning duties. The client is now safely able to continue to live in her own home.



To ensure the safety and protection of older and disabled adults, approximately

# \$24 million

[ 84% state funding, 16% federal/other funding ]

was allocated toward elder abuse investigation and prevention in State Fiscal Year 2019 (SFY 2019).

## SFY 2019 TOP 5 REASONS FOR REPORTS

### #1 FINANCIAL ABUSE OR EXPLOITATION

Improperly or illegally using a person's resources for the benefit of another person. Number of reports: **10,886**

### #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. Number of reports: **10,003**

### #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. Number of reports: **7,825**

### #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. Number of reports: **3,465**

### #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. Number of reports: **2,782**



Report abuse or neglect online at **aging.ga.gov**.

## APS CASES

# 20,812

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

# 51,422

number of reports of abuse, neglect or exploitation

# 173

number of budgeted APS case manager positions

## Public Guardianship Office employees advocate for more than 1,000 adults in the care of the state

*[Services provided by the Division of Aging Services]*

The DAS 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.

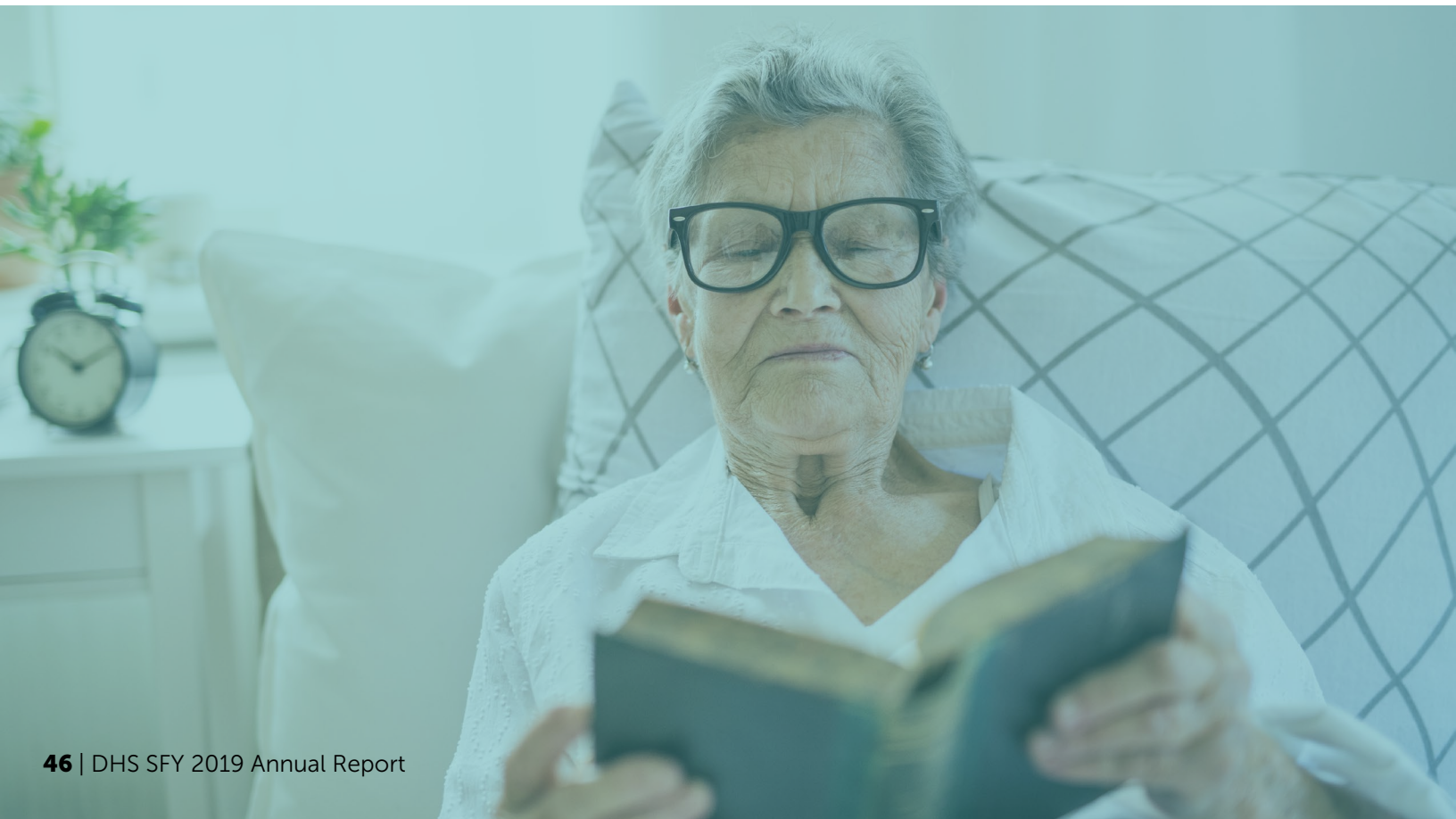
In SFY 2019, the PGO advocated for and managed the health and welfare of

