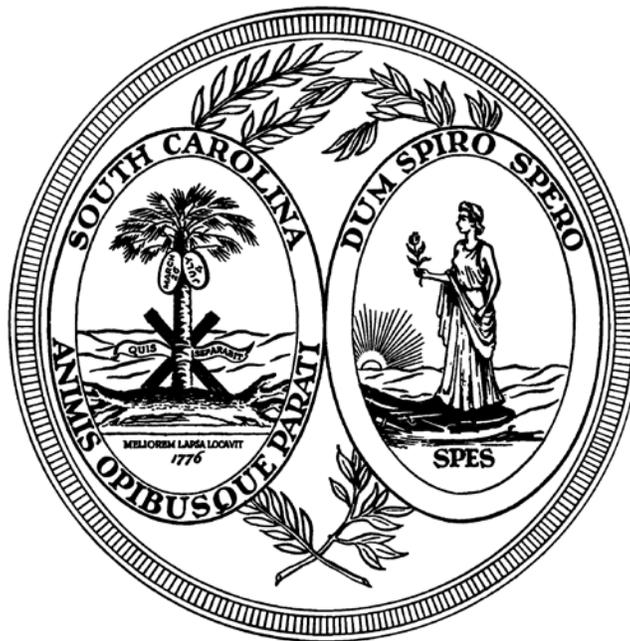


South Carolina Department of Social Services

Annual Accountability Report Fiscal Year 2003 – 2004



September 2004

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State Director

Accountability Report Transmittal Form

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South Carolina Department of Social Services

2003 – 2004 Annual Accountability Report

Section I: Executive Summary

DSS began FY 2003-04 with fewer resources and new challenges. For example, in November 2003, Governor Mark Sanford signed Executive Order 2003-26, transferring all functions of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) to the South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS). As the lead agency for child care, SCDSS assumed the responsibility for:

1. Coordinating all current state child care expenditures and programs to increase the efficiency and impact of these resources consistent with the state's child care priorities.
2. Administering all new funding sources of child care funds and programs to leverage the state's financial and programmatic resources for maximum efficiency and impact.
3. Administering the South Carolina Child Care Coordinating Council in utilizing statewide child care expertise and interest groups to share information, exchange ideas, provide input on state plans and develop and coordinate strategies to improve the child care system.
4. Developing a statewide system for monitoring and providing technical assistance to child care providers that makes optimal use of the state's resources to improve the quality of child care.
5. Developing a state child care strategic plan that delineates goals, objectives, strategies, timelines, principal partners, and resources to support and expand accessible quality child care. The plan builds on existing planning initiatives and is submitted annually to the Governor by July 1.

SCDSS also assumed administration of SSBG. These federal funds are provided to public and private agencies/organizations to offer a continuum of critical services such as child and adult protection, child care, and home-based services that cost effectively strengthen and support individuals and families in order to meet required national goals.

Implementation of the MAP Commission Recommendations

Based on the final recommendations of the MAP Commission in October 2003, the director established workgroups to implement changes in agency structure and operations.

Priorities for agency reorganization: The director clarified priorities to the agency reorganization workgroup. These priorities were: 1) to continue to provide direct service at the county level or regional level, ensuring that clients can readily access DSS services, 2) identify existing regional configurations, such as judicial circuits, to use in organizing support or indirect services, 3) not to create additional layers of management, and 4) work within current staffing levels.

The regional workgroup: recommended the establishment of four regions/areas for the agency's four regional programs. Each of the four regional programs had their own regional structure, and for three of the four programs, four regions would represent a reduction in the number of regions.

The goal was to establish administrative consistency by consolidating space, staff and workloads. The new structure would encourage more collaboration and efficiency among programs, including the co-location of staff where possible and appropriate, and the sharing of administrative resources with each other and the counties.

The county subgroup: recommended organizing the counties along judicial circuit lines, with one existing county director in each circuit acting as a "coordinator" of certain indirect services. All county directors will continue to report directly to the Deputy for Program Policy and Operations. Certain indirect services such as human resources, business management, legal, claims etc. will be performed across county lines in that circuit. For example, one county director in a circuit would coordinate legal services for all the counties in that circuit.

Issues like location were decided on a circuit-by-circuit basis due to the differing needs around the state. Implementation has not been abrupt, but rather has been the result of a deliberate and careful planning process involving every county and region. While the director anticipated that this process would ensure that resources would be organized in the best possible way to meet current economic challenges, the number one reason remained the improvement of service to agency clients and to the public. Creating an infrastructure that works during hard times was a goal, but so too was the creation of a logical framework for the agency long-term.

Administrative reorganization: The director reduced the number of deputy directors from five to three and consolidated the offices of county operations and program policy, which improved communication and the timely delivery of technical assistance from the state office to the counties. In addition, constituent services, governmental affairs, and public affairs were reduced from nine employees to three and were consolidated into one department within the Office of the General Counsel.

Transfer of programs to DSS: In addition to internal reorganization, the director worked with the Governor and the director of DHHS to identify better ways of using existing resources. The transfer of the Child Care Development Fund to DSS from DHHS stemmed from the decision to place it under a manager who is also responsible for child care licensing - a regulatory function and a legislatively mandated responsibility of DSS. This move offers opportunities to realize efficiencies and to enhance technical assistance to facilities and to improve regulatory oversight. This is intended to lead to greater safety and better quality of care for children without increased state resources.

Planning and Quality Assurance: Existing resources were redirected to create this unit, responsible for helping the agency deliver high quality and consistent services across the state. The division coordinates planning for the agency, provides analyses of operations and services across programs, offices, and counties. This division also assists in planning for improvement.

Efficiency through technology: The agency is improving the efficiency of required data reporting to the federal government. Through improved use of technology, two employees will conduct federally required data collection processes that have been performed by seven staff. In addition, most paper management reports are being converted to electronic reports, and management data and informational memoranda are now sent to state and county staff through email.

Reduction in force and mandatory furlough: In response to a state mandated budget reduction, the agency implemented a mandatory 10 day furlough for all staff, and implemented a Reduction in Force which eliminated 252 positions.

Other cost-saving steps taken by the agency: The director instituted reductions in travel expenditures and communication costs. SFY 03-04 travel expenditures are running at \$2.5 million less than last fiscal year. Communication costs for phones, pagers and fax lines cost the agency \$500,000 less than last fiscal year. (The savings are a combination of state and federal funds; as the agency matches all its state dollars, the actual state savings are less.)

Improvements in the payroll process resulted in better tracking of payroll changes, ensuring less chance for errors. Additionally, the Department focused on increased efficiencies through the revamping of the contracts process and the elimination of multiple cell phone service providers while also undertaking the automation of the Interdepartmental Transfer process. We have consolidated state office staff and some regional staff into fewer locations, saving approximately \$750,000.

The most recent statewide financial audit resulted in zero findings for Statewide Financial Statements which is an indication of the improved fiscal management.

1. Mission and Values:

The mission of the South Carolina Department of Social Services is to ensure the safety and health of children and adults who cannot protect themselves, and to assist those in need of food assistance and temporary financial assistance while transitioning into employment.

Programs:

Child Welfare	The program administered to ensure the safety and health of children. This system of services includes Child Protective Services, Foster Care, Managed Treatment, Adoption Services, and Day Care Regulatory and Licensing.
Adult Protection	The program administered to ensure the safety and health of vulnerable adults.
Family Independence	The program that assists those in need of temporary financial and employment-related assistance.
Family Nutrition	A network of food assistance programs that improve the health and well-being of children and adults who cannot provide adequate nutrition for themselves.
Youth Programs	The programs that provide services, to adolescents ages 10-19, for the prevention of primary and secondary pregnancies.
Child Support Enforcement	The program that enforces orders for child support, establishes paternity for children when paternity is an issue, and provides “locate” services when the whereabouts of a parent is unknown.

2. Key Strategic Goals

I. Child Welfare

A. Safety

1. First and foremost, protect children from abuse and neglect.
2. Maintain children safely in their own homes whenever possible and appropriate.

B. Permanency

3. Ensure that children have permanency and stability in their living situations.
4. Preserve the continuity of family relationships and connections for children.

C. Child and Family Well-Being (In-home and Out-of-home)

5. Enhance the capacity of families to provide for their children's needs.
6. Ensure that children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.
7. Ensure that children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

II. Adult Protection

1. Reduce recurrence of abuse/neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults (person 18 or older who is either subjected to or at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation).

Domestic Violence

2. To ensure that safe emergency shelter, appropriate counseling, and preventive services are accessible to victims of spouse abuse, their children, and offenders.

III. Family Independence (TANF)

1. Expedite Family Independence (FI) services to eligible children and families.
2. Maximize number of clients placed in employment.

IV. Family Nutrition

1. Maximize eligible families' access to the Food Stamp program.
2. Maximize eligible children and adults participating in the Emergency Food Assistance Program, Commodity Supplemental Food Program, Seniors Farmers Market Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, After-school Snack Program, Emergency Shelter Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program.

V. Youth Programs

1. Reduce the incidence of adolescent pregnancy among program participants.

VI. Child Support Enforcement

1. Establish paternity in a timely fashion for children who are born out of wedlock.
2. Make certain that children with one or both parents absent from the home receive adequate financial support from their absent parent(s).
3. Establish medical insurance coverage whenever such coverage is available at reasonable cost through the non-custodial parent's or custodial parent's employer.

3. Opportunities and Barriers

Opportunities

- Recent statutory modifications increased the capacity of DSS to use all historical information on a family, thereby enhancing the assessment of safety and risk for children.
- There is a continued and ongoing emphasis in agency policy and practice on the integration of safety and risk assessment principles into the intake and investigative/assessment processes.
- Joint training for county directors, supervisors, and attorneys to enhance the effectiveness of treatment and concurrent planning through the fall of 2004.
- DSS, the Children's Law Office, and the Bench Bar Committee are collaborating to provide training for judges and attorneys to address delays in establishing permanency for children.
- Implementation of new strategies for recruitment, licensing and training of resource families should improve placement stability.
- Intensive technical assistance in the counties where children are in foster care for one year with a plan of return home or adoption. This is in 11 counties.
- Collaboration with Family Independence for Foster Care youth 16 to 21 years old to include educational and vocational assessment and provision of job skills services.
- The two-state initiative between Georgia and South Carolina (Tale of Two States) is addressing barriers to cross-jurisdictional adoptive placements.
- There is a focus on enhancing educational achievement and self-sufficiency for children in the child welfare system.
- Responsibility has been designated to a specific individual at the state level to coordinate the development and implementation of strategies to address barriers to educational achievement.
- Refurbished computers have been distributed to foster homes with school age children through a partnership of DSS, the Children's Law Office, and the Foster Parents Association.
- Work groups internal and external to the Department are exploring ways to collaborate and address budget cuts in services and resources available for parents and children in the child welfare system.
- The newly organized Child Welfare Advisory Committee merges existing task forces and steering committees to provide an integrated approach to planning.
- The Casey Family-to-Family model, which focuses on child welfare strategies, is expanding statewide.
- TANF funding is providing the State an opportunity to bring the Family Independence stipend to an amount that approaches the southeast average.
- Recent statutory changes have created the opportunity for more child care centers to participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
- Increase in the amount of federal funding provided for benefits for the Seniors Farmer's Market Program.

Barriers

- The population of 13-18 year olds in foster care continues to increase. Since FY 98-99, the number of teens in foster care has increased thirty-six percent. Due to significant budget reductions, DSS will monitor placements in foster care to determine when children are

entering care inappropriately because of gaps in services from state agencies other than DSS.

- The agency needs to increase permanency options to include independent living services, reunification, and adoptive options.
- Group homes continue to struggle with the lack of placements from all state agencies.
- Barriers to timeliness in adoptions include a lack of implementation of concurrent planning, insufficient involvement of parents in the development of treatment plans, inefficiency of some attorneys and insufficient court time.
- Close monitoring of the impact of the reduction in APS staff due to budget reductions in and the trend of early retirements is necessary.
- Continual assessment of the agency's budget cuts in the services for abused and neglected children and vulnerable adults is critical.
- About one third of the Human Services Division staff is eligible for early retirement.
- Assess and evaluate current training program in light of budget reduction to include the method of delivery (i.e. online training, video conferencing) and address cross training issues with staff (Child Welfare Staff trained to handle APS cases).
- South Carolina is number one in the nation for women murdered by their male partners.

