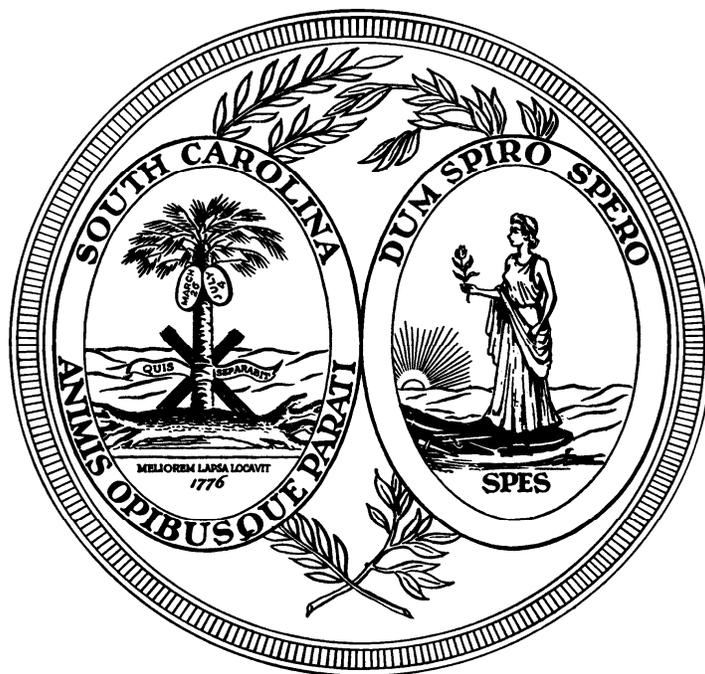


**South Carolina Department of Social Services**

**Annual Accountability Report  
Fiscal Year 2007 – 2008**



**September 2008**

**Kathleen M. Hayes, Ph.D  
State Director**

## **Accountability Report Transmittal Form**

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**Section I: Executive Summary**

DSS began FY 2007-08 with challenges and successes. The agencies principal challenge was the loss of approximately \$66 million from its base budget over the past seven years. Consequently, losing state funding has affected DSS' ability to draw down much needed federal dollars. The agency has also struggled with sustaining programs that serve South Carolina's most vulnerable citizens with the non-recurring funds that it has received for the past two years. Another pressing concern is the growing threat of additional federal penalties if DSS' mandated programs do not perform up to federal standards, which is difficult to do without the funds to adequately pay and retain staff.

However, despite the agencies enormous challenges it had a most successful year in the adoption program. For the first time in a fiscal year, the agency achieved more than 500 finalized adoptions. This is even more remarkable when compared to the average number in the last five years, about 400. The number performed in less than 24 months continues to increase – this year about 100 children were adopted in less than 24 months.

The agency's foster care recruitment program has been recognized by the federal government for its innovative marketing campaign. DSS recruited 511 new foster homes last year with a net gain of 74.

DSS is implementing recommendations made by the Governor's Task Force on Foster Care and Adoption Services. As an example, for the first time DSS, on a monthly basis, is sharing with the family courts information concerning the legal status of each child in foster care. This report is helping to expedite the permanency of children in foster care.

DSS received more than \$400,000 in Duke Foundation funds for three projects to study ways to improve case practice, streamline work processes and study ways to reduce sexual abuse.

DSS was selected by the National Governor's Association to participate with six states in a study designed to reduce the number of children coming into foster care.

The number of families receiving food stamps continues to increase. In FY 2007-08, the average monthly caseload increased by more than 7%. DSS serves about 90% of the state's population who live below the poverty line.

The South Carolina Emergency Food Stamp Disaster Planning System was implemented to assist workers and clients during an emergency or disaster to ensure that all citizens effectively receive the assistance needed. The system allows workers to designate specific areas that are impacted by the disaster down to the zip code level. Staff can input data for disaster food stamps or other benefits, and cross-reference by social security number to avoid double payments.

The Family Independence Program placed clients into more than 11,500 jobs paying an average of almost \$8 per hour. These jobs provide income and opportunity to families attempting to become financially self sufficient.

South Carolina continues to exceed federal participation requirements for the Family Independence Program. More than 50% of work eligible clients were participating in employment and training programs.

Child Care Services' investment in the professional development of infant-toddler caregivers has yielded significant benefits. SC has the largest number of fully certified graduates from the Program for Infant-Toddler Caregivers than any other state on the east coast.

The Child Support Enforcement Division continues to exceed goals on all five of the federal outcome measures. The division collected more than \$254 million in child support payments for children in federal fiscal year 2007.

**I.1. Mission and Values:**

The mission of the South Carolina Department of Social Services is to ensure the health, and safety of children and adults who cannot protect themselves, and to assist families to achieve stability through food assistance, child care, child support, and temporary benefits while transitioning into employment.

**Programs:**

Child Welfare	Child welfare programs ensure the safety and health of children. This system of services includes Child Protective Services, Foster Care, Intensive Foster Care and Clinical Services, and Adoption Services.
Adult Protection	The adult protective services program is designed to protect a vulnerable adult from harm caused by the vulnerable adult or another. Domestic Violence program services are also addressed within Adult Services.
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program assists those in need of temporary financial and employment-related assistance.
Family Nutrition	The family nutrition program consists of a network of food assistance programs that improve the health and well-being of children and adults who cannot provide adequate nutrition for themselves.
Child Care Services	The program administered to increase the availability, affordability, and/or quality and safety of child care. It includes the federal Child Care Development Fund, federal Social Services Block Grant and Child Care Regulatory and Licensing.
Child Support Enforcement	The program that establishes and enforces orders for child support, establishes paternity for children when paternity is an issue, provides locate services when whereabouts are unknown, and collects and distributes child support payments.

## 1.2 Major Achievements

### Major Achievements - Human Services

#### Child Welfare Services

The agency received additional frontline support to strengthen services provided at the local level. Child Protective Services and Foster Care received additional slots to increase the number of professionals assigned to provide technical assistance to county offices. Finalization of filling these slots occurred in the early part of fiscal year 2007-08 with persons who have experience in CPS and other related skills and experiences. Program technical assistance is focused on clinical supervision and interviewing skills, staffing difficult cases and mentoring county staff by demonstration of staffing techniques, and guidance on agency policy, procedures and applicable state and federal law.

1. **In Home Treatment Caseloads:** In March 2008, CPS established an in-home treatment work group to focus on the concerns noted in the CFSR and the state's Child Welfare Services Review of county programs. Primarily this workgroup will review current practices and policy and develop tools which assist staff in the case planning and monitoring process with children and families served. This initiative also builds on efforts to analyze in home treatment caseload standards and move toward counting caseloads by children rather than by family in order to more effectively serve children. This is a national trend by states and child advocacy organizations as increased federal and state requirements have made existing caseload standards for in home treatment obsolete.
2. **Child and Family Assessment and Service Plan (CFASP):** In order to address practice concerns identified in the federal Child and Family Services Review, SCDSS requested technical assistance from the National Resource Center on Child Protective Services and the National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice and Permanency Planning. These National Resource Centers provided state of the art technical assistance to SC on child safety assessment, comprehensive family assessment and development of family-focused treatment plans. The SC model is based on the child-centered, family-focused practice philosophy that has been embraced throughout the country. The revisions to the program model were completed and piloted by 7 county and regional offices. Training was provided to all county offices by the program technical assistance staff during February, March, and April 2008. Revisions to the Human Services Policy Manual, Chapter 7 for Child Protective Services were released in July 2008 to coincide with full implementation and a plan for evaluation of actual practice after three months. This initiative involved staff from all forty-six counties and will directly impact on the children and families in the counties served by the agency. A briefing overview for agency partners to include FCRB, GAL, family court judges, court administration, and other partners will be planned once processes around the CFASP have been finalized.
3. **Best Caseworker Practice – Strengthening Families Conference**  
Training for child welfare staff was provided in winter 2007 to more than 1,000 staff statewide on safety, family visitation, and engaging fathers in response to concerns identified through CWSR.

4. **Initiatives and Projects to Improve Practice and Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect:** Through a grant from The Duke Endowment and assistance from the Southern Institute, DSS is working on a Quality Improvement Project in Greenwood and Hampton counties in South. The purpose of the project is to assess current processes and practices within the CPS area and recommend changes for process improvement. A second component of the project is designed to support and enhance collaborative partnerships in each of the counties. In addition, strengthening collaboratives will lead to greater community awareness of the needs of children and families we serve and assist in promoting local community efforts to protect children.
5. **Zero to Three** which is a three (3) year grant supporting *State Partnership for Prevention: Reducing the Risk of Maltreatment of Very Young Children* and was initiated by the South Carolina First Steps Program. This three (3) year grant supports the partnership whose purpose is to fortify the state's capacity to prevent child maltreatment, particularly for infants and toddlers, a primary goal of DSS. DSS Prevention Coordinator has provided two trainings for child care staff. The training, Challenging Behaviors in Infants and Toddlers, is part of the Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect curriculum developed by the Zero to Three Organization.
6. **South Carolina Prevent Team** consists of seven (7) members representing both public and private agencies - Family Connections of South Carolina, Parents Anonymous of South Carolina, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS), and Voices for South Carolina's Children. The primary goal of this team is to create a community driven prevention network in one rural community and replicate the process in other counties if possible.
7. **South Carolina Department of Social Services and Department of Juvenile Justice Collaborative:** In May of 2008, South Carolina was selected as one of seven states to participate in a Breakthrough Series Collaborative aimed at increasing the capacity of both DJJ and DSS to identify youth served by both agencies. The primary goal is improved child well-being and service provision to families and youth served by both agencies. State and local staff from each of the agencies is involved in this collaborative which is funded by Casey Family Programs.
8. **Adoptions:** For FY 2007-08, the agency placed 631 children into adoptive homes and finalized adoptions for 515 children. To increase the number of adoptive families available, a recruiter has been added to each of the four regional adoption offices.
9. **Best Practices – Darkness to Light project**  
The Duke Endowment provided funding to train DSS and Juvenile Justice staff in sexual abuse prevention.
10. **Foster Care:** South Carolina was one of six states selected to participate for one year (April 2006 – March 2007) in the National Governors Association Policy Academy on Youth Transitioning out of Foster Care. The premise of the Academy is that although the Department of Social Services is the public agency responsible for the administration of Foster Care and the Chafee Independent Living Program, other state agencies and secondary systems are also responsible for helping youth to reach their potential. Through assistance by a team of NGA policy experts to a Core Team of senior state leaders appointed by the

Governor's Office, efforts were focused on developing better outcomes for youth exiting foster care. The state's vision was and continues to be *youth will succeed in transition from foster care to adult living and economic independence*. An unprecedented outcome from this committee is a one time allocation of one million dollars from the State Housing and Finance Development Authority for housing for youth in transition. Through the NGA Policy Academy, a stronger relationship has been established with the State Housing Authority that will open other doors in the future. The housing allocation through the State Housing Authority and Finance Development Authority has been implemented for youth aging out of care. Foster youth are accessing Rental Assistance for Transition (RAFT) in six categories of need through an application process at county and regional DSS offices. The Academy Core Team has now been integrated into the state Child Welfare Advisory Committee to continue to address activities initiated through the NGA Policy Academy.

SCDSS worked in partnership with the State Foster parents Association to create "Recertification Standards and Guidelines" for foster parents .In collaboration with the Guardian ad Litem program, Foster Care Review Board , private agencies and other providers, recertification training for foster parents has been expanded and is now available around the state on a monthly basis through local Foster Parent Associations. Through financial assistance from the Department, the State Foster Parent Association has hired a full time Director for Foster Parent Training.

An internal "Expediting Permanency Committee" was formed to increase focus on moving children to permanency in a more timely manner. Barriers and solutions have been included showcasing county practices that have been effective (such as Lexington County and Dillon Counties). At a meeting of all agency county directors, the directors were asked to focus on a specific list of children whose permanency was being delayed due to the need for TPR proceedings.

The South Carolina Heart Gallery, founded by the Foster Care Review Board, also features professional quality photographs of children waiting for adoption at venues around the state such as public libraries, art galleries, performing art centers, stores and other sites. The Heart Gallery also maintains a web site so that children are featured for recruitment state wide and for out-of-state families who are interested in adopting. In 2008 the Heart Gallery work was being enhanced by employment of a full time coordinator through a new partnership between DSS and the State Foster Care Review Board, designed to expand the Heart Gallery to a statewide program.

### **Adult Protective Services and Domestic Violence**

1. Adult Protective Services partnered with DHHS, DDSN, DHEC, DMH, the State Long Term Care Ombudsman and Protection and Advocacy to develop and implement guidelines for agencies to assist in relocating residents when Community Residential Care Facilities (CRCF) are forced to close. The guidelines were developed to enhance communication, to provide a coordinated response in relocation situations and to outline the duties and responsibilities of agencies in meeting the needs of vulnerable adults.
2. The entire Adult Protective Services Policy Manual is being updated to reflect the changes in South Carolina Law in order to meet the needs of our growing vulnerable adult population.

3. The Adult Protective Service Division developed and implemented a comprehensive APS Resource Directory (140 pages) that provides a listing of county resources in a defined geographical area.
4. APS initiated a process to assist hard to place young vulnerable adults with internal program areas such as Intensive Foster Care and Clinical Services, Adoptions, and Independent Living as providing internal guidance with county staff and management.
5. The Homemaker Program coordinated statewide certification training for all newly hired social service aides through the National Home Caring Council and USC. DSS had 26 participants who became certified through this national training program.
6. Child care owners and operators statewide are receiving Domestic Violence Training made available by DSS in partnership with the South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. DSS provides child care vouchers for women living in shelters or receiving services from a state-funded domestic violence program; the vouchers provide child care for up to one year.
7. During 2006, SCDSS along with Materials Management Office processed RFPs for community providers to award State Battered Spouse and Family Violence Prevention funds (grants) to thirteen regions in the state. Five year contracts were awarded to thirteen emergency shelter programs and to thirteen batterer treatment programs. DSS continues to monitor these approved providers for compliance. The Domestic Violence State Plan, Coordinating Councils, Batterer Treatment standards and approved providers are listed on the DSS Website.

**Major Achievements – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Family Nutrition and Child Care and Food Stamps.**

1. The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF) obtained more than 11,500 jobs for employable clients. This represents a 13% increase in number of jobs obtained since last year. These jobs paid about \$8.00 per hour.
2. The number of seniors participating in the Food Stamp Program increased by 98.84 % through the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP) since 2004.
3. The South Carolina Office Scanning Application (SCOSA) system was developed and tailored to meet the TANF and Food Stamp Program requirements. The statewide paperless system began implementation in June 2008 and will be completed by May 2009. Oconee and Pickens Counties piloted this project.
4. The eligibility Call Center was started in Columbia to improve service to the clients and to more efficiently manage changes reported that need case action.
5. The Employment Preparation Program (EPP) class curriculum was standardized for TANF recipients to prepare them for employment and implementation was privatized throughout the state through the use of the RFP process.
6. Transportation for TANF recipients has been standardized through use of a contracted privatized service. This service is available to employed individuals for transporting to and from work or training 24 hours a day.
7. Services from the TALX Corporation, called the Work Number, were purchased to assist in verifying employment information on individuals who apply for assistance. This can be accessed from the worker's desk and serves to substantially expedite work for staff.

### **Major Achievement - Child Care**

1. As the result of SCDSS Child Care Services' investment in the professional development of infant-toddler caregivers, SC has the largest number of fully certified graduates from the Program for Infant-Toddler Caregivers than any other state on the east coast.

### **Major Achievements - Child Support Enforcement**

1. In Federal Fiscal Year 2006-07, the South Carolina Division of Child Support Enforcement continued to exceed federal outcome measures in paternity establishment, collections, and other vital measures.
2. DSS continues to work with the Saber Corporation to complete a certified child support enforcement automated system.
3. The program collected \$6.87 in child support last fiscal year for every \$1 of expenditures.