**1,029**

vulnerable adults. This is an increase from 952 in SFY 2018

**39**

number of budgeted PGO case managers



## In Action

### PUBLIC GUARDIANSHIP OFFICE STAFF HIGHLIGHT

Carleton Coleman has been with the State of Georgia for 23 years and has held several different positions within the Division of Aging Services including District Manager, Field Operations Manager and the president of the National Guardianship Association (NGA). Since Jan. 2017, he has served as the Public Guardianship Office Section Manager.

During his career, Coleman has gone above and beyond the responsibilities of his positions to advocate for the vulnerable adults and families he has worked with.

In a recent case, the PGO received guardianship of a 34-year-old man who suffered a traumatic brain injury as a result of a car accident. He had been hospitalized for nine months and could not speak or walk. His mother was advised that he would not be able to regain his abilities and needed to be moved into a long-term care facility.

The hospital filed for an emergency petition, requesting that the state be named his substitute guardian and that his mother be removed because she had not completed the necessary work to move him into a long-term care facility. Coleman worked with the hospital and the mother to meet the requirement to place the young man in the least restrictive setting, his home.

With Coleman's help, the mother was reinstated as her son's guardian and the hospital confidently discharged him two days later. Coleman continued to help the family get all the resources they needed. Within a few months of returning home, the young man spoke, walked and started swimming.

"That was rewarding to me to know that I actually made a difference in people's lives," Coleman said. "At the end of the day, I can go home with a clear conscience knowing that I helped somebody. And if I didn't make a difference, at least I tried to be a voice for them."

Coleman has received various awards and recognition for his work. He was recognized at the 2019 NGA Conference in Lexington, Kentucky for his service as a past president and member of the NGA Board of Directors.

"It's been a rewarding job for me. I don't look for any accolades or appreciation, even though I've received them. It's not about me. It's not about the family. It's about the individual we are trying to serve," he said.



## Forensic Special Initiatives Unit trains more than 400 professionals to identify abuse, neglect, exploitation

*[Program provided by the Division of Aging Services]*

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
- And other professionals who respond to the abuse, neglect and exploitation of at-risk adults

In SFY 2019, FSIU trained

# 416

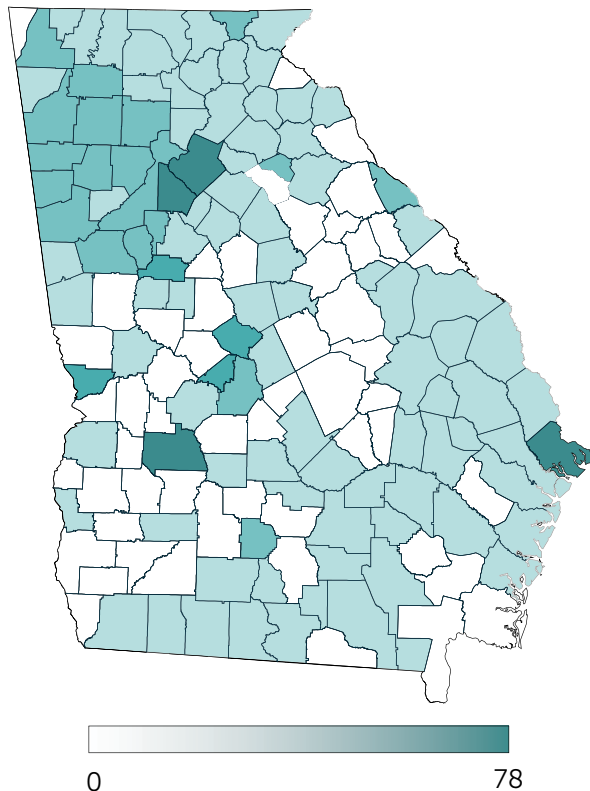
law enforcement officers, medical staff, prosecutors and other mandated reporters on issues pertaining to the abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable adults. In SFY 2018, **354** professionals received ACT training.