4. Major Achievements

A recent federal review of South Carolina's child welfare system found that:

- The child welfare system of South Carolina exceeded national standards for safety.
- The child welfare system of South Carolina exceeded national standards for incidence of child abuse and neglect in foster care.
- The child welfare system of South Carolina exceeded national standards for foster care re-entries.
- The child welfare system of South Carolina exceeded national standards for length of time to achieve reunification.
- The child welfare system of South Carolina passed 5 of the 7 systemic factors which included:
 - Statewide Information System
 - Quality Assurance System
 - Training
 - Agency Responsiveness to the Community; and
 - Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention
- Recent data shows the state is close to achieving the federal standard for stability in foster care.

Other achievements include:

- The number of youth in foster care receiving post-educational services has increased from 20 to 163.
- Increase in the number of TPR's and adoption finalizations.
- South Carolina is one of the first states to provide Medicaid coverage for foster youth who exit foster care after age 18.
- Implemented the principles of family to family statewide hence a subsequent increase in the number of foster homes.

- A contract with Clemson to provide Food Stamp outreach activities throughout the state was continued. The Clemson University project includes formal partnerships with local community organizations and faith based organizations in the upstate.
- Hunger in low-income families was reduced by increasing food stamp participation among eligible households. South Carolina currently serves 86% of eligible households in the State.
- Implemented the Commodity Supplemental Food Program that provides monthly food assistance to 4,000 seniors age 60 and older in 5 counties.
- Increased the number of seniors eligible to participate in the Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program by 23%.
- Received the assistance of over 2,400 volunteers, over 16,000 volunteer service hours, and approximately \$150,000 in cash and in-kind donations.

5. How is the accountability report used to improve organizational performance?

At DSS, the accountability report primarily has been used as a one-time report to document agency results at the end of the year. We are changing the way we do business, and the report will no longer be a document for staff to complete each September. Programs and administrative systems will be continuously analyzed and reviewed, with a goal of continuous improvement and increased efficiencies.

Section II: Business Overview

At SCDSS, we serve customers of all ages and from all walks of life. We have customers who want our services, customers who need our services such as children at risk and vulnerable adults, and customers who need but do not necessarily want our services. Because of our diverse customer base, we must be a flexible and agile organization - ready to serve when and where the need arises. Again, in 2003–2004, we met this challenge, successfully serving thousands of South Carolina citizens.

1. Number of Employees

Fiscal Year	Positions	Employees	Vacancies
2003 – 2004	4,637	3,448	1,189
2002 – 2003	4,559	3,854	705
2001 – 2002	4,562	4,206	356
2000 – 2001	5,125	4,831	294

2. Operation Locations – See Appendix A

3. Base Budget Expenditures and Appropriations

Major Budget Categories	01-02 Actual Expenditures		02-03 Actual Expenditures		03-04 Appropriations Act	
	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds
Personal Service	\$152,621,547	\$36,752,712	\$137,428,667.42	\$34,069,204.19	\$131,654,445.00	\$29,822,802.00
Other Operating	117,383,853	14,826,458	98,399,476.00	14,096,369.85	118,350,429.00	6,088,234.00
Special Items	271,948	271,812	871,676.00	871,676.00	1,164,442.00	980,559.00
Permanent Improvements	0	0	0	0	0	0
Case Services	486,942,052	37,742,773	578,883,388.98	37,278,659.19	553,552,739.00	38,963,045.00
Distributions to Subdivisions	10,512,826	113,348	11,732,248.41	246,575.00	13,776,776.00	1,718,333.00
Fringe Benefits	46,369,425	12,406,111	42,012,828.56	12,462,634.31	38,837,017.00	11,266,850.00
Non-recurring	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	\$814,101,651	\$102,113,214	\$869,328,285.37	\$99,025,118.54	\$857,335,848.00	\$88,839,823.00

Other Expenditures

Sources of Funds	02-03 Actual Expenditures	03-04 Actual Expenditures
Supplemental Bills	-0-	-0-
Capital Reserve Funds	-0-	-0-
Bonds	-0-	-0-

Interim Budget Reductions

Total 01-02 Interim Budget Reduction	Total 02-03 Interim Budget Reduction
\$26,779,483.00	\$12,253,946.00

4. Major Program Areas

Program Number and Title	Major Program Area Purpose (Brief)	FY 02-03 Budget Expenditures	FY 03-04 Budget Expenditures	Key Cross References for Financial Results*
I.A,B,C,D, E.4.; II.E.1.;G.1.;G.2., III.	Food Stamps - Cash benefits paid to low income families to enable recipients meet their need for food.	State: 17,458,817.00 Federal: 443,462,748.00 Other: 7,304,321.00 Total: 468,225,886.00 % of Total Budget: 54%	State: 13,427,262.00 Federal: 508,314,768.00 Other: 9,661,170.00 Total: 531,403,200.00 % of Total Budget: 58%	Charts 19, 20, 21, 23
I.A,B,C,D, E.3.,4.; II.E.1,2,3., G.1, L.; III	Family Independence - Cash benefits provided to needy families with children and provides parents with job preparation, training or work experience that will lead to self-sufficiency.	State: 16,695,148.00 Federal: 93,057,658.00 Other: 2,507,104.00 Total: 112,259,910.00 % of Total Budget: 13%	State: 22,831,311.00 Federal: 59,258,386.00 Other: 1,020,128.00 Total: 83,109,825.00 % of Total Budget: 9%	Charts 16, 17, 18
I.A,B,C,D, E.1, III; II.A.2.,B.1,2,3.,I,Q.1,2; III.	Foster Care Program - The planned, temporary placement of a child with a foster family when the needed care cannot be provided by the child's own family.	State: 32,403,929.00 Federal: 35,063,606.00 Other: 27,058,279.00 Total: 94,525,814.00 % of Total Budget: 11%	State: 27,314,265.00 Federal: 30,065,839.00 Other: 24,020,101.00 Total: 81,400,205.00 % of Total Budget: 9%	Tables 1, 2 Charts 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
I.A,B,C,D, E.1;II.A.1,2,3,B.2,I.,O.,Q.1,2; III.	Child Protective and Preventive Services	State: 4,186,876.00 Federal: 33,164,492.00 Other: 9,689,155.00 Total: 47,040,523.00 % of Total Budget: 5%	State: 3,215,880.00 Federal: 32,358,121.00 Other: 7,708,735.00 Total: 43,282,736.00 % of Total Budget: 5%	Tables 1, 2 Charts 1, 2
I.A,B,C,D; II.F; III.	Child Support Enforcement - Establishes paternity for children born out of wedlock and establishes and enforces orders for child support and distributes the support to the custodial parent.	State: 5,499,184.00 Federal: 17,963,304.00 Other: 17,454,482.00 Total: 40,916,970.00 % of Total Budget: 5%	State: 4,649,110.00 Federal: 19,319,808.00 Other: 11,117,575.00 Total: 35,086,493.00 % of Total Budget: 4%	Table 6 Charts 22

Below: List any programs not included above and show the remainder of expenditures by source of funds.

Adoption Services, Adult Protective Services, Homemaker Services, Battered Spouse/Family Violence, Child and Adult Care Food, Summer Food Services, Child Care Development (transferred to DSS in SFY 2003 - 2004), Emergency Food Assistance, Special Items.

Remainder of Expenditures:	State:	22,781,165.00	State: 18,133,342.00
	Federal:	54,092,216.00	Federal: 95,146,463.00
	Other:	29,485,801.00	Other: 28,361,414.00
	Total:	106,359,182.00	Total: 141,641,219.00
		% of Total Budget: 12%	% of Total Budget: 15%

* Key Cross-References are a link to the Category 7 - Business Results. These References provide a Chart number that is included in the 7th section of this document.

5. Key Customer Segments Linked to Key Products/Services - DSS touches the lives of South Carolinians in a variety of ways, at many different levels. Historically, we have been viewed as an agency that only serves low resource families. In reality, we are a potential service provider for any individual in the state. Our key customers are as follows:

Child Welfare

- Children at risk for abuse/neglect and their families
- Foster children and foster parents
- Custodial and non-custodial parents
- Adoptive families, adoptees, birth families
- Day care providers and parents of children in day care
- Youth at risk for parenting or already parenting

Adult Protection

- Vulnerable adults and frail elderly individuals living alone
- Individuals age 60 and over

Domestic Violence

- Shelter Providers
- Batterer Treatment Programs

Family Independence, Family Nutrition, and Youth Programs

- Low-income children, families, seniors age 60 and older and other adults that are functionally impaired
- Families dealing with disability issues that prevent or inhibit self-sufficiency
- Elderly individuals on fixed income
- Hispanic customers and others with language barriers
- After school and summer program youth living in low income areas
- Public and private sector employers
- Education and training providers
- Refugees
- Children in childcare facilities and emergency shelters and parents of children in day care
- Youth at risk for parenting or already parenting

Child Support Enforcement

- Family Independence families
- Custodial and noncustodial parents

5. Key Stakeholders (other than customers)

- Parents, childcare providers, faith-based organizations, general public, etc.

6. Key Suppliers

In serving children and families, it is critical that we maximize opportunities to partner with individuals, agencies, and organizations that can assist in meeting customer needs. The following are among our key partner suppliers:

- Community partners providing services to children and families including schools, law enforcement, employers, legislature (statute), and attorneys.
- Foster parents, group providers, and adoptive parents.

- State Agencies including Health and Human Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services, Governor’s Office, State Tech Board, Employment Security Commission, Commerce, Education, Clemson University and Extension, University of SC, SC State University, Corrections, Health and Environmental Control, Council on Aging, State Department of Agriculture, and Disabilities and Special Needs.
- Federal Government including Department of Agriculture, Department of Health and Human Services – (Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Administration for Children and Families, Social Security Administration – all part of DHHS), Department of Commerce, and Department of Labor.
- Local Governments including county administrators and school districts.
- Private for-profit and private nonprofit individuals and groups desiring to operate adult care centers, child care centers, home day care, after school programs, and food pantries in South Carolina.
- Faith-based organizations.
- Family Court

Major Products and Services - The products and services provided by our agency impact people’s lives. Our objective is to deliver services in a way that can be most meaningful and least intrusive. The following are major products and services:

Child Welfare

- Identification of children at risk of abuse and neglect and their families, addressing safety of children in danger of serious harm, appropriate interventions, linkage to rehabilitative services and preventive services.
- Recruiting, training and licensing foster care homes and group facilities for children.
- Recruiting and training adoptive families; adoption subsidy program; and, direct services to adoptive families and adoptees.
- Foster Care Youth services to enable them to be self-sufficient.
- Young Parent Program provides case management, parenting skills and subsequent pregnancy prevention services to FI youth, ages 9-20, who have parented or are pregnant.
- Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Initiatives provide out-of-wedlock pregnancy prevention initiatives for adolescents.
- Day Care licensing, monitoring, inspection, training and technical assistance.

Social and Economic Self –Sufficiency; Pregnancy Prevention

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) provides low-income children and families with cash assistance, counseling, case management, and support services including child care, transportation, employment and education training, job placement, life skills training, vocational training, and job search assistance. This includes enhanced case management for families dealing with severe disability issues.
- Child Support Enforcement enables custodial parents to receive child support from non-custodial parents.
- The Food Stamp Program promotes the general welfare and safeguards the health and well being of the State's population by raising the nutrition level of low-income households. Food Stamps permit eligible households to obtain a more nutritious diet, through normal

channels of trade, by increasing food purchasing power for needy households, including the elderly and disabled, and to those making the transition from welfare to work.

- The Food Stamp Employment and Training Program provides an opportunity for education, training, and job search assistance to Food Stamp Program recipients. Other Food and Nutrition Services programs include Food Stamp Outreach, Temporary Emergency Food Assistance, At-Risk After School Snack, Summer Food Service, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Emergency Shelters Food Program, and Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.
- The Refugee Program provides intensive case management, cash assistance and services to eligible refugees.
- The Child and Adult Care Food Program, After School Snack Program, Emergency Shelter program and the Summer Food Service Program provide healthy nutritious meals and snacks to eligible participants.
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program, Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and the Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program provide direct food assistance and nutrition education to program participants.
- Young Parent Program provides case management, parenting skills and subsequent pregnancy prevention services to FI youth, under age 20, who have parented or are pregnant.
- The Community Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program provides out-of-wedlock pregnancy prevention initiatives for adolescents.

7. Organizational Structure

Our agency is organized into functional areas that provide for clearly delineated roles and responsibilities, open communication and ease in collaborating across program lines. The following are the major functions within DSS:

DSS State Director

- General Counsel
- Planning & Quality Assurance
- Policy & Operations
- Administration & Program Support

See Appendix B for the organization chart.