### **Major Achievements – Administration and Planning**

1. The agency began imaging food stamp records, which will greatly increase the efficiency of workers.
2. Video conferencing was piloted, allowing large numbers of staff to meet or train without travelling to one location.
3. DSS began making group home payments through its management information system.
4. CAPPS II - the agency's child welfare information system was enhanced to allow workers to more easily document their work.
5. The ePay project to eliminate paper checks to foster and adoptive parents was initiated. Additional programs will be added next year. When all are completed, a savings will be realized in check printing and processing cost will be eliminated.
6. DSS formed a Budget Council to scrutinize all expenditures and make cost-savings decisions and recommendations.
7. The South Carolina Emergency Food Stamp Disaster Planning System was implemented to assist workers and clients during an emergency or disaster to ensure that all citizens effectively receive the assistance needed. The system allows workers to designate specific areas that are impacted by the disaster down to the zip code level. Staff can input data for disaster food stamps or other benefits, and cross-reference by social security number to avoid double payments.
8. WebEx – allows meeting to occur around the state without the cost of travel and time away from the office.
9. eLearning – allows training to occur at anytime that is convenient to the learner, saves costs of travel, time away from the office and overnight stays, allows more training to occur since no training instructor or training room is needed, allows for training on-demand.

### **1.3 Key Strategic Long Term Goals**

The following list contains long term goals that DSS is working towards.

1. Create permanency teams to prevent and reduce a TPR backlog thereby expediting adoption services.
2. Research types of family engagement to better serve families and communities.
3. Continue to aggressively recruit foster and adoptive families to increase the net gain of foster parents in FY 2008-09.

4. Achieve more than 500 adoptions in FY 2008-09.
5. Better support foster and adoptive parents by raising the foster care board payment and adoption subsidy.
6. Work with colleges and universities to establish a statewide training and internship program for DSS employees.
7. Continue to work with the Saber Corporation to complete a certified child support enforcement automated system.
8. Establish a state distribution unit SDU/Call Center to receive phone calls from clients by 2011.
9. Continue to enhance the child care website to benefit children, families and businesses.
10. Increase the number of ABC vouchers available to poor working parents.
11. Continue to increase the number jobs for TANF clients in FY 2008-09.
12. Meet or exceed federal TANF participation goals.
13. Staff food stamp program so that caseloads do not exceed national average.
14. Implement a Legal Case Management System so that attorneys and paralegals may better manage their caseloads and court time.
15. Continue to work towards certification for the Child and Adult Protective Service System (CAPSS).

#### **1.4 Opportunities and Barriers**

##### **Opportunities – Human Services (Child Welfare, Adult Protective Services)**

1. The addition of new program technical assistance staff for Child Welfare Services provides an opportunity to increase accountability in county offices by increasing support around outcome measures and objectives identified by the agency.
2. Both an opportunity and a barrier is the loss of experienced child welfare staff to retirement or other jobs. The turnover provides an opportunity for the Agency to reach out and attract dedicated young people to the profession. The barrier is in the loss of years of experience, knowledge, and expertise, and substantial cost in training of new workers.
3. DSS received a “Best Practices” grant from the Duke Endowment to study ways to assist in reform of the foster care system.
4. The Sheriffs’ Association reports that investigation of methamphetamine labs has decreased over last year. Seventeen meth lab busts were made in four counties statewide. DSS county offices report that six children have come into foster care as a result of the manufacture of methamphetamine in family homes. We see this reduction in meth lab busts as very positive for the safety, health and wellbeing of children in South Carolina.
5. DSS has established a workgroup of County Directors and State Office staff to examine the concerns about drug testing of clients, to include development of policy guidelines for when tests should be administered in what types of cases and working to establish contracts with suitable labs for the analysis to increase confidence in validity of findings.
6. The collaboration between the Children’s Law Center (CLC) and DSS provides an opportunity for enhancing the training provided to mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect in order to strengthen the system for protection of children. During fiscal year 2007-08, the CLC provided 86 sessions and trained 3,979 mandated reporters in South Carolina. This is a substantial increase in the training effort to equip professionals

- who are mandate reporters. Also, the training was provided to attorneys appointed to represent children.
7. The collaboration between DSS and BabyNet, the IDEA Part C Early Intervention program housed within DHEC, is part of a larger collaboration with other state agencies (DSS, DHEC, Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, Department of Education, School for Deaf and Blind, Department of Mental Health, Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse), University of South Carolina, and private organizations (such as child day care providers, speech and hearing therapists, Family Connections, Parents Anonymous, and others) and provides significant opportunities to serve South Carolina children identified with developmental delays, as well as their parents.
  8. During calendar year 2007, DSS made 2512 referrals of children under the age of three who were either the victim of child abuse, suspected of being exposed to drugs or because of some other indication of developmental delays. After screening and evaluation criteria was applied by BabyNet early intervention specialists, 250 (about 10%) of the 2512 children referred were accepted for BabyNet services.
  9. The Child Welfare services programs are receiving technical assistance from the National Resource Centers and this will continue through the next fiscal year.
  10. A Children in Foster Care and Adoption Services Task Force was created by Executive Order of the Governor in July 2007 and tasked with identifying ways to improve the efficiency and quality of the state's foster care and adoption processes. In particular, the group will focus on reducing the time it takes to find permanent adoptive homes for the most vulnerable children across South Carolina. DSS has implemented many recommendations, including providing the courts with a list of all overdue court hearings and upcoming hearings that need scheduling.
  11. SCDSS collaborated with the Center for Fathers and Families to expand services to non-custodial fathers and/or parents whose children are receiving child welfare services.
  12. SCDSS has implemented a sophisticated three tiered statewide marketing and recruitment plan for foster and adoptive families to implement specific needs based plans for placement resources needed for children in each county.
  13. A statewide Homemaker Handbook was developed to assist county management to establish standard business practices as to comply with the Homemaker Policy and agency program outcomes.
  14. CPR courses were offered through SD&T to Social Service Aides. Twenty social service aides are CPR certified for the Homemaker Program. (USC School of Public Health, RSF Hospital, Primary Care Association).
  15. SCDSS collaborated with the Alzheimer's Resource Coordination Center Grant Application Review Team.
  16. SCDSS collaborated with the Developmental Disabilities and Information Technology Work Group. This provides opportunity to develop, and implement technical resources statewide for our clients we serve.
  17. SCDSS collaborated with the Systems Transformation Grant Advisory Committee. This committee develops projects pertaining to systems transformation in S.C. to empower and support older adults and persons with disabilities living in the community. The projects streamline access of services to consumers within their own home communities.

#### **Opportunities - Family Assistance (TANF, Family Nutrition, Child Care)**

1. DSS is developing and implementing a debit card system for the TANF Program. Currently these clients receive benefits by check and it takes up to 10 days before the

- benefit can be receive. Beginning March 2009 they will receive benefits by being paid through an electronic pay card.
2. Completion of the imaging project so that paper is eliminated in the TANF and Food Stamp Programs in each county presents major opportunities. Imaging will save file space and time needed to locate file folders. We anticipate this will also save money in decreasing the need for paper.
  3. Call Center expansion is planned to incorporate the entire state so that changes can be reported by telephone throughout the state and can be acted on quickly and efficiently. Universal Caseload development is being planned to handle work on a rotation system rather than assignment.

### **Opportunities – Child Support**

1. The Child Support Enforcement Division will continue to participate in the design of the new statewide automated system, and continue to increase overall child support collections and implement a small call center to offset major workload demands.

### **Barriers – Human Services (Child Welfare, Adult Protective Services)**

1. The agency needs to better support family engagement practices through additional resources, staff training and formal evidence-based programs throughout the state. Family engagement strengthens families so that children can safely continue to be parented at home where parents are better supported by their families, thus reducing foster care entry
2. Additional bilingual staff is needed to address the needs of the growing Hispanic population. Efforts will continue to identify resources for forensic interviewers involved in child abuse or neglect investigations when the involved children or adults have limited English proficiency or who have disabilities which interfere with communication.
3. Drug use of all types in child protection cases is creating additional fiscal barriers as the cost and number of drug tests administered is growing. One significant problem is the lack of confidence in the validity of tests due to inherent testing factors, such as length of time since drug ingestion or possibility of client deception.
4. Over the past five years, the number of teens (13-18 year olds) in foster care has increased.
5. Young adults continue to come to the attention of APS, many of whom suffer from mental, physical or developmental disabilities. Few resources, including accessible placements, are available to meet the needs of this population. Nursing home placement of young vulnerable adults is not appropriate to meet their social and other emotional needs.
6. In the adult protective services program, the investigation and substantiation of financial exploitation cases is time-consuming, and once the victim's resources are exploited, it is difficult to find programs/resources to meet the victim's needs. The agency needs to find innovative ways to expedite the time it takes to complete investigations.
7. In the adult protective services program, often self-neglect cases require costly institutional placement, and only approximately 50% of the clients are initially eligible for Medicaid.
8. There is a lack of psychiatric long-term placements for young vulnerable adults with behavioral problems and or dual diagnosis.
9. There is an identified population of young to middle aged vulnerable adults whose caregivers are going into long-term placements, leaving them dependent again.
10. There are no specific service providers to deal with the issues relating to guardianship or to complete the necessary assessments related to Probate Court. (These are issues that relate to incapacitated persons who need conservators or guardians appointed versus vulnerable adults identified at risk for abuse, neglect or exploitation.)

11. Training capacity needs further enhancement to provide sufficient support for professional development of child welfare staff.
12. Foster and adoptive parent recruitment and support remains a challenge.
13. Foster care board payments and adoption subsidies are well below the southeastern average.

**Barriers- Family Assistance (TANF, Family Nutrition, Child Care)**

1. The Food Stamp caseload has increased from serving an average of 225,000 households in 2006 to 248,000 households in 2008. There has been no corresponding increase in staff resources to manage this growth in caseload.
2. Reauthorization of the TANF Program has substantially decreased the state’s flexibility allowed for delivery of the program.
3. There is a lack of adequate component activities available especially in the rural counties.
4. The cost of transportation for TANF clients continues to be a concern. This is directly related to the gasoline prices and the lack of work activities available in rural areas.

**Barriers – Child Support Enforcement**

1. Caseloads in the Child Support Enforcement Division remain high
2. Because of the way the paternity establishment goal is set each year, the child support enforcement division is in danger of not meeting its federal goal of paternities established this year which could result in financial penalties against TANF funding.
3. Changes at the federal level have reduced funding available for child support enforcement, creating the need for additional state resources to be requested.
4. Until the completion of the automated system, federal penalties will continue.

**1.5 How is the accountability report used to improve organizational performance?**

Programs and administrative systems are continuously analyzed and reviewed against the strategic goals of the agency, with a goal of continuous improvement and increased efficiencies. Baldrige techniques have led to improvements in work processes and more effective service delivery. Division directors, deputy directors and county operations directors meet with the agency director monthly to review, discuss and problem-solve critical issues facing the agency and progress towards performance goals. The meetings result in action plans and staff assignments, and staff are accountable for reporting their progress at the next meeting. At DSS, the philosophy of continuous improvement is practiced, and managers must prepare program improvement plans and report their progress when critical issues are uncovered.

**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, the agency must be able to handle the urgent needs of citizens within complex state and federal guidelines. DSS has to be ready to serve when and where the need arises. Again, in 2007-08, DSS met this challenge, successfully serving more than 850,000 South Carolinians.

1. **Major Products and Services and the Primary Methods of Service Delivery** - 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:

### **Human Services (Child Welfare, Adult Protective Services)**

The primary product and service of child and adult welfare services is *case management services* which are routinely best delivered by face to face contact with clients. Major products and services:

- Identification of adults and children at risk of abuse and neglect and their families, addressing safety of adults and 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.
- Services to Foster Care Youth to facilitate self-sufficiency.

The Adult Protective Services unit utilizes the case management approach. The overall goal is reducing harm and/or the risk of harm of abuse, neglect, exploitation or self-neglect. Major Products and services are:

- Intake/ Assessment
- Case Determination
- Referral and Coordination
- Case Planning
- Monitoring and Follow-up
- Case Evaluation
- In addition the agency invokes the authority of the Family court as appropriate, assists with locating appropriate placements in the least restrictive environment, assists in obtaining medical care and applies for financial and other services.

### **Family Assistance (TANF, Family Nutrition, Child Care)**

- 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.
- The Food Stamp Program permits eligible households to eat more nutritiously, through normal channels of trade, by increasing food purchasing power for needy households, including the elderly and disabled, and to those transitioning from welfare to work.
- Other Food and Nutrition Services programs include Food Stamp Outreach, Temporary Emergency Food Assistance, At-Risk After School Snack, Summer Food Service, Child & Adult Care Food Program, Emergency Shelters Food Program, and Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. Nutrition education is also provided to program participants.
- The Food Stamp Employment and Training Program provides opportunities for education, training, and job search assistance to Food Stamp Program recipients.
- The Refugee Program provides intensive case management, cash assistance and services to eligible refugees.
- The Community Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program provides out-of-wedlock pregnancy prevention initiatives for adolescents.
- The ABC Child Care Program provides vouchers for families receiving TANF, children with special needs, low-income working families, foster children of working foster parents, children receiving child protective services and other designated populations.

- Child Care Services manages a statewide system of providers and contracts to ensure the availability of child care at all quality levels by providing technical assistance, training and monitoring compliance with program standards and regulations.

### **Child Support Enforcement**

- The Child Support Enforcement Division, working through administrative process and the family court system, establishes orders for paternity, financial support, and medical coverage when available. Also, in addition to the judicial remedies used by the family courts, like wage garnishment and contempt hearings, the division offers locate services, tax offset, license revocation and liens as tools of enforcement, when needed.

## **2. Key Customer Segments and Key Requirements/expectations**

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 serves only low resource families. In

reality, we are a potential service provider for any individual in the state. Our key customers are:

### **Human Services (Child Welfare, Adult Protective Services)**

- Children at risk for abuse/neglect and their families
- Foster children and birth families (custodial and non-custodial parents)
- Foster families, Adoptive families, and adoptees
- Youth at risk for parenting or already parenting
- Vulnerable adults and frail elderly individuals living alone
- Individuals age 60 and over
- Persons eighteen years of age or older who have a physical or mental condition which substantially impairs the person from adequately providing for his or her own care or protection. This includes persons disabled due to: infirmities of aging, but not limited to, organic brain damage, advanced age, and physical, mental, or emotional dysfunction.
- Batterer Treatment Programs
- Shelter Providers

### **Family Assistance (TANF, Family Nutrition, Child Care)**

- 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 child care facilities and emergency shelters and parents of children in child care
- Child care providers including after school, summer and pre-K programs
- Youth at risk for parenting or already parenting

### **Child Support Enforcement**

- Family Assistance families
- Custodial and non-custodial parents

**The key requirements and expectations of our customers are:**

- To be treated with dignity and respect,
- That staff will follow all applicable laws, policies and regulations in providing responsive, timely and thorough assistance and referrals,
- To receive services that promote safe and stable families, and
- That the protection and well-being of children and families will - first and foremost - guide the services provided by this agency.
- DSS services promote safe and stable families.

**3. Key Stakeholders (other than customers)**

Key stakeholders other than customers include: extended families, childcare providers, faith-based organizations, the Family Court, residential facilities, foster care and citizen review panels, guardians ad litem, the Departments of Mental Health, Juvenile Justice, Disability and Special needs, the public schools and the general public. Local farmers, grocery stores, nonprofit agencies, county clerks of court are also among our key stakeholders.

**4. Key Suppliers and Partners**

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. Our key suppliers and partners include the following:

- Community partners providing services to children and families including schools, law enforcement, employers, legislature (statute), and attorneys.
- Foster parents, group providers, adoptive parents and their associations.
- 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, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Foster Care Review Board, the State Department of Education, and guardians ad litem.
- The Federal Government including the 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, the Department of Labor, and Department of Justice.
- Local Governments including county administrators, school districts, solicitors and clerks of court.
- Private for-profit and private nonprofit individuals and groups desiring to operate adult care centers, centers for prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect, child care centers, home day care, after school programs, and food pantries in South Carolina.
- Faith-based organizations.
- The Family Court.
- Batterer Treatment Providers and Shelter Providers
- First Steps

## 5. Operation Locations

See Appendix A.

## 6. Number of employees segmented by employee category (classified, unclassified, contract, etc.)

	Classified	Unclassified
<b>FTE's</b>	<b>4,056</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Temporary grant employees</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Temporary hourly employees</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total employees</b>	<b>4,357</b>	<b>5</b>

## 7. The regulatory environment under which your organization operates.

The dominant influences for DSS are federal statutes and regulations that establish conditions for the receipt of federal funds in support of its programs. A body of state statutes and regulations also apply, such as the Children's Code and the Family Independence Act. DSS' administrative functions (procurement, human resources, fiscal, for example) also are subject to state and federal requirements.