Since training began in SFY 2011,

# 3,190

individuals have become ACT Specialists

### Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation Arrests in SFY 2019









# Serving Children in Georgia

DHS is committed to helping children live safe and healthy lives. Each day, staff in the Division of Child Support Services (DCSS) and Division of Family & Children Services (DFCS) work toward that goal through a variety of services and interventions that support children's development into healthy, capable adults. The following pages outline the Department's work in State Fiscal Year 2019 (SFY 2019) to support, strengthen and safeguard children across the state.

## HOW WE SERVE CHILDREN IN GEORGIA

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SERVING CHILDREN IN GEORGIA

# Supporting 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.

The Division of Family & Children Services (DFCS) provides support to children through nutrition, cash assistance and health care programs.

DFCS also works through its Kinship Care program to provide emotional and financial support to extended family members who step in to provide stability for children who have to be removed from their homes through no fault of their own.

## Child support collections benefit more than 500,000 children across the state

*[Services provided by the Division of Child Support Services]*

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. DCSS ensures that parents under a court order provide their child with financial and medical support, and also encourages both parents to be involved in the overall well-being of the child.

### FATHERHOOD AND PARENTAL ACCOUNTABILITY COURT PROGRAMS

DCSS has two outreach programs, Fatherhood and Parental Accountability Court (PAC), that enable parents in their efforts to support their children, removing barriers that prevent them from paying support obligations. By connecting parents to community resources that help with issues like unemployment or substance abuse, parents can better support children to have increased and / or improved access to adequate shelter, food, clothing, medical assistance and education.

For more information on how the Fatherhood program strengthens adults so they can better support their families, see **Page 38**.

For more information about the PAC program and how it helps remove barriers for noncustodial parents struggling to meet support obligations, see **Page 40**.

## In Action

### CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES STAFF HIGHLIGHT

Cindy York is an example of what it looks like to advocate for children in the state of Georgia. York has worked in the Division of Child Support Services for the past 13 years and currently serves as the manager for the Camilla Child Support Office.



Under her leadership, the Camilla Child Support Office ranks among the top child support offices in the state, exceeding statewide performance indicators in current support paid, arrears paid and the percent of support orders obtained. She uses her experience as a high-performing manager, who constantly exceeds audit and statewide requirements, to train and mentor other managers across the state.

York and her team have received various awards— a testament of her leadership and professional skills. She is the recipient of the 2019 Outstanding Leader Award from the National Child Support Enforcement Association, and her team won the Division of Human Services Commissioner's Outstanding Team Award for exceptional, results-driven collaboration. She has previously been honored as a DCSS Hero of the Month.

All of these accomplishments help the staff in Camilla ensure that children receive adequate support and resources to thrive in their community.

"Cindy demonstrates outstanding management and leadership and has inspired others over the course of several years to improve the child support program and serve the best interest of children," said her supervisor and Division of Child Support Services Region 6 Manager Joy Spilman.