Section III: Elements of Malcolm Baldrige Award Criteria

1.0 - Leadership -

DSS State Director, Kim Aydlette, and the Executive staff recognize that an important part of their role is to provide purpose, direction, and motivation to influence others to accomplish the organization's mission. Together they work to create an environment where organizational goals are "owned" by all employees. Senior leaders understand DSS employees are the essence of the agency. In order to capture the corporate intellect and facilitate the advancement of agency goals, we must work to foster employee participation in the process and support and encourage their individual and professional development.

1.1 How do senior leaders set, deploy, and communicate: a) short and long term direction; b) performance expectations; c) organizational values; d) empowerment and innovation; e) organizational and employee learning; and, f) ethical behavior?

(a-f) Due to severe budget cuts, senior leaders were forced to critically examine all programs and major administrative processes in order to make some difficult funding decisions. Management met with key staff throughout all programs and counties and defined the core mission of the agency. Next, management established outcomes that meet the agency's mission. Action plans and strategies were developed. Management then created an optimal organizational structure to efficiently and effectively implement the action plans. Outcome measures were established, and a plan to review measures on a monthly basis was enacted.

The agency's plan has been placed on the DSS homepage for all staff and the public to review. The Deputy Director for Regional and County Operations conducts regular teleconferences with all county directors and central staff to communicate expectations regarding values, empowerment, and behavior. The agency has restructured and communicated the roles and responsibilities of central office staff and the expectations to respond to county needs in a timely manner.

1.2 How do senior leaders establish and promote a focus on customers?

Senior leaders stress public responsibility and citizenship. We work to engage local offices, and supporting administrative functions, in focusing on client outcomes and supporting the service delivery system to continuously improve performance by analyzing data and making programmatic process changes. Budget shortfalls have driven cost reduction efforts. This administration has taken great efforts to avoid the reduction of service-delivery staff. County operations staff recently went through a zero-based budget review that resulted in a 10% reduction in county expenses, and 200 positions were moved from indirect and supervisory positions to direct services.

1.3 How do senior leaders maintain fiscal, legal, and regulatory accountability?

The agency undergoes a detailed legislative audit every two years, a state financial audit annually, and regular federal reviews. Review staff are responsible for ensuring that programs comply with state and federal regulations, and legal staff provide advice and recommendations for ensuring compliance with various legal concerns.

1.4 What key performance measures are regularly reviewed by your senior leaders?

Each of our key program areas has outcome measures that are tracked and reviewed monthly by senior leaders and by staff at all levels. The following are key outcomes.

I. Child Welfare

A. Safety

Outcome 1 - Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

Outcome 2 - Children are safely maintained in their own homes whenever possible and appropriate.

B. Permanency

Outcome 3 - Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

Outcome 4 - The continuity of family relationships and connections are preserved for children.

C. Child and Family Well-Being (In-home and Out-of-home)

Outcome 5 - Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

Outcome 6 - Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

Outcome 7 - Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

II. Adult Protection

Outcome 1 - Reduce recurrence of abuse/neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults (person 18 or older who is either subjected to or at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation).

III. Family Independence

Outcome 1 - Expedite Family Independence (FI) services to eligible children and families.

Outcome 2 - Maximize number of clients placed in employment.

IV. Family Nutrition

Outcome 1 - Maximize eligible families' access to and participation in the Food Stamp Program.

Outcome 2 - Maximize eligible participants participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, After School Snack Program, Emergency Shelter Program, Summer Food Service Program, The Emergency Food Assistance Program, Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and Seniors Farmer's Market Program.

V. Youth Programs

Outcome 1 - Reduce the rate of adolescent pregnancy among program participants.

VI. Child Support Enforcement

Outcome 1 - Children who are born out-of-wedlock have paternity established in a timely fashion.

Outcome 2 - Children with one or both parents absent from the home receive adequate financial support from their absent parent(s).

Outcome 3 - Children receive medical insurance coverage whenever such coverage is available through the non-custodial parent's or custodial parent's employer at reasonable cost.

Outcome 4 - Children with one or both parents absent from the home receive adequate financial support from their absent parent(s).

1.5 How do senior leaders use organizational performance review findings and employee feedback to improve their own leadership effectiveness and the effectiveness of management throughout the organization?

Performance measures and employee feedback are critical elements in our ongoing efforts to improve the quality of programs and services we provide to our customers. Senior leaders meet frequently to discuss current data, trends and outcome measures, and how to implement needed improvements. They utilize performance data to assist counties in determining areas with high levels of performance as well as areas needing improvement. Periodically, a cross-section of agency staff is brought together to discuss a specific area of agency operations, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and generating ideas for improvement. The Deputy State Director of Policy and Operations has a policy to respond to issues immediately and directly.

Efforts have been made recently to make sure that all interested parties are brought to the table, ideas are discussed openly and are welcomed, and decisions are made. Also, responsibility is assigned and staff work together for the common good of the agency and the clients we serve.

1.6 How does the organization address the current and potential impact on the public of its products, programs, services, facilities, and operations, including associated risks?

Local staff are the eyes and ears of DSS. County directors, case managers, and other county staff interact with and receive feedback from our customers, the community, and the general public on a daily basis. This feedback is discussed and considered as we work to continuously refine and improve policies, processes, and operating practices. Other input is obtained through tracking constituent calls, analyzing customer questions and concerns, conducting current customer surveys and "leavers" surveys, and developing and conducting pilot projects to test new approaches.

1.7 How does senior leadership set and communicate key organizational priorities for improvement?

Senior leaders utilize workload indicators and outcome measurement data, designed around key strategic goals, to set organizational priorities. Senior leaders carefully review this data for anomalies and trends. Priorities are communicated through meetings and presentations with staff and community partners, in the agency's on-line newsletter, and through the DSS website.

1.8 How does senior leadership actively support and strengthen the community? Include how you identify and determine areas of emphasis. While we are indeed accountable for the health and well-being of the children and families we serve, we recognize that we must work with community partners to not only address the issues at hand but also alleviate root causes.

The agency has made a commitment to staff a community development effort. Through a faith-based community development effort, staff is dedicated for the purpose of creating opportunities for County directors to get the community involved. Senior leadership attends local churches and community functions to promote community development efforts, as well as to hear about the needs and/or successes in our local communities. A specific area on the agency web site provides

information regarding our faith-based initiative and a computer-based resource inventory provides statewide access and information regarding local partnerships. Many faith and community folks have volunteered time and resources to address local needs.

2.0 – Strategic Planning

We view strategic planning as the process by which we analyze the mission and goals of our organization and determine what conditions must exist to best accomplish those goals. We then initiate a sequence of events that will create those conditions including the cost-efficient allocation of resources. The effectiveness of our strategic plan is measured periodically by comparing goals and objectives to actual results.

2.1 What is your Strategic Planning process?

DSS implemented a strategic programmatic plan in 2003, which is discussed later in this report. While further refinements and improvements are being studied, this year's process has been productive. The strategic planning process incorporated the ideas, thoughts and input of all key staff, including direct service workers, supervisors, County directors and administrative staff. Staff met in a number of planning sessions and developed outcomes and measures that were challenging to all agency staff. In 2003, all 46 counties underwent a zero-based budget review. Expenses were reduced by 10%, and more than 200 staff were moved from administrative and indirect service functions into direct service delivery areas. For FY 2003-04, we will require all state office program and administrative divisions to undergo a complete zero-based budget review. In addition, a strategic plan that incorporates administrative and support services will be developed for 2003-04.

How does your Strategic Plan account for:

a) Customer needs and expectations?

We have a number of processes in place to gauge customer needs and expectations. We have meetings with community advocate groups and through required federal reviews. Our constituent services staff routinely deal with customer problems and complaints. Outside review groups that provide input include the Citizen Review Panel, Children's Health and Safety Councils, the Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force, and S.C. Fair Share. These entities provide regular reports that allow us to measure stakeholder satisfaction. In addition, we meet with service providers to discuss any issues or concerns.

b) Financial, regulatory, societal and other potential risks?

We consider where communities would be without quality DSS services and whether benefits gained by families are worth the resources we expend to achieve those gains.

c) Human resource capabilities and needs?

We realize our employees are our greatest resource. With our financial resources stretched to the limit, staff have been required to do more with less. We undertook an initiative in early 2003 to equalize caseloads throughout the state.

d) Operational capabilities and needs?

Efforts to analyze workforce availability/caseworker workloads in all program areas have been ongoing since 1998, but the study was never finalized. Finalizing this process was made a top priority and it has been completed.

e) Supplier/contractor/partner capabilities and needs?

We strive for mutually beneficial relationships with all suppliers, contractors, and partners in order to improve the quality and speed with which our customers are served. Many agency partners (e.g., schools, courts, treatment agencies) are both sources of referrals and service destinations for some customers. Our orientation toward shared ownership places us in the position of constantly negotiating the terms of our partnerships, particularly shared responsibility programs dealing with teenagers, domestic violence, and substance abuse problems. Our focus on tracking needs and outcomes data helps us clarify referral guidelines and expectations we have for our treatment providers. Finally, our own workload analyses have provided a great deal of information about the costs of staffing for quality and client outcomes.

2.2 What are your key strategic objectives?

Program Number and Title	Supported Agency Strategic Planning Goal/Objective	Related FY 03-04 Key Agency Action Plan/Initiative(s)	Key Cross References for Performance Measures*
Food Stamps I.A,B,C,D, E.4.; II.E.1.;G.1. ;G.2., III.	The goal of the food stamp program is to promote the general welfare and safeguard the health and well-being of the state's low-income citizens by providing benefits to help recipients purchase food.	Decrease poverty by providing low-income citizens resources to buy food and to provide employment and training to recipients who are able to work.	Charts 19, 20, 21, 23
Family Independence I.A,B,C,D, E.3.,4.; II.E.1,2,3., G.1, L.; III	The goal is to provide assistance to families while they are transitioning into employment so that they will become self-sufficient.	Increase opportunities for employment by providing necessary supports	Charts 16, 17, 18
Foster Care I.A,B,C,D, E.1, III; II.A.2.,B.1,2,3.,I,Q.1,2; III.	Children will be provided a safe environment in which to live and the agency will provide a permanent living arrangement.	Ensure timely and effective services to ensure children have permanency.	Tables 1, 2 Charts 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
Child Protective and Preventative Services I.A,B,C,D, E.1;II.A.1,2,3,B.2,I.,O.,Q.1, 2; III.	Children will be able to remain safely in their own home.	Ensure timely and effective intervention services when safety is compromised in the home or facility environment.	Tables 1, 2 Charts 1, 2
Child Support Enforcement I.A,B,C,D; II.F; III.	Children receive needed financial support from the noncustodial parent.	Increase child support collections.	Table 6 Charts 22

* Key Cross-References are a link to the Category 7 - Business Results. These References provide a Chart number that is included in the 7th section of this document.

2.3 How do you develop and track action plans that address your key strategic objectives? (Include how you allocate resources to ensure accomplishment of action plans.)

Outcomes, developed jointly by program, planning and research, and operations staff, establish the major policy and procedural revisions.

2.4 What are your key action plans/initiatives?

See Strategic Planning Chart

2.5 How do you communicate and deploy strategic objectives, action plans, and performance measures?

The agency's program and planning staff developed a number of strategies that are designed to achieve agency goals. The strategic planning chart briefly describes a sample of strategies.

2.6 Website where agency's strategic plan can be accessed.

The agency reviews program goals and outcomes on a periodic basis. The agency's strategic plan contains program and administrative outcomes, goals, objectives, and strategies. This document is posted on the agency website, and results of each outcome measure is emailed to all county and state office managers each month. The agency's strategic plan can be found on the agency's homepage at <http://www.state.sc.us/dss/>.

3.0 – Customer Focus (External Only)

Knowing and fully understanding the needs of current and future customers helps us to meet basic customer expectations and then go beyond to exceed their expectations. To ensure our success, we must research customer needs, communicate those needs throughout the agency, strive to meet those needs, and measure customer satisfaction on an ongoing basis.

3.1 How do you determine who your customers are and what their key requirements are?

Child Welfare

Children at risk of child abuse and neglect and their families are identified by community members, through other programs and agencies, and by direct reports to the agency. State statute defines child abuse and neglect, thus defining who these customers are once they are reported. Key requirements, determined by way of direct feedback from customers, county workers, community members and staff from other agencies, are accurate and timely individualized assessments, timely referral/acceptance to services appropriate to needs, and treatment with dignity and respect. Foster parents apply or are recruited. We provide training, staff support, and follow-up. Feedback from foster parents, focus groups, and task forces continually helps redefine key requirements.