## 8. Your key strategic challenges

- Retain experienced and effective managers, supervisors and caseworkers to the extent possible in all programs.
- Meet national, state and agency standards for child and adult welfare services. In addition, meet recommendations of the 2006 Legislative Audit Council audit of child protective services and the Governor's Task Force Recommendations of 2008.
- Increase the number of placement resources statewide that meet the children's needs for stability and nurturance, and provide adequate educational, residential and treatment resources for foster and adoptive children.
- Implement TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) reauthorization while protecting and/or contributing to the well-being of needy clients and their families, without incurring penalties.
- Maintain the food stamp error rate below the national average.
- Implementing new and/or improved automated systems – including child protective services (CAPSS), reauthorized TANF (PATs), child support enforcement (SCES - certified system) and administrative systems (such as personnel services) is the focus of many ongoing work groups and considerable expense and effort in the agency.

## 9. Your performance management system

The Human Resources Management Division is responsible for administering the state employee performance evaluation process for the agency.

## 10. 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 and Quality Assurance
- Community Services
- Family Assistance
- Human Services
- Child Support Enforcement
- Emergency Preparedness
- Administration and Program Support

(See **Appendix B** for the organization chart.)

11.

**Accountability Report Appropriations/Expenditures Chart  
Base Budget Expenditures and Appropriations**

Major Budget Categories	FY 06-07 Actual Expenditures		FY 07-08 Actual Expenditures		FY 08-09 Appropriations Act	
	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds
Personal Service	\$ 120,233,468	\$ 47,250,848	\$ 136,395,670	\$ 49,507,736	\$ 141,607,441	\$ 48,706,788
Other Operating	\$ 103,508,869	\$ 11,516,379	\$ 112,894,611	\$ 25,358,959	\$ 150,207,566	\$ 9,544,436
Special Items	\$ 2,631,676	\$ 2,631,676	\$ 4,471,676	\$ 4,471,676	\$ 1,200,000	\$ 1,200,000
Permanent Improvements						
Case Services	\$ 882,825,409	\$ 54,967,665	\$ 970,600,675	\$ 63,379,866	\$ 960,852,522	\$ 57,508,297
Distributions to Subdivisions	\$ 12,555,376	\$ 565,266	\$ 14,369,584	\$ 38,000	\$ 14,378,274	\$ 1,693,333
Fringe Benefits	\$ 38,384,552	\$ 14,223,918	\$ 43,551,401	\$ 16,186,023	\$ 42,878,421	\$ 15,594,112
Non-recurring						
<b>Total</b>	\$ 1,160,139,350	\$ 131,155,752	\$ 1,282,283,617	\$ 158,942,260	\$ 1,311,124,224	\$ 134,246,966

**Other Expenditures**

Sources of Funds	FY 06-07 Actual Expenditures	FY 07-08 Actual Expenditures
Supplemental Bills	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 28,600,000
Capital Reserve Funds	\$ 16,500,000	
Bonds		

## 12.

## Major Program Areas

Program Number and Title	Major Program Area Purpose (Brief)	FY 06-07 Budget Expenditures	FY 07-08 Budget Expenditures	Key Cross References for Financial Results*
I.A,B,C,D,E.4,II.E.1., G.1,2; III	Food Stamps--EBT Issuance and Administration	<b>State:</b> 17,765,982.00 <b>Federal:</b> 628,955,881.00 <b>Other:</b> 5,674,790.00 <b>Total:</b> 652,396,653.00 <b>% of Total Budget: 56%</b>	<b>State:</b> 16,373,038.00 <b>Federal:</b> 699,034,755.00 <b>Other:</b> 2,157,685.00 <b>Total:</b> 717,565,478.00 <b>% of Total Budget: 56%</b>	
I.A,B,C,D,E.1,3,4;II.E.1,2,3,L;III	Family Independence	<b>State:</b> 30,801,901.00 <b>Federal:</b> 49,449,421.00 <b>Other:</b> 41,232,178.00 <b>Total:</b> 121,483,500.00 <b>% of Total Budget: 11%</b>	<b>State:</b> 19,316,831.00 <b>Federal:</b> 68,813,842.00 <b>Other:</b> 40,246,649.00 <b>Total:</b> 128,377,322.00 <b>% of Total Budget: 10%</b>	
I.A,B,C,D,E.1; II.A.2,B.1,2,3; III	Foster Care Program	<b>State:</b> 36,749,204.00 <b>Federal:</b> 58,895,235.00 <b>Other:</b> 10,764,077.00 <b>Total:</b> 106,408,516.00 <b>% of Total Budget: 9%</b>	<b>State:</b> 57,131,179.00 <b>Federal:</b> 57,917,091.00 <b>Other:</b> 6,143,756.00 <b>Total:</b> 121,192,026.00 <b>% of Total Budget: 9%</b>	
I.A,B,E.1; II.E.1,N; III	Child Care Development	<b>State:</b> 9,809,988.00 <b>Federal:</b> 72,635,050.00 <b>Other:</b> 2,238,819.00 <b>Total:</b> 84,683,857.00 <b>% of Total Budget: 7%</b>	<b>State:</b> 10,023,162.00 <b>Federal:</b> 77,091,287.00 <b>Other:</b> 4,114,226.00 <b>Total:</b> 91,228,675.00 <b>% of Total Budget: 7%</b>	
I.A,B,C,D; II.F; III	Child Support Enforcement	<b>State:</b> 4,000,004.00 <b>Federal:</b> 23,764,847.00 <b>Other:</b> 23,404,130.00 <b>Total:</b> 51,168,981.00 <b>% of Total Budget: 4%</b>	<b>State:</b> 12,652,211.00 <b>Federal:</b> 29,646,594.00 <b>Other:</b> 14,612,668.00 <b>Total:</b> 56,911,473.00 <b>% of Total Budget: 5%</b>	

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

Adoption Services, Adult Protective Services, Child Protective & Preventive Services, Homemaker Services, Battered Spouse/Family Violence, Child & Adult Food Services, Summer Food Services, Emergency Food Assistance, and Special Items.

<b>Remainder of Expenditures:</b>	<b>State:</b>	32,028,673.00	<b>State:</b>	43,445,839.00
	<b>Federal:</b>	107,686,663.00	<b>Federal:</b>	119,129,365.00
	<b>Other:</b>	4,282,507.00	<b>Other:</b>	4,433,439.00
	<b>Total:</b>	143,997,843.00	<b>Total:</b>	167,008,643.00
		<b>% of Total Budget: 13%</b>		<b>% of Total Budget: 13%</b>

\* 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.

## **Section III: Elements of Malcolm Baldrige Award Criteria**

### **Category 1 - Leadership**

The DSS State Director, Dr. Kathleen Hayes, and her 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, to serve children and families in South Carolina with excellence, 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 ensure two-way communication for: a) short and long term direction and organizational priorities; b) performance expectations; c) organizational values; d) empowerment and innovation; e) organizational and employee learning; and, f) ethical behavior?***

**(a-f)** Management has met with key staff throughout all programs and counties to define the core mission of the agency and to establish outcomes that meet the agency's mission. In this manner, action plans and strategies have been produced. Management has created an organizational structure to efficiently and effectively implement the action plans with accountability. Senior leaders use workload indicators and outcome measurement data, designed around key strategic goals, to determine trends and anomalies, and to set organizational priorities.

The executive management team and senior management, as management groups examine all programs and major administrative processes in order to make difficult decisions concerning the allocation of resources. Priorities are communicated through meetings and presentations with staff and community partners, in the agency's on-line newsletters, and through the DSS website.

The agency's Business plan can be accessed on the DSS homepage for agency staff and the public to review. The State Director and executive staff conduct regular meetings with all county and regional directors and central staff to communicate expectations regarding objectives, values, empowerment, and ethical behavior

#### ***1.2 How do senior leaders establish and promote a focus on customers and other stakeholders?***

Improving customer service is an agency priority. The agency's Customer Service Task Force has explored strategies to improve customer service, including improving training, implementing customer friendly policies, implementing disciplinary actions to administer when poor service is provided, providing incentives for outstanding service, and adding a section concerning customer service to performance evaluations of staff. Senior leaders stress public responsibility and citizenship, and county and regional offices are responsible for dealing with customer inquires and concerns.

**1.3 *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 and key stakeholders are the eyes and ears of DSS. County and regional directors, case managers, and other county and regional 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, and analyzing customer questions and concerns.

**1.4 *How do senior managers maintain fiscal, legal and regulatory accountability?***

The agency undergoes a detailed legislative audit of Family Independence every two years, a state financial audit annually, and regular federal reviews of all federally mandated programs. DSS review staff is responsible for ensuring that programs comply with state and federal regulations, and legal staff provides advice and recommendations for ensuring compliance with various legal concerns. (See also response to 7.5 regarding key measures of regulatory/legal compliance). DSS also has implemented a Budget Council which includes senior managers to review budgetary issues on a weekly basis.

**1.5 *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 or more frequently by senior leaders and by staff at all levels. The following are key outcomes.

**I. Child Welfare**

**Safety**

**S1 Outcome** - Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

**S2 Outcome** - Children are safely maintained in their own homes whenever possible and appropriate.

**Permanency**

**P1 Outcome** - Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

**P2 Outcome** - The continuity of family relationships and connections are preserved for children. (In-home and Out-of-home services)

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

**WB1 Outcome** - Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

**WB2 Outcome** - Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

**WB3 Outcome** - Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

## II. Adult Protection Outcomes

**APS1** **Outcome** - Reduce recurrence of abuse/neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults (persons 18 or older who are either subjected to or at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation).

**APS2** **Outcome** - Safely maintain vulnerable adults (persons 18 or older who are either subjected to or at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation) in the least restrictive environment.

## III. Family Assistance

**FA1** **Outcome** - Eligible families receive Family Independence services.

**FA2** **Outcome** - Families that are receiving FI services achieve a level of competence that is commensurate with their abilities while improving family functioning and self-reliance.

**FA3** **Outcome** - Children in families receiving Family Independence do not become recipients as adults.

## IV. Child Care Outcomes and Measures

### A. Child Care Services

**CC1** **Outcome** - Quality, affordability, and/or availability of childcare is expanded throughout SC to help meet the needs of working families.

### B. Child Care Licensing and Regulatory Services

**CC2** **Outcome** - Children's health and safety will be protected in child care settings and the quality of child care facilities will be improved.

## V. Family Nutrition

**FN1** **Outcome** - Maximize eligible households' access to Food and Nutrition Programs.

## VI. Child Support Enforcement

**CSE1** **Outcome** - Children who are born out of wedlock have paternity established.

**CSE2** **Outcome** - Children with one or both parents absent from the home receive adequate financial support from the non-custodial parent(s).

**CSE3** **Outcome** - Children receive medical insurance coverage whenever such coverage is available through the non-custodial parent's or custodial parent's employer at reasonable cost.

**CSE4** – **Outcome** - Funds expended by the program produce a reasonable rate of return in child support collected for the benefit of the dependent children.

**1.6 *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? How do their personal actions reflect a commitment to the organizational values?***

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 weekly to discuss current data, trends and outcome measures, and how to implement needed improvements. They use performance data to assist counties and regional offices in determining areas with high levels of performance as well as areas needing improvement, and discuss how to improve outcomes.

On a monthly or bi-monthly basis, a cross-section of agency staff, and/or the DSS senior managers are brought together to discuss a specific area of agency operations, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and generating ideas for improvement. The emphasis for the administration is to be highly responsive to concerns raised by staff.

Efforts are made to ensure that all interested parties are brought to the table, ideas are discussed openly and are welcomed, and decisions are made in a supportive team environment where appropriate. Also, responsibilities are assigned and staff works together for the common good of the agency and the clients we serve, reflecting personal commitment to organizational values.

**1.7 *How do senior leaders promote and personally participate in succession planning the development of future organizational leaders?***

In 2005, DSS instituted a ‘knowledge transfer’ program. Managers were trained to develop systems to document the work of employees who had specific and technical knowledge critical to agency operations. The goal of this program is to provide for work continuation due to turnover in specialized or critical agency positions. In addition, senior management is establishing a mentor program to help newly hired county directors while they gain valuable experience.

**1.8 *How do senior leaders create an environment for performance improvement, accomplishment of strategic objectives, and innovation?***

Senior leaders have engaged in a series of meetings to plan strategies to incorporate staff input and reward staff and expand communication. The agency is examining implementation of lead worker programs and career ladders to recognize experienced, high performing employees. Emphasis by management is to recognize staff and offices that are excelling in providing quality customer service. The state director and other senior staff personally participate in the joint meeting of the two-year cycle of county child welfare program reviews to ensure clear communication of DSS priorities for continuous improvement.

**1.9 *How does senior leadership actively support and strengthen the communities in which your agency operates? Include how senior leaders and employees contribute to improving these communities.***

The health and well-being of the children and families served by DSS is the responsibility of many agencies and citizens. DSS recognizes that it must work closely with community partners to not only address the issues at hand but also to alleviate root causes of problems faced by citizens who need DSS services.

The agency has made a commitment to staff a community development effort. Through a faith-based community development effort, staff help create opportunities for county and regional directors and staff to get their communities involved. Senior leadership works with faith and community institutions to promote community development efforts, as well as to learn about the social service needs and/or successes in our local communities.

A specific area on the agency web site provides information regarding our faith-based/community initiative and a computer-based resource inventory provides statewide access and information regarding local partnerships. Many faith and community individuals and organizations have volunteered time and resources to address local needs. Periodically, the state director meets with outside stakeholders and legislators to discuss critical issues facing our community.

## **Category 2 – Strategic Planning**

### **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, including KEY participants, and how does it address: a) Your organization’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; b) Financial, regulatory, societal, and other potential risks; c) Shifts in technology or the regulatory environment; d) Human resource capabilities and needs; e) The opportunities and barriers you described in the Executive Summary (question 4) f) Business continuity in emergencies; and g) Your ability to execute the strategic plan.***

DSS implemented an agency-wide strategic programmatic planning process in 2003. That process has evolved to one in which a strategic plan incorporating administrative and support services.

Strategic planning is 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. While further refinements and improvements are being studied, this year’s process has been productive, and incorporated the ideas and input of the agency’s key staff, including direct service workers, supervisors, county directors and administrative staff.

Additionally, in child protection services, the agency is required by the federal DHHS Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to develop a Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP) every five years and submit annual progress reports (APSRs). Periodic federal reviews by DHHS ACF determine state compliance with national standards in child welfare, prompting a program improvement plan that includes development and monitoring of additional goals and outcomes for child welfare. The agency incorporates any unfinished objectives into the annual update of the CFSP. The agency’s child welfare program

improvement plan implemented in June 2004 ended in June 2006. A Child Welfare Advisory Committee comprised of our community stakeholders and partners meets quarterly to receive updated information from SCDSS and to offer feedback and input on our planning processes. Multiple citizen review entities, collaborations and partnerships throughout the state focus on and assess our child welfare activities, which require our ongoing attention and response.

***How does your Strategic Plan address:***

***a) Your organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats***

We include detailed performance measures and agency goals in our strategic plan, for all major programs in the agency. In formulating the strategic plan, managers and staff have been provided training in SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analyses and are knowledgeable in strategies for compiling a strategic plan that accurately accounts for goals and measures that can be achieved, and also, which address weaknesses and threats.

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

Executive management meets weekly to assess risks made known to the agency. Offices that are not fully complying with laws or agency policies concerning child welfare or family assistance programs, or potential financial penalties that might be imposed due to noncompliance, strategies to reduce risks are assessed.

***c) Shifts in technology or the regulatory environment***

DSS has requested the assistance of the Budget and Control Board to assist the agency in long-range information technology planning. Staffs of DSS and the Budget and Control Board office have met with federal officials to determine future technology needs.

***d) Human resource capabilities and needs?***

We realize our employees are our greatest resource. With our stretched financial resources, staff have been required to do more with less until additional resources were provided in FY 2006-07. Executive management, on a monthly basis, examines staffing and caseload sizes to determine if resources need to be reallocated.

***e) The opportunities and barriers described in the Executive Summary***

See **a)** above.

***f) Business continuity in emergencies***

DSS has detailed plans for the continuity of services due to catastrophes caused by hurricanes, earthquakes, or other natural disasters. Staff has been provided training in disaster response, procedures have been updated and disseminated as relates to evacuation plans for our client families and those at risk, and information is routinely updated for staff in terms of accessing instructions in times of need. In addition, 2700 DSS employees are trained to serve as the primary staff to shelters opened by the Red Cross to serve citizens displaced during a disaster.