In Federal Fiscal Year 2019 (FFY 2019),

# \$726,762,985

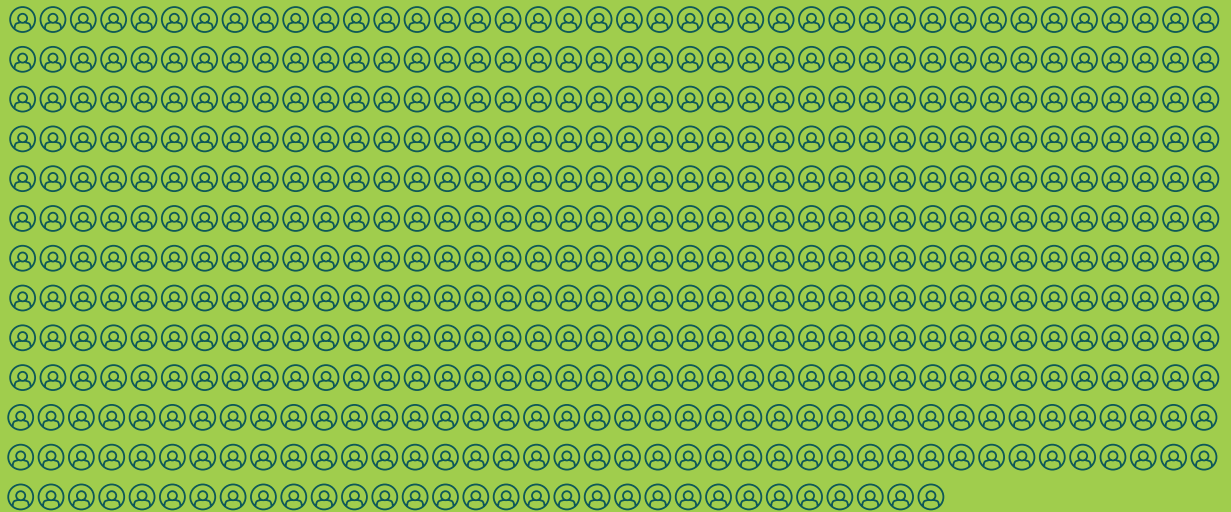
was distributed to Georgia's children and families by DCSS.



## Child Support Collections in FFY 2019

# 293,768

parents were under a court order for child support in Georgia, compared to 300,929 in FFY 2018.



# 511,194

children were financially supported as a result of these orders\*

\*Each icon to the right represents 1,000 children

## Parental Accountability Court program



# 2,508

children received increased support in State Fiscal Year 2019 (SFY 2019) from parents who participated in the Parental Accountability Court program, compared to 1,948 in SFY 2018



# \$1.1 million

the amount in financial support collected in SFY 2019 from parents who participated in the Parental Accountability Court program

## TANF, SNAP and Medicaid support children's health and economic well-being

*[Programs provided by the Division of Family & Children Services]*

DFCS helps children in low-income families access healthy meals, medical care and stable housing.

Children and families exhibiting the greatest need can benefit from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance program if their parents participate in qualified work activities. This program is also available to children in the care of relatives.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) ensures children have access to nourishing meals that support the development of their brains and bodies.

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

For more information on adults in the TANF program, see **Page 22**. For more on adults

**924,170**

number of children who benefited from the SNAP program in SFY 2019

**141,346**

average number of children who received medical coverage through Peach Care each month

**1,172,456**

average number of children who received Medicaid each month

**8,365**

monthly average number of child-only TANF benefits

receiving SNAP benefits, see **Page 24**. More on families receiving Medicaid coverage can be found on **Page 26**.

## 33 percent of children in foster care placed with a relative

*[Program provided by the Division of Family & Children Services]*

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.

**99,000**

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


**6,645**

children in foster care were placed with a relative in SFY 2019, which represents 33% of children in foster care in SFY 2019

To see how the Kinship Care program provides support to caregivers, see **Page 28**.





A photograph of a woman and a young girl reading a book together. The woman is on the left, smiling broadly, and the girl is on the right, also smiling. They are both looking at the book. The image has a light blue and green color overlay.

SERVING CHILDREN IN GEORGIA

# Strengthening Children



The Division of Family & Children Services (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 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.

The DFCS TeenWork program partners with employers across the state to provide job opportunities for teenagers to help them gain valuable employment experience.

The Division's Afterschool Care Program offers children in foster care and children with working parents a safe place to go after the school day ends to receive tutoring services, meals and social and recreational opportunities that support their overall well-being.

## Connected by 21 moves forward with plan to extend support for foster youth from age 18 to 21

*[Program provided by the Division of Family & Children Services]*

Youth aging out of foster care who do not receive appropriate services and support demonstrate higher rates of homelessness, unemployment, poverty, criminal behavior and dependence on public assistance. Former foster youth who are male are four times more likely than their peers to get arrested. To address these statistics, DFCS worked in partnership with the state legislature and its federal partners to create the Connected by 21 (CB21) program and help youth who have experienced foster care get their best shot at a good life.

CB21 seeks to ensure youth who age out of foster care are equipped with the same tools and opportunities afforded to their peers who are not in foster care by providing an extended medical, financial and educational support system for young adults until they reach age 21.

Young people who are still in foster care on their 18th birthday and who meet the federal requirements listed below are eligible to remain in foster care until their 21st birthday. The young person must:

- Be working toward secondary education or in a program leading to an equivalent credential; or
- Be enrolled in an institution that provides post-secondary or vocational education; or participating in a program or activity designed to promote or remove barriers to employment; or
- Be employed for at least 80 hours per month; or
- Have a medical condition that renders the young person incapable of engaging in these activities.