Refugees in need of social services are generally referred by the agencies resettling them in the state. Eligibility is determined by criteria mandated by law. We provide financial assistance, medical services, and educational services.

Child day care customers are determined by the applications received to license new childcare facilities and re-license existing providers. Parents of children attending child facilities and the general public are also customers. Key requirements are safe and healthy childcare facilities for all children.

Adult Protection

Abused, neglected, or exploited adults who are unable to provide for their own care and protection are identified by law enforcement, neighbors, churches and other agencies and organizations. Key requirements are safety and having their needs met in the least restrictive way.

Family Independence

Low-income families are generally identified when they seek services, are referred by other agencies or through outreach efforts. Their eligibility is determined by criteria as mandated by law, policy, and regulations. Key program requirements are typically determined by caseworkers through needs assessment and include income supplements, help with food, childcare assistance, health insurance and case management to include financial management. Youth at risk for parenting or already parenting are identified primarily by referral from or eligibility for other programs. Their key requirements are educational and counseling services in pregnancy prevention, family planning, and/or parenting skills.

Family Nutrition

For the Food Stamp Program, low-income customers are generally identified when they seek services, are referred by other agencies or through Food Stamp Outreach Program efforts. Their eligibility is determined by rules and regulation federally mandated by the Food and Nutrition Service of the US Department of Agriculture. Family Nutrition Programs' customers are identified when they request food assistance or become participants in programs operated by service providers. Eligibility requirements are mandated by federal regulations. Key requirements are financial assistance to obtain nutritional food, transportation and nutrition education. Agency customers include retail grocery stores that provide food for food stamp recipients, emergency feeding organizations, daycare providers, homeless shelters, and organizations that provide programs to low income children during the summer months.

Elderly citizens age 60 and older are recruited for the Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program through local agencies like senior centers, Councils on Aging and the United Way. Eligibility is determined by criteria mandated by law. Key requirements are financial assistance to obtain nutritional food, transportation and nutrition education. Agency customers include retail grocery stores that provide food for food stamp recipients, food banks, and homeless shelters.

Youth Programs

Youth at risk for parenting or already parenting are identified primarily by referral form or eligibility for other programs. Their key requirements are educational and counseling services in pregnancy prevention, family planning, and/or parenting skills.

Child Support Enforcement

Courts, employers, and Family Independence case managers refer customers. In addition, child support enforcement serves any citizen in need of services, regardless of income.

3.2 How do you keep your listening/learning methods current with changing customer/business needs?

We instituted a qualitative review process to assist local county offices in identifying best child welfare practices and in developing plans to address areas needing improvement. As a part of our listening/learning methods, we also seek and receive direct feedback from agency customers and business through such vehicles as community and professional meetings, exchange of information between professional entities, research and professional information on national trends, employer focus groups, participation in community and economic development organizations, conferences, surveys, foster care hot line, constituent services, indirect feedback through supervisors and workers, and Foster Care Review Board reports on performance.

3.3 How do you use information from customers/stakeholders to improve services or programs?

We utilize feedback from customers, community leaders, employers, staff, and others, along with local, state, and national data, to plan and/or modify programs, policies, and procedures to be congruent with good practice, statutes and federal regulations. We also utilize employer feedback, labor market data, economic data (such as hiring trends, jobs in demand, job announcements, plant closures and layoffs) in planning our approach to helping customers prepare for and secure employment. Financial resources are sought, as available, to design initiatives for gaps in current services or to augment current services.

3.4 How do you measure customer/stakeholder satisfaction?

The following are examples:

- Outside review groups including the Citizen Review Panel, Children’s Health and Safety Councils, the Children’s Justice Act (CJA) Task Force, and S.C. Fair Share provide regular reports that allow us to measure stakeholder satisfaction. In addition, we meet with service providers to discuss any issues or concerns.
- Quarterly surveys of former Family Independence customers have been conducted and grants secured for studies of former FI and Food Stamp customers by nationally recognized research organizations.
- Feedback from frontline workers also provides valuable information on customer satisfaction.
- Meeting with state and local faith and community-based leaders and organizations.

3.5 How do you build positive relationships with customers and stakeholders? Indicate any key distinctions between different customer groups?

We believe the key to building positive relationships with customers, partners, and employers is through one-on-one contacts. We actively seek out and build mutually beneficial partnerships with customers and stakeholders. Some examples of established faith-based and community partnerships (statewide, county, local) are as follows:

The Seventh Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church – Enhanced efforts to increase access to the Summer Food Program, After-School Snack Program, Food Stamp Program and Food Pantries. Also, increased efforts to provide assistance in other program areas, including but not limited to, Adoptions, Foster Care, and services to vulnerable adults.

F.A.I.T.H. (Focused Alternative Interfaith Transportation for Health), Hampton County – An established faith-based initiative that provides medical transportation services for Hampton County residents who are without a family or friend support system. The group is also exploring other areas of need, such as employment transportation.

St. John Baptist Church, Columbia, SC – Established a Food Pantry and served as a distribution site for the Seniors Farmers Market Program.

Florence-Darlington Technical College - To provide training to clients in the field of welding, thus helping local employers meet their workforce needs.

We have also partnered with faith-based organizations and rural hospitals to pursue and secure joint grant opportunities through the Duke Endowment designed to address rural workforce needs. Agency staff, including the Director, meets with groups of stakeholders such as Foster Parent Associations, non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations and service providers from other agencies to discuss common concerns. Customers and stakeholders are also incorporated into the agency's planning process.

Senior leaders convene focus groups or retreats with key stakeholders, client advocates, and agency staff in order to look at ways to improve services to customers. Information and data obtained from these discussions are then linked to our performance management system in areas where program modification or service delivery redesign needs to take place. Regional and county offices conduct customer satisfaction surveys, helping to build and enhance customer relations. Staff also incorporate survey data when considering service delivery process changes and improvements. A statewide advisory committee of former foster youth meets regularly with staff to make suggestions on improving the foster care program.

4.0 – Information and Analysis

We strive to utilize reliable, verifiable information to make data-driven decisions in a timely manner. Having pertinent information, including trend data, is critical to making decisions that will positively impact our overall effectiveness.

4.1 How do you decide which operations, processes, and systems to measure?

We are required by federal and state law to measure certain aspects of the services we are mandated to provide. The main mandated program areas are: Child Welfare, Adult Protective Services, Family Independence, Child Support Enforcement, and Family Nutrition. Our strategic goals, objectives, and priorities influence other operations, processes, and systems we measure. We also gather feedback from advocacy groups, clients, and others to assist us in developing and refining outcome measures.

4.2 What are your key measures?

Key measures can be found in Section III, Category 7.

4.3 How do you ensure data quality, reliability, completeness, and availability for decision-making?

Data, based on outcomes, is collected and compiled from local county offices on a monthly basis. Because of frequent changes to program services, Information Systems cannot keep up with the demand for system changes. (The agency has moved away from mainframe applications for all data toward a PC-based data application to help fill the gaps. Data is collected locally when it is not available through Information Systems management reports.) Other reliable data is accessed through such agencies as the Employment Security Commission, Department of Labor, and the US Census. We, along with state and federal auditors, audit our data to determine its reliability.

Staff also conduct qualitative reviews of county services to determine county strengths and weaknesses. These reviews assess the accuracy of data and improve management's ability to make timely, accurate decisions.

4.4 How do you use data/information analysis to provide effective support for decision-making?

Workload indicators and outcome measures data are reviewed on an ongoing basis and play a critical role in making decisions. The plan is to use the data to rank order the counties by outcome measure. The counties meeting or exceeding the most measures are the top performers. The counties meeting the fewest measures are the poorer performers. Once we identify the bottom ten performers we will concentrate resources, technical assistance, training, and other needed services to those counties in an effort to raise performance.

The data will identify which systems need to improve statewide and which counties have specific needs. With reduced resources in the state office to respond to needs, we will be forced to concentrate efforts more efficiently.

4.5 How do you select and use comparative data and information?

Much of our data is defined by federal regulation and can be compared across states for trends and problem definition. Data from other agencies can be used in an ad-hoc fashion to compare with our data to indicate effectiveness of services and unmet customer needs. The Budget and Control Board's Division of Research and Statistics provides the agency with crucial data analysis and cross-compilation of data from other sources that provides critical guidance when developing policy, determining if services are being delivered as planned and determining if services are meeting goals. We also utilize labor market hiring trends and other workforce data as we refine strategies for workforce development.

4.6 How do you manage organizational knowledge to accomplish the collection and transfer and maintenance of accumulated employee knowledge, and identification and sharing of best practices?

The agency created a "knowledge transfer" program and directed management staff to document the work of staff with "key" program knowledge. Staff are cross training employees to ensure that no one employee is critical to ensuring the successful performance of a program or administrative function.

5.0 – Human Resource Focus

DSS employees and their deep commitment to serving our customers are a testament to the character of our agency. Involvement from employees at all levels helps develop a team spirit that motivates staff to move forward toward the agency's mission. This ownership of mission enables our leaders to capitalize on the collective knowledge and experience of our staff and utilize them to better serve our customers.

5.1 How do you and your managers/supervisors encourage and motivate employees (formally and/or informally) to develop and utilize their full potential?

Staff are encouraged to bring ideas and new approaches forward for consideration. Our extensive and comprehensive training program provides caseworkers and managers the necessary tools to do their jobs effectively as well as serves to empower staff with knowledge. Staff are encouraged to participate in ongoing, pertinent training that will provide them additional practice skills to better serve our customers. County directors understand that they are responsible for making sure their staff are recognized for performance. Studies show that pay is the third or fourth reason for staff being unhappy with or leaving their job. Lack of support and lack of recognition from their supervisor are at the top. The Deputy State Director of Policy and Operations has offered time to attend recognition programs in the counties, including "flipping hamburgers" for staff.

5.2 How do you identify and address key developmental and training needs, including job skills training, performance excellence training, diversity training, management/leadership development, new employee orientation, and safety training?

Training priorities are tied to the agency's mission, values, and strategic goals. Each program has specific training requirements for staff to ensure quality delivery of services. We identify key developmental and training needs by way of data from performance management reports across programs, quality review data from regional and county offices that identifies strengths/weaknesses, program quality assurance data, and employee exit surveys.

One example is the design and implementation of the Child Welfare Training Academy, a new training system for child welfare staff designed to ensure new and experienced workers in children's services receive the best, most complete training possible. Curriculum includes assessment and advanced training that is responsive to and respectful of participant needs, preferences, and cultural backgrounds. Areas of focus include issues surrounding domestic violence, mental health, and alcohol/drug abuse.

5.3 How does your employee performance management system, including feedback to and from employees, support high performance?

The Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) helps bring focus to the agency mission and values. Performance evaluations and ongoing input and feedback between staff and supervisors allow us to continuously refine our focus on meeting the needs of customers and fulfilling the mission of the agency. Performance is measured, and what gets measured gets done.

5.4 What formal and/or informal assessment methods and measures do you use to determine employee well-being, satisfaction, and motivation?

Surveys of employees are conducted to determine effectiveness of new initiatives. Also, exit interviews are mailed to every employee leaving DSS to determine the reasons for leaving and to help direct policy for the agency as it relates to employee satisfaction. County directors are brought into critical discussions that affect their offices or staff so that they feel that they are heard. Discussions include climate issues that may impact positively or negatively on performance.

5.5 How do you maintain a safe and healthy work environment?

We recognize our employees are our greatest assets. To enhance the safety and well-being of staff we: installed electronic entry security systems at both state office buildings; installed cameras on top of the buildings so that guards can monitor key areas including parking; and, installed public address systems that can be accessed from anywhere in the buildings via telephone. A DSS committee is dedicated to examining state and county office conditions and employee practices. Their purpose is to develop cost effective measures to improve safety and security throughout the agency.

Our wellness organization continues to work on expanding its efforts including hosting health and community related programs. Through our "brown bag lunch" programs, we conducted seminars on such topics as domestic violence and stress management.

5.6 What is the extent of your involvement in the community?

At DSS, we are very involved in the community with state and local employees representing agency and customer interests on county/community boards and committees such as the Chambers of

Commerce, local workforce investment boards, and community and economic development boards. We routinely work in the community to gather input on needed services, participate in resource sharing, and work to eliminate duplicative efforts among local agencies and organizations.