***g) Your ability to execute the strategic plan***

Staff meets frequently to assess progress in executing the agency's business plan. For example, county directors meet monthly and senior managers meet quarterly. Issues that limit staff from executing the plan are discussed, and staffing concerns that cause the

agency to miss important outcome measures are analyzed. Each program has an experienced director who oversees the agency's strategic goals.

**2.2 What are your key strategic objectives?**

<b>Program Number and Title</b>	<b>Supported Agency Strategic Planning Goal/Objective</b>	<b>Related FY 06-07 Key Agency Action Plan/Initiative(s)</b>	<b>Key Cross References for Performance Measures (see Section 7)</b>
<b>Food Stamps</b> 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 22 – 25
<b>Family Independence</b> 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.	Table 4; Charts 17 – 21
<b>Foster Care</b> 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 5 – 14
<b>Child Protective and Preventative Services</b> 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 when possible.	Ensure timely and effective intervention services when safety is compromised in the home or facility environment.	Tables 1, 2; Charts 1 – 4
<b>Adult Protective Services and Domestic Violence</b>	Vulnerable/ elderly adults will have needs met in the least restrictive environment	Ensure timely and effective intervention and support services.	Table 3; Charts 15, 16
<b>Child Support Enforcement</b> I.A,B,C,D; II.F; III.	Children receive needed financial support from the non-custodial parent.	Increase child support collections.	Table 5; Chart 26

**2.2 *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 operations staff, establish the major policy and procedural revisions. (Regarding the tracking of action plans, see 2.8 below).

**2.3 *How do you communicate and deploy strategic objectives, action plans, and related 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 presents the key agency strategies.

**2.4 *How do you measure progress on your action plans?***

Data is aggregated and analyzed to determine how well individual counties are progressing on individual variables, how they compare to other counties in the state, how each county compares to the statewide average, and how all compare in terms of meeting, or not meeting, outlined objectives.

**2.5 *How do your strategic objectives address the strategic challenges you identified in your organizational profile?***

Strategic objectives mirror our challenges outlined in this report.

**2.6 *How do you evaluate and improve your strategic planning process?***

Management examines the results of key outcomes to determine if the agency's planning process is delivering the desired results. Results are scrutinized and annual plans are revised to better ensure that the needs of the agency and its customers are met.

**2.7 *If the agency's strategic plan is available to the public through the agency's internet homepage, please provide an address for that plan on the website.***

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 are e-mailed to all county and state office managers each month. A link to the agency's strategic plan can be found on the agency's homepage at <http://www.state.sc.us/dss/>.

**Category 3 – Customer Focus**

**3.0 Customer Focus (External Only)**

Knowing and fully understanding the needs of current and future customers help 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?***

**Human Services (Child Welfare, Adult Protective Services)**

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 statutes define 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 and adoptive parents apply or are recruited. We provide training, staff support, and follow-up. Feedback from foster and adoptive 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 in federal law. We provide financial assistance, medical services, and educational services to those eligible.

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 Assistance (TANF, Family Nutrition, Child Care)**

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 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.

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. South Carolina offers two simplified application projects to provide access to disabled individuals and elderly citizens over 60. Eligibility is determined by rules and regulations which are 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, food banks, and homeless shelters.

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.

The ABC Child Care Program provides vouchers for children from birth to age 13 years of age, or to 19 years of age if they have special needs. In order to be eligible for a voucher, the parent must be working, or attending school or training, must have a gross monthly income less than 150% of poverty, and must meet one of the designated target populations, i.e.,

receiving TANF, children with special needs in foster care or adoption, or receiving child protective services. Eligibility requirements are determined by federal regulations and state policy. Other customers are child care providers that apply to be regulated as required by state statute and parents of children attending child care facilities. Key requirements are specified in state statutes and regulations.

### **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 and expectations?***

We have established a Customer Service Task Force to assess current efforts and recommend enhancements to our services in meeting customer needs. Our constituent services division investigates concerns and complaints from the public, customers, legislators, and anyone with concerns about the agency.

We are continuing 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 businesses through such vehicles as community and professional meetings, exchange of information among professional entities, research and professional information on national trends, employer focus groups, participation in community and economic development organizations, conferences, surveys, the foster care hot line, constituent services, indirect feedback through supervisors and workers, and Foster Care Review Board reports on performance and feedback from the state's citizen review Panels.

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

We use feedback from customers, community leaders, employers, staff, and others, in concert with local, state, and national data, to plan and/or modify programs, policies, and procedures to be consistent with good practice, statutes and federal regulations. We also use employer feedback, labor market data, and 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. We seek to identify resources to address gaps in current services or to augment current services.

### **3.4 *How do you measure customer/stakeholder satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and use this information to improve?***

The following are examples:

- Outside review groups including the Foster Care Review Board, Foster Parents' Association, 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 issues or concerns.
- 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 a relationship with customers, partners, and employers is through one-on-one contacts. We actively seek out and build mutually beneficial partnerships with customers and stakeholders. DSS has three core programs, each with distinct and separate stakeholders and customers and some that serve mutual customers.

A number of faith-based and community organizations assist DSS in serving children and families in need of food, clothing, parenting skills and other basic necessities of life. We have a staff person designated to building relationships with nonprofit organizations, state agencies, and churches.

Agency staff, including the Director, meets with groups of stakeholders such as foster care youth, Foster Parent Associations, Council on Adoptable Children (COAC), non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations, and service providers from other agencies to discuss common concerns. Customers and stakeholders also are incorporated into the agency's planning process.

**Category 4 – Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management**

**4.1 *How do you decide which operations, processes and systems to measure for tracking financial and operational performance, including progress relative to strategic objectives and action plans?***

We are required by federal and state laws and regulations to achieve designated performance levels relative to most aspects of the services we are mandated to provide. The main agency program areas with mandated performance levels include: Child Welfare, Adult Protective Services, Family Assistance, Child Support Enforcement, and Family Nutrition. Federal and state law, and our strategic goals, objectives, and priorities, determine which data we collect, what we measure and how we measure. We focus on data which describe policy trends that have the greatest impact on client benefits and services, and on data which help assess compliance with federal and state requirements and on good practice standards.

**4.2 *How do you use data/information analysis to provide effective support for decision making throughout your organization?***

The Office of Planning and Quality Assurance was created to collect, analyze and report management information and performance information on a regular basis. The Office works with data maintained by other agencies such as the Budget and Control Board Office of Research and Statistics, Employment Security Commission, Department of Labor, and the US Census. Along with state and federal auditors, we audit our data to determine its reliability.

Workload indicators and outcome measures data are reviewed on an ongoing basis and play a critical role in decision-making. These data permit identification and analysis of trends in program use, for example, and in comparative analysis of county performance. Identifying offices or counties that need assistance allows us to concentrate resources, technical assistance, training, and other needed services to those counties in an effort to raise performance. The data identify which systems need to improve statewide and which counties have specific needs.

Qualitative reviews of county services are conducted to assist in the agency's quality improvement process. County reviews assess compliance with casework standards, determine the accuracy of data input into the data management system, and assess supervisory effectiveness. Qualitative reviews may lead to the identification of recurring issues, and to revisions of policy and/or procedures.

**4.3 *What are your key measures, how do you review them, and how do you keep them current with business needs and direction?***

Key measures can be found in Section 7, category 1. Review of key measures is mandated by our federal and state requirements, and in many cases, failure to meet key performance measures results in financial penalties.

**4.4 *How do you select and use key comparative data and information to support operational and strategic decision making and innovation?***

We strive to use reliable, verifiable information to make data-based decisions in a timely manner. These data are critical to decision-making that will positively impact our overall effectiveness. Most of the operations of the agency are documented according to federal and state requirements, and program effectiveness is measured against those criteria and against performance over time.

**4.5 *How do you ensure data integrity, timeliness, accuracy, security and availability for decision making?***

Much of our data collection is defined by federal and state laws and regulations, and must meet rigorous standards for integrity, timeliness, accuracy and security. Data from other social services agencies can be compared for trends to indicate effectiveness of services and to assess customer needs. The Budget and Control Board's Division of Research and Statistics also provides the agency with crucial data analysis and cross-compilation of data from other sources, important in developing policy, determining if services are being delivered as planned and determining if services are meeting goals. We also use labor market hiring trends and other workforce data as we refine strategies for workforce development.

**4.6 *How do you translate organizational performance review findings into priorities for continuous improvement?***

We continuously collect and monitor data and performance and meet with key managers to assess ways to improve performance.

**4.7 *How do you collect, transfer, and maintain organizational and employee knowledge (your knowledge assets)? How do you identify and share best practices?***

DSS continues to focus on best practices for ongoing improvement in the quality of services provided. Information regarding best practices is routed to key managers utilizing various methods. For example, in senior management meetings, staff who have had outstanding practices and outcomes have presented their practices to other managers. Staff is encouraged to communicate with experienced managers who have proven results.

## **Category 5 - 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 help realize the agency's mission. This ownership of mission enables our leaders to capitalize on the collective knowledge and experience of our staff and encourage them to better serve our customers.

**5.1 *How do you organize and manage work: to enable employees to develop and utilize their full potential, aligned with the organization's objectives, strategies, and action plans; and to promote cooperation, initiative, empowerment, innovation and your desired organizational culture?***

The agency is organized by similar programs and functions with experienced managers to oversee and monitor work. Each county and regional office has a director or administrator and the state office has deputy state directors or program directors to manage work. Employees participate in work design and program changes, and are encouraged to develop innovative ways to improve performance.

**5.2 *How do you evaluate and improve your organization's human resource processes?***

The human resources-related processes are evaluated through the analysis and required responses of reports provided by audit findings, Insurance Services reports, payroll reports, the Office of Human Resources, and the Retirement System. One goal of the Human Resources Management Division is to meet annually with the Human Resources Liaisons (HR Liaisons). The HR Liaisons are staff out stationed from State Office, and they serve the role of the human resources administrator for the assigned office. The purpose of this meeting is to provide training and information to these key human resources administrators and to receive input, suggestions and feedback from them about the agency's human resources processes. Additionally, the Human Resources Director sends periodic "HR Updates" to the HR Liaisons as an effort to provide continuous communication and solicit valuable input.

**5.3 *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? How do you evaluate the effectiveness of this education and training? How do you encourage on the job use of the new knowledge and skills?***

Training priorities are designed to meet the agency's mission, values and strategic goals, as well as to federal and state mandates. Child welfare and economic services programs have specific basic training requirements to ensure staff meets the skills and competency levels needed to provide quality and timely services to customers.

Key developmental and training needs are identified by various methods, including data from performance management reports, case reviews conducted by county and state office staff, program quality assurance and technical assistance reviews, written tests during training, formal training evaluations and follow-up and employee exit surveys. Regional and county managers also identify specific areas for development and training based on direct staff observations. Human Resources also provide feedback to the Training Division on management and HR-related issues they have identified. Each office is responsible for

conducting orientation for new employees. The Training Division also conducts periodic needs assessments and surveys to determine training needs.

The training division conducts non-violent crisis intervention 3-4 times per year as an open enrollment course. This course teaches basic safety techniques.

Trainees are encouraged to use knowledge and skills taught in training through use of exercises, activities and case studies that are representative of casework they will encounter in the field.

The effectiveness of training is measured by written tests, trainee performance on simulated casework and trainer observation during training sessions and periodic contact with supervisors concerning worker performance in the county office.

**5.4 *How does employee training contribute to the achievement of your action plans?***

Staff undergo extensive training when hired, and training is constantly provided so that employees understand changes in expectations, outcome measures, and federal programs. Specialized training is offered regularly, and staff is trained to meet goals outlined in our strategic plan.

**5.5 *How does your employee performance management system, including feedback to and from employees, support high performance and contribute to the achievement of your action plans? How do you motivate your employees to develop and utilize their full potential?***

Supervisor and employees in DSS work together to develop a planning stage for the EPMS (Employee Personnel Management System) that includes critical job functions and outlines the success criteria for each job function. At yearly evaluations, employees receive meaningful feedback on their job functions and, if needed, they receive guidance in areas needing improvement. This process supports high performance and the realization of the agency action plan. DSS also offers a broad array of training opportunities and is working to improve the career ladder for case workers. The agency is currently setting up a learning management system, which will offer online training, readily available transcripts for all employees, and social worker certification classes, among other opportunities.

**5.6 *How do you motivate your employees to develop and utilize their full potential?***

Employees are provided a variety of training opportunities in order to develop their full potential. The agency implemented the “DSS Academy” which provides interested participants a complete overview of the agency with the hopes of introducing them to all of the agency programs and services, so they can see that DSS offers a variety of career opportunities. The agency has participated in the Executive Institute Program and the Certified Manager Program (CPM) offered by the Budget and Control Board for the past few years which provides key participants in depth training with managing in a governmental environment. Supervisory training was reinstated with a focus toward training new managers on the technical aspects of supervision, such as, completing employee performance evaluations, preparing position descriptions, and other functions.

**5.7 *What formal and/or informal assessment methods and measures do you use to determine employee well being, satisfaction, and motivation? How do you use other measures such as employee retention and grievances? How do you determine priorities for improvement?***

Employee “Exit Evaluations” are sent to departing employees’ home addresses for feedback. This information is gathered, reviewed and shared with their respective Deputy State Directors monthly. Turnover information is prepared quarterly and areas that reflect substantial turnover is reviewed, often in conjunction with the exit interview information to determine the reasons. Grievance information is reviewed periodically for the purpose of determining the reasons for disciplinary actions and whether there are patterns that require attention. Improvement priorities are based on employee feedback from the exit interviews, management input and review of collected turnover data.

**5.8 How do you maintain a safe, secure, and healthy work environment? (Include your workplace preparedness for emergencies and disasters.)**

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.

During any disaster that may affect the state, SCDSS offices must be prepared to staff county American Red Cross (ARC) and Special Medical Needs (SMNS) emergency shelters. All available DSS county staffs, and Managed Treatment Services (MTS), Adoptions, Child Support Enforcement (CSE), and Day Care staff, are subject to shelter duty. This staff is to be brought in during the first 72 hours of shelter activation. After the initial 72 hours, the County DSS Director may request relief workers from the State Office or regional offices to be deployed to his/her supervision.

**Category 6 – Process Management**

We use a process approach to 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, implements and manages interrelated processes that contribute to our overall, responsive delivery of services to customers.

**6.1 What are your key processes that produce, create or add value for your customers and your organization? How do you ensure that these processes are used?**

Our targeted client groups are served by categorically funded, policy-based program designs including all programs in human services, family assistance and child support enforcement. 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.

Service delivery processes then vary with client needs, but may include numerous forms of intervention 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).

In addition, we conduct internal reviews and external audits are used to assess how these processes work.

**6.2 *How do you incorporate organizational knowledge, new technology, changing customer and mission-related requirements, cost controls, and other efficiency and effectiveness factors such as cycle time into process design and delivery?***

The agency measures how well we perform all key services. We measure implementation of human service treatment plans, food stamp error rates, child support collections, paternity establishment, 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 *How does your day-to-day operation of these processes ensure meeting key performance requirements?***

Executive staff, state level staff and county staff continuously make decisions that will improve agency performance. Key support functions include Information Resources, and Staff Development and Training. The Office of General Counsel provides legal guidance and interpretation and the Office of Planning and Quality Assurance provides data analysis, data monitoring, and reporting.

**6.4 *How do you systematically evaluate and improve your key product and service related processes?***

The agency uses internal and external audits and reviews to ensure that products and services are improved. We continually meet to evaluate service delivery and improve our management processes.

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

Key support processes are listed above, in 6.3. Improvement strategy is discussed above, in 6.4.

## Category 7 – Business Results

Note: Current fiscal year results are based on data that is available as of September 3, 2008. Those numbers will change as court orders, appeals, and other legal processes are completed and entered into DSS information systems. They will be finalized in next year's report.

### *7.1 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of mission accomplishment?*

The US Department of Agriculture monitors the accuracy of food stamp processing.

The US Department of Health and Human Services monitors the performance of our child support enforcement division.

The US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) initiated a review of South Carolina's child welfare programs in 2003. South Carolina met all six standards by the close of the Program Improvement Plan which ended in June 2006, and 20 of the 23 established goals.