DFCS works closely with older youth in care to educate them on their options and the resources available to them as they transition to adulthood. Youth who choose to leave foster care will continue to have access to services, but they may not have access to the additional resources and independent living options that youth enrolled in CB21 do.

CB21 was authorized through state legislation in 2018. In State Fiscal Year 2019 (SFY 2019), DFCS finalized its CB21 implementation plan and worked to develop training curriculum for staff.

DFCS will implement the program by 2022.

## TeenWork prepares youth for future career opportunities

*[Program provided by the Division of Family & Children Services]*

The Georgia TeenWork Internship Program provides job readiness training and youth employment opportunities to Georgia's youth in foster care and other at-risk youth. The program is supported by partnerships with Georgia employers and provides soft skills training, job readiness preparation and hands-on work experience during the summer months. The TeenWork program serves youth age 15 to 18.

**192**

youth participated in the summer work program, earning valuable on-the-job experience to prepare them for future careers

**95**

employers participated in the program, providing 110 work sites for teens to gain hands-on work experience

**308**

youth attended job readiness training

## Afterschool program engages children in science, technology, engineering, arts and math opportunities

*[Program provided by the Division of Family & Children Services]*

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 2019, agencies funded through the Afterschool Care Program provided STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) based opportunities which allowed children to learn about 21st century career and educational pathways. The children had a chance to showcase STEAM projects they developed throughout the year at the DFCS Afterschool Care Program Annual STEAM Exhibition held in Macon on July 12, 2019.

Partners like the Boys & Girls Clubs have programs across the state and served the majority of the program's 31,340 youth in SFY 2019.

**31,340**

youth were served through the Afterschool Care Program

SERVING CHILDREN IN GEORGIA

# Safeguarding Children



The Division of Family & Children Services (DFCS) is charged with investigating claims of abuse and neglect and making recommendations to ensure children are safe. In most cases, removing a child from his/her home can be avoided by providing a family additional resources or by working with relatives to stabilize the family and ensure the child's safety.

In instances when a child must be removed from the home, the state works with thousands of dedicated foster families who willingly provide a temporary home to children in need.

The Department's Residential Child Care Licensing Unit is also responsible for licensing and overseeing residential child care institutions to ensure children who are placed in foster homes and residential facilities are safe in their environment.

# Child Protective Services investigates 41,677 claims of abuse, neglect; number of youth in foster care decreases 3 percent

*[Services provided by the Division of Family & Children Services]*

## CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

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

### DID YOU KNOW?

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.

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 Action

### FOSTER CARE PROGRAM

DFCS named Gracie Kennard of Loganville as its Foster Caregiver of the Year in SFY 2019. Each year, the Division selects a caregiver who has demonstrated their devotion to kids in care by consistently going above and beyond to improve the lives of children facing challenging issues.

Kennard started volunteering as a foster parent more than 10 years ago to help address a shortage of foster homes in Gwinnett County, particularly with teenage children.

In addition to ensuring the children's safety and health, Kennard advocates for visits with

biological family members to keep youth connected to their families. She also maintains relationships with other foster parents and arranges transportation and supervision for kids in care.

A case manager who works with Kennard said: "She is devoted and always on call, including in the middle of the night, to assist the Division by accepting challenging-to-place children until a more appropriate placement is secured."

Kennard served as foster parent to 340 children at the time she was presented this award.



As a result of CPS intervention on cases that do not require removal from the home,

# 10,955

children were able to remain in their homes after their families received shelter, food, parenting classes or health referrals in State Fiscal Year 2019 (SFY 2019).



## CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES



# 41,677

reports of abuse or neglect of children were investigated by CPS staff in SFY 2019



# 14

median number\* of cases a CPS worker manages at a time \* 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.

## FOSTER CARE



# 20,462

children were in Georgia's foster care system on average at any point in time, representing a decrease of over 3% from SFY 2018

# 1,429

children were adopted by new families and given permanent homes, representing an increase of over 17% from SFY 2018

# 1,617

children were in foster care at the end of SFY 2019 and were available for adoption

# 22

is the median\* caseload for a foster care caseworker

# Residential Child Care Licensing provides regulation for 321 Georgia child care facilities in SFY 2019

*[Service provided by the Department of Human Services, Office of Inspector General]*

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 their 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.