Through our wellness program, we participate in activities that promote health and well-being. Some activities help organizations raise funds for carrying out their missions. One example is the First Ladies' Walk for Life, Steps Against Breast Cancer. We open many of our programs to the community and have had great participation in our brown bag lunch seminars. Some of our comprehensive health screenings are also offered to the community including breast cancer screening and awareness. Flu shots are made available to staff and family members.

6.0 – Process Management

We utilize a process approach to more effectively achieve desired results around our mission and goals and to manage and allocate our resources. These processes are the building blocks of our systems approach to management that identifies, plans, and implements and manages interrelated processes that contribute to our overall, responsive delivery of services to customers.

6.1 What are your key design and delivery processes (including such activities as needs assessments and efforts at continuous improvement) for product/services, and how do you incorporate new technology, changing customer and mission-related requirements, into these design and delivery processes and systems?

Our targeted client groups are served by categorically funded, policy-based program designs including child protective services, foster care, adult protective services, and adoption. Federal funding sources, state statutes and regulations define acceptable service processes and products for each program. For example, a state law requires making initial contact within 24 hours of receiving a report that a parent or guardian has harmed a child.

The social work practice field offers a standard service process that constitutes “best practice,” across all our program areas. The model process we use begins with Outreach (case finding), Intake (eligibility determination), and Referral. Early in all cases, we engage the client in an individualized needs assessment (problem identification) and negotiate mutually acceptable terms for an individualized case plan (training or service plan). Service delivery processes then vary with client needs, but may include numerous forms of intervention (e.g., crisis stabilization and support, counseling, education, training, treatment, behavior modification, etc.) that may be delivered directly by DSS or purchased from other providers. Good practice also requires ongoing case monitoring (quality review) and outcome evaluation (results checking) until discharge (services termination).

6.2 How does your day-to-day operation of key production/delivery processes ensure meeting key performance requirements?

The agency now measures how well we perform all key services. We measure implementation of treatment plans, error rates, the time it takes to process applications, the provision of relevant support services for customers, and many other key processes to ensure efficient and effective delivery of services.

6.3 What are your key support processes, and how do you improve and update these processes to achieve better performance?

We believe local managers and staff are in the best position to make decisions and recommendations that will achieve better performance. The following are some key support functions:

- Office of General Counsel: legal guidance and interpretation;
- Policy Staff: collaboration/coordination of planning and policies, interfacing of programs and activities, money distribution/accounting and grant writing for financial support;
- Division of Planning & Research: program and service evaluation, data analysis, and, agency planning;
- County Operations: coordination of flow of information to county offices as well as input on policy/ procedure development;
- Information Resources: technology development and upkeep;
- Staff Development & Training: training and skills development for service delivery staff.

6.4 How do you manage and support your key supplier/contractor/partner interactions and processes to improve performance?

We believe partners must deliver customer services that adhere to the same process as our county offices. That is, we must work in concert with suppliers to establish client outcomes and suppliers must be given the necessary freedom to develop their own approach to service delivery to achieve those outcomes. Regional and county offices and suppliers of external products and services must collect, report and incorporate data in a continuous improvement approach.

7.0 – Business Results

We recognize that we cannot achieve our desired business results alone. We must develop and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with all of our partners, both public and private. This interdependent relationship with partners enhances the ability and worth of all involved and increases the speed, flexibility and responsiveness of service delivery to our customers.

7.1 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of customer satisfaction? Remember that a customer is defined as the recipient or beneficiary of the outputs of work efforts or the purchaser of products and services.

The agency has conducted surveys of food stamp recipients to gauge the quality of service provided. In addition, food stamp clients are interviewed at random. We have conducted welfare “leaver surveys” and food stamp “leaver surveys.” Both were designed to track family economic circumstances and child well being. Also included were measures of service to customers and satisfaction with programs. For example, the welfare leaver surveys assess the extent to which customers knew of benefits for which they qualified, and their use of transitional benefits and other services.

7.2 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of mission accomplishment?

During this past fiscal year, the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (C&FS) initiated a review of South Carolina’s child welfare programs. South Carolina met or exceeded the federal standards in four of the six criteria reviewed by C&FS in advance of the full review. At that time, data on 36 states had been collected. Five states,

including South Carolina, met four standards. Two states met five. No state met all six standards. Table 1 indicates that South Carolina DSS is exceeding the national standards in:

- preventing recurrences of child maltreatment;
- preventing child abuse and neglect while a child is in foster care;
- preventing children reentering foster care once they are returned home; and,
- returning the children from foster care to their homes as soon as safely possible.

Category 7
Table 1

Child and Family Services Review Data Indicators

Data Indicator	National Standard (1999)	South Carolina Data (2002)	South Carolina Data (2003)	Definition of Indicator
Recurrence of Maltreatment	6.1% or less	3.4%*	2.9%*	Of all children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect, during the first 6 months of the reporting period, XX% had another substantiated or indicated report within a 6 month period.
Incidence of Child abuse and/or neglect in Foster Care	0.57% or less	0.51%*	0.33%*	Of all children in foster care during period under review, XX% were the subject of substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff
Foster Care Re-entries	8.6% or less	6.6%*	7.4%*	Of all children who entered care during year under review, XX% re-entered within 12 months of a prior foster care episode
Stability of Foster Care Placements	86.7% or more	76%	86.63%	Of all the children who have been in foster care less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal from home. XX% had not more than two placement settings
Length of time to Achieve Reunification	76.2% or more	82.1%*	81.9%*	Of all the children who were reunified with their parents or caretaker, at the time of discharge from foster care, XX% were reunified in less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal from home.
Length of time to Achieve Adoption	32.0% or more	14%	15.4%	Of all children who exited from foster care during the year under review to finalized adoption, XX% exited care in less than 24 months from the time of the latest removal from home.

*South Carolina met national standard.

Out-of-Home Abuse and Neglect Unit (OHAN)

OHAN is under the Child Protective Services Program and is responsible for investigating allegations of abuse and neglect in childcare facilities, such as foster homes, day care facilities, and some institutional settings.

Category 7
Table 2

OHAN	FY 01-02		FY 02-03		FY 03-04	
Total # of Reports	730		1,009		700	
	# Reports		# Reports		# Reports	
	Accepted	Indicated	Accepted	Indicated	Accepted	Indicated
Foster Homes	148	28	160	12	121	17
Institution/Group Homes	291	20	160	19	94	26
Day Care Facilities	N/A	N/A	96	10	76	15

Central Registry

The Central Registry is a statewide data system that provides data for determining the incidence and prevalence of child abuse and neglect in this State.

Category 7
Table 3

Central Registry Checks in 2004							
	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July
Non-Profit*							1,065
For-Profit							122
State Agencies							243
Private Adoptions							117
Schools**							376
Name Change							61
Other (Big Bro, Churches, etc.)							14
Number of Central Registry checks completed before DSS began itemizing (7-8-04)	1,269	3,572	2,841	2,303	1,896	3,123	1,070
TOTAL Central Registry Checks	1,269	3,572	2,841	2,303	1,896	3,123	3,068
Number of Day Facilities	189	152	269	406	287	141	544
TOTAL Day Care Checks	659	631	820	1,603	1,056	728	2,121
TOTAL Central Registry and Day Care Checks	1,928	4,203	3,661	3,906	2,952	3,851	5,189
TOTAL Central Registry Checks as of July 2004							25,690

*Non-Profit includes group homes, child placing agencies, etc.

**This includes new teachers and volunteers for schools.

DSS Strategic Plan Outcome Measures

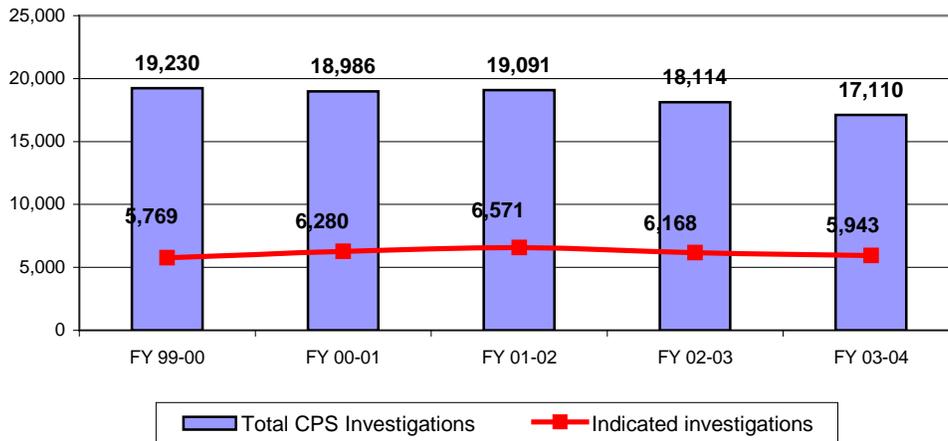
The Department of Social Services developed and published agency strategic plan outcome measures on June 13, 2003. The information in this document was used to help plan the agency’s work for the 2003-2004 fiscal year. Management reports on most of the outcome measures were produced and disseminated monthly by the Planning and Research Division. Data for all of the measures was not readily available this past year, but the agency is in the process of developing alternative methods of data collection and evaluation. Outcome Measures for the fiscal year are as follows:

Child Welfare Outcome I.A.1 - Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

During this past fiscal year, DSS received more than 17,000 reports of suspected child abuse and/or neglect. Of those reports, a little more than one third were found to be cases where abuse, neglect or some other type of child maltreatment likely occurred.

Category 7
Chart 1

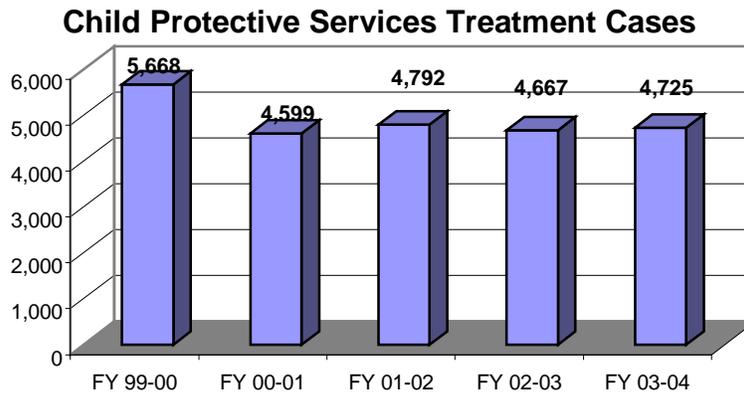
Total Child Protective Services Investigations



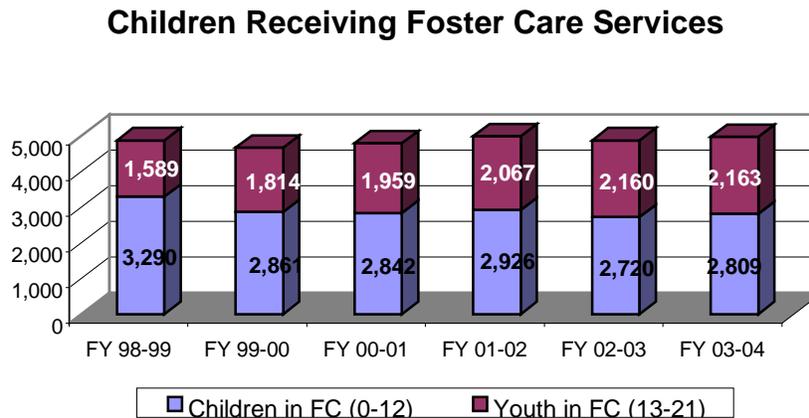
Child Welfare Outcome I.A.2. - Children are safely maintained in their own homes whenever possible and appropriate.

Chart 2 reflects the number of child welfare cases South Carolina DSS had at the end of each fiscal year where children were receiving services in their own homes. Chart 3 reflects the number of children receiving foster care services South Carolina DSS had at the end of each fiscal year. The population of 13-18 year olds receiving foster care services has increased thirty-six percent since FY 98-99.