## DSS Strategic Plan Outcome Measures

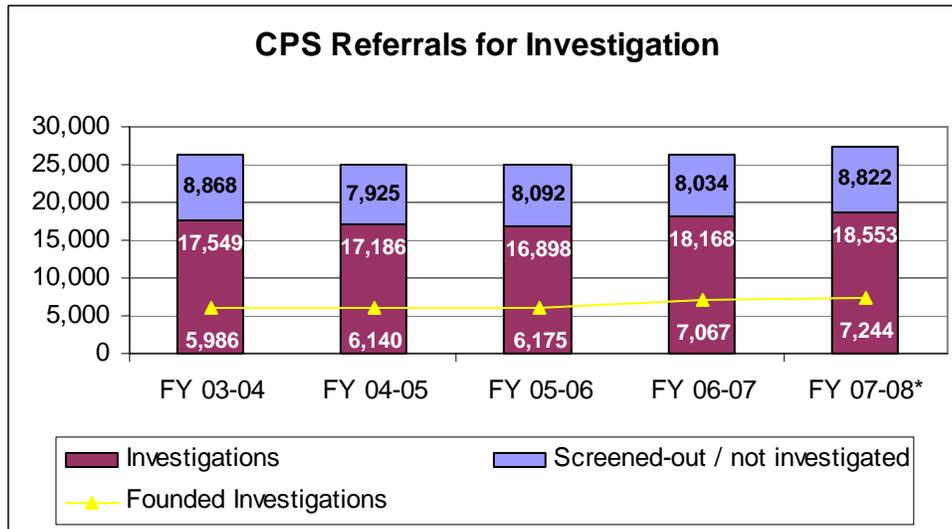
The Department of Social Services developed and published an agency strategic plan. As part of that plan the agency developed our "Dashboard" which are process and outcome measures designed to improve the agency's performance. Management reports and the agency's Dashboard are produced and disseminated monthly by the Planning and Quality Assurance.

Outcome Measures for fiscal year 2007-08 are as follows, (except where data is collected by federal fiscal year and is not yet available):

### **Child Welfare Outcome S1 - Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.**

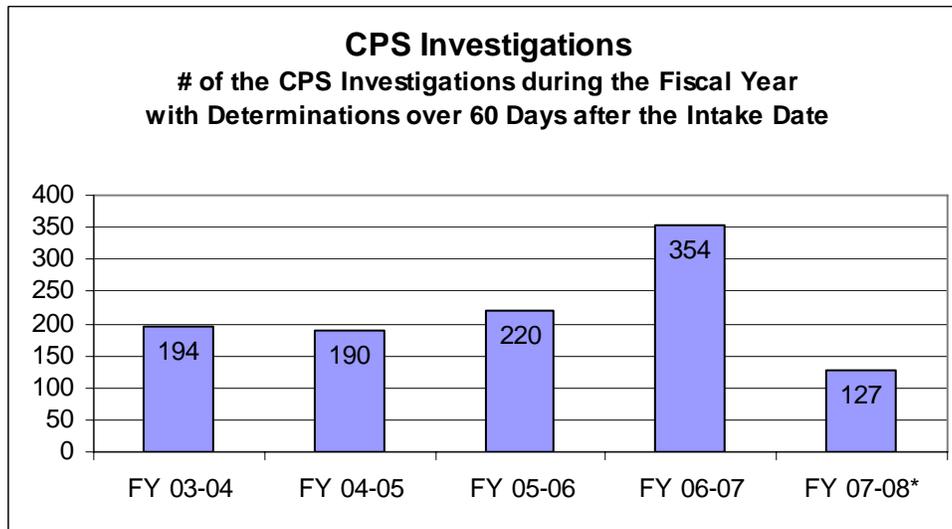
Chart 1 shows that during this past fiscal year, DSS investigated just over 18,500 reports of suspected child abuse and/or neglect involving families. Of those reports, 39% were found to be cases where abuse, neglect or some other type of child maltreatment likely occurred. Chart 2 indicates that the investigation / case decision took longer than 60 days in 127 of those investigations. This is a significant improvement since the previous year.

Category 7  
Chart 1



\* indicates data is current as of Sep. 3, 2008 – will be updated in next year’s report

Category 7  
Chart 2



\* indicates data is current as of Sep. 3, 2008 – will be updated in next year’s report

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

OHAN is part of 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. Table 1 shows that DSS received over 800 referrals of suspected abuse and/or neglect in out-of-home placements during FY 2007-08.

Category 7  
Table 1

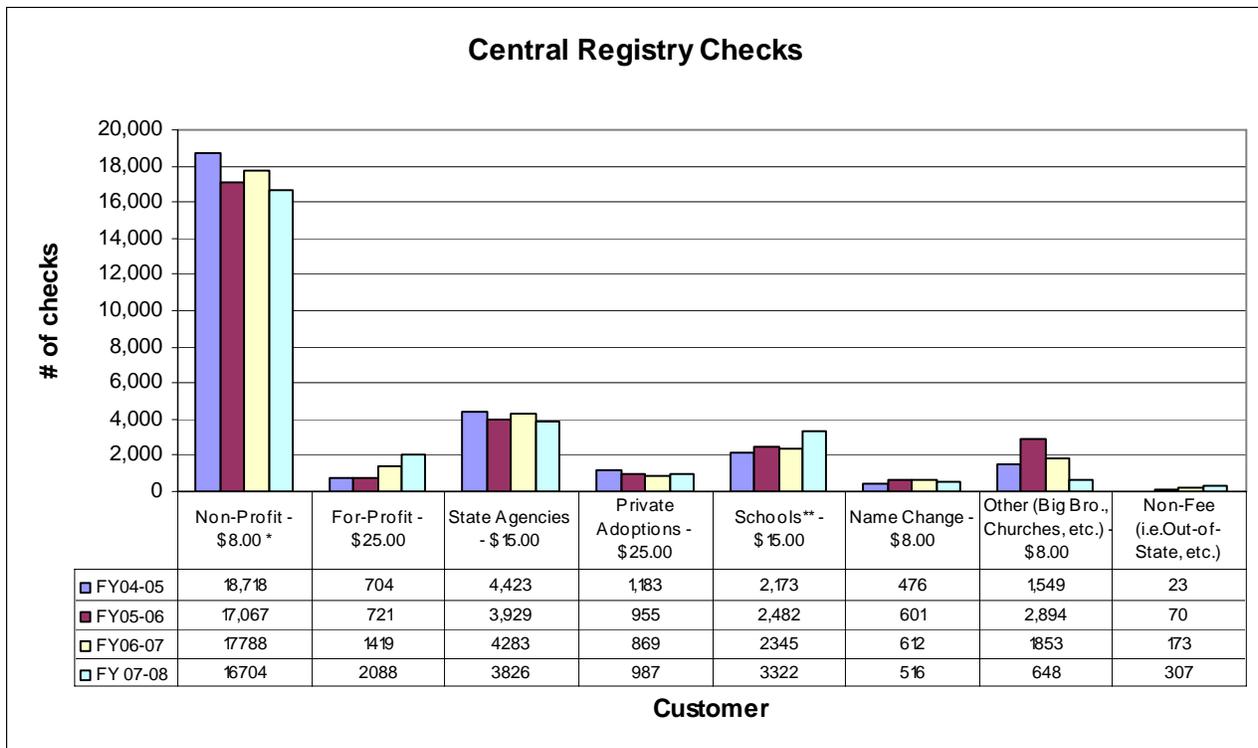
OHAN	FY 03-04		FY 04-05		FY 05-06		FY 06-07		FY 07-08*	
Total # of Referrals	700		788		817		882		833	
	# Reports		# Reports		# Reports		# Reports		# Reports	
	Accepted	Indicated								
Foster Homes	121	17	134	25	201	29	223	16	164	15
Institution/Group Homes	94	26	113	25	142	18	151	17	108	7
Day Care Facilities	76	15	104	24	96	13	185	21	144	16

\* indicates data is current as of Sep. 3, 2008 – will be updated in next year’s report

## Central Registry

The Central Registry is a statewide database that maintains records of confirmed incidents of abuse and neglect in South Carolina. DSS acts as a clearinghouse for agencies and business throughout the state to determine if prospective or current employees have a record of abuse and/or neglect. Chart 3 shows the number of Central Registry checks during the past 12 months.

Category 7  
Chart 3

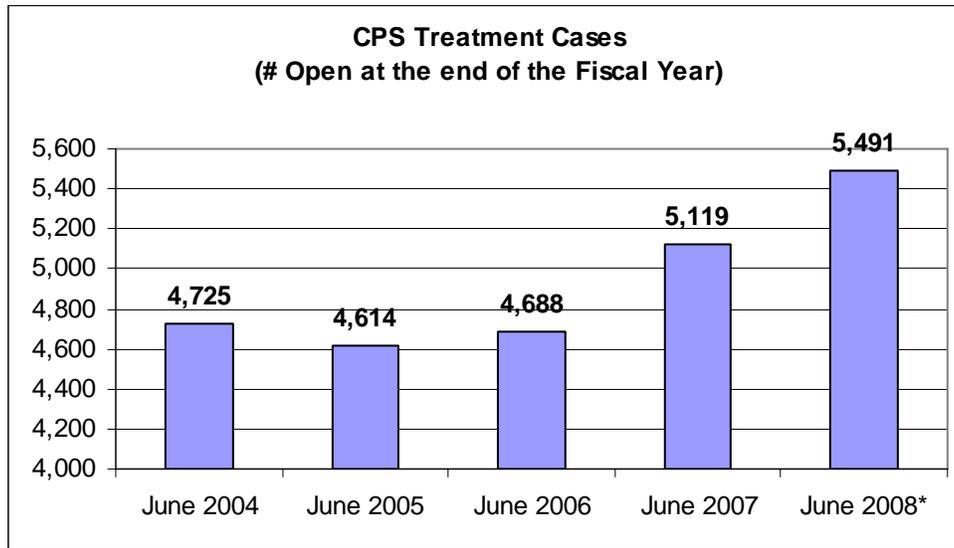


- Non-Profit includes group homes, child placing agencies, etc. Most are non-profit, although a few are for profit.
- \*\* This includes new teachers and volunteers for schools.
- \*\*\* Began charging fees on September 20, 2004.

**Child Welfare Outcome S2 - Children are safely maintained in their own homes whenever possible and appropriate.**

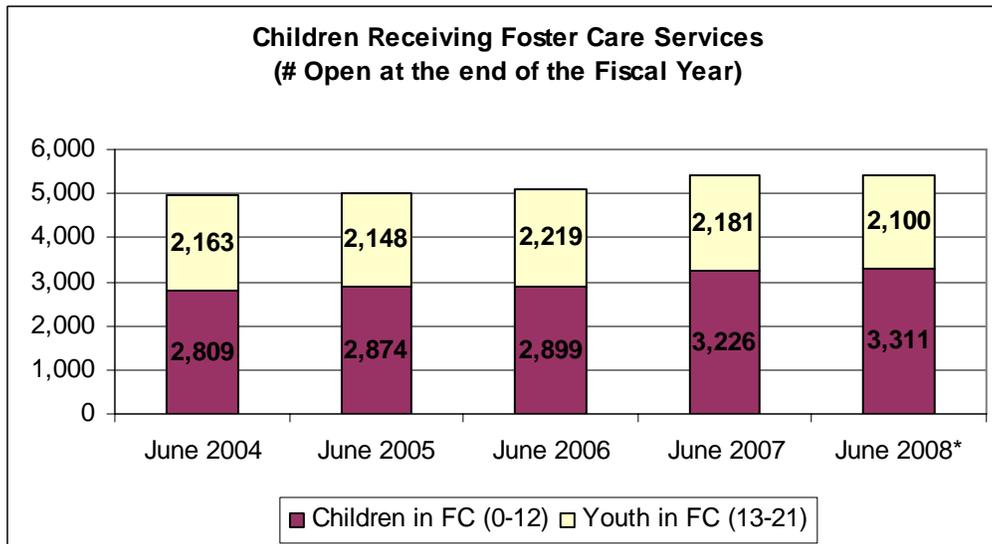
Chart 4 reflects the number of child welfare cases at the end of each fiscal year where children were receiving services in their own homes. Chart 5 reflects the number of children receiving foster care services at the end of each fiscal year.

Category 7  
Chart 4



\* indicates data is current as of Sep. 3, 2008 – will be updated in next year’s report

Category 7  
Chart 5



\* indicates data is current as of Sep. 3, 2008 – will be updated in next year’s report

Agency policy requires caseworkers to conduct a monthly home visit for each child in a child protective services (CPS) case. Home visits help the agency to assess the safety and well being of children who were the victims of abuse or neglect. A Legislative Audit council report published in

2006 recommended that DSS include in the accountability report the percentage of children in child protective services cases who have not been seen every 30 days. We concur with this recommendation and have developed reports to identify children who have not had a monthly visit.

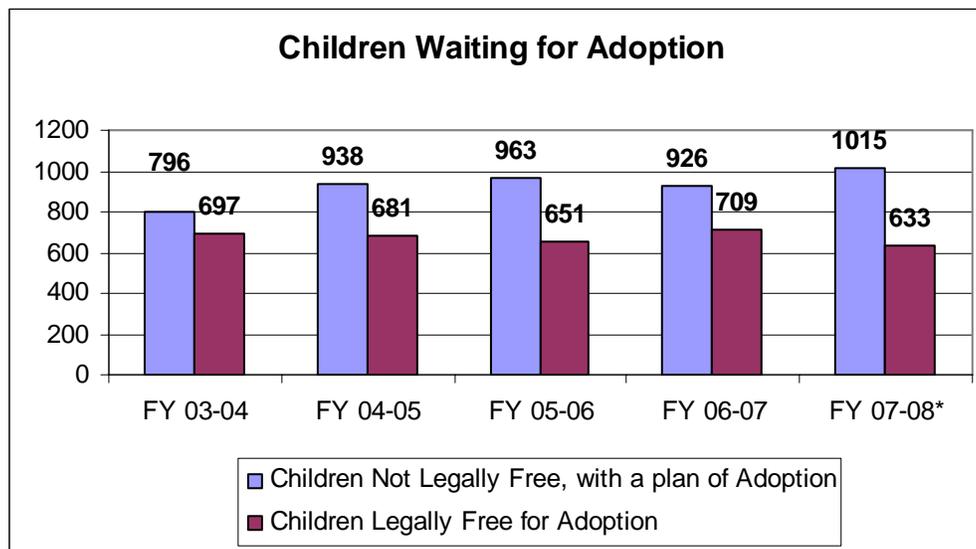
Category 7  
Table 2

CPS Treatment Services that were open any time 7/1/07 through 6/30/08	Total CPS Treatment Services	# Children	% of Total Children
# of open CPS treatment cases during the last 12 months	11,298		
# of children in CPST for 1 complete month during last 12 months		21,280	
# children with a f-t-f contact every for every full month in a CPST service		12,190	57.3%

**Child Welfare Outcome P1 - Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.**

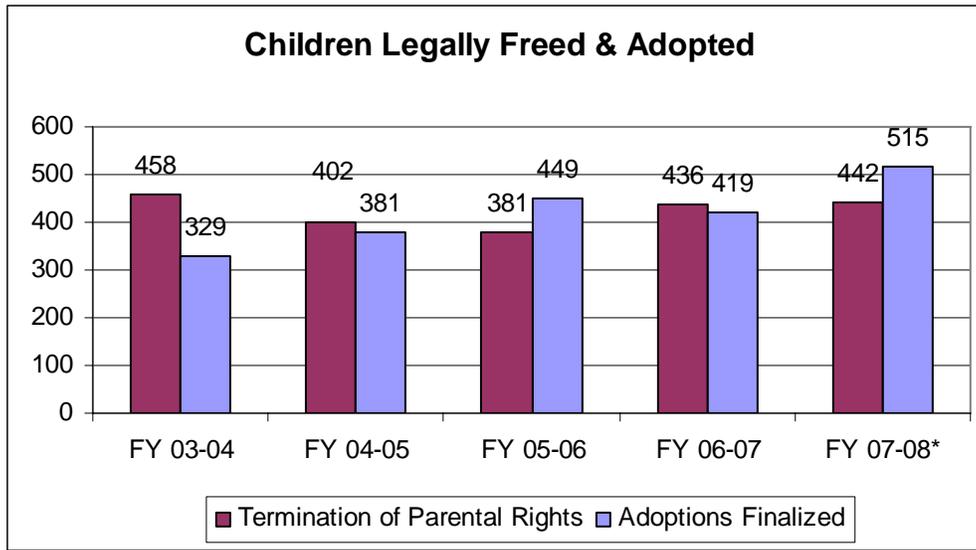
Charts 6 and 7 indicate the numbers of children waiting to be adopted and the numbers adopted.