## DID YOU KNOW?

You can search the DHS database of licensed child care facilities at [dhs.ga.gov](https://dhs.ga.gov).

# 321

facilities were regulated by RCCL in SFY 2019

# 13

new licenses were approved for child caring institutions

# 8

new licenses were approved for child placing agencies

# 1

new maternity home received licensure

## Top 5

The Top 5 reasons facilities received citations in SFY 2019:

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





# Serving Taxpayers in Georgia

The Department is committed to being responsible to taxpayers. The DHS Office of Inspector General's Benefits Integrity and Recovery Unit, Human Resources Personnel Action Self-Service System and DHS Transparency Initiative data dashboards all serve to increase government transparency and ensure responsible stewardship of taxpayer funds.

## HOW WE SERVE TAXPAYERS IN GEORGIA

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## Benefit Integrity and Recovery Unit investigates fraud claims with established value in excess of \$8 million

*[Program provided by the Department of Human Services, Office of Inspector General]*

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 and Staff Development.

BIRU was ranked second in the southeast in Federal Fiscal Year 2018 (FFY 2018) for the amount of collections recovered in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

## HR PASS reduces recruitment costs and time to hire

*[Program of the Department of Human Services, Office of Human Resources]*

In Summer 2019, DHS was recognized by the nation's premier human resources association for the agency's innovative use of technology in the implementation of a state-of-the-art applicant tracking system. The system, called HR PASS (Human Resources Personnel Action Self-Service System) was selected as an award finalist for the Atlanta Business Chronicle and Society for Human Resource Management-Atlanta HR Excellence Awards.

This is the second time the Department has been recognized for its use of technology in the human

### DID YOU KNOW?

You can **report waste, fraud or abuse** at 1 (844) 694-2347 or [dhs.georgia.gov/benefit-integrity-and-recovery-unit](https://dhs.georgia.gov/benefit-integrity-and-recovery-unit).

# \$8,396,805

value of established fraud claims in Federal Fiscal Year 2019 (FFY 2019). This number is up 6.6% over FFY 2018.