Category 7
Chart 2



Category 7
Chart 3

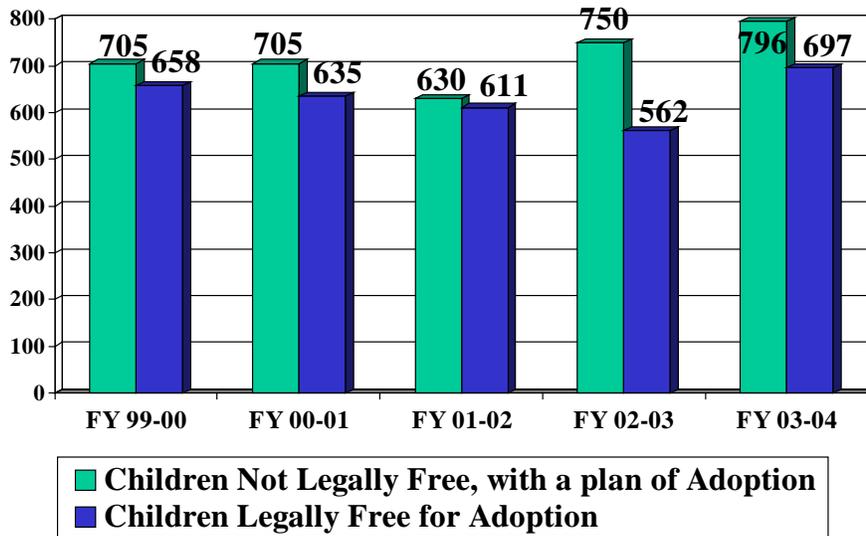


Child Welfare Outcome I.B.3. - Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

South Carolina has made significant increases in the number of children that have been legally freed for adoption and in the number of TPR's accomplished.

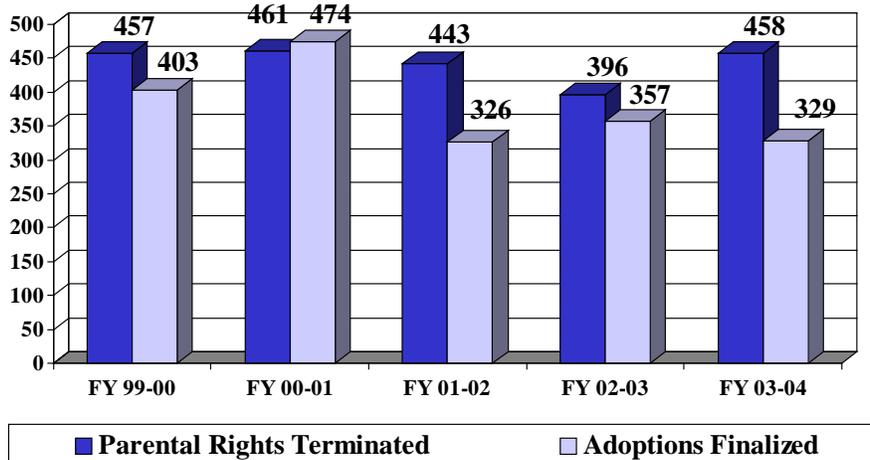
Category 7
Chart 4

Children Waiting for Adoption



Category 7
Chart 5

Children Legally Free & Adopted



Note: A decline in the finalized adoptions for fy 03-04 may be explained by families waiting until July 2004 (fy 04-05) to take advantage of the increase in one-time adoption subsidy from \$250 to \$1500.

Category 7
Chart 6

Months to Adoption

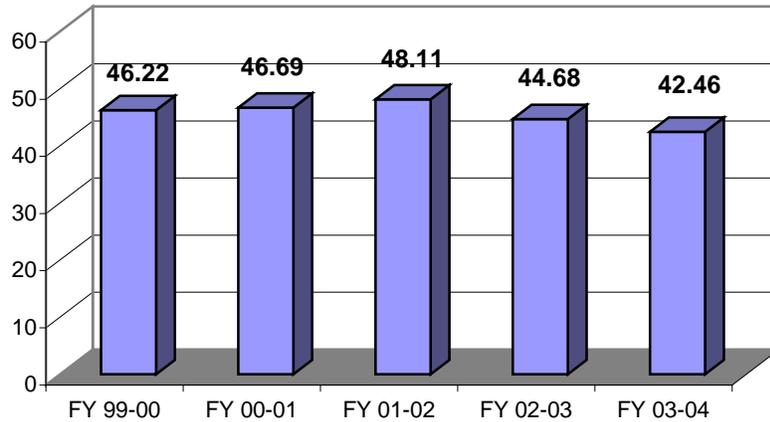
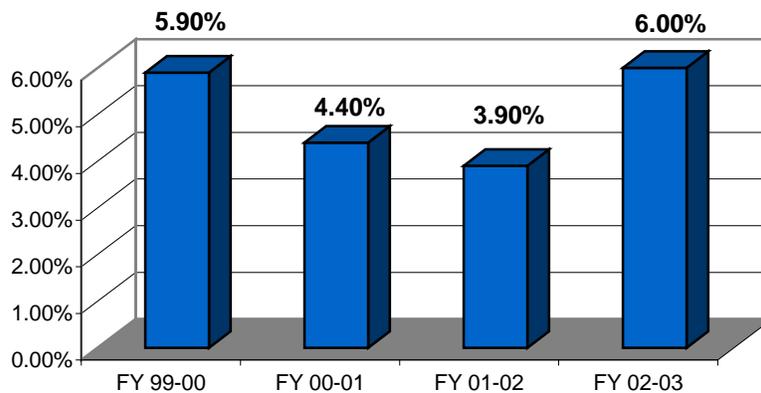


Chart 6 indicates that the average number of months it takes for a child to be adopted has been decreasing over the past three fiscal years. Chart 7 indicates that after a decline in DSS's adoption disruption rate during the previous three fiscal years, there was an increase for fiscal year 2003-2003. However South Carolina's rate is still less than the national disruption rate of 10-12%. The rate for fiscal year 2003-2004 will be calculated after there is reasonable time to determine the success of the adoptive placements during that fiscal year. A disruption is defined as an adoptive placement that is not finalized because the child has to be moved.

Category 7
Chart 7

Adoption Disruption Rate



Notes: Disruption data is not yet available for FY 03-04.
The National Disruption rate is between 10 to 12%.

Child Welfare Outcome I.B.4. - The continuity of family relationships and connections are preserved for children. Within the past fiscal year, DSS has been tracking on a monthly basis the proximity of foster care placements. The outcome measure is as follows: Of all foster children (excluding those receiving specialized MTS services) what percentage are placed within their home county? As of June 2004, DSS is placing over 67% of foster children within their home county. The statewide objective is 70%.

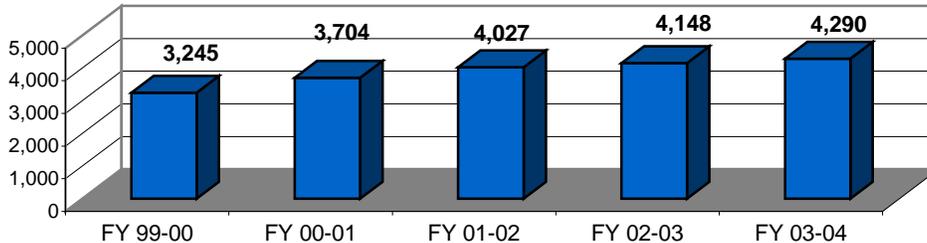
In the upcoming fiscal year DSS will be tracking the placement with siblings for foster children; placements with a relative, visitation with parents and siblings in foster care, and relationships of children in care with birth parents.

Child Welfare Outcome I.C.5. - Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

At the end of fiscal year 2003-2004, DSS was paying adoption subsidies to 4290 children. The total adoption subsidies paid for the year was \$20,601,591.

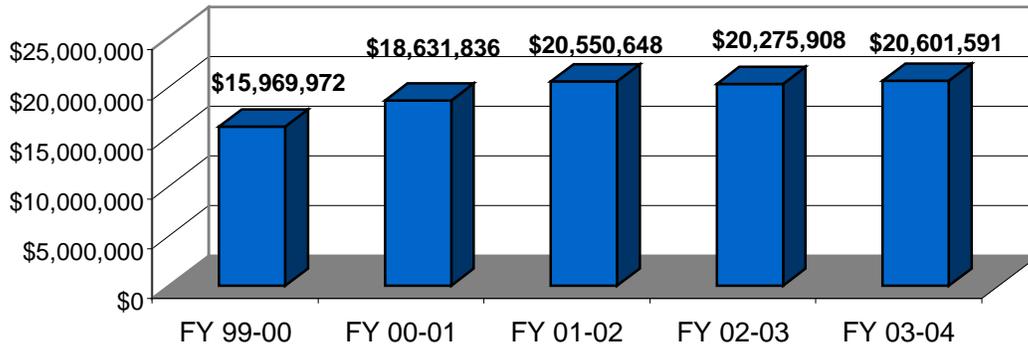
Category 7
Chart 8

Children Receiving Adoption Subsidies
(# of children at end of fiscal year)



Category 7
Chart 9

Annual Adoption Subsidy Payments

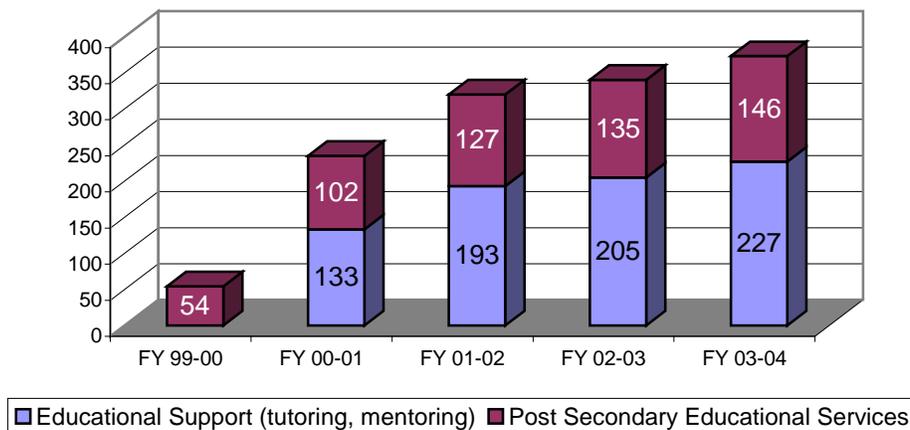


Child Welfare Outcome I.C.6. - Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

During this past fiscal year, the department paid for 146 foster children to attend post-secondary education. This includes tech schools and colleges. In addition, when foster children are having difficulties in elementary, middle, and high schools and the appropriate services are not available from the school system, DSS will purchase the service, like tutoring, for the foster child. During the last fiscal year, DSS purchased educational support services for 227 foster children.

Category 7
Chart 10

Educational Services for Foster Children



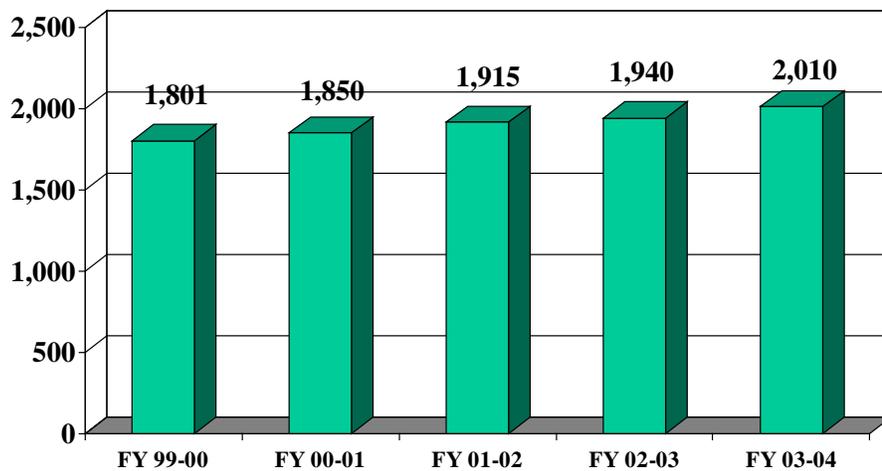
Note: DSS has 163 children receiving educational services as of August 2004. We continue to receive and process applications after the fiscal year for educational services for the coming school year.

Child Welfare Outcome I.C.7. - Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

Managed Treatment Services (MTS) provides intensive case management for children in DSS custody (Foster Care) who require therapeutic placement. This service is for children who have emotional problems so severe they cannot function effectively at home or adjust in regular foster care. Chart 11 shows steady increase in the number of children receiving these services.