Category 7  
Chart 6



\* indicates data is current as of Sep. 3, 2008 – will be updated in next year’s report

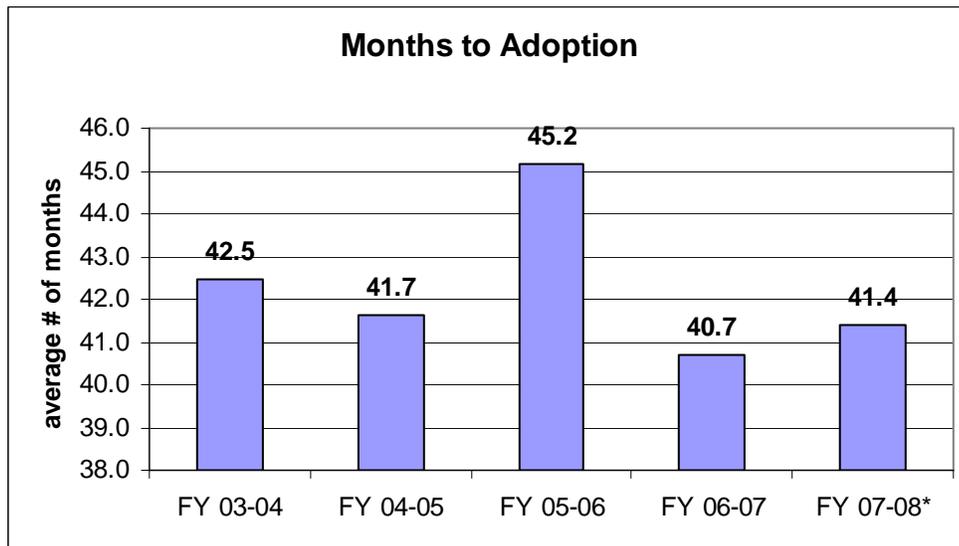
Category 7  
Chart 7



\* indicates data is current as of Sep. 3, 2008 – will be updated in next year’s report

Chart 8 indicates that the average number of months it takes for a child to be adopted decreased significantly since fiscal year 2005-06. The number increased slightly this fiscal year but continues to be much lower than fiscal year 2005-06. For federal fiscal year 2003-04 (the last year posted), federal data reflects that the national average months in care for children awaiting adoption was 43.8 months.

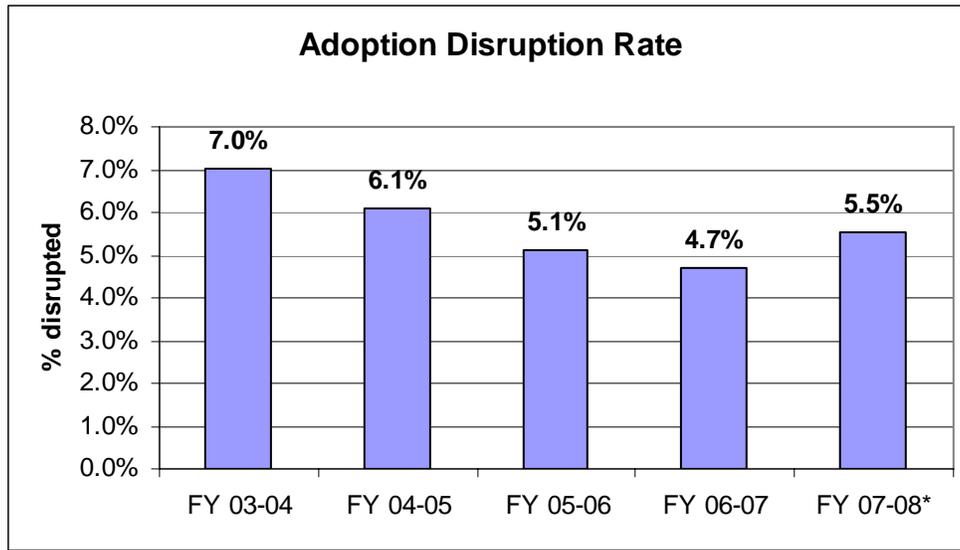
Category 7  
Chart 8



\* indicates data is current as of Sep. 3, 2008 – will be updated in next year’s report

Chart 9 shows a slight increase in the department’s disruption rate this past fiscal year. The national disruption rate is 10-12%. A disruption is defined as an adoptive placement that is not finalized because the child has to be moved.

Category 7  
Chart 9



\* indicates data is current as of Sep. 3, 2008 – will be updated in next year's report

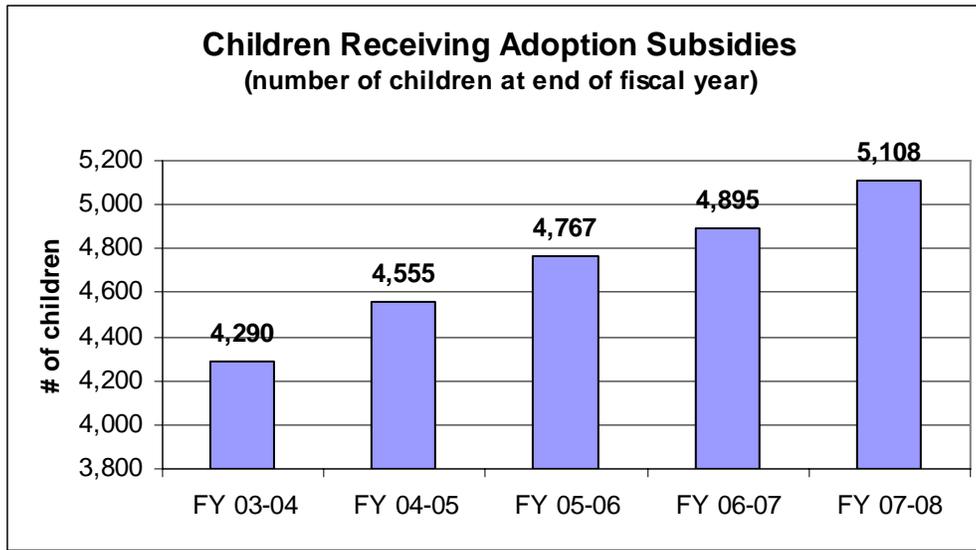
**Child Welfare Outcome P2 - The continuity of family relationships and connections are preserved for children.**

DSS has been tracking the proximity of foster care placements monthly. The outcome measure is as follows: Of all foster children (excluding those receiving specialized Intensive Foster Care and Clinical Services and Adoption Services) what percentage are placed within their home county? At the end of June 2008, DSS was placing 66.6% of foster children within their home county. This is an improvement compared to 62.8% last fiscal year. The statewide objective is 70%.

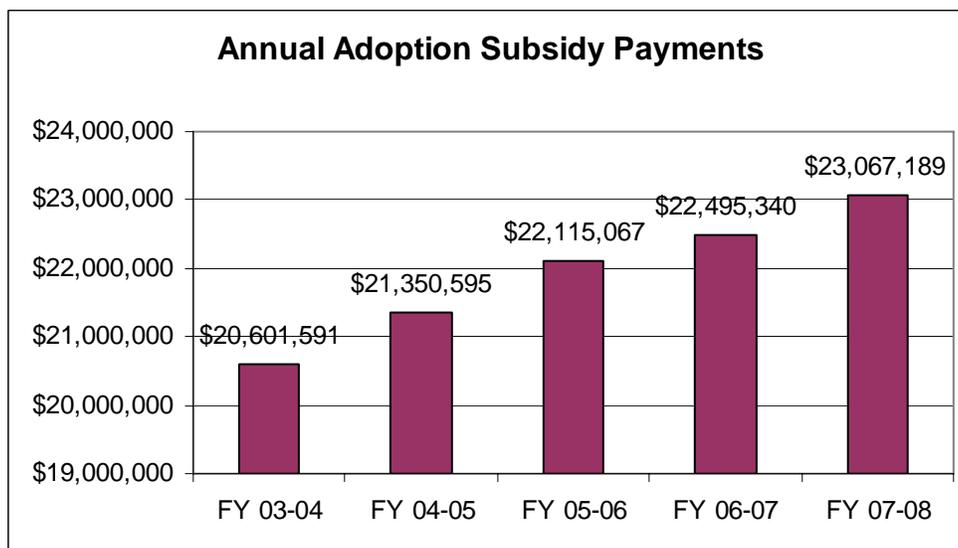
**Child Welfare Outcome WB1 - Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.**

At the end of fiscal year 2007-08, DSS was paying adoption subsidies to 5,108 children. The total adoption subsidies paid for the year was over \$23 million. See Charts 10 and 11.

Category 7  
Chart 10



Category 7  
Chart 11



**Child Welfare Outcome WB2 - Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.**

In fiscal year 2007-08, 145 youth received ETV Assistance/Chafee Assistance. ETV assistance includes college tuition, deposits, room and board, computers, lab and equipment fees, books and parking fees. Chafee assistance includes support for vocational training programs not covered by ETV such as barbering or other certificate programs.

Almost 400 youth received 592 education services in the following categories: (1) educational supports, such as tutorial services, summer school and adult education (2) senior items, such as

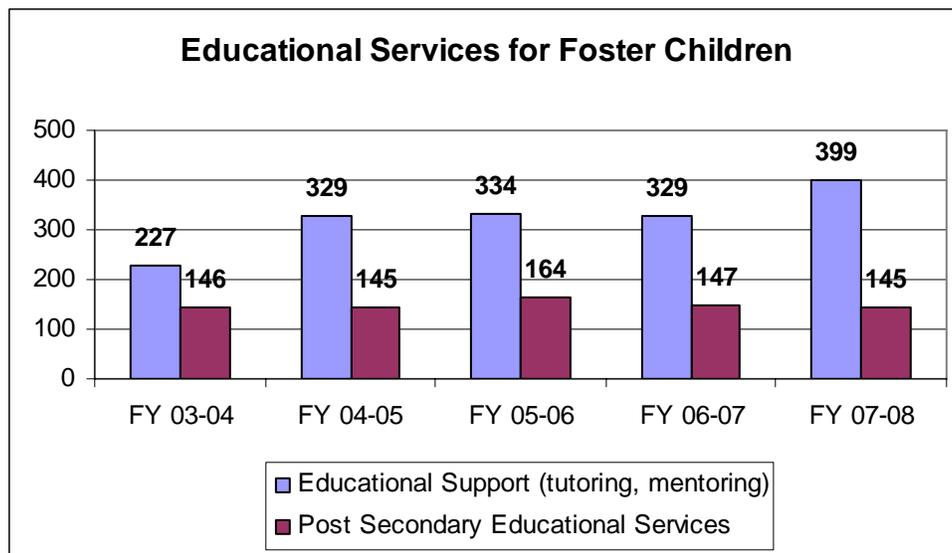
graduation invitations and packets, SAT/ACT fees and college application fees (3) special recognition, such as attendance at youth conferences, ROTC and/or school related sports uniforms and equipment, honor/award travel expenses, governor’s school tuition, and/or conference presentations and (4) transportation assistance to school to complete GED or to college or vocational school.

Of the 131 youth that graduated, 125 were High School Diploma, Certificate of Completion, or GED and 6 were Associate’s Degree, Vocational Certificate, or Bachelor’s Degree.

Notes:

- Post secondary graduate numbers are dependent upon youth or others reporting their status to the agency after youth may no longer be in foster care. The reported number is recognized to be lower than the actual number. Efforts are underway to explore alternate means of identifying post-secondary graduates.
- The S. C. Commission is currently working with the agency to track the number of foster youth who are receiving the state’s Need Based Grant, in addition to the Independent Living Program’s Education and Training Voucher.

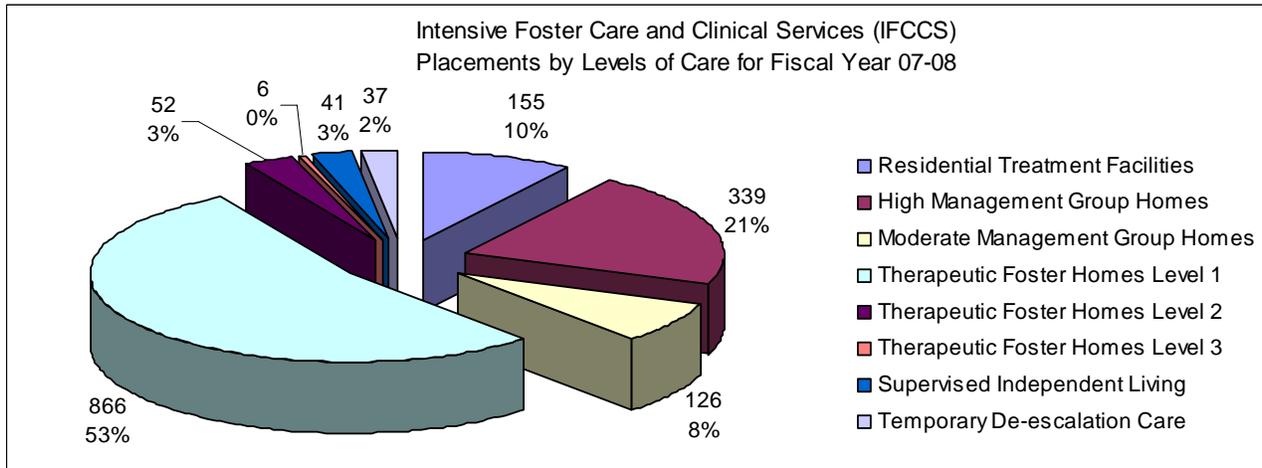
Category 7  
Chart 12



**Child Welfare Outcome WB3 - Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.**

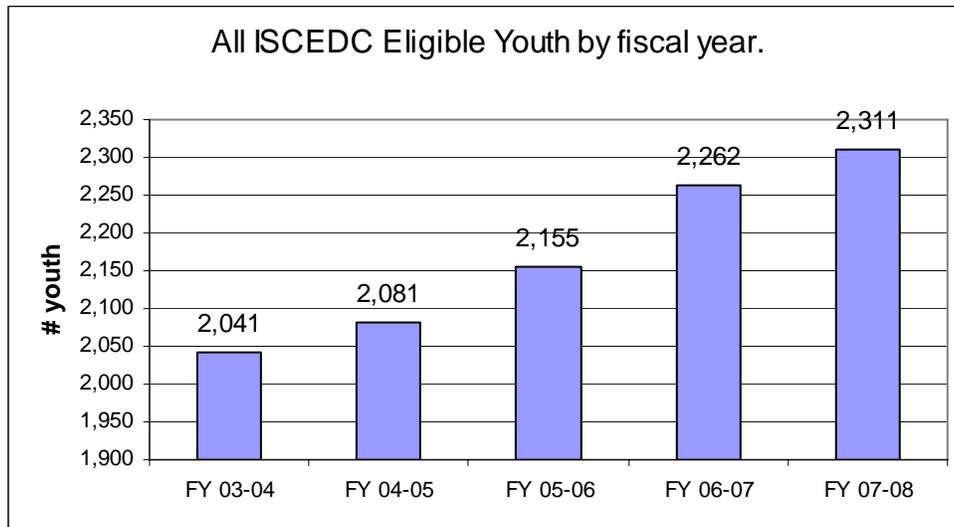
Intensive Foster Care and Clinical Services (IFCCS) provides intensive case management, as well as financial management or contract support for children in DSS custody (Foster Care) who require therapeutic placement. This service is for children who have emotional problems so severe they cannot function effectively at home or adjust in regular foster care. Chart 13 shows the numbers and types of therapeutic placements for children receiving these services during fiscal year 2007-08.

Category 7  
Chart 13



In FY 2007-08, 2,311 foster children were identified by local interagency staffing teams as emotionally or behaviorally disturbed and deemed ISCEDC eligible.

