

## Human Services

### Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Social Services is to prepare citizens to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency and assist them in attaining an outstanding quality of life. All program services pursue this mission through the following key business areas, which are provided by both city-operated programs and contracted services:

- Education and Employment;
- Temporary Financial Assistance;
- Protective Services;
- Building Life Skills and Strong Families.

### *Education and Employment*

Human Services recipients are assisted through various activities, programs, and services to obtain the education and training needed to secure employment. This allows the recipient and their family to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of self-sufficiency in the provision of health care, food, clothing and shelter. Virginia's Initiative for Employment (VIEW) Not Welfare establishes a two-year time limit on Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) while recipients are involved in activities to prepare them to secure employment.

### *Temporary Financial Assistance*

The categories include Food Stamps, TANF, Medicaid, FAMIS, General Relief, AFDC-FC, Diversionary Assistance, State and Local Hospitalization Program, Auxiliary Grant, Emergency Assistance, Energy Assistance and Refugee Resettlement.

### *Protective Services*

Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services, Foster Care Services and Adoption Services comprise the Protective Services Division. Social Workers receive and investigate reports of possible abuse or neglect and investigate custody and visitation cases. They are also responsible for the recruitment, training, and monitoring of Foster Care Homes as well as the recruitment and screening of adoptive parents through home visits.

### *Building Life Skills and Strong Families*

Manassas Park citizens will have the knowledge, skills and positive encouragement necessary to identify and meet their personal needs and the needs of their dependents; to manage their daily life, plan their future and be protected from physical abuse, neglect, and threats to safety, including:

- Provision of residential and outreach services as ordered by local courts;
- Assessment, case management of, and payment of residential and treatment services for at-risk youth, in collaboration with the Juvenile Probation Unit, Schools, and Community Services Board;
- Provision of therapeutic counseling both individual and family, and training in life skills, decision-making, and conflict resolution, as well as other programs;
- Provision of follow-up services for youth and their families;
- Provision of adult mentors, tutors, student internships, summer programs and so on for youth;
- Provision of intervention, case management, and shelter services for the homeless, including rent assistance and transportation;
- Oversight of distribution of government funds to local programs;
- Educational courses in nutrition, budgeting, and so forth;
- Provision of domestic violence intervention and shelter services.

The Department works collaboratively with city departments, non-profit agencies, local, state and federal governments to provide clients with a continuum of services and resources. Using

such an array of options, staff can respond to each individual's and family's unique strengths and needs, positively impacting their overall quality of life.

## Department Personnel and Organization

The Department of Social Services (DSS) employs 14 people, serving in the following capacities.

- Director
- 4 Case Workers
- 1 Social Work Supervisor
- 4.5 Eligibility Workers
- Office Manager
- 1.5 Receptionist/  
Administrative Assistants
- Interpreter

To provide the optimal level of services, the department is divided into three divisions: Services, Eligibility and Administrative.

### *Services Division*

Overseer of child and adult protective services, foster care and adoption, educational achievement, and family stabilization initiatives.

### *Eligibility Division*

Administers temporary financial assistance programs such as Medicaid, Food Stamps, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Emergency Assistance and Employment Training.

### *Administrative Division*

Responsible for the planning, organizing, setting objectives, formulating policy, directing and evaluating benefits, services and programs according to federal, state and local legislative rules, regulations, and policies.

The administrative division has the responsibility for the preparation and justification of the operating budget.

In conjunction with the services and eligibility divisions, the administrative division projects resource requirements and works with the local Social Services Advisory Board to keep it informed and seek necessary guidance and direction. The division coordinates community resources and monitors social, economic, and demographic trends in the community. Further, it maintains effective communication between the agency and other community programs and services, local government and the State Department of Social Services.

### *Client Base*

The majority of all clients are representative of populations we are mandated to serve by law. Others, like our youth population, are targeted to prevent the development of at-risk behaviors and dependency on public assistance programs.

It is important to note that any resident could become a client if he

or she was to experience a financial or medical crisis, unexpected unemployment, life-altering disability, hardship in caring for their family, a natural disaster or fire, or needed education and/or support services.