Category 7
Chart 11

Managed Treatment Services # of Children Served

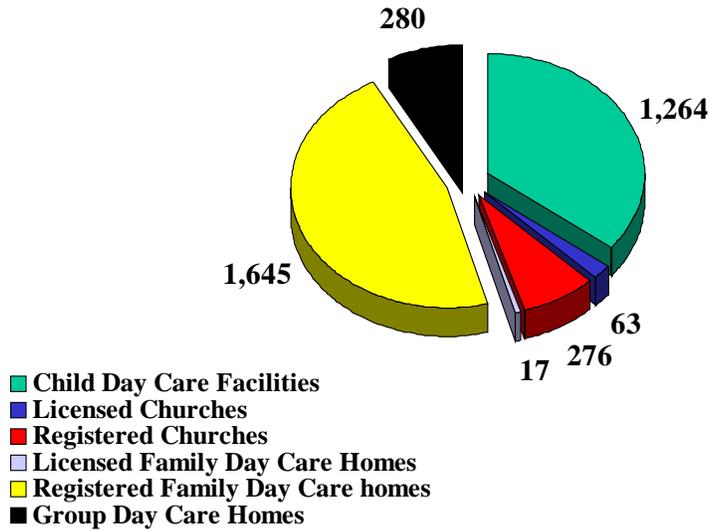


Child Welfare Outcome I.C.8. - Children's health and safety will be protected in childcare settings to include the improvement of the quality of childcare facilities.

Last fiscal year, DSS provided licensing services to 3,583 facilities, which included 170,359 day care slots. There were 873 regulatory complaints that required investigations, of which 334 were found to be valid complaints needing corrective actions.

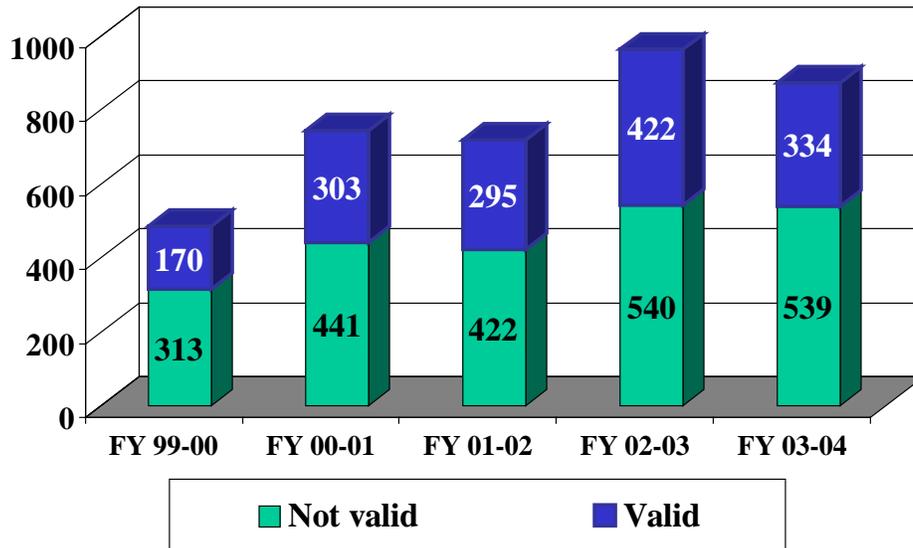
Category 7
Chart 12

Child Care Licensing Types of Facilities Regulated



Category 7
Chart 13

Child Care Regulatory Investigations



Category 7
Table 4

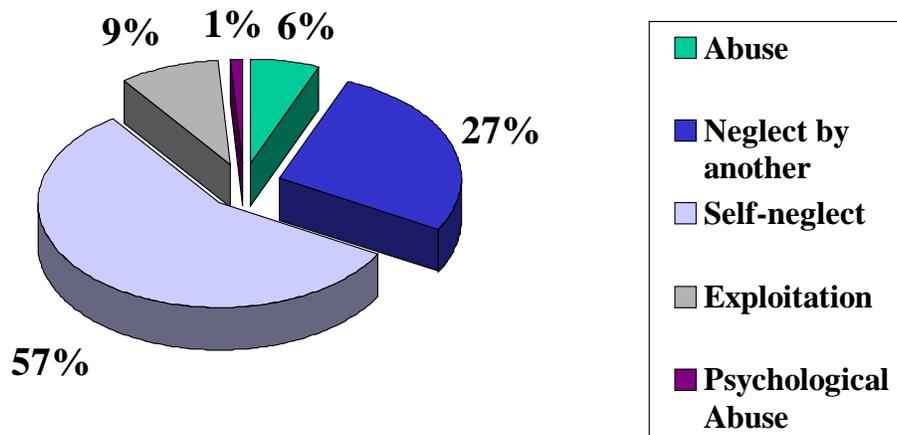
Office of Investigations
Background Checks Conducted in 2003 - 2004

Type of Check	Number
Foster Care Providers: SLED Background Check	23,799
Foster Care Providers: FBI Fingerprint Cards	3,426
Day Care Workers: SLED Checks	6,540
Day Care Workers: FBI Checks	6,036

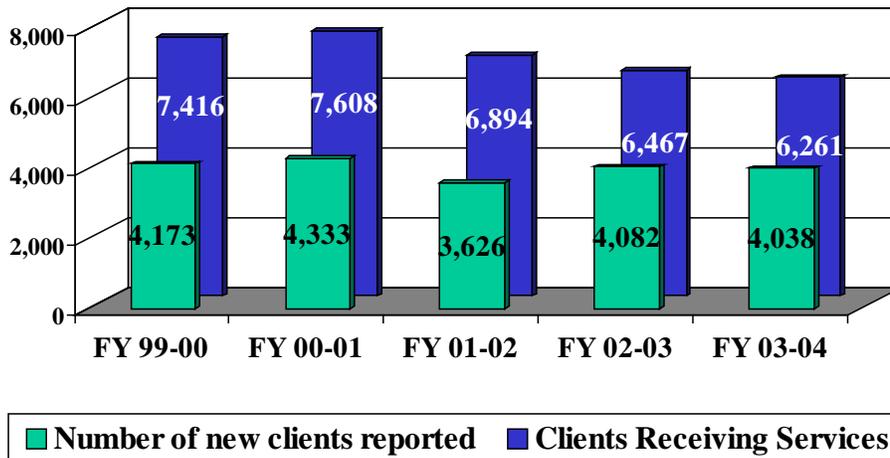
Adult Protection Outcome II.1. - Reduce recurrence of abuse/neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults (person 18 or older who is either subjected to or at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation).

Category 7
Chart 14

Adult Protective Services
Types of Maltreatment of New APS Clients
FY 02-03



Adult Protective Services Clients Reported and Receiving Services



Domestic Violence

The South Carolina Department of Social Services Domestic Violence Program Plan is designed to present a holistic perspective of the agency's plans to prevent domestic violence. Our guiding principle is that community resources will work together to assure quality services and to promote healthy lives for families' experiencing domestic violence.

The Battered Spouse and Family Violence Prevention Act Programs' goal is to prevent and/or reduce the incidence of family violence and to ensure accessible emergency shelter and related assistance to those in need of services for the prevention of spouse abuse and family violence. Our Department uses the *State Battered Spouse and Family Violence Prevention and Services Act* funds to contract with non-profit community based agencies to:

- Improve access to services by funding a regionally based network of emergency shelters; each shelter being required to provide locally based services for residents of its assigned service area, including but not limited to locally based individual crisis counseling, legal and/or client advocacy; and to locally based support group counseling for each county in the entity's service area;
- Coordinate intervention by requiring that contractors establish cooperative agreements with law enforcement and other disciplines providing intervention services for victims and families; and,
- Increase public awareness about domestic violence and its impact on the community by requiring contractors to promote community education by sponsoring workshops,

public speaking with local civic and private organizations, and contacts with local media.

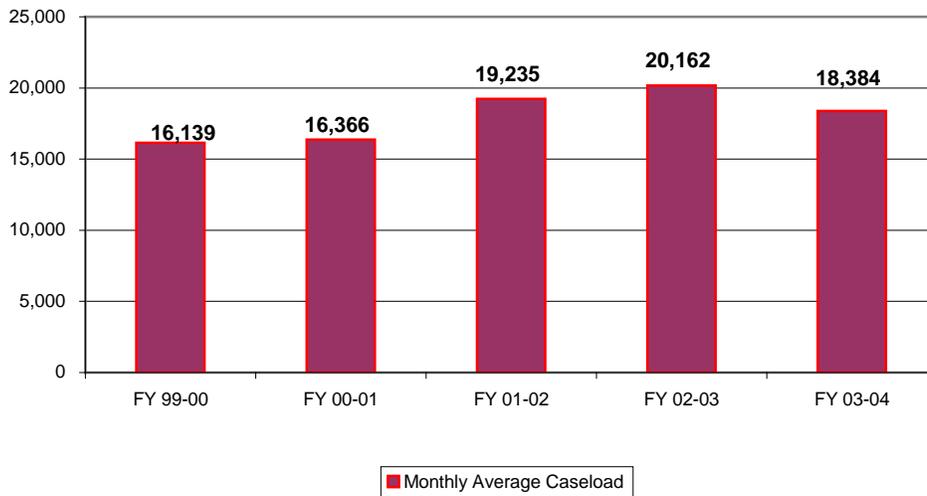
Category 7
Table 5

Domestic Violence					
	FY 99-00	FY 00-01	FY 01-02	FY 02-03	FY 03-04
Number emergency shelters funded	14	11	12	12	13
Number offender intervention centers funded	7	7	7	6	8
Number individuals receiving emergency shelter	9,765	10,503	4,208	3,943	3,417
Number women/children receiving counseling services	28,727	11,821	14,261	15,316	11,198
Number offenders receiving counseling services	2,415	2,143	1,992	17,763	2,274

Family Independence Outcome III.1. - Expedite Family Independence (FI) services to eligible children and families.

Category 7
Chart 16

FI Average Monthly Caseload



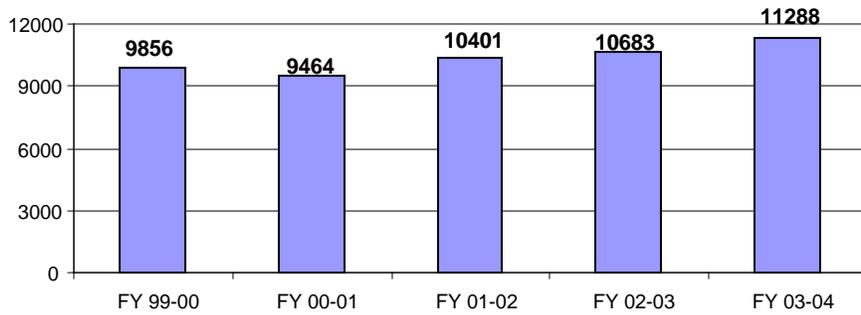
Family Independence Outcome III.2. - Maximize number of clients placed in employment

One of the primary objectives of the Family Independence program (TANF) is to assist families in becoming independent of state financial assistance when the families have members capable of employment. Last fiscal year, through education and employment training programs, DSS assisted

employable recipients in finding more than 11,000 jobs. The average wage for those employed through DSS programs was \$6.89 per hour, which is \$1.74 above the minimum wage.

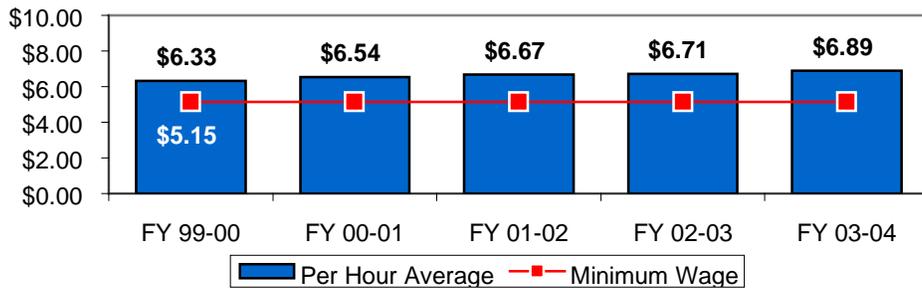
Category 7
Chart 17

Jobs Obtained by FI Employable Recipients



Category 7
Chart 18

Average TANF Wages per Hour
(Minimum wage = \$5.15)



Family Nutrition Outcome IV.1. - Maximize eligible households’ access to the Food and Nutrition Programs

DSS administers a number of programs to help maximize the eligible households’ access to the food and nutrition programs. The following is a list of programs we use to assist in achieving this outcome:

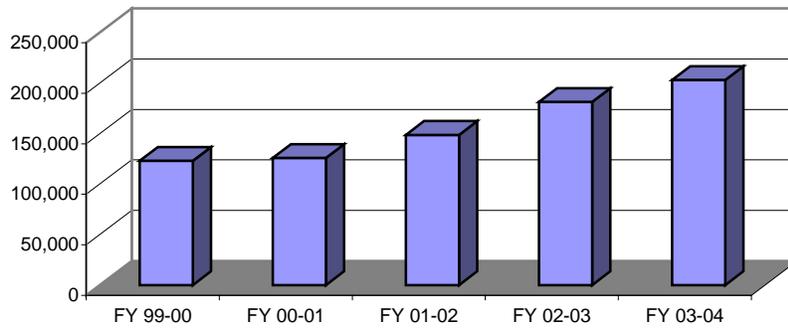
- Food Stamp Program
- Food Stamp Outreach Program
- Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program

- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- Summer Food Service Program
- Emergency Shelters Food Program
- After-school Snack Program
- Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
- Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
- Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

The following two charts, charts 19 and 20, indicate there has been a significant increase in families receiving food stamps in South Carolina last year. An average of 202,946 households received food stamps last fiscal year; and more than \$491 million in food stamp benefits were issued.