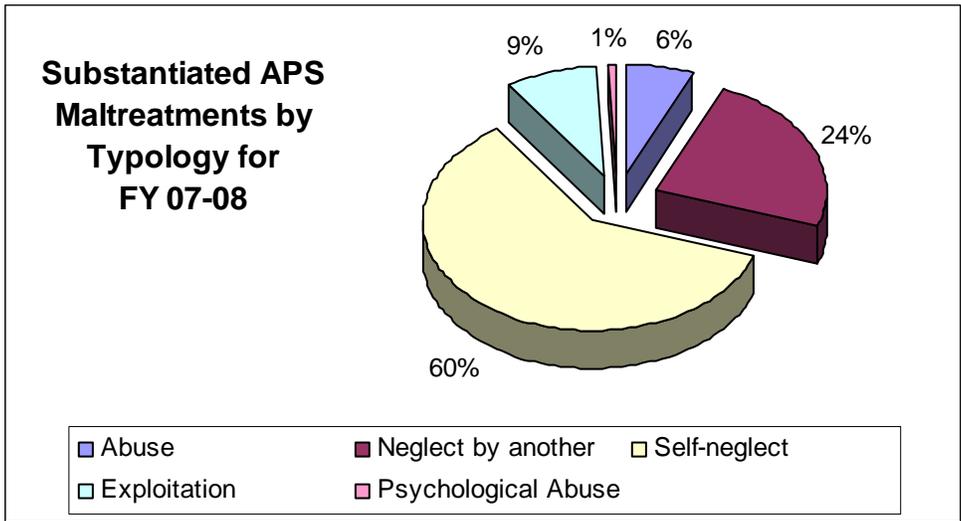
Category 7  
Chart 14



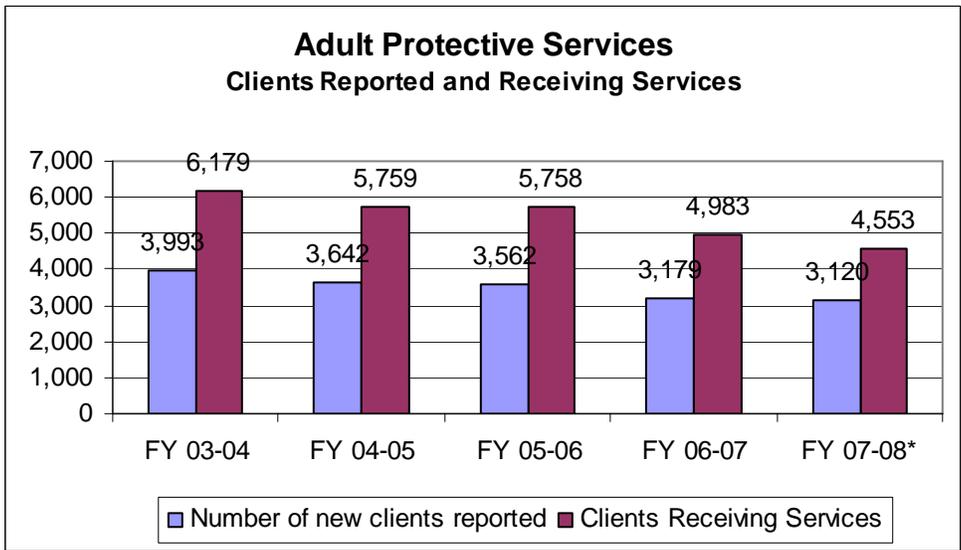
**Adult Protection Outcome APS1 - Reduce recurrence of abuse/neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults (person 18 or older who is either subjected to or at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation).**

**Adult Protection Outcome APS2 - Safely maintain vulnerable adults (persons 18 or older who are either subjected to or at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation) in the least restrictive environment.**

Category 7  
Chart 15



Category 7  
Chart 16



\* indicates data is current as of Sep. 3, 2008 – will be updated in next year's report

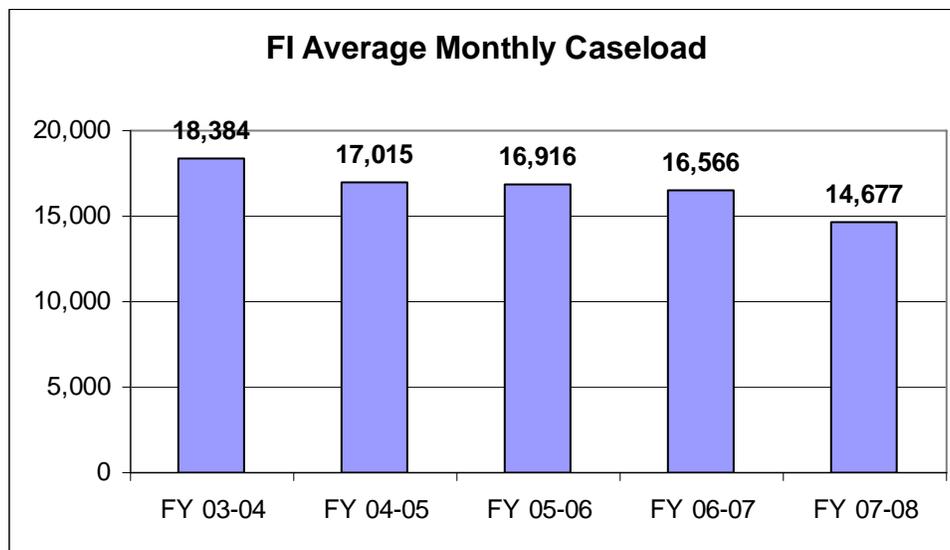
## Domestic Violence

Category 7  
Table 3

Domestic Violence						
	FY 02-03	FY 03-04	FY 04-05	FY 05-06	FY 06-07	FY 07-08
Number emergency shelters funded	12	13	13	13	13	13
Number batterer intervention centers funded	6	8	7	7	13	13
Number individuals receiving emergency shelter	3,943	3,417	3,674	3,270	7,507	3,045
Number women/children receiving counseling services	15,316	11,198	9,663	12,419	9,783	3,164
Number batterers receiving counseling services	1,763	2,274	5,170	7,731	4,469	8,888

## Family Assistance Outcome FA1 - Eligible families receive Family Independence services in a timely and effective manner.

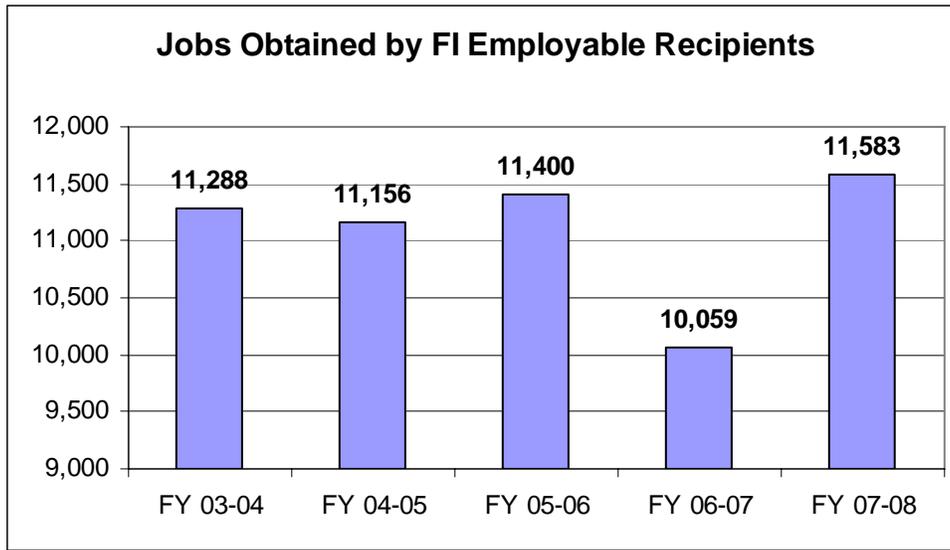
Category 7  
Chart 17



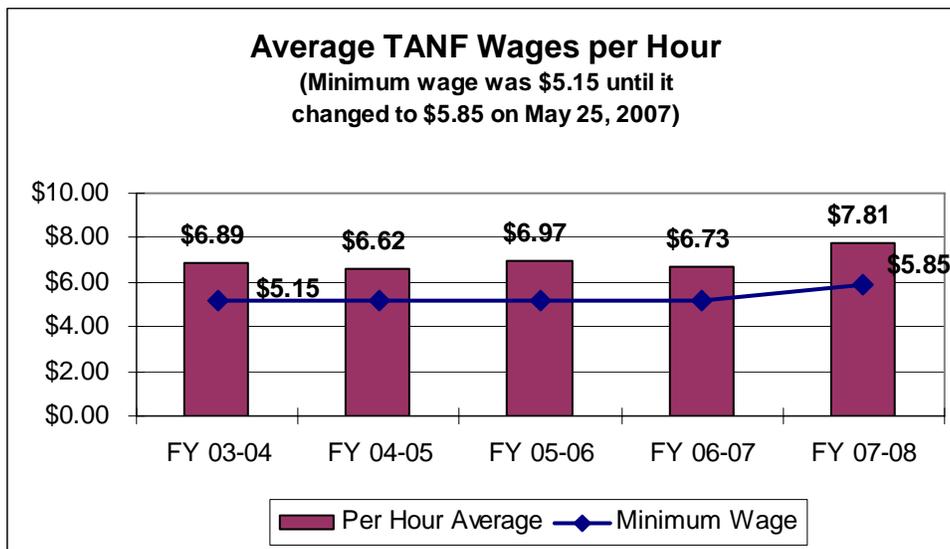
## Family Assistance Outcome FA2 - Families receiving FI services achieve a level of competence that is commensurate with their abilities while improving family functioning and self-reliance.

One of the primary objectives of the Family Assistance program (TANF) is to assist families to become 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 11,500 jobs. The average wage for those employed through DSS programs was approximately \$7.81 an hour, significantly above the minimum wage.

Category 7  
Chart 18



Category 7  
Chart 19



**Family Assistance Outcome FA3 Outcome - Children in families receiving Family Assistance do not become recipients as adults.**

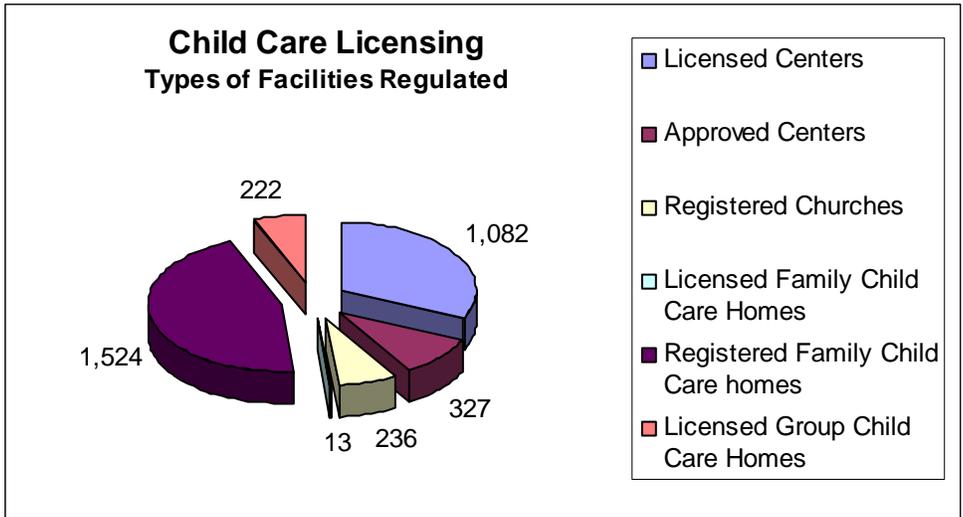
DSS is currently conducting a study with the assistance of ORS to track cohorts of children from the earliest automated benefit files (FY 1993-94), to see if these children have become adult recipients.

**Child Care Outcome CC1 - Quality, affordability, and/or availability of childcare are expanded throughout SC to help meet the needs of working families.**

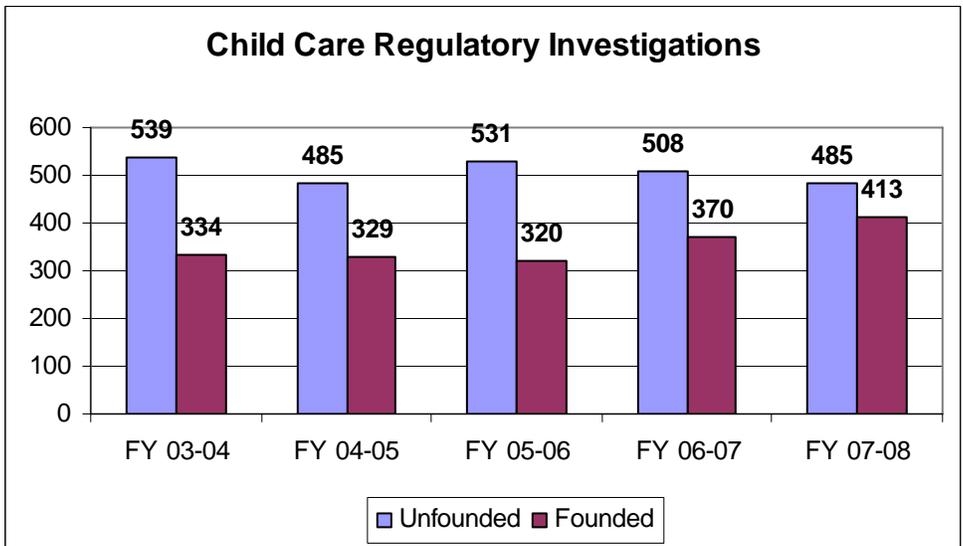
**Child Care Outcome CC2 - Children’s health and safety will be protected in child care settings and the quality of child care facilities will be improved.**

As of July 2008 there are over 3,400 regulated child care facilities. Specific policies and procedures have been developed that assist child care facilities to improve their level of compliance with current regulations. A new data system is being developed to ensure accurate and timely collection and dissemination of data regarding status of compliance of all regulated facilities.

Category 7  
Chart 20



Category 7  
Chart 21



Category 7  
Table 4

Office of Investigations - Background Checks Conducted					
Type of Check	Background Checks Conducted in FY 03-04	Background Checks Conducted in FY 04-05	Background Checks Conducted in FY 05-06	Background Checks Conducted in FY 06-07	Background Checks Conducted in FY 07-08
Foster Care Providers: SLED Background Check	23,799	21, 261	23,425	23,761	23,141
Foster Care Providers: FBI Fingerprint Cards	3,426	4, 504	4,189	4,194	5,922
Day Care Workers: SLED Checks	6,540	6, 246	8,143	8,848	11,314
Day Care Workers: FBI Checks	6,036	7, 468	7,950	8,723	8,723

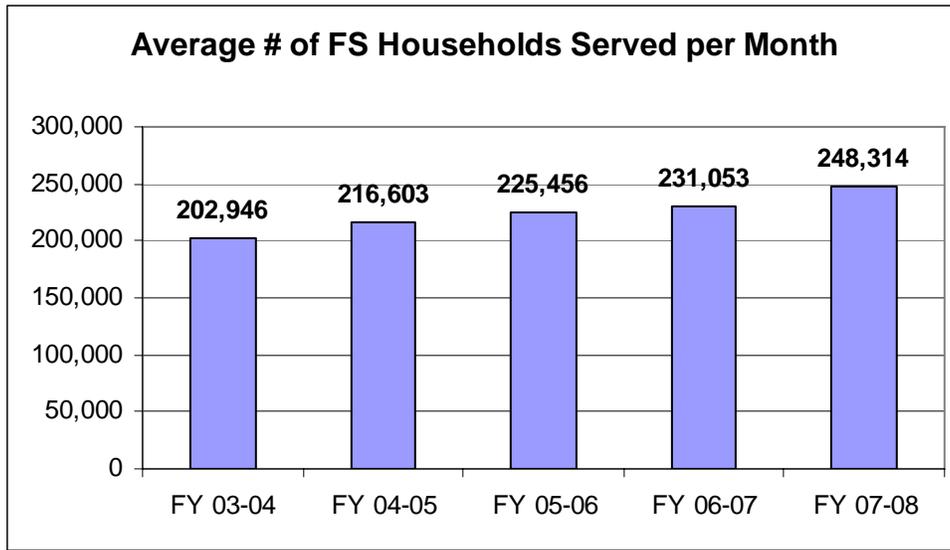
**Family Nutrition Outcome FN1 - Maximize eligible households’ access to the Food and Nutrition Programs**

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)

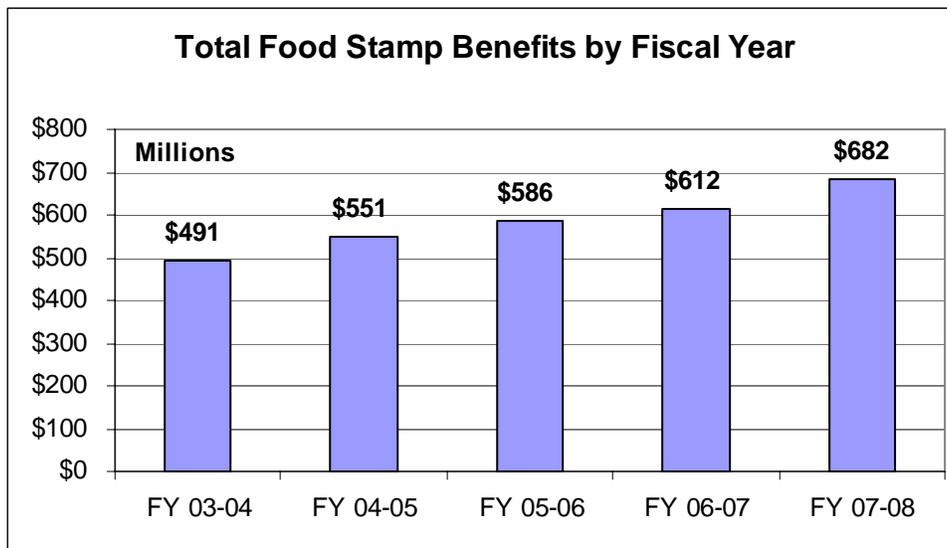
The following two charts, charts 22 and 23, indicate there has been a significant increase in families receiving food stamps in South Carolina last year. More than an average of 248,000 households received food stamps in each month of the last fiscal year.