### *Benefits of Social Services*

By utilizing all resources, the Department provides citizens with the skills and opportunities required to meet the basic needs critical to achieving self-sufficiency. These elements include:

- Safe, affordable housing;
- Education and job skills;
- Adequate, continuous income;
- Transportation;
- Medical and mental health care;
- Development of life, social, and daily decision-making skills.

In doing so, these programs directly enhance the city's economy, protect public safety, decrease the need for more expensive programs, help families remain together and care for their dependent members, while transforming today's youth into tomorrow's productive adult population.

### *Funding*

The Department of Social Services is supported primarily by federal and

state funds. The funds are provided in whole or part to allow mandated services and benefits set forth in the federal regulations/law and the state policy/law to be met by the Departments of Social Services.

Local governments are required by regulations/law to provide the services funded by the federal or state governments.

Approximately 65% to 70% of the cost of operating the Department of Social Services is borne by the federal and state governments.

## Strategic Direction

The most significant strategic issues confronting the Department during upcoming years include:

- Increasing state mandates governing services for juvenile offenders, who are requiring more residential

and long-term intervention services.

- Increased aging population.
- Increasing demands of hard-to-serve clients who have multiple problems but few resources.
- The need for programs promoting healthy youth development and prevention of at-risk behaviors, including skills development classes for parents.
- Development of collaborative regional partnerships with other local governments and nonprofit agencies to stabilize current programs, address gaps in services, and processes.
- Need to identify opportunities for cost sharing and/or garnering additional resources to offset the lack of adequate federal, state, and local funding.

## Goals, Objectives & Action Strategies

### Goal H1

#### Maintain a well educated and trained staff of professionals

##### Objective H1.1

Ensure compliance with all mandates and required deadlines, while increasing the staff's knowledge and skills, improving morale and job satisfaction, and recruiting and retaining well-qualified staff.

Action Strategy H1.1.1 Provide staff with necessary training on program mandates, eligibility criteria, systems training, new and innovation program models, accordingly.

Action Strategy H1.1.2 Continue to provide cross-training opportunities for staff.

Action Strategy H1.1.3 Continue to hold joint planning meetings among staff.

Action Strategy H1.1.4 Develop an Employee Development and Recognition Program with mentoring, job swapping, and internships.

Action Strategy H1.1.5 Maximize use of Virginia Institute for Social Services Training Activities (VISSTA) training center and expertise.

Action Strategy H1.1.6 Fill all staff vacancies on a timely basis.

Action Strategy H1.1.7 Implement a state recommended "pay for skill attainment" program, creating a two-tiered certification and pay system for eligibility and social work staff.

Action Strategy H1.1.8 Monitor staff caseloads to ensure appropriate and timely processing of applications and payment of benefits..

Action Strategy H1.1.9 Collaborate with the state to develop functional, user-friendly computer systems.

## **Goal H2**

### **Maximize Use of State and Federal Funding**

#### **Objective H2.1**

Increase revenue reimbursement from federal and state funding for local human service programs by 25%, increase revenue for program services overall by 10%, increase services available to citizens by 10%.

Action Strategy H2.1.1      Establish a Revenue Maximization Program to educate human service agencies about eligible programs.

Action Strategy H2.1.2      Pursue funding for Independent Living Program administration.

## **Goal H3**

### **Increase collaborative efforts to maximize utilization of program and financial resources**

#### **Objective H3.1**

Increase effectiveness of program services, while decreasing duplication of services, increase revenue for program services overall by 5%, increase number of clients served by programs by 5%, develop universal process for needs assessments and outcome measurements

Action Strategy H3.1.1      Increase shared ownership and funding among local governments for Juvenile Justice Programs

Action Strategy H3.1.2      Increase shared ownership and funding among local governments and non-profit agencies for human service programs.

Action Strategy H3.1.3      Increase collaborative efforts with Manassas Park City Schools, Parks & Recreation, and the Police Department to coordinate, develop and implement needed programs.

Action Strategy H3.1.4      Advocate for legislation mandating and funding Mental Health Services for youth.

Action Strategy H3.1.5      Pursue opportunities for cost-sharing and/or garnering additional resources to offset the lack of adequate federal, state, local funding.