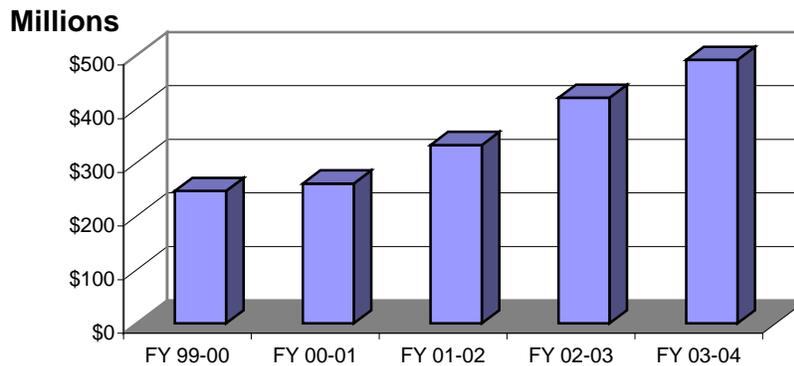
Category 7
Chart 19

Average # of Food Stamp Households Served per Month



Category 7
Chart 20

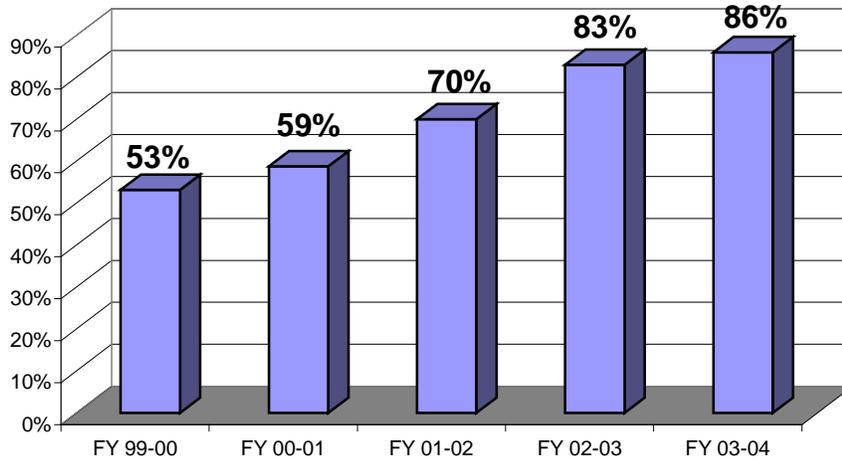
Total Food Stamp Benefits by Fiscal Year



DSS's efforts to maximize the eligible persons receiving food stamps in South Carolina have been very effective. Chart 21 indicates that approximately 86% of the South Carolinians in poverty are receiving food stamps.

Category 7
Chart 21

Individuals in Poverty in South Carolina Receiving Food Stamps



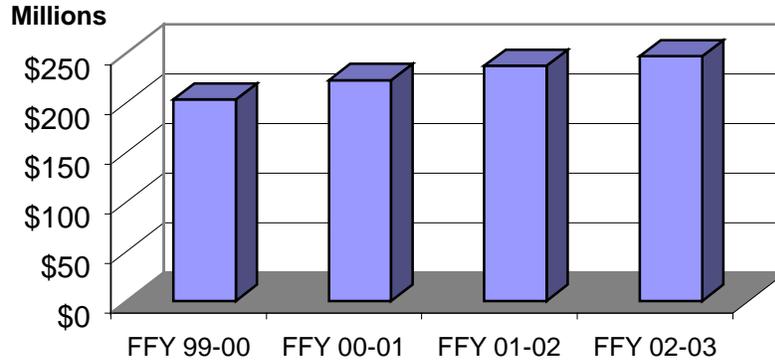
Child Support Enforcement Outcome V.1. - Children who are born out of wedlock have paternity established in a timely fashion.

Child Support Enforcement Outcome V.2. - Children with one or both parents absent from the home receive adequate financial support from their absent parent(s).

DSS's Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) had an objective this past fiscal year to at least maintain the number of cases where paternity is established or acknowledged by an absent parent to the rate of at least 80% to avoid penalties. This past fiscal year, 78.8% of the department's child support cases had paternity established which is a decrease of 2.6% from previous year levels. However, we have met this standard with a score of 80.2% as of July 2004.

Category 7
Chart 22

Total Child Support Distributed Collections



Child Support Enforcement Outcome V.3. - Children receive medical insurance coverage whenever such coverage is available at a reasonable cost through the non-custodial parent's or custodial parent's employer.

Child Support Enforcement Outcome V.4. - Funds expended by the program produce a reasonable rate of return in child support collected for the benefit of the dependent children.

The South Carolina OCSE collected \$6.30 in child support last fiscal year for every \$1 of expenditures. Table 5 shows performance objectives of the OCSE during federal fiscal year 2003.

Category 7
Table 6

Performance Criteria	Objective	FFY 2003
Support Orders Issued	At least 50%	70.7%
Paternity Established or acknowledged	At least 50%	78.8%
Current Support Paid	At least 40%	49.1%
Arrears Cases Paid	At least 40%	51.3%
Cost Effectiveness (Collections/Expenditures)	At least \$2.00	\$6.30

7.3 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of employee satisfaction, involvement, and development?

We conduct exit interviews with employees leaving the agency. Approximately 80% of respondents provided favorable comments about their previous employment at DSS and indicated they would consider returning to work with the agency.

7.4 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of supplier/contractor/partner performance?

Our suppliers, contractors, and partners are expected to deliver quality customer services that adhere to the same performance levels as our county offices. We work in concert with our suppliers to establish client outcomes expectations and allow suppliers the freedom to develop their own approach to service delivery to achieve those outcomes. Regional and county offices and suppliers of external products and services must collect, report and incorporate data in a continuous improvement approach.

7.5 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of regulatory/legal compliance and citizenship? Note: For a governmental agency, this question would apply to compliance with laws and regulations other than the agency's central legal mandate. Results of the agency's legal mandate or mission should be addressed in question 7.2.

Under the Food Stamp Program Provisions of the 2002 Farm Bill, all states will compete nationally for "High Performance Bonus" Awards in the Food Stamp Program in the following areas:

Payment Accuracy - the lowest combined error rate for the Federal Fiscal Year and the largest percentage of point decrease in the combined payment error rate.

Negative Error Rate - the lowest negative error rate and the largest percentage of point decrease in the negative error rates.

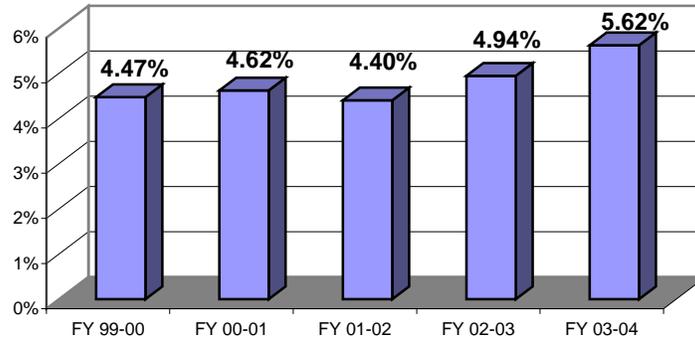
Participant Access Rate – the highest participation rate and the most improved participation rate (FNS will use the average adjusted monthly participation in a calendar year divided by the Census Bureau's count of people in poverty)

Application Processing Timeliness - the highest percentage of timely processed applications as determined through Quality Control (QC) data. The QC data will determine if an applicant was given the opportunity to participate within 30 days (or 7 days for expedited service).

South Carolina was among the top four states with the lowest negative error rate in FY 2003. South Carolina's negative error rate was 0.27% in FY 2003. The negative error rate measures the correctness of the state's action to deny an application or terminate the benefits of a participating household. It also measures whether a state correctly determined a household's eligibility in terms of compliance with federal procedural requirements. This measure is directly related to one of the federal government's overarching goals of improved customer service.

Category 7
Chart 23

Food Stamp Cumulative Error Rate



7.6 What are your current levels and trends of financial performance?

Faced with large budget shortfalls shortly after her appointment in early 2003, State Director Kim Aydlette ordered managers to conduct a complete review of major program and administrative processes used by the agency to determine if efficiencies and cost savings could be realized. As a result, a number of contracts that did not directly support the agency's mission were terminated. State automobiles that were rarely used were returned to the state fleet. Leases for office space in outlying areas were terminated, and staff were relocated to state office buildings. Expenses for cell phones, pagers, and fax machines have been significantly reduced.

Appendix A

DSS Operation Locations

Abbeville DSS - Main Site - Human Services Bldg.

Aiken DSS - Main Site / North Augusta B T C / MTSC

Allendale DSS - Main Site - Agriculture Bldg. / Site 2 McSweeney Bldg. / McSweeney Annex

Anderson DSS Office Building / MTSC

Bamberg DSS - Main Site / MTSC / MTSC (2nd Site)

Barnwell DSS - Main Site / FIA

Beaufort DSS - Main Site / Hilton Head / MTSC

Berkeley DSS - Main Site / FIA

Calhoun DSS - Main Site / FIA and Region III

Charleston DSS - Main Site - PQA Chicora Center / FIA - Quality Assurance / MTSC / Child Support Enforcement / Adoption Office Chicora Center / Adoption Region VI-Day Care / Trident One-Stop Career Center / Record Storage

Cherokee DSS - Main Site

Chester DSS - Main Site

Chesterfield DSS - Main Site

Clarendon DSS - Main Site

Colleton DSS - Main Site – Bernard Warshaw / FIA

Darlington DSS James P. Mazingo Bldg. / Robert L. Grooms Bldg. / Society Hill Neighborhood Ctr. / Government Outreach / FIA

Dillon DSS - Main Site

Dorchester DSS - Main Site / St. George

Edgefield DSS - Main Site

Fairfield DSS - Main Site

Florence DSS - Main Site / Lake City / Adoption Services Region IV / MTSC

Georgetown DSS - Main Site

Greenville DSS - Main Site / MTSC / FIA / Child Support Enforcement / Adoption Services Region II

Greenwood DSS - Main Site / MTSC

Hampton DSS - Main Site / FIA

Horry DSS - Main Site / Loris / Myrtle Beach Complex / Myrtle Beach MTSC

Jasper DSS - Main Site / FIA

Kershaw DSS - Main Site – United Way Holstein Ctr.

Lancaster DSS - Main Site / FIA / Kershaw

Laurens DSS Main Site - Human Services Complex

Lee DSS - Main Site / FIA

Lexington DSS – Main Site / Adoptions Region V / Maxway Bldg.

McCormick DSS - Main Site

Marion DSS - Main Site / Site 2 Multi-Purpose Bldg.

Marlboro DSS - Main Site / Annex / Bennettsville MTSC

Newberry DSS - Main Site

Oconee DSS - Main Site / FIA

Orangeburg DSS - Main Site

Pickens DSS - Main Site

Richland DSS - Main Site / Eastover Office / FIA

SCDSS Central Office - North Towers Complex / State Office MTSC / Staff Dev. and Training / Records Storage / PQA – Investigations – SACWIS / Central Receiving and Issuance Center/ Midlands MTSC / Region II (CSE) / Child Support Enforcement Region I / CSE

Saluda DSS - Main Site

Spartanburg DSS - Evans Bldg. - Main Site / Montgomery Bldg. / MTSC / Children's Shelter / Teen Shelter

Sumter DSS - Main Site / MTSC

Union DSS - Main Site

Williamsburg DSS – Main Site

York DSS - Main Site / Rock Hill Satellite / Satellite - Apple Tree Center / Rock Hill Adoption Services Region I

Appendix B – SCDSS Organization Chart

S.C. Department of Social Services