Category 7  
Chart 22



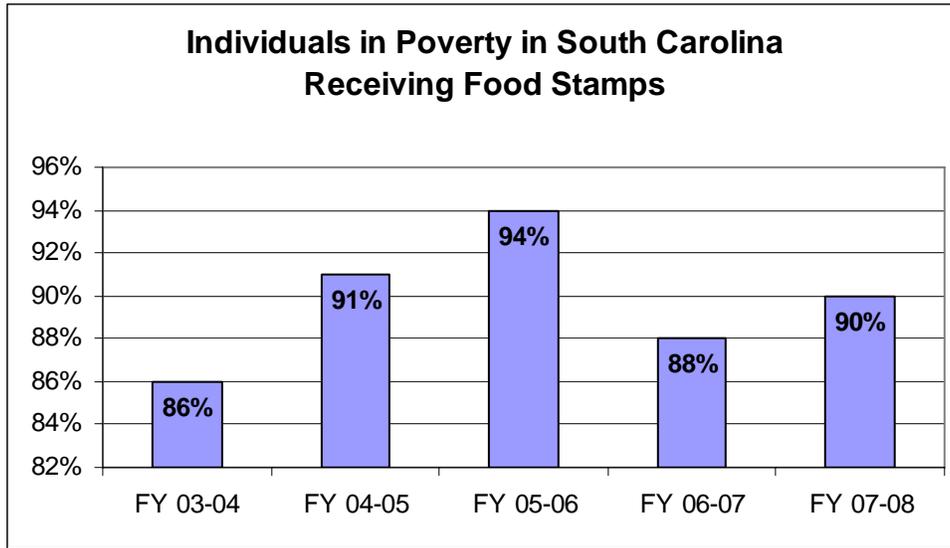
Approximately \$682 million in food stamp benefits were issued.

Category 7  
Chart 23

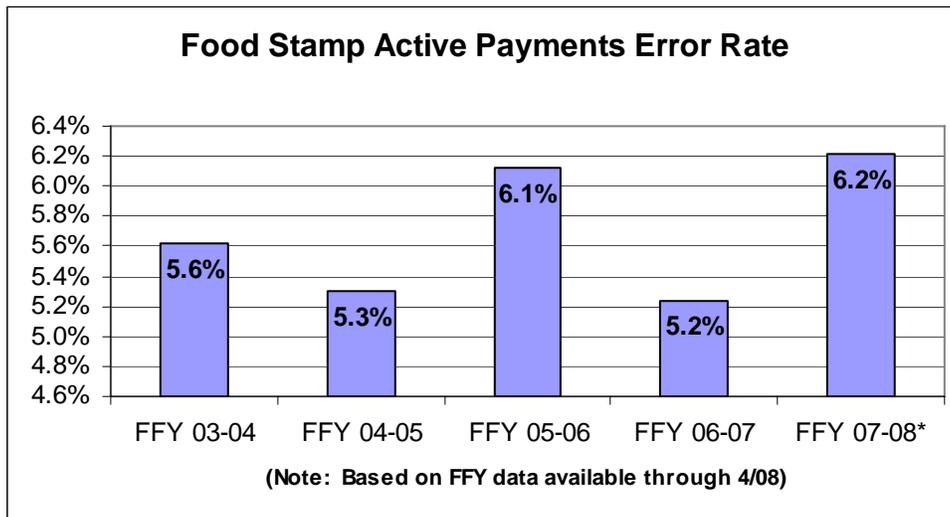


DSS's efforts to maximize the eligible persons receiving food stamps in South Carolina have been very effective. Chart 24 indicates that approximately 90% of the South Carolinians in poverty are receiving food stamps.

Category 7  
Chart 24



Category 7  
Chart 25



\* indicates data is current as of Sep. 3, 2008 – will be updated in next year's report

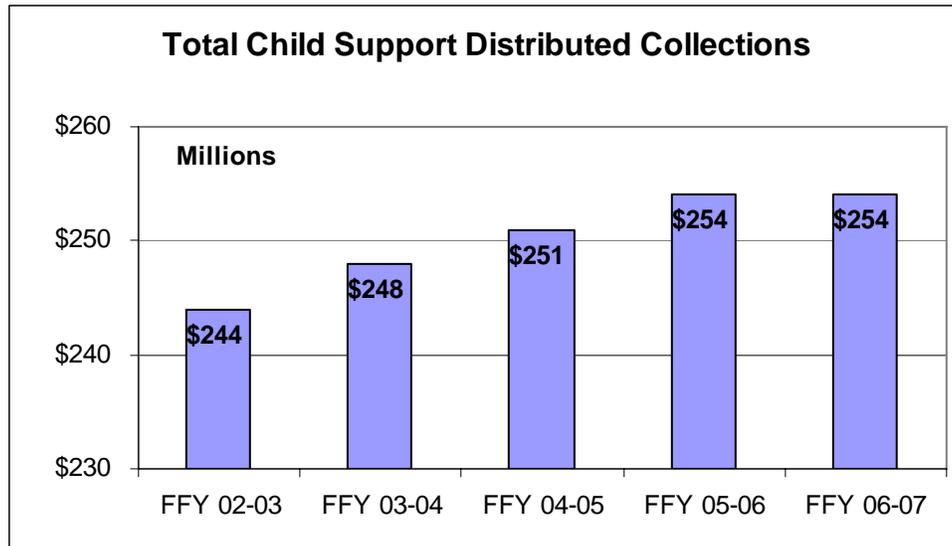
**Child Support Enforcement Outcome CSE1 - Children who are born out of wedlock have paternity established.**

This past fiscal year DSS's Child Support Enforcement Division (CSED) established paternity or had absent parents acknowledged paternity in 88.9% of the department's child support cases.

**Child Support Enforcement Outcome CSE2 - Children with one or both parents absent from the home receive adequate financial support from the non-custodial parent(s).**

Table 5 shows that the Division of Child Support exceeded federal standards by collecting over 51% of support owed; the federal standard is at least 40%. In addition, nearly 56% of arrearages were paid; the federal standard is at least 40%. *(Please note that the CSE Program operates on the Federal Fiscal year, and FY 2007-08 data is not yet available.)*

Category 7  
Chart 26



**Child Support Enforcement Outcome CSE3 - Children receive medical insurance coverage whenever such coverage is available through the non-custodial parent’s or custodial parent’s employer at reasonable cost.**

This performance criterion was added in federal fiscal 2005-06 for informational purposes only. However, we expect it to become a requirement in the near future and we have begun taking remedial steps to ensure that we are able to meet our goal once the requirement is established.

**Child Support Enforcement Outcome CSE4 - 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 \$6.87 in child support last fiscal year for every \$1 of expenditures. Table 5 shows performance objectives of the OCSE during the past five federal fiscal years.

Category 7  
Table 5

Performance Criteria	Objective	FFY 2003	FFY 2004	FFY 2005	FFY 2006	FFY 2007
Support Orders Issued	At least 50%	70.7%	71.2%	71.2%	75.6%	63.3%
Paternity Established or acknowledged	At least 50%	78.8%	82.3%	84.7%	84.2%	88.9%
Current Support Paid	At least 40%	49.1%	48.4%	47.4%	49.3%	51.4%
Arrears Cases Paid	At least 40%	51.3%	49.2%	53.8%	53.0%	55.7%
Cost Effectiveness (Collections/Expenditures)	At least \$2.00	\$6.30	\$7.00	\$7.10	\$7.43	\$6.87

**7.2 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of customer satisfaction?**

Customer Service Task Force: In an ongoing effort to enhance customer service, the SCDSS established a Customer Service Task Force in 2005 to explore strategies to improve customer service, including but not limited to, training, office policy, disciplinary actions, incentives, and evaluation. The Task Force consisted of local, regional, and state DSS staff, as well as the following external entities:

- South Carolina Appleseed, LJC
- South Carolina Foster Parent Association
- Harvest Hope Food Bank
- South Carolina Fair Share
- South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

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 incorporates survey data when considering service delivery process changes and improvements. Finally, a statewide advisory committee of former foster youth meets regularly with staff to make suggestions on improving the foster care program.

Tracking complaints: DSS Constituent Services tracks complaints by program area, county, and employee. This system allows DSS to ensure that complaints are addressed and resolved. Information can be used by county directors, program managers, and state office management to determine where improvements are needed, by program area. It also allows DSS to determine whether a contact is really a complaint; if the service action taken on a case is correct but the customer disagrees with the policy; or if an issue is a personnel matter. This system can be used to track letters, calls and face-to-face visits.

**7.3 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of financial performance?**

Financial performance levels are determined based on the preparation and analysis of the department's budget during the annual zero-based budgeting process and the monitoring of the budget.

### Budget Development

The zero-based budget process is designed to ensure that financial resources are allocated and used to meet strategic objectives, that budgeted operations are within available funding, and that the agency derives maximum benefit from all available funding sources. The budget process requires the analysis of resource allocation and funding needed for budgeted operations, and includes a review of necessary budgeted expenditures from the cost center manager through the senior management levels. The zero-based budget is a key indicator for the Agency's budget initiatives addressed during the annual budget process. Key measures of financial performance used during the preparation, review and monitoring of the budget include maximizing non-state revenue sources and the cost containment of administrative support type costs. This process is headed by executive management with support from senior staff and the budget office.

Each division is required to submit a detailed budget plan that includes a requested budget with documentation to support and justify the request. The division budget plans are reviewed by a budget review team comprised of executive and senior managers. Budget meetings are scheduled with division directors if necessary. The budget review team prepares and submits a proposed agency budget to the State Director for approval.

### Budget Monitoring

Divisions are required to monitor their budgets and expenditures on a monthly basis. Divisions may request internal budget transfers to address critical needs that may arise during the year. Divisions may also request additional funds to address critical needs that cannot be covered by internal transfers. These requests are reviewed by the budget office and submitted to executive staff for approval. Divisions are also required to complete a mid-year budget review and affirm that they are operating within their approved budget. The budget office monitors the agency budget and expenditures on a monthly basis, provides assistance to the divisions in resolving any budget-related issues, and reports critical issues to executive management for resolution.

### Post Audit Review

The budget office compiles historical budget and expenditure information for use in the zero-based budget development process. While this information is not used to establish budgets directly, it is helpful in analyzing division budget requests.

Additionally, the department expects our suppliers, contractors, and partners to deliver quality customer services that adhere to the same performance levels as our county offices. The department works with suppliers, contractors, and partners to establish client outcome expectations to include allowing service deliverers the freedom to develop approved approaches to service delivery to achieve these outcomes. Regional and county offices and suppliers of external products and services must collect, report on data in an effort to continually improve on delivery of services to clients served by the department.

#### ***7.4 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of Human Resource Results?***

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.

**7.5 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.**

The Division of Audit Services conducts examinations of the Department's fiscal operations, program management and program support activities and reports findings and recommendations to management and the State Director. Audits include 1) financial and compliance; 2) economy and efficiency; 3) program results; and, 4) performance. Other duties include providing technical assistance to the county offices in accounting for their local and client funds, reviewing independent audit reports submitted by providers of service in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget Circular A-133 (Audits of States, Local Governments and Nonprofit Organizations) and preparation of year-end financial statements for the county offices.

FY 2007-08, the DAS staff performed 83 audits of the Department and providers of service. Also, DAS prepared the County Financial Statements which included in excess of \$41 million in receipts and expenditures for submission to the Comptroller General to be included in the Statewide Financial Statements. Also, 54 independent audit reports were reviewed in accordance with OMB Circular A-133. In addition, technical assistance was provided to the 46 county offices in the operation and maintenance of their local accounting systems.

## **Appendix A**

### **DSS Operation Locations**

**Abbeville** DSS - Main Site - Human Services Bldg.

**Aiken** DSS - Main Site / North Augusta B T C / Intensive Foster Care and Clinical Services

**Allendale** DSS - Main Site

**Anderson** DSS Office Building / Intensive Foster Care and Clinical Services

**Bamberg** DSS - Main Site / Intensive Foster Care and Clinical Services / Intensive Foster Care and Clinical Services (2nd Site)

**Barnwell** DSS - Main Site / Family Independence

**Beaufort** DSS - Main Site / Hilton Head / Intensive Foster Care and Clinical Services

**Berkeley** DSS - Main Site / Family Independence

**Calhoun** DSS - Main Site / FIA and Region III

**Charleston** DSS - Main Site – Child Care Chicora Center / Family Independence - / Intensive Foster Care and Clinical Services / Child Support Enforcement / Adoption Office Chicora Center

**Cherokee** DSS - Main Site

**Chester** DSS - Main Site

**Chesterfield** DSS - Main Site

**Clarendon** DSS - Main Site

**Colleton** DSS - Main Site – Bernard Warshaw / Family Independence

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

**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 / Intensive Foster Care and Clinical Services/Child Care/PQA/Program Technical Assistance

**Georgetown** DSS - Main Site

**Greenville** DSS - Main Site / MTSC / Family Independence / Child Support Enforcement / Adoption Services Region II /Child Care/Program Technical Assistance

**Greenwood** DSS - Main Site / Intensive Foster Care and Clinical Services

**Hampton** DSS - Main Site / Family Independence

**Horry** DSS - Main Site / Loris / Myrtle Beach Complex / Myrtle Beach Intensive Foster Care and Clinical Services

**Jasper** DSS - Main Site

**Kershaw** DSS - Main Site – UnitedWay Holstein Ctr.

**Lancaster** DSS - Main Site / Family Independence / Kershaw

**Laurens** DSS Main Site - Human Services Complex

**Lee** DSS - Main Site / Family Independence

**Lexington** DSS – Main Site / Human Services – Main St..

**McCormick** DSS - Main Site

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

**Marlboro** DSS - Main Site / Annex / Bennettsville Intensive Foster Care and Clinical Services

**Newberry** DSS - Main Site

**Oconee** DSS - Main Site / Family Independence

**Orangeburg** DSS - Main Site

**Pickens** DSS - Main Site

**Richland** DSS - Main Site / Eastover Office

**SCDSS Central Office** - North Towers Complex / State Office Intensive Foster Care and Clinical Services / 2638 Two Notch Rd - Staff Dev. and Training / Midlands Intensive Foster Care and Clinical Services /3150 Harden St. - Region II (CSE) / Child Support Enforcement Region I / Child Care / Intensive Foster Care and Clinical Services

**Saluda** DSS - Main Site

**Spartanburg** DSS - Evans Bldg. - Main Site / Montgomery Bldg. / Intensive Foster Care and Clinical Services / Children's Shelter / Teen Shelter

**Sumter** DSS - Main Site / Intensive Foster Care and Clinical Services

**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**

**South Carolina Department of Social Services**

