

Charlottesville Department of Social Services Advisory Board

ANNUAL REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

The Charlottesville Department of Social Services (CDSS) Advisory Board is pleased to present its Annual 2025 Report to City Council. We appreciate Council’s support and the opportunity to share these updates over the past fiscal year.

Vision & Mission: (CDSS) remains committed to joining with the community to meet essential needs, promote self-sufficiency, and enhance quality of life.

The Department of Social Services consists of three Divisions that work collaboratively to ensure that the citizens of Charlottesville receive eligible benefits and service programs.

Major Programs Include But Are Not Limited To:

<u>Benefit Programs</u>	<u>Services Programs</u>	<u>Administrative Services</u>
Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP)	Child Protective Services (CPS)	Vendor/ Foster Care Payments
Temp Assist. For Needy Families (TANF)	Foster Care Prevention/ In Home	Procurement
Workforce (VIEW/ SNAP E&T)	Foster Care	Reconciliation
Supplemental Nutritional Assist. Program (SNAP)	Adoption	Recruitment
Energy Assist. (LIHEAP/ PIPP)	Fostering Futures	Staff Stabilization
Medical Assistance	Adult Protective Services (APS)	Financial Planning
Aux Grant, General Relief And Refugee Services	CSA/ Title IVE Funding And Administration	Accounting

Local Economic Impact

<u>Programs</u>	<u>Amount (USD)</u>
Medicaid & FAMIS payments to providers	\$99,593,830
SNAP	\$9,847,031
Children’s Services Act (CSA) payments	\$4,986,321
Staff, Administrative & Operations	\$6,585,721
Adoption Assistance payments	\$3,399,764
Title IV-E Foster Care payments	\$257,120
Child Care Subsidy payments	\$1,129,912
TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families)	\$1,389,032
Fostering Futures Foster Care Assistance	\$75,306
Kinship Guardianship Assistance	\$21,051
LIHEAP (Low-Income Home Energy Assist. Program)	\$507,787
Auxiliary Grant payments to providers	\$532,878
Other Purchased Services for clients	\$143,965
Central Service Cost Allocation	\$164,709
VIEW (VA Initiative for Education and Work)	\$132,767
Independent Living Services	\$55,303
Refugee Assistance	\$20,133
General Relief	\$3,792
State/Federal Funding	\$128,495,585
Department Local Match	\$3,981,861
Local Match for Children’s Services Act (CSA)	\$1,855,705
Total Expenditures for FY2024	\$134,333,151

Key Program Updates

Benefits: Federal and state mandated Programs to help low income families and individuals meet basic needs for food, shelter, and medical care.

- SNAP changes include new matching administrative funds, altered eligibility, and stricter work requirements.
- Medicaid changes introduce new tax restrictions, community engagement/work requirements, and a revised renewal process effective October 2026.

Services: Federal and State mandated Programs that provide assessment, intervention, and case management services for at risk youths and adults.

- Kinship placements are a success—CDSS reports 55% placement rate (well above the state average of 22%).
- The Safe Kids, Strong Families Initiative has launched a \$1M study on systemic reforms.
- FY2026 budget approved Adult Protective Services (APS) position has been filled.

Administrative: Responsible for planning, budgeting and fiscal management, program coordination and evaluation, and personnel administration.

- Vendor Payments transitioned from Harmony to the Kinship platform fully, however with conflict due to unexpected challenges.
- Team is now exploring expansion of the City's Umbrella system with I.T. to elevate future platform concerns that contribute to payment processing delays.
- Staffing vacancy rate is currently 2.7%, a positive indicator compared to other localities.

Challenges Ahead

Service Division: Referrals are rising, foster care caseloads up 50% (108 children in care), APS reports increased 4.8%. Staff burnout and compliance pressures are growing, specifically in the funding unit in which the caseload volume has greatly increased.

Benefits Division: SNAP and Medicaid policy changes present concern for increased workloads and compliance risks. Cost shifting from federal to state/local governments due to Error Rates poses budget challenges. New work and engagement requirements will require additional staff training, case monitoring and follow up by community members applying for and receiving benefits.

Safety and Security: Implementation of new lobby technology, a security officer and lobby restructuring would be helpful to improve the safety of our staff and customers, while increasing work efficiency.

Succession Planning: The department has a multi-generational work force. There is a recognized need for succession planning and the board recommends that this be a priority for the new director. In calendar year 2024, the department had 4 retirements. 10% of the department's workforce is eligible to retire in 2025 based on years of service and/or age. This includes 4 out of 6 Benefit Programs Supervisors.

Looking Forward: CDSS will continue adapting to evolving State and Federal policies, focus on improving service delivery, and remain committed to transparency and innovation in meeting community needs. It will be very important to ensure that staff members have the support needed to successfully perform job duties in a safe environment.

Respectfully, submitted by the Charlottesville Department of Social Services Advisory Board Members:

- Cherry Stewart, Chair
- Tyler Dick, Vice Chair
- Darlene Ayars-Feazell
- Avan Batten
- Omwira Nkere
- Brian Pinkston, City Council
- Rebecca Schmidt
- Toya Trager