# 8,085

investigations were completed in FFY 2019

# 2,985

claims were established from the investigations in FFY 2019

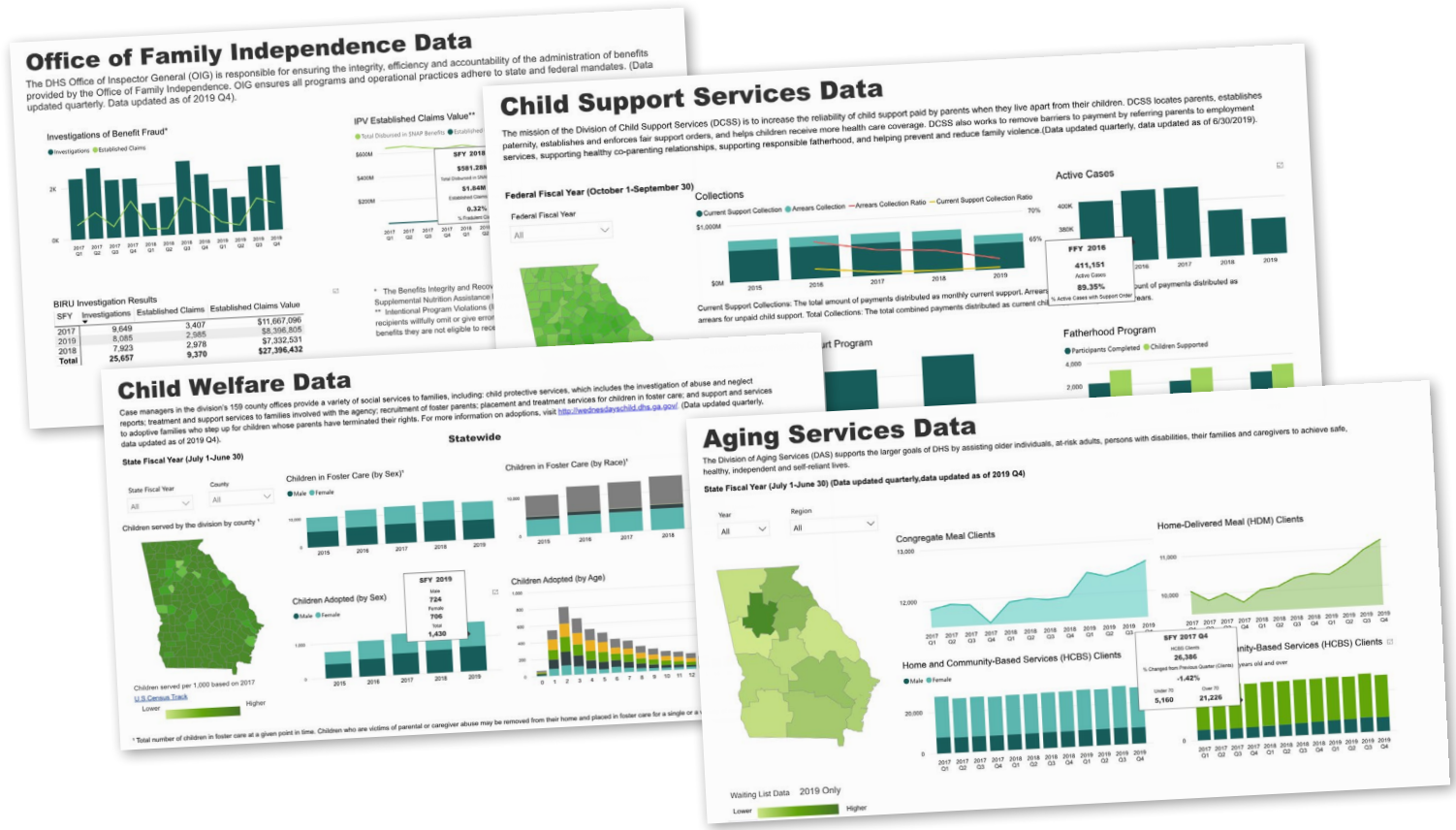
# \$2,813

average fraud claim amount in FFY 2019

resources arena. In November of 2018, NEOGOV Inc. presented DHS with the "Best Managed Insight and Onboard Implementation" award for the successful implementation of HR PASS.

The system decreases the time to recruit qualified staff, increases transparency in personnel actions and streamlines human resource processes for Georgia's largest state agency.

In State Fiscal Year 2019, the implementation of HR PASS cut time to hire from more than six months in the previous year to 78 days, saving taxpayers from an expensive and lengthy recruitment and onboarding process.



# DHS publishes interactive data dashboards to increase transparency and keep partners, public informed

[Project provided by the Department of Human Services]

In March 2019, the Department launched interactive online dashboards, making data associated with the Department's programs easily accessible to the public. The dashboards offer increased transparency to the state's work and remove barriers to accessing public information.

Users can view data from all three DHS divisions and the Office of Inspector General. Measurements of the Department's work include:

- Meals and other services provided to seniors
- Adult Protective Services and Guardianship cases
- Child support collections
- Participation in Parental Accountability Court and Fatherhood programs
- Foster care and adoption data
- Child welfare, family preservation and support services cases
- Families and households receiving benefits through eligibility programs
- Investigations of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program overpayment claims

In 2020, the data dashboards will continue to be enhanced and improved to help taxpayers, government agencies and community leaders get easy access to information needed for strategic planning and policymaking.

To view the dashboards, visit [dhs.ga.gov](http://dhs.ga.gov). Click "About" then "DHS Data."

# Leadership



**Gov. Brian P. Kemp**

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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

## 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. – 2:00 p.m.

### **CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES (CPS)** | 1-855-422-4453

Statewide toll-free number for all reports of child abuse and neglect, 24 hours per day, 7 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](http://fostergeorgia.com) or [itsmyturnnow.dhs.ga.gov](http://itsmyturnnow.dhs.ga.gov).

Call center hours are Monday - Thursday: 8 a.m. - 6 p.m., Friday: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 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. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday unless otherwise noted.

## **ON THE WEB**

Department of Human Services: [dhs.ga.gov](http://dhs.ga.gov)

Division of Aging Services: [aging.ga.gov](http://aging.ga.gov)

Division of Child Support Services: [childsupport.ga.gov](http://childsupport.ga.gov)

Division of Family & Children Services: [dfcs.ga.gov](http://dfcs.ga.gov)



**Georgia Department of Human Services**

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